You Never Drink Alone: Communication and Contextual Influences on College Students’ Drinking Attitudes and Behaviors
Krysten Buerner
Faculty Advisor: Ronald Rice
ABSTRACT: Approximately 63% of full-time college students report drinking alcohol recently, 43% reported recent binge drinking, and 18% of students in college meet the criteria for alcohol abuse and/or dependence (Mothers Against Drunk Driving; Talbott, Martin, Usdan, Leeper, Umstattd, Creemens, et al., 2008). Alcohol consumption is a salient and serious issue on college campuses across the country as shown in popular media and scholarly literature.

This study reviews relevant research to develop and test a model of the influence of communicative (family communication, peer norms, peer influence, and on-campus alcohol campaigns), and contextual (prior experience with alcohol, demographics, current residence, and year in school) factors on college students’ attitudes toward, and reported behaviors of, alcohol consumption. The sample included 427 undergraduate students from lower and upper-division Communication courses that were recruited to voluntarily participate in a brief online survey for class credit.

Current drinking behavior and attitudes towards drinking varied between campaigns because of awareness or knowledge about the campaign. The Life of the Party campaign utilizes a detailed website to inform the students of their rights, as well as the laws surrounding drug and alcohol use, and what they can do to help themselves and others have fun with less risk of negative legal or health repercussions and the Just Call campaign is an education campaign aimed at increasing knowledge about and awareness of alcohol poisoning symptoms and the one sanctioned response—calling 911. Parental communication seemed to be positively associated with current drinking behavior and attitudes towards drinking, though the effect disappeared once high school drinking was taken into consideration. Peer influence and peer norms were both associated with higher levels of drinking, with a stronger influence by close friends. Most demographic differences were not significant, but women did show more negative attitudes towards alcohol and Caucasians reported higher overall mean drinking.

Predictive Factors of Bystander Apathy on the Micro-Blogging Website Twitter
Danielle S. Danetra
Faculty Advisor: Cynthia Stohl
ABSTRACT: Social networking websites such as Twitter have become an integral part of our everyday lives. These websites prompt people to share personal information with potentially thousands of other users. Although some research has looked at people’s reactions to serious online personal disclosures, none has looked at Twitter, a micro-blogging website with more than 10 million active users. In non-mediated contexts, experimental and field research has found that people often do not intervene to help another even when they know the person is in trouble. This phenomenon is known as bystander apathy”. The aim of this study is to explore if, and under what conditions, bystander apathy occurs on Twitter. Participants in this study were exposed to several tweets that indicated a user was in distress. A 3(social identity) x 3(number of bystanders) x 3(gender of ‘victim’) experimental design tested the traditional factors associated with bystander apathy in the context of a “live” Twitter feed. Participants were asked to evaluate each message for the tweeter’s gender. Participants were told to stop the experiment and notify
the researcher if there were any problems within the feed. Five “distress” tweets were placed within each participant’s feed as the experimental manipulation. Once the experiment was completed, participants filled out a second survey which asked about their reactions to the distressed tweets and their rationale for intervening or not. Only 4 out of 140 participants stopped the experiment to help the victim. However there was significant variation in participants’ level of concern to the victim. There was an effect for the perceived gender of the distressed tweeter in that participants showed high levels of concern when they believed the person in distress to be male. The significance of gender stereotypes and internet norms are discussed.

The Structuration of Business Process Modeling
Logan Franken
Faculty Advisor: Dave Seibold
ABSTRACT: This research investigates the influence of social, interactional factors on the development of business process models within an organization. Organizations increasingly rely on business process models, or flowcharts of business activities, as a mechanism for articulating and evaluating existing business processes. Since the creation of these models requires effective knowledge sharing among organizational members, business process modeling is fundamentally a social, interactional process. However, past research focuses on the technical and practical business aspects of business process modeling, ignoring the influence of the organizational social environment. This investigation addresses this gap in past research by using structuration theory to develop a theoretical framework that defines business process modeling as a structuration practice that draws upon the embedded social structures of the organization. To assess the validity of this theoretical framework, a study of business process modeling practices within a small branch of a major government organization is conducted. Centering resonance analysis, a technique for analyzing complex discursive systems, is used to analyze the qualitative data. Results demonstrate the validity of the proposed theoretical model, confirming business process modeling as a socially-mediated organizational practice often facilitated by the same seemingly ineffective organizational social practices that business process modeling initiatives are meant to eradicate. Results also suggest that the actual process of business process modeling is more valuable for organizational members than the use of completed models, highlighting a potential challenge for organizations implementing business process modeling.

In Your Face: Understanding Parent-Adolescent Relationships in the Context of Facebook
Maggie Kanter
Faculty Advisor: Tamara Afifi
ABSTRACT: As new technologies threaten to erode traditional notions of privacy, the family is one of the only contexts that remain a safe haven from surveillance and monitoring. Or is it? What happens when family members invade other members’ private spaces, places they thought they would never see them, like on their Facebook page?

New technologies reduce costs and increase abilities of information sharing, and inevitably of surveillance and monitoring, making privacy more difficult than ever to achieve (Mayer, 2003). Facebook is one such technology. Founded in February 2004, Facebook is one of many social networking sites (SNS) that have seen a recent explosion in users. The site was designed to facilitate the sharing of information through “the social graph”, or the digital mapping of people’s real-world social connections. Founder Mark Zuckerberg has repeatedly stated that his goal is to help people share information more efficiently, and Facebook does just
that, but it may also be the poster child for those who warn of the demise of privacy in the age of technology.

As with most social networking sites, Facebook has named privacy as a top priority, and although users have the ability to share and restrict information through a “limited profile,” these privacy settings do not encompass every privacy concern of an adolescent user. Although the issues of sexual predators, school officials and future employees accessing one’s Facebook are recently becoming areas of concern among adolescent Facebook users everywhere, there is one audience that college students might be even more troubled about, their parents. Although the SNS was originally only open to college students, it is now available to anyone with an email, and with the increasing prevalence of technology, parents are becoming savvy enough to make their own accounts. Of the more than 200 million active users, more than two thirds are out of college; in fact, the fastest growing demographic is those 35 and older, according to the Facebook statistics page.

Part of the initial attraction of sites like Facebook, argue Buchner et al (1995), was that it was a realm created for and populated exclusively by teenagers, a refuge from the constant parental eye. Suddenly, adolescent Facebook users find themselves having to not only renegotiate traditional boundaries between privacy and public in a new digital environment, but to decide in which camp their parents lie. As an adolescent, a prevalent area of contention with one’s parent is the notion of maintaining control and ownership over one’s private information. Facebook is a prime context in which to study these privacy expectations, to seek to understand the conditions under which adolescents will perceive their parent on Facebook as a privacy invasion, and how that affects and is affected by the parent-adolescent relationship.

The current study will utilize Petronio’s (2000) theory of Communication Privacy Management (CPM) to examine issues of privacy in the parent-adolescent relationship, within the context of Facebook. Specifically, this study seeks to understand the conditions under which adolescents will perceive their parent on Facebook as a form of intrusive parental monitoring, and how it affects the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship. The author will argue that in general, adolescents whose parents are on Facebook will perceive greater intrusive parental monitoring than other students whose parents are not on Facebook, as they may experience, diminished control and a shift in ownership of previously private information. However, those perceptions of intrusiveness may not necessarily lead to diminished relationship quality, if the adolescent already enjoys a relatively conflict-free, close, and satisfying relationships with his or her parent. The author will argue that according to CPM, factors such as conflict, closeness, and satisfaction are indicative of the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship. Adolescents who perceive a high quality relationship with their parent will also likely perceive more permeable boundaries and view disclosure as less risky. Even though they may view their parent’s presence on Facebook as privacy invasion, their prior relationship with their parent will likely act as a buffer against any potential negative effects.

The Effects of Interactive Web Features on Young Voter Political Knowledge, Efficacy and Mobilization
Cassie Presentati
Faculty Advisor: Michael Stohl
ABSTRACT: Today, young American voters are turning out to the polls in lower numbers than older Americans and young voters of previous generations. In addition, young voters are turning away from traditional media sources for their political information, in favor of the Internet.
Given this recent phenomenon, this project explores the effects of interactive political campaign websites on young voters’ political knowledge, internal political efficacy, external political efficacy and mobilization. To compile data for this project, the researcher of this study conducted a pretest-posttest experiment with 174 college students. Findings from this study indicate that interacting with campaign websites is more effective for encouraging youth voter civic participation than passive exposure to traditional campaign commercials, or participating on an online political blog.

**Organizational Identification: Exploring Students’ Attachment to their University**

**Emily Richardson**

**Faculty Advisors: Karen Myers & Cynthia Stohl**

**ABSTRACT:** Organizational identification (OID) is crucial for the continued success of many different types of for-profit and non-profit organizations. This study investigates the OID of university students. Qualitative and quantitative survey data was collected from 555 juniors and seniors at a public university. Several hypothesized factors were found to positively correlate with OID, including: students’ trust in the university, their satisfaction with the university in contributing to their goals, and their perception of interorganizational competition with other rival schools. A small positive correlation was found between OID and having a mentor on campus. However, there was no relationship between students’ OID and the number of university sponsored organizations and extra-curricular activities they participated in during their time at the university. Open-ended responses indicated that students’ OID was positively enhanced by their attendance of sports games, university sponsored social events like concerts and lectures, and by participating in university sponsored social organizations or groups like political, professional, or cultural clubs. In contrast, OID was negatively affected by a recent budget crisis which raised tuition fees, by events or characteristics having to do with off-campus community where the majority of undergraduate students live, and by frustration with professors or university services. Theoretical implications are discussed, as well as practical suggestions for universities to engender OID in students.

**Communicating Dissonance: Identity Gaps and Mental Health Implications in the LGBT Community**

**Erica Thoe**

**Faculty Advisor: Walid Afifi**

**ABSTRACT:** This study examines the impact of personal-enacted identity gaps on the mental health of individuals with conflicting identities. A personal-enacted identity gap occurs when there is a discrepancy between a personally held identity of the individual, and their communicated, or enacted, identity. Where religiosity has consistently been found as beneficial to mental health, gaps created by conflicting religious and sexual identities are predicted to have adverse effects on mental well-being. Under Hecht’s Communication Theory of Identity, homosexuals are predicted to experience personal-enacted identity gaps in religious and sexual identities due to stigma, with adverse effects on mental health. In this 3 part experiment, the effects of identity gaps on mental health were measured in approximately 10 homosexual and 40 heterosexual participants over a three week period. Predictions were supported in that those experiencing personal-enacted identity gaps experienced negative effects on wellbeing. Those with high levels of religiosity experiencing identity gaps had the most pronounced effect on overall mental health, with religiosity adversely affecting mental well-being. The religious,
homosexual community experienced the largest mental health disparity due to cognitive dissonance concerning conflicting identities. Therefore, the mental health benefits of religiosity are limited in nature and may no extend to stigmatized groups.