2009

Expectations of Privacy in Online Social Networks: An Investigation of How Privacy on Facebook and Myspace is Interpreted by Users, Site Administrators, and the Courts

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ABSTRACT: The explosive popularity of online social networks (OSNs) in recent years has been accompanied by serious concerns over privacy. From stalking and sexual predators to arrests made through evidence obtained on the networks, the extensive personal information made available through OSNs and their users has resulted in numerous privacy threats. Nonetheless, privacy is a paradoxical concept on these sites because their main function is to facilitate user exposure and publicity—not privacy. Still, the abundance and depth of information that users are willing to post has naturally led to privacy-related problems. The present study will examine how these problems are being managed by both OSN site administrators and the law.

OSNs deal with privacy in two ways: through their offered privacy policies and through the privacy settings that users can implement. The former mainly functions to protect the OSN from potential legal disputes. The latter is the more practical protective measure for users, although a number of studies have found that only a minority of OSN members actually apply such settings (Dwywe, 2007; Govani & Pashley, 2007; Gross & Acquisti, 2005; Kolek & Saunders, 2008; Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2006). Furthermore, prior research has shown that certain variables (such as gender and experience) affect the implementation of privacy settings (Kolek & Saunders, 2008; Gross & Acquisti, 2005; Lewis, Kaufman, & Christakis, 2008; Warfel, 2008).

The U.S. legal system also provides privacy protection to individuals through the Fourth Amendment, as well as through various privacy torts. Privacy cases hinge on whether the party in question demonstrates that he/she had an “expectation of privacy,” and that society would deem such an expectation as reasonable in the situation at issue. This “expectation” is especially difficult to prove on OSNs because, as previously stated, these sites are used for personal promotion and networking-uses that appear antithetical to expecting privacy. Indeed, the law conceives of privacy as a desired state or process of social withdrawal by conceptualizing privacy as the right to be left alone. As such, courts have traditionally assumed that any voluntary “publicity” negates one’s right to privacy. For example, courts have rules that no legal expectation (or right) to privacy exists while a person is in a public place.

To Talk or Not To Talk: Relational Experiences on Your Personal Well-Being

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ABSTRACT: Social allergens are unpleasant behaviors that produce a hypersensitive reaction. If they are bothersome enough, social allergens may cause a person to ruminate. Rumination has an association with mental health, and relationship satisfaction has an effect on mental health. Communication competence looks at how skilled a partner is in a discussion, and this study looks at competence as a moderator between rumination and about social allergens and relationship health outcomes. Participants came from the University of California, Santa Barbara and filled out a survey in three points in time. Results found that rumination about social allergens are associated with worse mental health, and that perceived communication competence is associated with higher relational satisfaction. Further, greater relationship
satisfaction is associated with better health and that competence matters when it comes to a 
conversation with your partner. Also, expectations of partner competence may be just as crucial. 
Nevertheless, social allergens are apparent in every kind of relationship, and how much we 
choose to ruminate about them determines the health and relationship outcomes that may come 
of it.

Differences across Media Content and Media Effects Interventions in Affecting 
Participants’ Perceptions of Trust and Credibility in Television News 
Ethan Hartsell 
ABSTRACT: This study attempted to evaluate differences in the effects of two kinds of media 
literacy interventions (media content and media effects) on participants’ perceptions of 
credibility for four news clips, as well as their trust in television news as a medium. Participants 
were assigned to a media content, media effects, or control condition. In the media content 
condition, participants read a short article on the television news values of 
prominence/importance, proximity, timeliness, the unusual, human interest, and conflict 
controversy, and the role these values play in the selection of stories covered by the news 
industries. In the media effects condition, participants read an excerpt that discussed the agenda-
setting role of news media, mainstreaming effects, and cultivation effects. Paired-samples t-tests 
were run to examine the significance of changes in pre- and post- test ratings of trust and 
credibility, and an LSD analysis was performed to examine what significant differences in 
changes in ratings of credibility and trust across groups. Results indicated few significant 
changes in ratings of credibility and trust after interventions and few significant differences 
across group. Implications for future research are discussed.

Comedy News versus Traditional News: How Humor Affects Memory through Emotion 
Kinsey Johnson 
Faculty Advisor: Dolly Mullin 
ABSTRACT: This study examined how the emotions generated by traditional news programs 
versus comedy news programs are related to memory for news information. While both news 
genres often provide the same factual information, comedy news utilizes humor and jokes 
making fun of politics or celebrities, and traditional news typically omits such humor. It was 
expected that humor that is utilized in comedy news would evoke more positive emotions in 
viewers than traditional news and that news stories containing humor would result in better 
memory for factual information. A within-subjects two-part experiment was conducted in which 
similar news stories from both genres were manipulated and shown to participants. Analysis was 
based on humor in the messages, how viewers felt after viewing each story, and which stories 
were best remembered. Result indicated that although more positive emotions were evoked after 
viewing comedy news clips, memory was actually better for traditional news stories. Results are 
discussed in terms of the limitations of positive emotion and competing research on inhibitors of 
cognitive processing of information.

Demand-Withdraw and Relationship Satisfaction: Emotional Intelligence as a Possible 
Moderator 
Rebecca N. Lautenbach 
Faculty Advisor: Tamara Afifi
ABSTRACT: Research presents two fundamentally sociological perspectives to explain why demand-withdrawal patterns in marriages are especially dissatisfying and why it is that the females tends to become the demander while the male withdrawals. The current study introduces a more skilled-based explanation using emotional intelligence as a moderator, and also introduces perceived misunderstanding as a fourth possible explanation. Results analyzing both male and female dating and martial couples (N=280) indicated that there were significant findings for dating couples involving misunderstanding as a strong predictor of demand behaviors being dissatisfying. For all participants the more misunderstood they felt the more dissatisfied they were. Further, emotional intelligence did not seem to affect marital female’s dissatisfaction. Limitations and offers for further research involving a larger sample and dyadic data analysis is discussed.

Television with Pity: Psychological Correlates of Participation in Online Fandom Communities
Emily Mangel
ABSTRACT: This study examined the influences on and advantages of participating in online fandom communities with respect to television programs. A survey was given to 138 participants to assess both their use of online communities and the possible effects that this participation has on various aspects of the viewing experience. These aspects include participants’ reactions to events in the show and their overall intellectual and emotional engagement with the television program and its characters. In addition, a focus group was conducted with high to moderate-level online fandom community participators to further evaluate potential differences between high and low level participators with respect to various psychological measures (such as need for affiliation, need for status, need for expression, and need for cognition) and parasocial relationships associated with the television show. The study revealed that online participation was associated in interesting and illuminating ways with a network of psychological and social needs and gratification.

Destabilizing the Information Sampling Bias: A Bona Fide Group Perspective of the Hidden Profile Paradigm
Robert (Tripp) May
ABSTRACT: Literature on small groups suggests that group decisions are generally superior to individual decisions because groups have a greater range and diversity of information available to them. However empirical research in the laboratory, based on the hidden profile paradigm, indicates that groups with distributed information habitually fail to effectively pool information and this leads to sub-optimal group decisions.

The present study examines specific contextual conditions that might help us better understand the informational sampling process in groups. An experiment was conducted that integrates the Bona Fide Group Perspective with the Hidden Profile Paradigm to explore the extent to which features of bona fide groups, interdependence with context and permeability boundaries, affect the relationship among distributed information, information pooling, and decision quality. The study was a 2 (hidden profile vs. manifest profile) x 2 (stable group membership vs. unstable group membership) x 2 (access to information vs. no access to information) factorial design. The results suggest that in the distributed information conditions, both access and stability moderated the effects of the hidden profile. Specifically, when group did not have access to information, only those groups with permeable boundaries were likely to
share information and make effective decisions. The pragmatic implications of these findings are presented.

The Effects of Reality-Based Television Programming and Advertising on Nutrition and Exercise Efficacy and Motivation in Young Adults

Jenna Thomas

Faculty Advisor: Robin Nabi

ABSTRACT: The objective of this study was to examine the effects of reality entertainment programming and embedded commercials on an individual’s perceived motivations and efficacy to consume a healthy diet and exercise. To examine these ideas, a 3 (television program: reality healthy, reality non-health, and fictional drama) x 2 (commercial: healthy, unhealthy) factorial design was used with 303 UCSB undergraduate Communication students, aged 18 to 23 (M = 19.56, SD = 1.18). Participants completed a pretest measuring items such as perceived knowledge, motivation, and self-efficacy with regard to diet and exercise, then viewed one of six stimuli, and completed a posttest. The posttest items were similar to those in the pretest, with the addition of perceived realism, character identification, ad recall, and snack choice measures. The results indicated that perceived realism of a health-oriented reality program is related to greater confidence to eat healthier and exercise, as well as greater motivation to exercise. Also, regardless of the show, unhealthy advertisements were better remembered than healthy advertisements. In conclusion, reality programming has the potential to influence positive health behavior to the extent that the program events are seen as real; however, future research is needed to continue investigating how these effects compare to those of other TV genres. Additionally, an examination of the varied persuasive techniques used in healthy versus unhealthy food ads should be conducted in an effort to make healthy food ads more engaging.