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A Study of How Young Adults Leverage Multiple Profile Management Functionality in Managing their Online Reputation on Social Networking Sites

T. John McCune

Nova Southeastern University, tjohnmccune@me.com

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by

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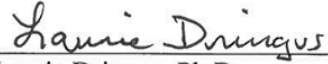
A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
In
Computing Technology in Education

College of Engineering and Computing
Nova Southeastern University

2017

Approval Page

We hereby certify that this dissertation, submitted by Thomas McCune, conforms to acceptable standards and is fully adequate in scope and quality to fulfill the dissertation requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



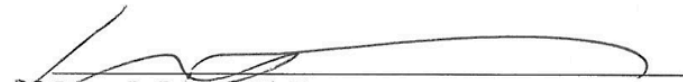
Laurie Dringus, Ph.D.
Chairperson of Dissertation Committee

08/08/2017
Date



Ling Wang, Ph.D.
Dissertation Committee Member


8/8/2017
Date



James L. Parrish, Ph.D.
Dissertation Committee Member

8/8/2017
Date

Approved:



Yong X. Tao, Ph.D., P.E., FASME
Dean, College of Engineering and Computing

8/8/2017
Date

College of Engineering and Computing
Nova Southeastern University

An Abstract of a Dissertation Submitted to Nova Southeastern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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by T. John McCune
August, 2017

With privacy settings on social networking sites (SNS) perceived as complex and difficult to use and maintain, young adults can be left vulnerable to others accessing and using their personal information. Consequences of not regulating the boundaries their information on SNS include the ability for current and future employers to make career-impacting decisions based upon their online reputation that may include disqualifying them as job candidates.

On SNS, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, young adults must decide on how to manage their online reputation by regulating boundaries to their own personal and professional information and identities. One known practice for the regulation of boundaries is the use of multiple profile management (MPM), where users of SNS create and use multiple accounts on a SNS and separate the social and professional identities that they disclose publicly and privately.

The purpose of the study was to understand the lived experiences of young adults in how they regulate boundaries on SNS, through the use of MPM, as they manage their online reputation to different audiences. The practice was studied by applying interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) through interviewing young adults of 18-23 years of age, who use MPM on a SNS. Semi-structured interviews permitted participants to provide in-depth descriptions of their lived experiences.

Eight themes were identified and described based on the analysis of the interviews that include: SNS use with online audiences, motivations for using MPM, the processes for the presentation of self, online search results, privacy settings, untagging SNS posts, self-editing and censorship, and new features. The themes describe the complexity and challenges that young adults face with regulating boundaries with their professional and social identities online through the use of MPM.

Findings from this study have implications for a variety of audiences. Through the findings of this study, SNS developers can introduce new features, improve usability related to privacy management, and further encourage use of their networks. Users of SNS can use this study to understand risks of using SNS and for learning of practices for how to manage their online reputation on SNS.

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Table of Contents

Approval Page	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	ix

Chapters

1. Introduction 1

Background	1
Problem Statement and Goal	8
Research Question	10
Stance of the Researcher	11
Relevance and Significance	12
Barriers and Issues	14
Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations	15
Definition of Terms	16
Summary	17

2. Review of Literature 18

Introduction	18
Online Identity	18
Privacy	22
Boundary Regulation and MPM	24
Employers Use of Social Networking Sites	26
Online Reputation Management	30
Use of Privacy Settings for Online Reputation Management	33
Overview of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)	34
What is Known and What is Unknown	36
Summary	37

3. Methodology 39

Introduction	39
Aim	41
Research Question Restated	41
Rationale for Choosing the Method	42
Participant Selection	43
Sampling	43
Recruitment of Participants	43
Setting	45
Instrumentation	45
General Steps (Procedures)	48

Reflexive Bracketing and Journaling	48
Semi-Structured Interviews	49
Reporting	50
Quality Control	50
Data Organization and Analysis	51
IRB Considerations and Human Subjects	54
Resources and Feasibility	56
Access to Participants	56
Transcription Assistance	56
Hardware and Software Resources	57
Feasibility of Resources	58
Summary	59

4. Results 60

Introduction	60
Data Analysis	60
Demographic Data	61
Interviews	62
Transcription	63
Data Coding	64
Journaling and Bracketing	64
Findings	65
Data Visualization	67
Super –Ordinate Themes	68
SNS Use with Online Audiences	68
Motivations for using MPM	73
The Processes for the Presentation of Self	77
Online Search Results	81
Privacy Settings	85
Untagging SNS Posts	90
Self-Editing and Censorship	93
New Features	95
Patterns Across Cases	99
Summary of Findings	100

5. Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations and Summary 102

Introduction	102
Conclusions	102
Research Question	104
Strengths, Weaknesses, and Limitations	114
Validity	115
Sensitivity to Context	115
Commitment and Rigor	116
Transparency and Coherence	116
Impact and Importance	117
Implications	117

Recommendations 119
Future Research 120
Summary 122

Appendices 125

A. Letter of Informed Consent and Invitation to Study Participants 125
B. Prospective Profile Google Form Questionnaire 127
C. Interview Schedule 129
D. Node Classifications Table 131
E. Sample Coding and Annotation 134
F. IRB Approval Letter – Nova Southeastern University 136
G. IRB Approval Letter – State University of New York at Fredonia 137
H. Transcript Review Letter 138
I. Informed Consent Form 139

References 143

List of Tables

Tables

1. Motivations for MPM 24
2. Research Process Overview with Major and Sub Tasks 39
3. Participant Recruitment 61
4. Demographic Data Content 62
5. Interview Length by Participant 63
6. Perceived Primary Audience and Utility of SNS 69
7. Themes Discussed by Each Participant 100
8. Layered Model to Regulate Boundaries and Manage Online Reputation through the use of MPM 113

List of Figures

Figures

1. Word Cloud Based on NVivo Analysis of Coded Nodes 67
2. NVivo Word Tree of the Term “Family” 71
3. NVivo Word Tree of the Term “Employer” 76
4. NVivo Word Tree of the Term “Pseudonym” 79
5. NVivo Word Tree of the Term “Google” 83
6. NVivo Word Tree of the Term “Privacy Settings” 87
7. NVivo Word Tree of the Term “Untag” 91
8. NVivo Word Tree of the Term “Multiple” 103
9. SNS Use with Online Audiences 105
10. Motivations for using MPM 106
11. The Processes for the Presentation of Self 107
12. Online Search Results 108
13. Privacy Settings 109
14. Untagging SNS Posts 110
15. Self-Editing and Censorship 111
16. New SNS Features 112

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

Use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) continues to increase every year with 90% of young adults, who are between 18 and 29 years of age, having an account on a SNS (Perrin, 2015). The most popular sites include Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Twitter, and Instagram. Individuals use SNS for the ability to establish social connections (Ahn & Shin, 2013). Through the connections, interpersonal relationships can be established and maintained (Grieve, Indian, Witteveen, Anne Tolan, & Marrington, 2013). While the use of SNS for social identity purposes has previously been explored, there has been limited research on how users manage their privacy and represent their professional identity to others on SNS (Bareket-Bojmel, Moran, & Shahar, 2016). Yang (2015) defined online reputation management (ORM) as the actions of creating, improving, and maintaining one's impression to others by controlling what information can be accessed, including pictures, textual information, and videos. With hiring professionals making career-impacting decisions based on information from SNS, it is important to understand how users are managing their privacy on SNS and their online reputations to others (Bohnert & Ross, 2010; Chiang & Suen, 2015; Drake, Hall, Breton, & Posey, 2017; Frampton & Child, 2013; Hammer, 2014; Hartzog & Stutzman, 2013; Koohikamali, Peak, & Prybutok, 2017; Ward & Yates, 2013; Williams, 2006; Yang, 2015; Yang, 2016).

When using SNS, decisions must be made on the identity or identities presented, how users are representing themselves to others, and how they choose to manage their

online reputation on SNS. As the size of one's social network increases, their risk also increases with becoming more vulnerable to their privacy being compromised due to difficulty with managing communications to different target audiences (Buglass, Binder, Betts, & Underwood, 2016). With the regulation of privacy being critical to online safety, it is essential to understand the perception of users in how effective they feel they are with regulating access to their information on SNS (Bartsch & Boruch, 2016). The need to manage online reputation, through the use of privacy settings on SNS, needs to be understood as ineffective interfaces or continually changing privacy settings can discourage a user's use of SNS, as it can create a feeling of overload or being difficult to manage and use (Lee, Son, & Kim, 2016).

Goffman (1959) described the presentation of self in that the presentation is dependent upon the audience that is present. An analogy would be that actors would present themselves in one manner if they were on stage for an audience, in comparison with a different presentation that could occur if the actors were backstage by themselves. Goffman's sense of presentation brings forth the notion that presenters may choose to present themselves differently based upon the intended audiences and the context of the communications that are planned and that occur.

Walther (2007) expanded upon Goffman's (1959) sense of identity and described the unique qualities of the impacts on computer-mediated communications (CMC) upon impression management and formation. CMC have the ability to foster a wider range of impressions and more favorable relations, when compared to physical face-to-face communications. For the presentation of self, CMC have the ability for fostering and communicating presentations of self that were more selective; senders could focus on

what they would like to present, rather than on information that they did not want to present.

Through the use of SNS, users must form the identity they wish to present and how they represent themselves to targeted audiences. This may include users exploring new facets of their own identities, where they may not feel comfortable with exploring off line (Bodroža & Jovanović, 2016). In the creation of an online identity, Jung, Song, and Vorderer (2012) found that the formation of identity was iterative in the way blog authors choose to read what their audience thought to determine if the authors' intended impressions were found and validated. Through comparison with comments, the constructed identities could be revised to foster increased connectivity with their audiences. Ward and Yates (2013) emphasized the importance in understanding the value of how the online personal and professional identity of students can provide impressions to others. The authors stressed that students need to know their strengths and weaknesses, so that they can develop the needed skills to promote and differentiate themselves from others online.

Findings from previous research found that when one is transparent with their offline identity that there can be an increased likelihood for the building of an online reputation, with others being able to better evaluate source credibility and accuracy of information (Chorley, Colombo, Allen, & Whitaker, 2015; Johnson, & Kaye, 2015; Stuart et al., 2012). However, there is tension with revealing one's true self on the Internet and SNS. Users of SNS can be frustrated and upset when they are not able to present their true identity and must censor themselves for protection (Gulotta et al., 2012). It is essential for one's well being to be able to express one's true self (Tosun,

2012), and SNS may fail to serve their users when they are not able to provide the social support expected by their users (Oh, Ozkaya, & LaRose, 2014). A study from Marriott and Buchanan (2014) asserted that online actions that are not anonymous may prevent the expression of one's true self on the Internet, and that the concept of allowing one to present their true self on SNS is outdated. Further, Kang, Brown, and Kiesler (2013) recognized that the use of pseudonyms might no longer permit true anonymity online. While online environments of SNS may permit for the expression of one's true self, Seidman (2014) stressed that the consequences of expressing true self on Facebook and SNS needs to be further understood.

Although users of SNS want to leverage privacy controls on SNS to help manage their online reputations, users can experience difficulty with using and managing privacy settings, and regulating data that they feel they cannot control (Lang & Barton, 2015). The lack of user functionality or having a user-friendly way to navigate privacy controls can impact the frustration of managing one's online reputation, so that the user may modify the way they intend to use a SNS (Fodor & Brem, 2015). Perceived negative reputation impacts can occur from the potential use and dissemination of personal information viewed as private, including uses of personal data by third parties (Shibchurn & Yan, 2015).

On SNS, multiple profiles can be used so that an individual, through the use of at least two or more identities on a single site, can manage social contexts differently, depending on the group context. boyd (2007) referred to the concept as a "mirror network" where privacy could be leveraged through one profile that was created for the purpose of being used in a general and widely accepted manner, while another separate

profile could mirror the other but be used for a selective and alternative audience. The application through managing identity to the different audiences is known as multiple profile management (MPM) and the process for managing multiple identities is known as boundary regulation (Stutzman & Hartzog, 2012). Through the use of MPM and the boundary regulation process, individuals must determine their desired results for managing their online reputation through regulating disclosures and with their process for achieving privacy to groups based upon the subject matter and audience.

Stutzman and Hartzog (2012) explored boundary regulation to understand why and how working professionals regulate boundaries to their information on social networking sites (SNS) through the use of MPM. The authors identified four expanded motivations for use of MPM that included privacy, identity, utility and propriety. Processes for the regulation of MPM ranged from pseudonymity, where separate identities are used with different names that do not imply connections, to transparent separation, where multiple identities are connected in a transparent manner. Participants emphasized the need to selectively manage group contexts through the regulation of access by different groups to regulate the boundaries between their social and professional lives. Repercussions of voicing of their own opinions were identified as concerns on the use of their social identity on future employment opportunities and the impact on their current employment. While Badrul, Williams, and Lunqvist (2015) found that working professionals regulate boundaries to their social and professional identities, they stressed that further research was required to obtain a deeper understanding in how context is managed.

SNS can provide current or future employers with information that can be used to form impressions on current or potential employees. Pike, Bateman, and Butler (2013) engaged professionals responsible for hiring employees to analyze their perceptions with information obtained through SNS and what the potential uses may be for that information during the hiring process. The authors found that the role of SNS needs to be understood, as there are tensions with interpreting the use of the information. With resumes and materials being submitted to employers, the applicant chooses what to present as their professional identity to the potential employer. Through the use of information from personal social identity, there is information that applicants may not want employers to have as it is considered private, inaccurate, and not relevant.

MPM, a strategy and method for users to manage their privacy on SNS, is used to regulate group boundaries on SNS with personal and professional identities. While little research has been done to show motivations and experiences with adults using MPM, there is limited research to show the lived experiences of young adults. With young adults transitioning into the workforce, SNS have the opportunity to impact current and future employment opportunities.

This study expanded upon the work of Stutzman and Hartzog (2012) to create a better understanding of the lived experiences of young adults, with the authors acknowledging that the use of MPM may vary depending upon the user's stage in life. Hammer (2014) found that users of SNS need to be diligent in their ongoing pursuit to regulate their privacy settings, monitor the information that other users post on individuals' profiles, and assess the potential impacts on employment opportunities. Further, previous findings found that 69% of hiring professionals have made a decision to

disqualify an applicant based upon information obtained through a SNS (Black & Johnsons, 2012). With the use of privacy settings on SNS impacting employment and employment opportunities, concern exists about if and how users are employing MPM functionality and, if users are employing MPM, why they are not effectively managing their privacy (Shin & Kang, 2016).

With SNS users experiencing satisfaction with their lives through interacting with others in an addictive manner on SNS, difficulty exists with users acknowledging that negative consequences can also occur through those interactions (Blachino, Przepiorka, Balarkier, & Boruch, 2016). In life transitions, such as graduating from college, a new job, or a change of relationship status, users of SNS have a lower inclination to share information on SNS from before the transition due to the old information not being considered relevant to the new context (Ayalon & Toch, 2013). De Wolf, Willaert, and Pierson (2014) found that adults had a higher likelihood of using individual privacy management strategies due to their privacy concerns with others using their information from SNS for purposes that they did not intend. However, Farnham and Churchill (2011) found that although users want to be able to manage their privacy and limit their online information to others, privacy settings are not typically used as they are perceived as complex. With young adults using a wide variety of functions on SNS, there is a need to further understand the benefits and disadvantages with using SNS to achieve goals associated with navigating personal and professional objectives and contexts (Keating, Hendy, & Cain, 2016).

Problem Statement and Goal

When using SNS, users must make decisions as to how the functions of conversations, identity, groups, presence, relationships, and reputation will be used and how to share information with others (Zolkepli & Kamarulzaman, 2015). If privacy settings are found to be difficult to use and not actively used or managed to regulate data to others, users can be vulnerable with their data being accessed and used by others without their knowledge (Litt, 2013). With users of SNS sharing more information than they have in the past, researchers are concerned with young adults, with how they are providing personal information to others, and the impacts on their online reputation (Gool, Ouytsel, Ponnet, & Walrave, 2015).

On SNS, challenges exist for regulating boundaries to information that may be personal and professional in nature. boyd (2014) described this as “content on SNS is public by default and private through effort”. This study built upon previous work done by Stutzman and Hartzog (2012) that found MPM used for the regulation of boundaries on SNS to overcome challenges with limited or difficult to use privacy settings, and to separate personal and professional online identities. The addressable problem of this study was to create a deeper understanding of SNS users’ motives and processes for regulating boundaries in leveraging MPM functionality on SNS. Limited research had been done involving young adults and how they manage their online reputations, and more research was needed to further add to the body of knowledge on online reputation management (Yang, 2015). The work of Stutzman and Hartzog (2012) was extended to gain a further understanding on exploring the lived experiences of young adults related to MPM and boundary regulation on SNS. Yang’s (2015) conceptual model of long-term

motivation for online reputation provided a framework for extending research questions related to motivations that include the perceived importance of online reputation, naivety, ease of use, and convenience.

The goal of this study was to obtain an understanding of the lived experiences of young adults, who are between the ages of 18 and 23, with how they made sense of using MPM on SNS, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, to manage their online reputation through regulating boundaries to their personal and professional identities online. Previous research from Stutzman and Hartzog (2012) focused on adults who have been established in their careers for a period of time, rather than on younger adults who are at a formative time in their lives and in the early stages of their careers. The need for this work had been found in previous research that has shown the impacts of unregulated boundaries to information obtained through SNS by human resource personnel and hiring managers on disqualifying job candidates (Black & Johnson, 2012; Bohnert & Ross, 2010; Farnham & Churchill, 2011; Hammer, 2014).

There was an opportunity to further understand how young adults are representing themselves and regulating boundaries online. Moekotte, Brand-Gruwel, Ritzen, and Simons (2015) studied how youth that were on the cusp of dropping out of school did not view online resources, including SNS, as beneficial. In response to the perceptions of the youth, the authors advocated that further research was required to understand how online representations of identity could improve one's economic position. When SNS are viewed primarily for entertainment and social purposes, there may be an opportunity to engage younger audiences with the identities they project and expect on SNS (Mou, Miller, & Fu, 2015). However, with multiple contexts for engaging online, including

social and professional contexts, there is a need to understand the context of the lived experiences of how individuals navigate their professional and social identities online (Lim, Nicholson, Yang, & Kim, 2015). Positive use of professional identity on SNS can be beneficial to employees as they can augment their contact, interaction, and building of professional relationships with those in their field of work or within their own work organization (Zoonen, Verhoeven, & Vliegenthart, 2016).

Research Question

The central research question of the study was: How do young adults describe their experiences with using MPM on SNS to regulate the boundaries between their personal and professional identities online? These experiences may include thematic contexts of online identity, privacy, employers' use of SNS, and online reputation management. With online identities serving as a representation and extension of SNS users' offline identities and behavior (Behm-Morawitz, 2013; Marriott & Buchanan, 2014), SNS users must assess the risk and trust of social media platforms as they evaluate the use of SNS for participating in virtual communities (Wang, Min, & Han, 2016). While information obtained by employers through SNS can have negative impacts on current and future employment opportunities (Bohnert & Ross, 2010; Hammer, 2014; Ward & Yates, 2013), positively managing online reputation on SNS can also benefit users of SNS with personal and career goals (Khedher, 2014). The identified themes helped with the creation of questions in the interview schedule in a manner that allowed the participants to draw out their own themes.

The research question was measured through coding to identify and analyze themes that emerge and then grouped by themes in a broader sense that is consistent with

an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach (Smith, Flower, & Larkin, 2009, pp. 92-100). The primary benefit of using IPA was to leverage and re-examine the grounded theory approach taken by Stutzman and Hartzog (2012) and Yang (2015) to determine if further insight could be yielded on the topics using MPM for boundary regulation to manage online reputation on SNS. Due to limitations with SNS user interface functionality, there was a need for understanding how to better manage privacy online to permit users to present themselves while also being able to regulate access to content (Dhir, Kaur, Lonka, & Nieminen, 2016).

Stance of the Researcher

SNS present challenges for young adults with how they should represent themselves to diverse audiences including family, different social groups of friends, co-workers, and others (Stutzman, Gross, & Acquisti, 2012). Potential impacts from using SNS can affect obtaining a job, maintaining employment, enrolling in college, and creating and maintaining social relationships. The ability for users to be able to prevent reputation damage when using the Internet is important and required more research (Woodruff, 2014). An opportunity for research existed through learning about the experiences of young adults using SNS. Through the personal experiences of the researcher with being involved with the hiring process and supervision of young adults, a need was demonstrated to understand how young adults are representing themselves on SNS, through the use of MPM, to current and potential employers.

A specific experience that took place several years ago involved the use of Facebook by a member of a student media organization on a college campus, where the researcher served as an advisor. A situation arose where a member voiced criticism, using

vulgar language, toward another member and the organization on a Facebook group for the organization. The students on the executive board had to analyze what had happened and determine what would be an appropriate response. Tensions existed between the thought that Facebook was a place for expressions that were personal and private in nature, and the thought that SNS was a form of media that served as an official mechanism for public communication. The group decided that as the communication took place on a public page for a production of the organization, that it was in their authority to suspend the member. Although the decision was made, debate continued amongst those involved in the decision on the role of communication on SNS and how repercussions from those actions could occur. Many members decided to use different accounts to separate their public identities from their own private identities.

Relevance and Significance

With hiring professionals using information obtained through SNS to disqualify candidates and to evaluate current employees, the question of how users regulate boundaries between themselves and audiences on SNS is significant (Brown & Vaughn, 2011). Individuals and groups that are affected include all of those that use SNS and are seeking employment or are currently employed. With the number of users of SNS increasing every year (Duggan & Smith, 2013), the impact grew larger with the potential for more and more users to be affected from the use of information obtained through SNS by those involved with the hiring process.

Through studying the problem, more was learned through the lived experiences of the participants, which addressed a much-needed area in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) research for better understanding how management of reputation takes place on the

Internet (Woodruff, 2014). Through this study, more became known as to the practices and processes within the context of the participants' lived experiences with the major life transition of being in the early stages of pursuing a career. Specific areas of knowledge will assist those seeking new and continued employment and with understanding processes, including functionality and usability of the functionality, that take place through the use of MPM on SNS.

Altman's (1975) boundary regulation theory has been applied by researchers to better understand the regulation of boundaries in communication that takes place over the Internet (Litt, 2013; Stutzman & Hartzog, 2012; Taddicken, 2014). Altman's process is dynamic for the "selective control of access to the self" depending on the groups and communication received for achieving an optimized regulation of boundaries. While boundary regulation has been researched, further work was needed to better understand the application by young adults with a variety of SNS.

There was a lack of research on group privacy management on SNS and how individuals manage privacy (Bergström, 2015; De Wolf et al., 2014; Mayer, Schuler, & Jones 2012). Understanding how young adults experience and make sense of using MPM on SNS to regulate the boundaries between their personal and professional identities online will help with creating a deeper understanding of the experiences for audiences that includes other young adults, and older adults, including those in the capacity of hiring professionals. Through research on the practice of MPM, the opportunity to add new knowledge on the topic existed through extending previous work done by Stutzman and Hartzog (2012) through an IPA approach.

Barriers and Issues

A challenge was obtaining participants that met the defined list of criteria. The participants needed to fulfill a list of criteria that built on previous work to qualify them to participate in the study. The criteria to participate in the study included:

- 1) The participants must have used MPM on a SNS, with the use of more than one identity on at least a single SNS (Stutzman & Hartzog, 2012). As Facebook's Community Standards do not permit the maintaining of multiple personal accounts, this may have limited participants that identify as using MPM with Facebook.
- 2) Participants needed to remember when and why they began using MPM (Stutzman & Hartzog, 2012) to better provide details, context, and understanding of their lived experiences.
- 3) The participants needed to represent young adults between the ages of 18 and 23 years of age that are early in their careers, or just starting to seek employment. With various motivations for online reputation management, further understanding young adults can extend the limited research that is available (Yang, 2015).

To address the challenges of recruiting participants, permission from the Institutional Review Board at the State University of New York at Fredonia was obtained to recruit from a list of students that fulfill the defined age criteria. An email message was sent to the prospective list to recruit participants for the study.

Interview questions were used to understand the lived experiences of the participants in using MPM on SNS. To understand key experiences from the participants, questions were focused on participants' exploring their experiences and to aid with data analysis to derive commonalities between the experiences of the

participants. Through the review of existing studies, none could be found that utilize IPA as a methodology. Rather, previous grounded theory work from Stutzman and Hartzog (2012), and Yang (2015) served as the basis for the design of an IPA study.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The study relied on the assumption that young adults are using MPM on SNS by choosing to create multiple profiles to regulate boundaries between their personal and professional identities online. Young adults can have concerns on their online identities being viewed by different audiences (Yang, 2015). The concerns provided motivation for young adults to use MPM as a boundary regulation strategy, similar to older adults (Stutzman & Hartzog, 2012). In addition to having participants who meet the criteria to participate in the study, the assumption was that participants would be able to discuss their lived experiences with MPM on SNS in an open manner with the researcher.

IPA is a qualitative research method that relies on a purposeful sample and how the participants understand a specific phenomenon through their own lived experience (Smith, et al., 2009, pp. 49-51). The number of participants for the study is 11 participants. While a purposeful small sample could be viewed as limiting, the approach was utilized to enable an in-depth collection of data from each participant on their lived experiences. With the study targeting young adults, who are 18-23 years of age, the results of the study are limited in generalizability for adults. Further limitations in generalizability also exist in the purposeful sampling method in order to obtain participants who meet selection criteria that include those already using MPM on SNS. The value of the study was transferability, where the results of the research can be transferred within a similar context for other young adults that are using SNS.

Definition of Terms

The terms and definitions below are used in the study:

Boundary Regulation: a framework developed by Altman (1975) for privacy regulation through a dynamic process that is bi-directional and strives for continual optimization for individuals to achieve their desired goals for both disclosure and privacy.

Multiple Profile Management (MPM): A practice for the regulation of boundaries, where users of SNS create and use multiple accounts on a SNS and separate the identities that they disclose publicly and privately (Stutzman & Hartzog, 2012).

Online Identity: is defined by the use and the interactions that take place by both the originator of content that forms impressions and the receivers that interprets the information presented through the identity and through communications that may take place (Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2013).

Professional Identity: are the qualities, such as experiences and beliefs, related to professional development and growth toward or in maintaining a decided upon career path (Ward & Yates, 2013).

Social Identity: Within the context of social networking sites, social identity is defined as the shared common interests that individuals may identify with that facilitate connections and communications in a virtual community (Arteaga Sánchez, Cortijo, & Javed, 2014).

Social Networking Sites (SNS): SNS are websites that permit users to create profiles and share connections and communications with individuals and groups with those that they share interest and commonalities, such as colleagues, family members, and friends (boyd & Ellison, 2008). Examples of SNS include Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

Summary

Chapter 1 presented information on how users of SNS leverage MPM functionality in managing their online reputations. The research problem, goal, and research question were described. Through this study, the intention was to better understand how young adults that are 18-23 years of age are motivated using MPM with employment and employment opportunities, and how they process boundary regulation through the use of MPM on SNS. Through doing so, the results of the study benefit in understanding how users of SNS are presenting their social and professional identities and managing their online reputations.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

This chapter presents a brief review of literature to provide better context for the current understanding of the subject matter for this study. Through reviewing the literature on the topics of how are young adults motivated to use MPM and how do young adults process boundary regulation through MPM on SNS, research emerged related to the themes of online identity, privacy, employers' use of SNS, and online reputation management. This chapter reviews the themes by topic.

Online Identity

SNS have typically been used to maintain existing offline relationships with the most common uses for entertainment, organizing social functions, and for sharing photos (Michikyan, Subrahmanyam, & Dennis, 2014; Tosun, 2012). While little research has been done on the topic of self-presentation on SNS (Michikyan et al., 2014), research has shown that the online identity of a user is connected with their offline identity and behavior (Behm-Morawitz, 2013; Marriott & Buchanan, 2014). However, people may represent themselves differently from their offline selves when they are participating online as an individual in a virtual community (Suh, 2013; Turkle, 1995). Areas related to online identity will be explored related to identity creation, young adults and identity transitions, the impact of environment on identity, and tensions with revealing the true self in online environments.

Goffman's (1959) thought of presentation brings forth the notion that presenters must choose how to present themselves based upon their audience, while the receiver(s) then is able to interpret the actions and communication from the presenter. Gulotta, Faste, and Mankoff (2012) suggested the sense of identity not being constructed in a vacuum, but in the context of others. They stated that online identity is not exclusively constructed by an individual, but rather through the individual's interactions with others in virtual communities. Users of SNS must make intentional decisions in how they create and edit information to represent themselves to others (Gentile, Twenge, Freeman, & Campbell, 2012). Dennen (2010), in her work with bloggers, found that users would reposition their online identities based upon the communications and perceived expectations from the intended audiences. Expectations for communication within groups establish norms (Walther, 2007) that are applied to validate both communications and online identities on SNS (Jung et al., 2012).

How the environment of a SNS is structured can impact the behavior of the participants not just by the norms of the group(s), but the social situations that affect the perception and definition of online identity (Sohn, 2014). McCreery, Krach, Schrader, and Boone (2012) identified that online projections of self are done with the knowledge of constraints, goals, and the online environment, of which online projections of self may differ with different online environments. While different projections of self may be done in different online environments, the connection with the offline identity of the user of SNS cannot be detached and influences their online identity (McCreery et al., 2012; Karakayali & Kilic, 2013). In the context that the line between our offline and online identities are becoming more blurred, Gulotta et al. (2012) recommended that future work

be done to understand how contemporary online identities are expressed and curated within implications that are practical and ethical.

Facebook allows for the development and maintenance of relationships (Grieve et al., 2013) and young adults are the primary population that uses Facebook to promote themselves to others (Panek, Nardis, & Konrath, 2013). Relationships can be quickly developed and escalated through Facebook with recent and frequent communications that use a variety of media, including the tagging of photos and private messages (Sosik & Bazarova, 2014). Scott's (2014) study on perceived popularity on Facebook indicated that those with a higher number of friends, photos, and wall activity from others can be perceived as more attractive and approachable, which contributes to impression formation and management on SNS (Scott, 2014).

While Facebook is used to maintain existing relationships and social connections, Twitter permits connections from the public to be established where an existing relationship does not exist (Panek et al., 2013). If experts are following a user on Twitter, it can help with the perception of the user and their credibility (Westerman, Spence, & Van Der Heide, 2012). Affordances of Twitter include the ability for users to have multiple accounts that can be created with a specific audience in mind. Coursaris, Van Osch, Sung, and Yun (2013) discovered that while adoption and usage of Twitter was initially driven by the information available, relaxation, and social interaction, the motivation for use then shifted to being primarily work-related. The transition caused users who adopted the platform more for social identity interactions to become inactive and even discontinue their use if they did not adapt their usage with their professional identity. To further understand how use of SNS may be discontinued, in-depth

experiences of how a user chooses to adopt and discontinue an identity or service online needs to be obtained in regard to key events, motivations, and uses that would discourage and encourage use (Coursaris et al., 2013).

Gender and personality can be used to predict SNS use. Orchard, Fullwood, Galbraith, and Morris (2014) found that females use SNS more for creating and maintaining social connections, where males use SNS more for their professional identity and for projecting more idealized versions of themselves. Different personalities can interact with SNS in unique ways with extroverts requiring social connections and the ability to have freedom to express themselves, while introverts may prefer to be anonymous with little information available on them publicly available to others (Orchard et al., 2014).

Young adults can embrace what they are comfortable with sharing and what content is perceived as relevant to others. Facebook's timeline feature suggests that more of an emphasis is being placed on allowing others access to view one's past content, similar to a diary (Orchard et al., 2014). However, young adults view older SNS content as less relevant as it gets older, implicitly private, and have expectations that it will not be accessed, shared, or viewed (Ayalon & Toch, 2013; Zhao, Salehi, Naranjit, Alwaalan, Voida, & Costley, 2013). Michikyan et al. (2014) emphasized how young adults manage their impressions on SNS strategically to others by projecting idealized identities and not their true selves, as they are exploring their own online behaviors and identities. Young adults can view SNS as a way to promote themselves and show off to others (Panek et al., 2013).

Privacy

Karakayali and Kilic (2013) found that an increased sense of network consciousness is being formed within contemporary society, with people becoming more aware of networks, social connections, and the risks associated. With the Internet being public, users may have a sense that posting information is not safe as unintended audiences may have access to their information (Gulota et al., 2012). The transparency of social information presents opportunities for collaborating through the sharing of information, but there are larger implications with who has access to the information (Stuart, Dabbish, Kiesler, Kinnaird, & Kang, 2012). Although SNS users are concerned with the impact of content they post, they proceed with posting content that is more short-term focused than focused on the long-term impacts (Hallam & Zanella, 2017).

People are becoming more conscious and selective on the information that they present about themselves for their online identities on Facebook (Scott, 2014). Concerns with privacy can have an impact on whether individuals use SNS, such as Facebook (Ljepava, Orr, Locke, & Ross, 2013). Those who want to limit information on SNS have concerns on how their information could be viewed by different and unintended audiences (Farnham & Churchill, 2011). Privacy related concerns exist with the use of SNS as information and contexts between personal and professional lives overlap (Frampton & Child, 2013).

One of the top reasons for individuals to not use SNS is due to privacy concerns. To address this, SNS providers must develop and maintain policies similar to e-commerce providers to build trust with users by assuring that providers detail their policies related to the areas of access, choice, enforcement, notice, and security (Wu,

Huang, Yen, & Popova, 2014). If the primary purposes of SNS are to facilitate sharing of content and communication amongst users, SNS must build trust with users by having privacy settings that can effectively limit content from being viewed by unintended audiences (Scott, 2014). Otherwise, users may share less content and communicate less. SNS need to include instructions, documentation and tutorials for managing one's online identity to others, as users' levels of digital literacy and understanding of social networks currently guides the process (Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2013). When effective profile visibility controls are in place to limit access to information including birth date, email address, gender, home address, and profile picture, and users of SNS are knowledgeable of the controls, the users are more likely to share information (Staddon, Huffaker, Brown, & Sedley, 2012). When users feel that privacy concerns are not being addressed on SNS, they may consider discontinuing the use of SNS (Bright, Kleiser, & Grau, 2015).

The design of SNS should incorporate needs from users to help meet their expectations for identity curation with including the ability for old content to be automatically archived over time, so the content becomes personal, private, and inaccessible to others (Zhao et al., 2013). With identity impressions being influenced by information from others it makes it important to learn more about the process of identity curation (Westerman et al., 2012). Additional research is needed to determine characteristics and features of SNS that would encourage or prevent users from disclosing information (Child, Haridakis, & Petronio, 2012). Default privacy settings on SNS should be based on the principle of least privilege to permit the preservation of privacy, rather than settings fostering less privacy by default (Watson, Lipford, & Bessmer, 2015).

Future designs that embrace MPM on SNS will offer needed features for users by being able to manage group context and sharing of information (Farnham & Churchill, 2011).

Boundary Regulation and MPM

Stutzman and Hartzog (2012) acknowledged challenges with group communication management in segmenting communications with relevant and intended group context when using SNS. Segmentation of communications through boundary regulation and use of MPM can be motivated by more than just privacy. Other motives included that of identity, utility, and propriety (see Table 1). Privacy was focused on the ability to choose what disclosures and information others are able to view, so that negative impacts from certain disclosures would not impact a career in a negative manner. Identity references identity management and being able to present certain aspects of identity to targeted audiences, so that impressions could be formed from specified audiences. Utility is explained through the ability to enhance and regulate disclosure that is dependent on the proper context of circumstance, so that relevancy can take place with the receiver. Propriety is classified as boundaries that fit within the cultural customs of what may be considered normal.

Table 1

Motivations for MPM

Motive	Outcome
Identity	Presenting different facets of one's identity through self-presentation on SNS to targeted audiences so that they receive specific intended impressions.
Privacy	Being able to select and limit what content and information on SNS is available to others to minimize potential negative perceptions.
Propriety	Ensuring that communications that take place adhere to what is considered normal to a group in relation to the culture, customs, and usage.
Utility	Providing relevancy so that disclosures adhere to appropriate circumstances with the receivers of information.

With wanting to present different identities to different audiences on SNS, and the privacy control mechanisms on SNS being complex and difficult to use, users select MPM as a strategy to manage access to their information (Dimicco & Millen, 2007). The use of multiple profiles allows for the separation of offline and online identities with the primary purpose of managing non-professional and professional presentations to different audiences (Park, Campbell, & Kwak, 2012). During life transitions, MPM is used on SNS when behavior and norms may not adhere to those of others or when identities are viewed as being incompatible to different groups (Farnham & Churchill, 2011). This can include where family and social circles contexts overlap, but there is tension with the work circle overlapping the family and social contexts. An example can be where a SNS user is starting their career and is going through a difficult time at work with a new supervisor and is seeking emotional support through family and friends. Communications with work colleagues on SNS on the topic could create further tension in the work environment and create unintended results that negatively impact their careers.

With Michikyan et al. (2014) identifying future research for examining online presentations of identity for the real self, the ideal self, and the false self, the opportunity exists to understand how the ideal self can influence online reputation. Further, Fox and Moreland (2015) recommend that privacy practices need to be analyzed on SNS for social and professional purposes. The work of Michikyan et al. (2014) and Moreland (2015) reinforce the need to understand how privacy and different online presentations of identity impact the regulation of boundaries between users' personal and professional identities online. DeGroot and Vik (2017) also emphasize the need for further

understanding how SNS users perceive the process for regulating privacy with content on SNS and how users respond and manage breaches to their privacy.

Altman's (1975) boundary regulation theory is described as a process that is dynamic in that strategies and actions related to disclosures and maintaining privacy are adjusted in a continuous manner based upon bi-directional communications that take place between the sender and the receiver. Through interactions that generate feedback or with the perception of feedback, the response and adjustments can be made. In situations where passive observation takes place, the sender will have to anticipate perceived feedback, which may be the case with hiring professionals using SNS as a way to gather background information on job applicants.

Employers Use of Social Networking Sites

For the study, it is important to understand the impact that employers' use of information obtained through SNS may have on young adults' ability to gain employment. Information obtained through SNS can negatively impact the potential for job candidates to be hired due to concerns from hiring professionals (Bohnert & Ross, 2010; Hammer, 2014). Even after employees are hired, they must decide on their privacy management strategies as they become connected to work colleagues through SNS (Frampton & Child, 2013). Profiles that are viewed as unprofessional can negatively impact the impression provided to current and potential employers (Ward & Yates, 2013).

Pike et al. (2013) conducted a study with hiring professionals that revealed interest and potential in the use of information obtained through SNS during the hiring process. Passive observation, in which information could be collected through SNS, was

acknowledged as being a source for further information on job candidates, beyond what was supplied by the candidates' resumes. Information collected through passive observation is done in a manner where job candidates are not aware that information is being collected or they are being observed. The information can be collected by a hiring professional searching for information on SNS and without the candidate aware of what is being done. With the cost being significant to recruit, train, and retain employees, information from SNS could be considered a good investment for an organization. The return on the investment for an organization would be in reducing overall long term costs due to less frequent hiring and need for training, and potentially an increase in quality for fellow employees in the work place.

With hiring professionals using information obtained through passive observation, tensions exist with the perception of the information quality in the contexts of being accessible, contextually relevant, and credible (Pike et al., 2013). Scott (2014) noted the difficulty in using information obtained through SNS is that hiring professionals make decisions to disqualify candidates largely based on assumptions, where only a relative small amount of information is publicly accessible, and the information obtained may not be reliable in representing a candidate. Holgersson (2015) further cautioned on the quality of information obtained online in that output representations can be manipulated and misleading, as there can be more value in understanding the contextual relevancy of the source of the data in how it is generated, registered, and created for others to view in order to understand the quality of the information. Drake, Hall, Breton, and Posey (2017) identified that in certain instances employers may even ask applicants for their SNS usernames and passwords as part of the screening process.

In current or future places of employment, young adults may encounter enterprise SNS (ESNS) that are run and used for internal business purposes, such as communications, collaborations, and other business functions that were previously done by companies' intranets. An example of an ESNS is Yammer that was acquired by Microsoft for inclusion in their Office 365 development area. Yammer provides a similar user interface to Facebook to provide an organization with collaboration software that can be used internal to departments, groups, or across an organization. Choudhury and Counts (2013), researchers at Microsoft, studied emotional expression in a microblogging tool used for internal communications to determine when intervention may be required to address and identify periods of productivity that can be classified as having a high or low productivity. Through analyzing textual communications, and using a psycholinguistic lexicon, emotions were analyzed through classification of positive affect or negative affect and results of the analysis were broken down by the role of the employee within the organization, geographic location, and the times of the day. Future work was noted that included the potential for exploration of drilling down further than an aggregated collection of expression, where individual assessments for employees could be explored.

With ESNS becoming more common in the work place and with emotional analysis of ESNS occurring, employees must be mindful of the impressions that their communications provides to their employers. Hammer (2014) emphasized the need to evaluate the information that users post about themselves and the information others post about them in order to understand the impressions that can be provided to others. Parrish and Hammer (2014) further identified that poorly written communications on SNS may impact the desirability of employees in a negative manner and further research is needed.

Hartzog and Stutzman (2013) cited several cases where employees or prospective employees have been impacted by the use of SNS on their employment or potential employment. A case is made for online obscurity and how privacy laws need to address information obtained through the use of SNS and the Internet. A central challenge to online obscurity is that there must be a comprehensive definition agreed upon to help facilitate further understanding and actions. Four key areas are identified for obscurity that include clarity, identification, search visibility, and unprotected access. The action suggested is that obscurity is analyzed within the four key areas to define obscurity and then to initiate further discussion to help refine what obscurity means and how it can be further incorporated to protect online disclosures.

Recent research continues to support the need to further understand how young adults are regulating boundaries between their personal and professional identities online (Yang, 2015). Ouiridi, Segers, Ouiridi, and Pais (2015) stressed that not having a virtual identity may no longer be an option, as the lack of an identity has less presence and may seem suspicious to potential employers. Rather, those seeking employment must be careful with content posted on SNS and may need to prioritize their professional identity over their social identity. Chiang and Suen (2015) further acknowledge the difficulty with balancing personal and professional identities in that the use of LinkedIn can provide a virtual resume with a professional identity, while an inconsistent perceived social identity could detract from a professional identity. However, without a clear understanding of the impact on using SNS to build a professional identity, young adults will struggle with their use of SNS with obtaining and maintaining employment (Drouin, O'Connor, Schmidt, & Miller, 2015).

Online Reputation Management

Online self-presentations permit users to have a higher level of control over their presentation to others and can yield a greater sense of intimacy with audiences (Walther, 2007). If users are able to provide better impressions of their identity through the Internet, the influence will impact their real life activities, in areas that include the creation of relationships (Tosun, 2012). On SNS, affordances and opportunities exist for connecting and building professional relationships, creating and managing a positive professional reputation, and for managing impressions to help further careers (Majchrzak, Faraj, Kane, & Azad, 2013). Building social capital is not about increasing the numbers of friends or followers, but rather promoting oneself effectively and with a focused impact to others through frequent communications (Luarn, Yang, & Chiu, 2014).

When using Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, young adults need to understand the significance of creating a strategy to communicate and market their online identities (Ward & Yates, 2013). Managing a reputation online through SNS can be beneficial in letting an audience know unique qualities about an individual that make them stand out, how needs of others can be fulfilled, and the results can yield better relationships, prestige, and financial gains (Khedher, 2014). Zhao et al. (2013) address the topic of the self-presentation of impression forming information and how traditionally it has focused upon addressing an immediate situation, rather than considering the long-term impact from past-presentations.

In managing online reputations, users of SNS must decide on how to communicate their identity to others. When using multiple accounts for profiles, boyd (2002) emphasizes the need to have explicit boundaries between accounts and identities

to limit the identifiable information to others. Without having explicit boundaries, and with only using one's real name online, one's information and reputation will extend across public and private contexts without the ability to manage their reputation to specific audiences (boyd, 2002). In instances where online artists choose not use their real names online, and pseudonyms were used instead, Kang, Brown, and Kiesler (2013) concluded that the decision limited the ability for an artist to grow their reputation offline. The lack of a consistent online presence that is connected to an individual's real name can negatively impact their perceived credibility and reputation to others (Stuart, Dabbish, Kiesler, Kinnaird, & Kang, 2012).

Online reputation is managed not only by what an individual posts about oneself, but also through the content and comments that others provide online about an individual or entity. Concerns exist on the impact on negative comments posted online by employees on the perceived reputation on an employer's reputation (Aggarwal, Gopal, Sankaranarayanan, & Singh, 2012). In a similar fashion, an individual's online reputation is also impacted by the actions of their online friends that are viewed as an extension of an individual (Ouiridi et al., 2015). If rewards for endorsing a reputation are presented to others that can impact perceived reputation to others, the reputation and profile can be raised (Barreda, Bilgihan, Nusair, & Okumus, 2015). Building a positive online reputation amongst others and through peer recognition can positively impact career goals (Marlow, Dabbish, & Herbsleb, 2013) with connecting to others that have trusted and valued online reputations themselves (Young & Leonardi, 2012).

Motivations for managing online reputation can originate from several different areas that can include entertainment, trust, and concerns with privacy and security (Lee,

2015). Young adults that utilize SNS for entertainment purposes and can be motivated to manage their online reputation to help boost their self-esteem by representing themselves in a positive manner (Basak & Calisir, 2015). Those that are concerned with managing their online reputation have a higher tendency to use privacy settings to regulate their information to others (Ahn, Kwolek, & Bowman, 2015). While users of SNS may have clear intentions for building a positive online reputation (Khedher, 2014), others may be motivated to connect with others for the simple sharing of knowledge (Majchrzak, Faraj, Kane, & Azad, 2013).

With future workplaces expected to evaluate employees more each year on their online reputation, the need for employees to monitor themselves on SNS continues to grow (Ouiridi et al., 2015). The role of a person's friends and co-workers on SNS will continue to play an increasing role as to how employees and prospective employees can be evaluated through their online presence (Williams, 2006). Through the association of an individual with others, the need for building social capital with others in SNS to build, maintain, and manage online reputations become more important (Console & Juliette, 2009). Users of SNS will need to align the value they can contribute to a community or organization to help promote themselves and increase their visibility to others (Ward et al., 2013).

With prior research representing a variety of outcomes with social capital being obtained through SNS, further work is needed to understand the experience of young adults. Blight, Jagiello, and Ruppel (2015) found that existing relationships provided the most social capital, while also being able to benefit from relationships that were loosely connected on Facebook. The findings from Li, Chen, and Popiel (2015) were similar

with the recommendation that further work explore the building of social capital and managing reputation on Facebook on broader populations. Grieve and Kemp, (2015) further suggest that possibilities to manage reputations and build social capital exist on other SNS and that future research should consider using a qualitative approach to learn more on the experiences of others.

Use of Privacy Settings for Online Reputation Management

Literature highlighted the need for changes to occur in the design of privacy settings and systems on SNS to improve the ability for users to manage their online reputations (Gulotta et al., 2012; Kang et al., 2013; Litt, 2013). SNS users are multigenerational and represent a wide variety of experiences with using technology and SNS. With their varying experience levels with using SNS, it is important to take into consideration the different users, and their skillsets and experiences. Privacy settings and tools should be accessible and easy to learn to encourage their use, while being able to effectively minimize potential negative impacts on the users' online reputations (Litt, 2013).

The primary reason that SNS users become frustrated with privacy settings is that they are not confident in the ability of the settings to manage boundaries to their information from users and groups that they identify (Kang et al., 2013). Concerns arise from users about what others may think of their interests, citing past experiences in which they felt threatened by others, and feel that communications are only relevant to certain individuals or groups. In response to lacking confidence in SNS' privacy settings, users create another account on a site to ensure that their communications and information are limited to those that they wish to not have access (Kang et al., 2013).

SNS users need the ability and granular mechanisms to express their identity, curate their identity, and maintain connections within the norms of specific communities to effectively manage their online reputations (Gulotta et al., 2012). Users of SNS post pictures online wanting to advocate for their own rights and those of others, and seeking to protect others. To foster the sharing of pictures, Gulotta et al. (2012) stressed that three core principles need to be followed for the design of future systems for sharing pictures: 1) a commitment must exist for the use and promotion of sharing pictures, 2) settings and systems need to assist users with the ability to make informed decisions on the impacts of sharing of content, and 3) systems need to be created that are user-oriented to address their concerns with their online reputations. Yang (2016) stressed that as the importance grows for users to manage their online reputation, the features and tools that are available to them to effectively manage their online reputation must focus on usability and ease of use for users to confidently manage their content and their reputations.

Overview of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is a qualitative research method that focuses on how a purposeful sample understands their lived experiences in creating meaning on how a specific phenomenon occurs (Smith, et al., 2009, pp. 49-51). The method is grounded in psychology and social sciences and was popularized by the psychologist Jonathan A. Smith. The three main elements of IPA include phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography.

The focus of phenomenology is on understanding the essence of an experience through the lived experience of a group (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). Within IPA, the importance of the element of phenomenology is that meaning is developed through

making sense of interpreting the relationship of individuals to the world (Smith, et al., 2009, p. 21). Through the relationship, sense can be derived through the meaningful experiences that are common and through those that are unique to the individual.

Hermeneutics contribution to IPA is through the understanding of the method and purpose of interpretation. The hermeneutic circle provides a non-linear form of analysis that is iterative with analyzing relationships through examining and interpreting the part and the whole. Smith et al. (2009, p. 28) placed emphasis on the value of the interpretation in that to understand pieces, the whole must also be understood, and that also the whole must be understood to then understand the pieces. The use of double hermeneutics is another component of IPA in that the researchers must make sense of the topic and also make sense of how the participants are making sense of the topic. To help with mitigating the affect of preconceptions by the researcher in making sense, Smith et al. (2009, p. 25) stressed that bracketing of the researcher's preconceptions must be done in a cyclical manner.

The contribution of idiography in IPA is on the focus on the particular, through the commitment to detail in understanding specific phenomena from the view of a specified audience and context (Smith et al., 2009, p. 29). The value of idiography in IPA is that it stresses the need to focus on studying cases to identify and examine similarities and differences. Through the focus on the particular, the researcher can identify and interpret what is common, while also understanding what may be unique to specific participants.

Through the combination of the elements of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography, IPA offers a unique method for interpreting the lived experiences of

participants. With the study utilizing IPA to understand young adults use of SNS and MPM to manage their online reputation, the work is aligned with previous use of IPA to understand identity changes during significant life transitions (Smith et al., 2009, p. 163).

What is Known and What is Unknown

With the ability to impact hiring and career growth, it is important to recognize the importance of managing a reputation online. Managing online communications on SNS to audiences can have a positive impact in building relationships for professional purposes (Khedher, 2014; Majchrzak et al., 2013; Marlow et al., 2013; Walther, 2007). However, information obtained through SNS can also negatively impact the potential for job candidates to be hired due to concerns from hiring professionals (Bohnert & Ross, 2010; Drake et al., 2017; Hammer, 2014; Hartzog & Stutzman, 2013; Ward & Yates, 2013). Hartzog and Stutzman (2013) found any information found online can outweigh any information submitted on the resume of a candidate. For example, hiring professionals can disqualify potential job candidates by finding questionable postings and pictures found on SNS (Ward & Yates, 2013). Pictures found on SNS with candidates and alcohol has been found to be a flag for concern with immediately decreasing a candidate's desirability for employment (Hammer, 2014). Further, pictures with comments from a candidate's SNS friends can also serve to disqualify candidates through the comments not portraying the candidate in a positive manner (Bohnert & Ross, 2010).

Concerns continue to exist on SNS privacy settings not permitting the effective management of privacy with social and professional boundaries due to limited usability, difficult ease of use, and by default sharing information to a broad audience, rather than a limited audience (Bright, et al., 2015; Farnham & Churchill, 2011; Gulotta et al., 2012;

Litt, 2013; Stutzman & Hartzog, 2012; Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2013; Watson et al., 2015; Yang, 2016). To overcome privacy risks on SNS, available privacy settings must be enhanced in the future to limit access to personal information (Mansour, 2016) and be able to be used with minimal effort required by the end user (Watson et al., 2015).

Research continues to support the need to further understand how young adults are regulating boundaries between their personal and professional identities online (Chiang and Suen, 2015; Koohikamali, Peak, & Prybutok, 2017; Ouiridi, Segers, Ouiridi, & Pais, 2015; Yang, 2015), as well as including circumstances of life, differences in education, and unique personal characteristics (Čičević, Samčović, & Nešić, 2016). The goals and motivations must be understood by users of SNS as to how they are communicating and seeking support from others (Oh & Larose, 2016), their privacy management strategies (Wisniewski, Knijnenburg, & Lipford, 2017), how they are managing boundaries through MPM (Stutzman & Hartzog, 2012), and their online reputations to others (Yang, 2015).

Summary

SNS permit for the improvement of interpersonal relationships (Lai & Gwung, 2013) and to permit users to receive social support from others (Huang, 2016). Groups may value and interpret information differently and it may create tension between strategies from an individual and a group. Individuals must work with a group to determine and develop privacy boundaries and rules (De Wolf et al., 2014). With structured textual analysis, communications from SNS can be analyzed including the emoticons and slang language that is used (He, Glas, Kosinski, Stillwell, & Veldkamp, 2014). However, in the different selves that are represented to others, we must understand

how young adults use MPM to process boundary regulation in managing their privacy on SNS and managing their online reputation to others. With deciding how to represent the identities that are projected to others on the Internet, there is great opportunity for personal transformation (Turkle, 1995), and for building positive presence for themselves to organizations (Schmidt, Lelchook, & Martin, 2016).

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents details on the approach of the study. Within this chapter, the methodology and research methods are described, steps are presented that were used to accomplish the research goal, and the overall process includes the identification of resources required. The required resources were obtained in order will be to proceed with the study.

After IRB approval was granted, the dissertation proposal was defended, and the committee approved the proposal, the study was conducted as outlined (see Table 2) with the major and sub tasks identified.

Table 2

Research Process Overview with Major and Sub Tasks

Major Task	Sub Tasks
1.0 Acquire Resources	1.1 Procure Amazon.com gift cards 1.2 Procure audio recorder and cards 1.3 Procure Dropbox Pro account 1.4 Procure MacMini computer 1.5 Procure NVivo software for Macintosh 1.6 Procure audio transcription services
2.0 Recruit Participants	2.1 Bracket and journal thoughts 2.2 Send out invitation to study participants 2.3 Review prospective profile Google form submissions 2.4 Select and contact potential participants 2.5 Obtain statement of informed consent from participants

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Research Process Overview with Major and Sub Tasks

Major Task	Sub Tasks
3.0 Conduct Semi-Structured Interviews	3.1 Schedule interview setting 3.2 Schedule interviews 3.3 Conduct interviews with interview schedule 3.4 Provide participants with Amazon.com gift certificate 3.5 Bracket and journal thoughts
4.0 Transcribe Interviews	4.1 Upload audio recordings of interviews to audio transcription service through Dropbox 4.2 Receive and review audio transcriptions 4.3 Send transcribed interviews to participants for review and clarification 4.4 Update transcriptions based upon feedback received from participants 4.5 Bracket and journal thoughts
5.0 Organize and Analyze Data	5.1 Import transcripts and data into NVivo 5.2 Read and re-read transcripts 5.3 Analyze semantic content and language through initial noting 5.4 Develop emergent themes 5.5 Search for connections across emergent themes through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.5.1 Abstraction 5.5.2 Subsumption 5.5.3 Polarization 5.5.4 Contextualization 5.5.5 Numeration 5.5.6 Function 5.6 Move to the next case 5.7 Look for patterns across cases 5.8 Bracket and journal thoughts
6.0 Create Report	6.1 Write report and supporting narrative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.1.1 Create individual summaries 6.1.2 Describe themes 6.1.3 Create tables and figures 6.2 Bracket and journal thoughts 6.3 Finalize report

Aim

Young adults experience a transitional time of their lives that represents a time of independence, where communications are important in developing their own identity of self in experiencing new freedoms. The aim of the study was to extend previous work done by Stutzman and Hartzog (2012) by exploring the lived experiences of young adults with the phenomenon of MPM to regulate boundaries on SNS. Previous work from Stutzman and Hartzog (2012) focused on working professionals that were age 24 or older, where participants in this study are of 18 to 23 years of age. In addition to building upon the previous work by Stutzman and Hartzog (2012), previous work from Yang (2015) was used to extend research by utilizing the conceptual long-term motivation developed by Yang (2015) for understanding the motivations behind online reputation management. Through interviewing young adults, the aim of the study was to capture the essence behind their shared experiences with using MPM, through the functionality of SNS, to manage their privacy with separate public and private identities to manage their online reputations to current or potential employers. The importance of this study has been found in previous research that has found the use of SNS to have a negative effect on employment (Black & Johnson, 2012; Bohnert & Ross, 2010; Farnham & Churchill, 2011; Hammer, 2014).

Research Question Restated

The essences of the research question of “How do young adults describe their experiences with using MPM on social networking sites to regulate the boundaries between their personal and professional identities online? “ was discovered through interviewing young adults through using the IPA method.

Rationale for Choosing the Method

Smith et al. (2009, p. 163) identified that IPA has been widely used to understand life transitions and the identity change that occurs. With the life transitions of young adults starting their careers and deciding how they represent themselves and manage their online reputation on SNS, IPA represents an approach to understand significant lived experiences of the participants at a formative time in their lives. The approach was used to engage the theory of boundary regulation, with using the work of Stutzman and Hartzog (2012) as a theoretical framework from their grounded theory work on boundary regulation in SNS.

Boundary regulation theory addresses the question of: How do we regulate access of ourselves to others (Altman, 1975)? The process is described as a dynamic one where social interaction is dependent on changing contexts and how an individual chooses their desired level of privacy. With young adults use of MPM on SNS, they must decide how they regulate their privacy, set access to their information, and manage their online reputation to others. The application of IPA with the study is aligned with the understanding of boundary regulation practices, as the individual process is subjective and based upon the lived experiences of the participants.

In research done by Stutzman and Hartzog (2012), the focus was on understanding working adults' regulation of boundaries on SNS. Through the use of MPM to regulate boundaries, the grounded theory approach identified motives that included privacy, identity, utility, and propriety. In this study, IPA represents a methodology for extending work based upon the findings from Stutzman and Hartzog (2012) by gaining a deeper insight, and with a different sample. With the research

question being grounded in the findings from Stutzman and Hartzog (2012), and conducting semi-structured interviews using IPA, the researcher makes sense of and understand how young adults represent themselves to others and how they make sense of their use of MPM and their experiences with the motives and applications of MPM.

Participants were selected based upon their experience with using MPM on SNS.

Participant Selection

Sampling

In alignment with using IPA, a purposive sampling approach was used for the recruitment of participants. The justification for using a purposive sampling approach that was homogeneous was to ensure that all the participants will have the general common lived experience with the phenomenon required to contribute to the phenomenological study (Creswell, 2013, p. 155). The number of participants identified was 11 in accordance with the range for IPA specified by Smith et al. (2009, p. 52). The purpose for having a sample of 11 participants is to enable in-depth collection and analysis of data from each participant to obtain a deeper insight on their lived experiences with SNS. The sample was recruited from students at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Fredonia based on criteria that determined if they fit the participant profile.

Recruitment of Participants

Participants were needed that could provide insight on the subject matter of the study. After receiving IRB approval, SUNY Fredonia assisted with supplying a list of prospective participants for the study. For the purpose of this study, a list of 200 prospective participants was desired and identified. The number of 200 prospective participants identified is because the researcher believed not all potential participants may

meet requirements to participate in the study or have a willingness to do so. The researcher sent through email a letter of invitation to the list of potential study participants (see Appendix A).

In order to be eligible to participate in the study, prospective participants needed to fulfill core criteria. Recruiting participants based upon the core criteria ensured that they met basic elements to participate in the study that were essential with providing quality assurance. If potential participants did not meet the core criteria, they were not considered for the study, as potential data yielded would not address the purpose for the research. Core criteria for the prospective participants to serve as participants in the study included:

1. The participants must have used MPM on a SNS, with the use of more than one identity on at least a single SNS.
2. Participants needed to remember when and why they began using MPM.
3. The participants needed to be between the ages of 18 and 23 years of age.

To ensure the core criteria needs were fulfilled to participate in the study, prospective participants completed a prospective profile form questionnaire (see Appendix B). The questionnaire was provided through a link to a Google Form in the initial email message to prospective participants. When the profile form questionnaire had been completed, the researcher received an email notifying him that a completed form had been submitted. The form was then reviewed to determine if prospective participant met the core criteria to participate in the study. From the prospective participants that met the listed core criteria, the researcher purposefully selected 11 participants for the study.

Setting

The interviews took place in-person, in a small conference room that the researcher was familiar with on the campus of SUNY Fredonia. In accordance with IPA recommendations, the room was quiet and away from interruptions to ensure that participants felt comfortable and safe in a neutral environment (Smith et al., 2009, p. 63).

Instrumentation

An interview schedule (see Appendix C) was used to explore the lived experiences of the participants. The interview schedule was reviewed by the researcher prior to any interviews taking place, and included fields for information related to the time of the interview, the date, the location, the name of the interviewee, the age of the interviewee, and the occupation of the interviewee. Further information on the interview schedule included a general description of the study, and the questions that were asked during the semi-structured interviews. The researcher assured those being interviewed that any identifiable data from the participants will be removed, with pseudonyms or participant numbers substituted for the actual names of the participants.

Prior to interviews taking place, a pilot interview was done to ensure that the researcher was comfortable with the schedule and that the interview could be conducted in a manner that was not distracting for the participants. The pilot participant fulfilled the core requirements for participating in the study with being 18-23 years of age, having multiple accounts on Twitter, and with using the multiple accounts for a period of 2 or more years. The semi-structured interview lasted 15 minutes in duration. In accordance with the recommendation by Smith et al. (2009, p. 66), the audio of the interview was recorded, and the transcription of the first interview was analyzed for the purpose of

reviewing the interview schedule and strategies. From reviewing the interview, the researcher reviewed the work of Smith et al. (2009) to better understand the use of building rapport, and with making the participant more comfortable. The researcher adjusted the interviews through the rephrasing of questions and prompts, channeling the interview away from an issue, and determining if an interview should be ended based upon the perceived comfort level of the participants. The researcher then ensured that he understood the reactions of the participants during the interviews to make sure they were comfortable.

The basis for the research questions comes from the themes identified in the review of literature and the conceptual model of long-term motivation for online reputation management identified by Yang (2015). Smith et al. (2009, p. 60) stressed the importance of structuring questions that are open to provide the participants with an opportunity to describe a detailed experience that is not based on assumptions or leading towards a specific answer. In order to limit the impact of the themes and literature, the researcher used journaling and bracketing to limit their influence in order to allow the participants to draw out their own themes. The questions included on the interview schedule were aligned with the research question of the study, and are open-ended in nature.

Questions that were used during the interview included:

1. Please describe your experiences with MPM on SNS.
2. Can you tell me how concerned you are with protecting your privacy on SNS?

Prompts: Why are you concerned? How do you feel about privacy?

3. How do you manage your privacy settings through the user interface on SNS?

Prompts: What features do you use? Why do you use those features? Are they easy to use?

4. What problems do you see with the current privacy settings on SNS?

Prompts: What would you change? What would you like? How could the settings and interface be improved? Does it require a significant amount of time to manage privacy settings?

5. Can you tell me if you ever searched for yourself online to see what turns up in search results?

Prompts: When was the last time you searched for yourself? Can you tell me what you found? How frequently do you search for yourself?

6. How would you describe how you manage your online reputation to different audiences through the use of MPM on SNS?

Prompts: Can you provide an example? What are the differences between your social and professional presentations?

7. Have you ever changed the way you use SNS in thinking that a current employer or a potential employer would view your information?

Prompts: Can you provide an example? Was there an experience that caused you to change the way you use SNS? Do you feel it is important for young adults using SNS to consider current or potential employers viewing their information?

8. Can you tell me if anyone has shared content over SNS that you untagged or deleted to help manage your online reputation?

Prompts: Can you provide an example? Who posted the content? How did the content

make you feel? Were there negative consequences from what was posted? Was it easy to untag or delete the content?

9. What do you think could help you in managing your online reputation?

Prompts: Are there new features that would be helpful? How could SNS be designed better? What would make SNS more user-friendly?

General Steps (Procedures)

In order to conduct the study, the general steps were described that the researcher will follow. The steps included ones for reflexive bracketing and journaling, semi-structured interviews, data organization and analysis, reporting, and quality control. Through the identification and description of the steps, the researcher intends to show that the process and use of IPA as a methodology was applied in an appropriate manner for understanding the lived experiences of young adults in their regulation of boundaries on SNS, as they represent and manage their online reputation to audiences.

Reflexive Bracketing and Journaling

Within phenomenological approaches, it is important for the researcher to understand how their previous experiences may impact the understanding of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013, p. 83). Further, the communication of the background of the researcher can play an important part in the study, as it adds further context to the reader. The researcher used reflexive bracketing and journaling to introduce and limit their interpretations, so that they could further focus on the experiences of the participants in the study. Through the limiting of preconceptions, the researcher bracketed and journaled in a cyclical manner that is in alignment with a double hermeneutic approach to understand the lived experiences from the view of the participants making sense of the

experience, while the researcher made sense of how the participants are making sense of their experiences with using SNS (Smith et al., 2009, pp. 35-36).

Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews with participants were semi-structured and conducted in-person. The duration of the interviews was estimated to be about 1 hour in duration for each participant. Audio recordings of the interviews took place, with the audio recordings being sent to a third-party transcription service provider afterward. A non-disclosure agreement was processed prior to any transcriptions being processed. The privacy of the participants was maintained through the use of pseudonyms and participant numbers to represent the participants. Each participant was presented an Amazon.com gift certificate.

The interview schedule was utilized during the semi-structured interviews to focus on how young adults use MPM with employment and employment opportunities, and how young adults process boundary regulation through the use of MPM on SNS. Smith et al. (2009, pp. 66-69) described the challenges of semi-structured interviews in that the correct balance must be found between the schedule and the interview. As each participant and interview is unique, the phrasing and sequencing of questions was changed depending on how a participant is responding and what questions seemed appropriate. The pacing of the interview was done to provide time for the participant to respond, with a single question being focused upon at a time. While the interviewer may have wanted to confirm that he understood a participant, he prevented himself from analyzing and interpreting the data during the interview.

Reporting

After the data organization and analysis was completed, the results were written in the report. The findings included the identification and description of themes that were found in the analysis, and information is presented graphically from the use of NVivo software through tables and figures in the report. Themes were presented in an ordered sequence and have data collected from the participants to provide justification for the themes, with a discussion of the process (Smith et al., 2009, p. 109). A supporting narrative was included to contain an overall summary, individual summaries from the participants, and the analysis by the researcher. Quotes from the transcriptions of the interviews are included to provide support for the patterns across the cases in the themes that are common, while also recognizing ones unique to an individual.

Quality Control

Creswell (2013, p. 45) identified the importance of using deductive and inductive logic in qualitative research through the creation of categories, patterns, and themes that are consistently being validated based upon the data collected. Through the use of the transcribed interviews, inductive analysis was used to discover themes from the data obtained from the participants. While validating and refining of the analysis took place, deductive reasoning was also applied. After no new themes were identified, the researcher acknowledged that the point of saturation has been achieved and completed the final report.

Smith et al. (2009, pp. 179-186) described four principles for ensuring quality control when using IPA that were followed in the study:

1. Sensitivity to context - Sensitivity to context requires that rapport be established with key gatekeepers to enable the access to those with the lived experiences necessary to be included as participants in the purposeful sample. The researcher established rapport, so that the participants were comfortable with the process, to ensure the quality of information was obtained and processed.
2. Commitment to rigor - Commitment and rigor requires a diligence on the part of the researcher to be attentive and thorough during the processing of and analyzing of data. The researcher ensured that the sample for the study was aligned with the research question and good interviews were consistently conducted.
3. Transparency and coherence - Within the study, the research process and the stages had been defined with information provided on the needed participants, the schedule, and the process for data organization and analysis. To be coherent, the study adhered to the core principles of IPA and a rational presentation of the findings took place to connect the themes identified in a logical manner.
4. Impact and importance – The study presents findings that are important, interesting, and useful to the reader of the report within the scope of understanding the lived experiences of young adults with their processes and motives for the regulation of boundaries on SNS to represent and manage their online reputation to audiences through the use of MPM.

Data Organization and Analysis

After transcriptions of the audio interviews were received from the transcriptionist, the text files were loaded into NVivo software for analysis. Node classifications and coding and annotation is supplied in Appendix D and E. The analysis

was conducted in the six steps that Smith et al. (2009, pp. 82-101) identified for IPA analysis:

1. Reading and re-reading – The written transcript of the interview was read and reread. During the process, the interviewees' voices were heard through the recordings to understand their tone and to familiarize the researcher with associating an individual voice with each interview. The researcher slowed down and analyzed experiences in the recordings of the audio to bracket either through their own audio recordings or through noting. The researcher engaged with the data to understand the narratives in the different sections of the interview. Throughout the process, rapport was understood in how it emerges throughout the interview, and how it effectively influenced information received from being general, in the beginning, to being able to provide more specific details, as the interview goes on.
2. Initial noting – This step was focused upon analyzing the semantic content and language used by the participants. Through the initial noting process, familiarity with the transcript continued with the researcher creating written notes with each reading of the transcript. The notes and comments were aligned with the specific meaning intended from the participants, with the analysis of the comments grounded in the understanding of contexts that are conceptual, descriptive, and linguistic. Specific objects of interest during this step included events, places, principles, processes, relationships and values. Further focus upon meaning for understanding why the participant was expressed and described their experiences and concerns are noted.

3. Developing emergent themes – After reading and re-reading, and initial noting had been done, a large data set existed. The identification of emergent themes focused on developing emergent themes from connections and patterns between the exploratory and initial notes. Chunks of the interview were analyzed and identified for themes consistent with the hermeneutic cycle, where the interview was broken down into pieces to then be combined later through analysis. The outcome was derived through the interpretation of the themes in that the researcher will develop understanding of the experiences.
4. Searching for connections across emergent themes – Within this step the researcher determined how themes could be organized in a structure to identify those of interest and significance. After the process was finished, the researcher documented the process and created figures and tables to document the connection of the themes. Smith et al. (2009, pp. 96-99) identified six methods that can be used for the process, with the emphasis being placed on that the methods were not prescriptive:
 - a. Abstraction – After patterns in the emergent themes have been identified, similar themes were developed and clustered under a super-ordinate theme.
 - b. Subsumption – An emergent theme obtained super-ordinate status through combining emergent themes that are related.
 - c. Polarization – Emergent themes were compared by their differences to understand relationships and to organize for analysis.

- d. Contextualization – The relationships of emergent themes were analyzed to understand common narrative elements and life events of the participants.
 - e. Numeration – The significance of themes were identified through the frequency in which they occur.
 - f. Function – Themes were analyzed for the purpose of the content that the participant in the research used to convey meaning during the interview.
5. Moving to the next case – After the transcript had been reviewed from one participant, the researcher moved onto the transcript from another participant for analysis. To permit for new themes to emerge, the researcher bracketed the ideas from the first participant before moving on to another. The purpose was to limit the potential influence from one to the other.
6. Looking for patterns across cases – Themes were identified within the super-ordinate themes to show connections across participants. While there were some themes in common, some were unique to a single participant. Graphics and tables were created to illustrate the connections and patterns that took place across participants. During this step, themes were relabeled and/or reconfigured.

IRB Considerations and Human Subjects

Prior to any research being conducted, permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Nova Southeastern University and the State University of New York (SUNY) at Fredonia were obtained (see Appendixes F and G). As the researcher is employed at SUNY Fredonia, participants and facilities for conducting in-person

interviews were used and the IRB at the institution was consulted. The study ensured that harm did not occur to the participants and that their identities were protected.

The use of human subjects was required for the study. In alignment with the use of IPA, the researcher ensured that the participants have an explanation and context of the interview, consent was obtained, and that the participants were able to review transcripts of the interviews (see Appendix H) for accuracy (Smith et al., 2009, p. 54). The identities of the participants have been protected, so that their privacy will not be violated. The researcher conducted the interviews in a professional manner and will not disseminate any identified information that is considered private. During the study, data and audio recordings from the interviews have been saved securely to adhere to IRB standards.

Before the interviews took place, care was practiced to ensure participants were comfortable with participating in the study. Consent forms for the participants were developed and submitted for IRB review along with the IRB submission form (see Appendix I). The research was described and the IRB approved statement of informed consent was presented to the participants. After the participant confirmed their willingness to participate, and the informed consent form had been signed and received by the researcher, the interview took place. The researcher communicated that at any point a participant could discontinue the interview if they choose to do so. The researcher then proceeded to utilize the interview schedule to conduct the interview. Audio recordings of the interviews were then done, so that transcriptions could be created.

Resources and Feasibility

Resources were required to conduct the study. Resources were identified that included access to participants, transcription assistance, and hardware and software resources. Through the identification and evaluation of the resources, the study was feasible.

Access to Participants

In order to conduct the study, participants were needed. In alignment with using IPA, 11 participants were recruited. The number of participants is justified by Smith et al. (2009, pp. 51-52) to aid in achieving an individualized and in-depth understanding from each of the participants. A purposive sampling approach was utilized to ensure that participants fulfilled base criteria that ensured they have the experiences necessary to contribute to the study. Criteria included that the participants were 18 to 23 years of age, and have more than one profile on at least one SNS. Access to participants was obtained through recruitment emails at the State University of New York at Fredonia.

Transcription Assistance

The researcher utilized a transcription service provider that has been contracted by others that have conducted their dissertation research at Nova Southeastern University. The cost for the transcription services was \$50 per audio hour, or 83 cents per audio minute, with an estimated hour of audio requiring 3-4 hours of typing. When the IRB proposal was in process of development, the researcher contacted the service provider to coordinate the processing of a non-disclosure agreement. Personal funds from the researcher were used to cover the expenses for the transcription services.

Hardware and Software Resources

Hardware and software resources were required to facilitate with the recruitment of participants, the transferring of files from the audio recorder, and for analysis of the interviews.

Recruitment of participants took place online over email. In the recruitment message (see Appendix A) there was a link to access a Google Form (see Appendix B), where the prospective participant entered in data with their contact information and answered questions to ensure that they met the core criteria of the purposeful sample. When entries were made into the Google Form, the researcher received an email notifications to their personal Gmail email account. Then, the researcher contacted the potential participants to inform them of their selection to participate in the study. Google Forms were available for use at no charge through having a personal Gmail account. The researcher utilized existing Gmail and email accounts that already exist for this study.

All interviews were audio recorded with transcripts of the interviews being generated. A Tascam model DR-05 portable handheld digital audio recorder was used for the recording of the interviews. The recorder recorded onto Micro SDHC cards, and a card was required for the interviews with each participant. Personal funds from the researcher were used to cover the expenses for the audio recorder and the Micro SDHC cards.

A computer was required for transferring the recorded interview files, analysis, compiling the results, and for writing the completed report. An Apple Mac Mini computer was purchased for use during the study with the researcher's personal funds.

NVivo software, from QSR International, was used for qualitative data analysis. Through the use of NVivo, transcripts of the audio interviews were imported. Analysis took place through using the software to code the transcripts and to identify and analyze themes. An NVivo for Mac Student license was obtained through QSR International's website for use during the study. The researcher used personal funds for the purchase of the software.

Throughout the study, the website Dropbox.com was used to upload recorded files of interviews with participants, transfer the transcripts, and to serve as a backup location for files used during the study. Dropbox Basic, the free version available through Dropbox.com, only allows for 2GB of space, which is not sufficient for the anticipated needs of the study. For this study, a Dropbox Pro account was needed that permitted up to 1 TB of total space per year. Personal funds from the researcher were used to cover the expense for Dropbox.com.

The website Amazon.com was utilized to provide each participant with a \$25 gift to assist with incentivizing participation in the study. The gift cards were distributed over email to the participants. The researcher utilized personal funds for the procurement of the gift cards for the study.

Feasibility of Resources

The resources required for this study are primarily within the areas of participants, hardware, software, and transcription services. The researcher utilized personal funds for the procurement of all the items necessary to conduct the study.

Summary

Chapter 3 detailed the approach and methodology for the study in pertaining to areas related to addressing the research question and aim of the study. Details were provided to identify and describe the approach in participant selection, setting, instrumentation, general steps, IRB considerations, and resources and feasibility.

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this interpretative phenomenological analysis study (IPA) was to obtain an understanding of the lived experiences of young adults with how they make sense of using Multiple Profile Management (MPM) on Social Networking Sites (SNS) to manage their online reputation through regulating boundaries to their personal and professional identities online. The significance is there can be numerous consequences when young adults do not regulate boundaries to their information on SNS including the ability for current and future employers to make career-impacting decisions that includes disqualifying them as job candidates.

The research question of this study was how do young adults describe their experiences with using MPM on social networking sites to regulate the boundaries between their personal and professional identities online?

Chapter 4 presents the lived experiences of young adults that are between the ages of 18 and 23. From the responses of the participants in the semi-structured interviews, a narrative is presented. In this chapter, a review of themes and coding, and a summary of the findings are presented.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted based upon the IPA methodology described by Smith et al. (2009). The methodology included processes for reading and re-reading transcripts, initial noting, developing emergent themes, searching for connections across

emergent themes, moving to the next case, and looking for patterns across cases. The process included the development of codes on the data generated from the interviews, and coding data in single and/or multiple nodes by connections across themes. The consistent refinement of nodes, concepts, and themes created an exploratory narrative detailing the experiences of young adults.

Demographic Data

The participants interviewed for this study represent profile identified, including the core criteria needed to participate with being young adults of 18-23 years of age, having multiple accounts on at least one SNS, and with using the multiple accounts for a period of two or more years. A total of 200 potential participants were identified through random sampling of students at The State University of New York at Fredonia. Out of the 200 messages sent to potential participants, 16 responses were returned from potential participants. Of the 16 that responded, two did not meet the core criteria needed to participate, two opted-out of the study, and 12 participants were identified that met the core criteria to participate (see Table 3). Of those 12 participants, one was selected as a pilot participant and the remaining 11 were interviewed.

Table 3

Participant Recruitment

Number of Invitations Sent	Invitations Returned	Respondents that did not meet core criteria	Opted-Out	Interviews Conducted
200	16	2	2	12

The participants selected for the interviews, excluding the pilot interview, were put into a demographic breakdown (see Table 4) that shows the variety in their ages, self-reported gender identities, and the social networks where they used multiple profiles.

Table 4

Demographics Data Content

Participant	Age	Gender Identity	Multiple Profiles
1	20	Male	Facebook, Twitter
2	20	Genderfluid, designated female at birth	Tumblr
3	18	Female	Twitter
4	20	Female	Twitter
5	21	Female	Facebook
6	18	Female	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
7	19	Female	Twitter
8	19	Non-binary	Twitter, Tumblr
9	20	Female	Twitter
10	19	Female	Twitter
11	19	Male	Twitter

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in person with 11 participants.

Interviews were conducted in-person and spanned a length of time from 10-64 minutes (see Table 5). Analysis of the interview lengths indicated no specific correlation between the demographic groups and interview length. The shortest interview involved Participant #3, which was the researcher's first interview after the pilot interview. After the interview, the researcher adjusted the sequence of the questions to align them with the

responses from the participants, prompts were better utilized to obtain more depth of detail, and participants were provided with more guidance on what they could expect during the interviews.

Table 5

Interview Length by Participant

Participant	Interview Length
1	53 minutes
2	64 minutes
3	10 minutes
4	52 minutes
5	47 minutes
6	46 minutes
7	51 minutes
8	33 minutes
9	41 minutes
10	64 minutes
11	42 minutes
Average	45.7 minutes

Transcription

All the interviews were transcribed by a third-party transcriptionist. To ensure that all the transcripts were accurate, the researcher compared the original audio files to the transcripts. The transcripts were then mailed to the participants within 48 hours of the interview, so the participants could review the accuracy and provide clarifications. Participants were then provided a one-week timeframe to review the transcripts and provide feedback. Only one participant provided additional details to clarify their comments that were made during the interview. The remainder of the participants confirmed the accuracy of the transcripts without providing any additional further details or comments.

Data Coding

After the participants confirmed the accuracy of the transcripts, or provided additional details and clarifications, the transcripts were imported into NVivo 11.3.2 software for analysis. The transcripts were then read and re-read by the researcher, initial noting then took place through annotating the transcripts, and codes were then developed, refined in an iterative manner, and organized as themes emerged through organizing the data (see Appendix D). The researcher continued to refine the coding and themes throughout the analysis stage as new ideas were presented.

Journaling and Bracketing

Journaling and bracketing thoughts helped the researcher to review and reflect upon the interviews to then make improvements in the way he conducted his research, as well as limiting potential bias. An entry after the pilot interview read:

“I conducted the pilot interview yesterday. It went a lot quicker than I thought with being around 15 minutes in total. I need to do a better job at building rapport and making the participant more comfortable. I should even provide better guidance with what participants can expect during the interview. Further, I should become more comfortable with the interview schedule, so that I can prompt and be able to probe spontaneously, while also being able to adjust the sequencing of questions.”

After making further adjustments to the semi-structured interviews, an entry read:

“I felt like this interview went so much better than the previous two. The participant seemed so much more comfortable, and the prompting worked out very well. The rapport building before the start of the interview worked out very well too. Overall, I felt like there was great improvements over the first two.”

Then, during the analysis stage one journal about privacy settings read:

“With Facebook privacy settings update, young adults seem to perceive that the updates require effort to ensure that their content is private, and that it has not been made public by default. However, the updates create frustrations. Possibly this is also why young adults just use Facebook for generic updates, in addition to citing that their families and parents are on Facebook.”

Throughout the drafting of the report, the researcher continued to journal to detail their thoughts in relation to how the participants described their experiences through the data generated from the semi-structured interviews.

Findings

IPA is used in the chapter to present themes that came from the 11 semi-structured interviews that were done with young adults that were of 18-23 years of age. Eight major findings were identified:

1. **SNS Use with Online Audiences:** As a primary boundary regulation strategy, young adults select the SNS they use depending on their audience with family, friends, and employers.
2. **Motivations for using MPM:** Young adults are motivated to use MPM as a secondary boundary regulation strategy as they are worried about judgment by others, and how their information could have a negative impact on their employment.
3. **The Processes for the Presentation of Self:** When young Adults use multiple SNS and MPM, they further regulate boundaries to their information through presenting themselves through pseudonyms, and limiting connections with others and between their different SNS accounts.
4. **Online Search Results:** Young adults search for themselves to see what turns up in search results, and they are concerned and do not understand why certain information and pictures turn up while others do not.
5. **Privacy Settings:** Privacy settings were found to be difficult to use and create frustration by the time required to change settings. Specifically, Facebook privacy

settings were identified for being complicated, hard to understand and use, taking a long time to change, and updates created frustrations with changing privacy settings and their interfaces to manage the settings.

6. Untagging SNS Posts: Young adults found it easy to untag content and know that it is not just what they post about themselves, but also what others post about them and connect to their profiles that impact their online reputation.
7. Self-Editing and Censorship: Self-editing and censorship was relied on by young adults as techniques to help manage their online reputations to limit negative impressions to others.
8. New Features: Young adults want new SNS features to enhance privacy, increase security, and limit negative impressions that could be generated from the posts.

The introductory quote below from Participant #9 summarized the privacy concerns by young adults and their need to use MPM as a boundary regulation strategy:

“I’m fairly concerned about it because I do know that a good majority of employers do look at your Facebook and your Twitter, if they can find it, to see what types of activities you engage in and those sorts of things. And I have known people who have been denied jobs or who have been removed from a job because of postings online, and so I have been very vigilant about keeping my online presence professional in publicly accessible ways and my private ones I can do whatever I please.”

The quote from the participant represents the concerns of young adults with how their posts on SNS can have negative impacts on their career and employment and how they are vigilant with regulating boundaries to their professional and social identities online.

Data Visualization

NVivo software was used for coding, identifying of themes, and for visualization of data to analyze the frequency that words were used. For the analysis of word count, a minimum length of four characters were used with including the option for stemmed words. The term *like* and its variations that included *liked*, *likes*, *liking* occurred a total of 25,912 times and was displayed predominantly in the word cloud generated (see Figure 1). In addition to *like* being a function on Facebook, it is important to note that the word *like* is commonly used by young adults in speech as a slang interjection. Words that also occurred at a high frequency included *knows* (8,034), *just* (6,729), and *people* (5,012). The significance of three of those words are they involve core functions of SNS that includes being able to like content, and that through connecting with and searching for other users on SNS, people can find information about others.



Figure 1. Word Cloud Based on NVivo Analysis of Coded Nodes.

Super-Ordinate Themes

Super-Ordinate themes were developed through the data analyzed from the semi-structured interviews guided by the interview schedule and the responses from the 11 participants. Themes were developed through the analysis of coded interviews by the researcher in understanding the experiences of the participants.

SNS Use with Online Audiences

A layered approach to boundary regulation was found in that first young adults are choosing to use different SNS for different audiences, so that Facebook is primarily used with their family, Instagram, Tumblr, and Twitter are used for their peers, and LinkedIn is used for employers and college admissions staff. Then, young adults further regulate their boundaries through using MPM with having multiple accounts on at least one SNS. The participants mostly described their communications and presentations as being different to different audiences in alignment with Goffman's (1959) sense in the presentation of self in everyday life.

While online audiences can help decide what type of SNS is used, young adults also choose to use a SNS due to the perceived utility of a SNS (see Table 6). Examples of the perceived utility are Twitter being used for stream of conscious interactions, Instagram being used for the posting and sharing of photos, Tumblr for anonymous audiences communicating on common topics of interest, and LinkedIn being used for professional networking for employment and career development opportunities, including networking with college admissions staff members for furthering of education for advanced degrees.

Table 6

Perceived Primary Audience and Utility of SNS

SNS	Perceived Audience	Utility
Facebook	Family	Communications with family
Instagram	Young Adults	Posting of photos
LinkedIn	College Admissions & Employers	For employment and furthering education.
Tumblr	Young Adults	Communicating on common topics of interest in an anonymous manner.
Twitter	Young Adults	Stream of conscious posts

Participant #6 described her experiences with selecting to use a SNS based upon their perceived social audience to regulate boundaries between their family on Facebook, and friends on Instagram and Twitter:

“So like I may be like talking more to my friends through that (Twitter) than through Facebook. And also because like for younger generations Facebook’s like not as popular as Twitter and Instagram would be. And like around Facebook I just like mostly post like the good things that are happening or like liking something that like my mom would have tagged me in, or something around that. And it’s more of a way for me to connect to like my family while I’m away from home. So it’s just like a different barrier between like who I’m really talking to on Facebook versus who I’m really talking to on like Twitter and Instagram and that kind of stuff.”

Participant #8 reinforced Participant #6 in regulating boundaries based upon their use of a SNS. Participant #8 further added that their use of Tumblr is similar to that of Twitter in that they use it as their family is not present:

“Facebook because of like my family. Twitter because my family doesn’t have a Twitter, or if they do I just block them. And then Tumblr just for kind of like the same things. Like you don’t know who I am.”

Participant #2 described the value that they saw in Tumblr for seeking support

from others, while being able to limit potential negative impressions by employers or family members:

“If you vague on like Facebook people get concerned. Like your grandma’s going to start calling you, like: Are you okay? Someone might be like: Hey, we should hang out. Are you okay? blah, blah, blah. But on Tumblr you can make like relatable content or like jokes out of it and it’s not much of an issue, and there you can find people who feel the same way and are dealing with the same thing, and you can like, you know, build your little vaguely anonymous support community. And like any potential employer would never have to know that you, you know, have social anxiety to the point where you literally have to write out what you are going to say in class, or you are really, really depressed and like, say, maybe you’re thinking about just ending it all. Like nobody’s going to want a potential employee who’s been like that. They’re not going to want to know that, say, mental illness is a thing, partially because of the stigma surrounding it. And the anonymity of Tumblr frees a lot of people from that sort of hypothetical scrutiny...”

Participant #11 recalled how he decreased his use of Facebook due to the presence of a family member:

“...I’m not huge into social media. I’m not as big into it as most people are my age, I’d say. I don’t know. I used to have one (Facebook) in middle school and maybe in the first years of high school, too, and I just... I don’t really like it too much. I’m not sure what about it. Maybe it was the layout of it I didn’t like, or maybe it was because my mom got a Facebook!”

The participants consistently described that they view Facebook as a platform for use primarily with their families, and that they use Instagram and Twitter with their friends as their family members are not on Instagram and Twitter. An NVivo generated word tree of the term “Family” illustrates connections between words from multiple interviews that showed the connectivity between the participants and their families with the purpose of sharing content on Facebook with their intended audience (see Figure 2).

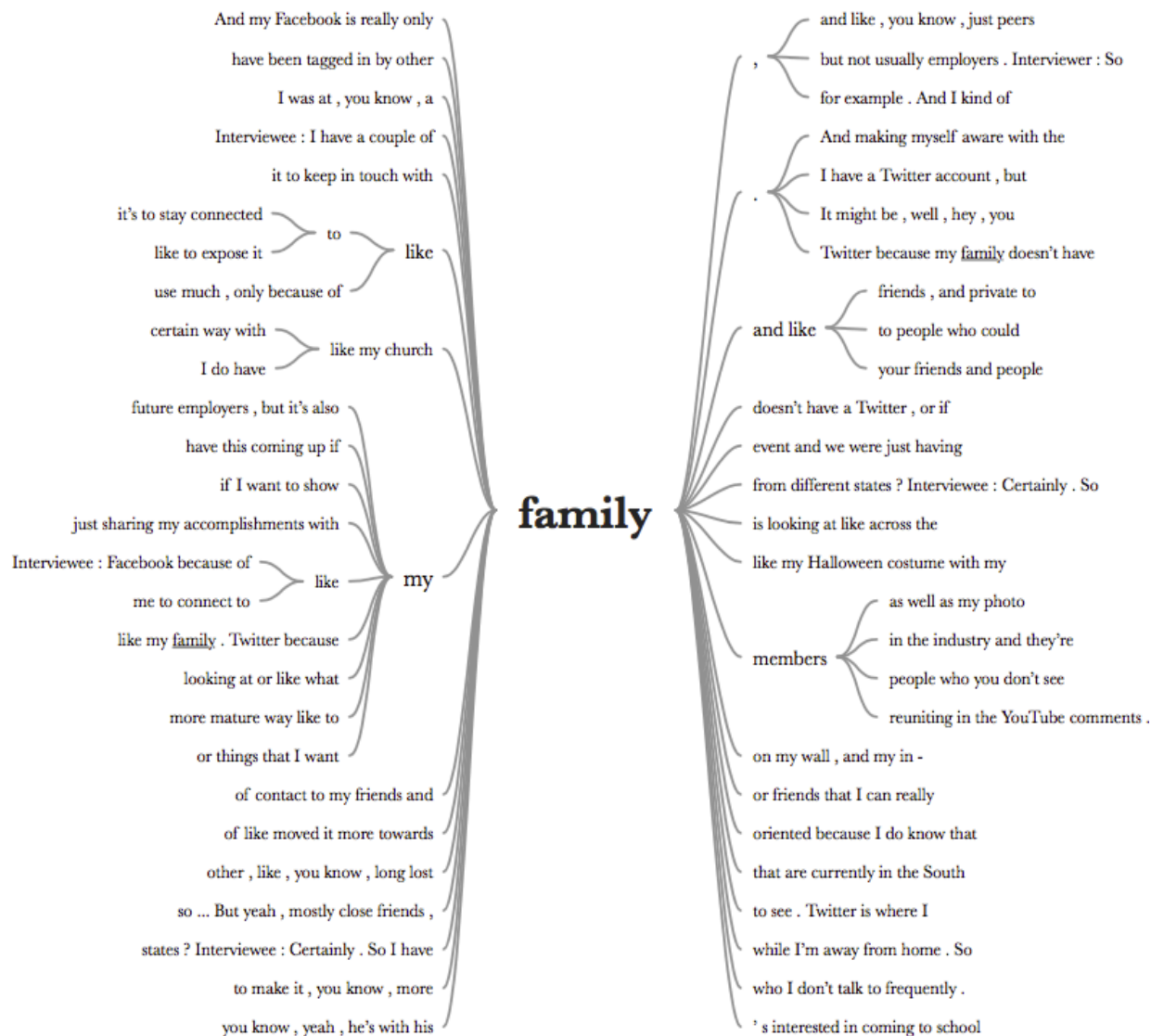


Figure 2. NVivo Word Tree of the Term “Family”.

With young adults using Facebook less, there are still some young adults who choose to use it with their family and their friends. Participant #7 articulated her use of Facebook with friends due to the ease of use:

“I guess I would say I really like multiple sites because, you know, not everybody’s using Facebook these days. I really like the... I’m mostly a Facebook and Instagram person. I mostly am there for the pictures, but I think Facebook is easier for communication purposes and that’s pretty much my main form of contact to my friends and family.”

Participant #5 detailed her use of Facebook and the type of updates supplied to her family, while her interest in Instagram and Twitter were for more social purposes:

“So my Instagram tends to be more of my social life, so it’s pictures of me and my friends. Whereas Facebook I don’t tend to post pictures. It’s mostly status... Not... I don’t like to say status updates, but it’s just like I have this coming up if my family’s interested in coming to school to see me. Or just sharing my accomplishments with my family who I don’t talk to frequently... And then my Twitter is my more unprofessional outlet and that’s the one that I tend not to censor myself so much on.”

In contrast with Instagram, Tumblr, and Twitter being perceived as more social oriented platforms by young adults, Participant #9 talked about her professional presentations on Facebook and LinkedIn:

“I think that they probably know it but they don’t realize the extent of what it really means and the extent to which it is so easy to find things. Because say you have a very professional Facebook – which most people do – most people’s Facebooks are very, very clean slate; they’re more professional; they would not mind if their employer saw their Facebook. I think most people could agree with that, that your Facebook is pretty clean, second only to your LinkedIn of things you post on social media.”

With participants keeping their Facebook profiles clean for their family members, they may not consider it a professional profile similar to their LinkedIn profile.

Participant #1 described how his use of the two SNS are different:

“It is a priority. I do try to keep, you know, certain information out there. So I don’t try to... Obviously I don’t try and mix personal stuff with business. So I don’t put on like, you know, personal things on my LinkedIn and I don’t try to put really professional stuff on my Facebook. I might put on some things like oh, I’m doing this, but I don’t say, hey, I’m applying for a job at this place; you know, I talked to this. I don’t try to give out that much information on Facebook because that’s more for my personal life and, you know, talking with friends and family.”

Participant #10’s use of Twitter was unique from the rest of the participants in that she indicated her use of Twitter was not restricted to friends, but also included her family:

“I have a couple of accounts on Twitter. I have my own account, which is just for like me and like friends and family, and that’s what people like come across if I was being interviewed for a job or whatever, and then I have an account that’s a fan account for Justin Bieber and it actually has like 10,000 followers.”

Motivations for Using MPM

Information made available on SNS is a motivator for young adults to use MPM. All participants had experiences that motivated their boundary regulation practices. The primary motivators were found to be the impact that SNS could have on employment and employment opportunities, and young adults worrying about judgment by others when not adhering to group norms. Secondary motivators were oriented on privacy and the ability to build a following from other users of SNS.

Similar to the findings detailed by Goffman (1959), participants were motivated to use MPM to be able to present themselves differently to different audiences. The participants were worried with how they would be judged by others when not adhering to group norms. Participant #10 talked about her worry:

“I’m just like really careful about what I post because I don’t want to be annoying or be judged or people think I’m poor or stuff like that. It’s like it’s really strange to say that but like that’s what I worry about...”

Aligned with group norms, Participant #3 addressed the need for young adults to be able to understand group norms through participating in multiple group contexts to understand their difference:

“Sure. I used to do it a lot when I was about like 14 or 15, like when I was like, wow, like internet’s a thing and I can use this now. And I went on like a few different websites – I don’t even remember the names now. But I used to just like set up different accounts and just pretend to be different people just to kind of like get a feel of like what it’s like talking to different types of people that are like similar to the one account and like different to the other one and all that kind of stuff.”

Participant #7 described her presentations of self to different audiences to adhere

to group norms including her church community, family, and friends:

“I guess the way I would think about it is, you know, I’d behave a certain way with like my super close friends, behave a certain way with like my church family, for example. And I kind of try to find like a happy medium. Like maybe something I would say to my best friend I wouldn’t want to put on Facebook because, you know, there’s... You know, my grandma’s on Facebook. You know what I mean? Not that I would normally say anything too terrible, but I like to keep it kind of professional – personal but professional, without being too revealing, I guess.”

Through being able to represent themselves differently to audiences, Participant #2 articulated the benefit that young adults perceive in being able to make mistakes and learn from those, while not being at great risk:

“I feel like it takes a bit of the fear of oh God, someone’s going to see me and recognize me right away, along with the hey, I don’t have to be myself today. I can go out, try something entirely new and it wouldn’t really matter as much. And I feel like if you, say, got internet famous or something, you could just create another smaller pseudonym and just go like incognito, like Adam Savage does at Comic-Con. He always has this ridiculous costume and nobody knows it’s him, and that’s part of the way he gets through there without being seen. Or that one time the guy who plays Wolverine went to Comic-Con in his Wolverine costume, nobody noticed and someone said he was too short. Like it’s freeing in the okay, I can make mistakes and it won’t permanently reflect badly on me. Like I can slip up. I can make this dumbass comment and maybe then learn something about it and realize that was a dumbass comment, but it’s not always Wow, you’ve done this. Look at you. You were such an asshole five years ago – which is really freeing to me and I guess a lot of other people, too.”

Participant #11 described his motivation to use MPM to segment different music and political interests from his social identity:

“Okay. Well, first I just have like my main account. It’s just my name, _____, and that was just like any like normal Twitter account, just like following friends and stuff like that. And I’m not like a big poster on social media – I more just like look at stuff. But I created a second account because they’re two really kind of random reasons: because I wanted to follow like news and people’s like opinion on the Election, because this is my first election I can be involved in and it was like a crazy election. So I wanted to follow like people like they were just only talking about that and I just wanted to have one where I could just go on and find all the news on it and stuff like that. And also I’m a big Fleetwood Mac fan, so I follow all the Fleetwood Mac news on the second account. So basically it’s like

the stuff I enjoy. I'd always follow the news on it and stuff like that.”

Participants that had concern of SNS use on employment and employment opportunities either knew of an example where a SNS post impacted employment or potential employment. Participant #9 described her concern with her online presence, how her employment could be affected, and the need to keep certain communications private:

“I'm fairly concerned about it because I do know that a good majority of employers do look at your Facebook and your Twitter, if they can find it, to see what types of activities you engage in and those sorts of things. And I have known people who have been denied jobs or who have been removed from a job because of postings online, and so I have been very vigilant about keeping my online presence professional in publicly accessible ways and my private ones I can do whatever I please.”

Participant #4 shared the concern of what could happen of a boss or employer viewed a SNS post made by an employee and how even a deleted SNS post may be able to have a negative impact:

“...Like yeah, it's a concern because you hear all about oh, you know, a new picture you can post, like a potential, you know, job or the boss could see it. And so, you know, that's always been like at the back of my mind. I guess especially I think with Twitter it's more of like stream of consciousness almost and like you don't really think about what you say sometimes. But then like, you know, if you look back at it an hour later you're like wow, I wish I didn't tweet that. And even if you delete it there's still kind of the like... you know, it's on the internet somehow...”

A NVivo generated word tree of the term “Employer” illustrates connections between words from multiple interviews that showed the perceptions of employers accessing their content on SNS (see Figure 3). The connected words show that the participants have concerns with how employers can interpret content they post on SNS and how judgments could impact their careers in a negative manner.

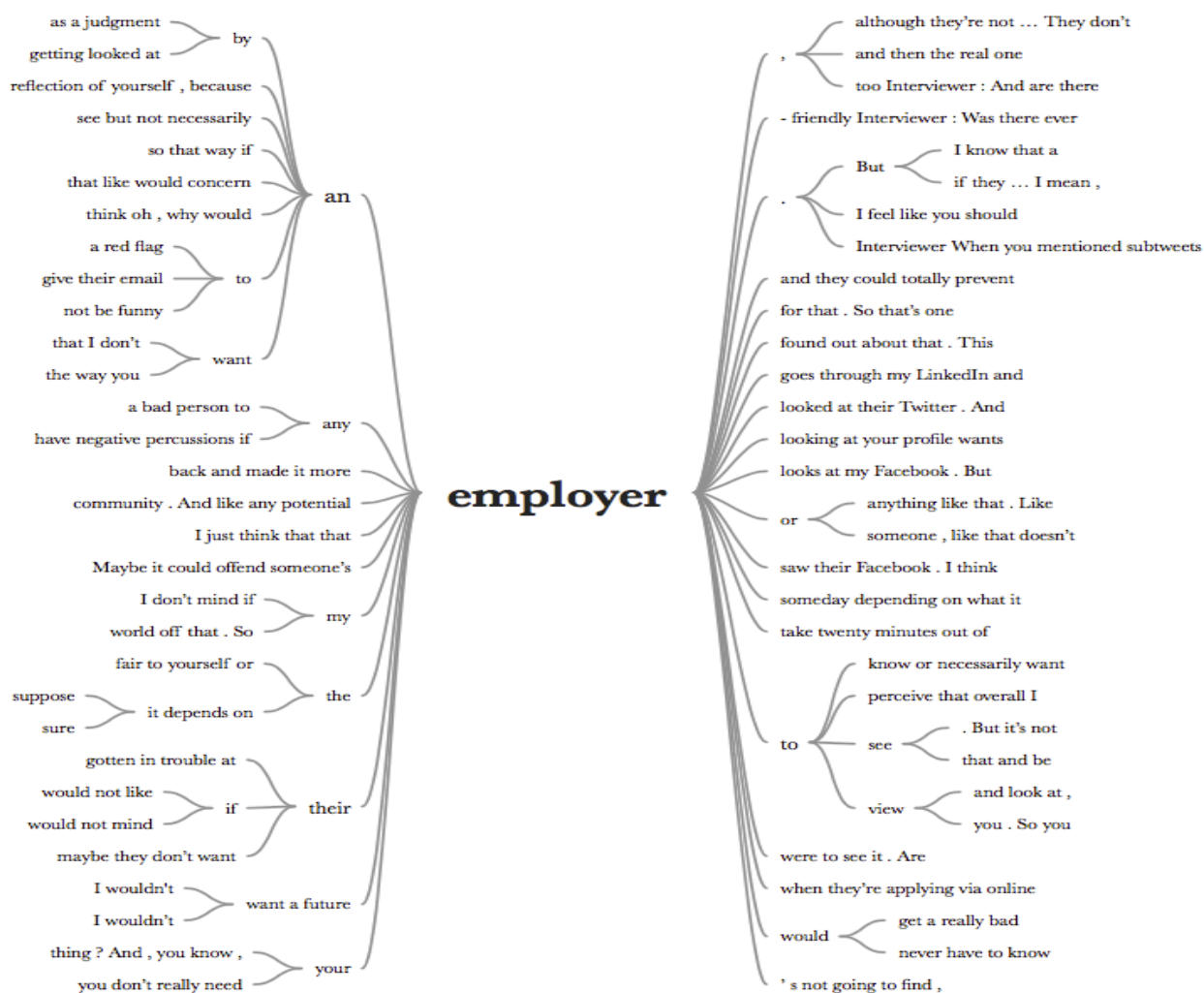


Figure 3. NVivo Word Tree of the Term “Employer”.

While participants emphasized the need of SNS users to be careful of what they post, Participant #1 articulated his concern with how the posts of others could portray him negatively and potentially impact his career:

“Well, I usually like to keep those things separate just in case something were to happen. Let’s say a person... let’s say a friend I had got upset with me. They could, you know, in a sense try to I don’t want to say trash me, but defamation... I do know of certain things that people have put on where they’ve mixed work and personal life and it has gotten them into trouble. People at work have done that with vacation photos and they have gotten in trouble at their employer for that. So that’s one thing I try to avoid. Especially since I am starting out in the job field with my career, I don’t want to try and do anything that would potentially hinder me from getting a career I would like or furthering my education.

Participant #5 reinforced the concern of others with that while being careful with what she posts, there remains the ability for posts to be misinterpreted and have negative impacts on a career:

“... I just don’t want anything to ever be taken the wrong way by somebody looking in on my profile without knowing me, because I could mean something in a totally, completely harmless way but somebody could not take it as such and judgments would arise. And I don’t want somebody that I don’t know to have biases about me. So I want to make sure that – in any case but Twitter for some reason! – that I’m protecting myself from that, especially with being somebody who’s about to enter the workforce.”

Privacy was cited as a general concern by Participant #6 where she expressed concern with who could access her information:

“I think it’s important. I don’t think that like the whole world needs to know about what you do and things. Generally like I’m an open person like if you got to know me, but like I don’t really like having people who don’t know me like know things about my life, because it’s just like... Like you don’t know who’s out there or anything...”

Participant #8 articulated their motivation in their desire to build a following through obtaining more followers:

“And then I have two Tumblr accounts. I have like my main one and then I have another one that I don’t use so much anymore. I made it like not even a few months ago, maybe like six months ago. I stopped using it because it didn’t get a lot of followers. So just like whatever; I’m over it. Because my other one I have like 600 and this one I only have like 60.”

The Processes for the Presentation of Self

When young adults use multiple SNS and MPM, they further regulate boundaries to their information through presenting themselves through pseudonyms, and limiting connections with SNS and between different SNS. Participant #9 shared her thoughts on limiting connections between different SNS as her presence is unique depending on the site and her online presence:

“Particularly with Twitter and Instagram I really like the option of not having the accounts linked between social medias. Because social media has become about sharing things on multiple sites, a lot of applications and websites tend to link them automatically and so you could share on multiple medias and say oh, I want to share this photo I’m posting on Instagram. I can share it on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Flickr. But there’s the option to unlink that so that they don’t get shared on multiple media sites, which is what I like to do because I don’t want them connected, because my presence on each social media site is tailored not only to that social media site but to my personal use of that social media site with regards to my privacy and online presence.”

Participant #3 added that her interests and how she represents herself to others may be different depending on the site:

“Well, like when I was younger I would do like different... I would base it off like different interests. Like sometimes I would pretend to be somebody who like really into sports just to see how that went. And then other times I would just be like really into like clothing and stuff like that. So I would just kind of – I don’t know – just try it out to see if like maybe this is really what I do like and maybe I could go with that...”

If connected and linked to a young adult’s real identity, an online presence may be able to be found across multiple sites. Participant #10 provided what she found when she searched for their SNS accounts in a Google search:

“... I found like links to my accounts, like Twitter, Instagram, like emails, like how to get there. So like anyone could like figure out how to get to my profiles.”

Participant #7 highlighted the ability for employers to search with the email addresses that applicants use for submitting resumes to determine what SNS are connected to it:

“... They’re (Employers) using it, you know. It’s how you get to see who you’re about to work with. Almost on every application I’ve ever filled out they asked if I use Facebook, you know. And my email address is linked to my Facebook. It’s just so public. It’s so accessible to people...”

To limit connections, young adults use the practice of using a pseudonym where they use a variation of their own name, or a name that is completely different from their

real name. Their intended goal is to make their accounts less likely to be found and connected to other online identities or their offline identity. A NVivo generated word tree of the term “Pseudonym” illustrates connections between words from multiple interviews that showed the experiences of young adults using pseudonyms on SNS (see Figure 4). Participant #6 described why young adults would use a pseudonym:

“...And like they would do things like that so like colleges like couldn’t search into them and like... So they type in their name; like they wouldn’t come up or anything like that. And there’s like a trend for like the last two or three years ago.”

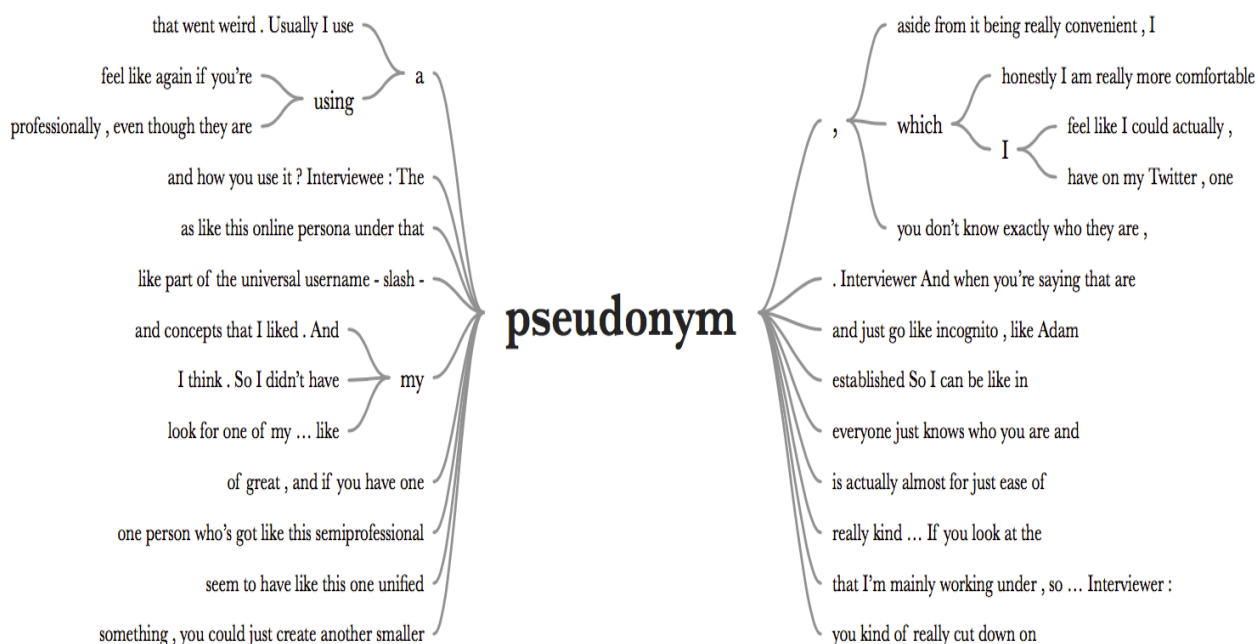


Figure 4. NVivo Word Tree of the Term “Pseudonym”.

A method that several participants described was that a method they used and knew of other young adults using was to create a pseudonym with keeping their first name and then using their middle name as their last name. Participant #5 explained her experience:

“The thing I can think of is I changed my name on Facebook so that it wouldn’t be my first and last name, it’s my first and middle name. And that’s more so for

future students as opposed to employers even. Because people know it as me and I wasn't going to make up some arbitrary fake name where people were like: who is this? At least it's still my name and then you can infer that that's my middle name. And a lot of people know my middle name anyways..."

Participant #8 articulated their use of only their first name on Tumblr to limit their connectivity:

"Just because like the way that Tumblr works and how you have like URLs and stuff that just like aren't your name... Other than... I mean, I do have my name on there but it's only my first name. So unless I told you what my Tumblr was or if I said something specific on my Tumblr that you would be able to put the pieces together, then you would really know who I was."

Other participants were less concerned with the use of a pseudonym for the Facebook accounts and used pseudonyms for accounts that were more for communicating with their peers. Participant #2 sums up their experience:

"... Usually I use a pseudonym, which honestly I am really more comfortable with. So I come up more often as like this online persona under that pseudonym, which I feel like I could actually, you know, go semiprofessional with, write under, maybe take writing commissions, etc. But my real name only really comes up as a Facebook, and even then that's really protected, private, and I don't post too much there."

Participants who had a second account on a SNS site used pseudonyms for the second account. Participant #11 explained his experiences:

"Yeah, my main account is under my actual name, where I follow all my friends and I reply to them and you can tell it's me in things like that. But my other one I don't really post on that one at all. I just follow people and I just use that to keep up on things, on certain topics. Just so people know it's me, I guess – all my friends. And I don't know if I said this but the other one (Twitter Account) isn't under my name. It's just a like a friend and username and... It's not even a picture of me."

Challenges can come for young adults with creating second SNS accounts and the need to limit the connectivity with their initial username. Participant #1 described his experience with Twitter:

“It’s difficult. For example, I know on... I can’t remember if it was... It might have been Twitter. So there’s a display name and then there’s actually your actual name and sometimes those are locked in. Like it’ll say you can’t change this for... They’ll say why because of, you know, X, Y, Z.

So I know in some cases, you know, your display name you can change but, you know, on record your actual name... If you don’t want to... Let’s say on Twitter you don’t want to say your actual name on there, if you want to put a, you know, username, whatever one and stuff, you might have difficulty changing that information.”

Although second accounts on a SNS can limit the ability for others to make connections, Participant #4 expressed concern with a Twitter account tied to her work and connected to her:

“I think through word of mouth they know it’s me because, you know, I say: ‘Follow the (Residence Hall) Twitter. You know, I run the (Residence Hall) Twitter. Yes, I’ll send out a tweet about your event.’ But there is no... you know, on the profile there is no mention of my name. There’s no picture of me.”

Online Search Results

All participants communicated that they have searched for themselves online to see what they find in search results. The participants were concerned with their information being found in search results and do not understand why certain information and pictures turn up while others do not. They are motivated to search for themselves on Google out of curiosity to see what their online presence is and during times that they apply for jobs.

Participant #2 described their curiosity for what they could find when they searched for themselves online:

“I want to say about a year ago, mostly because, well, school stuff, academically. Just hey, do I exist academically yet? Because with that private school I kind of actually didn’t in my home state’s school system because it was a private school – which was weird. So it’s like hey, do I exist at all? And then do I stick out like a sore thumb? Do people see me? What do people see of me when they do see this?”

Participant #3 shared her curiosity and what she found in search results:

“Yeah, I used to do that a lot when I was younger, when I was like wow, like there might be something about me out there. And it was just like school related stuff. Just to see like what would come up. It was usually nothing, though! It was like school related stuff, like sport team type things and... Like when I graduated high school I was in like a certain newspaper. And just like different like academic related things.”

When young adults search for themselves online, they can find pictures of themselves. Participant #5 is unsure why some pictures appear in her search results and others do not:

“I just wonder how some get there and how others don’t. I’m more confused about it. Like why just this one picture, not that other picture? And I don’t really understand how things get chosen to be put there. So I’m like, oh, cool, that’s me and like you can see my accomplishments, but I wonder why.”

Participant #8 described searching for their pictures with friends and their friends wondering why their pictures would show up in the search results:

“There were a couple of times when I had to like find pictures of myself and so I looked up my name or whatever. Sometimes just curiosity. And then I did it a couple of other times to show people. I was like hey, look what happens when I search my name... They thought it was strange because they’d see like pictures of themselves on it – I searched my name. And I actually... I found it interesting that like I would find more things when I searched my email addresses than I did my actual name.”

A NVivo generated word tree of the term “Google” illustrates connections between words from multiple interviews that showed the experiences of young adults searching for themselves through using the Google search engine online to determine what information about them is available to others (see Figure 5).

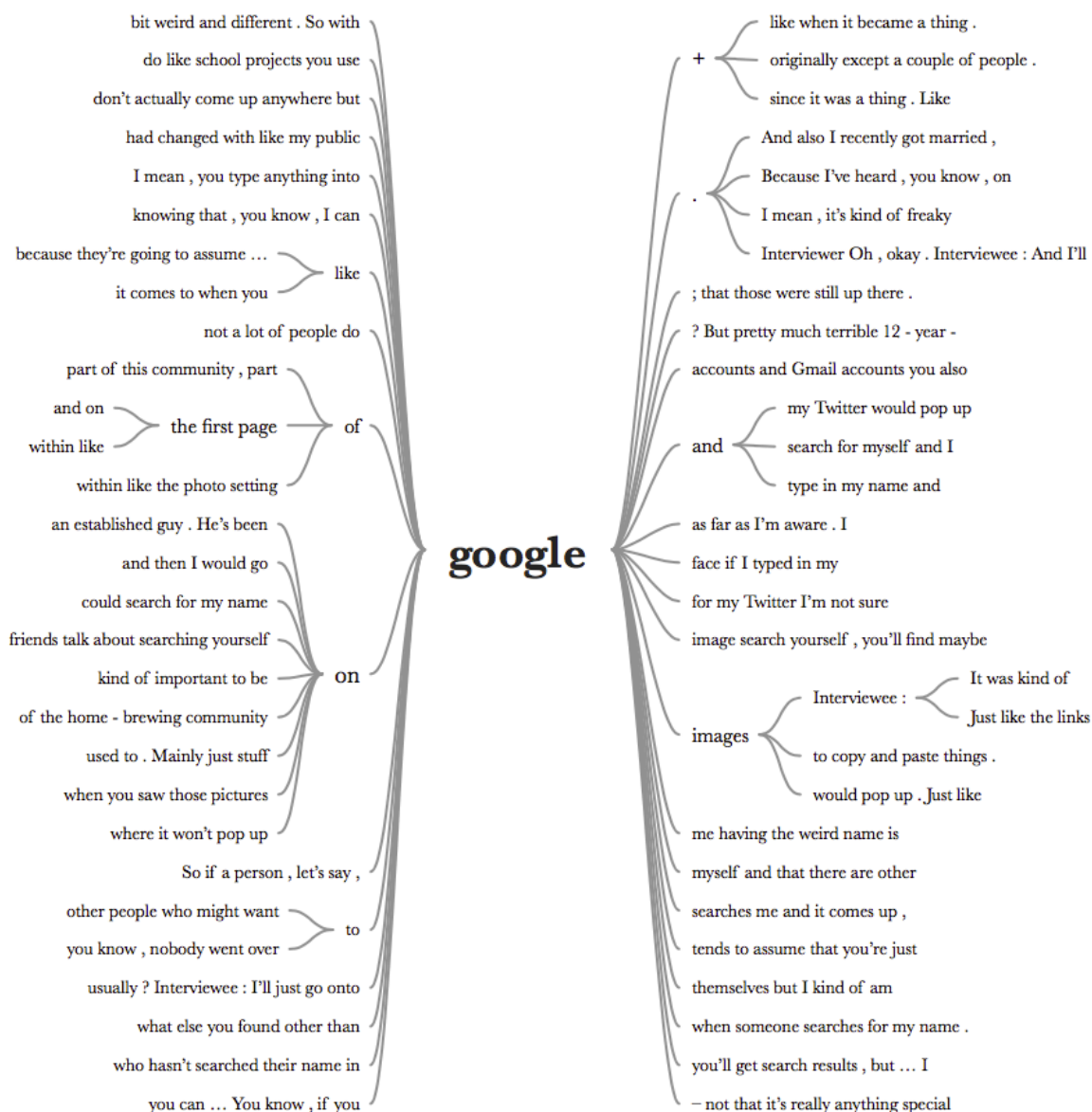


Figure 5. NVivo Word Tree of the Term “Google”.

Participants #6 also searched for themselves with her friends and shared concern with other participants with the pictures that appear in search results:

“I mean, when I do it, sometimes I do it with like my friends as a joke just to see what we’ll find on each other. And it’s funny but it’s like also kind of weird. So internally I just like get really weird about it and annoy-. Like not like annoyed. Like the articles of school, like I can understand that. It’s only like a name like pop up or anything like that. But the pictures are just like... Like they don’t need to be on there or anything.”

Participant #10 shares the same confusion with other participants why certain pictures will show up in search results that appear to be random, while others do not seem random:

“I have no idea. Like sometimes I’ll search my name and like stuff will come up connected to other people. Like someone’s tagged me in something on like Twitter or Instagram or something. But I don’t know. I don’t know why like certain things pop up and like others don’t. Like I don’t know. It just seems like really random. Like there’s no significance to like certain pictures.”

When searching for himself online, Participant #11 realized that anyone could search and find pictures of him:

“It was kind of weird at first, but I realize that you have to like search... I don’t know. It wasn’t that weird. I kind of expected it, but it was weird at first to actually see it... I don’t know – just like using the internet your whole life and seeing... Like when you have to do like school projects you use Google images to copy and paste things. It was just weird to see myself on there and realize that anyone could see that if they really wanted.”

Participant #7 voiced concern with embarrassing pictures that could be found online, but also thought it was neat that she would turn up in search results:

“Pretty embarrassing, just because I was whole different person at 12 – I mean, who wasn’t? But, I mean, at the same time it’s also kind of neat, though, that... I don’t know, it shows like I’m part of this community, part of Google. I mean, it’s kind of freaky that anyone can search me, but it’s neat. I don’t know, it makes me feel kind of important to be on Google...”

Participant #1 expressed concern in that his information, including his address, could be turned up in a Google search:

“I found it was a little bit distressing because that is just a simple search. I mean, someone could find all that information about you. Doing another simple search... And I also did find other information. Like you could find, you know, a person’s address. So with just a simple search I could pull up my address just by putting my name in, and other information. And that was a little bit shocking that someone could put your name in and that and pull up that type of information.”

Participant #4 described how search results made her realize how easy information can be obtained by others and be permanently accessible:

“I think that that’s like a scary moment because there is like... From what I’ve heard, you know, once it’s online it is online, and even if you remove it there’s, you know, there’s traces of it and someone can still find it. And I think it’s scary knowing that, you know, even if that was up there for five minutes it’s kind of this notion of once it’s online it’s online forever and someone somehow can find it. So I think it’s scary knowing that that can be up there and... Going back to those horror stories of, you know, like... It can come back to haunt you.”

Participant #9 highlighted that information can be found through searching for a variety of linked information including email addresses on resume, phone numbers and associated SNS accounts:

“I think that a lot of people just need to realize how easily it is done and how easily you can find other people on the internet, even if you are not... One moment. Even if you think that it’s not easy to find you, that it is very easy to find people on social media and how it connects to each other. So like I mentioned with Twitter and Facebook. Because yes, your Facebook is very professional and people can find you on Facebook, but a lot of them don’t realize that when you signed up for Instagram or when you signed up for Twitter that you are able to find people through their Instagram or through their Twitter. Or in Twitter there’s even a search option where you can search for people by their phone number. If your phone number is tied to your Facebook then they can find you on Twitter with your phone number. Or I can find you by your email that you used to sign up for Twitter if you don’t unlink that. And so I think a lot of people will give their email to an employer when they’re applying via online application and then don’t realize oh, if they back-search my email they’ve found my Twitter and my Instagram, which maybe they don’t want their employer to see. But it’s not tied to their name or to their full legal name but it’s still tied to them somehow.”

Privacy Settings

Privacy settings were viewed as difficult to use by eight out of 11 participants, one participant did not use privacy settings, and two participants felt that privacy settings were easy to use. In general, young adults found privacy settings difficult to use and are frustrated by the time required to change settings. Facebook privacy settings were identified for being complicated, hard to understand and use, taking a long time to

change, and updates created frustrations with changing privacy settings and their interfaces to manage the settings. In comparison, Twitter privacy settings were not typically used, possibly due to family members primarily being on Facebook.

Participant #2 described the ease of use related to privacy settings not requiring a long time to understand and use:

“It depends on the site and the user interface, I think. The easier it is to use, the less time it takes to, well, learn, manage, understand who exactly is going to see things if you change it. And then it kind of cuts down on the I guess anxiety of dealing with it or just the I guess hassling with it if you do need to fix something. Like if you seriously messed up on a post that you’re like ‘Oh God, did anyone see that? That was a mistake. Oh God,’ you can like really cut things down really quick or even delete the thing. Of if you’re like ‘Oh crap, my Aunt _____, my Great Aunt _____’s on here. She probably doesn’t want to hear about, you know, how I went to Pride this year and how it was great.’ So if the user interface with the security settings are... if that’s easier to use, that’s like power to the site. Honestly, I’d feel more comfortable with a website if I knew more about the security settings and I was able to work with them.”

Participant #4 reinforced Participant #2’s sense that privacy settings should be easy to use, require little time to adjust, and be easy to understand to be more user-friendly:

“More user-friendly, yeah. I think that if they... Like I said, I had a really hard time finding privacy settings and getting to them and trying to understand that. I think if there was a better... almost like how-to guide. Or if they were... you know, if you click this button, this one button in settings, this will get you straight to it. I think that if it was more straightforward and not in the, you know, ‘click here for advanced settings’... I think like if it was right off the bat ‘you can make this private’, instead of having to have to dig down into advanced settings, I think that that would make privacy a lot easier to manage.”

A NVivo generated word tree of the term “Privacy Settings” illustrates connections between words from multiple interviews that showed the experiences of young adults and their complicated relationship with using privacy settings,

understanding them, and their desire to have streamlined settings that are easy to understand and use (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. NVivo Word Tree of the Term “Privacy Settings”.

Participant #1 voiced his concerns with Facebook’s privacy settings and taking a long time to change with many steps that were perceived as unnecessary:

“I do see some issues. In terms of Facebook there are some issues with like information. So sometimes it could be hard to change privacy settings. A lot of

times they would ask, well, are you sure you want to change it to this? You know, password, you know, stuff like that, where... You know, if you're logged in, let's say, or say, okay, I need your password to do this, you know, you need to do this. And sometimes it can be frustrating because you just want to change it. You don't want to have to jump through all these hoops to, you know, change something."

With updates to Facebook, young adults are further frustrated by the changing privacy settings that results in changes to the interfaces for managing privacy settings.

Participant #5 explained her frustration:

"I think when you establish your account at first it's easy to just click off those boxes and check, okay, I want people to see this, I don't want people to see that. But then when you already have the account... And they keep changing privacy settings. Like you'll get updates. It's like 'we changed this feature'. And it's like, well, I don't really understand that. So I tend to just leave it at what it was and not go back and change it because I don't now understand how to and what it fully entails."

Participant #7 further stressed that the change requires time to then learn the new Facebook interfaces:

"...It always takes me a while to kind of find stuff like that when I'm specifically looking to, you know, hide a post or block somebody. But I think for a lot of people it comes more naturally. So I guess once you do it once it should probably be easy to figure it out for the rest of the time. But I always have to reteach myself how to go in and do that kind of stuff."

Concerns were identified by participants on their privacy settings changing on Facebook when updates are applied. Participant #9 explained her concerns:

"I know with Facebook, in particular, sometimes when they update the network and they'll change the format it'll reset some privacy settings – which I find problematic because I'll post things that I have changed the privacy setting in the past so that every post is friend only can view and then I'll realize after they've updated it that oh, now other people can see this. And so I'll have to go back through and recheck it. So sometimes your privacy settings are not kept throughout. And that's always in the fine print of what you're agreeing to, but no one wants to read 500 pages of legal jargon when you're agreeing to the new terms and user agreement with Facebook – because they do try to hide it in 500 pages of legal jargon. And you could sit there and read through it all, but most people don't have the time or don't have the patience to sit through and read it or don't understand it well enough to read it."

With young adults using Facebook primarily with their families, they were concerned less about privacy settings with their Twitter accounts that they used primarily with their friends. They generally preferred their Twitter accounts be to be open and permitting for the abilities to retweet their tweets. Participant #8 described the use of privacy settings on Facebook while keeping their Twitter account public:

“Well, okay, so my Facebook like only my friends can see what I post. And then there’s like we have the Pride page on Facebook that’s completely private just because like there are a lot of people who post things in Pride that they don’t want their families to see. My Twitter anybody can look at because it’s not private at all.”

Participant #10 described her rationale of not having her Twitter account set for private:

“...It’s a hassle because if anyone wants to follow you you have to accept their follow. So like instead of just like gaining followers you have to accept them, and then they see that you accept them and don’t follow them back. And I don’t know, I just think it’s like more of a hassle to be private. Plus if you’re private on Twitter people can’t retweet you. So like no one can see your tweets. I don’t know, I like when people retweet me because like more people see it. But if you’re private no one can.”

Participant #3 stated that she does not use privacy controls with her Twitter accounts:

“Not really. I mean, like I said, I don’t really use them, so if there was a problem I probably wouldn’t even figure it out.”

Participant #11 seemed to be unsure as to the privacy settings on his Twitter accounts and who could access them:

“I think my Twitter is private. I’m pretty sure. I really don’t look at privacy settings too often because I don’t think... there’s not a lot of valuable information about me on there, as I said earlier. But my Twitter’s privacy, my main one, and then my other one’s not private. It doesn’t really make a difference on that one because I don’t really say anything on it. And my Instagram, which only has a handful of photos, is public, too. Honestly, that one should probably be private if

any of them would be private.”

Participant #6 stated that she did not find privacy settings difficult to use with social media. However, she emphasized that she is careful with what she posts:

“I don’t find there to be many problems on social media with the privacy. I think it works well, what they’re trying to accomplish, which I’ve found to be successful and I use it. So I don’t really find there to be many problems. I just think that it might be smarter of people to use it if they are doing things that they maybe shouldn’t be allowing for the rest of the world to see – even though they are by posting about it and stuff.”

Untagging SNS Posts

Ten out of the 11 participants used the SNS feature of untagging themselves from content that varied from alcohol related posts to embarrassing pictures to regulate their privacy. The ten participants knew that it is not just what they post about themselves, but also what others post about them and connect to their profiles that impact their online reputation. While untagging content was considered relatively easy to do participants voiced concern with the impact of the posted content, and in some cases asked those that posted it to take down the content.

Participant #7 talked about the importance of regulating content that she was tagged in to control how she is presented to others:

“Oh, all the time. Actually that’s one thing that I’ve recently changed is now whenever somebody tries to post something to my timeline I make sure I can approve it first because, I mean, there’s so much junk going around, like things that I don’t really want to be associated with, you know, from old friends or like a different, you know, a different time in my life that I just don’t want like stirred up. And I don’t really want people to see me the way that some people try to portray me.

A NVivo generated word tree of the term “Untag” illustrates connections between words from multiple interviews that showed the experiences of young adults using the feature of untagging themselves from content on SNS to limit their connection with

content that was viewed as undesirable or the ability to have a potential negative impact on them (see Figure 7).

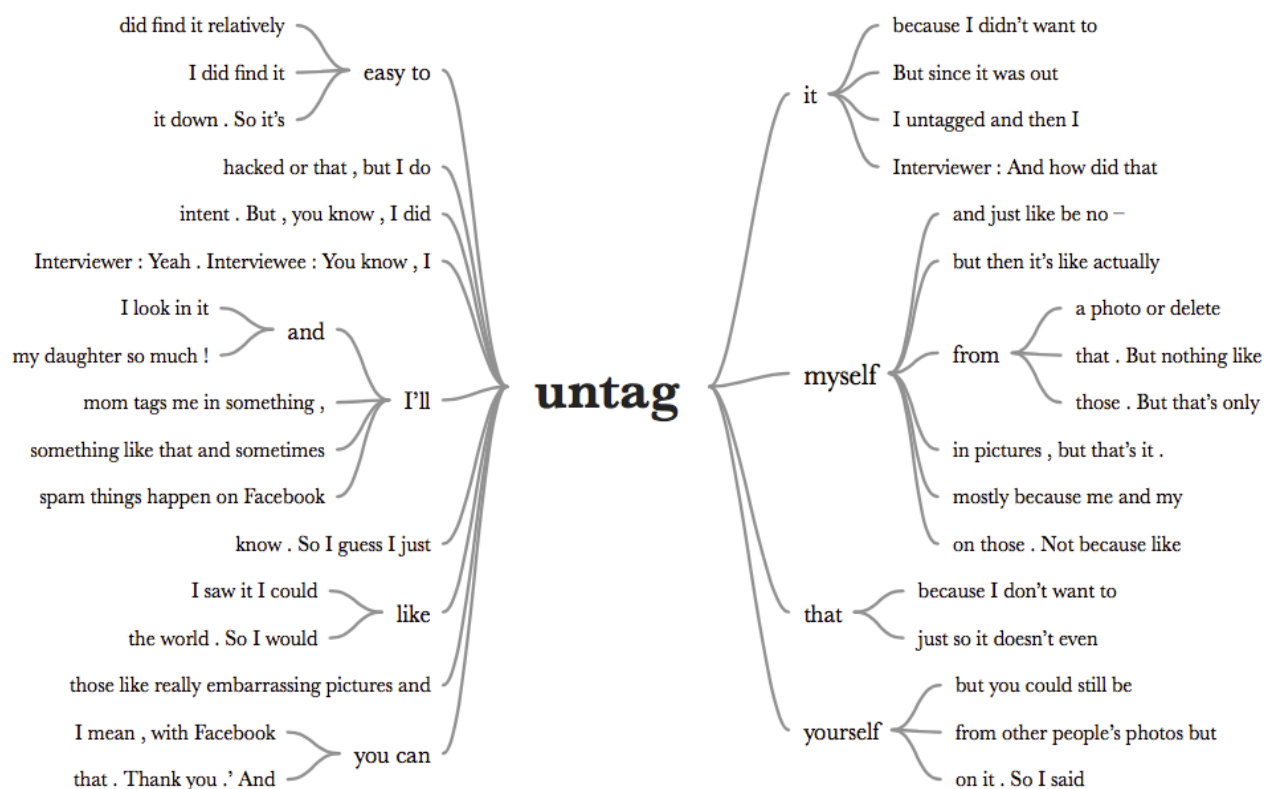


Figure 7. NVivo Word Tree of the Term “Untag”.

Participant #9 described an experience she had on Facebook where she untagged herself and asked the poster to delete the post:

“Yes. I had a friend post a photo on Facebook and it was of me at a house party at college and they tagged me in the photo. And I was not drinking in the photo. There was nothing that showed that I was drinking, but there were people drinking in the photo and there were drinks in the background and all that kind of stuff. And I said I do not want this tied with me. And so I messaged the person. I said, ‘Please delete this immediately. I do not want this on my Facebook. I don’t know why you have it on your Facebook, but I do not want it tied to mine. And so I have had to remove some posts because of online presence. And some people are comfortable sharing things about them going out and either drinking or going to parties and whatnot on Facebook – I don’t know why – but I am not and so I do not want that on my Facebook.’”

A similar comment was made by Participant #4:

“Yeah. On Facebook, you know, there’s been some pictures posted of me like over the weekends when we were hanging out and I’ve been tagged in them. And I immediately untagged myself just because I say, hey, I see how this picture could be interpreted. And that might not necessarily be the truth but I see how it can be interpreted. So I untagged myself and, you know, told my friends: ‘Hey, you need to take this down.’”

Participants #5 recalled when she untagged herself from an alcohol related post as she was concerned how it could be interpreted by employers:

“One example I guess would be even though I’m 21, like it’s totally fine for me to share photos... I don’t, but my mom will sometimes share like a cute like drink recipe with me on there, and I wouldn’t want a future employer to see that and be like: oh, well, she must like drinking and partying – even though that’s not true. Like things like that.”

Participant #1 described a post where he untagged himself:

“It was a friend from high school. So it was a person who, you know, I went to high school with, I was kind of close friends with. They weren’t my best friend, but I did, you know, talk with them every once in a while. And they got upset about something and, you know, they’re going on about like all this different stuff. I can’t remember what it was, but they were obviously very agitated about something and they just started putting, you know, oh, you know, these are my friends; these aren’t, you know. Then somehow I ended up in there. I kind of just untagged myself because I didn’t want to get, you know, associated with that.”

Embarrassing or unflattering pictures caused several participants to untag themselves from posts. Participant #11 summed up his experience:

“Probably just one of my... Well, maybe it was more just like an embarrassing picture or something like that. It might not have been super serious, but it was kind of like God, come on, lads, can you take that off.”

Participant #10 had a similar experience:

“Yeah, I guess so on Facebook and on Twitter. I guess from like birthday messages from people. I get a lot of like embarrassing pictures from when I was like 8 and like my teeth were like awry. I just tend to take off those like really embarrassing pictures and untag myself on those. Not because like I care about like professionally and like jobs seeing them – because like there’s nothing wrong with them. I just don’t want anyone to see them because they’re embarrassing and I’m just like: urgh, it’s ugly. I’d just rather people forget about my young self and like... I don’t know. So I guess I just untag myself in pictures, but that’s it.”

The ten participants all felt that it was easy to untag content. Participant #6 summed up the experiences:

“Yeah, it’s fairly simple. You just click on... it’s some like notification that says like ‘would you like to be tagged... like untagged from this picture?’ And you say yes and it’s gone.”

Self-Editing and Censorship

Ten out of 11 participants described their presentation of self in the context of self-editing and censoring themselves to help manage their online reputation on SNS. The participants acknowledged that the possibility of an overlap could occur with their social and professional identities.

Participant #5, a teacher candidate, explained how she censored herself to present a positive professional identity to help her career:

“My friends are all education majors, so when pictures get posted they’re in the same boat, where it’s... you post what’s good and respectable. Just censoring yourself in language and especially on Facebook not sharing something that might cause a conflict with somebody. You want to keep it very clean and this is me, this is who I am, but that’s about it.”

The impact of SNS posts on employment and the ability to create negative impressions was articulated by Participant #10:

“Yeah, I guess that’s part of the reason why I don’t post stuff about drugs, alcohol, swearing, that kind of stuff. A lot of people do and it does bother me a lot. Like a lot of people like to brag on Twitter how much they drank last night, how much they’re going to drink this night, like the drug they did last week, how they’re just so messed up right now from how much they drank. And it just looks so bad. Not just to employers, to anyone – anyone viewing the tweet. It just looks bad on you...”

Participant #6 expressed the need to be careful with what she posts on SNS rather than being regretful later:

“I think monitoring yourself is really important and to know when you should and shouldn’t be saying something that may not be appropriate. I think in general

I think people like don't really think about what they're saying and like they can look back on it in a year and just feel like oh, like maybe I shouldn't have said that. But like if you thought about it beforehand you could save yourself that. I just think people need to like really think about like the consequences and like what can happen from things."

With young adults using Twitter and having their accounts public, participants like Participant #4 posted communications that she thought were safe, but wondered if past communications could be interpreted in ways that she did not intend:

"I think a big one was kind of that thought in the back of my head of like wow, my Twitter public; anyone can see it. And it wasn't so much of like oh, you know, some friend could see it. It was, you know, maybe in the future, if I'm trying to get a job – which I am... but it's still that thought of like, you know, what if I had tweeted something that, you know, I really didn't mean and then it coming back and haunting me? I've heard those horror stories and I'm like I don't want that to happen to me..."

Participant #11 voiced a similar content to Participant 4 in that he needed to be careful and that his past posts should be reviewed:

"Yeah. Yeah, definitely. That actually started actually to be in my head when I used social media probably maybe like my last year or two of high school. I was like, you know, I definitely... I don't really post bad things on here, but I should definitely be careful because... or I should even... If there's anything bad in the past I should just go back and delete it because things like that could probably... they could definitely come back and haunt you."

Participant #8 described how they deleted a post after it had been made as they regretted the post or had others talk to them:

"Yeah. Yeah, there's been a few instances where I've gone a little too far with something and then people will usually come talk to me about it and so then I'll delete it. Or maybe five minutes later after I posted it I'm just like maybe that wasn't a good idea, and then I'll delete it."

Participant #7 explained how limiting her connections with others on SNS could help in preventing negative expressions:

"Definitely focusing on like the company I keep. I mean, if I removed like my middle school friends, you know, people who I'm not really associated with

anymore, like they wouldn't post like memories and tag me in them that I don't want to really see anymore; that I've moved past."

To avoid conflicts with others, by limiting his connectivity, Participant #1 explained his withdrawal from SNS during the presidential election to avoid negative interactions:

"Well, the experiences with, you know, people with the harassment, stuff like that, and with the Election – you know, this is right, this is that. I have, you know, stopped going on for a couple of days, you know, weeks. You know, instead of going on maybe once or twice, you know, every couple of days, I would go, you know, maybe a week or so because I didn't... If I anticipated like something was coming up... For example, the Election, with people from both sides about, okay, well, whoever wins... You know, I stayed off of social media for, you know, a couple of days – you know, the day of and a couple of days after – because I didn't want to put up with, you know, people saying oh, this is right, this is wrong, or what's going on here? Just, you know, to avoid, you know, any conflicts or that."

Participant #2 described how to give up on an account on Tumblr if there are no other options available:

"To give up on an account usually... Well, sometimes you can make a post and be all like Hi, I'm deleting in like X amount of time. And people can take a look at that and you can send it to people or just tell them; people can see it, and then just, you know, delete the account."

New Features

When the participants were asked what new features would be helpful for them with using SNS, the features identified were related to enhancing privacy, increased security, and with being able to limit negative impressions that could be generated from the posts. Four out of the participants' responses focused on the common thread of content monitoring and review and ranged from monitoring a post that was just made to being able to review posts and delete content that had been done in the past.

Participant #2 described a prompt that could occur in the user interface if a SNS analyzed the post and determined that the post may create negative consequences:

“Maybe for like certain posts just to have something pop up and be like ‘Are you sure you want to say this? Like is this really what you want to say?’ – based off of like things that you’ve said in the past. I feel like that could be helpful, especially if I get like angry or something and I just kind of like want to lash out, and it’s like wait a minute, are you sure you want to do this?”

Participant# 6 expressed the idea of having SNS analyze pictures and content on SNS and act if those in the pictures are under 21 and if alcohol:

“I think that if you maybe like make... If like people under 21... Like if they had a team like on Instagram per se and they like monitored what people were posting and what people were saying on like the app, what they were doing, and like say like: ‘Oh, you really shouldn’t have a picture of alcohol with you. Like you should delete that or we’re going to delete that for you.’ And like taking care of like people like who... Just in general, like with different situations, that is maybe not the best for them or best for other people; like should not be doing about... like going about that. And the same for Twitter, because like a lot of people like tweet things and like start fighting and like drama, and that like could totally be avoided if like people just didn’t impulsively tweet in the first place.”

Participant #7 described a need to better curate older content and being able to control who has access:

“Can I think of new features that would be helpful? Well, they’ve started doing this memories thing on Facebook, like see what you posted on this day two years ago. And like if my friend Natalie tagged me on something two years ago she can repost that – you know what I mean? – and she doesn’t need my permission, even if I was a part of it, which... I mean, it’s definitely nice sometimes to like see those memories. But when it digs deeper sometimes it’s like er, that was funny five years ago but now it’s just kind of embarrassing or inappropriate. So more regulation of that would be nice probably.”

“Well, for instance, there was... I can’t remember specifically, but one of my friends and I were apparently hanging out seven years ago last month or something and it was just before I really felt a need to make my Facebook professional and appropriate. And, you know, there’s a whole bunch of swearwords in it and a whole bunch of comments from people who just really aren’t a part of my life anymore. And that was reposted and all that stuff was kind of dug back up. Those people who were associated with the post all kind of, you know, it jogged their memory of like how it used to be and kind of stuff. So it’s

like just outdated stuff that doesn't accurately represent me or represent me in a professional way gets kind of dug up sometimes and it just isn't a good thing."

Participant #11 identified an idea for a new feature for being able to search by keywords to remove old content:

"I never thought about that before. Maybe if you want to go back and delete a lot of posts like from your past maybe you could search keywords in posts. Like there could be a thing where if you want to delete a bunch of posts at once you could search one keyword and you could delete every post that had that word. Say if like you had a swearword in a post, you could search every single post that had that and delete them all at once maybe. That would be kind of cool."

Participant #11 described his idea for being able to recreate an account that could be used during times where an employer may search for his profile:

"Maybe there could be a thing where if your account is really that bad you could have something where for a few days it like recreates your whole account and makes it all really, really good posts that are really positive. And then it's just a temporarily thing. Then after a few days it goes back to being your ultimate account. It recreates everything so it looks really good. I think a fake... like basically a fake profile for a few days."

Participants explained their needs, through new features, for increasing security and privacy with their SNS accounts. Participant #1 explained how a pin could help facilitate the changing of settings:

"Well, I would like to have it where, you know, maybe... I know on the phones they have with... You know, this is more of like a security thing, but, you know, login. Like on your phone you have the PIN. I think seeing more of that maybe on a computer set up for it might be easier. Or in terms of if you want to change your information, maybe have the option to put like a PIN instead of your password. That might make it easier. Or it could be an additional step. If someone wants to have a password or a PIN or both, that might be an additional step for privacy."

With Twitter, Participant #4 articulated the idea of being able to regulate privacy on an individual tweet basis:

"I think maybe be able to make individual tweets private could be a good thing, because there are some tweets... You know, if I'm on my personal Twitter and I'm sending out a tweet about a club event or a program that I'm having, I want

other followers to be able to retweet that to get the information out. But then there are other tweets that I'm simply just saying wow, I was working on a paper for so long. That doesn't necessarily need to be public. It's not necessarily a bad tweet, it's just that can be on my private life"

Participant #5 expressed the desire to be able to see what their profile looks like when others view it:

"I wish that there was a way that you could see your profile through the eyes of somebody that you are not friends with on that profile so that you know what people are looking at when they search you without knowing you."

When setting up an account initially, Participant #9 shared that she would like a simple drop down menu to be able to set initial privacy settings:

"It would be another option like select your gender or put in your age. It's select your privacy setting. And it could just be as simple as the same dropdown that you get in the settings bar but while you are doing the signup process."

To help manage their online reputation, Participant #10 articulated the need for a feature on SNS to mute people, so that they cannot see that they were unfollowed:

"I think... Well, Twitter has that feature where you can mute people. So it doesn't tell them you've muted them but like you don't see their things. So it's like a one way kind of thing. I wish other social medias did the same thing. I wish you could mute people on like Snapchat or Instagram because I'd like it because then they don't know that you did that so like it doesn't cause any drama, like why did you unfollow me? Like that kind of stuff. So like they don't know, but you don't have to see their tweets. Or if you got in a fight you can mute them. And then like you make up, then you can just unmute them and then there's no like well, why did you unfollow me when we were in a fight? Or like something like that. I just really like that feature. I wished the other ones had that, too."

Training on the use of SNS and social and professional presentations was identified for a need by several participants. This could include an online tutorial or training, or an in-person training. Participant #1 shared his needs:

"...But I think, you know, if there was a course on campus opened where it went through and really presented like this is how you do like a résumé. This is how you do... You know, stuff like this. This is how you present yourself on social media, or professional, or even a personal aspect. You know, this is what you

don't put on there. This is how it could trace back to you if you put something negative on. So focusing mostly on the professional, how to show yourself professionally, regardless of if it's professional social media or your personal social media."

Participant #2 reinforced the need for understanding how others view their representations on SNS:

"Well, knowing more of what people actually see and think of you, which is kind of how it works in real life, too, I guess. But it's not like you're going to go up to someone and be like: Hi. On a scale of 1 to 10 what do you think of me as a person? But yeah... Though in some areas, like on forums, Good Reads, Tumblr, etc., you are going to see like a direct impact of how, say, your thoughts, your opinions, the way you present your arguments, you're going to see directly how they affect people and how people respond. But like there the stakes are also lower. So yeah... And it's not like... You can't... You legitimately can't just go up to people and ask them. You can't... I am someone; hey, what do you think of me as an individual? That's kind of like violating the social norm that we have..."

Participant #4 shared that with a Twitter account that she was asked to use for work purposes there was no instruction provided on professionalism with posting:

"When setting up the ...twitter account me, as well as the other RA's in my building were never given clear directions or guidelines for the twitter. We simply set it up as another way to promote programs in our building, as we saw our residents are active on social media. Professionalism was never discussed, but rather I think it was implied with the twitter name... This twitter account was simply set up as another way to advertise for programs besides posting flyers in the building."

Patterns Across Cases

In the study, the researcher identified themes through the review of the transcripts.

The themes identified were:

1. SNS use with online audiences (T1)
2. Motivations for using MPM (T2)
3. The processes for the presentation of self (T3)
4. Online search results (T4)

5. Privacy settings (T5)
6. Untagging SNS posts (T6)
7. Self-editing and censorship (T7)
8. New Features (T8)

Through the review of the transcripts by the researcher, the frequency of the themes were identified (see Table 7).

Table 7

Themes Discussed by Each Participant

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	Total
Participant #1	42	41	2	10	8	6	2	5	116
Participant #2	10	50	31	6	4	0	1	1	103
Participant #3	1	4	1	3	1	1	0	4	15
Participant #4	12	20	4	11	9	4	1	3	64
Participant #5	22	54	9	12	25	5	6	9	142
Participant #6	26	57	7	12	14	4	11	7	138
Participant #7	22	31	0	4	14	7	4	6	88
Participant #8	12	24	10	12	9	3	5	6	81
Participant #9	28	60	10	5	20	4	3	5	135
Participant #10	20	78	8	17	10	2	14	9	158
Participant #11	27	60	5	14	12	5	9	8	140
Total	222	479	87	106	126	41	56	63	

Summary of Findings

Chapter 4 provided detailed findings of the analysis and results generated from semi-structured interviews with young adults. Eight themes developed: SNS use with online audiences, motivations for using MPM, the processes for the presentation of self, online search results, privacy settings, untagging SNS posts, self-editing and censorship, and new features. The themes describe the complexity and challenges that young adults face with regulating boundaries with their professional and social identities online through the use of MPM. In chapter 5, the researcher will discuss conclusions and

recommendations for future research with boundary regulation for young adults and their uses on SNS.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations, and Summary

Introduction

Based on the findings detailed in Chapter 4, this chapter provides a conclusion to the study through providing details related to: the themes presented, the research question, and strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of the study. Further information is provided to address validity of the findings, implications, recommendations, and future research. This section will provide a concise summary of the research presented in this study.

Conclusions

The previously identified findings from this study are used to answer the research question: How do young adults describe their experiences with using MPM on SNS to regulate the boundaries between their personal and professional identities online? Findings and conclusions are presented below to address the research question. Themes and their relationships are presented to show how they connect to the research question of this study.

The responses from the participants in the study show that their experiences and the processes for managing their online reputations are complicated. Young adults, between 18 and 23 years of age, use a multilayered process for regulating the boundaries to their information, including the use of MPM, to different audiences to manage their online reputation. As part of the MPM process, and consistent with previous research (Stutzman & Hartzog, 2012), young adults primarily rely on the use of multiple accounts

on SNS, rather than on privacy settings that are not considered user friendly and can possibly change with updates to the SNS. For young adults, the risk of a current employer or future employer making a decision based upon information found on SNS is significant. Participants recalled direct and indirect experiences that motivated them to use MPM to regulate the boundaries between their social and professional identities.

A NVivo generated word tree of the term “Multiple” illustrates connections between words from multiple interviews that showed the experiences of young adults using MPM to manage their online reputations on SNS (see Figure 8). The use of the word multiple is important in many phrases pertaining to this study including multiple profiles and multiple accounts, which both are parts of MPM.

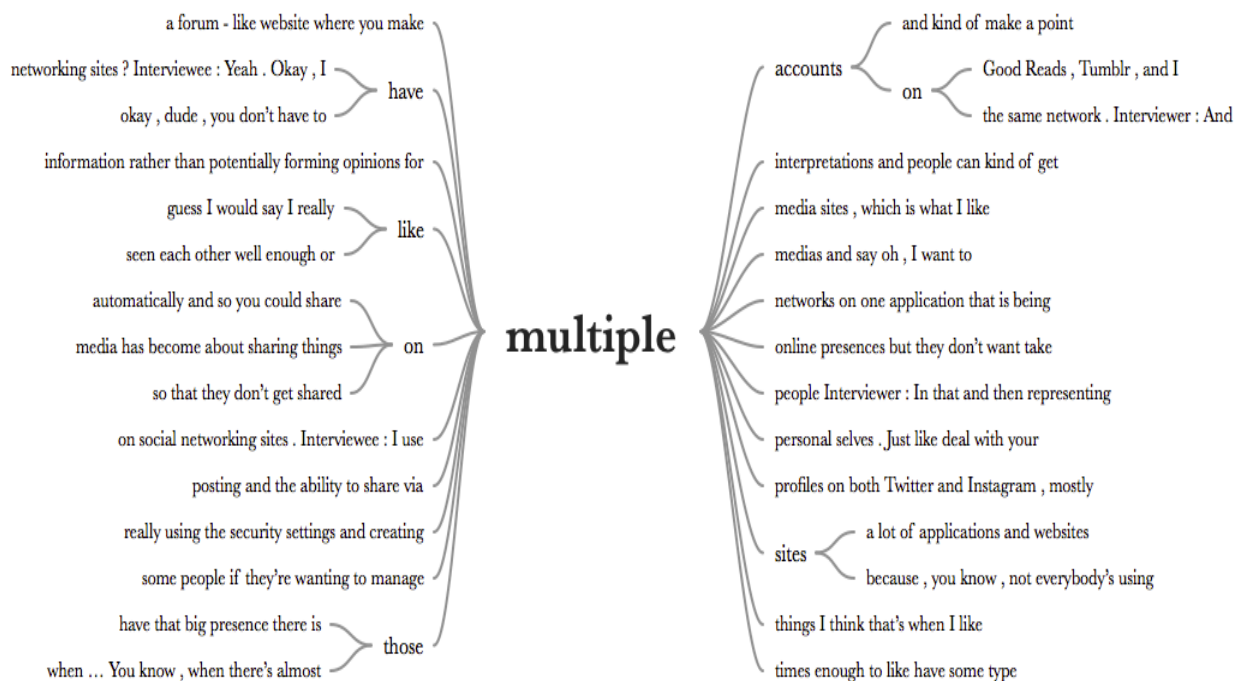


Figure 8. NVivo Word Tree of the Term “Multiple”.

Research Question

The central research question for the study was: How do young adults describe their experiences with using MPM on SNS to regulate the boundaries between their personal and professional identities online? Themes were identified through an analysis of the semi-structured interviews and included: SNS use with online audiences, motivations for using MPM, the processes for the presentation of self, online search results, privacy settings, untagging SNS posts, self-editing and censorship, and new SNS features.

A preliminary boundary regulation strategy was described by the participants in that they first decide how they are going to use a SNS depending on the audience. Many participants recalled how the use of Facebook transitioned into being primarily for their own families and that they provided general updates to their families through Facebook. Tanis, Louw, and Buijzen (2017) emphasized that parents use of SNS, and specifically Facebook, increase after children move out of the house as the intent of the parents is to stay connected with their children, now in their life as young adults, through their presence on Facebook.

The SNS that participants felt comfortable creating and sharing for personal and social use was Instagram and Twitter. In contrast, LinkedIn was viewed as a professional identity oriented network, and with Facebook being viewed as a family friendly network that was perceived as a SNS for more professional presentations and communications. The findings were consistent with those of Jeong and Kim (2017) who found users have unique concerns with privacy on SNS depending on the platform, audience, and

information. Figure 9 illustrates the relationships of how young adults use different SNS platforms depending on the audience and the information.

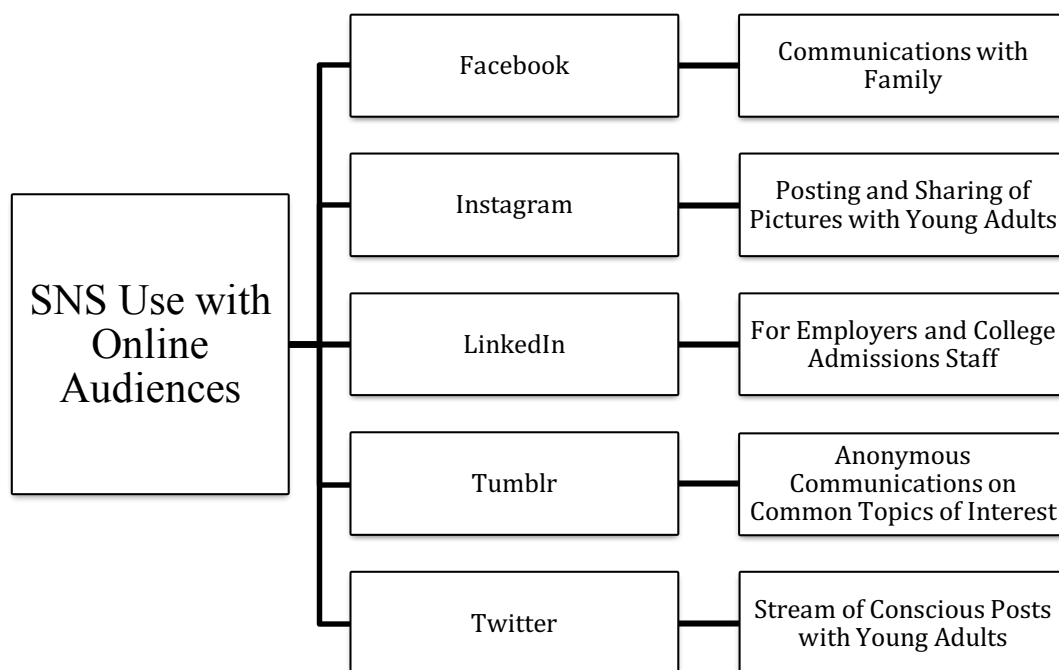


Figure 9. SNS Use with Online Audiences.

The participants expressed their use of MPM was motivated by two primary factors that were the worry about judgment by others with their social identity, and possible negative impacts with their professional identities. With their social identity, the worry focused upon how their family and friends may judge them negatively based upon content that did not adhere to the norms of those groups. With their professional identity, participants were concerned as to the impacts with increasing the likelihood that an employee could be fired, or with the possibility that information obtained through a SNS would make a potential employee be perceived as less desirable. The findings were consistent with the motivations identified by Stutzman and Hartzog (2012). Figure 10 illustrates the relationship with the participants Motivations for using MPM.

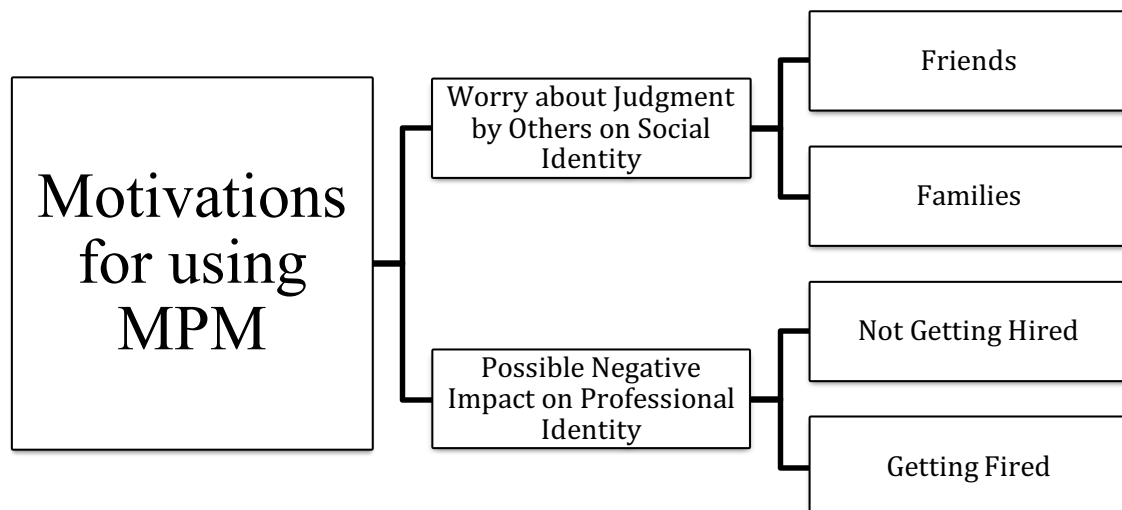


Figure 10. Motivations for using MPM.

When a SNS account is created, decisions must be made in regard to what the username will be, the name registered for the account, what email address is connected to the account, and if the account will be connected to any other SNS account through the sharing of an authentication mechanism. If a phone number is needed to register for the SNS, or for the use of dual factor authentication, the user must decide as to the level of connectivity with a phone. Participants in the study were very mindful of the connectivity and the impact it could have with MPM in linking accounts that they wished to keep separate from one another. The strategy of limiting connections was consistent with the findings of Stutzman and Hartzog (2012) with users intentionally limiting connections to help facilitate the sharing of content with being able to worry less about unintended audiences viewing the information.

Comments were made by participants that shared their concern with the use of any email addresses or phone numbers listed on resumes, or provided to employers, that could be linked to their SNS accounts that they did not want employers to be able to find. Participants further emphasized the need for use of a pseudonym with SNS accounts to

further limit access and discoverability of their different SNS accounts that were used for separate social and professional purposes. The use of pseudonyms was aligned with Stutzman and Hartzog's (2012) processes and components of boundary regulation through MPM to keep online identities separate and to limit connections across accounts. Figure 11 illustrates the processes for the presentation of self the participants described with the strategies to regulate boundaries.

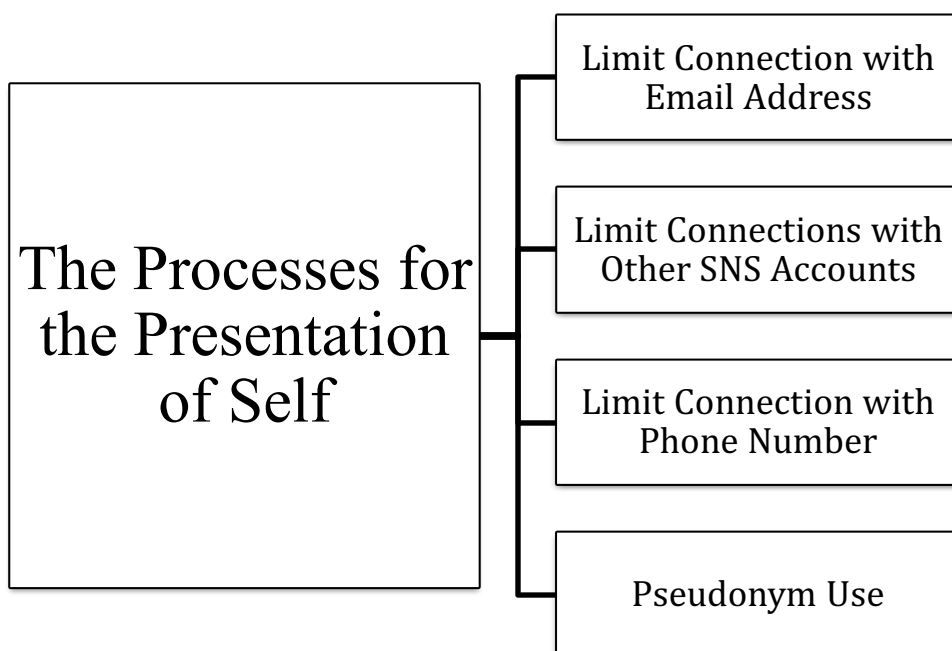


Figure 11. The Processes for the Presentation of Self.

Yang (2015) identified the need for conducting online reputation through searching for information pertaining to your online reputation, analyzing the information and assessing impact, and then taking steps to address any information found that is of concern. All participants communicated that they had searched for themselves online to determine what information others could find in search results. Those that did not limit connections in their use of MPM were concerned with their SNS accounts appearing in search results. In the instances where the participants knew who posted content on SNS,

they would contact the poster to have content removed. Besides SNS accounts, the information that appeared in search engine results that was of most concern to participants were pictures of themselves. Participants did not understand why some pictures would appear and others would not appear. Consistent with Yang's (2015) findings, the participants did not indicate that they acted on the results of search engine searches that identified the pictures of concern. Figure 12 illustrates the relationship that participants described with online search results.

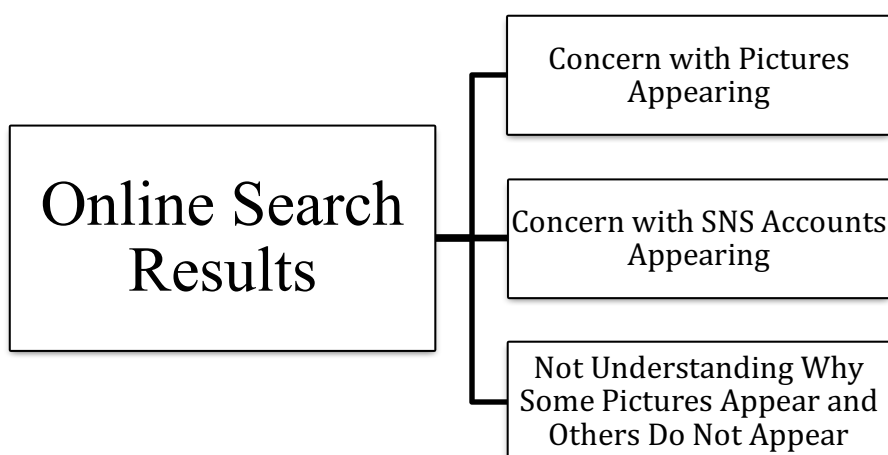


Figure 12. Online Search Results.

Participants expressed concern with the limited usability of privacy settings on SNS sites that was consistent with the prior research (Yang, 2015). Privacy settings, in general, were described as taking a long time to change, complicated and difficult to use, and when updates were applied users were frustrated with the interfaces being different and settings being changed that made their accounts less private. The participants had a high level of concern specifically with using Facebook privacy settings. The impact on MPM is perceived in that MPM use was encouraged, in addition to the use of different

SNS, to create a layered approach to privacy management through use of different sites and accounts for different purposes. The use of privacy settings as one tactic to be used with other tactics, such as MPM, was consistent with Stutzman and Hartzog (2012).

Figure 13 illustrates the relationship that participants described with privacy settings and their perceived usability.

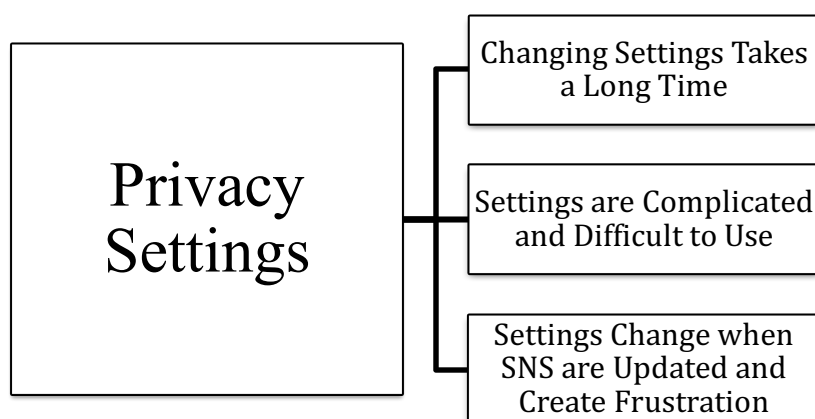


Figure 13. Privacy Settings.

Participants described high relative ease of use with being able to easily untag content that others had posted and tagged the participants in. The participants were aware that their online reputation is not just about what they post about themselves in their accounts, but also what others post about them and tag them in. Their use was consistent with Birnholtz, Burke, and Steele (2017) in finding that users are motivated to untag themselves from content to remove connections and limit potential negative consequences. This potential to be impacted negatively created concern and difficulty for participants trying to manage multiple contexts and audiences on a single SNS.

Several participants indicated that after they had untagged themselves they then asked the original poster to then delete the post with the original content. They indicated

that the original poster complied with the request after receiving their explanation of why they would like the content deleted. Instances like this one represent how different users may have different privacy preferences and how SNS can have difficulty with facilitating multiuser privacy with their current tools (Fogues, Murukannaiah, Such, & Singh, 2017). Participants acknowledged that with utilities for taking screenshots the content on SNS can be retained by others long after it had been deleted or untagged. Figure 14 illustrates the relationship that participants described with untagging SNS posts and the perceived usability.

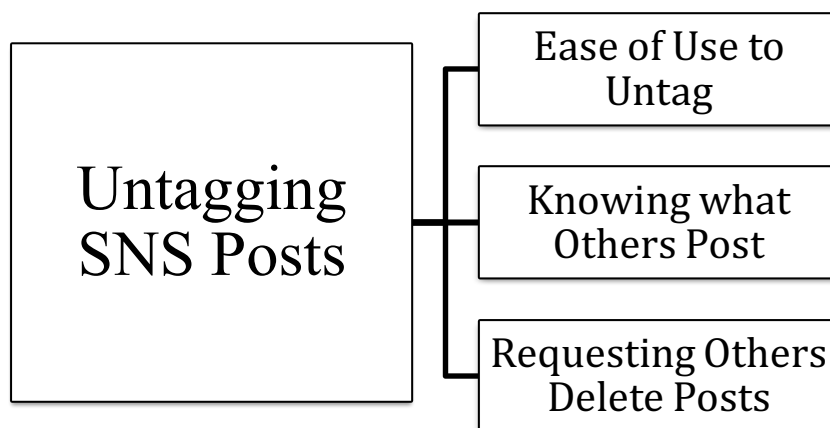


Figure 14. Untagging SNS Posts.

With the participants' use of multiple SNS site and using MPM to further regulate boundaries to the information, the participants spoke about the need to use self-editing and censorship as a strategy to limit negative impressions to manage their online reputation. This included self-editing and censorship both after and before posts were created on SNS with, in some instances, posts being deleted after the SNS account owner was notified by a peer that their post could be or was interpreted in a negative manner. With public, professional, and family oriented accounts, the participants emphasized the

importance for this strategy, and the practice was consistent with those in work from Stutzman and Hartzog (2012). Figure 15 illustrates the relationship that participants self-editing and censorship of posts done on SNS.

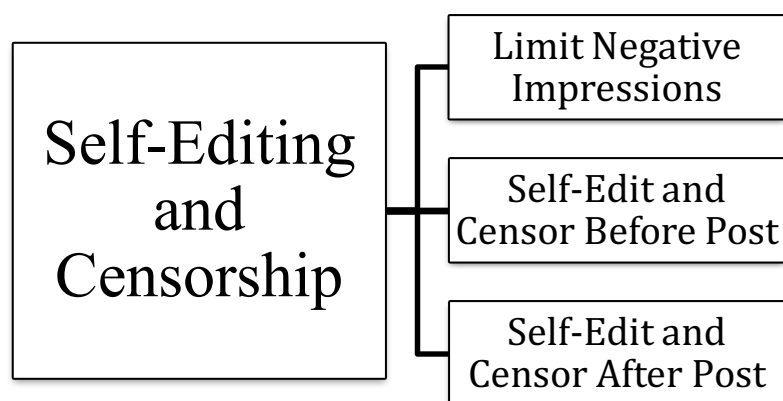


Figure 15. Self-Editing and Censorship

The participants identified the need for new SNS features to assist them with managing their online reputation through regulating boundaries to their information online. The preliminary goals of the desired features are to enhance privacy, increase security, and to limit negative impressions from past posts. With MPM being used as a primary boundary regulation by young adults, a new feature identified focused on content monitoring and review of posts, with SNS being able to flag content that a potential post could be questionable. In comparison with self-editing and censorship, this suggests a need to help supplement judgment by the participants with the help of others, prior to the posting of content on their networks. The ultimate overarching goal of the new features identified was to limit potential negative consequences that could take place from posts

made on SNS. Figure 16 illustrates the relationship that participants identified for new features.

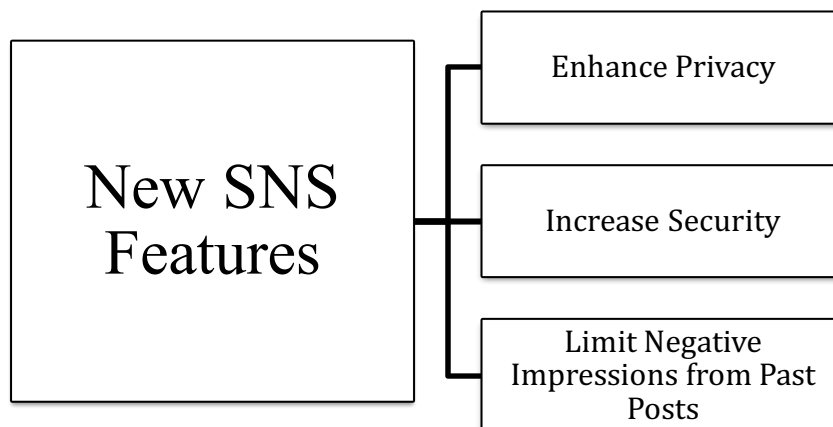


Figure 16. New SNS Features.

The responses from the participants in the study show that the process for young adults managing their online reputation are complicated and involved with them using a multilayered process for regulating their boundaries to different audiences and relying on key features on SNS to further manage their privacy. Aligned with the findings and themes identified in the study, the researcher presents a model illustrating how young adults used a layered approach to regulate boundaries and manage online reputation (see Table 8). This model has many potential benefits with a few examples including that it can be used as a framework for further research on how young adults are using MPM as part of the boundary regulation process, it may be used to evaluate how young adults are regulating boundaries to their information, and educational materials and resources can be made available to young adults to help inform them of different strategies and best practices that can be used to help limit access to their information available on SNS.

Table 8

Layered Model to Regulate Boundaries and Manage Online Reputation through the use of MPM

Layer	Description
1	SNS Use with Online Audiences: Young adults intentionally select and use different SNS depending on the audience.
2	Use of MPM: Young adults decide to use MPM with the creation of a second account to further regulate boundaries and manage their privacy based upon interest and/or audience.
3	Processes for the Presentation of Self: When MPM and a second account is created, young adults choose their pseudonym for the account, and decide how the accounts could be connected through common logins, email address, or phone number.
4	Privacy Settings: Privacy settings are configured with initial account setup and are used to regulate access to a user's information on the multiple accounts.
5	Untagging SNS Posts: Users untag content that they do not want to be associated with and may ask the original posters to delete their posts of the original content.
6	Self-Editing and Censorship: To limit negative impressions from others, public accounts that are associated with one's true identity are regulated through self-editing and censorship.
7	Online Search Results: To monitor what appears in search results, users of SNS need to search for themselves by the names and other information that could be used to connect accounts such as usernames, email addresses, and phone numbers.
8	Review of New Features: New features that are released need to be analyzed for their impact on privacy, security, and the further impact on online reputation management.

Strengths, Weaknesses, and Limitations

The semi-structured interview process was a strength for the study in that the 11 participants shared a variety of experiences and the participants were eager to share information. The number of participants helped to provide a large amount of data for review by the researcher. This helped to provide a large data set and ensure that a saturation point occurred with common themes aligned with the major findings of the study.

Another strength for the researcher was being able to utilize the expertise of another researcher that was familiar with the use of the IPA methodology, for assistance and guidance with coding and analysis. As the study was the researcher's first study using the IPA methodology, the fellow researcher's experience was extremely useful to ensure that the data analysis and organization was in proper alignment with the IPA methodology and the fellow researcher helped to manage bias on the part of the researcher.

A weakness of the study could be the participant selection, as participants that were sent the letter of invitation to participate in the study were students enrolled at a university. As they were enrolled, it is possible that they may be more motivated and career oriented, and considered more the impacts of their posts on SNS, in comparison with young adults who choose not to pursue further education after high school. This presents an opportunity for future research to create a broader sample of young adults for further study.

The sample could also be considered a limitation as it was a purposeful sample that required participants to have multiple accounts on at least one SNS. With that

requirement, the sample was constrained to young adults who were using MPM and were willing to participate in the study. It does not mean that all young adults use MPM, and whether the use of MPM is a common strategy for boundary regulation by young adults. Possibly, the participants that responded could have been more proactive in managing their online reputation in comparison with others that did not respond. However, in IPA, the sample is intentionally purposeful and selective to be homogeneous and limited to obtain in-depth data about a common lived experience (Smith et al., 2009, pp. 49-50).

Validity

Smith et al. (2009, pp. 179-186) described four principles that are grounded in the work of Yardley (2000) for assessing validity when using IPA:

Sensitivity to Context

Sensitivity to context requires that rapport be established with key gatekeepers to enable the access to those with the lived experiences necessary to be included as participants in the purposeful sample (Yardley, 2000). Throughout the study, the researcher established rapport with participants, made participants comfortable with the process, and ensured the quality of information was obtained and processed. Without effective establishment of rapport, the researcher would not have been able to obtain in-depth accounts of the participants' experiences. With young adults using multiple accounts on SNS, the researcher was careful with handling the participants' personal experiences that were sensitive in nature. The researcher took care to describe and maintain context with presenting information in an anonymous manner to protect information that was disclosed.

Commitment and Rigor

Commitment and rigor required diligence on the part of the researcher to be attentive and thorough during the processing of and analyzing of data (Yardley, 2000). The researcher ensured that the sample for the study was aligned with the research question by fulfilling the core criteria needed to meet the requirements for participating in the study. During the semi-structured interviews, the researcher encouraged participants to provide in-depth details of their experiences. The researcher provided transcripts of the interviews to the participants for them to review, provide clarifications, and add any additional details they wanted to provide. During the analysis, a heavy level of rigor was demonstrated in extensive reading and rereading of the transcripts, initial noting and annotating, coding, and refinement of themes. Throughout the study, the researcher frequently journaled his thoughts related to the study including the semi-structured interviews, the analyzing of the data, and the creation of the dissertation report.

Transparency and Coherence

For this study, the research process and the stages were defined and conducted in a coherent and transparent manner with information provided on the participants, the interview schedule, and the methodology, including the process for data organization and analysis (Yardley, 2000). In achieving the goal of coherence, the study adhered to the core principles of IPA and a clear and rational presentation of the findings connected the themes identified in a logical manner. Information was provided to support the findings including quotes from the participants from their semi-structured interviews, and the review of literature to design the study. The study adhered to the design of the methodology proposed originally with no changes.

Impact and Importance

The intent of this study was to present findings that are important, interesting, and useful to the reader of the report within the scope of understanding the lived experiences of young adults with their processes and motives for the regulation of boundaries on SNS to represent and manage their online reputation to audiences through the use of MPM. While previous studies focused on the use of MPM by working professionals (Badrul et al., 2015; Stutzman & Hartzog, 2012), there was an opportunity for understanding how young adults use MPM for regulating boundaries with their social and professional identities on SNS. This study is of importance as young adults are navigating and understanding ways to regulate privacy and access to their information. The risks are significant for young adults who are not regulating access in that there can be ramifications on current and potential employment (Bohnert & Ross, 2010; Chiang & Suen, 2015; Drake et al., 2017; Frampton & Child, 2013; Hammer, 2014; Hartzog & Stutzman, 2013; Koohikamali et al., 2017; Ward & Yates, 2013; Williams, 2006; Yang, 2015; Yang, 2016). The importance of this research will be determined over time. The perceived importance is to provide a resource with knowledge and understanding to an area where research was lacking, so that young adults and other audiences may benefit from the work.

Implications

Findings from this study have implications for a variety of audiences including SNS developers, young adults using SNS, and other users of SNS that regulate boundaries to their information on SNS. The findings from this study create opportunities for further research to extend or replicate research with different demographics, and with

further understanding of the interfaces that young adults use with SNS. The semi-structured interviews with the participants provided rich and in-depth information on their experiences illustrating the challenges and complexity with regulating boundaries to their information on SNS.

On SNS, there are multiple audiences and user interfaces that young adults interact with to present themselves. With needing to manage multiple contexts that are professional and social in nature, there is a risk with making information available that current or future employers could use to make career impacting decisions. Young adults are aware of the risk and were open to the researcher in acknowledging the risks, describing their experiences, and sharing their strategies and challenges. The information from the semi-structured interviews show there are challenges with navigating and understanding interfaces, and managing the connections and contexts with different audiences. This is consistent with the findings of Chang, Liu, and Shen (2017) in that SNS development and design should focus on ease of use for the users, so that minimal effort is required to mitigate privacy concerns and perceived risk. Otherwise, if users perceive that their risk is high and that much effort is required to achieve their desired level of privacy, they will lose trust in the SNS

This study introduces a layered model to regulate boundaries and manage online reputation through the use of MPM on SNS. This study also introduces ideas for new features on SNS to increase security, enhance privacy, and for content monitoring and review. Further, the need for education and training for young adults on the use of SNS was identified as a need by the participants.

Recommendations

Recommendations from this study are relevant to multiple audiences that include educators, SNS designers and developers, SNS users, and young adults. Having information made available on SNS that impacts employment serves as an example that multiple audiences have relevancy with the findings from this study from those that design and develop the SNS interfaces to those who use it, and those who help educate on the use and implications to others.

The researcher recommends that SNS developers review the findings from this study pertaining to the roles of usability and privacy management, specifically those with Facebook. The perceived level of understanding on Facebook privacy settings was observed as low, with notes of frustration related to interface design and a low level of perceived trust in that their privacy settings could change when updates take place to the user interfaces. Young adults rely on Facebook for connections their families with providing general and safe updates to them. However, the frustration with Facebook may be driving the creation of accounts and the use of MPM on other SNS. Luqman, Cau, Ali, Masood, and Yu (2017) emphasize that users consider reducing or no longer using Facebook when they feel overwhelmed socially, or they experience exhaustion or technostress. For Facebook, this means that the use of their SNS could decrease over time with young adults and younger audiences choosing other SNS, such as Twitter, as their primary SNS platforms.

Although young people perceive a great risk with sharing of data and photographs online, there is a need for providing training to young people focused on learning the technology and instilling ethics on use of the technology (Lareki, Morentin,

Altuna, & Amenabar, 2017). Young adults that participated in the study were very aware of the impacts that their use of SNS could have on the careers and employment. The potential impacts motivated them to use different SNS with different audiences, use MPM, determine how to limit access to their information through linking accounts and information, using features such as untagging and privacy settings, and using the practice of self-editing and censorship. While the participants described their strategies in a manner of self-discovery combined with learning about how their peers use SNS, there is a need for young adults to understand best practices with limiting access to their information. The layered model to regulate boundaries and manage online reputation through the use of MPM can serve as a model for the development of best practices.

The role of educators needs to be emphasized in how they explain SNS to young adults. Educators can recommend that young adults search for themselves online to help raise awareness, with emphasizing potential negative impacts on employment. However, further opportunities can include the effective use of privacy settings and other privacy enhancing features on SNS. With participants describing their use of SNS starting in middle school or junior high, that could represent a time for educators to further engage students related to boundary regulation and the use of their social and professional identities online.

Future Research

With SNS including Facebook, LinkedIn, Tumblr, and Twitter existing for around a decade, and multi-generations adopting their use, SNS are no longer a place for young adults who are early adopters. With information being found on SNS informing the decisions to hire and fire employees, young adults know what they post online can have

real world ramifications. The findings from this study provide an opportunity for future research in areas related to MPM, boundary regulation, and online reputation management.

In this study, a layered model to regulate boundaries and manage online reputation through MPM was introduced to create a more in-depth understanding of the findings, and for extension for future research. The model identified eight key areas that young adults reported they used to manage their online reputation. This framework represents an opportunity for researchers to use those for further understanding how online reputation can be managed through SNS. Future research could try to replicate the findings, through use of the model, with the same age range for those that are not currently enrolled at a higher education institution. Or, further research could focus on a slightly older population that have graduated from college and have been in the work force for several years.

With SNS offering the ability to have multiple accounts logged in at a single time through an app on a mobile device, the research could be extended to determine how mobile interfaces encourage the use of MPM. This includes accessing SNS through the mobile apps for Instagram and Twitter, which permit multiple accounts to be signed in and accessed with a high ease of use. In contrast, others such as Facebook do not permit multiple accounts to be logged in at the same time through a mobile app. The use of mobile interfaces was not specifically addressed in this study on the role mobile apps play with MPM and their use with SNS for regulating boundaries.

Summary

The goal of the research study was to understand how do young adults describe their experiences with using MPM on SNS to regulate the boundaries between their personal and professional identities online. The work of Stutzman and Hartzog (2012) was extended to gain a further understanding on exploring the lived experiences of young adults. Yang's (2015) conceptual model of long-term motivation for online reputation served as a framework related to exploring motivations related to online reputation and ease of use. 11 participants were recruited that were of 18-23 years of age, that remembered when and why they began using MPM, and had multiple accounts on at least one SNS. The study was conducted using the IPA methodology to obtain in-depth knowledge of the participants' experiences, as young adults are at a formative and transitional time in their lives that is connected to their sense of self/identity (Smith et al., 2009, p. 163) with seeking or starting a career and employment.

The lived experiences of young adults identified eight major findings that were found through semi-structured interviews, and data analysis and organization through the coding of nodes to identify themes:

1. SNS Use with Online Audiences: As a primary boundary regulation strategy, young adults select the SNS they use depending on their audience with family, friends, and employers. The study found Facebook was primarily used with family, and Instagram and Twitter were used with the friends of young adults.
2. Motivations for using MPM: Young adults are motivated to use MPM as a secondary boundary regulation strategy as they are worried about judgment by others, and how their information could have a negative impact on their

employment. Nine out of 11 participants in the study reported that they had multiple accounts on Twitter to regulate boundaries.

3. **The Processes for the Presentation of Self:** When young Adults use multiple SNS and MPM, they further regulate boundaries to their information through presenting themselves through pseudonyms, and limiting connections with others and between their different SNS accounts. Nine out of 11 participants referenced the use of pseudonyms as a common strategy of young adults to further limit access to their information on SNS.
4. **Online Search Results:** Young adults search for themselves to see what turns up in search results, and they are concerned and do not understand why certain information and pictures turn up while others do not. Participants were most concerned with their pictures appearing in search results and connections to their SNS accounts being public.
5. **Privacy Settings:** Privacy settings were found to be difficult to use and create frustration by the time required to change settings. Specifically, Facebook privacy settings were identified for being complicated, hard to understand and use, taking a long time to change, and updates created frustrations with changing privacy settings and their interfaces to manage the settings. In the node classification table (see Appendix D) the researcher noted that references related to privacy (155) and privacy settings (126) had the highest reference totals after Twitter (172), Facebook (140), outward persona (132), techniques (193), and pictures (127).
6. **Untagging SNS Posts:** Young adults found it easy to untag content and know that it is not just what they post about themselves, but also what others post about

them and connect to their profiles that impact their online reputation. Besides privacy settings with 126 references in the node classification table (see Appendix D), the feature of untagging content was the second most referenced feature (41) on SNS that was used by the participants.

7. Self-Editing and Censorship: Young adults relied on self-editing and censorship as techniques to help manage their online reputations to limit negative impressions to others. Ten out of 11 participants described their strategies with self-editing and censorship of SNS posts to manage their online reputation.
8. New Features: Young adults want new SNS features to enhance privacy, increase security, and limit negative impressions that could be generated from the posts. These are an opportunity for SNS developers to consider new features to help encourage use of their sites with young adults.

The results of the study describe that young adults are aware of the need to regulate the boundaries to their social and professional identities to manage their online reputation. MPM is used as a component of the process that requires young adults to select a SNS based upon intended audience, determine how their accounts will not be connected and accessible through search results, effectively use features of SNS including privacy settings, review results of search results, know when to unlink and untag themselves from content, and know when to self-edit or censor themselves. The findings from this study can be of benefit to young adults who use SNS, and for SNS developers for the consideration of new features. Future research identified included analyzing the impact and use of SNS and MPM with mobile interfaces, and the role of MPM within a layered model for boundary regulation with the use of SNS.

Appendix A

Letter of Informed Consent and Invitation to Study Participants

Title of Study: *A Study of How Young Adults Leverage Multiple Profile Management Functionality in Managing their Online Reputation on Social Networking Sites*

Principal investigator

T. John McCune, Ed.S.
State University of New York at Fredonia
280 Central Avenue
E204 Thompson Hall
Fredonia, NY 14063
(716) 860-0746
mccune@fredonia.edu
tm872@nova.edu

Co-investigator

Laurie Dringus, Ph.D.
Nova Southeastern University
3301 College Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL
(954) 262-2073
Laurie@nova.edu

Institutional Review Board

Nova Southeastern University
Office of Grants and Contracts
(954) 262-5369/Toll Free: 866-499-0790
IRB@nsu.nova.edu

Site Information

State University of New York
at Fredonia
280 Central Avenue
Fredonia, NY 14063

Description of Study: T. John McCune is a doctoral student at Nova Southeastern University(NSU) engaged in research for the purpose of satisfying a requirement for a Doctor in Computing Technology in Education degree through NSU's College of Engineering and Computing. The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of young adults with how they make sense of using multiple profile management on social networking sites to regulate the boundaries between their personal and professional identities to manage their online reputation.

Participants in the potential study will need to be between the ages of 18 and 23 years of age, and will need to have used multiple profiles on a social networking site (SNS), with the use of more than one identity on at least a single SNS.

Interviews will be conducted in-person. All interviews will be audio-recorded and will be approximately 1 hour to 1 hour and 30 minutes in duration.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete the prospective profile Google form questionnaire.

The questionnaire will help the researcher with determining if prospective participants meet the age and experience criteria required to participate in the study. The questionnaire will take approximately five to ten minutes to complete.

Risks/Benefits to the Participant: There may be minimal risk involved in participating in this study. There are no direct benefits to for agreeing to be in this study. Please understand that although you may not benefit directly from participation in this study, you have the opportunity to enhance knowledge on how young adults leverage multiple profile management functionality in managing their online reputation on social networking sites. If you have any concerns about the risks or benefits of participating in this study, you can contact T. John McCune at 716-860-0746. You may also contact the IRB at Nova Southeastern University or the State University of New York (SUNY) at Fredonia with questions about your research rights. SUNY Fredonia's IRB can be contacted through Judy Horowitz at (716) 673-3335.

Cost and Payments to the Participant: Participants who are selected will be provided a \$25.00 Amazon gift card for their participation. There are no costs to you for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: Information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. All data will be secured in a locked filing cabinet and/or securely stored as a password protected computer file. Your name will not be used in the reporting of information in publications or conference presentations.

Participant's Right to Withdraw from the Study: You have the right to refuse to participate in this study and the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

I have read this letter and I fully understand the contents of this document and voluntarily consent to participate. All of my questions concerning this research have been answered. If I have any questions in the future about this study they will be answered by the investigator listed above or his/her staff.

I understand that the completion of this questionnaire implies my consent to participate in this study.

Appendix B

Prospective Profile Google Form Questionnaire

*The questions below will be in a Google Form that will then send an email to T. John McCune when completed. The questionnaire will ensure that participants meet the core criteria of the purposeful sample that is necessary to participate in the study

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Age:

Gender:

Primary Language:

Please select all social networking sites (SNS) that you use:

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Twitter

Do you have multiple accounts on a SNS? If so, which one(s). Please check all that apply.

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Twitter

How long have you used multiple accounts on a SNS?

- 1-6 Months
- 6-12 Months
- 1-2 Years
- 2 or more Years

Are you concerned with your privacy when using SNS?

- Yes
- No

Have you ever searched your name online to see what results would show up?

- Yes
- No

Have you used the privacy settings on SNS to limit who can see your posts?

- Yes
- No

Would you consider yourself to have a skill level of Novice, Medium, or Expert with Social Networking Sites?

Are you unemployed, seeking employment, or currently employed?

- Unemployed and not seeking employment
- Unemployed and seeking employment
- Currently employed

Are you concerned with managing your online reputation?

- Yes
- No

Appendix C

Interview Schedule

*A Study of How Young Adults Leverage Multiple Profile Management
Functionality in Managing their Online Reputation on Social Networking
Sites*

Setting and Participant Data

Date of Interview:
Time of Interview:
Location of Interview:
Participant Name & Number:
Occupation:
Gender:
Age:
Contact Information:

Greetings and Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to be a participant of the study. The goal of the project is to understand the experiences of young adults with how they make sense of using multiple profile management on social networking sites to regulate the boundaries between their personal and professional identities to manage their online reputation.

The interview will be approximately 1 hour to 1 hour and 30 minutes in duration. For your participation you will be provided with an Amazon gift card in the amount of 25 dollars.

Have you received and completed the informed consent form?

Do you have any questions in regard to the informed consent form?

Would you like a copy of the results of this study?

The audio from the conversation will be recorded. After the recording is completed, a transcript will be created that will then be sent to you for review. Please review the transcript and if there are any inaccuracies or additions you would like to make, please advise and I will include them on the revised transcript.

May we proceed with the interview, or do you have any other questions?

General Interview Questions

1. Please describe your experiences with MPM on SNS.
2. Can you tell me how concerned you are with protecting your privacy on SNS?
Prompts: Why are you concerned? How do you feel about privacy?
3. How do you manage your privacy settings through the user interface on SNS?
Prompts: What features do you use? Why do you use those features? Are they easy to use?
4. What problems do you see with the current privacy settings on SNS?
Prompts: What would you change? What would you like? How could the settings and interface be improved? Does it require a significant amount of time to manage privacy settings?
5. Can you tell me if you ever searched for yourself online to see what turns up in search results?
Prompts: When was the last time you searched for yourself? Can you tell me what you found? How frequently do you search for yourself?
6. How would you describe how you represent yourself to different audiences through the use of MPM on SNS?
Prompts: Can you provide an example? What are the differences between your social and professional presentations?
7. Have you ever changed the way you use SNS in thinking that a current employer or a potential employer would view your information?
Prompts: Can you provide an example? Was there an experience that caused you to change the way you use SNS? Do you feel it is important for young adults using SNS to consider current or potential employers viewing their information?
8. Can you tell me if anyone has shared content over SNS that you untagged or deleted to help manage your online reputation?
Prompts: Can you provide an example? Who posted the content? How did the content make you feel? Were there negative consequences from what was posted? Was it easy to untag or delete the content?
9. What do you think could help you in managing your online reputation?
Prompts: Are there new features that would be helpful? How could SNS be designed better? What would make SNS more user-friendly?

Appendix D

Node Classifications Table

Name	Sources	References
Information Available on SNS	10	229
Address (USPS)	1	3
Birthdate	4	5
Comments from Others	3	8
Coursework	1	2
Email Address	6	10
Incorrect Information	2	4
Major Life Events	3	4
Negative Expression	7	32
Past Employment	1	1
Phone Number	4	8
Pictures	10	127
Politics	6	11
Positive Expression	4	8
Social Security Number	2	2
Videos	2	4
Managing Online Reputation	11	386
Consequences	10	51
Online Search Results	11	106
Resources	8	34
Techniques	11	193
Motivations for using MPM	11	479
Convenience	6	19
Ease of Use	10	54
Identity	8	18
Naivety	10	54
Perceived Importance of Reputation	10	114
Privacy	10	155
Propriety	8	41
Utility	9	24
MPM Processes	10	87
Practical Obscurity	5	15
Pseudonymity	9	63

Transparent Separation	5	9
Online Audiences	11	222
Classmates	5	14
College Admissions	2	12
Coworkers	3	3
Employers	11	112
Family	9	38
Friends	10	39
Strangers	2	4
Presentation of Self	11	537
One Self	4	17
Outward Persona	10	132
Professional Identity	10	92
Real World Overlap	10	43
Self-Editing & Censorship	10	56
Separation of Profile Types	11	91
Social Identity	10	106
Types of SNS and Sites Used	10	468
Facebook	10	140
Good Reads	2	4
Google +	1	2
Instagram	7	71
LinkedIn	2	25
Myspace	2	7
Reddit	1	1
Snapchat	4	11
Tumblr	2	24
Twitter	10	172
Wordpress	1	5
Youtube	2	6
Use of SNS Features	11	370
Block	5	12
Change Name or Username	3	6
Delete Account	6	13
Documentation	1	1
Flag and Report Content	3	9
Ideas for New Features	11	63
Interface Design	6	24

Login & Password	1	2
Mute	2	12
Post Content	3	6
Privacy Settings	11	126
Retweeting	6	16
Tag	7	16
Untag	10	41

Appendix E

Sample Coding and Annotation

[26:03]

Interviewee: I think that... Well, I wish the social media teams would like be more proactive about like what you should post and what you shouldn't post. I think that's like very important because like you're teaching them and then also it keeps you... it makes you aware of like, well, really like what are you doing and like what are you really like looking to accomplish by doing stuff like that.

And also you don't know who the audience is that you are reaching to when you're public. Like I know people in middle school who will get like college students' profiles and then think that's great or like that's the cool thing to do, and that's not what middle schoolers should be looking at or anything like that. So it's like people don't like think about like the big picture. They just think about like in the moment like what's important to do.¹

[Coded: Presentation of Self - Outward Persona & Separation of Profile Types, Use of SNS Features – Privacy Settings, Managing Online Reputation - Resources]

[26:55]

Interviewer: And how do you think...? Getting back to like what post and what should not post, how do you think that could be better?

[27:02]

Interviewee: I think that if you maybe like make... If like people under 21... Like if they had a team like on Instagram *per se* and they like monitored what people were posting and what people were saying on like the app, what they were doing, and like say like: 'Oh, you really shouldn't have a picture of alcohol with you. Like you should delete that or we're going to delete that for you.' And like taking care of like people like who... Just in general, like with different situations, that is maybe not the best for them or best for other people; like should not be doing about... like going about that. And the same for Twitter, because like a lot of people like tweet things and like start fighting and like drama, and that like could totally be avoided if like people just didn't impulsively tweet in the first place.²

[Coded: Presentation of Self - Self Editing & Censorship, Information Available on SNS - Pictures, Managing Online Reputation - Resources, Use of SNS Features - Ideas for New Features, Motivations for MPM - Utility, Types of SNS Used – Instagram & Twitter]

Annotations

¹Can SNS educate users on use and what should and should not be posted?

²She feels that Instagram and twitter posts could be moderated to help identify what should and should not be posted.

Appendix F

IRB Approval Letter – Nova Southeastern University



MEMORANDUM

To: **Thomas McCune**
College of Engineering and Computing

From: **Ling Wang, Ph.D.,**
Center Representative, Institutional Review Board

Date: **September 15, 2016**

Re: **IRB #: 2016-405; Title, "A Study of How Young Adults Leverage Multiple Profile Management Functionality in Managing their Online Reputation on Social Networking Sites"**

I have reviewed the above-referenced research protocol at the center level. Based on the information provided, I have determined that this study is exempt from further IRB review under **45 CFR 46.101(b) (Exempt Category 2)**. You may proceed with your study as described to the IRB. As principal investigator, you must adhere to the following requirements:

- 1) **CONSENT:** If recruitment procedures include consent forms, they must be obtained in such a manner that they are clearly understood by the subjects and the process affords subjects the opportunity to ask questions, obtain detailed answers from those directly involved in the research, and have sufficient time to consider their participation after they have been provided this information. The subjects must be given a copy of the signed consent document, and a copy must be placed in a secure file separate from de-identified participant information. Record of informed consent must be retained for a minimum of three years from the conclusion of the study.
- 2) **ADVERSE EVENTS/UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS:** The principal investigator is required to notify the IRB chair and me (954-262-5369 and Ling Wang, Ph.D., respectively) of any adverse reactions or unanticipated events that may develop as a result of this study. Reactions or events may include, but are not limited to, injury, depression as a result of participation in the study, life-threatening situation, death, or loss of confidentiality/anonymity of subject. Approval may be withdrawn if the problem is serious.
- 3) **AMENDMENTS:** Any changes in the study (e.g., procedures, number or types of subjects, consent forms, investigators, etc.) must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. Please be advised that changes in a study may require further review depending on the nature of the change. Please contact me with any questions regarding amendments or changes to your study.

The NSU IRB is in compliance with the requirements for the protection of human subjects prescribed in Part 46 of Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46) revised June 18, 1991.

Cc: **Laurie Dringus, Ph.D.**

Appendix G

IRB Approval Letter – State University of New York at Fredonia



13 September 2016

T. John McCune
Director of Technology Support Systems
Thompson Hall
The State University of New York at Fredonia
280 Central Avenue
Fredonia, New York 14063

Dear Mr. McCune,

Your request for a review of your proposed research entitled “A Study of How Young Adults Leverage Multiple Profile Management Functionality in Managing their Online Reputation on Social Networking Sites” has been completed under Category II, expedited process. The Human Subjects Review Committee member performing the review found that you adequately addressed the issues raised. **This letter serves as your formal approval notice, and your research may proceed as described.** Please note that this approval is valid until September 1, 2017. Should you need an extension, please notify me prior to that date.

As a reminder, you must comply with Part D of the Campus Policies on Human Subjects requiring notification at the time data collection begins and when it is done. **You may accomplish this with a simple e-mail to me at Human.Subjects@fredonia.edu.**

Thank you for keeping the high standards relating to research and the protection of human subjects on the Fredonia campus. Best wishes on your research!

Best

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Judith M. Horowitz'.

Judith M. Horowitz, Ph.D.
Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, Sponsored Programs
And Faculty Development
Human Subjects Administrator

Appendix H

Transcript Review Letter

Dear _____,

Thank you for participating in the study on understanding how social networking users leverage multiple profile management functionality in managing their online reputation.

Attached to this message is a transcript from the recorded interview. Please review and advise if any revisions are needed, or if there are any further thoughts that you have had since our interview. I ask that feedback is provided by _____. The transcript from the recorded interview will not be disseminated to anyone other than the participant for each interview. Revisions and additions will be included on the revised transcript.

Through being a participant in the study, you should have received through email an Amazon gift card in the amount of 25 dollars. If you have not received this, please let me know.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (716) 860-0746 or at tm872@nova.edu. Again, thank you for participating in the study.

Sincerely,

T. John McCune, Ed.S.
tm872@nova.edu
(716) 860-0746

Appendix I

Informed Consent Form



Consent Form for Participation in the Research Study Entitled

A Study of How Young Adults Leverage Multiple Profile Management Functionality in Managing their Online Reputation on Social Networking Sites

Funding Source: None

IRB protocol #: 2016-405

Principal investigator

T. John McCune, Ed.S.
State University of New York at Fredonia
280 Central Avenue
E204 Thompson Hall
Fredonia, NY 14063
(716) 860-0746
mccune@fredonia.edu
tm872@nova.edu

Co-investigator

Laurie Dringus, Ph.D.
Nova Southeastern University
3301 College Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL
(954) 262-2073
Laurie@nova.edu

For questions/concerns about your research rights, contact:

Human Research Oversight Board (Institutional Review Board or IRB)
Nova Southeastern University
(954) 262-5369/Toll Free: 866-499-0790
IRB@nsu.nova.edu

Site Information

State University of New York at Fredonia
280 Central Avenue
Fredonia, NY 14063

Initials: _____ Date: _____

Page 1 of 4

What is the study about?

You are invited to participate in a voluntary study on how young adults leverage multiple profile management functionality in managing their online reputation on social networking sites. The goal of the project is to understand the experiences of young adults with how they make sense of using multiple profile management on social networking sites to regulate the boundaries between their personal and professional identities to manage their online reputation.

Why are you asking me?

We are inviting you to participate in the study because you fulfill the criteria needed to participate in the study. Requirements to participate in the study include that participants will be 18 to 23 years of age, and have more than one profile on at least one SNS. There will be between 10 and 12 participants in this study.

What will I be doing if I agree to be in the study?

In the study, you will participate in one interview that will last approximately 1 hour to 1 hour and 30 minutes in duration. T. John McCune, the principal investigator, will interview you and ask about your experiences with using multiple profile management (MPM) on Social Networking Sites (SNS) to manage your online reputation through regulating boundaries to their personal and professional identities online. If you wish to review the transcript from the audio recorded during the interview, a transcript will be shared with you, so that you can clarify any comments that were made.

Is there any audio or video recording?

This research project will include an audio recording of the interview. This recording will be available to be heard by the researchers listed above, the university's Institutional Review Board and regulatory agencies. The recording will be transcribed by a professional transcription service; there will be nothing on the transcript that can be used to personally identify you. The recording will be kept securely in the researcher's office locked in a filing cabinet. The recording will be kept for 36 months and destroyed after that time by erasing the electronic files. Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the recording, your confidentiality for things you say on the recording cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will limit access to the tape as described in this paragraph.

What are the dangers to me?

Risks to you are minimal, meaning they are not thought to be greater than other risks you experience every day. Being recorded means that confidentiality cannot be promised. However, every precaution will be made to ensure the confidentiality of the research data throughout the collection, storage, analysis, and reporting stages. If you have any concerns about the risks or benefits of participating in this study, you can contact T. John McCune at 716-860-0746. You may also contact the IRB at Nova Southeastern University or the State University of New York (SUNY) at Fredonia with questions about your research rights. SUNY Fredonia's IRB can be contacted through Dr. Judith Horowitz at (716) 673-3335.

Initials: _____ Date: _____

Are there any benefits for taking part in this research study?

While there are no direct benefits to you for participating, it is hoped that this study will benefit others through providing the shared lived experiences of how young adults use MPM on SNS to manage their online reputation through regulating boundaries to their personal and professional identities online.

Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?

Participants who are selected will be provided a \$25.00 Amazon gift card for their participation. There are no costs to you for participating in this study.

How will you keep my information private?

Participants will remain completely anonymous and the researcher will ensure that anonymous presentation takes place for the final report. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. The transcripts of the audio recordings will not have any information that could be linked to you. All transcribed data from the interview will be available to be read by the researchers, the university's Institutional Review Board, and regulatory agencies. As mentioned, the audio recordings will be destroyed 36 months after the study ends. The IRB, regulatory agencies, or involved faculty members may review research records.

What if I do not want to participate or I want to leave the study?

You have the right to leave this study at any time or refuse to participate. If you do decide to leave or you decide not to participate, you will not experience any penalty or loss of services you have a right to receive. . If you choose to withdraw, any information collected about you **before** the date you leave the study will be kept in the research records for 36 months from the conclusion of the study and may be used as a part of the research.

Other Considerations:

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available, which may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you by the investigators.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:

By signing below, you indicate that

- This study has been explained to you
- You have read this document or it has been read to you
- Your questions about this research study have been answered
- You have been told that you may ask the researchers any study related questions in the future or contact them in the event of a research-related injury
- You have been told that you may ask Institutional Review Board (IRB) personnel questions about your study rights
- You are entitled to a copy of this form after you have read and signed it

Initials: _____ Date: _____

- You voluntarily agree to participate in the study entitled *A Study of How Young Adults Leverage Multiple Profile Management Functionality in Managing their Online Reputation on Social Networking Sites*

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant's Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Date: _____

Initials: _____ Date: _____

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