

Love Thy Neighbor (Or know them, at least)

Kara Scherer '17
ENVS 400

Building Social Capital Before Disasters

what you need to know

The Cascadia Subduction Zone



There is a fault 100 miles off the coast that runs from Northern California to Vancouver. It's capable of producing magnitude 9.0 earthquakes, and there is a 10% chance that it will happen in the next 40 years. The last earthquake of that magnitude was in 1700, so there is no public memory of it -- therefore Oregon is very underprepared.

Social Capital



Social capital consists of the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively. There are three types of social capital: bonding, bridging, and linking.

Third Places

Third places are social spaces other than work and home such as cafes, community centers, pubs, or parks. Physical third places are in decline, but virtual third places such as Nextdoor and Facebook are on the rise.



what i did

Survey



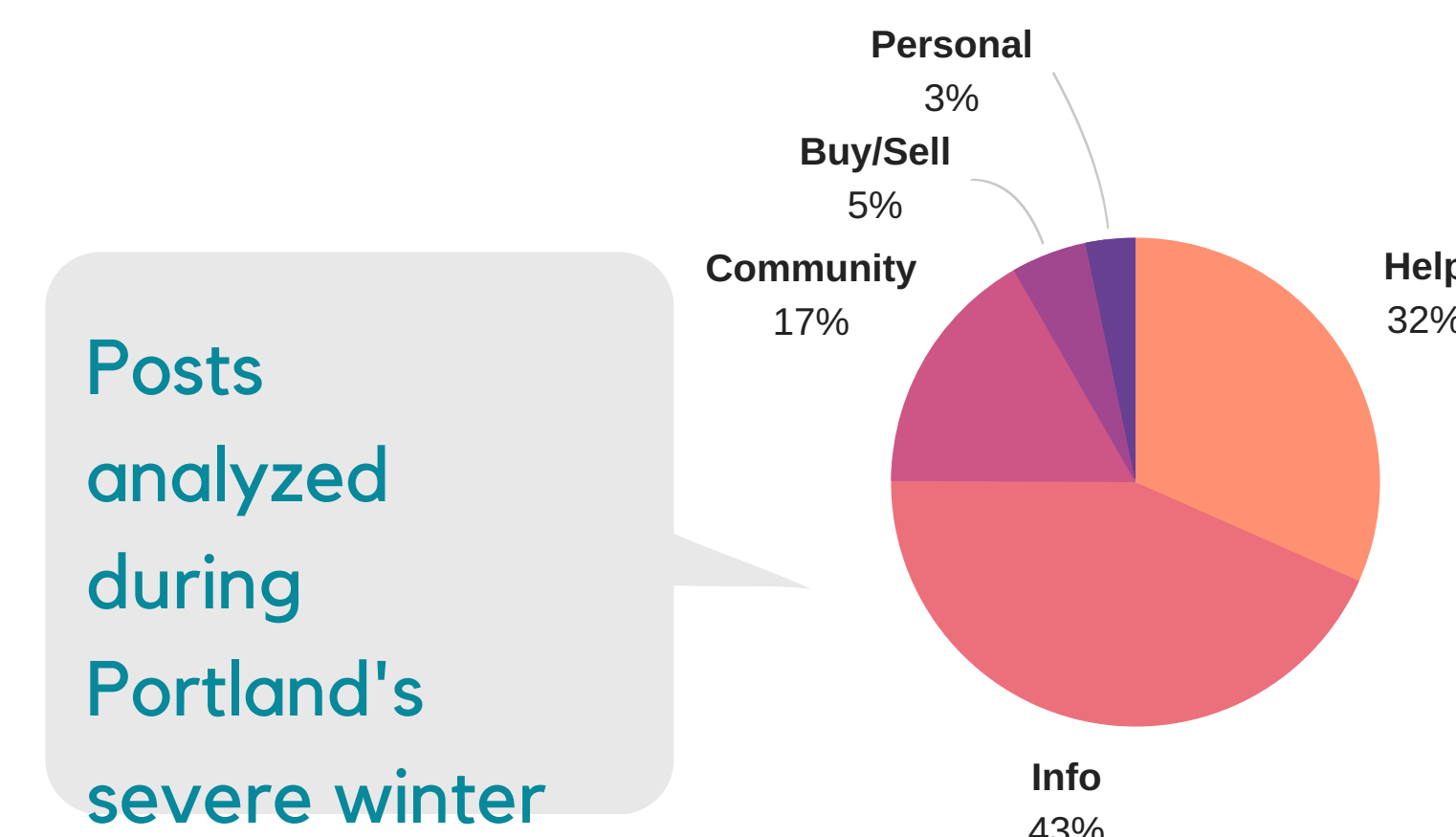
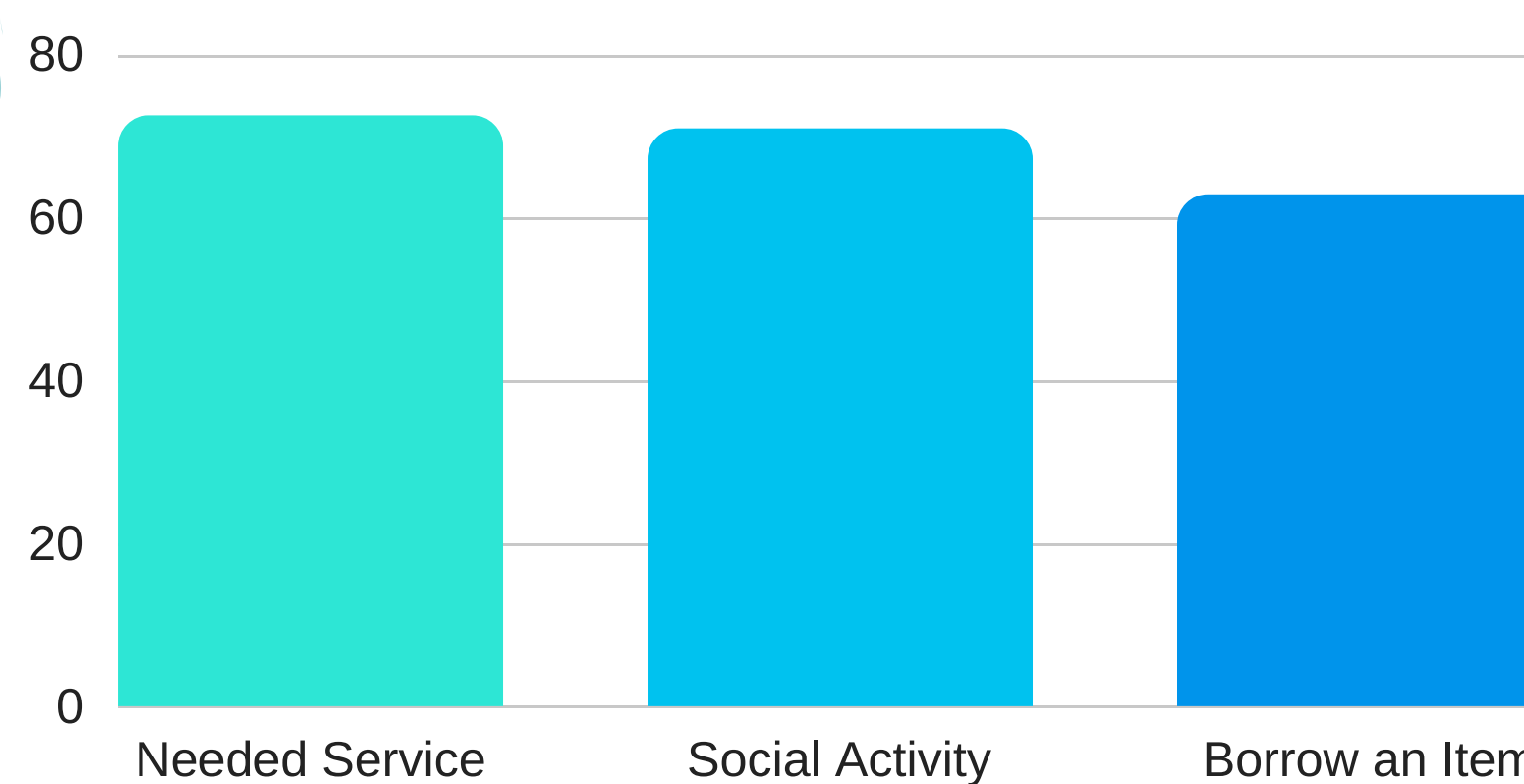
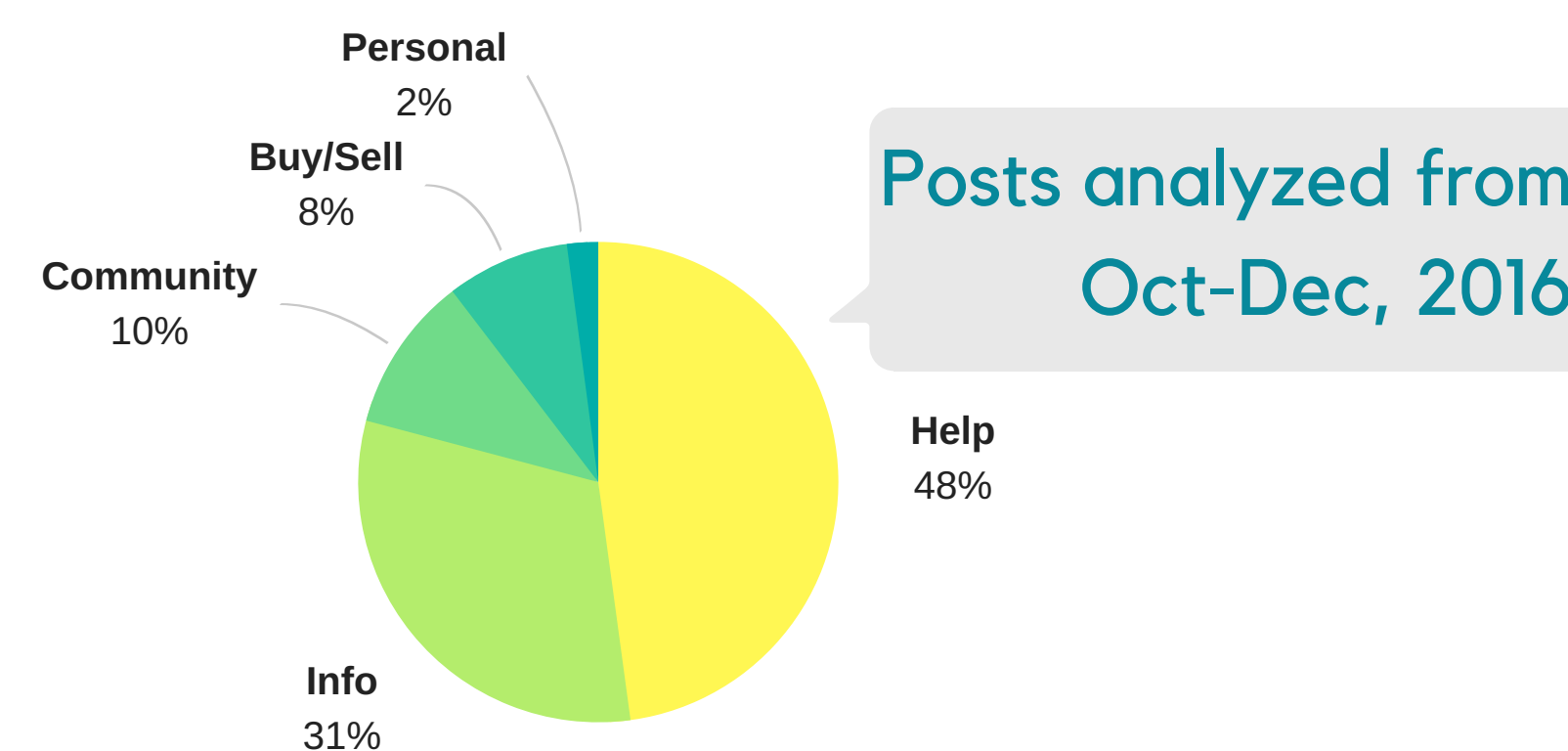
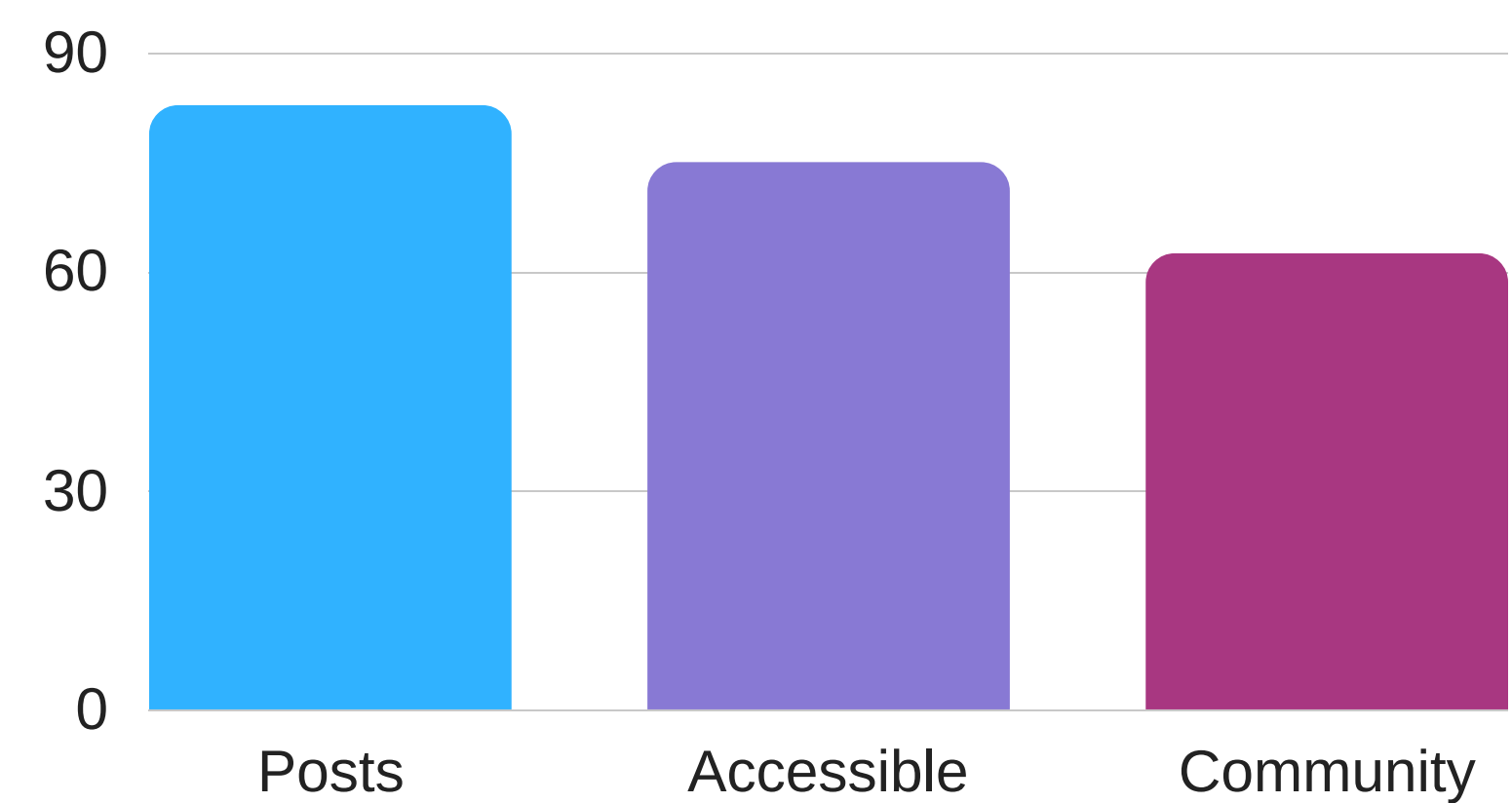
The survey was designed to gauge the possibility of Nextdoor being a virtual third place and as an extension, a place for neighbors to build social capital. I asked questions about trust, perceptions of Nextdoor and the neighborhood, as well as demographic information.



Qualitative Post Analysis

I analyzed a total of 108 posts for themes of interaction, beginning with the "categories" already available on Nextdoor: Classifieds, Crime & Safety, Documents, Free Items, General, Lost & Found, and Recommendations, and then created more specific sub-themes as seen in my results below..

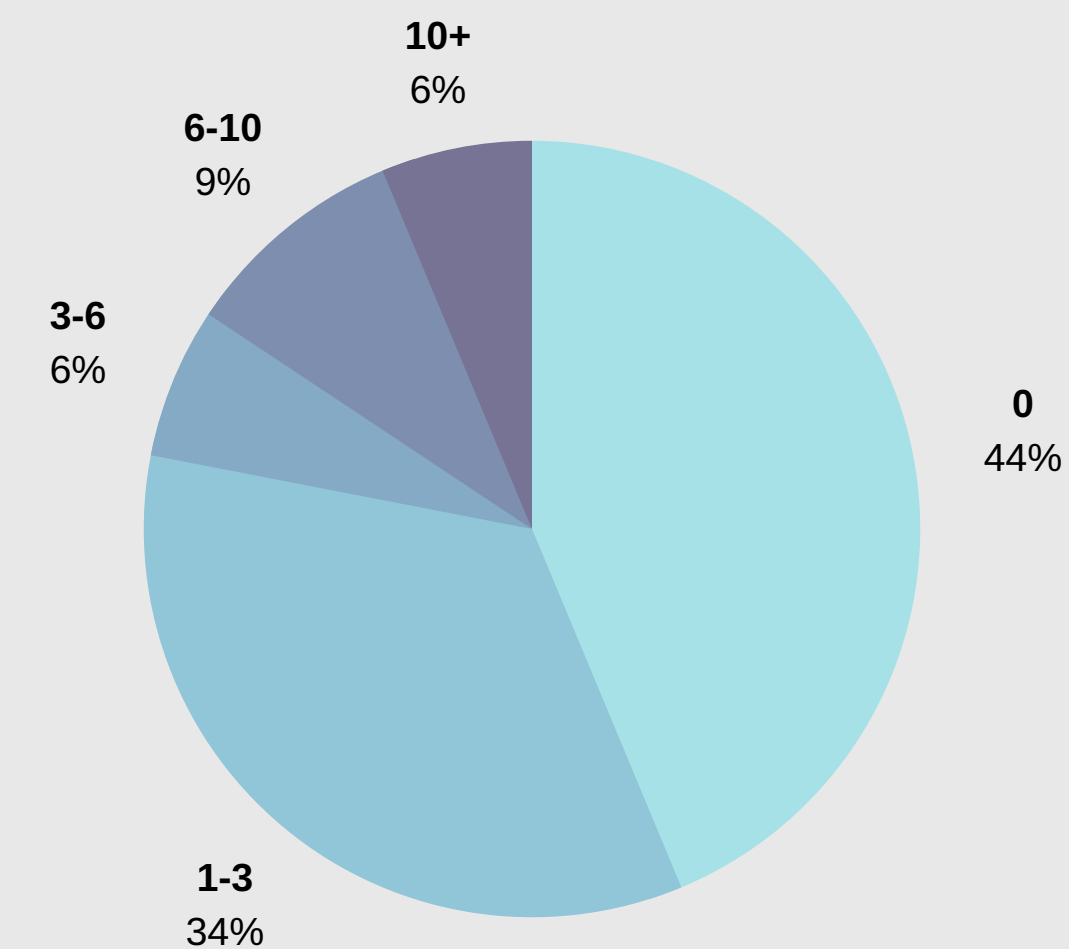
What kinds of interactions are taking place between neighbors, and are they helpful or harmful in creating social capital?



Oldenburg, R. 1989. The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Community Centers, Beauty Parlors, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts, and How They Get You Through The Day. New York: Marlowe & Company.

why it matters

Over 50% of survey participants had met a neighbor in person because of Nextdoor. This implies that virtual third places not only facilitate online social capital, but can also connect people in person



The Oregon Seismic Safety Commission recommends that communities make a plan for disasters preparedness. Nextdoor can help facilitate that process.



What now?

Get online and meet your neighbors! But keep these guidelines in mind:

- Know the territory
- Assume Goodwill
- Reciprocate
- Jump in where you can add value
- Be mindful
- Encourage casual conversation
- Humanize :)