Exploring the self-presentations of Indian IT professionals on social media

By

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Abstract

Self-presentations are goal-directed acts designed by individuals to convey particular images of their selves and thereby influence how they are perceived and treated by various audiences (Goffman, 1959). Recent literature suggests that individuals are increasingly interacting with their workplace colleagues on personal networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. In such overlapping interactions, individuals often move swiftly and in an asymmetric fashion between physical-virtual settings and personal-professional life. Presumably, diverse self-presentations across physical-virtual settings and personal-professional life may create conflicts or tensions.

Drawing on 31 semi-structured interviews, this thesis explores the self-presentations of Indian IT professionals on social media. Overall, the analysis suggests that in most cases, respondents enacted diverse self-presentations across physical-virtual settings and personal-professional life. In such cases, they expressed concerns that overlapping audiences may view their self-presentations on social media out-of-context and inevitably misconstrue their professional image.

From a theoretical perspective, the thesis illustrates that individuals who exercise 'region behavior' experience cognitive discomfort when they enact self-presentations on social media as overlapping self-presentations are inevitable. From a practical perspective, empirical evidence suggests that employees take their interactions on social media seriously and thus dispute managers' arguments that interacting on social media is merely a 'time-pass'.

Key words: self-presentations, impression management, social media, Indian IT professionals, cognitive demands

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Self-presentations are goal-directed actions performed by individuals to convey desired impressions of the self (Goffman, 1959). Further, Goffman (1959) postulated that self-presentations are context-based and particular to the setting and audience. Since impression goals vary according to the setting and audience, individuals enact 'region behaviour' (Goffman, 1959), that is, they enact diverse self-presentations. For instance, self-presentation of an individual in a setting like the office in front of an audience such as workplace colleagues, clients and managers may be different from the individual's self-presentations in other settings, such as a social club.

Interacting on social media is a personal and individual experience wherein self-presentations are inevitable. Within the information systems (IS) literature, scholars (Schoneboom, 2011; Boyle & Johnson, 2010) suggest that individuals share bodily experiences and physical body constructs (like age and gender) accurately in their self-presentations on social media. In contrast, another strand of literature suggests that individuals view their self-presentations on social media as disconnected from their physical self or as 'disembodied'. For instance, Turkle (1994) demonstrates that on text-based multi-user domains, individuals use different windows to role-play multiple personalities simultaneously. Whereas a third strand of literature argues that self-presentations on social media are a result of human-computer interconnectedness. In other words, individuals' self-presentations on social media can be viewed as a result of the entanglement of the physical-virtual setting (Schultze & Mason, 2012; Veerapen, 2011; Orlikowski, 2007). Scholars (Schultze & Mason, 2012; Veerapen, 2011; Orlikowski, 2007) ascribing to this view argue that individuals experience the virtual world through their avatar.

Recent research regarding interactions on social media has focused on overlapping audiences and interactions that span personal-professional life and physical-virtual settings. As Malaterre et al. (2012) theorise, individuals are increasingly interacting with their professional contacts on social networks that are personal in nature, such as Facebook or Twitter. Thus, they are likely to experience a blurring of personal-professional life and presumably a collision of personal-professional identities. In such situations, individuals who enact 'region behaviour' in their physical settings and interact with overlapping audiences on social media risk overlapping diverse self-presentations. Such situations presumably lead to conflicts and tensions. Although as Sayah (2013) suggests, individuals use various technology mediated tactics to shape their temporal, spatial and psychological personal-professional boundaries, individuals are likely to experience cognitive discomfort.

Regarding the research context for this study, India provides an ideal and dynamic social setting for the study of individuals' self-presentations on social media. In India, there is an ongoing socio-cultural transformation of its working class. These changes have been primarily credited to the Indian IT industry, which grew in prominence post the landmark economic reforms in the 90s (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2006; Fernandes, 2000). Whilst the IT industry continues to grow, it has simultaneously caused flutters within the larger Indian strata due to high salaries and fostering mobile lives. The industry nurtures individuality as a means to sustain within the global market; such individuality lifts the dependency on individual companies to shoulder the burden of individuals' careers (Upadhya & Vasavi, 2006). However, such individuality has carried over into personal lives as well, thus, we now see the growth of 'glocals', those individuals who have consumed world cultures and retained 'traditional Indian values' (Brosius, 2010). The larger

socio-cultural changes are also of consequence here, with landmark protests in the 90s against the Miss World contest in Bangalore, (Oza, 2001) suggests laypersons associate gender with morality and sexuality. Additionally, the Indian context provides for an interesting research setting for two reasons: First, while Indian IT industries compete in a global market and are identified as modern organisations, they employ normative and indirect control at the workplace. For instance, scholars suggest managers use factory-style power and control mechanisms to manage employees (Upadhya & Vasavi, 2006; Bain et al., 2002). Second, Indian IT professionals carve individuality in their personal lives by moving away from hierarchy and autonomy. Such a stark contrast, that is, of individuals succumbing to tight power and control mechanisms in their professional life whilst carving individuality in their personal lives every day makes for an interesting research setting for this study.

In this study, broadly, I explore the self-presentations of Indian IT professionals on social media. Specifically, I concentrate on those enactments that are targeted at building or managing impressions and consider how individuals navigate physical-virtual settings in their self-presentations on social media. In doing so, I also examine how Indian IT professionals respond to socio-cultural and organisational norms that extend from the physical to the virtual setting. Finally, I investigate how Indian IT professionals respond to overlapping audiences in their physical-virtual settings. The epistemological position I assume in this study is social constructionism (Burr, 1995), which highlights the relationship between individual action and their social context. By examining Indian IT professionals' interactions on social media through recursive relationships between the physical-virtual settings and individual action, my study illuminates a broader understanding of self-presentations on social media.

1.1. Structure of thesis

The thesis is structured as follows. The literatures relevant to this thesis are reviewed in chapters 2 − 6. In chapter 2, I describe the dilemma created by social media. Whilst social media is altering the modern workplace by facilitating people to work from anywhere and at any time, managers and employees face challenges in managing dispersed teams and working with team members and clients who are geographically dispersed.

In chapter 3, I explain self-presentation theory. Individuals craft self-images in face-to-face interactions either intentionally or unintentionally through their appearance, behaviour and tactical use of self-presentation tools in the physical setting. In such interactions, self-presentations are context-based. Moreover, individuals have specific image related goals they wish to convey to a physically present or visible audience.

In chapter 4, I review three strands of literature on self-presentations on social media. One strand of literature suggests that individuals share bodily experiences accurately in their self-presentations whereas another strand argues that individuals' self-presentations on social media are disconnected from their bodily experiences. A third strand of literature explores the interconnectedness of human-computer interaction when enacting self-presentations on social media.

In chapter 5, I examine the cognitive demands of the impression management process. Individuals experience cognitive demands while enacting a self-presentation as they rely on introspection to improve their enactments. Further, individuals experience increased cognitive

demands when they enact a self-presentation for the internal audience (the self) compared to enacting a self-presentation for the external audience.

In chapter 6, I describe the research setting - Indian IT professionals. The Indian IT industry, set in neo-liberal India promotes adoption of western work-cultures yet the work-ethics are set in strict, hierarchical and factory-style management tactics. Indian IT professionals lead mobile lives and focus on carving individuality to survive in an insecure job market. Further, Indian IT professionals adapt to continually evolving socio-cultural transformations in Indian society.

In chapter 7, first, I explain the qualitative methodology underpinning this study. Then, I discuss the methods I used to collect the data, select respondents and techniques I draw on to analyse the data.

In chapter 8, I present the empirical data in three sections. The first section elaborates on Indian IT professional's four motivations to interact on social media: broadcasting information, networking with personal and professional contacts, displaying identity and managing impressions. The second section shows how whilst enacting self-presentations on social media, they experience two conflicts: overlapping audiences and permanence of online interactions. The third section explains how Indian IT professionals cope with these conflicts by enacting defensive selves or by avoiding overlapping audiences altogether.

In chapter 9, first, I discuss how respondents enact self-presentations on social media. Broadly, respondents share some bodily experiences in their self-presentations on social media. However,

many respondents enact diverse self-presentations in their physical-virtual settings and personal-professional life. In a bid to avoid misinterpretations by the overlapping audiences, respondents enact defensive selves or avoid overlapping audiences altogether. Next, I discuss how respondents navigate organisational and socio-cultural norms that extend from the physical setting to the virtual setting while enacting self-presentations on social media. Finally, respondents express cognitive discomfort while enacting self-presentations on social media. Interestingly, the findings suggest that respondents with clearly defined impression goals experience minimal cognitive discomfort.

In chapter 10, I present conclusions and discuss contributions of this study to theory and application. From a theoretical perspective, this thesis contributes to the literature by underpinning the importance of the setting, context and audience while enacting self-presentations on social media. Furthermore, the thesis adds to the literature by identifying that individuals with defined goals experience minimal cognitive discomfort. From a practical viewpoint, the thesis identifies that socio-cultural norms extend from the physical to the virtual setting.

Chapter 2: Social media in organisations

Social media is integrating personal life with professional life. A cursory glance at people in a public place suggests that individuals are heavily dependent on social media technology, either on their mobile phones or laptops to stay connected with the workplace whilst on the move. Although some scholars argue that social media is entwined in the history of the internet (see Castells, 2002; Wellman et al., 2002), the dependence on social media technology for work purposes is recent, presumably since the rise of networked communications (Bughin & Chui, 2010), that is, those social media technologies that connect the internal efforts of employees and extend the organisations' reach to its customers, partners and suppliers. For instance, corporate blogs connect the internal efforts of employees by facilitating employees to interact with each other; similarly, many companies have taken to Twitter and Facebook to communicate with their clientele and establish employer brand (Dholakia & Durham, 2010; Smedley, 2007). Also referred to as 'enterprise-wide levers' (Chui et al., 2012), a recent study of 4,261 organisations estimates that 72% of companies use some form of social technology in their business and roughly 35% employ some type of enterprise networking site. Clearly, social media technology is the present and future of 'modern workplaces' that provide 'alternative workplaces' to employees by creating 'hybrid workspaces' (Halford, 2005; Bailey & Kurland, 2002; Apgar, 1994). Simply put, we have seen the emergence of newer definitions of the workplace due to rise of technology at the workplace since the late 90s. As Apgar (1994) suggests, social media technology has facilitated organisations to provide opportunities for employees to work from home, a hotel room or a nearby park; with the objective of pushing for work-life balance for employees.

However, industry reports concerning access to social media based applications at the workplace suggest otherwise. According to a CIO (2008) report, companies have banned access to social media as managers view use of social media websites as a waste of time at the workplace. Additionally, according to Gaudin (2009) and Kalman (2014), managers were concerned that using social media at the workplace may divert employees' attention away from more pressing priorities, thus they prefer that employees focus only on work-related activities at the workplace. These reports indicate managers' negative perceptions of social media despite its' many advantages. Further, managers express concerns in managing a dispersed workforce. Oftentimes, managers overcome this challenge by following unethical practises of 'electronic surveillance' and 'electronic peer surveillance' (Ellway, 2013; Bain & Taylor, 2000). On a parallel note, recent literature suggests that employees face a new and interesting challenge of coping with overlapping interactions across online-offline worlds and personal-professional boundaries. As scholars (Malaterre et al., 2012; Sayah, 2013) suggest, employees are increasingly taking to social networking sites to socialise with colleagues, potential clients, friends and family on social media sites. In such situations wherein personal and professional information is accessible online instantly, individuals experience boundary overlaps. This study is set in this meeting of challenges in the modern workplace. The study explores access to social media in the modern workplace and broadly seeks to understand employees' experiences regarding using social media at the workplace.

In this chapter, first, I define social media and provide a brief overview of popular social networking sites Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter within an organisational context. Next, I provide a literature review concerning two aspects in organisations: access to social media at the

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workplace and management of dispersed workforce. Finally, drawing on limited literature, I evaluate the impact of overlapping interactions on individuals.

2.1. Social networking sites

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010, p.61) define social media as "a group of internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0, that allow creation and exchange of user generated content." Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) add that Wikipedia, Facebook, and Second life are all a part of this large group, thus, social media needs to be distinguished further. For instance, researchers refer to social media in their studies on online communities, peer-to-peer sharing, networked gaming, blogging, micro-blogging, and virtual worlds (Markus, et al., 2000; Takhteyev, et al., 2012; Wattal, et al., 2010). Further, most genres of social media require a computer and internet, but increasingly, mobile networks are serving as a source to access social media (Bernoff & Schadler, 2010; Handy, 1995; Kane, et al., 2009). Consequently, for purposes of clarity, researchers' studies on social media can be categorized into social networking sites (SNS) and those sites that do not allow networking. Boyd & Ellison (2008) define a SNS as "a web-based service that allows individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system." By that definition, SNSs incorporate features from a wide array of other genres of social media, including blogs, instant messaging, email, bulletin boards, chat rooms, and media-sharing sites. As of this writing, there are hundreds of SNSs with various technological affordances, supporting a wide range of interests and practices. While the key technological features as stated by Boyd & Ellison (2008) are fairly consistent across SNSs, the cultures that

emerge around SNSs are varied. Most sites support the maintenance of pre-existing social networks, but others help strangers connect based on shared interests, political views, or activities (Huberman, et al., 2008). Some sites cater to diverse audiences, while others attract people based on a common language or shared racial, religious, or nationality-based identities (Ellison, et al., 2006) . Sites also vary in the extent to which they incorporate new information and communication tools, such as mobile connectivity, blogging and photo/video- sharing (Lindley, et al., 2009; Rettberg, 2008). To differentiate social media from generic internet based sites, Piskorski & Mecall's (2010) study focuses on five broadcast behaviours of: blogging, managing a social-network profile, sharing photos, sharing videos, and microblogging. Thus, the gamut of social networking sites vary widely and need to be distinguished, however there is a general consensus that 'Facebook', 'Wikipedia', 'LinkedIn', 'You Tube' and 'Twitter' are all a part of this large group.

2.1.1. Brief overview of Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter

The use of social networking sites (SNS) within the workplace context has received much attention recently. As businesses become increasingly global and competitive, SNSs are playing a major role because of its ability to bridge distances and enable the development of relationships, a key component for any business. A 2012 Burson Marsteller[1] study shows that Fortune Global 100 companies have more accounts on each platform than ever before with an average of: 10.1 Twitter accounts, 10.4 Facebook pages, 8.1 YouTube channels, 2.6 Google Plus pages and 2.0 Pinterest accounts. Their report reveals further that 74% percent of companies studied have a Facebook page, 93% of corporate Facebook pages are updated weekly, 48% of companies are

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[1] Burson-Masteller, established in 1953, is a leading global public relations and communications firm that provides clients with strategic thinking and program execution across a full range of public relations, public affairs, reputation and crisis management, advertising and digital strategies.

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now on Google Plus, 25% of companies have Pinterest accounts and each corporate Facebook page has an average of 6,101 people talking about it. Increasingly, it appears that managers and potential employers use specific social networking sites for a given purpose. For instance, Facebook is often used for purposes of recruitment (Waters, 2011; Brown & Vaughn, 2011). Similarly, LinkedIn is often regarded as a 'social networking site for professionals', the infrastructure of the site allows for passers-by to get a glimpse into strangers' professional skills, work-life history and their networks. The infrastructure of Twitter supports employees' and customers' petty rants, thus, it is used as a personal branding tool and towards promoting organisational agenda.

In summary, social networking sites are important in an organisational context as suggests, collecting personal and social information regarding employees is more straightforward on social networking as individuals leave extensive digital traces unintentionally (Kleinberg, 2008). However, industry reports suggest that companies' social media policies fall on a continuum wherein some companies evaluate social media policies that restrict employees from posting certain content including personnel matters, contract negotiations and corporate policies and others leverage employees' social media skills by endorsing them as brand stalwarts and promote company goodwill. Nonetheless, companies are protective regarding their presence on social media and educate employees on interacting on the site in a professional manner.

2.2. Access to social media at the modern workplace

The advent of social media has facilitated a shift in the organising of work by aiding flexible work arrangements like teleworking (Haddon & Brynin, 2005). In contrast to traditional workplaces where employees worked for fixed times in the day, social media empowers employees to choose when and where they can work from, thus reducing the need for physical presence at the workplace. Earlier, teleworking arrangements referred to those working arrangements wherein employees worked from home, also referred to as 'home working'; now, teleworking is also associated with 'mobile working' or working from a park nearby (Halford, 2005; Brodt & Verburg, 2007). This shift in working arrangements is not as dramatic as extant literature might suggest, as Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have spurred many changes in organisations since the late 90s. Initially, we saw the emergence of 'alternative workplaces', that is, organisations facilitated employees to work from anywhere at any time (Apgar, 1994) through a combination of non-traditional work practices, settings and locations that is beginning to supplement traditional offices. Soon we found that similar technologies were employed to enable virtual technological structures and relationships to operate with little or no face-to-face contact (Halford, 2005).

This shift from Apgar's (1994) notion of social media aided organisational forms to Halford's (2005) view of hybrid workspaces can be explained in the significant numbers of people who worked both from home and the workplace using virtual technologies to connect the two spaces. For instance, towards the late 1990s, as Townsend et al. (1998, pp.18) suggested, we saw the emergence of 'virtual teams', where "groups of geographically and/or organizationally dispersed co-workers assemble using a combination of telecommunication and information technologies to

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accomplish an organisational task". The use of social media in such organising of work has facilitated groups of employees to work together on complex projects. For instance, Malhotra et al. (2001) describe how a unique virtual team, deploying a computer-mediated collaborative technology (like video conferencing), developed a radically new product. The project involved eight employees from two companies, performing various roles (like project manager, concept designer, lead engineer, combustion analyst, and thermal analyst) from two geographically separated organisations and physically dispersed employees to work together over a 10 month project. It might be that the success of this project cannot completely be accredited to social media, however, projects in which employees work together from geographically distant locations was not possible through email alone. The success of such projects over the last few years thus, has given rise to organisations adopting social media including 'global virtual teams' that are "internationally distributed groups of people with an organisational mandate to make or implement decisions with international components and implications" (Maznevski & Chudoba, 2011, p.473).

Similarly, organisations have also been able to provide flexible work arrangements for employees to work from anywhere by providing office laptops and phones like blackberries (Mazmanian et al., 2006). As a result, today's 'mobile worker' has continuous access to the workplace irrespective of their physical location (Hislop & Axtell, 2007). Further, organisations also provide social media technology like forums, customised Facebook pages and corporate blogs for the employee to connect internally with colleagues, clients and managers at any time of day; simultaneously using the same technology to improve communication within the organisation and spur innovation projects internally (Wattal et al., 2010; Hathi, 2009; Majchrzak

et al., 2009; Bryan et al., 2007). Additionally, this trend of providing increased connectivity to employees is ingrained within the workforce population itself also referred to as 'cyborgs' or 'digital natives', the future employees of the workplace who are inherently tech-savvy and crave for continual social connectedness via social networking sites (Poster, 2002; Howe & Strauss, 2007; Prensky, 2001).

2.3. Management of dispersed workforce

Generally speaking, managers are yet grappling with how to supervise employees with the many changes to organisational forms since the advent of social media. Of course as Lurey & Raisinghani (2001) suggest, geographically dispersed teams must first have a shared purpose to foster the need for members to work together. The challenges primarily stem from the physical separation of workers and managers wrought by such information-age arrangements as telework and virtual teams with managers asking the question, "How can I manage them if I can't see them?" (Cascio, 2000, p.81). Thus, the first challenge in managing dispersed workers lies in transitioning from managing employees' time (activity-based) to managing projects (results-based) (Cascio, 2000). This transition however, is easier said than done. Oshri et al. (2007) highlight best practises employed by Tata Consultancy Services, an Indian IT company; include focusing on knowledge-management and process-dependency rather than control and power mechanisms that managers typically employ in making this transition. Consequently, rather than appearing to hold on to time-based managerial styles by toeing the fine line of employees' privacy and managerial ethics, managers may focus on retaining knowledge than controlling attrition.

The second challenge according to Cascio (2000) is to overcome the uncertainty about whether managers will still be valued by their companies if they are managing employees who are not physically present. Kirkman et al. (2002) highlight another challenge in this context; that of building trust with team members. As Handy (1995, p.44) states, "Most of our organizations tend to be arranged on the assumption that people cannot be trusted or relied upon, even in tiny matters.. It is unwise to trust people whom you do not know well, whom you have not observed in action over time, and who are not committed to the same goals.. Trust needs touch…high tech has to be balanced by high touch to build high-trust organisations. Paradoxically, the more virtual an organization becomes, the more its people need to meet in person". Scholars suggest that building trust among team members might be the biggest concern as managers hold on to control and power dynamics tightly rather than negotiating managerial styles (Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Waters, 2011; Clark & Roberts, 2010). In other words, literature suggests rather than trying to build trust with dispersed team members, managers use social media as a bridge to unearth hidden information when interacting with remote workers. In addition, Fogarty et al. (2011, p.184) identify four dilemmas in managing dispersed employees: "the nature of control mechanisms for remote working, the degree to which these should be contiguous with pre-existing managerial styles within the organisation, the merits of regularising remote working into existing working arrangements and the degree to which organisational members' access to remote working arrangements should be formalised".

While Fogarty et al. (2011) address the nature of relations between teleworkers and non-teleworkers and the importance of control between remote workers and non-remote workers from the latter's viewpoint, they highlight similar concerns that managers face in handling

remote workers. For instance, the regularity of remote work within an organisation might help managers get accustomed to the notion of managing physically absent workers and establish an ethical system to supervise. However, in many modern organisations, since remote working is temporary and irregular (Sieber, 1998), managers may find it a challenge in organising this group of workers. Similarly, if the degree of control in managing remote workers were similar to existing organisational practises, managers might find ways to overcome this challenge. The findings from a study conducted by Lurey & Raisinghani (2001) suggest that managers working with geographically dispersed teams may want to consider utilizing more face-to-face interaction and other group communication technologies, such as group telephone and on-line computer conferencing as well as video conferencing to enhance personal connections between team members. They reiterate that formalising processes and reinforcing structure to the working of such teams successfully is crucial.

2.3.1. Electronic surveillance in modern organisations

Currently, limited research has focused on how managers are coping with evolving organisational forms. Felstead et al. (2003, p.246) conducted a study to find out if the reinvention and modification of control mechanisms via electronic devices that "activate the surveillance capabilities of existing managerial devices, set short-term and medium-term output targets which can be monitored at regular intervals, bring management into the home by means of home visits, emphasize trust, thereby obviating the need for high levels of visibility" would help managers and employees alike to cope with managing locational flexibility? They conclude that "the more ad hoc and haphazard the occurrence of flexible working, the greater the likelihood of inflexibility for the work schedules of co-workers and the business as a whole and suggest that a

multidimensional approach that considers the interactions of organisational flexibility, control and equity is required. Thus, management of employees is dependent on the regularity of remote working, formalised locational flexibility policies and organisational flexibility. However, organisations in reality do not fit within this description to provide optimal remote working options. As a result, as recent literature highlights, managers resort to borderline unethical practises in seeking control over employees' time and productivity at the workplace (Ellway, 2013; van den Broek, 2002). These borderline unethical practises are pervasive among managers in organisations. For instance, employees are recruited based on their Facebook profiles and laid off based on the content on their personal blogs (Clark & Roberts, 2010). Reports suggest this practise of hiring and firing employees based on the content on their personal web pages has grown in popularity among managers (Richards & Kosmala, 2013; Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Waters, 2011). Another borderline unethical practise managers are increasingly adapting is 'electronic surveillance', also known as 'electronic panopticon', a Foucauldian metaphor for power and control to gather comprehensive information in societal surveillance (Zuboff, 1988). In other words, this notion suggests that managers see it within their power to collect all information- personal, professional or social, on employees as a means of controlling their time and productivity at the workplace. Although this practise of collecting an 'information panopticon' on employees has been heavily debated and scholars question the extent of veracity in reality, it appears that more often employees have harboured suspicions that surveillance was occurring and this acts as a form of 'electronic panopticon' (Ellway, 2013; Bain & Taylor, 2000; Sewell & Wilkinson, 1992).

As a corollary, it appears as though there might be a generation gap between managers and employees in using social media that might be the root cause for this conflict. In other words, employees take to social media to vent emotions (Richards & Kosmala, 2013), thus, while employees yearn for connectivity through social networking sites, managers view use of these sites during working hours and at the workplace as time-wasters (Skeels & Grudin, 2009). In attempting to curb usage of social networking sites or popular social media at the workplace, managers keep tabs on employee usage. In some companies, as CIO[2] reports, one way of reducing this conflict was to ban access to social media at the workplace and control access to social media technologies at the workplace (Bughin & Chui, 2010; Hathi, 2009; Majchrzak et al., 2009; Oshri et al., 2007).

2.3. Impact of overlapping interactions

Pauleen & Yoong (2001) identify many challenges in socialising patterns for 'virtual teams' within IT companies. As they suggest, perhaps one of the biggest challenges is in merging the individual cultures of the team members into a team culture. As discussed earlier, interacting on social media is a pervasive and intrusive experience. Just as employees are being hired and fired online, scholars suggest that employees are socialising online (Leonardi, 2013; Ahuja & Galvin, 2003; Bakardjieva, 2003; Malhotra et al., 2001), thus, interacting on social media is also a personal and individual experience. Socialising online with workplace colleagues indicates a virtual togetherness for employees, who are connected with friends, family and workplace colleagues on a handful of social networking sites at any time and all the time. Individuals

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connect with workplace colleagues on public-personal and public-professional networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn (Malaterre et al., 2012).

Schoneboom (2011) adds to growing literature in this field that individuals use social media technology like blogs or internet-based diaries to record experiences at the workplace. Further, researchers studying leadership suggest that leaders must use social networks to build a network at the workplace (Ibarra & Hunter, 2007). In these interactions, individuals interact with colleagues in the physical workplace and on personal social networking site Facebook; thus, individuals move swiftly and in an analogous and asymmetric fashion from offline environments, where ambient awareness and organisational socialisation can provide cues on managing impressions (Leonardi, 2013) to online environments, where audience is ephemeral and communication cues are minimal (Boyd, 2001). In other words, individuals move quickly and in a sporadic manner from offline or real life where face-to-face interactions provide cues to social interaction to online or where the audience is ephemeral and social interaction cues are learned over time. This transition can be adverse and beneficial in terms of impact on individuals. On the upside, we see that dispersed teams work well together with minimal disruption to their work schedules and less emphasis on personal involvement with workplace colleagues (Majchrzak et al., 2004). In addition we see that faceless electronic communications are a source of comfort for newcomers to actively engage in cognitive information with senior colleagues as the sender of information rather than a receiver (Ahuja & Galvin, 2003). On the downside, we see that such arrangements like teleworking and mobile lifestyles affect individuals' work-life balance. As Malaterre et al. (2012) theorise, interacting with workplace colleagues on personal social networking sites like Facebook is causing a clash of worlds between professional-personal and

work-life for the employee. Consequently, such interaction where there is an overlap of online-offline worlds and personal-professional boundaries is altering how individuals interact with workplace colleagues and managers. Thus, as the literature suggests, increased connectedness has implications on user behaviours online and offline.

In summary, social media has altered the workplace and the management of workers considerably. Social media technology aids both organisations to function on a global scale and employees to work from anywhere and at any time. However, managers are grappling with this shift in managing their teams; they are forced to rely on social media technologies and find new ways of managing teams. This causes a conflict between managers and employees when managers see it within their power to collect all information – personal, professional or social on employees in an attempt to control productivity at the workplace. A troubling trend in this direction is managers' use of social media technologies to manage those employees physically located at the workplace as well. However, we know little about manager intentions; if such electronic surveillance is prevalent or if employees harbour such suspicions. Further, as employees move between online-offline and personal-professional environments in an asymmetric fashion, they experience a blurring of work-life boundaries inevitably leading to an overlap of interactions.

Chapter 3: Self-presentations

People have an on-going interest in how others perceive them and spend a substantial part of their day and income in impression management related activities. For instance, Sadalla & Burroughs (1981) suggest that people tend to choose foods not only for nutritive and sensory reasons but also in order to bolster their public image. Similarly Vartanian et al. (2007, p.275) explain the symbolic impressions fostered through food consumption and identify impression stereotypes associated with gender roles, "people who eat 'healthy' foods and smaller meals are seen as more 'feminine'; conversely, those who eat 'unhealthy' foods and larger meals are seen as 'masculine'". In a study on income levels associated with impression management, Godfrey et al. (2003) find evidence to associate upward earnings and favourable impression management especially one year after a CEO change. Thus, crafting an image of the self in front of an audience is a vital part of people's activities and in these daily encounters, people request their observers to take seriously the impression fostered before them.

3.1. Self-presentations: The theory

Self-presentations are the attempt to control images of self before real or imagined audiences (Schlenker, 1980). It is a goal-directed act designed, at least in part, to generate particular images of self and thereby influence how audiences perceive and treat the actor. People intentionally or unintentionally stake claim to self-images through aspects of their appearance and behaviour. In his seminal work, 'The presentation of self in everyday life', Goffman (1959) proposed impression management theory with this assumption that, 'when an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or her to bring into

play information about them already possessed". In other words, in the physical presence of a performer, the audience acquires available information about the performer.

Goffman (1959) applies the metaphor 'all world is a stage' to people's everyday interactions thus implying a dramaturgical view to perceiving others. According to this view, individuals wear 'masks' in front of an audience, that is, individuals enact rehearsed self-presentation behaviours to convey an impression on an unassuming audience who takes the individual's behaviours seriously and assume that his/her self-presentation is the 'real' self. While this study views self-presentations as synonymous with impression management, many scholars distinguish between self-presentations and impression management to suggest that self-presentations are specific behaviours individuals employ to foster desired impressions. The distinction lies in the micro-level differentiation between outcome (impression) and behaviours (self-presentations). For instance, Schneider defined self-presentation as "the manipulation of information about the self by the actor" (1981, p.25). Gardner & Martinko (1988b) suggest that the impression management process encompasses a set of behaviours that people may exhibit, and a self-presentation is one of the prominent ways to manage an impression where individuals have control over the information they share.

The earliest instance of this distinction is by Archibald & Cohen (1971) who correlated self-evaluation with self-presentations. They explored individual's desires in seeking approval while presenting the self and the impact of self-evaluation in the process. In another study on cognitive demands in self-presentations, Baumeister & Jones (1978) consider the pre-existing knowledge and expectations of the audience on individuals. Their study looked at long-term on-going relationships and the role of self-presentations in the context of longevity. Baumeister et al.

(1989) investigated the effects of deliberate self-presentation on one's memory for the interaction, on one's attributions about one's partner and on the partner's behaviour. They demonstrate that one person's self-presentation can set implicit norms for self-presentational favourability on others. Leary & Allen (2011) view impressions as the outcome, and self-presentations as the internal process that individuals dabble in towards a desired outcome. Baumeister & Tice (1989) argue that individuals' self-esteem have an impact on self-presentations. They demonstrate that individuals with high self-esteem tend to present the self in an enhanced manner, and low self-esteem leads to a protective or defensive self-presentation.

Jackson & Towson (1997) assess variables central to shyness and find that individuals' perceived interpersonal skill deficits influence their self-presentations. Further, audience disapproval has an effect on self-presentations. In a similar study on personality indicators on self-presentations, Arkin et al. (1980) find that individuals with high social-anxiety present the self in a favourable light, and assume more responsibility for success than failure. However, individuals present a modest self and assume responsibility for failure than success when the audience comprised of individuals with high-prestige (Arkin et al., 1980). Tice (1992) suggests that self-presentations elicit internalization of behaviour. She urges that self-concept changes due to internalization leading to changes in behaviour and subsequent presentations. The above deconstruction of self-presentations indicate that individuals experience cognitive demands not just in deciding on the desired impression individuals wish to create but also in effectively communicating the same. This study adopts the definition of self-presentation as those behaviours directed at fostering impressions to the audience (Baumeister, 1982; Schlenker, 1982; Goffman, 1959).

Broadly speaking, enacting a self-presentation is an everyday activity and individuals draw on a variety of tools to foster a desired impression. Additionally, individuals enact behaviours particular to the setting and audience. Collectively, these three aspects (self-presentation tools, setting and audience) are integral to fostering a desired image successfully. In this chapter, first I review the self-presentation tools that individuals draw on to foster a desired image. Next, I explore the interplay between the setting and audience in enacting self-presentations. To apply a dramaturgical perspective in social interactions, individuals must first be aware of their audience. Presumably, the audience varies according to the setting. For instance, in a setting like the workplace, the audience includes all members in the physical workplace like colleagues, manager and friends while a setting like a coffee shop includes members physically present in the coffee shop like strangers and vendors. Finally, I explore individuals' motivations to enact self-presentations; more specifically I explore the intention to enact a self-presentation in order to foster a desired image.

3.1.1. Self-presentation tools

In everyday interactions, individuals have access to a variety of tools in their physical setting to convey desired impressions. Such tools vary widely in terms of using the body, ambience and artefacts to foster desired impressions. As Depaulo (1991, p.352) explains, "nonverbal expressive behaviours include facial expressions, tone-of-voice cues, body movements, orientations, postures, touching and other ways of regulating interpersonal distances" in the impression management process. Knapp (1978) adds that physical appearance cues, modes of attire and even the arrangement and decoration of physical spaces are considered to be examples of nonverbal cues. In addition to non-verbal behaviours, face-to-face interactions, language and

the physical environment are rich media that can bridge different frames of reference when ambiguity is involved and assist individuals in fostering desired impressions (Goffman, 1959). For example, individuals use story-telling and narration to communicate a creative self (Ibarra & Lineback, 2005; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). In addition, Hughes (2000) and Lindley et al. (2009) demonstrate the use of art like photographs and music to convey desired impressions of the self.

At the workplace, individuals draw on multiple tools in the ambience to foster impressions. In terms of the physical workplace, the workplace environment provides many tools, like the furniture, décor, cubicle space and physical layout (Goffman, 1959). As Davis (1984) suggests, three elements in the physical workplace provide self-presentation tools for individuals: the physical structure like walls and furniture, physical stimuli like clock or telephone and symbolic artefacts like framed certificates. Many scholars provide insights into impressions fostered based on the workplace décor (Verhoeven, 2007; McElroy et al., 1983; Morrow & McElroy, 1981). In general, the physical workplace where workers' offices are located near their manager's will receive many cues to foster impressions. For instance, as Lercher et al. (2003) suggest, individuals draw on ambient awareness to foster impressions, that is, communications occurring among others that we are not involved in but we passively observe. Exposure to such ambient communication is one way by which individuals can learn what and whom others know without expending effort and use the information to evaluate impression strategies. In addition, individuals draw on organisational characteristics like organisational culture and norms to foster impressions as well (Bughin & Chui, 2010; D'Mello & Eriksen, 2010; Majchrzak et al., 2009). For instance, Gardner & Martinko (1988a) suggest managers often use descriptions of the organization, to manage impressions and legitimize company decisions and policies. Also,

worker role, duties and responsibilities at the workplace also provide cues for self-presentations; for instance a marketing professional and a manager will have access to different self-presentation tools (Upadhya, 2009; Alvesson, 1994). In the physical presence, the worker's physical self also provides cues for self-presentations. For instance, gender, age, race, status, power, attractiveness and skill levels are self-presentation tools (Das et al., 2008; Howcroft & Richardson, 2008; Cooper, 2005; Cherulnik & Souders, 1984).

Thus, the tools available to enact self-presentations are a motley crew that includes movements, postures, vocal cues (other than words), aspects of physical appearance, interpersonal space and touch among many others (Morris et al., 1996; DePaulo, 1992). Overall, the tools and mechanisms available in the physical space are unparalleled, and individuals can creatively use physical places and spaces to communicate impressions.

3.1.2. The interplay of setting and audience in enacting self-presentations

The interplay of the setting and audience is a critical aspect in enacting self-presentations. Individuals seek to create different impressions on different sets of audience based on their specific goal for the interaction. For instance, at a work meeting, the setting is the conference room and the audience are colleagues and clients. In such self-presentations, individuals may dramatise their presentations to draw emphasis to specific impressions they wish to foster. For instance, at a work meeting, individuals may interrupt a colleague in order to convey their point across in a stern manner, presumably intending to foster an impression of an assertive person. Goffman (1959) refers to such self-presentations as region behaviour; the discrepancy between one's behaviour when with different kinds of audience. "When one's activity occurs in the

presence of other persons, some aspects of the activity are expressively accentuated and other aspects, which might discredit the fostered impression, are suppressed..there may be another region – a 'background' or 'backstage' – where the suppressed facts make an appearance" (Goffman, 1959, p.114). In this section, I explore the interplay of setting and audience, where in most cases the setting takes a subcutaneous form.

A literature review suggests there are two types of audience, one introspective wherein individuals are working on internal impression management goals like self-esteem and the other external, that is to the public, which scholars view as more strategic. One perspective of the audience when enacting self-presentations is that the audience is internal, implying self as the audience. Schlenker (1982) suggests self-presentations are an attempt to control images projected in real or imagined social situations. This view of self-presentations suggests individuals maintain a delicate balance between self-enhancement, accuracy and humility in social interactions. Individuals attempt to control an image about the self by either highlighting favourable facts about the self that might otherwise be unknown or convey an image of being modest by underplaying one's achievements; thus implying that a self-presentation is 'self-relevant', or relevant only to the self. Greenwald & Breckler (1985) add to this perspective and refer to the self as the 'inner-audience' in making a self-presentation. By forcing the individual to introspect, individuals construct their self-concept in the process of impression management (Gecas, 1982). Gardner & Martinko (1988b) suggest that personality traits such as self-monitoring ability, machiavellism, need for approval and social anxiety facilitate individuals' responses to impression management cues and audience reactions, that is, individuals who monitor the self closely, seek approval and experience social anxiety are inclined to experience

stress in the self-presentation process as these personality traits are cognitively demanding; or as Gardner & Martinko (1988a, p.327) explain, "actor cognitions like self-concept, attributions, cognitive scripts, role-expectations, and self-efficacy expectations guide actors in evaluating self-presentation strategies". In their study, they identify four cognitive demands that shape the novelty of their performances; audience formality, favourability, and familiarity. In regards to setting, where the audience is internal, the setting is irrelevant as individuals focus on core aspects of the self; nonetheless, these cognitive processes are relevant at the workplace where individuals desire career progression and invest themselves cognitively in defining their task, role and situation to gain upward mobility by fostering a positive self-image.

Typically, within the literature on self-presentations, a popular stance is to define the audience as the 'the assembled spectators, or listeners at a public event', that is, when individuals try to control impressions, they try to control impressions of the self in front of a public gathering. In the physical presence of an audience, individuals can be flexible in their enactments and quickly modify performances based on audience feedback. For instance, street artists gauge success of their performances based on indicators of success like claps, bigger crowds or money collection. In the writings of Baumeister (1982), Baumeister & Tice (1984) and Goffman (1959) the reference to the audience is external. This audience could be a set of strangers (for example, at the theatre), a familiar set of people (for example, the workplace) or a mix of both (for example, at a party).

In reviewing the literature on the interplay of setting and the audience in the self-presentation process, recently, the focus has shifted to studying self-presentations on social media. In these

studies, scholars extend Goffman's (1959) theory to interactions on social media (Rui & Stefanone, 2013; Guadagno et al., 2012; Papacharissi, 2002), suggesting that all interactions on social media may be considered as performative. As the studies are recent, we know little about the interplay of the setting and the audience, however, scholars explain that social media adds dynamicity to performative interactions in this aspect. The audience on social media is ephemeral and spatial (Ellison et al., 2007); that is, the audience on social media transitions from one site to another in quick succession and cannot be counted. In spatial terms, not only are individuals connected to each other across great geographical distances, members of the audience overlap across physical and virtual settings. In addition, audience on social media can be anonymous or with false identities, thus making it difficult to gauge audience. Thus, the closest understanding we can make of who constitutes audience on social media is in referring to audience as 'imagined'. Anderson (1991, p.6) defines an 'imagined community' as "a set of people within a community, where the members will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives an image of their communion". Consequently, the audience on social media is assorted, diverse and overlaps across the physical and virtual settings. When interacting with such a dynamic audience across physical and virtual settings, individuals struggle in few aspects with regard to performative interactions. As Schultze & Mason (2012, p.301) inform us, "in these evolving spaces, the boundaries between actual and virtual reality, between living individuals and their virtual bodies, and between private and public domains are becoming even more blurred". In other words, by virtue of interacting on social media, individuals transition between virtual and actual realities, often reporting incidents occurring in one medium to the audience in the other (Jenkins, 2006). The overlap of interactions, audience and the setting on social media creates conflicts for individuals in enacting self-

presentations on social media. For instance, one conflict is that individuals may not be fully aware of their audience during performative interactions. Another conflict is an overlap of interactions might inevitably lead to an overlap of self-presentations across the physical-virtual setting and personal-professional life. Thirdly, in contrast to self-presentations in the physical setting wherein enactments are situated within a context and thus time-bound, on social media, self-presentations transcend space, place and time. Thus, in regard to self-presentations on social media, two questions may be asked at this point: are individuals aware of their audience during performative interactions? And can all interactions on such evolving spaces as social media sites be considered performative?

3.1.3. Motivations for self-presentations

As Goffman (1959) suggests, most social interactions can be considered as enactments; that is when people are consciously engaged in impression management, there is an assumption of intentionality, that is, a conscious intention to foster an impression, thus as Gardner & Martinko (1988a) suggests, the motivation to foster impressions must be subliminal. However, scholars argue that while individuals may monitor their impact on others and try to gauge the impressions other people form of them, individuals engage in daily interactions without any particular motivations (Castells, 2002; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Thus, where intentionality is concerned, scholars suggest that the impression management process involves two discrete processes: impression motivation and impression construction. According to Leary & Kowalski (1990), individuals engage in everyday interactions without any particular motivations to foster impressions, however, in certain circumstances where situational and dispositional factors interact, people become motivated to control how others see them. Broadly, they identify three

such circumstances: levels of impression monitoring, primary self-presentational motives and antecedents to impression motivation. In regard to levels of impression monitoring, Leary & Kowalski (1990) suggest individuals' cognitive demands on the process are indicative of impression motivations. For instance, in some situations like a job interview, first impressions are critical and individuals may invest cognitively in every aspect like language (verbal and nonverbal) and dress to convey desired impressions (Rosenfeld, 1997). Scholars suggest individuals have primary self-presentation motives when they target social and material outcomes, like friendship, power or social approval (Utz, 2010; Archibald & Cohen, 1971) or in the identity construction process (Chreim et al., 2007; Pratt et al., 2006; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Gecas, 1982).

The antecedents to impression management are broadly identified as the goal-relevance of impressions, the value of desired outcomes and the perceived discrepancy between one's desired and current social image (Heffner et al., 2002; Rao, 1995; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Apsler, 1975). Furthermore, as Leary & Kowalski (1990, p.39) suggest, impression construction involves not just self-descriptions, "it includes all those behavioural attempts to create impressions in others' minds" as "people attempt to create impressions not only of their personal attributes, but also of their attitudes, moods, roles, status, physical states, interests, beliefs and so on." In other words, Leary & Kowalski (1990) suggest examining of impression tactics and individuals' evaluation of specific self-presentation behaviours towards an understanding of the impression management process.

3.1.3.1. Motivations for self-presentations at the workplace

In spatial terms, self-presentations at the workplace refer to all performative interactions that occur at the workplace. Self-presentations at the workplace serve many purposes. Given the dyadic nature of impression management, individuals engage in self-presentations at the workplace in order to develop a professional identity (Roberts et al., 2005; Ibarra, 1999; Markus & Nurius, 1986), build credibility in a new work role (Ibarra, 1999), in the performance appraisal process (Barsness et al., 2005; Bolino & Turnley, 2003) and towards career growth (Bosley et al., 2009). In addition, in global organisations where individuals work across geographies, individuals invest cognitively in fostering positive impressions of the self in the absence of face-work (Clair et al., 2005). Similarly, Barsness et al. (2005) indicate that remote work enhances impression motivation, that is, as the proportion of time spent working remotely from their supervisors increased, employees increased their levels of impression management. Generally speaking, with the rare exception of when individuals desire a poor impression (Becker & Martin, 1995), people attempt to foster positive impressions of the self to colleagues, managers, customers and clients; although the techniques and processes may vary considerably, the motivation to convey a specific positive image is subliminal. For instance, individuals behave opportunistically in order to create positive impressions with the motivation of generating support for their actions (Fandt & Ferris, 1990).

Similarly, individuals attempt to foster a positive impression on others in the organisational socialisation process by seeking varied technical and social information from colleagues and through observation (Morrison, 1993). Individuals also convey impressions through symbolic acts, for instance, work-group identification and organisational identification (Knippenberg &

Schie, 2000). In addition, individuals create a positive impression when they wish to be mentored by a colleague or a manager (Ibarra, 1999; Kram & Isabella, 1985). Overall, impression fostering at the workplace is intentional and individuals' impression motivation is to foster positive self-images. Thus, scholars studying self-presentations at the workplace assume intentionality is implicit (Bolino et al., 2008; Barsness et al., 2005; Wayne & Kacmar, 1991) and focus on examining specific self-presentational behaviours.

Although individuals desire positive self-images, scholars suggest that their self-presentation tactics at the workplace are 'strategic', 'manipulative' or 'controlling'. One thread of literature on self-presentation strategies views individuals' choice of specific self-presentation behaviour as 'strategic' and 'manipulative'. Organ (1988) proffers five self-presentation tactics at the workplace: altruism – behaviours directed at helping a specific person at work (e.g. a co-worker or supervisor), sportsmanship – tolerance for nuisances on the job, courtesy – the act of 'touching base' with others before taking actions or making decisions that would affect their work, generalized compliance – general employee conscientiousness that surpasses enforceable work standards and civic virtue – behaviours that describe the active participation and involvement of employees in company affairs, such as attending meetings, responding to mail and keeping up with organizational issues. By exhibiting such behaviours individuals exhibit positive impressions of the self at the workplace and are specifically directed at the workplace audience (Bolino, 1999). Jones & Pittman (1980) identified five self-presentation strategies: ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, intimidation and supplification. Ingratiation occurs when individuals use favours or flattery to obtain an attribution of likeability from the audience (Liden & Mitchell, 1988), self-promotion occurs when individuals call attention to their

accomplishments to be perceived as capable by the audience, exemplification occurs when individuals go beyond and above what is necessary or expected to be perceived as committed or hardworking (see D'Mello & Eriksen, 2010); intimidation occurs when individuals project their power or ability to punish to be viewed as dangerous or powerful (e.g. Upadhya, 2009) and supplification occurs when individuals present their weaknesses or deficiencies to receive compassion and assistance from others (Jones & Pittman, 1980). Cialdini (1989) examines self-presentation tactics through association and indirect links, that is, the tendency to bask in reflected glory by making observers more aware of one's association with successful others. He identified four connection-focused and indirect tactics that may be applied in the impression management process: boasting, blurring, blaring and burying. Boasting, the tendency to boast, not about one's own accomplishments, but about one's link to others' accomplishments is rarely viewed as 'strategic' or manipulative. In contrast to boasting, burying is the tendency to distance the self from unfavourable others and this may be viewed as manipulative. For instance, individuals may distance themselves from those who maintain a façade or are intentionally fostering negative self-images (Becker & Martin, 1995). Blaring, similar to blurring is the act of proclaiming a negative link to an unfavourable other (Ibarra & Andrews, 1993). Blurring refers to those performative acts when individuals blur their links with favourable others through strategic omission of information (Singh & Vinnicombe, 2001).

On a more general level, all performative interactions fall under three categories: assertive, defensive or self-focused impression management tactics. Tedeschi & Lindskold (1976) define assertive self-presentation as behaviour aimed at establishing particular identities in the eyes of others. Assertive tactics may be seen as pre-emptive, wherein individuals proactively manage

impressions about themselves, for instance at an interview, individuals may use assertive tactics to show employability (Weiss & Feldman, 2006; Feldman et al., 2002). As Jones & Pittman (1980) identified, ingratiation, exemplification and intimidation are examples of tactical or strategic self-presentational behaviours that individuals employ to foster desired positive images at the workplace.

Defensive self-presentation tactics are actions taken to re-establish a positive identity or remove negative typifications. Examples of defensive self-presentation tactics are when individuals reactively manage impressions about themselves, typically by means of apologies, excuses, justifications, disclaimers or entitlement (Gibson & Sachau, 2000; Lee et al., 1999). Similarly, individuals in most cases also refrain from specific behaviours like lying or faking content in order to convey a positive impression (Carlson et al., 2010). Leary et al. (1995) argue that although self-presentation tactics employed at the workplace are deceptive or manipulative, individuals present aspects of themselves oriented toward making their desired impressions and do not fabricate such aspects.

Another thread of literature on self-presentations at the workplace evaluates individuals' tactics as 'strategic' and 'manipulative' when individuals employ 'audience segregation' tactics. Goffman (1959, p.57) explains 'audience segregation' as, 'those before whom one plays one of his parts won't be the same individuals before whom he plays a different part in another setting." As Hewlin (2003) suggests, in the organizational context, individuals may wear 'masks' to indicate conformity to organizational norms, for instance, individuals may use performative tactics to convey their deservedness for rewards. Similarly, mentors may wear a 'mask' to

convey some specific role-related attitudes to their mentees in the role-modelling process (Raabe & Beehr, 2003; Scandura & Schriesheim, 1994; Kram, 1988). As Schlenker & Leary (1982) suggest, the types of impressions people prefer to create depend on what they are trying to achieve, however, a self-presentation does not necessarily involve conscious deception, or wearing a 'mask'. Many scholars have explored the notion of self-presentation tactics at the workplace. Gardner & Martinko (1988b) suggest that individuals vary self-presentations based on the audience, implying impression management as an inherently manipulative process. Examples of manipulative self-presentation strategies include complimenting a person to get in their good graces (Cooper, 2005); doing favours for others for which there is no reciprocal form of compensation (Derlega et al., 1976) or agreeing with a person publicly while privately holding contrary opinions (Tedeschi & Riess, 1981). Similarly, individuals may bask in reflected glory by attempting to associate themselves with positive events and with successful others to appear successful (Giacalone & Rosenfeld, 1986). People may also participate in the impression management process by proxy whereby they use another individual to manage their impressions for them (Singh & Vinnicombe, 2001). Schlenker & Britt (1999) refer to friends or colleagues at the workplace managing the impressions of others as when he/she neglects to mention any negative attributes and may highlight only the positive characteristics. Thus, scholars refer to those self-presentations as manipulative wherein the intention to manipulate is clearly identified.

Ashford et al. (1998) justify managers' use of tactical self-presentations to influence organizational agenda. They suggest that such discretionary upwardly directed behaviours are essential to push for change within organizational policy, thus, managers behave machiavellestically. In a recent and elaborate inquiry on self-presentation tactics, Bolino &

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Turnley (2003) explain that individuals with high Machiavellism use self-presentation tactics discretely. As Carlson et al. (2010) explain, individuals use deception as a technique to manage impressions. They explore the use of deceptive tactics to manage impressions in a subordinate-supervisor relationship, and summarize that not only is it difficult to deceive but also that if unaccomplished, it can have a negative outcome. Dose & Klimoski (1995) suggest that individuals use 'accountability' as a masking technique, where they may portray a positive image of 'doing the right thing' while conveying a negative impression of a colleague at the workplace.

Broadly, scholars have explored self-presentations in the physical setting of the workplace extensively, focusing on self-presentation tactics. Recent studies highlight specific self-presentation behaviours that individuals exercise to foster a desired positive image. As D'Mello & Eriksen (2010) note, despite no work pressure, individuals stayed late at the workplace due to their desire to be noticed by the boss as 'hard working' or 'going the extra mile' hoping to be nominated for workplace awards. Jemielniak (2007) finds in his study that software engineers denounced formal dress-codes, thus suggesting that self-presentation tools at the workplace as reviewed earlier are changing in the modern workplace. Raghuram (2013) explains that impression management at the modern workplace is cognitively demanding and identifies differential coping mechanisms that individuals adopted.

In summary, Goffman (1959) applies the metaphor of drama to everyday activities, suggesting individuals enact performances targeted at creating and maintaining particular images of the self in front of an audience. Self-presentations refer to specific behaviours that individuals enact in order to convey an image. Individuals shape their self-presentation behaviours specific to the

audience and setting by drawing on a variety of tools. In everyday instances, individuals primarily rely on the use of the body to communicate an impression; at the workplace, individuals have access to additional tools like the physical workspace, socialising with colleagues and proximity to the managers' office. In terms of setting, individuals wish to foster different impressions in their personal and professional life; thus, they may exhibit various aspects of their personality or choose to enact a specific characteristic extensively depending on their goal. Here, researchers suggest that individuals tactically vary their self-presentations depending on the audience. If the audience is the self, then individuals are more introspective in terms of gauging the self-presentation goal and if the audience is external, individuals rely on feedback mechanisms to gauge the success of their performance. Recent research shows that individuals who interact on social media with workplace colleagues experience conflicts regarding boundary overlap of personal-professional life resulting from overlapping interactions across the physical and virtual settings. Overall, researchers have paid particular attention to exploring self-presentation strategies that individuals may employ in countering conflicts arising while enacting self-presentations on social media and find that on a more broad level, self-presentation tactics fall under three categories: assertive, defensive or self-focused. In the following chapters of this thesis, I explore the notion of self-presentations on social media in-depth.

Chapter 4: Self-presentations on social media

Self-presentations on social media refer to all those social interactions that occur across social media platforms, including mobile phones and other internet enabled technology, social networking sites, news portals, and other interaction sites where individuals can share content from one site to another (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Scholars define self-presentations on social media by interpreting particular actions like profile construction, use of media, status updates and networking style among others as performative interactions (Tong et al., 2008; Bolino & Turnley, 2003). Broadly speaking, the discourse on performative interactions on social media question the extent of embodiment and intent of interactions in these presentations.

Embodiment refers to enacting embodied identity, "the experience of the body as I am, as me' rather than 'the experience of the body as a thing that belongs to me, as mine" (Carruthers, 2009, p.130). Thus, individuals enacting embodied identities try to recreate their experiences in the physical body like age, gender and race as identity signifiers (Ihde, 2002), invisible identities like mental illness and disability (Beatty & Kirby, 2006), personal, social and professional identity (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Alvesson, 1994; Gecas, 1982) and their lived social experiences, emotion and cognition (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999) to foster impressions of the self. In other words, embodied identity enactment on social media refers to those interactions describing all aspects of the physical (including emotional & mental) self and environmental experiences. In addition, the notion of performative interactions on social media is centred on the intent of online interactions. While some scholars suggest that individuals' performative interactions on social media are embedded in their embodied experiences and offline practises; others propose social media

facilitates dualism, thus individuals' performances are disembodied; in either situations, scholars suggest that the intent is to foster an impression.

Most popularly, researchers studying performative interactions on social media suggest that individuals do not present information, but dramas to the audience (Goffman, 1959). By applying a dramaturgical metaphor, scholars assume that even when individuals are in the virtual presence of an audience, they are engaged in impression management (Papacharissi, 2002). Consequently, when individuals are engaged in impression management, the notion of intentionality arises, that is, are all interactions on the internet considered performative (Schau & Gilly, 2003) or do individuals expressly intend to foster impressions on their audience? As Vasalou et al. (2008) explain, individuals use their profiles to accurately reflect their offline selves by displaying stable self-attributes, thus illustrative of the notion of representativeness in performative interactions on social media. Representativeness, or a re-presentation of the offline self online seeks to maintain integrity between the online-offline selves, in other words, individuals strive for accuracy with their embodied experiences and offline practices and if they lack this integrity their performances are deemed deceptive or 'fake' (Vaast, 2007). Consequently, many scholars adopted this notion of performative interactions and joined the discourse on self-presentations on social media.

Papacharissi (2002) finds in her study that individuals draw on multiple media tools like links, guestbooks and banners to perform representativeness online. She adds that some of her respondents also made a conscious effort to create and affiliate with online communities. Similarly, Bargh et al. (2002) found that online, although individuals were liberated by anonymity, they generally expressed more actual-self aspects than in offline interactions. In regard to networking strategies as a performative tenet online, Baym's (1995) study shows that

individuals who experience similar embodied experiences are likely to network online and perform embodied experiences accurately. In other words, Baym (1995) suggests individuals in homophilous networks are likely to perform representational selves. In addition, Stefanone & Jang (2007) suggest that individuals perform representative selves on blogs to build relationships. Similarly, scholars suggest representativeness when they argue that individuals' networks on social networking sites are reflective of their 'true' personality (Utz, 2010; Ellison et al., 2007; Gosling et al., 2007). In other words, researchers studying performative interactions on social media corroborate that interactions on the internet are not performed but genuine (Papacharissi & Gibson, 2011; Tong et al., 2008; Walther, 1996). In such presentations, the intent of performative interactions is meant to be genuine or to perform the 'real' self. The logics for representativeness is aptly explained by Utz (2010, p. 316): "If these friends are indeed friends whom the individual might know in 'real' life, the chance that friends might express doubts on the validity of information on the profile is quite high", thus, social interaction and impression fostering on social networking sites tends to be more real, as it is the norm to have friends from the physical world on these sites. These friends or networks that individuals make on social media sites represent the context for self-presentations on social media (Tufekci, 2008).

The argument here is that the interconnected nature of the internet forces individuals to be 'real' in a digital age where individuals can advertise their blogs and promote their work on networking sites simultaneously. Vasalou et al. (2008) found that individuals strive to be their 'true' selves, and that the unity of offline and online selves facilitates honest constructions of the offline self. Further, Vaast (2007) adds that individuals have transference and manage impressions on online forums quite similar to their offline selves. Gosling et al. (2007) studied

the accuracy of personality in impressions based on popular social media site Facebook and found that impressions showed accuracy. Although individuals may sometimes promote false impressions of what he/she is like (Weiss & Feldman, 2006), often they manage to convey accurate information about themselves that the audience may not otherwise know (Murphy, 2007). Hum et al. (2011, p.1828) find in their study that majority of the photographs uploaded to profiles were "inactive, posed, appropriate and contained only the subject" suggesting that individuals wish to convey specific images of the self by using photographs as a representation for their personality. Given the rise in number of social networking sites recently, Leary & Allen (2011) postulated that that individuals rely on a relatively small number of basic self-presentation personas in which they convey particular profiles of impressions as a set. They explain further that since individuals cope with a physically absent and virtually present audience on social media, most people rely on a small number of basic self-presentational personas in which they convey particular impressions. Further, because individuals are multifaceted, with diverse and sometimes contradictory attributes and interests, they tend to present the self with characteristics most relevant to their immediate goals (Leary & Allen, 2011). Thus, rather than being necessarily deceitful and manipulative, people's self-presentations on social media are often honest, albeit tactical efforts to foster certain images in the audience' eyes. While the notion of representativeness is a compelling argument, the concern with such a view to performances on social media is that it excludes the influences of individuals' online experiences. In addition, researchers largely assume that the very act of creating a presence on social media is intended to foster impressions, which is a debatable notion.

Although heavily criticised, in a second perspective on performative interactions on social media, scholars argue that individuals craft disembodied selves. As Nakamura (2002) explains, the

notion of disembodied selves is best understood in the 1993 *New Yorker* cartoon, 'On the internet, nobody knows you are a dog'. This notion, that you can be anyone on the internet; for instance a different gender from embodied selves, exemplified a utopian view of performative interactions wherein individuals had the option to lead an ideal or alternate online self. Turkle (1994) is most notably known for her research on disembodied selves in performative interactions on social media. She demonstrates that technology fosters dualism and individuals are provided with an unparalleled opportunity to 'try out' new selves. Further, she adds that "You are who you pretend to be" and "You are the character and you are not the character both at the same time", thus defining the notion of disembodied selves (Turkle, 1994, p.161). Spears & Lea (1994) employ a Foucauldian metaphor of the panopticon and suggest that limited privacy online may force individuals to perform disembodied selves. In another famous study by Mnookin (1996) on LambdaMOO, a similar platform to MUDs wherein individuals can adopt more than 350 text-based realities online, she concluded that online impressions need not in any way correspond to a person's real life identity; people can make and remake themselves, choosing their gender and the details of their online presentation. A recent study by Berman & Bruckman (2001) demonstrates that when individuals were presented with a choice to enact disembodied selves, they actively engaged in disembodied enactments.

Similarly Bargh et al. (2002) explain that in a relatively anonymous setting like the internet and in the absence of physical 'gating features', individuals were more likely to enact disembodied selves. Some researchers suggest that individuals' may craft their offline identities based on their online selves, thus shape integrity with the on- and offline self yet maintain individuality (Buckingham, 2008; Boyd & Heer, 2006; Ellison et al., 2006). As Chester & Bretherton (2007,

p.223) note, the notion of disembodied selves views the internet as "the quintessential playground for postmodern plurality, fragmentation and contextual construction of self." Additionally, their findings indicate that although "some present idealized or hoped-for images, they more commonly put a positive spin on personality traits" thus suggesting individuals' keenness to present a positive self-impression albeit not 'real.' Bessière et al. (2007) conducted a study on performative interactions on a multi-player role-playing game called Warcraft and find that the game allows players the freedom to create successful virtual selves regardless of the constraints of their actual situation. In another recent study, Zhao et al. (2008) point out that in their study on Facebook that individuals were not representing nor performing embodied selves, rather performing a hybrid hoped-for-self with highly socially desirable identities that they aspire to have offline but have not yet been able to embody for various reasons. Zhao et al. (2008) explore an alternate aspect to disembodied selves wherein individuals used their performative interactions online as a guide to interact offline. Recent research indicates that individuals are inclined to perform disembodied selves in the online dating world to create positive impressions. Guadagno et al. (2012) demonstrate that men are more inclined to alter their self-reported personality characteristics and physical appearance when they expected to meet a potential date. Similarly, Whitty (2008) finds that individuals experiment with their performances on dating sites.

However, as pointed out earlier, the notion of disembodied selves has been heavily critiqued by scholars who suggest an inseparability of on- and offline spaces, experiences and identities (Wynn & Katz, 1997; Hardey, 2002). For instance, as Barraket & Henry-Waring (2008, p.163) explain, dating trends are "both shaped by and situated within broader socio-cultural trends

relating to work, household and mobility patterns in so-called advanced western societies".
Further, as Nyberg (2009, p.1189) illustrates, "to a customer, the elements that form part of the
service delivery (that is telephone system, computer systems, customer service representative
and so on) are experienced as an entangled whole until customer service representatives
distinguish themselves from the (failing) technology with such utterances as, 'the computer has a
mind of its own'" thus explaining that the social and material and the human and the machine are
inextricably related. These critiques gave rise to a third perspective to performative interactions –
the inextricable relation between the social and material and subjects and objects and co-emerge
as the outcome of practise or networks (Orlikowski, 2007). Researchers variously refer to this
notion as sociomateriality (Orlikowski, 2007), symembodiment (Veerapen, 2011) or cyborgism
(Zimmer, 2012; Schultze & Mason, 2012). The notion is best understood as, "individuals are
entangled in their technological and physical environments, thus the notion of performativity
shifts attention towards understanding them as sociomaterially entangled with their digital bodies
(e.g. blogs, tweets, social media profiles and avatars)" (Schultze, 2012, p.93). Adopting a social
and technologically entangled view of performances on social media, scholars suggest that self-
presentations on social media sites mediates individuals' offline experiences, that is, individuals'
offline selves are influenced by their performative interactions online (Huang et al., 2011;
Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). This understanding of self-presentations on social media not
only extends individuals' embodied experiences and offline practices, but also seeks to interpret
use of text and media images to gauge performances on social media. Goodings (2010) studied
identity construction on SNS MySpace and proposes that performativity is mediated through the
use of technology, that is, he postulates that identity performance is carved-out over time through
continuous interaction with media and the audience, thus it is socially and digitally constructed.

Although there have been numerous calls for research in the area (Schultze & Orlikowski, 2010; Leonardi & Barley, 2008; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008), there is little empirical evidence available. Further, as Schultze (2012) highlights, although her study explored the notion of entanglement, her findings suggest that individuals' performances on social media are anchored in representativeness and calls for studies exploring sociomaterial assemblages from a purely performative lens.

Overall, self-presentations on social media are broadly viewed as all social interactions occurring on social media using text and media. Broadly, self-presentations on social media are categorised in terms of performativity and intentionality. In terms of performativity, scholars question the extent of embodiment in individual performances. That is, scholars explore if individuals attempt to recreate their experiences in the physical self accurately or if they attempt to role-play an alternate persona. In terms of intentionality, all interactions on social media are considered as conscious attempts to foster an impression. Scholars largely align with this assumption as many studies suggest individuals use the internet with a similar purpose as in their everyday interactions like dating and socialising. In this regard, scholars explore the extent of accuracy between their online-offline selves and specific social media sites. Scholars suggest accurate descriptions in those performances that are representative of individuals' offline selves especially on social media sites like Facebook, LinkedIn or dating sites where the express purpose is to network. However, on social media gaming sites like SecondLife, individuals may enact disembodied selves when protected by online anonymity. More recently, scholars who have explored self-presentations on social media from a view of entanglement of the physical and virtual settings suggest that individuals' offline self is modelled based on their online selves.

Chapter 5: Cognitive impact of self-presentations

Enacting self-presentations is a cognitively demanding process as evaluating a self-presentation strategy and the post-enactment phase are anxiety-driven (Schlenker & Leary, 1982; Apsler, 1975; Brown & Garland, 1971). Individuals experience such anxiety as they attempt to project core aspects of the self like self-esteem and self-evaluation (Baumeister, 1982; Schlenker, 1975; Archibald & Cohen, 1971).

Self-esteem has an impact on individual's desires in seeking approval when enacting self-presentations. Archibald & Cohen (1971) suggest that self-esteem is relevant in two situations: when future interactions are anticipated and the audience is 'private' or 'public'. In instances when the audience is public, individuals consider longevity in relationships before their performative interactions. As Schlenker (1975) demonstrates, in the anticipation of longevity in relationships, individuals are cautious in their self-presentations and present a self that they expect to validate in the near future. In cases when the audience is internal, individuals considered preconceived notions of the external audience prior to performative interactions. Baumeister (1982) demonstrates that respondents with low esteem felt obligated to comply with their reputation while respondents with high self-esteem did not appear to feel constrained to conform to others' expectations. Cognitive demands in enacting self-presentations includes considering reputation and expectations of the audience and conforming to these notions (Baumeister & Jones, 1978). Their study also looked at long-term on-going relationships and the role of self-presentations in the context of longevity, that is, "in the course of a lasting relationship, a person would attempt to 'correct' or improve another's unfavourable impression" (Baumeister & Jones, 1978, p.616). Thus, if individuals suspect that they are considered

immature or dull-witted, they might bring up in conversation their political or civic awareness to try to argue for their maturity or intelligence, however, if they think others find them mature and intelligent, they probably would not even mention political leaning unless specifically questioned. Baumeister & Tice (1989) suggest that individuals may cognitively immerse in self-presentation tactics in order to protect one's self-esteem or promote self-enhancement. Cognitive demands in enacting self-presentations are enhanced in situations when individuals must switch between self-presentation strategies swiftly and particularly in those cases when individuals have to switch back and forth between contexts that are very different from one another (Raghuram, 2013). These studies highlight the emphasis actors lay on cognitive immersion in internal (self-esteem) and external (audience – private or public) factors in the process of enacting self-presentations. Further, the act of self-presentation is a cognitively discomforting experience for individuals in not just acting skills, but also communication skills. Individuals chose the information they wish to convey, then chose the precise words and non-verbal behaviour to communicate the same to the audience (Derlega & Chaikin, 1977) and such precise enactments request rehearsals and confidence. Overall, Gardner & Martinko (1988b) suggest that individuals who exhibit personality traits such as self-monitoring ability, machiavellism, need for approval and social anxiety are particularly inclined to experience stress in the self-presentation process.

At the workplace in particular, individuals cognitively involve in their self-presentation strategies to gain specific work-related outcomes (Cooper, 2005). For instance, use of humour and ingratiatory behaviour is a common strategy to foster positive impressions at the workplace (Liden & Mitchell, 1988; Cooper, 2005). The use of humour through these forms is a "class of strategic behaviours illicitly designed to influence a particular other person concerning the

attractiveness of one's personal qualities" (Jones, 1964, p.11). Other types of purposive behaviours include intimidation, self-promotion, and exemplification; through these behaviours individuals may seek to be perceived as dangerous, competent, and morally worthy respectively (Jones & Pittman, 1980). In modern organizations where individuals work across geographies, individuals invest cognitively in fostering positive impressions of the self in the absence of face-work (Clair et al., 2005). In the absence of face-work, Sayah (2013) finds that individuals spend considerable time in their personal-professional life socialising with workplace colleagues on social media. Such enhanced and continued interaction with workplace colleagues on social media can lead to conflicts in terms of identifying geniuine friendships, overlap of self-presentations and boundary overlap across personal-professional life. As Skeels & Grudin (2009) explain, there are multiple problems to address: "differentiating among friends is a delicate task. People love to share information on their moods and photos from vacations, parties and activities with friends, but encounter problems when they share too widely. However, the ability to build rapport and closer professional relationships may diminish if all personal life is hidden from professional contacts. Categorizing friends could undermine the informal friendliness of the medium. Conversely, people want to share work information with colleagues, trusting that it won't inadvertently reach the public". In regards to overlap of self-presentations, while this conflict may be an inevitable result of continued interaction across physical and virtual settings, it may pose a risk for those individuals who practise 'regional behaviour' or 'audience segregation'. Further, as Koch et al. (2012) find, employees' use of social networking sites blurred work-life boundaries yet created positive impressions for those that used internal company networks.

Finally, cognitive demands in performative interactions on social media are furthered due to the technological infrastructure of social networking sites. Vasalou et al. (2010) suggest sites like Facebook are technologically built to encourage individuals to stay on the site for longer. Presumably, staying on one social media site for a long time and watching audience reactions to self-presentations can be stressful (Ito, 2010). In addition, as Sayah (2013) suggests, performative interactions on self-presentations on social media is a cognitively demanding process as self-presentations on the internet surpass temporal and spatial boundaries.

Overall, individuals experience cognitive struggles in the process of enacting self-presentations. Such cognitive struggles arise as individuals immerse in notions of self-esteem and self-evaluation in the performative process. The conflicts arise when individuals consider longevity in relationships and are particularly high when they are enacting for the self. At the workplace, individuals inevitably experience cognitive struggles as they seek work-related outcomes like a job or promotion. On social media, individuals experience additional cognitive demands due to the inevitability of overlapping interactions and consequently of overlapping self-presentations across physical and virtual settings.

Chapter 6: Indian IT professionals

In this chapter, I review the context for the research study.

India thrives on dualities; for instance, in Mumbai, to enter a posh, new, multi-storied, modern flat, one has to pass through a shanty town. While this sight is intriguing to novelists and scholars alike, laypersons in India not only accept these dualities, they have learned how to thrive in it. Moreover, these dualities strengthen the nation and create many Indias while simultaneously fostering resilient individuals. As Raman (2013, p.148) aptly summarises, "The struggle between the country's ancient spiritualism and modern materialism, the friction between the majority community's beliefs and those of the other great religions India nurtures, the battle for power between the central and state governments – such contradictions have tormented the country for decades. At the same time, these dualities have strengthened the young nation, helping India become more pluralistic and resilient." Consequently, the 'young nation' of India has been of particular interest to scholars. As a research setting, people in India are particularly interesting due to the dynamic social contexts in their personal-professional life. While in their personal lives, they are moving away from tradition and pursuing newer forms of personal identity (Brosius, 2010; Fernandes 2000), in their professional lives they yield to hierarchy and autonomy by accepting indirect control as a norm at the workplace (Upadhya, 2009). Thus, in their personal lives, they perform 'glocal' selves wherein they are immersed in global cultures yet retain 'traditional middle class identity', thus searching for unique typifications, while at the workplace where IT companies promote such individuality, they experience job insecurity and anxiety (see D'Mello & Sahay, 2007). In addition, embedded within the social context in their personal-professional lives are strong associations of gendered interactions which have moral

implications; scholars have been particularly interested in how individuals negotiate these contexts routinely (Radhakrishnan, 2008; Oza, 2001)

6.1. Political economy context

This study is set in neo-liberal India that is born from the change in economic policies in 1991. The economic reforms of 1991 ended public monopolies allowing automatic approval of foreign direct investment and gave rise to the free-market economy. 'The new India' or 'India Shining' which promoted India as the 'future global superpower of the twenty first century' has been celebrated as a political agenda since early 2000s. As Brosius (2010) observes, 'the stunning career of this metaphor began with a massive media campaign launched under the same name by the Bharatiya Janata Party, then leading constituent of the Indian government, in the advent of the general elections in 2004'. The Indian National Congress party enveloped this notion into their economic strategies while they were in government, consequently, India has gained slow acceptance into the global economy. As Nadeem (2011, p.211) summarises, "India has been cast as an unlikely, even 'roaring' capitalist success story. Breaking the shell of its' quasi-socialist past, it has been selectively integrated into the global economy as its' impressive economic growth over the recent years attests."

One of the major changes in the post-economic reforms of the 90s was the rise of the Indian IT industry. The neoliberal Indian economy provides an ideal setting for the IT industry, with lower telecommunication costs, world scale logistics combined with the high quality yet cheap labour, the IT industry was able to compete on a global level and provide employment opportunities in large numbers to graduates (Nilekani, 2009; Friedman, 2005). Following the success of the IT

industry, the government identified IT based services, including ITES-BPO as a key engine of economic growth and the attraction of foreign direct investments (FDI) as a strategic objective (Taylor & Bain, 2004). Consequently, recent trends suggest an increase in entrepreneurs providing IT-enabled services within the Indian state to a local and international clientele. As Nilekani (2009) identifies, India as a country has started recognising the role of entrepreneurs in the nation building agenda. Nilekani's observation arises from the increase in the number of alterpreneurs, a set of entrepreneurs largely providing IT-based services to other companies in India and abroad. Consequently, IT companies are becoming a hub to foster such entrepreneurs to provide IT enabled services to local as well as international clientele (Khanna, 2007). In addition, we see the emergence of IT software product companies in India, for instance internet companies like Google, Yahoo, Microsoft, Delloite and so on.

6.1.1. The Indian IT Industry

The information technology (IT) and IT enabled service (ITES) companies in India, together referred to as the 'IT industry' have become highly visible nodes of the global economy, attracting substantial attention from international media and business interests as a prime destination for IT-enabled work. While the Indian IT industry initially focused on providing software services and maintenance in many areas like systems software, telecommunications, medical systems, automotive software and so on, recently, software product design companies have emerged with immense growth potential. Broadly, the Indian IT industry is divided into two categories in terms of location and IT-work. In terms of location, India based software companies are categorised as: small/medium enterprises (SMEs), major Indian companies (MICs) and multinationals or firms with foreign equity participation (MNCs). Major Indian

companies include well known global service providers as Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services and Wipro, while the SME category includes a wide range in terms of size- from 10 up to 1000 employees. This categorisation however, excludes issues of ownership.

In terms of IT-work, broadly three categories are identified: software solutions, products and services, although the major difference between these categories is generally referred to in terms of 'services' and 'products'. This division of software production into 'services' versus 'products' arose due to the trend towards customisation of software, in which generic products are tailored to specific requirements of customers. Broadly, this distinction roughly corresponds to the difference between 'high-end' (which includes product and consultancy as well as research) and 'low-end' work (generic software services for customers). However, this distinction between 'high-end' and 'low-end' is blurred, for two reasons: One, 'low-end' jobs typically refer to maintenance, coding, testing and so on where the skill requirements are lower compared to 'high-end' jobs like consultancy, analysis of requirements and design which require higher skill as well as domain and market knowledge. Two, irrespective of 'high-end' or 'low-end' jobs, Indian based IT employees typically experience low power and control compared to their colleagues located onsite (Zimmermann & Ravishankar, 2011). Thus, as Upadhya & Vasavi (2006) suggest, the 'high-end – low-end' dichotomy may not accurately describe the entire gamut of software related services that Indian based IT companies provide as small/medium and individual companies may be engaged in several different activities simultaneously. For instance, Cognizant Technologies Limited, although popularly known for its' IT software services, has recently branched into creating networked enterprises as a software product. Similarly, ITES-

BPO services are categorised as the 'new low-end' jobs and IT professionals express superiority in many aspects over their ITES-BPO colleagues.

In this study, the research setting is set broadly within these Indian based IT companies, and the term 'IT professionals' refers to all those individuals employed by the IT-industry. The current IT professional workforce consists of software engineers and other IT–enabled occupations who are highly educated, well paid, mobile and closely linked into the global services economy, whether working in India or abroad. As NASSCOM[3] (2011) reports, IT has become a career option of choice for many young educated Indians today, for whom it offers competitive salaries compared to other sectors as well as an opportunity to live and work outside of India. Overall, the IT industry has redefined work and employment practises at the Indian IT workplace.

6.2. Work and employment practises at the Indian IT workplace

Generally speaking, extant literature available on the Indian IT workforce identifies two major characteristics of the Indian IT professional: mobility and individualisation.

6.2.1. Mobility

The IT professional was seen as a bundle of skilled and inexpensive 'bodies' to be 'shipped' overseas at competitive rates (Kuznetsov, 2006). Initially referred to as the 'body-shopping' era, much of the development of work was done at the customer site onsite (overseas). In such 'body-shopping' arrangements, Indian engineers only worked onsite, along with direct employees of the customer. Typically, body-shopped software engineers carry out low-end maintenance or

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[3]*Nasscom* is the premier organisation that represents and sets the tone for public policy for the Indian software industry.

coding jobs. Although 'body-shopping' has reduced over the years, the current state of Indian IT work arrangements still depend on a flexible labour force; consequently, labour is geographically dispersed across India and across the world (D'Mello & Sahay, 2007). Thus, Indian IT professionals largely assume mobility as an integral characteristic of IT work and whilst many of them pursue IT careers for this reason (travel abroad), such mobility simultaneously hinders and nurtures their identity construction process. For instance, Upadhya & Vasavi (2006) suggest that increased mobility implies that many Indian IT professionals are unable to put down roots in one place, at least during the early years of their careers. Broadly, scholars identify four types of mobility: geographic, social, existential and virtual.

Geographical mobility refers to physical shifts of various sorts including foreign travel, relocation within India, working from home or a different branch, travel to the workplace, and attrition, including industry shifts. Social mobility refers to shifts within, and across various groups of belonging such as work relations, caste and region affiliation, family and one's social group. D'Mello (2006) suggests that social mobility is restricted at the workplace and individuals prefer to socialise within their regional groups. By existential mobility, D'Mello & Sahay (2007, p.179) refer to the "thoughts, feelings, and responses of the IT worker that relate to their experiences of fears and hopes, insecurities, and successes primarily in relation to shifts in career trajectories and work contexts." Although existential mobility is integrated into the characteristics of flexibility and individuality, this is a cognitive exercise particular to individuals, thus when individuals express desire to move on from their current state, they can choose between two kinds of mobility: project-based mobility or moving to another company. Generally speaking, many software engineers complain about the routine, boring and uncreative nature of their work and seek more challenging and meaningful work either by changing projects within

the company or, if that is not possible, changing companies. Thus, this type of mobility is more individual-driven, wherein they aspire change due to job dissatisfaction.

Finally, Upadhya & Vasavi (2006) identify 'virtual' mobility, in which labour moves without the body of the worker. This form of 'virtual' labour is characteristic of the modern workplace, where individuals work from anywhere and at anytime; moreover, they work with team members who are geographically dispersed, thus rely heavily on social media and telecommunication technologies for everyday work processes. This type of mobility is also commonly seen in the ITES-BPO industry, wherein, call centre agents situated in India make phone calls to clients located elsewhere in the world.

6.2.2. Individuality

Through such flexible working arrangements and increased mobility, the Indian IT industry promotes individuality among workers. Such individuality is pervasive and manifests in many ways in the Indian IT industry. Primarily, companies foster individuality by "displacing responsibility for shaping of careers and the management of risk away from the corporation or the state and onto the employees" (Upadhya & Vasavi, 2006, p.49). Although many individuals may thrive under the 'fear of survival' in the event they may be made redundant if they are unable to keep up with ever changing technologies, many are simultaneously also on the lookout for more stable career options, thus contributing to the sustained high attrition levels in the Indian IT industry. In their personal lives, IT professsionals embrace individuality by creating unique lifestyles yet retaining 'traditional middle class values'. As Nadeem (2008, p.36) writes, "Individualism is the order of the day and is expressed in things like the consumption of high-

end goods, drinking, lavish celebrations, Western-style "love marriages", a preference for English, and the patronage of multinational fast food chains like McDonalds, Pizza Hut and KFC whose clientele is generally well-to-do."

Overall, as D'Mello & Eriksen (2010, p.106) summarise, "The IT workplace is a microcosm of globalising as well as glocalising processes, situated in a global network of local places with various, intersecting forms of cultures which are emergent, changing and complex." Further, such work and employment practises in the Indian IT industry have a huge impact on the socio-cultural transformations in the Indian state.

6.3. Social and cultural transformations

Socio-cultural transformations in India are driven primarily by the landmark change in economic policy in 1990s and are set in a tug-of-war between political agenda and individuality. A primary influencer contributing to the socio-cultural changes are the high salaries across the industry which has increased affordability of an elite lifestyle, thus promoting a highly consumption driven lifestyle. This change in consumption is reflected across the socio-cultural changes in this section. Thus, in explaining the socio-cultural context for this research study, I draw on these subcutaneous notions.

Many scholars who have explored the socio-cultural transformations in the Indian state have focused on consumption and lifestyle patterns (Brosius, 2010; Mazzarella, 2003; Fernandes, 2000) and view the 'new middle classes' as a section of society that aspires upward mobility. This change however is reflective of a larger section of the society including other professions

and industries and is a broad trend that has swept the country. In this section, I focus on select aspects of socio-cultural changes that have an overriding theme of consumption and lifestyle transformations and other influencing factors like the socio-political scenario and explore the IT workplace. Thus, in this section, I explore notions of gender and morality, patterns of sociality, marriage and gender, and transnationalism and identity. In addition, I discuss social media in the Indian setting.

6.3.1. Patterns of sociality

Patterns of sociality vary according to the size of the company and type of the company.

In regards to the size of the company, large services companies have workforces over 50,000 or more, spread across several centres in India and many locations abroad. Also, most large Indian IT service companies' clients are located in North America and increasingly in Europe, East and Southeast Asia. In contrast, small and medium sized companies have workforces averaging 500 to 1000 (Parthasarathy, 2004) who typically have few 'big' clients and compete with the larger companies for clients. Many of the large companies provide 'generic' services as they are able to take on a wide range of software development, maintenance, and other projects across a variety of domains, however, small and medium sized companies tend to specialize in particular domains although they follow the same outsourcing model. Although broadly speaking, the companies provide the same set of services, scholars suggest individuals' workplace experiences vary vastly as these companies adopt different human resource policies and organisational culture among other differences. In this section, I cover two aspects that influence patterns of sociality at the workplace: IT workplace culture and managerial styles.

6.3.1.1. IT workplace

Generally, organisations are known to engage in employee socialisation practises; within the Indian IT workplace, such socialisation practises go beyond employee-friendly policies to inculcate a 'family-friendly' workplace (D'Mello & Eriksen, 2010). Given the average age group in these companies is 25 and Indian IT companies recruit new graduates in thousands every year, generally the Indian IT workplace is viewed as 'young' and 'youthful'. Broadly, this means promoting a collegial atmosphere through camaraderie and employee engagement by organising events to celebrate festivals and on off-busy working days. In addition, given that projects function as smaller business units, typically, the human resource personnel in these groups organise team bonding related activities including celebrating birthdays and team outings. In addition, individuals socialise at lunch hours in the canteen or bring packed lunch boxes from home and hang-out around the massive company premises. Instances of such socialising are provided in many scholars' work in describing the Indian IT workplace setting (see D'Mello & Eriksen, 2010; Ravishankar et al., 2009).

Whilst many such organisational efforts are in place to increase socialisation at the workplace, generally, Indian IT professionals experience more hindrances than opportunities to build significant working relationships with colleagues at the workplace. This is primarily due to three factors related to IT work culture: periods of intense work pressure, long working hours and job insecurity. As they work on 'projects' that are temporal in nature and are geographically mobile, individuals are selective about socialising with colleagues. Rather than restrict to interacting with colleagues, individuals build a social network including friends in the same company but on different projects, friends and peers from the same batch at engineering college, friends and ex-

colleagues whom they interacted with primarily on email (D'Mello & Eriksen, 2010). Interestingly, these social networks exclude both present and earlier managers from the workplace (I review the reason for this in the next section). In addition, 'project team members' are a group of specialists working together for a short time frame, thus, as D'Mello & Eriksen (2010) find, individuals are not socially mobile, instead, they socialise within their preformed groups based on collegial, gender and location of workplace rather than forming significant relationships with team-mates within projects. An explanation for the absence of such significant social relationships at the workplace is also found in the innate desire to carve individualistic selves.

6.3.1.2. Managerial styles

Generally, literature suggests that Indian based IT companies' project 'flat' and flexible organisational structure and informal working relationships; two key features that distinguish them from 'traditional' Indian workplace setup such as the government sector that is set in hierarchy and autonomy. Scholars indicate that informal working relationships may exist between managers and workers due to the blurred line differentiating the terms: managers and workers are highly educated, holding typically at least a graduate degree although many managers tend to have either a Masters degree (preferably a Masters in Business Administration) or experience in the industry to override the need for higher education. In addition, in regards to age, there is minimal age and experience gap between managers and workers. Moreover, many Indian IT engineers aspire managerial roles, consequently many Indian IT workers wish to be seen in a positive light by the manager. However, as Upadhya & Vasavi (2006, p.58) argue, "there is a gap between the official work culture as described by managers and expressed in

company policies, and the actual work that develops spontaneously at the workplace." Closer examination of this gap highlights the contrast between the cultures described and practised; for instance, Ravishankar et al. (2012) point out, managers and employees are set in asymmetric power relations that are deeply embedded and implicated within Indian IT workplace culture. Indian IT organisations –both Indian and multinational- mimic 'western' managerial styles; 'new age' management, developed primarily in the US embracing American work ethics such as egalitarianism, teamwork, individual initiative and responsibility, and democratic forums of decision-making. While American companies may adopt such 'new age' managerial styles and nurture 'flat' and flexible work organisations, within the Indian setting, embodying such practises produces a new managerial style. As Kakar (1971, p.305) explains from a psychoanalytical point of view, at the Indian workplace setting, patterns of authority are common and "are related to socio-cultural factors in Indian tradition as well as to the historical development of modern work organisations in India." Thus, the socio-cultural setting of patriarchy, hierarchy and autonomy transform to the workplace as well. Hence, far from being free and flexible, adopting an individualised or glocalised version of 'western' managerial styles leads to increased control and power by managers. As Kumar & Sethi (2005) and Vaidyanathan (2012) find, Indian managers have an apparent tendency to always appear 'in charge' and expect perpetual deference by subordinates. At the Indian IT workplace, scholars provide evidence of how the organisational setting has ingrained direct and indirect normative control mechanisms on its employees. Indirect control mechanisms include self- surveillance and peer surveillance. Individuals adhere to these norms in an attempt to gain approval as well; as D'Mello & Eriksen (2010, p.91) find, "in spite of no work pressure, some employees were observed staying late. Part of this was self-imposed such as the desire to be 'noticed by the boss' as hard working and

'going the extra mile', something that might even enable the employee to earn an award at a company event." As Upadhya & Vasavi (2006, p.61) explain, "Because the progress of an individuals' work often depends on the completion of work by other team members, software engineers pressurise one another to finish tasks on time and put in extra hours, if necessary". Various means of indirect control include the use of time sheets, data and weekly reports on quality, productivity and efficiency and weekly reports on project status (D'Mello & Eriksen, 2010). As Zimmerman & Ravishankar (2011) illustrate, although managers have little control over individuals' career (as Indian IT companies promote individuality), they provide empty hope with promises of 'fast-track' career progression under the condition that individuals work effectively in collaborative teams.

6.4. Transnationalism and identity

Initially referred to as 'brain drain', scores of IIT graduates relocated to the US or other developed countries in the West to pursue opportunities and experiences of working and living outside of India. As Nair (1997, p.149) notes, "'The IITian-turned-NRI' represented a dream figure in the subconscious of the Indian bourgeoisie. Implicit in an IIT education, is the promise of becoming a professional who helps to constitute a global culture free of nationalist ties and obligations. Having acquired the traits and education to belong to a global culture of professionals, they assert their right to pursue goals of a better life that can be found in India." However, such 'brain drain' is in the past; with the rise of the Indian IT industry, traveling to such international destinations has become a common experience among Indian IT professionals. In addition, as sociological studies suggest, the 'new middle class' travel to international destinations for holidays and aspire upward mobility through such lived experiences. Further, as

Hunger (2004) illustrates, many of the former 'brain drain Indians' either re-emigrated to India or started business enterprises in India. This returning population brought back lived experiences of working in the US and other developed countries. Together, these sets of individuals constitute as 'transnationals'.

Whilst transnationals acquire such international experiences, many assert they are nonetheless embedded in 'traditional' social and cultural milieus and articulate their adherence to 'traditional middle class values'. Mirchandani (2012) explains the identity dilemma immaculately through two notions: one, fundamentally, Indian IT professionals believe they are different from Westeners; two, the idea that they are cultural clones, thus, they adapt quickly to western thoughts in order to establish transnational relationships promptly. Similarly, at the workplace, transnationals struggle with balancing these cultural paradoxes; as Johri (2011, p.955) explains, quick adoption of the clients' work practises and innovative use of material and social resources contribute to the success of globally dispersed teams; "successful teams are able to create practises that span locations while being tied to location based practises." However, whilst they absorb such world cultures hastily in their personal-professional lives, they also attempt to individualise these cultures to their lifestyles to maintain their 'middle class values'. Consequently, as Brosius observes, the new generation of 'global Indians' who relate to new urban lifestyles in India are intrinsically 'glocal' (Brosius & Yazgi, 2007), that is, they are informed by globalised notions of 'wedding', 'beauty', 'spiritual well-being' and so on while simultaneously generating standardised concepts of 'Indian traditions', that is, individuals desire to carve a unique 'glocal' identity. As Murphy (2011) finds, two self-attributes appear continually; being middle class and feeling cosmopolitan. Thus, the 'glocal' identity is characterised as part of an emergent global middle class sharing common lifestyles and values

with their counterparts in western countries. Individuals' varied consumptions patterns are reflective of this deep craving to display uniqueness. On the one hand, IT professionals are caught in a web of contradictions around questions of identity and nationality (Das et al., 2008) yet on the other, they embrace individualisation to display individuality. As a result, this group of educated Indians show resilience yet experience intense feelings of anxiety, stress and a sense of precariousness as well as anticipation of new challenges that stretch across both local and global contexts (Raman, 2013; D'Mello & Sahay, 2007). Overall, in the pursuit of individuality, individuals attempt to steer away from typification and generalisations by embracing individuality. At the core of their personal identity, many Indian IT professionals believe and present the self as 'different and ubiquitous' and this notion is vested within the notion of individuality that Indian IT companies promote to succeed in the free-economy within the global market.

6.5. Social media in India

Traditional broadcast media like television and national dailies in India are inherently driven by socio-political agenda wherein political parties seek to mediate socio-cultural traditions. As Mankekar (1999) and Mazzarella (2003) explain, television shows and advertising campaigns were firmly rooted in communicating socio-cultural norms to the masses. To date, television is used as a gimmick in electoral elections, for instance, in the recent state elections, a political party called Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) distributed colour television sets to poor families. Further, local governments in Tamilnadu own television channels, which they use frequently to further political agenda. Social media, a recent introduction to broadcast media

altered this dynamic. The infrastructure of social media sites are constructed around user centric agenda (Kaplan & Heinlein, 2011), thus shifting the locus of control from political parties to user centric schema. However, recent events in 2013 suggest that this shift in loci of control is blurred. For instance, BBC news reports that a woman and her father were arrested for their informal comments on Facebook about a recently deceased political patriarch. Further, the BBC report suggests that such instances of arrests related to Facebook are on the rise. In another instance, the government banned a youtube video created by the opposition party to defame the government few days after it went viral. While such instances of political interference on individuals' internet privacy are bemoaned by the public, generally, individuals are increasingly taking caution in interacting on social media sites, especially Facebook. Over the last two years, as Facebook became incredibly popular (according to reports, Facebook's India user base crossed 100 million users second only to America and is set to become Facebook's biggest market), the site also remains a contested site in regards to invasion of privacy, breech of speech and contested notion of audience in regards to self-presentations on social media. On a meta-level, the social networking site is a space to watch socio-cultural transformations as well as a space that informs about evolving socio-cultural changes.

Chapter 7: Methodology

The objective of this study is to explore the self-presentations of Indian IT professionals on social media. In doing so, the study explores how individuals make sense of social media from their interactions across varied forms of social media every day. Interacting on social media is a personal and social process, thus implicit here is the assumption that individuals are inseparable from their social context (Burr, 1995); thus, the social worlds individuals are situated within are therefore central to understanding their lives. I am interested in understanding the factors that influence how individuals make sense of social media and how these factors shape individuals' self-presentations on social media. In order to understand this processes, I explored the issue of access to social media to question if that might be at the root of social media interaction. Therefore I collected rich and detailed data on social media use at the workplace and their personal lives from a select number of Indian IT professionals to construct a theoretical understanding of negotiating self-presentation strategies on social media among this occupational group. In this sense, theory development will be grounded in data collected. The methodological perspective I adopt for this study is broadly qualitative. First, I conducted a feasibility study in May 2011. In this study, I sought to find out primarily if my study was of interest to the industry and interviewees. Overall, in this study, I use semi-structured interviews as the main research tool. In the sections that follow, first I provide a brief overview of the feasibility study. Next, I introduce the qualitative approach to research and then explain the epistemological underpinnings for this study. In the following section, I explain the use of semi-structured interviews in my study. Finally I will talk about the research process of this study focusing on the specific processes of sampling, data collection and data analysis.

7.1. The qualitative approach

Qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live (Myers & Avison, 1997). Thus, as Kaplan & Maxwell (1994) point out, the goal of qualitative research is to understand a phenomenon from the point of view of the participants and its particular social and institutional context, which might be lost when textual data is quantified (Klein & Myers, 1999). Thus, in contrast to quantitative research which was originally developed in the natural sciences to study natural phenomena, qualitative research takes a holistic approach to data (Myers & Avison, 1997).

Tucker et al. (1995) suggest one of the primary advantages of qualitative research methods is that it is more open to the adjusting and refining of research ideas to inquiry proceeds. Further, "the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the research setting, as in an experimental study, but rather seeks to understand naturally occurring phenomena in their naturally occurring states" (Tucker et al., 1995, p.386). Qualitative methods were particularly attractive because they provide well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations and serendipitous findings for new theory construction (Miles & Huberman, 2002).

Qualitative researchers view reality as socially constructed (Burr, 1995) and seek to describe and interpret the meanings people attribute to situations. While not all qualitative research is necessarily interpretive, the philosophical assumptions of the researcher, in this case, social constructionism, facilitates the researcher to describe and interpret the meanings people attribute to phenomena and situations and in that sense, take an interpretive stand to the data (Cassell & Symon, 2004; Myers & Avison, 1997). Klein & Myers (1999, p.69) insist that, "research can be classified as interpretive if it is assumed that our knowledge of reality is gained only through

social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents, tools and other artefacts. Interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables, but focuses on the complexity of human sense-making as the situation emerges". Therefore, an interpretive researcher typically sees the world as inextricably linked to individuals and attempts to understand people's accounts in relation to the social, political, economic and organisational contexts they are situated within (Cassell et al., 2006; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1997). In other words, qualitative approaches seek to contextualise findings by immersing themselves into the holistic context of the respondent and as Myers (2000) suggests, it would be rather impossible for the qualitative researcher to escape the subjective experience. As a result, in this process, the researcher gets involved with the respondents in the process of negotiating meaning and research is inevitably influenced by the values of the researcher (Hochschild, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In summary, the qualitative research approach is active and dynamic and continually evolving as research questions are embryonic in the light of respondents' conceptualisations of reality and based on emerging insights in the data collection process. As Bluhm et al. (2011) outline, "A qualitative research uncovers experience, processes and causal mechanisms through it's unconventional methods", most qualitative research inquiry begins with an open mind since the goal is to discover and explore rather than test predetermined relationships. Hammersley & Atkinson (1997, pp.206) explain the flexibility and dynamism characterising qualitative research through their notion of progressive focusing:

> …research should have a characteristic funnel structure, being progressively focused over its course. Over time, the research problem needs to be developed and transformed and

eventually its scope is clarified and delimited, and its internal structure explored. In this sense, it is frequently well into the process of inquiry that one discovers what the research is really about: and not uncommonly it turns out to be something rather different from the initial foreshadowed problems.

Before I discuss the notion of progressive focusing, first, I provide an overview of qualitative research methods popularly adopted in IS research and then explain the epistemological underpinnings for this study in relation to this particular study in the next section.

7.2. Epistemological underpinnings

In this chapter I will explain the broad epistemological approach underlying this thesis: social constructionism.

7.2.1. Social constructionism

Social constructionism views discourse about the world not as a reflection or map of the world but as an artefact of communal interchange, that is, social constructionist inquiry is principally concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live (Gergen, 1985). In other words, social constructionism is an epistemological position to research based on the notion that the world is constructed by individuals themselves through their social practises rather than a fixed entity external to the individual that impacts them in deterministic ways (Burr, 1995). This approach to research considers how individuals understand and construct reality in a social context. Thus, socially constructed reality is seen as a continuous and dynamic process where reality is constantly reproduced by people acting upon their representations of it. As

Weick (1995, p.31) suggests, people are part of their environments and through their actions they contribute to the creation of 'the materials that become the constraints and opportunities they face'. This epistemological position is grounded in few key assumptions of research which are reviewed in this section. In reviewing the key assumptions of this research position, I draw on seminal works by Burr (1995) and Gergen (1985) who explain the tenets of social constructionism from a psychologist viewpoint, which resonates with the researcher and specifically with this study.

7.2.2. A critical stance

"Social constructionism takes a critical stance toward our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world, including ourselves. It invites us to be critical of the idea that our observations of the world un-problematically yield its nature to us, to challenge the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world" (Burr, 1995, p.2). This tenet to social constructionism cautions researchers to be ever suspicious of their assumptions about how the world appears to be, that is, the categories with which we as human beings apprehend the world do not necessarily refer to real divisions. In other words, social constructionism directs research by suggesting, "what we take to be experience of the world does not in itself dictate the terms by which it is understood" (Gergen, 1985, pp.266). For instance, gender as male or female is predominantly biologically determined, however a gender studies researcher might argue with this notion (Beatty & Kirby, 2006). Such a critical stance is particularly adopted toward mainstream psychology and social psychology, generating radically different accounts of many psychological and social phenomena. For instance, Turkle (1994) views multi-user dungeons, an internet gaming site, as the space for social construction of

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identities for teenagers; in her research, she broke multiple paradigms of determinism by studying the internet as a world on the internet where individuals construct their identities and notions of reality through interaction with other gamers rather than subjecting individuals' thoughts and actions to the researchers' ideology.

Social constructionism is critiqued for suggesting that knowledge is sustained by social processes and that knowledge and is less interested in the cognitive processes that accompany knowledge (Young & Collin, 2004). For instance, Wittgenstein (1968) suggests that individuals construct an understanding of reality through their own mental abilities by asking questions such as 'where does an individual feel grief or happiness', 'Could a person have a profound feeling in one second' and 'Can the features of hope be described', thus implying that cognitive abilities pre-dictate social interaction. Researchers criticise social constructionism by suggesting that individuals draw on their cognitive abilities as well to understand the world (Young & Collin, 2004).

7.2.3. Focus on history and culture

Another tenet of social constructionism suggests that individuals' understandings of the world must be seen as historically and culturally situated and changing across time and space (Brewer & Gardner 1996; Burr, 1995; Boyd, 2001). That is, people's understanding of the world is influenced by the world they live in, and therein embedded its history and culture.

Gergen (2001) suggests that people's meaning making through reflexivity on culture and influence of modernity on cultural roots makes them relational beings. This is particularly

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applicable to the research context, wherein notions of culture are situated across time and space (Mankekar, 1999; Mazzarella, 2004). Further, scholars exploring the research context situate emotions and culture as historically intertwined in post-colonialism (e.g. Ravishankar et al., 2012; Das & Dharwadkar, 2009; Bhabha, 1984).

7.3. Overview of qualitative research methods

Information systems research has reached a new stage wherein scholars increasingly use newer qualitative methods, for instance, scholars have used various versions of virtual ethnography in recent studies (Schultze, 2014; Kim, 2009; Ward, 1999). This new environment means that IS researchers now have a wide selection of research methods to choose from, thus, it is important to consider the potential risks and benefits and to understand beforehand the circumstance in which a particular method may or may not be appropriate. For the purpose of this study, three methods were evaluated before finalising a research design: case study, ethnography and diary entry.

The term 'case study' has multiple references; it can be used to describe a detailed study of a single social unit (for instance, case study of a particular organisation) or to describe a research method. Yin (1994, p.13) defines a case study as, "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". Thus, case studies are rich empirical descriptions of particular instances of a phenomenon that are based on a variety of data sources. Whilst case studies may provide rich insights provided the study has an interesting case as

foundation, there are few disadvantages to case studies: gaining access to a company or a particular group of companies can be challenging, the researcher has little control over the situation and case studies can be time consuming.

Ethnographic research is one of the most in-depth research methods possible. In defining ethnography, scholars talk about the purpose of ethnography rather than a precise definition. For instance, Hammersley & Atkinson (1997, p.23) explain, "the value of ethnography is perhaps most obvious in relation to the development of theory". Similarly, Myers (1999) suggests, the main purpose of ethnography is to obtain a deep understanding of people and their culture. Lewis (1985) suggests, ethnographers immerse themselves in the life of the people they study. For purposes of clarity, case studies and ethnography can be distinguished on three parameters: time commitment: significantly longer time commitment for ethnographic research), orientation of the researcher: in ethnographic research, the researcher relies on participant observation and finally types of data: in ethnographic research, the data sources include interviews, archival data, minutes of the meeting and so forth. Of course, one of the biggest advantages in ethnographic research is the richness of data, however, the disadvantages like extensive time commitment and lack of breadth of data (this can be a particular concern for a doctoral study) outweigh the benefits.

While diary-entry has been relatively neglected as a research method within Information Systems research, it can provide rich insights in any study. Allport (1943) identifies 3 distinct models of diary familiar in everyday life: the intimate journal, in which private thoughts and opinions are recorded, uncensored; the memoir - an 'impersonal' diary, often written with an eye to publication; and the log, which is a kind of listing of events, with relatively little commentary.

While the memoir may assume an audience, the log and the intimate journal are essentially private documents, written primarily for the diarist themselves. They are therefore constructed within the diarist's own frame of reference and can assume a forgiving, understanding reader (Jackson, 1994) for whom there is no need to present a best face. However, the respondents of this study considered diary entry as a taxing and time-consuming task, thus, this method was eliminated.

In regards to case study and ethnographic research, despite the huge advantage of richness of data, the primary data collection method used in this study was semi-structured interviews due to access related concerns. I elaborate on the issue of access later in this chapter in section 7.7.

7.4. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews comprise many open-ended questions which are loosely structured and are an effective way to understand "behaviours that derive from the cultural and ideological identities of the speaker" (Lindlof, 1995, p.165). The key issues the researcher intends to address are usually identified in advance and fall within few broad research themes. A majority of the questions are framed in an ongoing manner during the interview allowing both the interviewer and the respondent to introduce their own topics, probe for details and discuss issues in depth (King, 2004). In other words, a semi-structured interview is formatted like an open-ended conversation between two people, yet allowing the researcher sufficient control and the respondent freedom to delve deeper into the topic as they continue conversing. The benefit of this interviewing format is that the researcher can gain insight into the respondents'

interpretation of the phenomenon rather than merely developing general opinions. Due to the way semi-structured interviews are formatted, the interviews may vary in length, number of participants and style of setting which can range from face-to-face interviews to interviews on Skype (via the internet).

In the spirit of gaining a holistic understanding of the respondents' world and with the research study in mind, I used Facebook as an interaction tool to find respondents in the beginning and later to stay in touch with them. I travelled between two major cities in South India for interviews and spent atleast an hour for each interview. I will delve further into this aspect under the data collection section. While all the meetings were deliberate attempts to interview respondents and collect data, Facebook helped the respondent to get to know me better and build trust; similarly staying in touch with the respondents on Facebook helped me as a researcher to understand their world better and more importantly get a clear and thorough grip on what my respondents tried to tell me.

7.5. Issues of reliability and validity in qualitative research

Although the issue of reliability and validity is central to both qualitative research and quantitative research, the ways they are addressed differ moderately. Issues of reliability and validity are both central to qualitative research yet the most critiqued notions in pursuing qualitative rigor. As Schwandt et al. (2007) points out, investigators committed to interpretive research are subject to questions on credibility and truthfulness when comparisons are drawn between qualitative and quantitative research. In this section, I address how I achieve reliability

and validity and draw heavily on Lincoln & Guba (1986). This section details the steps, methods and techniques that qualitative researchers use to ensure reliability and validity in their research.

7.5.1. Reliability

Lincoln & Guba (1986) explain four axioms that undergird naturalistic and responsive evaluations. One, the axiom concerned with the nature of 'truth', demands that inquirers abandon the assumption that enduring, context-free truth statements – generalisations – can and should be sought, rather asserting that all human behaviour is time- and context- bound. Two, in contrast to conventional assumption of causality, explanation of action asserts that action is explainable only in terms of multiple interacting factors, events and processes that give shape to it and are a part of it. The third axiom questions the nature of the relationship between inquirer-respondent and suggests that such relationship is one of mutual and simultaneous influence wherein inquirers and respondents may fruitfully learn together. Thus, such relationships, once established, is one full of respectful negotiation, joint control and reciprocal learning. Finally, the fourth axiom is concerned with the role of values and suggests that inquiry is value-bound in respect to values of the inquirer, choice of inquiry paradigm, choice of a substantive theory to guide inquiry, and contextual values. Thus, as Morgan (1983) identifies, the criteria for judging reliability in qualitative studies stems from the underlying paradigm. In this study, I adhere to Lincoln & Guba's (1986) the axiom of truth by abandoning the assumption of generalisations and exploring human behaviour within a context. In this study, I explore the influence of multiple contexts on individual's actions; evidence of such a process can be found in the transcript attached. The sample transcript attests to the second axiom as well by suggesting the

interplay between multiple factors, events and processes that come into play in enacting self-presentations on social media. As regards the third axiom, I explain the relationship between the researcher and respondents later in this chapter (in sections 7.5 to 7.9). Finally, in regard to the fourth axiom, I chose a substantive theory to guide inquiry, self-presentations which is context-driven and research-focused.

Further, as Golafshani (2003) suggests, reliability in qualitative studies can be augmented by employing co-researchers. Such co-researchers help to interpret the data and as Lincoln & Guba (1986, pp.19) suggest, "exposing oneself to a disinterested peer helps to 'keep the inquiry honest', assist in developing working hypotheses, develop and test emerging design, and obtain emotional catharsis." I attest such credibility to my data as I have discussed the research study, emerging themes, test emerging designs with my supervisor and PhD colleagues on several occasions although the research was self-initiated and I claim virtuous authority over the work in this study.

7.5.2. Validity

In qualitative research, as Creswell & Miller (2000) explain, writing about validity in qualitative inquiry is challenging on many levels, for instance, scholars have developed a thesaurus suggesting alternative terms for validity like goodness, adequacy, authenticity and so on. As Guba (1981) and Lincoln & Guba (1986) suggest, many such responses were devised by scholars in response to drawing a parallel in qualitative research to conventional paradigm of internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity. In simple terms, Hammersley (1990, pp.57) defines; validity in qualitative research is 'the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers.' Thus, as Silverman (2009) argues, qualitative

researchers have to convince their readers that their insights are based on all their data rather than parts of it. Such convincing can be produced by showing that the inferences that the researcher are making are supported by data and sensible in relation to existing research (Perakyla, 2011). Silverman (2009) suggests five interrelated ways in which researchers can convey validity, some of which have been covered under Lincoln & Guba (1986)'s definitions for reliability in qualitative inquiry. Silverman (2009) suggests researchers must leave aside initial assumptions about data and overcome the 'temptation to jump to easy conclusions just because there is some evidence that seems to lead to an interesting direction (2009, pp.279). I have covered this point under reliability in suggesting emotional detachment and discussion with 'uninterested peers'. Next, Silverman (2009) suggests 'comprehensive data treatment' and 'constant comparison' by moving to and fro between emerging data and examining emerging ideas across the transcripts. I elaborate on this under the data analysis section where I discuss using principles of grounded theory that suggest a similar notion to analysing data. Finally, Silverman (2009) suggests that researchers should indicate to the reader the frequency of particular occurrences and examine deviant cases thoroughly. I have followed these suggestions in my data section where I describe the number of respondents who attest to the same notion. Finally, I examine deviant cases thoroughly, for instance the cases of respondents who formed anomalies in regards to showing apathy to power and indirect control mechanisms, I explore the role of the context in-depth in these cases to correctly identify an explanation for their actions.

7.6. The research process

The research process for this study is best described as circular and iterative. I conducted a pilot study in May 2011 for four reasons: gauge the interest-level of companies and explore the concerns regarding access to social media within companies. In addition, I conducted this pilot study to test my interviewing skills and to gauge the ease of recruiting respondents for the study. In this study, I interviewed 6 Indian IT professionals working in an Indian IT company based in Peterborough, UK. The study was conducted in a focus group format where-in these IT professionals had a group discussion for an hour regarding social media in their company and the related issues; more specifically, issues that concerned them as individuals rather than as representatives of the company. The group discussion was facilitated by me in a semi-structured interview manner, that is, I listened and took notes for the most part and at times, I directed the conversations and requested the respondents to talk about issues in-depth. The study revealed that social media was an interesting topic to industry and individuals expressed concerns regarding access to social media at the workplace. In addition, respondents spoke about how they used social media for employee engagement and innovation in the company. The pilot study set the direction for this study.

The next logical step in research of conducting a comprehensive review of social media in Indian IT companies suggested that access to popular social media sites were blocked at the workplace and in some instances, due to the high security within the project, many employees were banned from using smartphones, thus, the question of how individuals negotiated access intrigued me. Further, the background of Indian IT professionals, that many lived away from their families and friends, the study sought to explore how individuals used social media to foster impressions

when distanced from social media technology for more than 10 hours every day. Although I was particularly interested in access related questions, I wanted to give the respondents the opportunity to introduce their own topics and talk about their experiences with social media. Thus, although I prepared a rough interview guide (King, 2004), this guide was used as a template to cover the key points in the interview and was not as a questionnaire. In the interviews, individuals were keen to talk about the issues that concerned them with regard to social media and their stories unfolded over time, in their own words. During the interviews, I asked probing questions for clarity purposes and by the end of each interview; I ensured that the key research themes were covered, while allowing for emergent themes to rise.

After the first few interviews, it appeared that the respondents were keen to talk about social media and not access issues; they were interested in talking about privacy related issues and about being 'real' on social media. Despite having work experience in the Indian IT industry and having friends in the industry, I did not expect this turnaround. Nevertheless, after the initial set of interviews, I spoke with my supervisor, read limited literature on Indian IT professionals and amended the interview guide to shift focus to social media and conflict-related themes. As King (2004) explains, the interview guide is not a means of gaining insight into the 'real' experience of the interviewee, but as an interaction constructed in the particular context of the interview, thus, interview guides are evolving, and continually modified through use. Throughout the course of the data collection, issues raised by the respondents were addressed in subsequent interviews with other respondents. These questions formed the basis of subsequent analysis, which I will explain in detail in the forthcoming sections.

7.7. Recruitment of respondents

This research study is based on data collected from qualitative interviews with 31 Indian IT professionals who had a graduate degree or above. From a qualitative point of view, a large sample is not required to ensure population representativeness, since we assume shared practises in a social context (King, 2004). Additionally, as King (2004) suggests that gathering a large volume of respondents do not guarantee credibility in a study nor should one interview get preferential treatment over another. The aim in this research nonetheless was to conduct maximum number of interviews in the short span of three months. Further details about respondents will be explained in the next section in this chapter.

The sampling approach adopted in this study was non-probability, using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Non-probability sampling refers to sampling without random selection methods (King, 2004). Purposive sampling is when a researcher targets a specific subset of people who meet the exact criteria of respondents or target group. In this case, the research targeted a sub-group: Indian IT professionals; that is, highly educated and skilled labour who live mobile lifestyles in IT companies based in India (see D'Mello, 2006; Meijering & Hoven, 2003). Next, snowball sampling techniques were used; that is, respondents recommended their friends to the researcher and assisted the researcher in marketing the study on popular social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. Further, ad-hoc quota system was followed to eliminate gender bias in the sample. Within this category, I sought to include in the study IT professionals from multi-national companies (MNC) and Indian IT companies (focused on software IT companies) so that the results can be generalised to the occupational group of respondents.

The entire data was collected from interviews conducted in two Indian cities: Bangalore and Chennai and the research study ran from July 2011 – September 2011 (inclusive). I decided to conduct the interviews in India for three reasons. First, having worked in the Indian IT industry for three years, I was confident of quick access to respondents. Second, I had access to first-hand information about the Indian IT industry, for instance, I learned that respondents use of social media was influenced by newspaper articles and some Indian IT companies provided access to social media at the workplace. Finally, many of the interviews were conducted in coffee shops away from the office premises and encouraged respondents to reflect on their social media experiences critically and comfortably.

The first step I took in accessing respondents for this study was two months before the fieldwork began. I sent out an email to my friends in India, specifically to those who work in IT companies and included those contacts who have worked in IT companies in the past. Next I set up an event on Facebook and invited the same friends to participate in the fieldwork. Out of the 32 invites I sent out on Facebook for the interview 'event', in which I had described the purpose of the study and the profile of the respondents, 4 responded 'Yes' to attending and a majority replied 'Maybe attending'. When I went to India to conduct these interviews, the Facebook event response did not materialise into interviews. At this point, I reached out to three more friends: Jishnu, who worked in an Indian IT company more than 5 years ago and had quit to join a music band full-time, Nikhil, who quit his IT job few years ago to start his own social media company and Sidharth, who had recently relocated to India to work in an IT company after living in America for more than 10 years. These three friends introduced me to their networks and friends in the IT industry. For instance, Jishnu introduced me to three of his contacts, he first spoke with them about my study and when they gave their consent, he asked me to set up a face-to-face interview.

Nikhil is a very well-networked contact. First, he sent an email to his friends list on gmail and forwarded details regarding the study; those respondents who were happy to be interviewed responded and I got in touch with them. Next, Nikhil introduced me to a senior member in his company who was kind to send an introductory email to his friend Sumanth who worked at a multinational company. In this way, Nikhil helped me in interviewing more than 18 respondents for this study. In regards to Sidharth, after I interviewed him, he suggested I meet with his team within his company. Typically, post my first interview with these new contacts, the respondents felt that I could gain more insight from talking to their friends within the same company and within their friends circle. Although I struggled initially to identify respondents, snowball sampling appeared more straight-forward. Respondents were keen to be a part of the process and eager to be interviewed, which was a refreshing change for me. They were very co-operative and extremely patient, even though they had no reason to be. Further, most of the respondents added me as a friend on Facebook upon my request to stay in touch with them. Having access to their Facebook account was certainly useful, however I could not use the data from the netnography as it borders on unethical research practises.

7.8. Description of sample

As mentioned before, the study is based on 31 semi-structured interviews, among the respondents, 18 are male respondents and 13 are female. Extant literature suggests that individuals work on different developmental tasks at different ages and career stages in the context of the relationships and networking practises (Ibarra, 1999; Kram & Isabella, 1985; Levinson et al., 1978). Therefore it seems important that the study allows for such differences to

manifest; accordingly three career stages are identified in this sample, 25 – 35, 36 – 45 and 46 – 65 are identified as most likely to represent individuals in early, middle and late career stages. While categorising the sample based on career stages might seem redundant, social media usage has been linked with age and literature suggests that within the larger set of the world population, two extremes are typically identified: youth and old age, that is the age group of 17-20 and beyond 75 (Brandtzæg et al., 2011; Buckingham, 2008; Boyd, 2007). We know little about the social media usage patterns between the age of 24 – 50. In this sample, twenty five of the respondents are in their early career stages, five in the middle career and one in the late career stage.

In their sociological study of the Indian IT industry, Upadhya & Vasavi (2006) identified three types of software IT companies: small/medium enterprises (SMEs), major Indian companies (MICs) and multinationals or firms with foreign equity participation (MNCs / FEs). The relevance of being employed in these companies is the differential facilities that workers receive, as mentioned in the literature review, IBM a MNC with branches in India uses social media to collaborate within the company (Hathi, 2009), on the other hand, a MIC revoked access to social media within the company after a law suit threat was issued by an employee's partner (Rediff, 2006). I wondered if these facilities or the lack thereof might have an effect on social media usage; the research sample comprises of 26 respondents from MNCs and 5 from MICs.

Out of the 31 respondents, 11 have moved to a different company every two years, this data corroborates with the attrition data in the industry. Most of the respondents had a graduate degree. Fourteen respondents had a Masters degree and two were readying to leave their IT jobs for a

postgraduate study. One respondent was a high school dropout. Role wise, the respondents were selected across various departments and roles: Human Resource, Program Analysts, Associate-Projects, Consultant, Research Analyst, Product manager, Project Managers, and Project Leads. The average work experience of the group was six years; with five respondents having more than 10 years of experience and four having more than 13 years of experience. Details about the respondents' role and experience is relevant in this study as I explore use of social media among Indian IT professionals and I sought information regarding interaction on social media with colleagues outside the workplace.

With respect to marital status, 10 respondents were married at the time of the interview and one respondent was engaged. Out of these respondents, two had met their partners on internet dating websites. 20 respondents were single and mentioned marriage and dating in their interviews. Lastly, in terms of social media usage, respondents used a variety of social media sites on a regular basis, however, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn can be identified as the top three sites in this sample. The table below highlights the demographic details of every respondent in the study. All respondents have been given pseudonyms for confidentiality purposes and names of their organisations withheld.

Table I. Description of Sample

Interview No.	Name	Gender / Age	Experience in years	IT MNC / MIC	Role	Education	Comments	Respondents' Relationship
1	Carol	F / 24	3	MNC	Program Analyst	B.Sc Maths	Moved to 3 different companies in 3 years	Stand-alone respondent
2	Martin	M /	4.2	MNC	Program	B.Sc.	Avid Facebook	Stand-alone

		25			Analyst	Computer Science	user	respondent
3	Sylvia	F / 27	6.5	MNC	Program Analyst	B. Bank Management	Met her husband on an Indian dating site	Stand-alone respondent
4	Amit	M / 27	5	MNC	Associate – Projects	B.E. Mechanical	Disdainful of intra-company chat, uses Facebook only to stay in touch with friends and family	Stand-alone respondent
5	Tarang	M / 27	5	MNC	Associate – Projects	B.E. Mechanical	Uses Facebook to promote his hobby of photography – wishes to convert photography into a career. Denied friendship request to researcher.	Stand-alone respondent
6	Ganapat hy	M/27	5	MNC	Associate – Projects	B.E. Mechanical	Uses Facebook to stay in touch. Will happily move to any SNS which is popular among friends	Stand-alone respondent
7	Aalia	F / 29	6.5	MNC	Consultant	MBA	Moved from a FMCG industry recently	Manager
8	Venkat	M / 28	5	MNC	Research Scientist	M.E. Computer Science	IT hardware company	Stand-alone respondent
9	Sulabh	M / 27	4	MNC	Research Officer	B.E. Information Systems	Internet company	Stand-alone respondent
10	Ganesh	M / 27	5	MNC	Program Analyst	B.E. Computer Science	Active user of Facebook; company is computer technology company	Paired interview with his wife Smitha (11)
11	Smitha	F / 27	5	MNC	Program Analyst	B.E. Computer Science	Has an account on facebook but light user; company is computer technology company	Stand-alone respondent
12	Teena	F / 28	5.5	MIC	Human Resources Professional	B.E.	Used to be an avid blogger, maintained the Facebook account for her department in addition to her	Stand-alone respondent

							personal account on the SNS	
13	Ankit	M / 30	6	MNC	Project Manager	MBA	Careful with adding colleagues on Facebook account. Wary of overlapping impressions; multinational conglomerate	Paired interview with his wife Daya (14)
14	Daya	F / 28	5	MNC	Project Manager	MBA	Not very active on Facebook, wary of photo tags in particular; multinational conglomerate	Stand-alone respondent
15	Vasavi	F / 27	4	MNC	Sr. Program Analyst	MBA	Wary of photo tags on Facebook	Stand-alone respondent
16	Narada	M / 27	6	MIC	Consultant	B.Tech	Quit IT job to pursue MBA. Avid Facebook-er.	Paired-interview with his friend Gagan (17)
17	Gagan	M / 31	8	MIC	Program Manager	B.E.	Avid Facebook-er, uses Indian dating sites	Stand-alone respondent
18	Gopi	M / 45	12	MNC	Manager	M.Tech	Facebook skeptic; telecom industry	Stand-alone respondent
19	Samarth	M / 39	10	MNC	Product Marketer, Manager	MBA	Social media guru. Quit his job to become an entrepreneur. Met his wife on Facebook.; internet company	Manager for 20-24,26 and 27
20	Ankita	F / 28	7	MIC	Manager	MBA	Avid Facebooker	Stand-alone respondent
21	Vidya	F / 33	3	MNC	Media team	M.A.	Internet company	Stand-alone respondent
22	Prema	F / 39	13	MNC	Editor	M.A.	Internet company	Stand-alone respondent
23	Nick	M / 35	14	MNC	Media manager	M.A.	Wary of expressing extremes on Facebook or any social media; internet company	Stand-alone respondent
24	Bikram	M / 37	12	MNC	Manager	M.A.	Uses personal Facebook account for work related polls; internet company	Stand-alone respondent
25	Raghav	M / 36	13	MNC	Product Manager	MBA	Avid Twitter user to keep in touch	Co-Manager for 20-24,

							with clients, Facebook user for friends and family; internet company	26,27
26	Arpita	F / 25	4.5	MNC	Senior Editor	B.A. Psychology	Internet company	Stand-alone respondent
27	Parvati	F / 27	4.5	MNC	Senior Editor	M.A.	Internet company	Stand-alone respondent
28	Pran	M / 52	22	MNC	Head – Products	High school dropout	Internet company	Manager for 19,25
29	Sundar	M / 31	8	MNC	Manager	MBA	Moved from USA to India, avid LinkedIn user	Manager for 1,2,3
30	Madhu	F / 31	6	MIC	Analyst – Systems Security	B.E.	Sceptical about Facebook security	Stand-alone respondent
31	Giri	M / 32	10	MNC	Human Resources Manager	B.E.	Interview was not recorded in parts	Manager

7.9. Collection of data

The data collection in this study was undertaken alongside data analysis. However, in this section I will explain the two processes separately to fully examine key aspects of each. As mentioned before, the main method of data collection was semi-structured interviews. Each respondent was interviewed for about one hour. Most interviews were conducted in coffee shops or a location of the respondents' choice, to ensure they felt comfortable during the interview. Each interview commenced with a brief note about the research, the nature and purpose of the research, explaining issues of confidentiality and respondents agreeing to have the interview recorded. The respondents were also free to ask any questions regarding the study at any time during the interview. Thereafter, basic demographic detail such as name, age, role, work experience, organisation and designation was collected. In most cases, I was already aware of some of the basic demographic details about the respondent as I had contacted the respondent to introduce

myself and to coordinate the interview, during the first phone call, a brief synopsis of the study was also provided to gauge if the participant suited the profile of the respondents the study sought. However, for purpose of formality, the information was gathered to enter in the research diary. A typical interview commenced with the following question:

Let's start with your usage of social media. Please can you list all the social media sites you use, what you use them for and what is your opinion on the same. Can you also talk about any special experiences you have had with the site most recently?

This open ended question was intended to encourage respondents to talk freely about their social media experiences over time. They were at times interrupted with questions, either to gain clarity on the story or as a probing question for the respondent to provide more in-depth information. Examples of these interruptions are, "Can you give me an example?" or "can you elaborate a little more about what you just said?" On many instances, these questions led to respondents making sense of their experiences on social media during the interview. For example, a number of respondents expressed 'should' statements like, "Women should be more careful on social media, you know..", to which I asked for clarity on why they thought so and if they had faced any situations that helped them arrive at that conclusion. While these statements helped me to understand the respondents' point of view, similar to a conversation, respondents sometimes were distracted mid-way of the interview in reflection of their narrations and I found it within my role to bring the focus back to the study.

I conducted five paired-interviews, two of these pairs were couples who were married to each other, and in the other three pairs they were colleagues or friends. The dynamics in these couple interviews varied; generally, in the interviews with married couples, the wife was not very

communicative. Throughout these interviews, they allowed their husband to take the lead in the interview and were in-synch with the comments the other made. In the interviews where the pairs were colleagues or friends, both respondents were communicative. All the paired interviews extended beyond an hour. I did encounter three respondents who were not very communicative initially and in these instances, the respondents opened up after I gave them an overview of the comments by other respondents. In all interviews, my questions prompted the respondents to talk about their experiences freely.

Establishing trust was an important part of successful interviews, therefore I took many measures to make the respondents feel comfortable enough to share their own experiences (Liamputtong, 2007). For instance, questions such as, "so what happened?" or "really, did that happen?" and body language that indicated that I was listening like nodding of the head, maintaining eye contact, leaning in, prompted respondents to tell their stories with excitement. Since I did not know any of the respondents before the interview, it was most critical that respondents could trust me and importantly trust that the information they shared with me would be handled sensitively.

Except one, all the interviews were digitally recorded after seeking the respondents' consent. In addition, I suggested that if there was any time during the interview that they wished I turn off the recorder, then I would do that. One respondent requested I switch off the voice recorder when he shared sensitive stories of the employees as he felt it might scar the image of the employer. In addition to digital records of the interviews, I maintained interview notes. In the field notes, I have typically recorded any unusual points about the respondent, for instance, "she picked the

interview place and time, yet came late and was non-communicative initially." Finally, the interviews were transcribed.

7.10. Management of emotions in qualitative research

Researchers are inevitably emotionally involved with their subject of study when they study the social world, of which they are a part (van Krieken, 1998). A reflection of emotional entanglement is often seen in qualitative research wherein the study is ground in reflexivity, particularly in some research methods like auto-ethnography (Cohen et al., 2009). This challenge in managing emotions is heightened when the researcher has had personal experiences in the topic of study. Despite the significance of emotions in the qualitative research process, emotional labour experienced by researchers has received limited attention in literature. While my study was neither information-sensitive nor emotional in nature, I was faced with the challenge of managing my emotions many times during the study and in this section I discuss the role emotions played in data collection and explain how I managed my emotions in the pursuit of maintaining neutrality as a researcher.

Emotions played a role in this study on two levels. First, I dealt with emotions as a woman, that is, when respondents spoke about experiences that guided them in identifying their strategies, these experiences were many times about cyber stalking. For instance, one male manager described a scenario when it is easy to gain tacit information about a woman he likes by cyber-stalking her profile, identifying their common friends and finding his way around to meeting her in real life. While popular cinema portrays such situations often in this 'Facebook age', when

respondents echoed similar incidents unfold in front of them, it struck a chord in me about women's privacy and rights.

Second, there were certainly occasions when respondents felt comfortable to disclose personal stories related to social media, for instance, their experiences on Indian internet dating sites. This was a popular topic of conversation among all the single respondents, who spoke about relationships, marriage and divorce.

Thus, a challenge I faced was managing my emotions while respondents were narrating their stories. Hochschild (1998, pp.9) defines emotion management as, "an effort, by any means, conscious or not, to change one's feeling or emotion". While on the one hand, I reminded myself that I was a researcher and tried to regain focus of my research, on another, these stories were influencing the research itself as well as affecting my social media usage and distracting me from the purpose of these interviews (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009). King (2004) talks about strategies interviewers could use to refocus respondents' attention to the study, for instance, he suggests using a line, "That's interesting, but could we get back to what we were talking earlier on". While the strategy seems quite straight-forward, it seemed rude to say that to the respondents. Most times, I listened to their narration, expressed my emotions and took a moment before carrying on.

Thankfully, I realised quickly that the interviews were longer and there were few awkward pauses on my part as well as the respondent's behalf. On listening to the first and second interview for the second time, I realised that I had to learn to manage my emotions. One strategy

I followed was to convert the negative into the narrative, that is, rather than viewing a respondents' experience as negative, I saw them as the respondents' desire to foster an impression on me, that of an 'informed respondent' or a 'intellectual' respondent. Dickson-Swift et al. (2009) suggest that the qualitative researcher rely on colleagues, trusted friends and family members for support in such situations. However, the emotions I dealt with during the interviews were not heavy and did not affect me in my personal life, so I did not find the need to seek external support.

7.11. Doing insider research

Insider research is when a researcher conducts a study on a group of which he or she is also a member (Kanuha, 2000). I was doing insider study in this research as I have worked with the target group: Indian IT professionals. There are advantages and disadvantages to this feeling of belongingness. This section discusses insider research and I explain the strategies I followed to overcome insider research bias. As Dwyer & Buckle (2009) suggest, being an insider certainly gives easy access to the target group and facilitates quicker understanding of the meanings of respondents' narratives compared to say, an outsider. In this case, one of my biggest challenges was that having worked in the Indian IT industry, respondents assumed I knew the workings of the industry. Admittedly, I felt the same way at first as well. As a result, when respondents said, "you know what it is like..", I often responded with empathy, thus respondents failed to get into the details of some situations. As Cohen & Ravishankar (2011) explain, it was difficult to separate my experiences in IT, my role as a researcher and my 'Indian-ness' from the research context.

Another major challenge I faced with insider research is that I overlooked the important aspects of the study as I thought them to be obvious (Karra & Phillips, 2007). For instance, when respondents told me that the industry is 'hierarchical and stuck in traditional managerial methods' or when one respondent described the lack of hygiene in one of many instances at the canteen in the company, I found myself agreeing with the respondents on the lackadaisical attitude among Indian IT companies to care for it's employees.

The struggle I faced was that while my first reaction was to express shock and surprise, as the respondents began to explain the situation, I grasped the meaning of what they tried to say too quickly, compared with an outsider to the industry who may have asked more questions; in doing so, I chose to move on to other topics quickly during the interview. As Fay (1996) states, others outside the research experience might be able to appreciate the broad picture, and conceptualise the experience better than the insider researcher. I realised this insider bias after the first round of interviews, when my supervisor highlighted the risk during a research update. When I recognised on reflection that I conveyed more of a belongingness than what I felt in reality, I refrained from agreeing with 'hmmm' and 'yes' whilst internally pondering that 'nothing had changed', I began to identify a strategy to overcome this bias. According to Asselin (2003), it is best for the insider researcher to gather data by assuming that he or she knows nothing about the area of research. This is however easier said than done. A strategy that I used was to acknowledge my struggle with managing the risk of insider bias when it related to understanding the workings of the Indian IT industry. In such instances, when I found myself agreeing, I consciously changed my response from an agreement into a question, "can you elaborate on what you mean by stuck in

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hierarchical management system". It took great effort to eliminate insider bias research and the only strategy I followed was to compare the data with existing literature and identify unique narratives which have different meanings that have not been covered in extant literature.

7.12. Reflexivity

Reflexivity is the extent to which the researcher influences the direction of research and can take an external stance to the study. As Nightingale & Cromby (1999, pp.228) define it, "Reflexivity involves the ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research." In other words, as Alvesson & Sköldberg (2009, pp.9) define it:

> "Reflective research has two basic characteristics: careful interpretation and reflection. The first implies that all references – trivial and non-trivial to data are the results of interpretation… The second element, reflection, turns attention 'inwards' towards the person of the researcher, the relevant research community, society as a whole, intellectual and cultural traditions, and the central importance, as well as the problematic nature of language, and narrative (the form of presentation) in the research context." They add, "systematic reflection on several different levels can endow the interpretation with a quality that makes empirical research of value."

In this process of reflexivity thus, critical importance is given to the knowledge generated in the data, how knowledge is organised, interpreted and what claims are made in that connection (Altheide & Johnson, 1994, pp.486). Thus, scholars recognise the importance of reflexivity in the research process and are attentive of how they interpret the data.

There are broadly two types of reflexivity: personal reflection and epistemological reflection. As Willig (2001) simply puts it, personal reflexivity involves reflecting on how the researchers' values, beliefs and experiences influences the research. He adds further, epistemological reflexivity involves thinking of how the assumptions of the world made by the researcher in the due course of research and the research design have shaped the findings of the research. This section details my experiences in personal and epistemological reflexivity in the context of the study.

In the context of personal reflexivity, I attempted to be conscious of how my personal experiences, emotions and insider knowledge influenced the way I collected, organised and analysed the data. For instance, in my first round of identifying themes, I was highlighting only those findings that I thought were new. However on reflection, I had left out few other findings and themes as I was clouded by my values, beliefs and insider bias. With help from my supervisor, I noted this tendency in the early stages of the research process and took care to ensure that my personal feelings did not interfere with the study. In addition, I was on the lookout for contradictions and minority views, which helped me to avoid bias in research.

With respect to epistemological reflexivity, despite the philosophical position I assumed, in this case, social constructionism, I found it a challenge to go beyond the narrative experiences to look for deeper meanings and gain insight. This could be due to my minimal research experience, in that, I maintained the view that respondents' interactions on social media were unaffected by their offline world and vice versa. When I eliminated my bias with help from my supervisor, I

could look at the total picture and move from plainly describing the data to theorising it for the study.

7.13. Data analysis

The main techniques used to analyse the date are inductive and deductive. First I used an inductive tool by applying select procedures from grounded theory research. In the second round of analysis, I draw on hermeneutics. In this section, I explain the first method in brief and describe how I used it in my analysis and then explain the second tool similarly.

The first method I used was to apply the principles of grounded theory to data. Corbin & Strauss (1990) suggest that the procedures of grounded theory are designed to develop a well-integrated set of concepts that provide a thorough theoretical explanation of social phenomena under study. In doing so, Corbin & Strauss (1990) identify two important principles that are built within the steps to analyse data: one, phenomena is not conceived as static but continually changing and second, actors (respondents) are seen as having, though not always utilising, the means of controlling their destinies by their responses to conditions. In addition, Corbin & Strauss (1990) suggest that some procedures and canons should be followed by the grounded theory researcher, for instance, data collection and analysis are interrelated processes. Further, along with the principles and canons for research, three types of coding are suggested by Corbin & Strauss (1990) to analyse the data: open coding, an interpretive process by which data is broken down analytically with the purpose of giving the researcher new insights by breaking through standard ways of thinking about or interpreting phenomena. Second is axial coding, where categories are

related to their subcategories and the relationships are tested against the data. Third, selective coding, the process by which all categories are unified around a 'core' category and categories that need further explication are filled-in with descriptive detail.

Data analysis was an on-going process through the data collection period. As mentioned earlier, after few interviews were conducted, I spoke with my supervisor, read limited literature on the respondent group and amended my interview guide. In the first instance of analysis, a pattern emerged in the initial interviews; that of impression management and networking strategies. At this stage, I identified three themes in the data: respondents' motivations to enact self-presentations on social media, the wider Indian IT setting and self-presentation strategies. In the second stage of analysis, I applied a grounded theory cannon: categories must be developed and related, "merely grouping concepts under a more abstract heading does not constitute a category. To achieve that status, a more abstract concept must be developed in terms of its properties and dimensions of the phenomenon it represents, conditions which give rise to it, the action/interaction by which it is expressed, and the consequences it produces." (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, pp.8). Thus, I looked for categories that reflected the respondents' understanding of their world more closely. At this stage, three rough themes emerged: (1) The relationship between self-presentations on social media and embodied selves (2) Influence of feedback on self-presentations on social media (3) The influence of the overlapping interactions when enacting self-presentations on social media. Having identified the themes, an iterative process followed, of moving back and forth between the data, relevant literature, and the emerging themes to begin developing conceptual categories.

In the second round of analysis, I used hermeneutics to analyse the data. As Klein & Myers (1999, pp.71) outline, "The idea of the hermeneutic circle suggests that we come to understand a complex whole from preconceptions about the meanings of its parts and their interrelationships. The process of interpretation moves from a precursory understanding of the whole context back to an improved understanding of each part, that is, the meanings of the words. The sentence as a whole in turn is a part of some larger context". Applying this analysis method, I found explanations for the emerging themes. In this stage, I applied meaning to the sentences and textual data to gain insights about the meanings of its part and the interrelationship with the context. I did this by questioning the relationship between motivations to enact self-presentations and overlapping interactions across the physical and virtual settings when enacting self-presentations on social media. Similarly, I questioned the relationship between feedback and motivations to enact self-presentations on social media. I questioned the interrelationships with the themes and the respondents' context, that is, the relationship for instance between motivations to enact self-presentations on social media and the manager at the workplace. I tried to understand the relationship between respondents' perception of social media and the workplace. Just as identifying the initial themes using the principles of grounded theory, this was also an iterative process until I achieved data saturation.

Chapter 8: Findings

Chapter 8 presents the research findings. In this chapter, I examine respondents' interactions on social media under three broad themes: motivations, conflicts and coping mechanisms.

8.1. Motivations to interact on social media

This chapter explores respondents' motivations to interact on social media. Respondents' motivations consolidate around four themes: broadcasting, networking, displaying identity and managing impressions.

8.1.1. Broadcasting

Overall, respondents in this sample use social media for broadcasting information. Such information includes accurate self-descriptions as they view social media as a space and place where they can reveal the self on a personal and professional level. Foremost, some respondents rationalise the need for broadcasting on public social media sites like Facebook and LinkedIn and networked communications.

Narada explains that in the IT industry, individuals lead mobile lives, thus he finds it a challenge to keep track of his friends' phone numbers. He says Facebook helps to connect with friends in America:

> *You see right now, you don't have a phone number of every friend of yours. Considering how dynamically we are moving in and out of places, you can't keep track of that. I can't have like one guys' number today and after three days he's gone to US and it's over. Facebook helps with that (Narada, 27)*

Sylvia and Ganesh use LinkedIn to find out about a new manager at the workplace. Sylvia explains that when a new manager joins a project there are no formal introductions between the

manager and the team. In such situations, she says she uses LinkedIn to gather work-related information about the manager, a site where she has immediate access to the managers' profile without the necessity to add them to her network:

When you have a new manager, there is no formal introduction of what he did last 10 years. And it's a easy way to find out. You don't have to add him on LinkedIn also, you can just go in and search. His whole history is displayed there. His whole reputation. That's how you use it professionally. You can't use Facebook for that. Facebook is more a fun update and he'll not put his technical details of what he's done. (Sylvia, 27)

Nick explains that he views social media as his personal PR tool, where he promotes himself by sharing links to articles or videos and adding photographs. He also uses social media to collect personal information on his friends:

I keep track of what my friends are up to. I use it as I would say a personal PR tool. You know, talk about myself, put out links to articles or photographs of you know social occasions, put links to videos. Yeah, so it's a place to find out what's happening with my friends and also to tell my friends what's happening with me (Nick, 35)

Sundar explains that he uses social media for entertainment and to collect personal information on his friends:

On Facebook, come to know when their birthdays are, see who's getting married, partly to get some masala (gossip), entertainment. Because some people are posting some goofy things, like videos, so that is one (Sundar, 31)

Prema suggests that people use Facebook and social media in general as a self-esteem booster. She adds that visibility is important to her and she likes to be acknowledged. She believes that someone somewhere is admiring her for who she is, even if it is only virtual:

I think there's a little bit of that I'm important too thingy in everyone of us right. You want to be seen. You want to be acknowledged. We all need that acknowledgement in life. Whether it's from our spouse, our parents, our teachers, it is there at the workplace. there's someone out there who's going to appreciate what you write. That's a huge ego booster. It builds your confidence bit by bit. It gives you that feeling of important. It even works wonders for your self esteem. There are networks. Someone somewhere is admiring you for who you are even if it's only virtual (Prema, 39)

Amit agrees with Prema, in that people use Facebook to create a presence and seek attention. He adds that he feels connected when he sees friends' posts about milestones like marriage and having a child, information he may not have found out otherwise, but other than that, he believes people who spend time chatting on Facebook or update status regularly are attention seekers:

People chat or their hourly day-to-day experiences, what's happening hourly experiences but most probably gossip. Yeah, it's not a question of gossip. I feel it's like people are just attention seekers. I just have that profile of mine just to keep in touch with friends, and yeah, it's really nice to know what's happening when people get married, you really don't know. Someone has a kid, you really don't know. Such things are nice but otherwise, people just want to create their presence (Amit, 27)

In the case of Narada, he was employed in a multinational IT company. In regards to social media, he did not have access to either networked communications portal or public social media sites. He rationalises the need for broadcasting. Narada explains that he spends approximately nine – 10 hours at work and lives alone, so when he goes home, he feels restricted from venting. He adds further that in his project comprising of nine people, six are married and have familial

priorities. In addition, the chances are he does not get along with the remaining members of the team. As a result, he has no space to interact or divert his attention:

> *Considering you asked me why there's a need for all these things, I'll tell you. We probably work how many hours a day in office. You go back home, you don't have any other forum to express anything. It's probably a milder version of saying you've bottled up everything inside. Now you have nine people in your team, six people in your team, half of them are married so they have their own set of things and the remaining people you need not gel with them all the time, so you can't exactly express everything with them (Narada, 27)*

Similarly Ankita explains her feeling of disconnectedness with the world outside of work. She explains that she finds interacting only with work colleagues about work is constraining and she needs a break, which she finds easily on social media:

> *You feel so disconnected because you're working 20 hours and the only people you have around you are your work people and that's really constraining at times because how much can you talk to them. A lot of times all you talk about will be work, it really gets to you and you really need a break. I'm not saying the whole day because I need that break. I need that little inducing thing that ok you are relaxed otherwise you couldn't work. It does give you some entertainment component, plan your weekends (Ankita, 27)*

In regards to access to broadcasting sites at the workplace, respondents in this sample were employed by different IT companies, each unique in allowing access to public social media sites at the workplace. Additionally, the infrastructure of networked communications varied across IT companies. While few IT companies employed networked communications and banned access to public sites, other IT companies allowed access to LinkedIn at the workplace. One IT company

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only allowed one hour of gmail access at the workplace and another company allowed full access to public social media sites and implemented networked communications. Thus, there was no pattern to allowing access to social media at the workplace. In this section, respondents first elaborate on access to social media and networked communications at the workplace and explain the need for access to broadcasting portals at the workplace.

Ganesh explains he can access Facebook at the workplace. Although he is not active on Twitter, access to the site is open at the workplace, similarly access to LinkedIn and Gmail services are also available.

> *We have access to Facebook and LinkedIn. I am not active on Twitter but you can generally access it. Also Gmail, you can have a window open and access it (Ganesh, 27)*

Interestingly, in the case of Vasavi, her employer allows access to public social media sites as well as networked communications where individuals can view classifieds and look for a marriage partner as well:

> *Nothing is blocked – Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, we have universal access. Also, each department has this forum where if you want to buy something or sell something or you are looking for an alliance. You have this open space where you can openly discuss everything. There's this forum where you can discuss anything. Your identity is basically linked to your id. (Vasavi, 27)*

Gagan explains the evolution of social networking in his company. He suggests that social interaction began as a platform to advertise classifieds. However, he explains, management realized that IT workers lead mobile lives and access to a networked communications portal helps them make quick transitions from one location to another:

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Earlier, it used to be general and it was only to share information. So it started off that way, but people realized that a lot of people relocate in the industry, so they have to sell a lot of stuff you know, I have a bed that I need to sell and so they opened another folder saying 'real estate plus buy and sell' so they have divided into many categories (Gagan 31)

As Ankit explains, in his company, access to public social media is allowed as well as networked enterprises:

Blog which it's a login platform which is provided to the entire user community. Almost everyone is on it. They can access news about cricket, company news, we have customised blogger platforms. We also have groups restricted groups within the team where we can create events or promote our blog. When you subscribe to these forums, you get notifications and can put up a profile there. These profiles will list details like interests, skills, areas of expertise – depending on these, you can subscribe. We also have inbuilt social networking platforms like yammer for the sales force. Access to Twitter and Facebook is open (Ankit, 30)

Sundar justifies the absence of networked communications in his company as he argues that networked communications facilitate harassment. As a manager who is privy to the decision making process, Sundar explains why access to social networks is denied at the workplace. Citing a hypothetical example, he suggests that employees have, in the past, used social networks to cyber stalk female colleagues.

It is not allowed at work, because these people spend all their time on these things and waste their time, and sometimes, there is scope for misuse with respect to guys snooping around girls. So there have been lot of incidents like that that have happened. Most

common issue at work is, to some degree, harassment happens. Guys trying to stalk girls and things like that. So if I meet somebody or see somebody at work with somebody I know. So today I go to the cafeteria, got for lunch and see Rakesh. Next to Rakesh is a girl who I think looks good. I'm going to go immediately back to work and look up Rakesh on Facebook, look through his list of friends and find out who this girl is and try to make connections. Or try to find out more information (about the girl) or show my friends. But if I don't have social networks, I don't have access any of this at work, I'm probably not going to do it because when I go back home, I have a million other things to do. This is the reply. This is something we have discussed a lot in managers' meetings, as to why social networks are not being opened up at work (Sundar, 31)

Thus, as Sundar explains, the company blocked access to Facebook and internal networks as the networked communication contained personal information about employees which they prefer is only accessible by friends and not the entire company network. Further, he explains that the company's image is entangled in the employee's interactions on social media, thus, access to personal social network Facebook is denied although LinkedIn can be accessed at the workplace:

You can access LinkedIn at work. Facebook and well there were complaints about the internal social networks. The internal ones also will have some degree of information. So the basic complaint is a lot of this information is personal and we want it to just be restricted to friends and we don't want people at office to know about these things. People seem to be very protective of certain information. The image of the company is based on its employees

In addition, respondents justify the need for broadcasting accurate self-descriptions as they use social media sites for dating and matrimony. Ankita explains that she uses Facebook to collect information about her work colleagues and about a man she is keen about:

Network within the company depends on what are you looking for because see if I wanna know my employees within my company I will definitely be having an internal portal. If I don't have an internal portal, then I will go to social media sites. Networking depends on your purpose. So suppose I'm interested in some guy, I will ask my friends to find out about the guy and if I'm too shy to open up to my friends, then I will go to Facebook and see what more I can find out about the person (Ankita,28)

Similarly Vasavi explains that if she is to get married through the arranged marriage system that is widely followed in India, she assumes a potential partner would check her Facebook or LinkedIn profile where they may be able to gauge her personality from the comments and photographs uploaded:

Supposing I'm to get married through an arranged marriage. I meet somebody or somebody comes up with an alliance through parents. So what will you do first. You will go and check up on any Facebook or LinkedIn profile. A photograph will say a lot. Some comment will say a lot about that person. I think that's very powerful (Vasavi, 27)

Overall, respondents justify using social media sites to broadcast information. Respondents justify the need to broadcast citing reasons like mobile lives, long working hours, boosting self-esteem, creating a presence and seeking attention. They explain that they broadcast accurate self-descriptions as they use social media sites like Facebook and LinkedIn for dating. In this section, few respondents also describe access to broadcasting portals at the workplace.

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8.1.2. Networking

Many respondents explain that broadcasting accurate self-descriptions primarily helps in networking with friends, family and colleagues. As Gagan suggests, individuals do not build relationships on Facebook, rather a relationship is built offline and then people connect on the social networking site:

> *Facebook, you sometimes don't build relationships on Facebook. There's a relationship built and then you get connected on Facebook (Gagan, 31)*

Overall, a majority of respondents use Facebook for networking. As Sundar states below, Facebook is for friends and LinkedIn is to network with professionals; half of the respondents agree to this systematic style of networking with friends and family on Facebook and colleagues, clients and work-related contacts on LinkedIn.

> *Facebook is pretty much just friends. LinkedIn is for my professional perspective (Sundar, 31)*

Tarang uses Facebook to re-create a collegial environment as he keeps in touch with friends from college and those outside the workplace:

> *Social media is just to keep in touch with my friends, who I've left behind in college and also friends that I have made outside of the company for the past 5 years. So basically I keep in touch with them through social media (Tarang, 27)*

Similarly, Giri elaborates that he uses Facebook, Google plus, Orkut (although sporadically). He is quick to clarify that he only uses those sites that are popular among his friends:

> *Social media is keeping in touch. I use Facebook, G+. I used to use Orkut, I still use, but very sporadic nowadays because what happens, your friends move on, and obviously it's*

a better feature. Like G+ has a better feature, that Facebook doesn't have at this point in

time. But there are multiple things. But primarily, I use Facebook as of now (Giri, 45)

Ankita suggests she uses Facebook as a personal reminder for birthdays, Google chat and Skype on occasion. Ankita summarises that social media is a medium for communication and advises others to keep it at that level:

Personally I would only use Facebook ok and LinkedIn. Nothing else. LinkedIn is for

professional and Facebook is for more lively, friendly kind of a thing. I'm on Facebook,

it's my most active forum. I'm on my school network, I use Facebook for remembering

birthdays. I'm not on LinkedIn. Twitter is work related. Gtalk, yes. I use gtalk very

regularly but not skype much. It is my friends abroad, normally call once in a while you

know from skype so I don't use it that much. Yeah, social media is for communication and

you want to keep it at that level (Ankita, 28)

Samarth says he uses email services, instant messenger, Skype, Facebook, Orkut, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google plus as a channels for social media:

I use email, I use instant messenger, and Skype at home very extensively. I use Facebook

very extensively, orkut, rarely. Twitter- I tweet actively. I use G+ now although I don't

have a large following or I don't follow a large number of people. I use LinkedIn quite

actively and so these are the channels I use for social media (Samarth, 39)

Nick says in a confessing manner that ninety percent of his time on social media outside of work is on Facebook. Nick says he is not very active on Twitter or LinkedIn but uses youtube for music videos:

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I would say that 90% of my time on social media outside of work is Facebook, I do very

little of Twitter, little of LinkedIn, quite a bit of youtube and mostly for music videos (Nick,

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In the context of networking with clients, colleagues and managers, respondents in this sample communicate subtle messages whilst networking with work-related contacts. For instance, Sundar uses Facebook in a professional context to build trust with his team. He states that if his colleagues did not trust him enough, they may not have given him complete access to their Facebook walls:

Twenty of the people who report to me are on Facebook, and a lot of my colleagues are

on Facebook. They have complete access and interestingly, they have given me complete

access too and it has got more with the fact that in real and offline, they trust me (Sundar,

31)

Ankit states that he uses his self-presentations on social media to gain visibility at the workplace. He suggests that he uses Facebook to gain visibility in various ways, for instance, by establishing expertise on the network.

One is to just acknowledge that you are an expert…the other could be that you are

actually looking for other prospects and you need to advertise the fact that here you are

worth something, you know this, you know this stuff, and if this is what people are

looking for, then you are the person to come to. So it could be a need for moving on, for

finding out different things and for advertising your skills. It could be insecurity that you

haven't been heard in sometime and you want to make yourself heard. I exist, so could be

that as well. Professionally, you want yourself to be seen, and you want people to know

how cool you are. and you are writing about new technology every week or blogging

about things and I mean, you just want to be seen, I'm sure, which is fine. And I think if

you are working in a organisation, you need to be seen as well (Ankit, 30)

Madhu explains that she uses internal company networks to display her ingenuity. Specifically, she talks about internal technical forums where she can provide solutions to other's problems by stepping into their shoes. In addition, she suggests interacting on networked communications is an opportunity to gain visibility:

Social media helps me to develop my ingenuity, it tickles my brains. Because I can use my

creative thinking to address concerns and issues which are really outside my purview of

things. It gives me a chance to explore the world outside what it is defined for me by the

company – getting into other people's shoes and thinking for them. It helps me build a

network really. I may not have access to COO of the company otherwise but if he is

interacting on the internal networks, I may interact with him directly. He is now

accessible to me which is not the case otherwise. It gives me recognition. I do blog within

the company (Madhu, 31)

Samarth uses Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter to display his expertise. Since he has assumed different roles across his career, he uses social networking sites to display his expertise:

A bunch of folks at X company think of me as the uber engineer, while people in my

current company know me as the Marketer, he's the biz-dev guy, he's the guy you go to

for deals and stuff and one doesn't necessarily link me to the other, but on Facebook

page or my LinkedIn network, they get to know who I am. He's a geek, also a marketer

and he's a financial economist, so that's a way of getting a feel for the bigger person. It

is a lot of images to maintain, yes. So in the end it's hard to be someone you are not. So I

don't try. I just talk about what excites me and it happens that there are multiple things

that excite me and you will find a composite personality (Samarth, 39)

Narada adds that LinkedIn is great to display a web of the professionals he has worked with, and

showcasing this network leads to many more opportunities at the workplace. He advises that if

the manager is of a jovial sort, add him on the network. As regards Facebook, he says he uses the

messaging service to interact with friends who can see it later:

Facebook is a nice way of leaving a message, later on they can see it. It's easy. LinkedIn

is so good. It just keeps up a web of network, log of people you have worked with

professionally. LinkedIn is such an amazing thing from a professional perspective. The

way people have been able to connect or your manager having him on your network, it

gives you so many more opportunities. You keep them (managers) on LinkedIn, you know

what you require from them. He's a close friend, if your team lead is jovial, then just add

him (Narada, 27)

Finally, Aalia explains that LinkedIn is a platform to interact only on business and does not

interfere with personal life.

LinkedIn is really one of the platforms that is purely business and doesn't appear to

personal life. There are two people you really want to keep in touch with, right. One is

your client. You've made a contact, a client contact and you wanna go back and add

them on a network, so you sort of keep that touch and you can talk to them later on. And

LinkedIn is really one of the platforms that is purely business and doesn't appear to

personal life, like adding them on Facebook or something. That also gives them an

opportunity to check your profile out and your friends and what people have said about

you sort of reinforcing what you've flaffed in your meeting with them. The other kind of

people are your partners, like in the line of work that I do, we do a lot of work along with product companies like SAP, Oracle. So you join a lot of groups that are around these products (Aalia, 29)

Few respondents express motivations to network on Facebook and LinkedIn for employment opportunities. As Ganesh explains, he used LinkedIn to get a job and to keep abreast with the goings-on in the industry:

On LinkedIn, it's more professional stuff, right? Professional means, I get a job. You get a picture of what's going on in the industry (Ganesh, 27)

Narada explains that LinkedIn will be one of the networks he will join when he finishes his MBA to pursue job opportunities. He adds that the networking site helps in managing work-related connections and clients:

When I get off my mba, I'll need to put up a resume in every place possible to seek the best opportunity I can get. And maybe one of those will be LinkedIn. In those places LinkedIn is so good. It just keeps up a web of network, a log of people you have worked with professionally (Narada, 27)

Sundar also uses LinkedIn to get a job:

I just use LinkedIn for finding another job. That's why I'm up there. I have my friends on there to find other jobs and stuff, to network with HR folks and things like that. In fact, that is how I got this job, through LinkedIn. What that means is I try to find out HR people in companies that I would be interested in working in, then I go about adding them and sending them messages and say, 'Hey! I'm looking out for an opportunity. Do you think you have anything in your company that fits my profile, my skill set?' so it's more like getting in touch with them. Other than HR I also network with people who are

in the same field as me. So I interact with people in this group around the world or in

India. We discuss work issues like how did they fix a particular lag. So it's basically HR

folks and experts (Sundar, 31)

Ankita suggests LinkedIn is a very useful network to construct professional identity; she uses LinkedIn to network with others in her field and find jobs:

So you get to meet people from other companies and you also get to meet the product

guys. And that is more active than any other connection on the work front. And then of

course you search for your jobs on LinkedIn. And that's pretty easy. Because a lot of

people post when you are on the right network, you get to see what's out there (Ankita,

28)

Overall, respondents network with friends and family on Facebook and use LinkedIn as a networking portal to interact with work-related contacts. Here, it is interesting to note that in regards to networking, respondents view the gamut of public social media under two social networking sites Facebook and LinkedIn. To the extent possible, respondents in this sample explain that such a systematic view to networking helps in building accurate profiles on the sites. On Facebook, some respondents create a collegial environment and attempt to keep these interactions friendly and informal. Few respondents use their interactions with colleagues and work-related contacts on Facebook, LinkedIn and networked communications for specific motivations like building trust with team members, displaying individuality and gaining visibility at the workplace. Respondents also express that networking on LinkedIn is particularly vested in their motivation to seek a job or be open for better employment opportunities.

8.1.3. Displaying identity

In this section, I present data regarding individuals' motivation to display identity. This section addresses how respondents use social media to foster an impression of individuality by displaying aspects of their identity. In this context, respondents reject notions of disembodied self, which I examine in the following section.

Many respondents used their interactions on social media to display identity. Samarth maintains a blog and in his writings, he explores his personal identity:

> *The process of writing a blog is a search for your identity. I have a private blog that I keep. Even if someone finds out everything about it, I'm not afraid that it's there. It's just that I chose to not make it public. The process of blogging will reveal things to you that you din't know and it will help for yourself and others (Samarth, 39)*

Teena explains that she has two blogs, one personal and another on networked communications. Although the content is fairly similar on both blogs, on networked communications, she displays her personal identity. Although she omits excessively personal information like emotions and feelings, she broadcasts on an aspect of personal identity - her love for animals:

> *I have my own blog right, in which I write everything. But when I cross-posted, I took out all the personal stuff which is why my blog ended up being about my animals you know funny stuff that happened to me and not really about what I was thinking about emotionally because I didn't think that belonged on a corporate blog, so I kept that on my personal blog. There was no way to sort of control who reads your blog here, so I didn't want to write about when I was feeling blue on a corporate thing or whatever. I didn't think it belonged there. People I made friends with, even through blogs who I hit it off with, I give them a link to my other blogs, and they check it out there (Teena, 28)*

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Prema states that she uses Facebook to display her personal identity by staying updated on music, movies, sports and books. Although not an active participant, she is a part of these groups on Facebook to find out about events. As she explains, she uses the likes on her Facebook page to 'let people know' her tastes:

> *On Facebook they have these like pages. I'm a huge Pink Floyd and Carpenters fan so I'm part of that page. I like movies so I subscribe to IMDB. I like football so I'm part of that group as well. I have my books through goodreads. That influences me and I go and buy that book. I just want to let people know I'm a Pink Floyd or grafunkle fan because I can get access to events. For me, its' just information. I don't participate in those forums, it's just me (Prema, 39)*

Raghav explains that he views Twitter or any social medium as a tool for others to gauge his personality. He is very conscious of this notion, thus he uses Twitter to express opinions in a way that reflects his personality through which people can understand him well:

> *One thing I realized Twitter as a medium or any social medium for instance will one day going to become a tool for others to understand about you as a personality. I'm very conscious about that. So I use Twitter as a way to express my opinion in a way that reflects my personality or reflect my knowledge about something or reflect my opinion, through which people understand who I am (Raghav, 36)*

Aalia suggests she adds people to her network as it provides an additional glimpse of her personality to see apart from other's observations about her. In addition, she adds people in her network so they can reach out to her:

You add people because it's an additional glimpse of you that they can see apart from
what you already told them and as long as they are in your network it's an easier way to
reach out to them if you need something (Aalia, 29)

Nick displays his holistic self in his interactions on social media. He suggests that his interactions on social media include details about his personal and professional identity. He adds that personal identity is not just friends or family, it is about him:

Personal is anything. Personal is my company as an organization, Nick is a person. If it's
not related to work, then it's all personal. It can be pretty much anything. It doesn't have
to do with family or friends, it can do with me (Nick, 35)

Ten respondents use the infrastructure of social networking sites like 'Like pages' and 'Communities' to display social identity. Respondents in this sample use communities, forums, blogs and Facebook likes to construct a social identity. Nick suggests he regularly visits travel related communities, automobile related communities and music communities to construct his social identity:

Communities, I do go to travel related communities. Travel, sometimes, very little of cars,
very little of music as well. The communities I have on Facebook are mostly fan pages,
and I get to know what's happening. I use it both as a way to be notified about events, to
get to know about a new song, find out if there is a new play in town, there's a place to
eat (Nick, 35)

Narada explains he uses networked communications portal to display his social identity at the workplace. He is interested in automobiles, motorcycles and photography and uses the portal to form a group:

I'm interested in automobiles and motor cycle, photography.. GV (the other respondent) is into something else. So we find our own group of friends whom we have never met before and we have our own thought processes that we deliberate on (Narada, 27)

Sundar displays his personal and social identity by advertising his interest in organising events and trumpeting his socialising skills:

You join networks built around something that you are interested in, that you pursue as a hobby, or pursue as an interest. Be it Salsa, or my piece of chennai or pechakucha, they were all things which were my interests (Sundar, 31)

Gagan says he is interested in scrabble and uses the networked communications portal to join a group interested in scrabble:

I am very interested in scrabble. I think I've found a lot of people on BB itself and that is a kind of helpful scenario and I'm online all the time (Gagan, 31)

Giri uses Facebook to coordinate his marathon running schedule with his colleagues from the workplace:

I am actually a marathon runner. My friends from office, we run together. So we are there basically for that. We don't discuss office per say on social media but we discuss our running plan and stuff like that (Giri, 45)

Tarang uses Facebook to promote photography, his hobby that generates an income:

I use Facebook also for promoting my photography and I have couple of other what do you say ventures. One is, I have a wedding photography venture. I have an event, a wedding photography event that happens in Bangalore. These two things I promote through Facebook or through my friends circle, their friends circle and twitter also. I use

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these networks sometimes to express my state of mind but most times it is for promotion

of my event (Tarang, 27)

In addition, two respondents use LinkedIn to display professional identity. Ankita and Aalia associate professionalism with honesty:

LinkedIn I think is more professional. You cannot lie about your career (Ankita,28)

Aalia adds that lying on LinkedIn is hard due to the social pressure that her work colleagues who know her work closely are on the same platform.

It's difficult to lie on LinkedIn because all your colleagues are right there, as opposed to a resume, right because you can write pretty much what you want and send it to some people. But all your work people are right there, so most people would not take that liberty. And then they see what other people had to say about you. So, to that extent it's more truthful than a resume would turn out to be (Aalia, 29)

Further, respondents explain that they display their core identity by rejecting the notion of disembodied selves. Samarth explains that to the extent that individuals interactions online are consistent with a mental image of who they are, they do not experience cognitive dissonance. He states that it is hard to be of a certain personality online and a different personality offline, thus he does not try. He advises that staying true to the mental image of the self is the key to maintaining integrity in online-offline interactions and as long as individuals strive to be the same, there is minimal cognitive dissonance:

So in the end it's hard to be someone you are not. So I don't try. You may believe certain things about yourself. I am a geek, that's a mental image of who I think I am. Truth be told, I'm nowhere near as uber geek as people as real geeks. But yet that's my mental

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image of myself. As long as I'm consistent or believe that mental image, there is no

cognitive dissonance. I'm not play acting. I'm just being who I think I am (Samarth, 39)

Prema explains that interactions revealing her core identity helps in meaningful introspection and

helps her to grow emotionally:

I've grown as an individual in terms of how to express myself in certain pockets you know

like how to deal with people, what's rude, what's not because Facebook is like one place

where you know I'm more personal there. I tend to be more of myself, my real self over

there which is I'm extrovert. The internet and Facebook has had a tremendous influence

on mine and everybody's personal life. The personal life is now virtually public. People

have come back to me to say this is online, this is virtual, you can't be your real self

(Prema, 39)

Bikram observes online interactions and opines that many live their lives online. He suggests

there has to be a life outside and beyond the online world to salvage oneself so as to retain the

'real' self:

I know for a fact that most people live their lives online. Going back to the days of IM

and all that, which are precursors to social networks, internet relayed chat tool and stuff

like that and that's exactly what I don't want to be. There has to be a life outside and

beyond to salvage (Bikram, 37)

Although Gagan enacts his 'true' identity on networked communications, he has interacted with

individuals who are different in face-to-face interactions and online interactions. An explanation

for such diverse selves is found in the scope for anonymity on networked communications:

I've been interacting with a lot of bb (networked communication portal) folks but never

met in my life till now...and we/they are in the same building. Never met them and then

one fine day we decide ok let's meet. All of us who are regulars met up and realized that what we post sometimes is very different from what we are. Here's a lot of folks who love to portray what they are not. Like I said when we actually met there was a simple nice guy. His posts, all the time negative and sarcastic and all the time trying to pull the other person down. He says I love doing that. You know I love to be the bad guy because no one knows me I don't care. so it does have.. I mean it gives you an opportunity to tell people what you are at the same time it gives you an opportunity to show your talents that you cannot show on a regular basis. but I think some.. there are certain sides of you which you show on these kind of networks that you wouldn't show on a day to day, face to face (Gagan, 31)

Further, Giri explains that spending too much time online may blur the lines between the real self and the virtual self:

So that's where the line getting really blurred. Who is the real you or who are you pretending to be? Sometimes that may be backfired. For that reason, the consequence can be dangerous. It can get out of hand (Giri, 45)

Overall, respondents explain their motivation to interact on social media is to display identity. In such interactions, respondents display their personal, social and professional identity. Respondents use infrastructure on social media sites (for instance 'like' button and communities) to display identity. These interactions also provide scope for introspection and growth of identity. In this context, respondents reject the notion of enacting disembodied selves although they explain that individuals may exhibit diverse selves within the cape of anonymity.

8.1.4. Managing impressions

This section explores respondents' motivation to interact on social media: managing impressions. In this section, respondents discuss the inevitability of fostering an image during online interactions and explain their struggle with audience segregation.

Ankita explains that people use social media to create a certain image of the self. She describes how individuals construct images on popular social network Facebook:

> *People use social media to project a certain image about themselves, especially Facebook. 'About me' is one section where people…a lot of people write elaborate things. You have your interests, you have your hobbies, you have your music. All those points you have. So it says a lot about you. So the kind of things that you comment on, the kind of likes that you have, the kind of posts that are generated by you, it speaks a lot about you. I think you get to know personally (Ankita, 28)*

Carol suggests that social media presence is linked with creating an image and gives the audience an opportunity to find out more about the person:

> *It's about maintaining your image, you're giving them an opportunity to find out something about you (Carol, 23)*

Samarth explains that he views social media as a learning space and experiments with self-presentation nuances to generate an impression of the self:

> *It's my way of learning what it takes to market in social media…and it's also a way of building an influence. Letting people know who I am and what I do. And generating a sort of persona in my circle of influence. It's a way of building an image, a way of relating to people. The reason I did that was first was to learn: What does it take to establish a presence on Twitter or a social medium (Samarth, 39)*

Further, Samarth adds that he builds an image of the self by role modelling on others' profiles. He explains he uses social media to communicate a vision of who he is as a person:

I role model myself on other people I've seen. I certainly experiment with message and tone and frequency to generate a certain impression of myself. My circle, different people use social media for different purposes. I use it to express myself and communicate a vision of who I am and promote myself as a commodity.

Teena says that she uses her blog to build an image. She explains that she interacted with colleagues within the company who are in different locations and her enactments through the blog helped her associates to form an image of her 'real' self:

With blogs, I did build some sort of image especially because there, there are people from other locations who can't meet you right so they have to form an impression of you solely through what you write or through your communicator or whatever. There I had a reputation for being an animal lover and that sort of thing (Teena, 28)

Teena adds that people who are shy are inclined towards using blogs to build an image and focus on adding media that suggest that they are cool. In particular, as a human resources professional, Teena observes that the young professionals who join the IT industry are motivated to create an image to seek attention from the opposite sex:

With blogs, that's the part I'm very clear about. People who are shy, they use it to sort of build their image. They put up pictures where they look the coolest and a lot of young people, so you are obviously looking for attention from the opposite sex, a lot of young people want to sound cool. (Teena, 28)

Narada explains his motive to manage impressions on social media is to gain respect:

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I think it's perfectly alright considering… see finally what are you doing with the whole social network? You're either trying to impress someone or you're trying to build an image of yourself wherein people respect you. For everyone it's about respect (Narada, 27)

Prema agrees that people use social media for image management. She adds that in her experience, people consciously attempt to foster a 'cool' image of the self:

There is this massive image management that happens. There are some who actually conscientiously do certain things online to let people think they are really this cool dude or happening person online (Prema, 39)

Similarly Sylvia suggests that people use exaggerated tales of the self to convey a 'cool' image of the self. She adds that people construct the 'cool' image from their western counterparts:

People use exaggerated tales to convey an image of being 'cool'. They are comparing to 'west' constantly (Sylvia, 27)

Vasavi explains that maintaining an image is important, thus she is mindful of photo tags. She hesitates to add pictures of people who smoke as she fears her audience may associate her with the habit:

I like travelling, so I definitely have pictures of me going to different places. I like going out meeting friends so lots of pictures like that. I'm very careful about the kind of pictures that are there. I don't smoke and I wouldn't want anybody who smokes to be on my profile, because automatically people would associate. Even if I don't smoke, people would say that she's hanging out with people who smoke. If need be I remove the tag if there's a picture I wouldn't want to be there. So I think image is important (Vasavi, 27)

Vasavi explains that in a professional setting like the workplace, she wishes to foster the impression that she is serious about work although not necessarily a serious person. She worries that adding pictures from her parties might invite comments that may alter the impression at the workplace:

> *Specially if it's a professional setting, at the end of the day you want them to think of you as a serious person, you are serious about work. You don't want them to think that ok this girl always parties. You don't want that picture or that one comment from somebody else on your wall that can actually change somebody else's perspective (Vasavi, 27)*

Ankita agrees that interaction on Facebook influences impressions at the workplace. She uses Facebook as an ice-breaker with her team. Ankita explains how she uses her Facebook wall posts to earn respect and create a rapport with her colleagues at work:

> *I earned the respect through social media because I tried to create a rapport with them…not just by talking but by being on Facebook and interacting with them. If not through chat but through posts. So you know, you start a conversation on Facebook, or you start something on Facebook and you discuss it over lunch…that kind of a thing…I think that helps to create a rapport (Ankita, 28)*

Similarly Ganesh suggests he uses Facebook to foster a 'cool' image of the self and like Ankita, he too uses Facebook as an ice-breaker with his colleagues:

> *Not the professional part of me on Facebook. It's more the fun part of me. Photos, my hobbies, travel. It's kind of the same thing. It's easy to blend in because people already think you are cool. You find someone at office and you just know them. Once you add them on Facebook, it becomes more comfortable to them. That's how it turned out to be. Because once they see more personal stuff, they like it and they end up becoming more*

closer. They start appreciating what you do, and become closer. That increases the ice

breaking stuff (Ganesh, 27)

Gagan uses Facebook to convey an image to his colleagues. He explains that he uses his Facebook pictures which are over five years old to break ice particularly with the younger employees on his team:

Gagan: in fact, four years back I used to have a pony tail. Now he has never seen it.

Narada: I have seen photos. This is Gagan?

Gagan: Exactly. The thing is, they wouldn't know that I have that kind of a attitude also. Lot of my team mates are juniors, who are 1ˢᵗ year, 2ⁿᵈyear…they come and say I really didn't know you were that much of fun…I said "you ask and I'll tell you.." so, it's all about an image that is built and over the years, and those photographs are 4-5 years old…and people look at it and actually see and understand who or what you are. I think that makes a lot of difference also (Gagan, 31)

Narada interprets Gagan's photo as an example to explain the fostering of images in the online-offline and personal-professional world. Narada explains that he first interacted with Gagan for about a fortnight at the workplace and his image of Gagan based on Gagan's attire at the workplace was a stark contrast to his image of Gagan after viewing said photograph on Facebook:

Narada: where Gagan comes up, I've never seen him other than with hair like this. I've met him, all the time it is gelled hair, it's all well-oiled and I see the photo of him with a ponytail, and I was like 'abbey! Yeh kab se hua?' (Hey! When did that happen?) So my image definitely is that he's a little more adventurous than he shows his image in front of us probably.... I just met him after 15-20 days, I added him on Facebook or something and I saw these photos…And I was like, 'huh'? (Narada, 27)

Nick explains that his profile on Facebook is open and helps his colleagues relate to him better. He adds that interacting on the social network does not interfere with his personal life, so it's perfectly alright:

> *If you came to my profile page, my profile is mostly open, you'll get to know about what I like doing, where I like to hang out, my activities, and so on. It helps you relate to me better and it helps to build these networks, both professionally and personally. I have no problems with it at all. It doesn't interfere with my personal life, so it's perfectly alright (Nick, 35)*

Martin uses Facebook to foster an image that he is not hard-working to his colleagues at work. Martin suggests that a hardworking image at the workplace might also imply an unsociable image, thus he wishes for his colleagues to view him as social. Martin uses his pictures, status messages and tags on Facebook to foster the desired image:

> *I wouldn't want to be known as hardworking or something like that, not really, at least to my colleagues. But to higher management, yeah but not my colleagues and friends around, I wouldn't want to be known as that. When people think that you are really hard working, it affects the way they act around you. They don't do anything else, people think that you are not very sociable and they won't come up to you and they might try to ignore you and could be like that…Just letting people know what we are up to. It's usually pictures, wall posts, tagging (Martin, 25)*

Although Aalia prefers LinkedIn over Facebook to portray an image at the workplace, she explains that the act of interacting on Facebook at the workplace can convey an image of being 'flimsy' to workplace colleagues:

You don't want to sit there and gossip. Work when you're meant to be working. It's more of that. And there is also the image that you want to create at the workplace, because you think that will help you with your promotion. Or you think that helps build a certain image with the people who matter or the people who you want to look at you as someone who is serious and not flimsy about stuff (Aalia, 29)

She adds further that fostering an image is difficult on Facebook due to the infrastructure of the site while on LinkedIn, professional images can be created easily:

Facebook doesn't help you maintain that image because it's very difficult to control who sees what. On Facebook, so pretty much everybody will know whatever side of you that you want to portray because it's not just what you to put up, it's your friend, and your friends of friends put up about you. So that doesn't really help maintain any image at workplace. LinkedIn yes, to some extent they help you change the image that you want to portray.

Overall, respondents express that managing impressions during their interactions on social media is inevitable. Few respondents explain that they alter their profiles by moulding according to others' profiles. In line with the earlier section, few respondents explain that the process of fostering an image helps in identity construction. Further, respondents use their interactions to convey specific images like 'cool' or 'serious' and 'hardworking'.

8.1.5. Summary

In this chapter, I explored respondents' motivations to interact on social media. Respondents in this sample have four motivations: broadcasting, networking, displaying identity and managing impressions. In regards to broadcasting, respondents explain their necessity to broadcast citing reasons like mobile working, long working hours, creating a digital footprint and seeking attention. They explain that they broadcast accurate self-descriptions as they have specific goals like finding a partner. Next, respondents describe their motivation to network on social media. In these interactions, many respondents categorise Facebook as a site to interact with friends and family and create a collegial environment on social media site where in they have informal interactions. The respondents suggest they primarily use LinkedIn as a site to interact with workplace related contacts. Interestingly, few respondents interact with workplace colleagues on Facebook and express motivations to foster a desired image at the workplace through these interactions. Additionally, respondents interact on LinkedIn with the specific motivation of seeking employment opportunities. Furthermore, respondents use the infrastructure on social media sites to display personal, social and professional identity. They also view these interactions as opportunities for introspection and nurturing core identity constructs. In this context, respondents reject the notion of disembodied selves as a futile effort although they have interacted with people who enact diverse selves across online-offline and personal-professional life. Respondents also explain that they interact on social media to foster an image on the audience. They modify their profiles by modelling on others' profiles. In this section, respondents express specific images they wish to portray like 'cool' and 'hardworking'.

8.2. Conflicts

In this section, respondents describe their conflicts in interacting on social media. Overall, respondents experience two conflicts: audience-impression overlap and permanence of online interactions.

As I explained in the earlier section, few respondents use Facebook to recreate a collegial environment and some respondents use Facebook in a strategic manner to foster a specific impression at the workplace. This lack of clarity in using Facebook for a specified purpose adds to the conflict when respondents receive friend requests from workplace related contacts. While some respondents embrace the notion, others experience cognitive dissonance. The reason for this cognitive dissonance lies presumably in the notion of region behaviour (Goffman, 1959). Additionally, respondents explain that they struggle with identifying genuine friendships, thus the conflict is furthered. Further, respondents experience a conflict in regard to permanence of content on social media. As respondents explain, broadcasts on social media transcend time, thus individuals explain their cautious approach in interacting on social media.

First, I examine the conflict of audience overlap and then, I explore concerns regarding permanence of interactions on social media.

8.2.1. Overlapping audiences

In this section, respondents explain their conflicts in interacting with workplace-related contacts on social media. Respondents explain that they experience two conflicts: overlapping impressions and blurring of boundaries between personal-professional life. First, I explore the conflict of overlapping impressions. Respondents explain overlapping of impressions occurs in

the virtual presence of workplace contacts on Facebook. Aalia explains that the content in her interactions might change radically the instant her boss is on her Facebook friend list:

The minute your boss is on Facebook, obviously you are not saying anything bad about him, because he's your friend and he can see that. It's not a great learning process as much as survival instinct, right. You don't want to get fired for saying your company sucks. That could potentially blow up into something not so nice (Aalia, 29)

Tarang explains that he has a hobby that earns him an income. He is concerned that if his manager found out about this activity in his personal life, he may connect it to his productivity at the workplace. In an attempt to avoid the overlap, Tarang denies access to his Facebook wall to his managers:

I don't want him to know me more than he requires...at work, his relationship with me is just at work, for the time being…I do not want him to know that I have a hobby which is more than a hobby now, which he might think will affect my productivity in the project, so I want him to know that I'm 100% committed to the work that I'm doing for him…so maybe I'm not doing it at least they should not know that I'm not doing it…that's the reason why they are not there…even I've not added any of my managers…even the ex-managers, I've not added (Tarang, 27)

Ankita says that she would not mind adding her manager to her Facebook network. However, Ankita's manager attempts to break personal-professional boundaries and online-offline world and these experiences have forced Ankita to segregate the audience on social media:

See the thing is I wouldn't mind. Normally I would be okay with it but then she is a person who will comment on. So if I put a status message, which is not even related to

work. She will take it up and bring it up in a very sarcastic manner which is not nice. So

that is why I've blocked her (Ankita, 28)

Secondly, respondents explain that the blurring of personal-professional boundaries is a result of interacting with workplace colleagues on social media. Many respondents in this sample face this struggle particularly with their manager. Vasavi narrates how personal life might affect productivity at the workplace. She explains that Facebook is a space to gather intimate information about individuals and colleagues. She adds further that managers find explanations for lack of productivity from such unintended disclosures:

Supposing you have not been able to perform well for some reason for 2 to 3 months or a

quarter. So if he's like narrow-minded and not broadminded, he would link it to that

saying you are going out too much, your mind is deviating, you are not concentrating…so

you know. It happens. I see (judgments being passed based on Facebook) on people

easily. There's this person in my team. She's very hardworking and dedicated and

suddenly she starts seeing somebody and everything goes haywire. She's a young girl you

know. Fresh out of college, no work experience. People tend to form opinions. Your work

gets hampered. Everything indirectly links to there. It's very simple (Vasavi, 27)

Giri narrates an experience of the overlap where the overlap can have a negative consequence on individuals at the workplace. He describes a situation on Facebook when he commented on a colleagues' Facebook wall post and explains how the interaction affected their working relationship offline:

One example is the political…In West Bengal, the CPM or the Marxist or the Communist

have been ruling for 35 years. I don't know if you know about that they got defeated for

the first time. It is taken by the Congress (capitalist party) so obviously there's very

strong emotions on both sides, and one of my friend put up that is it right or wrong or something like that…then both the parties started throwing muds to each other…they are friends supposedly…because I don't know all of them.. so it becomes very nasty. There's this lady, she ends up getting abused. Nasty language on that place...then she has to shut up for some time. It affects my interactions with her. If you keep on seeing that updates, you start forming a particular idea about that person, though I know her personally ok (Giri, 45)

Prema describes an experience when her friend gave her feedback offline about her interactions online. Prema explains how this experience made her take a step back to introspect:

I can be quite snarky in a fun sort of way. I like my humor to be sarcastic even when I'm commenting on other people's status updates I'm usually sarcastic but that I've learnt is not appreciated publicly. People don't like…I may be commenting on my friends' status because I know her and she's going to take my sarcasm in the right spirit. But that's not how it works apparently. Because there are other people in her friends circle who don't know me and find my comments insulting. This feedback is given to me offline. It made me take a step back and introspect (Prema, 39)

Aalia advises against personal life updates altogether on Facebook especially when colleagues and managers are on the same network:

There are times say when you bunk office and go to commercial street for shopping, right. That you don't want to put up on Facebook. Which is really alright, it's not like it affects your work or anything, but that's definitely not what you want your work people to know about (Aalia, 29)

Ankita explains her struggle in dealing with personal-professional boundary overlaps when interacting with overlapping audiences. She expresses her hesitation to disclose details of her holiday to her manager and is concerned that she might be caught 'red-handed' through her Facebook wall tags if she was not honest with her manager:

Yeah, that has affected…the boss will either fire you or you'll just take a tough thing.. I went on a vacation recently and I was very scared to take leave from my boss. So I had this entire thinking going on what should I tell her and the first thing which came to my mind was if I lie, she will see it on my Facebook even though I have blocked her from my tags and photographs, what if she happens to see them on Facebook…because even if I don't put the photographs, my friends will put…they will tag me…even if I untag myself, that short span of time between the tag and the untagging, what if she sees it at that time…all this starts running in my head.. ultimately I had to go and tell her that I'm going, please grant me leave…so that way I think it is a very dangerous thing (Ankita, 28)

Additionally, respondents explain the controlling ways of managers and colleagues that influence respondents' interactions on social media portals at the workplace.

Ankita talks about her manager's interference at the workplace. She explains that she is careful to avoid interacting on social media in her manager's presence. Like Narada's and Gagan's manager, Ankita's manager appears to be controlling. She illustrates her manager's reaction to Ankita's interacting on social media:

That's the thing. Around me, including me, we are very careful about what my boss sees. So when my boss comes by, all of us make sure we are not on Facebook or we are not on messenger...because that definitely gives a wrong signal. One day, she saw me

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chatting...and then I was like...four windows open ok...immediately next, in the next 10

minutes or so she called me asking me, "what are you working on?"(Ankita, 28)

Gagan narrates an incident that altered his view to interacting on social media. In this incident, Gagan refers to an enactment on the internal social portal for the company. Gagan involuntarily expresses his viewpoint about a company policy that affected him and his colleagues on the company's internal social forums. The message was flagged as inappropriate, he was treated as an 'offender' and given a warning by a member of the human resources department categorically saying 'you don't want to lose your job, do you'?

These guys (the monitoring board) pull or call these offenders and give them a straight

strict warning. That's why they have to...they have to work within the lines. I was one of

them. I was pulled in. I was pulled in twice. Once when I joined and once not too long

back ago. First time, I was called in for because I voiced my opinion against one of the

policies that was there and which was hitting my training batchmate and myself. So we

were called directly and said "You know...You don't want to lose your job, do you?" And

I was just like 6 months, and so I really got scared at that time. So after that, I changed

the way I wrote my mails you know...or I started talking to the right people and not

talking to everybody in the world (Gagan, 31)

This incident shaped Gagan's view of social media and importantly his understanding of rules to enact self-presentations on social media. While the threat of job loss might have been an empty threat to moderate interactions on the company's social forum, Gagan viewed the experience as personal.

Narada explains that he had to bear performance rating issues because his manager observed him interacting on the company's social networks regularly:

It has happened. I have lot of friends in X company (ex-employer) so I chat…I do my work but my manager never liked it. He would see communicator windows popping and me chatting at the workplace. He raised it many times. I said I do my work on time. I finish it and hand it back. You don't need to question me about what I do on my own time. I don't offend anyone. I don't disturb anyone next to me. These are my friends. It's not like I'm trying to pick up anybody from anywhere and just chat. If we do our work on time and I show you all the devotion in work and finish my work, you don't have any qualms in that part. But it caused a problem. He didn't like me for that. There were rating issues and I had to bear it (Narada, 27)

Gagan explains that his manager interacts with him on the company's network. While Gagan may not view her suggestion that he should get back to work on a public forum like networked communication portal as controlling, respondents in this sample suggest managers in the Indian IT workplace seek control over employees' time at the workplace:

In fact lot of times my manager responds to my posts you know…saying that "I guess you have a lot of work" and she's fun…so it's just fun…some people take it as offensive…it's ok (Gagan, 31)

Aalia explains that manager in the IT workplace claim subtle control over workers' lives and this aspect of the IT workplace annoys her:.

That's a philosophy where as long as I do my work, how does anybody care otherwise. Even if I don't come to office and do it at midnight, what do you care. I'm doing what you want me to but not everybody thinks like that, specially not in the IT industry. People

want to see people working long hours, they want that when your boss comes, he wants to see you in before he comes and he wants to see you there when he leaves that sort of. Not everybody is like that. My boss is not like that. We share a pretty good rapport. It's alright. I can tell him that I'm going to commercial street and bunk work, that's alright, but that's very rare. Most people are not like that in the IT industry. So you don't want to be that rebel who takes up that battle and screw up your chances, right. So you just go with the flow. That's more like it (Aalia, 29)

Vasavi adds that while her manager avoids boundary overlaps, other managers find it a challenge:

My manager is totally chilled out. He's what 35. But there are a lot of managers who are still in that old state of mind where they form opinions on what they see not on what the person is working on not on the professional side, they kind of try to give judgement (Vasavi, 27)

While it appears that respondents can solve this conflict by denying friendship requests from workplace related contacts on Facebook, Ankit explains the dilemma of evaluating friendship requests from the workplace. If he adds his colleagues to his Facebook profile, they are privy to information about his personal life and he prefers to maintain a personal-professional boundary. However, if he denied access, he might have to justify why he denied access as his colleagues work in the same office:

I would say Facebook also has people from work. So that way, they would know what you do after work. That could convey something about you. It's difficult because somebody sends you a request. It's your colleague, if you say No it's tough because the person is from the same office. If you say yes, they know what you do after work and you don't want to be open to them all the time (Ankit, 30)

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Thus, there appears to be social pressure in adding colleagues to Facebook networks and respondents express a cognitive struggle in meandering through this conflict. Ankita adds that she has a similar dilemma to Ankit. She explains that she is very close-knit with the team she works with which can cause for a blurring of personal-professional boundaries. However, while she prefers that her boss or manager and colleagues remain connected only on a professional level, she finds denying contact requests on social networking sites a challenge as she might have to justify the denial at work:

I'm very close to the team that I work with and it's easy for the lines to blur. But at the end of the day my boss is my boss and my colleague is still somebody that I have to go to work with and I maybe I'm just cautious. I haven't had a bad experience or anything, but I prefer to make sure the lines don't gel. We have a lot of common friends and there might be things that go on in my personal life that I don't discuss. So I don't feel its appropriate to talk about it at work so I prefer to keep it for myself. With my present company, I can't not accept a Facebook request (Ankita, 25)

Aalia explains that she feels the social pressure in adding her work colleagues to her Facebook account, a practice she does not like. However, she explains that denying friendship requests might be considered rude and so she is stuck in a conflict:

Yes, I add my work colleagues, yes all of them on LinkedIn. Adding them on Facebook, that's another thing that's catching up right…which I don't personally like. But then if somebody adds you, it's rude to not add back sort of situation you are caught up with…You really don't want your work people to you know see all that personally. But you do end up.. I do have my work colleagues on Facebook, and you just try to make a

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different profile for them and hope that they don't get to know too much about you..

(Aalia, 29)

In summary, respondents experience cognitive demands in interacting on social media in the virtual presence of workplace contacts on Facebook. Additionally, respondents experience cognitive demands in interacting on social media when physically located at the workplace; that is, managers and colleagues comment on the amount of time spent in such interactions. They explain that interacting with overlapping audiences on social media leads to two types of conflicts: overlap of impressions and blurring of personal-professional life. Respondents who have experienced the overlap explain that such experiences have influenced their cautious approach to interacting on social media. It is interesting to note that respondents experience social pressure in evaluating friendship requests on Facebook.

8.2.2. Permanence of online interactions

Respondents in this sample express another concern in enacting 'true' selves online. They express apprehension regarding the permanence of interactions on social media. Samarth explains with an example from a search of his name on popular search engine Google:

> *My only thing is… realize that anything you say on the web will stay on the web for ever. There are posts of mine that will surface on Google that were made in 1996, there's a mail I sent, a bug fix mail I sent to x person, who subsequently became the CEO of X company about a bug in the system. So if you do a search for my name, that will come up. It's there somewhere in the usenet archives. At that time, usenet was there. So, this is what 95, 1995. So it's there forever. So whatever image it is, whatever you are trying to do, remember it is a permanent record of your this thing (Samarth, 39)*

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The notion that all interactions on social media last forever is a scary thought for Giri who is already wary of online security. He suggests that a lack of control over content posted online alongside a lack of security of content could mean that individuals lose complete control over the original intent of posting:

Actually my idea is you should not be doing anything which you will regret for future. Because you never know what can be used for what purpose and all of that (Giri, 45)

Nick explains through an analogy that published content on social media is like a floating object in cyber space that can be accessed at any time. He adds that if individuals accept the general notion of permanence of online interactions and are aware that all their content is for public consumption, then they will be cautious in interacting online:

Once you realize that everything you put out there is for public consumption, it doesn't really disappear, it remains. It's like a floating object in space, in cyber space that can be accessed at any given point in time so you have to be really careful about what you say (Nick, 35)

Ganesh summarises the notion of using Facebook to foster desired impressions; he suggests individuals should be ready to face the consequence of their performances:

Once you put it on Facebook, you have to be ready to face the consequence, that's all (Ganesh, 27)

Overall, respondents explain that interactions on social media are permanent and remain online forever. As they explain, this notion influences their cautious approach in interacting on social media.

8.2.3. Summary

In this chapter, I explored the conflicts that respondents experience in their interactions on social media. Respondents explain that they experience cognitive demands in interacting on social media in the virtual presence of workplace contacts as it leads to impression overlaps. Respondents also explain the conflict of blurring of personal-professional life due to interactions with the overlapping audiences across online-offline settings. Additionally, respondents explain managers' controlling ways when they interact on social media portals at the physical workplace. It is interesting to note that rather than denying friendship requests, respondents experience social pressure to friend colleagues. Finally, respondents also explain their concern regarding permanence of interactions on social media. They repeatedly explain their cautious approach as a strategy to solve the cognitive demands they experience in interacting on social media. In the next section, I examine how respondents cope with these conflicts while interacting on social media.

8.3. Coping mechanisms

In the findings so far, respondents have repeatedly explained their cautious approach in their interactions on social media. In this section, I examine how respondents' cope with the conflicts they face during online interactions. Broadly, respondents exercise caution by self-policing and enacting restricted selves. First, I explore the impact of the conflicts discussed above on respondents' interactions on social media and then examine respondents' cautious ways.

Respondents explain that the conflicts described above influence their cautious approach while interacting on social media. While both conflicts influence the respondents, the audience-impression overlap particularly affects many of the respondents.

Ankit resorts to self-policing; he explains that he is fiercely protective about his personal and professional life and prefers that they do not merge:

I am fiercely protective about what I do. Personal and professional. I know there are people out there who do the same things that I do, which is fine with me as long as the job gets done. I know if they know what I do on a personal level, it's going to seep in on a professional level as well. It's just human nature, there's nothing else to it. It's just how things are. So you want to control that as much as possible. So at work, I interact with people, my purpose is to get the job done and I want to get the job done, I want to be as effective as possible. When I'm off work, I'm work. It's a different thing, doesn't have anything to do with my professional life (Ankit, 30)

Aalia agrees with Ankit and expresses her hesitation to allow the audience-impression overlap. She explains that the IT industry is hierarchical and power and control driven, thus, if the individuals who report to her saw pictures of her partying over the weekend, they might lose respect for her and that will directly impact the impression she wishes to foster at the workplace:

But I personally would like to keep it purely professional. The reason is, see specially in IT industry, as opposed to FMCG industry that I was in before, people aren't that open...people aren't that exposed or broadminded or whatever. So you wouldn't like people who work with you, who report to you to know what you did on Saturday night. That really messes up with what you're going to tell them on Monday morning, right. It'll

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probably affect how seriously they'll take you. Ideally it shouldn't, but it does. So you

want to keep these separate (Aalia, 29)

Similarly Ankita suggests that she prefers to maintain a boundary between personal-professional life. She adds that she would prefer her party pictures in particular remain private and accessible to her 'real life' friends. Although she feels comfortable to discuss her weekend with colleagues at work, she prefers to maintain the boundary between personal-professional life:

I suppose it wouldn't really impact me but I prefer to keep our relationship professional

and I don't want them to see where I've been partying last night. I suppose it's personal

preferences because its not that I don't want them to know I was partying last night. I

was and we usually talk about what we do on the weekends and everything but I see my

weekend as my private time (Ankita, 25)

As Samarth explains, one bearing of this overlap is it blurs the line between reality and virtual; thus may lead to people interacting with each other with great familiarity offline because it is easy to gather a lot of personal information online.

This will lead to people coming and talking to you in some situations with great

familiarity offline, because it is easy to research you online. So if people talk to you in

terms of familiarity, it is easy to assume that they must be of an in-circle. But that's not

required in a public context. Over time, you've forgotten all the things you've written too

(Samarth, 39)

Similarly, Prema adds that overlap of boundaries are inevitable and leads to introspection.

Professionally, when you are a part of these groups and platforms, you learn a lot of

things. Certain events online mould my ways of thinking and speaking. Offline and online

merge with one another – whether personally or professionally. It leads you to take a step

back to introspect (Prema, 39)

Another influence as Ankit states is that it provides scope for speculation and misinterpretations as the audience may not always know the context of the photo or wall post:

You don't want that if you put a status message, it should be shown to everyone. People

perceive things in a different way, right. They see your pictures, and they may not always

know the context right. A lot of the cultural associations would be lost. A lot of the

cultural contexts would be lost. So the entire information is not being conveyed, all they

can see is maybe a photograph (Ankit, 30)

Nick adds that one of the concerns with the overlap of audience is that it may lead to misinterpretations in the absence of context for interactions on social media. He says that workplace colleagues may attempt to fill in the missing gaps and try to make quick judgements of individuals' personality based on their interactions on social media:

There's a lot of people, because they don't know you too well, will base the empty parts

of what they don't know on the photographs that they see on Facebook and they will fill

up based on just those parts of the puzzle, the jigsaw puzzle, they will arrange an entire

jigsaw right and that can be quite dangerous. So one is you're not taken seriously at

work. I think a friend of mine, who had these photos up, maybe he's partying a lot or if

you see a lot of those photos, you're thinking, when does he ever work? Or if he's

partying so much, then does he get enough sleep (Nick, 35)

Ankita explains that individuals may restrict themselves in their enactments as they are scared of being judged by the audience:

The IT industry is dominated by men. I think that's true. Indian society is also dominated by men. Although the times have changed, but I still think people are more accepting…but people are careful about what they write and what they post, because they are scared of being judged.. absolutely (Ankita, 27)

Giri also expresses that he tries to avoid the overlap due to scope for misinterpretations:

I think it's wrong for the personal and professional worlds to meet. If I put and the things are taken out of context you can be interpreted in a different way...because I have no control.I have control on what I'm putting but what people think about that, I have no control (Giri, 45)

An exception is Samarth, who uses the audience overlap to his advantage. He is candid about his future. Samarth is a manager and intends to quit his company to become an entrepreneur, an ambition that his managers and colleagues are aware of. As a result, Samarth is unperturbed by his managers' presence on social media where he is candid about his dislike for his current role.

My boss is on my social network, my past bosses are on my social network all the way back to my X (first) company days and my Twitter feed is connected. I have strong opinions. So my boss knows what I am passionate about and he knows what I am not passionate about. One of the things I'm not passionate about is my current role but yet that is what I do (Samarth, 39)

In summary, as Samarth advises, overlap of audience inevitably leads to overlap of impressions and blurring of boundaries. Thus, individuals must practise self-policing especially when they attempt to hide unsavoury information in their personal life:

You have to be comfortable with the fact that (if you are online) your public world will collide with your private world, and if you've got a whole bunch of unsavoury people, or

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things you've done in your private life that you don't want your public to know, then don't participate in the social media space. Email and messaging is fine, but don't go online (Samarth, 39)

Overall, respondents explain that the conflicts described above have consequences on the impression they foster at the workplace, this is of primary concern for the respondents. Respondents express their concerns that the audience may arrive at misinterpretation in the absence of context for their interactions on social media. Further, respondents also explain the concern for blurring of boundaries between virtual-physical due to continuous interactions.

8.3.1. Restricted selves

As the above comments suggest, individuals experience cognitive struggles due to the conflicts they face in their interactions on social media like blurring the lines between reality and virtual, blurring of personal-professional boundaries, overlapping impressions and creating scope for misinterpretations. In a bid to cope with these cognitive demands, individuals exercise a coping mechanism by enacting restricted selves.

Respondents enact restricted selves by policing their interactions on social media. Although they experience social pressure to accept friend requests from workplace contacts, some respondents evaluate friendship requests. Further, respondents consider gender in their interactions on social media.

Ankit explains that self-policing is automatic when working in a global company. He works in a global organization and suggests that broader the reach of the medium, the less likely it is to be misused. He feels that people are automatically sensitive to everything:

The broader the reach of the medium, the less likely it is to be misused. For us, it's pretty much a global organisation. People are automatically sensitive to everything (Ankit, 30)

As Vasavi suggests, although social media is accessible at the workplace, she self-polices her interactions by restricting broadcasting to a home-based activity:

I'm not on Twitter. Facebook – there's no restriction at work but I only check it rarely and from home. Once in a while, maybe. But a lot of people are on Facebook throughout the day in our office (Vasavi, 27)

Prema elaborates that on a public platform like social media, everyone is on guard because nobody wants to reveal their real self:

You don't really know what's working on people's minds when you comment on public networks like Facebook even if you know the people really well. They don't take it the way they would if you were talking face to face. On a public platform, everybody is on guard. You may be very close to that person but if you make a personal comment people are there to jump at you and they are on guard because no one wants to reveal their true self when they are online (Prema, 39)

Raghav explains that he self-polices his interactions by controlling the language in his broadcasts. Since the audience on his Twitter page is international, some of his followers are from Belgium and Siberia and they may not understand if Raghav tweets in an Indian language or about any information that is relevant to the Indian context and he is very conscious of this issue. Thus Raghav self-polices the content to ensure context for this broadcast is generic:

Sometimes you know when I try to provide an update, I'm not able to provide an update. Let's say I want to introduce some Hindi words into my update but my update has which folks, you know my professional folks, who don't know a thing about…it's not even like

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they are Indian folks. They are US folks, Belgian, Siberian, all kinds of folks who wouldn't understand a thing of what I'm saying. So I'm very conscious of that. Also, my opinion, I want to make sure that it's not stupid because suppose say some recruiter is trying to recruit me. I think twice, thrice, four times before you know I tweet something until I'm completely sure (Raghav, 36)

Gagan explains that he self-polices his interactions by broadcasting information that is generic and can be read by the wide audience on Facebook like his family and friends:

I'm very cautious about my tweets because I understand that it's not just my followers or people who I know who might know about it but others also. Many times, what I have to do is when I'm writing a post, I try to make sure that everybody can read it…and because my dad is on Facebook all the time, so is my mom, my sister is there. My posts are very simple. Anybody can see my photographs, who are my friends, and who are my friends's friends (Gagan, 31)

Similarly Ganapathy suggests that his Facebook account is a host for a variety of audience including his workplace colleagues, family and friends thus he self-polices his interactions:

As far as Facebook is concerned, your colleagues are on it, your friends are on it. So you become very circumspect in what you say or do (Ganapathy, 27)

As Samarth explained earlier, he broadcasts excessively personal information on his personal blog. Apart from self-policing broadcasts about his personal life, he does not self-police his interactions although he takes responsibility for the broadcasts and advises the same to others:

The way I look at it is everything I put out is going to be public. Even the content that I share with my friends. Even on my own private Facebook, with friends. Anything that I put out, I assume that my friends are gonna read it, my employer is going to be reading it,

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and some point in time, a future employer is going to be reading it. I assume. I take responsibility for every piece of information that I put out and thereby I am quite careful about what I do put out (Samarth, 39)

Similarly, Nick self-polices his broadcasts by taking responsibility for the information he shares:

Anything that I put out, I assume that my friends are gonna read it, my employer is going to be read it, and some point in time, a future employer is going to be reading it. I assume…I take responsibility for every piece of information that I put out…and thereby I am quite careful about what I do put out. If I want to say something privately, I might use a private message to somebody but most of the time what I put out, I assume its' going to be for public consumption (Nick, 35)

Prema suggests one way of gaining control over the audience is to be selective in adding contacts. She adds that she interacts with those members in the audience on Facebook whom she has known for years and has kept in touch with and avoids acquaintances:

I interact with my friends on Facebook but again there I'm closed. I interact with those probably that I have known over the years and I have kept in touch with. I vehemently oppose all these friend requests from people who have discovered me on Facebook, people I have never interacted with whether in my school or college or whatever. They suddenly think they should be a part of my friend list for whatever reason I just don't encourage that. People I don't know, I avoid (Prema, 39)

Giri explains that he self-polices his interactions by avoiding comments on work-related topics:

Any strong emotions and bitter feelings its better to deal with in person that's what my personal opinion than rather than putting up for public consumption. Why they need to know who I am as a person, and why should I tell them? See one aspect of me, the hobby

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part or the vacation part, part of the vacation, not all of the vacation, which is okay to

put in the public domain. But not all of it. I definitely neither want to hear nor want to

give away those private moments. This is absolutely mine. I will discuss face-to-face and

if the situation warrants but I will not put it up online and let everyone comment. I'm not

looking for that. Only demarcation I'm trying to make that this is private, this is public. I

discuss only running stuff. I personally don't discuss family or other things. I consciously

avoid that. Yes, when you go to holiday or when my friends go to holiday, we do share

some of the pictures. And some of the interesting tidbits of the travelogue but not share

any other emotions on the Facebook (Giri, 45)

Similarly, Ankita restricts her broadcasts by refraining from interacting on topics like her

manager or an extreme viewpoint or against a social cause:

Talking about your boss, for example on a public forum…see even if you don't have your

boss on your list that doesn't mean he or she cannot see it at some point because through

some source you can always get to see it which is not right it is dangerous for your own

professional career and what else can be hazardous? Making a public statement against

a 3ʳᵈ party or maybe against a cause...everything because you never know what

happens…so today you make a derogatory remark about some one that person might just

put a case against you (Ankita, 27)

Ganapathi self-polices his interactions by avoiding broadcasting excessively personal

information:

I think I'm happy with the level of control it gives me. The other thing is, internet is a

very I feel it's a very dangerous place to put your personal input… I never... It's a trust

issue…I never my private life is private. So I'm happy with the way things are that I think

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I can control what other people...what is perceived or what other's perception of me is

(Ganapathi, 27)

Nick adds that he restricts himself online by avoiding extremities, that is, whilst he may enjoy punk music or death metal music privately, he refrains from performing individuality on social media:

I would be very careful about becoming a member of a punk rock group or a death metal group. I would be very careful about political affiliation on Facebook. So I'm neutral in terms of being political, I'm neutral in terms of being religious. I wouldn't post something which is related to my religion. I wouldn't post anything which is politically you know, I'm slanting towards any political organisation. I'll be very careful when it comes to anything extreme like the two things you mentioned which is punk rock or death metal. I might enjoy that music privately but exercise caution online (Nick, 35)

In particular Vasavi advises self-policing tweets on social media site Twitter where opinions are openly expressed and audience segregation is impossible:

Twitter is another forum where I think you should be careful. You are openly expressing your opinion and people have access to that. So you have to be careful (Vasavi, 27)

In terms of broadcast content, geo-tagging raised safety concerns for few women, thus, they explain that they do not update locations on Facebook. Vidya explains that Facebook sends tips to users about privacy and she strictly avoids adding any personal information like birth year, geo-tags or when she travels:

I don't know how safe we are online. I don't put any personal thing. Facebook keeps sending you tips about what not to do. Also someone told me don't put your full birthdate with year on Facebook. Someone can drag the information from that, your personal

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information so I don't put that. I put date and month. I don't put any information like if

I'm going out of Bangalore (Vidya, 33)

Similarly Ankita says while she adds pictures and content during her holidays, she would avoid

sharing intimate pictures of herself or her family and refrains from google latitudes:

I don't share geo-locations. A lot of my friends actually have google map latitudes on

their phone. They check in to say I'm here, I don't want to do that because I don't want

people to know where I'm heading towards. I might share, for instance, I went off to this

weekend destination day before yesterday. So I took some lovely pictures so yes I'll share

them but I won't share a very very intimate picture of me and my family. I don't want to

do that. I mean that is part of a closer network of friends who I share it with, and that is

what differentiates private and public (Ankita, 25)

Prema also explains that she self-polices all her interactions on social media. In particular, she

differentiates between public and private information during her broadcasts:

But on social media I'm careful. There are certain things about my life that are personal

and I ensure that it stays that way. As an individual I always see that there is a divide. I

don't completely open myself up on social media. I don't share my exact location at all

times. I might share pictures from my weekend getaway but I won't share intimate

pictures of my family. That is part of a closer network of friends with whom i would share

that, and that is what differentiates private and public (Prema, 39)

While Parvati claims that others' opinions do not matter. She is careful in adding colleagues to

her network and hesitant to talk about happenings of the workplace on social media:

Others opinions don't matter to me because at the end of the day, it's my profile page. I

say what I want to say. But obviously I'm not going to bitch about my boss on my

Facebook profile or twitter account. I'm very careful in adding my colleagues in adding to my list and I am very very very careful about talking about my workplace. You have to be careful (Parvati, 27)

Similarly Arpita says that she would not offend her boss or her colleagues on social media as she is very careful about the content of her interactions:

I'm not gonna bitch about my boss on my Facebook profile, I'm not gonna bitch about my boss on my Twitter account. Obviously, that's not gonna happen. And I'm very careful in adding my colleagues on the list, and so far I have been very very very careful about talking about my workplace because I feel that especially working in a company like this, where there are hundreds of people looking at you, you have to be very careful. Considering companies are associating yourself as a brand from what you are actually sharing, but obviously on a Facebook you have the privacy setting, so I use that (Arpita, 25)

Some respondents explain that they self-police their interactions by negotiating friendship requests. Vasavi explains that the conflict of audience-impression overlap influences her to negotiate the audience on her profile, especially in regards to workplace related audience:

At the end of the day, he's a manager. He's the one who's going to do your appraisal you know. Your manager is never your best friend, you know, he's not even your friend. He's a manager. He or she is a manager. I think there is that line of professionalism that should be maintained. I don't think he needs to know what's going on in your personal life. Who are your friends, where are you going out, who are you going with, where you going clubbing or whatever. Basically it's all…if he had a particular view about you, you

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wouldn't want that to change because of one silly picture. It may not be on your profile, it

could be on somebody else's. So yeah (Vasavi, 27)

Similarly Carol adds that her manager is not on her network on Facebook. She expresses that the

fear of an impression overlap forces her to negotiate friendship requests on Facebook:

Managers are kinda off when it comes to Facebook. You don't want people to judge you,

and I think that is why we are building the wall you know. This is how I'm going to

probably showcase about me to you. I guess (Carol, 23)

Similarly, Ganesh explains that he self-polices his interactions by controlling friendship requests.

He chooses not to add his managers on his Facebook account as he uses the site to berate them:

I'm pretty choosy about who I add on my Facebook. I don't get to add managers. I bitch

about them so (laughter) I try to avoid managers. But if I have to, some ex managers,

that's it. No present managers (Ganesh, 27)

Tarang explains that he is selective about adding contacts. He refrains from adding contacts on

Facebook if he has not interacted with them on a personal level:

I do not like random people approaching me even if it is from my company, if I've not

interacted with him at a personal level, I do not entertain that kind of this thing at a

social media level (Tarang, 27)

Vasavi explains that she is wary of adding her manager to her Facebook account:

On Facebook, I have a couple of colleagues. Of course manager I don't really. But he's

very active (on Facebook) from what I hear. Only selective colleagues (Vasavi, 27)

Tarang along with a few other respondents candidly express that they do not add their managers

to their networks and negotiate access for friends or colleagues at the workplace. Tarang explains

that he adds his earlier managers but the manager of his current project is not on his Facebook profile:

> *He is not on my Facebook profile, absolutely not. But your friends from work are. Whoever is, whoever was my manager and is no longer my manager is on my profile, but my current manager is not (Tarang, 27)*

Narada explains that if he is not selective of the audience to his interactions on social media, he is vulnerable to misconceptions and overlapping impressions arising from enacting diverse self across online-offline settings and personal-professional life:

> *Considering your family, considering your office thing, considering people you've just met once in a while, you wanna build an image of a nice person or whatever and your photograph says completely different story. Everybody is doing that to build an impression, it's the truth actually (Narada, 27)*

Ankita explains that she does not add any of her colleagues to her network until she quits the company:

> *I try not to add anyone from my work to my network. In fact from my previous company, I stayed away from adding anybody. I try to wait. It's only once I quit that I added a lot of people that I worked with (Ankita, 25)*

Carol explains that she adds contacts and then blocks them so they cannot view her interactions on social media:

> *So I know certain people who I don't want to actually check them, but it's not like I don't add them totally so I add them and then block them. Unless and until he checks your profile continuously, he won't know he's blocked completely. Otherwise, he wouldn't. (Carol, 25)*

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Carol's comment is insightful as it adds to the notion that the respondents in this sample experience a conflict in audience segregation on social media, specifically Facebook. However, rather than denying access to interactions on social media, sometimes respondents experience peer pressure and social conformity and add their colleagues from the workplace although many of them denied access to their managers.

Many respondents explain that the presence of colleagues on Facebook influences them to self-police their interactions. Additionally, they use 'groups' to segregate the audience on Facebook. By grouping contacts, respondents in this sample attempt to control the impressions and avoid the audience-impression overlap conflict. Samarth explains that although he does not deny a networking request, he groups his audience according to his motivation to interact with them:

> *I have a policy of not saying 'No' to anybody unless it's obviously spam. So I will accept any connection that comes. So there are lots of people who are distant connects, acquaintances, and there are people who are part of my family network. You have separate groups for the family and related thing (Samarth, 39)*

Three respondents, Gagan, Narada and Vasavi suggest that Facebook groups is a solution to the audience-impression overlap conflict:

> *I have added everyone who sent me an invite. I have put them in groups (Gagan,31)*

> *Thank you for groups. It doesn't affect my posts (Ankit,30)*

Ankita explains that her managers' presence on Facebook forces her to self-police her interactions, although she has blocked her manager from viewing select performances, thus the conflict is minimized:

Yes, I have people from work on my personal network. Yeah, partly there is a conflict. Because I have my boss on my Facebook page, I'm very careful about everything that I post. I have also blocked her on my Facebook profile just in case I slip up (Ankita, 28)

In addition, respondents also consider the role of gender in policing their interactions on social media. Tarang observes that men and women use Facebook differently. He suggests the women use Facebook to connect with their friends or display milestones and the single men use Facebook to find a partner or spouse:

So the women population especially those who are married, uh they are either just to catch up with some college friends or to show photos of their babies (laughter) that seems to be the trend. Single – it's their photos, when they are married, it's with the husband and then they have a kid, then the photo is with the kid then it goes on.. (N: even the profile photo is with the husband) exactly, then it changes to the husband, then it changes to the kid. Men, the single ones are there to hook up (find a partner/spouse) (Tarang, 27)

In addition to viewing social media as a community where individuals have moral obligations to fulfil, respondents in this sample explain the role of gender while interacting on social media. Vasavi explains that a negative comment about a woman on social media may have a direct impact on how she is perceived, thus suggesting that people should maintain a moral responsibility in commenting on content online:

If they see something negative about a girl, a photograph or some comment automatically even if the person has not met you they are not giving you that chance to explain the context or the situation right (Vasavi, 27)

The respondents felt strongly that women should self-police their interactions on social media as they are vulnerable to misinterpretations. Narada strongly feels that in the Indian context, women should be careful about what they post on social networks. He explains that a simple change like relationship status on a woman's profile on Facebook gets the gossip mill running at the workplace:

> *In India, definitely (women should be careful about what they post on social networks). In India, definitely. I'll tell you a simple thing. Relationship status. A girl putting up relationship status anywhere is like a big, big thing...it's like a declaration of war, love...whatever. It has to be there. People just can't seem to digest. If you go back to office the next day, there will be gossip (Narada, 27)*

Gagan sympathises with women who have to use restrictions on themselves to interact on social media especially when sharing photographs or discussing taboo topics:

> *Unfortunately women have had bad experiences using social media, so they might have to use certain restrictions on themselves specially sharing photographs or talking about taboo topics (Gagan, 31)*

Ankita agrees that women have to be careful when they interact on social media. Specifically, she says women in IT are scared of being judged, thus, they refrain from using bad language:

> *True, women have to be careful about social media usage. You'll not see too many women using bad language, they might use it in their daily life but they will not use it in a public forum because they are very scared of people judging them...and especially, women in IT are very scared about people judging them (Ankita, 28)*

As a woman, Ankita explains that image management is more important for women than men on social media, especially with photographs. She adds that her photos are not visible to the public:

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Creating (and having control over the image) an image is more important to women than to men. That is true because I have privacy settings. My photographs will not be visible to people who don't know me. Because I don't want people to know or see what I am (Ankita, 28)

Samarth postulates that women have a general issue with privacy settings on social media as they get cyber stalked:

Women, there is a general issue with privacy because women, they get hit on a lot. So women do get cyber stalked (Samarth, 39)

Samarth adds further that the networking behaviour is different between men and women. He suggests that he knows more women from work who deny network connections than men:

I seem to know more women who don't add people from work than men who don't add people from work (Samarth, 39)

As Nick explains, women should self-police their interactions as the moral implications for women are harsh. He suggests that photographs of women with a drink or a cigarette in hand, in a revealing attire or in the company of men may convey an image that the woman has loose character while a photograph of a man with cigarettes or drinking may convey an image that he is laidback and not serious about work:

For women, yeah, if they were to put out photographs of them drinking or smoking, or wearing something which is revealing or in the company of men and so on, those images can be misconstrued by others at work. Maybe you'll be taken you know they may look at you and think of you as objectify or something...they may draw inferences which may be untrue. There's a tendency for some men that just because you have a drink in your hand, you are also easy in their eyes in whatever they think it is. Even with men, if you were to

post a picture of yourself with a drink in your hand or acting silly or smoking a cigarette, people are going to draw a lot of inferences like this guy parties a lot or you know and thereby when they see you at work, they are not gonna see you seriously (Nick, 35)

Madhu expresses a fear that women should be careful while interacting on social media as anything can happen online:

Specially with women, anything can happen online. Women have to be very careful (Madhu, 31)

Vasavi adds that men don't care to maintain their image as much as women do, as the audience may form opinions quickly and there is a lack of control over what people can see about you on Facebook:

I think only men, they don't care for it. A lot of people have relatives, you have your manager, you have friends and you have colleagues. Everyone forms an opinion. They see something, opinions form. Even without you knowing. So you should be careful about who's commenting, who's putting up what picture and we don't know who's seeing what so there is a bit of control over what people can see about you on Facebook (Vasavi, 27)

Few respondents explain that they self-police their interactions by immersing in privacy settings and tactics to boost self-esteem. For instance Giri explains that he avoids interacting on social media on days when he feels distressed. Giri explains that his enactments on social media are stable self-attributes which he regards as somewhat unique, like using Facebook to coordinate his running plans with his colleagues. Consequently, he avoids social media interactions on days when he is unstable:

I'm not trying to portray good impression. I'm just trying to be neutral for the simple

reason is that I will have my strong days and my lows so it does not make me either this

or either that (Giri, 45)

Giri adds that spending a lot of time online might lead to revealing personal information and venting. He advises that people should use social media with responsibility as the audience on social media is uncontrolled:

The more time you spend, the more crap you end up writing...so you need to be careful

about that. When you go on Facebook there will be impulse to vent out that and you

might regret why you did that. So you need to use social media with responsibility. And

today, you are there and your friends are there and you are wild parties and all these

things, you end up putting photos and tomorrow, your children or your friends' children

are on the network. You never know, right. It's this uncontrolled kind of thing (Giri, 45)

Nick explains that members in the audience can gauge his personality from his interactions on social media, however, since he restricts his broadcasts and self-polices his interactions online, there is minimal scope for misinterpretations or overlap of impressions:

Most of the things you'll find out about me is going to be, even though you'll learn a lot

about my interest, my activities and so on, you'll learn quite a bit about me but you're not

going to learn anything about me that can affect me professionally, or personally where

somebody can form a very negative opinion about me (Nick, 35)

Bikram attempts to present his real self, however, he cognitively immerses himself in privacy settings and seeks control through audience segregation:

It is an extension of my personality. It's my personal life. Even if I post anything personal

I'm very careful about controlling access to the information. For instance on Facebook,

even my work networks, my privacy settings are such that I know who's seen what. I'm

constantly cued to that (Bikram, 37)

Like Nick, Bikram also immerses in self-policing his interactions and expresses confidence in the exact information his audience can extract from social media about him:

They'll know what I look like. They'll know where I work. They'll know what my

professional networks are. I guess they'll also know who I'm married to and what I write.

If they see more than that I'm not really worried (Bikram, 37)

Few respondents explain the normative practices of interacting on social media and treat the medium as a moral community where they have rights and duties to perform. Teena, a member of the human resources department in a company explains that she treats social media as a moral community where individuals may stray away from the right path of social media and it is a moral responsibility of others to teach individuals to self-police themselves:

In any group of people, there will be some straying from the right path of using social

media. I think that the answer is not to deny access, the answer is to teach people to

police themselves. That's what happens in blogs, where bloggers tell each other what is

alright. Even in the buletin board (internal interaction portal), it's self-policing,

otherwise, it won't work. You are not in any random network, this could define your

career, so act responsibly, and most people do, and if they are not, they are pulled up and

they learn (Teena, 28)

Ankit feels that when Indian IT professionals present themselves on social media, they ought to keep the company's image in mind. He suggests that his identity is enmeshed with the company identity although he is interacting on personal social networking site Facebook:

Large part of it (the rules to virtual self-presentations) is common sense. You should not be talking about the company or use passwords that you use within the company. I would say mostly about the company. Yeah, if you are working on something which is confidential, you don't talk about it. Use your judgements. Don't upload documents. Yeah, don't upload documents. Don't talk nonsense when you are out there in cyberspace and always keep in mind that even when you don't think about it, the company's image is at stake one way or the other, which is fair. It's a fair ask. So let's say if you are on the old old social networking thing called orkut and somewhere your groups show up on the side maybe and you are going on and on about something and you are increasingly leaning towards political incorrectness, and here people can identify you with certain companies, they can identify you with certain groups, and one of them happens to be your current employer not a good thing, right. So if you keep in mind that even though you may not be talking about them directly but you are representing the firm in one way or the other…it's things like that. Most of it is common sense. It is documented. Sure. As a policy, they are pretty clear but those instructions, when you read them, it's pretty much common sense. You would use your good judgement and then you wouldn't do certain things like I said…No 1, you get the job done. No 2 you be as inoffensive as possible. Be ethical. That would be it, I think (Teena, 28)

Carol explains that there are no rules to interaction; the right way of interacting on social media is common sense:

Be confidential. There aren't any rules, you just know these things. Don't gossip on Facebook walls, everyone can see it, worse, the person you are gossiping about can see it (Carol, 23)

Samarth agrees that the company image is enmeshed in individual identity and individuals must refrain from posting negative comments about their employers:

> *One of my colleagues went on Facebook and dissed his company. He simply said something derogatory about salary raises without mentioning the name of the company. But everyone knows who you work for. So, these things are not accepted (Samarth, 39)*

Samarth adds further that there are some rules to interacting on social media that he follows, like attribution; giving credit to the source of the information. He advises individuals to be kind and to treat people online the way they wish to be treated offline.

> *First, be kind. In the sense of you can express frustration, but don't slander people. Be very careful about that. Treat people online the way you want to be treated in person. So imagine you are sitting in front of your audience, and everyone knew you personally and then say what it is you wanted to say. Don't think you can say something on Facebook or on social media that you couldn't say to a person on their face. Because if that's the case, then don't say it at all. To a new person what I would say is what I call intellectual honesty. Intellectual honesty is giving credit where credit is due. So if you have taken a quote from someone, or discovered the post because somebody else posted it, acknowledge the fact that you got to that information from that source. And that comes from basic research integrity. So any research organisation, IBM research is also the same, references. If you put in an idea that isn't yours, you are taking the work of somebody else, reference it. Reference the fact. Attribution. Attribution is extremely important, and I do that both on my public and personal network (Samarth, 39)*

Samarth's comment is insightful as he urges individuals to share embodied interactions accurately yet treats social media as a community of people with moral duties and responsibilities.

Giri explains that interactions on social media are not temporal and advises against interacting on social media in instances when there may be an element of regret in the future:

> *In my opinion, any social networking arena, it is better to be neutral kind of thing because you never know…for example tomorrow, you'll be applying to that other guy (a different company)…you enter the room, the interview room…and probably that guy is sitting and probably that guy has already an opinion about you. You'll end up in situation like this which is unfortunate right, because that is not what you wanted and that is dangerous. Facebook is a distraction when I'm in a private moment in my life or when I am focused at work, I normally avoid. Because obviously I am a human being, so inadvertently those emotions might come. I consciously avoid those intense moments into the social media. It (social media) is more informative than insight (Giri, 45)*

Aalia suggests refraining from certain topics, for instance she advises individuals not to use social media to launch into a personal tirade:

> *It's more of the kind of topics you talk about and the things you don't talk about. You would not necessarily launch into a personal tirade about what you did with your husband, or what happened with your boyfriend, or what happened with your work people, because that is...it is distracting. You don't want to sit there and gossip. Work when you're meant to be working. It's more of that and there is also the image that you want to create at the workplace, because you think that will help you with your promotion (Aalia, 29)*

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Prema explains that discovering a true identity is a spiritual journey than a virtual one. Thus, she advises that individuals introspect and question if they feel that they are interacting with the audience in the right manner:

> *Definitely not. The true self doesn't come up online. Discovering your true self is more of a spiritual journey than a virtual journey. Virtually I don't think someone can really find oneself. But I would say that it does help to look inside, be introspective, take a step back and then think whether the way you are interacting with people is right, is publicly acceptable. Are you going wrong somewhere. These days this virtual scene has a very deep psychological effect on you. It really does affect people. Because it is not…lets face it…It is not easy leading dual lives. You can't do that right. After a point you'll…one of you is going to break down and the two selves have to merge and march forth (Prema, 39)*

Samarth opines that individuals share accurate self-descriptions online and opines that enacting disembodied selves (the online and offline self are disconnected) is not a viable option for many people. He supposes that in a limited context, maybe individuals can have dual personalities. However, he advises that being comfortable with the true personality is integral to online interactions:

> *The fact is you can only role play for a limited amount of time in a limited context. But role playing for an entire lifetime, I dunno…unless you are some Russian spy who has gone deep undercover, maybe that's possible. But is it a viable option for most people? Your eventual personality will shine through. Whatever...whichever way you do it. So you better be comfortable with your personality or be the person you want to be (Samarth, 39)*

Samarth's comment is insightful as he explores the notion of disembodied selves, that is, if individuals can portray a disconnected self online (Turkle, 1994). Teena explains that she

maintains two profiles on Facebook, one is her personal account, and the other to add colleagues from the workplace:

> *On Facebook I have two pages, one is my actual page – this I started, just before I joined this group because then I would have to join the team internal page. And then people could see who I was and everything, and I wasn't comfortable about that because a lot of the time it's people I don't even know or people I don't care to share my life with. So that's why I had 2 profiles. On this official profile, people can search me and add me, and everything but my wall is blocked and my profile picture is of my back from 30 meters away. So and you can't see any pictures or any posts that I write. My wall is just blocked. That's the official one. My personal one is more normal. I mean you can't search me or add me which means that I have control over who enters my network…so that's' very limited. So over four years, I have 100 friends. But that's where even there I don't really post pictures but when people tag me, other friends can see but over here, even if I'm tagged, people can't see it. So yeah to that extent, I separate it. If I really like, if I think that I'm comfortable enough to share my life with you then you are on this list (Teena, 28)*

Teena is the only respondent who used two profiles on social media to solve her conflict of audience segregation. Teena's presentations online are not disembodied, rather her dual profile is a result of cognitive immersion in audience segregation and its success.

8.3.2. Summary

In this chapter, I examine respondents' cautious approach in interacting on social media. Respondents explain that they exercise caution by policing their interactions; that is, respondents focused on language, content and use of appropriate photos in their interactions. Although respondents explain the social pressure in evaluating friendship requests earlier, it appears that respondents cognitively immerse in such requests. Respondents appear to struggle with identifying genuine friendships and distinguishing friendship from stalking, especially in relation to the workplace. Respondents explain that they exercise caution to avoid misinterpretations. They explain that when their interactions on social media are taken out of context, or in the absence of a context, any member in the audience can misjudge interactions; respondents are deeply concerned about the possibility for such misinterpretations. In this context, many respondents explain that they consider gender as an important factor when enacting restricted selves. Respondents explain that women may face moral implications in terms of misinterpretations, thus, they exercise caution in their interactions. Few respondents cognitively immerse in privacy settings in their interactions. Respondents also explain the norms they follow in interacting on social media. These include maintaining a neutral image online; that is avoiding expression of extreme notions, avoiding slander and remembering that the company's image is associated with their interactions.

Chapter 9: Discussion

The objective of this study is to explore the self-presentations of Indian IT professionals on social media. An analysis of the data suggests that self-presentations on social media are best understood in concert with intentionality. The analysis underpins the importance of 'region behaviour' in the process of enacting self-presentations. Within the wider literature, self-presentations have been largely viewed in terms of embodiment (Stefanone & Jang, 2007; Papacharissi, 2002; Turkle, 1994; Spears & Lea, 1994), that is, individuals share accurate self-descriptions of offline experiences in their self-presentations on social media. The empirical evidence from this study suggests that while respondents attempt to share some bodily experiences accurately, most respondents restrict their self-presentations on social media. Respondents express concerns regarding misconstrued professional image arising from two reasons: diverse self-presentations across personal-professional life and overlapping audiences across physical-virtual settings. In other words, most respondents enact diverse self-presentations across personal-professional life; thus, in the event of interacting with an overlapping audience, respondents express concerns that audience members isolate self-presentations on social media from the context, thus, inevitably leading to misinterpretation of their professional image. In order to avoid such seemingly inevitable misinterpretations of their professional image, respondents coped with the demands of the impression management process in two ways: defensive selves: self-presentations that re-establish a positive identity or remove negative typifications or restricted selves: controlled sharing behaviours on social media. Of noteworthy mention is the finding that respondents with clearly defined impression goals experience minimal cognitive discomfort in their self-presentations on social media. Overall, this study identifies impression motivation as a critical factor when studying self-presentations on social media.

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9.1. Self-presentations on social media

Generally speaking, the evidence suggests that respondents are comfortable in using social media sites and networked communications to foster impressions to the audience. Primarily, individuals foster desired impressions by broadcasting content within their networks. Out of the audience members in their network, a majority are geographically dispersed and some of the contacts are recently established relationships in the physical setting. Respondents explained that some of the contacts were first established in the 'real' world before they interacted on social media sites.

In terms of embodied enactments, few respondents share bodily experiences accurately in an attempt to maintain integrity between the offline-online self. In these cases, respondents' self-presentations in the physical setting complement their self-presentations on social media. In other words, as Vaast (2007) found, respondents strive for accuracy with their bodily experiences and offline practices and if they lacked this integrity, they believed their performances to be deceptive or fake. They enacted such representativeness by accurately portraying their offline selves. Thus, it appears that respondents view their self-presentations on social media sites like LinkedIn, Facebook and personal blogs as an extension of their offline selves. Here, legitimacy of identity construction on social media sites tallied with respondents' understanding of their true selves during introspection.

However, in most cases, respondents enact diverse self-presentations in their personal-professional life. Thus, in the event of overlapping interactions across physical and virtual settings (like interacting with workplace colleagues on Facebook); such 'region behavior' becomes meaningless. In other words, respondents express concerns regarding overlapping self-

presentations across physical-virtual settings and personal-professional life. For instance, workplace colleagues view respondents' informal self-presentations on Facebook and comment on these self-presentations at the workplace.

Consequently, in terms of self-presentation strategies, respondents chose between two strategies: defensive selves and avoiding overlapping audiences. Respondents enact defensive selves, that is, they enact self-presentations that re-establish a positive identity or remove negative typifications. By following this strategy, respondents refrain from specific behaviours like lying or faking content in order to convey a positive impression (Carlson et al., 2010). The respondents in this sample suggest similar inclinations when they claim, "On LinkedIn, you cannot lie" attributing this tendency to social approval from workplace colleagues by way of testimonials.

Alternatively, respondents avoided overlapping audiences by enacting a restricted self or a dual self. They enact partial representativeness in aspects like finding a partner or sharing personal information that might be perceived as morally implicating by the audience. In addition, respondents restrict access to their self-presentations on social media to some members of the overlapping audience. Else, respondents restricted their enactments altogether in a bid to avoid conflicts arising from interacting with overlapping audiences.

Additionally, as Leary & Allen (2011) suggest, some respondents relied on a relatively small number of basic self-presentation personas in which they conveyed particular profiles of impressions as a set. They follow this strategy by creating two profiles or dual selves. By following this strategy, respondents attempt to avoid overlapping audiences, interactions, self-

presentations while managing personal-professional boundaries. For instance, Tarang explains that he enacted dual selves as he was concerned about overlapping interactions. He explains that he pursued an income-generating hobby outside work-hours. If his manager (who employs indirect control mechanisms and controls his time spent at the workplace) views his self-presentations on social media, the manager might misinterpret Tarang's professional image. As a result, Tarang negotiated access to his managers at the workplace. Similarly, Aalia says, 'You just try to make a different profile for them and hope that they don't get to know too much about you'. Dual selves are dissimilar to disembodied selves in that as Leary & Allen (2011) suggest, individuals tailor their images to specific targets by managing two profiles or two selves on social media sites.

Overall, the Indian IT professionals in this sample share some bodily experiences accurately in their self-presentations on social media. In few cases, respondents' self-presentations complement their self-presentations on social media. However, in most cases, respondents enact diverse self-presentations. Thus, they avoid overlapping audiences by enacting defensive selves. Alternatively, respondents avoid conflicts arising from overlapping audiences and interactions by choosing between enacting restricted selves (avoid excessive sharing of information about their personal life, negotiating friendship requests with audience) and dual selves.

9.2. Organisational contexts and self-presentations

Generally, in terms of the organisational context, respondents explain that they have specific impressions they wish to convey at the workplace. Their primary motivation to foster

impressions at the workplace is to gain visibility. Of noteworthy mention here is that companies differed vastly in terms of perspective to adoption of social media and organisational culture. In companies where networked communications are popular, respondents use these networked communications to gain visibility by presenting a unique attribute of their personal identity. Some respondents gain visibility by using their interactions on networked communications as ice-breakers with senior management and participating in company events. In regards to public social media sites, respondents use social networking sites LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and other social media tools like blogs to first create a digital presence. Then, respondents gain visibility by showcasing unique attributes in their personal and professional life. In contrast, in companies where there was neither access to public social media sites nor access to networked enterprises, respondents express a sense of claustrophobia. In a way of justification, respondents claim that they worked long hours and many times with socially incompatible workplace colleagues, access to social media was a way to relate to their life outside of the workplace. On the upside, in such cases, respondents experienced minimal impression management demands despite enacting diverse self-presentations across personal-professional life as there was minimal scope for overlapping audiences and interactions. On the flipside however, in such cases, work-life balance might impact their working lives.

Overall, respondents wish to foster a 'hybrid self' image (Raghuram, 2013) and create a positive impression in their self-presentations on social media to gain visibility. The 'hybrid self' image reflects in respondents' use of public social media sites to join exclusive communities on Facebook, use the medium for work related and personal inquiries, show prowess in English and display an image of cultural, social and technology awareness. Respondents convey positive

impressions about the self through symbolic acts, for instance 'liking' company page on Facebook, 'following' Twitter feeds and refraining from any negative comments about their employers (directly or indirectly), thus inferring organisational identification (e.g. Knippenberg & Schie, 2000). Respondents justify that immersing in symbolic acts on social media to build company goodwill and acting as representatives of the company for clients and customers helped them to get into the 'good books' of colleagues and managers. An explanation for the need to gain visibility and maintain a positive professional image is provided in Upadhya & Vasavi (2006) and D'Mello's (2005) studies on the Indian IT industry; the volatility of the global IT market and emergence of the 'entrepreneurial employee' who must constantly upgrade their skills in order to remain marketable has created job insecurity among Indian IT professionals. Thus, by immersing in their interactions on social media and reinforcing a positive self-image in their self-presentations on social media, respondents sought job security.

Although respondents interact with workplace colleagues across physical and virtual settings, such interactions appear to be out of obligation rather than genuine friendship or cunning intentions. It appears that the respondents experience the same problems as pointed out by Skeels & Grudin (2009) in terms of interacting with workplace colleagues on Facebook. The respondents experience cognitive discomfort in denying friendship requests, thus they react by either negotiating friendship requests or adding contacts arbitrarily. Interestingly, the respondents who negotiate friendship requests experienced more cognitive discomfort than the respondents who added contacts arbitrarily. Nonetheless, after accepting such obligatory requests, respondents used their Facebook self-presentations strategically to foster desired impressions. Ganesh says he uses his interactions on Facebook to convey an image of being 'cool' and to

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break ice with new team members. Similarly, Ankita uses her interactions on Facebook with her team mates to break ice and gain respect. The respondents successfully convey such images by strategically posting content (photos and status messages) on Facebook where the friendship requests are extended.

While respondents appear to negotiate friendship requests from colleagues easily, they struggle with friendship requests from managers. Generally speaking, many respondents did not 'friend' their ex or current managers due to concerns of electronic surveillance, misinterpretations due to overlapping self-presentations and personal-professional boundary overlap. Respondents explain that managers (inadvertently or intentionally) collect information on employees' personal life when they are 'friends' on Facebook and correlate personal life issues with productivity at the workplace. Although not many respondents have experienced such an issue, many of them are wary of adding managers. The point here is that respondents view interactions on social media by managers as electronic surveillance strategies, thus, they avoid adding managers when possible. Respondents explain that they avoid managers as Indian IT managers draw on indirect power and control mechanisms. Further, respondents explain that they have faced harsh consequences of such overlapping interactions. For instance, Gagan experienced a threat of job loss for commenting on a company policy online. Similarly, Gagan cites an incident that his boss interacts with him online to say, 'Don't you have some work to do?' In another instance, Naren expresses frustration when he was 'caught' interacting on networked communications on many occasions and faced issues in the performance appraisal process. Respondents explain that such instances of overlap, at first shocking, later were important events of reflection influencing their

self-presentation strategies. Here, data supports and contributes to the literature on managerial styles in the Indian IT workplace.

Of noteworthy mention here is the considered reflection on consequences of overlapping self-presentations. Interestingly, respondents acknowledge the inevitability of impression overlap across physical-virtual settings and personal-professional life when they obligate to networking requests from workplace colleagues, however, they experience cognitive discomfort when managers comment on respondents' self-presentations (online or offline). In other words, respondents explain that adding managers on Facebook meant giving them permission for electronic surveillance.

Interestingly, while the findings adhere to scholars' empirical research suggesting indirect control mechanisms deployed at the workplace (see Raghuram, 2013; Upadhya, 2009; Bain & Taylor, 2000), of particular interest are few respondents' accounts that illustrate not only absence of electronic surveillance, these respondents are apathetic to managerial styles and unconcerned by notions of online surveillance. Such performances do not necessarily signal absence of indirect control or normative practices at the workplace; rather it appears that respondents' interactions and self-presentations are complementary across their physical-virtual settings. Thus, these respondents do not experience cognitive discomfort in the event of overlapping interactions or self-presentations. An explanation for this is provided in their self-presentation strategy. As Leary et al. (1995) argue, although the motivation to enact self-presentations are deceptive or manipulative, individuals present aspects of themselves oriented toward making their desired impressions and do not fabricate such aspects. In other words, Indian IT professionals enact

defensive selves and reactively manage their impressions by means of justifications, disclaimers and refraining from specific behaviours like lying or faking content.

Overall, respondents use overlapping interactions cleverly to foster desired impressions to the workplace audience. Primarily, their motivation is to gain visibility. On public social media sites, respondents accept friendship requests as an obligation. Respondents avoid interacting with managers on social media due to concerns of electronic surveillance. However, few respondents were apathetic to managerial presence on social media and indifferent to notions of electronic surveillance. By teasing out some of the less obvious and less explicit rationales for self-presentations on social media, this thesis has generated some useful insights into the role of the organisational context in enacting self-presentations on social media.

9.3. The Indian context and the self-presentations of Indian IT professionals

The empirical chapters illustrate clearly that wider socio-cultural transformations within the physical setting in the research context extend to respondents' enactments on social media.

First, in regards to patterns of sociality, respondents' reliance on Facebook reflects their highly mobile lives. Respondents explain that they use Facebook to stay in touch with family and friends. Here, they imply that family members, friends and the respondents themselves; all lead travel-intensive lifestyles and depend on Facebook to maintain relationships. Narada explains that he uses Facebook to keep in touch with the friends he made while onsite, his friends who travel to onsite locations and family members who are geographically dispersed. Similarly,

Samarth uses Facebook groups to communicate with his friends who are far away, family members who are based across the world and found his wife via common friends on the site. This finding adds to scholars work who suggest mobility for leisure and work among the 'new middle class' in India (see Brosius, 2010; Fernandes, 2000); respondents accept such mobility as integral to modernity and their work-lives.

Second, the data highlights the shift in using Facebook to find marriage partners as respondents associate Facebook profiles with legitimacy of performing a 'true' self compared to profiles on dating and matrimonial sites. Respondents explain that profiles and interactions on dating and matrimonial sites are limited to the potential partner's family who inevitably create profiles inconsistent with the 'real' self. Respondents extend legitimacy of profiles on Facebook to LinkedIn profiles as well where professional selves are crafted. However, respondents explain that they rely on Facebook to scout for partners as the infrastructure of Facebook allowed real time tags and respondents could find out about their partners' vices especially in the matters of alcohol, smoking and partying. These insights add to scholars work suggesting 'glocalisation' (Brosius, 2010; Radhakrishnan, 2008; D'Mello, 2006), that is, respondents embrace world cultures quickly, yet attempt to retain their traditional middle class notions. However, it appears that such middle class notions are drawn on for convenience rather than desire to maintain traditions.

Of particular significance in the findings is the overall implication of gendering and morality on Facebook. Respondents' accounts suggest that gender and morality related issues in their physical setting extend to their self-presentations on Facebook. Although male respondents

indicated that such morality issues are also extended to them, the implications are higher for women. For instance, as Nick explains, a photo of a man with alcohol in his hand might lead to misinterpretations in regards to his employability while a photo of a woman with alcohol in her hand might lead to misinterpretations of her character. Broadly, such notions of gendering and morality are rooted within the 'traditional middle class' values that 'glocals' attempt to retain (see Nadeem, 2011; Brosius, 2010); respondents' accounts of their self-policing in their self-presentations on Facebook to avoid such misinterpretations suggests that such notions of gendering and morality in the physical setting extend to their virtual setting on Facebook. Interestingly, respondents explain that they assume gendering and morality as interconnected notions on Facebook; thus they immerse in self-policing in their self-presentations on social media to avoid misinterpretations.

Among social media sites, Facebook is both popular and a site of conflict within the research setting. Respondents' justifications that nothing is 'personal' on a 'public' space like Facebook are suggestive of the external influences on their interactions on the site. Such external influences include the interplay of virtues and vices, gender and reputation and reputation and marriage within Indian society. Respondents struggle to continue sharing bodily experiences accurately on Facebook as they navigate these societal norms and explain that the infrastructure on Facebook provides convenient audience segregation. By grouping contacts into labels like 'Family' and 'Friends', they experience a degree of freedom from cognitive discomfort. However, despite grouping, overlapping of audience and self-presentations are inevitable. Thus, while respondents express confusion at first instance of overlap, these experiences become episodes of reflection leading to increased cognitive immersion.

In brief, respondents explain that they rely on Facebook to build relationships with friends and family, especially those who lead travel-intensive lives. Respondents also explain that they interact on Facebook with a motivation to find a potential partner. However, respondents explain that wider societal norms have an important influence on their self-presentations on social media. By identifying such subtleties in respondents' self-presentations on social media, the thesis adds to the notion of embodied self-presentations as respondents are embedded in their wider socio-cultural settings.

9.4. Cognitive demands of impression management on social media

Impression management can place cognitive demands on individuals under any circumstance. These demands arise from the choices that individuals make in order to convey a desired image relevant to the context for their performance. The respondents in this study suggest that whilst they experience cognitive demands in the impression management process, they primarily expressed concerns regarding coping with boundary-spanning issues arising from diverse self-presentations and overlapping audiences. Individuals' self-presentations vary across the physical-virtual and personal-professional lives. As social media bridges these boundaries, individuals experience cognitive discomfort as their interactions span physical-virtual settings and diverse self-presentations become meaningless.

The respondents in this sample suggest that they experience cognitive demands in the impression management process especially on social networking sites Facebook and LinkedIn. While

respondents use other social media sites like Skype, G+ and other dating sites, they explain that Facebook and LinkedIn are popular among their personal and professional circles; thus, they spend a considerable part of their time in their personal life on these two sites. Among the two sites, respondents express that they experience conflicts in regards to overlapping self-presentations especially on Facebook. In this section, first, I explore the cognitive demands of enacting self-presentations on Facebook and then discuss the coping strategies that respondents employ.

9.4.1. Impression demands on Facebook

While respondents enact self-presentations across public social media sites and networked communications with ease, they experienced cognitive discomfort on Facebook. Successful fostering of impressions on Facebook depends on navigating overlapping and diverse self-presentations across blurring boundaries like physical-virtual and personal-professional life. In addition, respondents continually interact with a wide audience in their personal-professional life; thus although respondents immerse in audience segregation strategies by 'grouping' contacts, audience members from the physical setting continuously sought friendship connections on Facebook. As a result, respondents interact with a wide audience on Facebook including acquaintances, potential partners, colleagues, friends and family members. In such situations, respondents experience cognitive discomfort due to blurring of their physical-virtual and personal-professional image.

In particular, the respondents in this sample explain that they experience cognitive struggles in the event of two inevitable consequences arising from overlapping self-presentations:

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misinterpretations of professional image and 'region behaviour'. Respondents fear that overlapping interactions and diverse self-presentations across the physical-virtual setting might lead to misinterpretations as respondents' self-presentations on Facebook may be taken out-of-context by workplace audiences. They explain that their self-presentations on Facebook are contextual and when audience members isolate their self-presentations on social media from the context, it leads to misinterpretations of their image. Such misinterpretations might affect not only the impression they desire to foster at the workplace but also potentially undermine their power and control with workplace colleagues. As one of the respondents Nick explains, the audiences' view of isolated performances, for instance, a photograph at a party or outdoors with friends can be easily misinterpreted:

> *There's a lot of people, because they don't know you too well, will base the empty parts of what they don't know on the photographs that they see on Facebook and they will fill up based on just those parts of the puzzle*

Secondly, when workplace colleagues inadvertently or intentionally view respondents' Facebook interactions, 'region behaviour' becomes meaningless. It appears that these respondents rehearse 'region behaviour' or in the words of Goffman (1959, pp.114), "those before whom one plays one of his parts won't be the same individuals before whom he plays a different part in another setting". Respondents note that they were protecting their personal image on Facebook from their 'professional' image at the workplace as they believe that "it is human nature" to let one impression of an individual influence the other impressions. An explanation for such misinterpretations is provided by Ichheiser (1943); the psychologically naive and the scientific psychologist, both are subject to misinterpretations as internal processes distort and falsify

experiences of other people even on the level of immediate observation. Thus, when respondents wish to rehearse 'region behaviour', they cognitively immerse in 'audience segregation' in their enactments on social media by 'grouping' contacts. In particular, the infrastructure on Facebook poses problems for respondents in this aspect; as Skeels & Grudin (2009) find, overlap of personal-professional life is inevitable. Thus, when respondents experience the overlap or are victims of misinterpretations, these events become initiators for active reflection and investing cognitively in their self-presentations on social media.

9.4.2. Coping with impression management demands

Given the above evidence, although it is notable that respondents did not speak about the cognitive demands on the impression process explicitly, it would be safe to assume that the primary concern for most respondents while enacting self-presentations on social media was managing boundary spanning. In other words, respondents reflect on coping mechanisms whilst addressing their concerns regarding work-life imbalance. Scholars suggest that rather than immersing in such cognitive demands, individuals fostering multiple impressions simultaneously present fragmented selves (Vaast, 2007) or use one persona for the diverse audience (Leary & Allen, 2011).

Interestingly, the data suggests that respondents cope with impression management demands by choosing between self-focused impression management and audience segregation tactics. One strategy that respondents draw on while enacting self-focused presentations on social media is to enact self-presentations for the internal audience. While few respondents are explicit about performing for the internal audience, others are implicit. This inference is made as respondents

reiterate introspection as integral in their performances (see Schlenker, 1975; Archibald & Cohen, 1971). However, the coping mechanisms differ widely among the respondents. Some respondents invest extensively in introspection and reflection and examine their performances in terms of what was said, what it meant and how it was perceived. For instance:

I can be quite snarky in a fun sort of way. I like my humor to be sarcastic even when I'm commenting on other people's status updates I'm usually sarcastic but that I've learnt is not appreciated publicly. People don't like…I may be commenting on my friends' status because I know her and she's going to take my sarcasm in the right spirit. But that's not how it works apparently. Because there are other people in her friends circle who don't know me and find my comments insulting. This feedback is given to me offline. It made me take a step back and introspect (Prema, 39)

As Schlenker (1975) and Archibald and Cohen (1971) suggest, in these accounts where respondents are introspective and perform for an internal audience, they consider longevity of relationships as integral to their performances. In contrast to the wider literature that suggests that performing for the internal audience is cognitively demanding (see DePaulo, 1992; Baumeister, 1982; Archibald & Cohen, 1971), some respondents experienced minimal cognitive demands despite performing for the internal audience. An explanation for such minimal cognitive demands is that these respondents' performances are goal-driven. In other words, some respondents are focused on achieving internal goals; for instance Samarth and Tarang wish to start their own business, Teena wishes to pursue further education; thus, they restrict their self-presentations to information that is relevant to the image they wish to create of the self and disengage with the physical-virtual settings. Interestingly, these respondents express lesser

confusion and experience minimal cognitive demands in their performances. In their narratives, they express informality in their interactions and explain that they view their self-presentations on social media as a personal branding campaign. For instance, Samarth explains that he uses his social media interactions to gain visibility as he intends to start a technology based business, and he 'tracks his cloud score' to gauge the extent of influence he has on his audience members. In these accounts, it appears that respondents are self-focused, that is, they use social media to display expertise. Here, it appears that respondents are indifferent to cognitive demands regarding longevity of relationships, strength of relationships (weak-strong) or genuine connections (Skeels & Grudin, 2009; Schlenker, 1975).

In terms of self-focused impression management strategy, respondents also avoid excessive sharing of personal information although the classification of personal information is unique to the respondent. For instance, Nick explains that while he may enjoy punk or heavy metal music privately, he avoids sharing this information on Facebook as a future employer may perceive such an interest in negative light of his professional image. In addition, many respondents view social media sites as a space to manage their public relations profile where they restrict themselves from sharing some kinds of information. They avoid geo-tagging of locations and restrict sharing personal information about family members on Facebook. For instance, Teena explains that on her personal blog, she writes herself into being (see Sundén, 2003), however, when she cross-posts, that is links her personal blog to the corporate blog, she edits the content to suit the audience on the corporate blog. Similarly Tarang uses his Facebook account to promote his photography, a hobby generating an income, however on networked communications, he "keeps it professional". In another instance, Ankit explains that on his Facebook account, "he is

himself", while on the company's networked communications, he enacts self-presentations relevant to his workplace audience.

Finally, respondents in this sample cope with impression demands like post-enactment anxieties and cognitive dissonance by immersing in audience segregation tactics. They achieve this by networking with 'professional' contacts on LinkedIn where they enact workplace related performances. Similarly, respondents control the impression they foster to the diverse audience through social media tools that support online privacy. On Facebook, respondents control audiences by 'grouping' their contacts. Facebook infrastructure supports fostering of multiple impressions (Leary & Allen, 2011; Tufekci, 2008). In brief, respondents learn to manage cognitive demands by avoiding excessive sharing and disengaging with the physical-virtual setting in their self-presentations on social media. In regards to coping mechanisms, they chose between enacting defensive selves or immerse in audience segregation.

Overall, respondents experience cognitive discomfort in the event overlapping self-presentations for two reasons. One, respondents express concerns that 'region behavior' became meaningless. Two, respondents fear that overlapping self-presentations might have negative consequences (like misinterpretations) on their image. Respondents cope with such cognitive discomfort by focusing on self-focused presentation tactics and audience segregation tactics. The analysis suggests that respondents with clearly defined goals experience minimal cognitive discomfort.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

In this study, I suggest that Indian IT professionals' self-presentations on social media are best understood in concert with 'intentionality', that is, as Leary & Kowalski (1990) suggest, individuals engage in everyday interactions without any prior motivations to foster impressions, however, in certain circumstances where situational and dispositional factors interact, people become motivated to control how others see them. Recent IS research literature has focused on extent of embodiment in online interactions and the implications of misconstrued image at the workplace due to unintended disclosures on social media has largely been ignored. I address this gap by using Goffman (1959)'s concept of self-presentations to understand the experiences of Indian IT professionals on social media. This study adds to an important and evolving dimension to previous IS research. I discuss the theoretical, empirical and managerial implications of this study below.

Firstly, this study suggests that IS research needs to expand its corpus of basic frameworks for studying and explaining interactions on social media. Such an expansion can help accommodate the increasingly complex interactions in continually evolving modern organisations supported by various forms of social media. With a broader lens to view interactions in modern organisations, we may be able to overcome some of the blind spots created when viewing interactions on social media as a solely online experience. I have adopted this dynamic perspective to self-presentations on social media in this study and it draws attention to the notion of overlapping audiences arising from overlapping interactions across personal-professional and physical-virtual life. Adopting such an unconventional perspective underscores the significance of 'region behavior' while enacting self-presentations and adds a novel dimension to our understanding of

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self-presentations on social media. I therefore suggest that IS researchers transition towards a general awareness of such a dynamic perspective; that is, overlapping interactions across physical-virtual settings.

Secondly, the study shows how individuals respond to overlapping interactions across physical-virtual settings. By identifying coping strategies, this study contributes to extant literature on self-presentations to suggest that the impression management process is an especially demanding process. Such demands are enhanced when individuals enact diverse self-presentations whilst managing boundaries across personal-professional life. As a corollary, the study suggests that individuals with clearly defined impression management goals experience minimal cognitive discomfort. I would argue that such cognitive discomfort exists at deep levels and can only be elicited through in-depth assessments of individuals' impression management process and therefore, I call upon researchers to explore the impact of enacting diverse self-presentations.

Thirdly, the study shows how managers may inadvertently gather personal information regarding employees while interacting on social media. Simultaneously, the study also suggests that employees harbour suspicions of 'electronic surveillance' and avoid interacting with workplace related contacts on personal networking sites. Thus, it underpins the notion of 'intentionality' while enacting self-presentations on social media. Whilst the study provides evidence to support this claim, I would argue that this is the bane of the modern organisation and call on IS researchers to examine electronic surveillance with a narrow focus on un/ethical managerial practices.

Finally, practioners may find the empirical material in this study useful in the process of better managing employees in modern organisations. Limited literature and practioner reports suggest that managers express concerns regarding employees' flippant use of social media and their indifference to company goodwill. In contrast, this study shows that employees take their interactions on social media seriously and interact online with caution. The study may also be useful to organisations deliberating use of social media at the workplace as it shows that employee engagement is increasingly more virtual. This study also has some relevance to managers in Indian IT companies who may be able to gauge employee resistance to interacting with managers online and employees concerns regarding extending power and control dynamics to their interactions on social media.

While I emphasise the key contributions of my study and suggest ways that scholars can develop the findings from this study further, I also recognise the limitations of this study. First, I interviewed Indian IT employees from various IT companies including Indian IT companies, Indian MNC and Multinational companies which have a huge presence in India. While the data from this study is generalizable to theory, the extent to which it may be generalised to professionals in other industries or Indian IT professionals based outside India may vary considerably. Similarly, the analysis from this study may not be applicable to any one of the Indian IT companies I interviewed due to factors like organisational culture, managerial practises and perspectives on adoption of social media at the workplace. Presumably, permitting access, studying the self-presentations on social media of employees in one large Indian IT company by either conducting a case study or an ethnography may have yielded richer insights that could have specific organisational implications (Klein & Myers, 1999).

Second, as Miles and Huberman (1994, pp.10) note, "The strengths of qualitative data rest on the competence with which their analysis is carried out". In this study, I used principles of grounded theory and hermeneutics to analyse the data. While I have gained deep insights by using these methods, as a novice researcher, I might have missed out insights by overlooking alternative methods of analysis. Triangulation of data, for instance, can strengthen qualitative research and add robustness to it. Such a technique could have helped me to identify clearly the relationships between interviewees and identify patterns in the data that I have missed out.

Third, I conducted 5 paired-interviews, of which 3 were with married couples. In these interviews, the wife was silent and in agreement with the husband's views to all the questions. If I had conducted individual interviews with the couple rather than paired interviews, I might have collected valuable comments from a different perspective. As I found it a challenge to access interviewees, in instances of paired-interviews, my focus was to elicit data and concentrate on patterns, direction of research and continue snowball sampling. As a direct consequence of focusing on larger objectives of the research project, a limitation of this study is I may have lost rich data.

Finally, it is worth noting that India is a country of diversity in terms of culture and it would be fair to assume that Indian IT professionals based in other parts of the country might react differently to the conflicts highlighted in this study. I would recommend that future studies explore a study on comparison of self-presentations on social media of Indian IT professionals from various parts of the country for interesting cultural insights.

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Overall, the study adds significantly to a theoretical understanding of self-presentations on social media by adding to recent and evolving literature on the notion of overlapping interactions. Now, the challenge is to understand how individuals cope with overlapping interactions while managing boundary spanning. I have started the journey with the findings in this study, but we still have a long way to go.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The interview guide

An illustrative list of open-ended questions used during the interviews is below. The first set of questions sought biographical details like age, experience etc.

1.0.   Biographical information

1. What is your name, age and gender?

2. Are you married or single?

3. What is your current role and where are you employed?

4. Please tell me your professional history briefly.

2.0.   Social media

1. Please list all the social media sites you use

2. How and where do you access these sites (home, tablet, smartphone)

3. Do you have access to the sites you have mentioned at the workplace?

4. For what purposes do you use these social media sites?

5. Have you had any negative experiences at the workplace due to interacting on social media?

6. What kind of information do you share on social media?

7. In your view, what kind of information do others share on social media?

8. Do you friend your manager on social media?

9. Have you had any experiences (good / bad) regarding your managers' presence on social media?

10. Does your company stipulate any rules regarding how you must interact on social media?

Appendix 2: Sample transcript

Biographical information:

Age- 36; Gender – Male; Marital status – Married

Total work experience – 13 years

Current role – Product manager in a MNC company based in India

1. **Please list all the social media sites you use**

I have social networking site, I am on Facebook.. I'm on LinkedIn, if you want to call it as social.. Twitter as well as G+. So these are 4 networks that I have but I'm mostly active on Twitter. I'm not active on either of those 2 that I mentioned.. So on G+ I saw the notice on it, so I don't really use it. But there are some placeholders like G+ is very focused. Facebook I do visit once in a while not often not to update but to learn about other people, for sharing or uploading. But Twitter is where I'm most active. On Twitter, I follow colleagues (all of them), I follow very famous bloggers, major bloggers, their tech feed.. I'm a very techie guy, so I follow some of these well known techies and then other well known personalities, for sure but I don't follow you know like Shahrukh Khan or Aamir Khan (Indian actors in films) because they are all ghost managed for the most part, so I don't really follow any of those people. So I think it is more of a what they have to offer rather than themselves, right so on busy days they don't have time to go around reading different things from different sources right. We have RSS which aggregates information & puts/pushes stuff into the mailbox but even there, out of 1000 things, there are 10 things which are of use. So even there, we have to score through bunch of things. Twitter, for me atleast helped in streaming that relatively more where I get to learn some interesting stuff not having to go through a million things.. So this is what I learn from Twitter but even that is

becoming a little difficult because if I follow a lot of people, fact is there are a lot of updates which I can't effectively manage. So even there I have to sort of skittle it down to 10 things I want to do, 10 things I want to follow and I mean Twitter is not yet meant for that, more like a lot of you know feeds, some useful, some not so useful.

2. For what purposes do you use these social media sites?

I don't get to know anybody over Twitter.. so Twitter is more like casual. I don't even want to classify it as social-social because your tweets are independent of each other, right. It's not a Facebook where you have it under you know information, counter information, argument, comments. Twitter you can do that, but people don't use it as a platform.. It's more like one-sided updates. You can have a conversation where you are like actually re-tweeting somebody else's tweet and commenting on top of it. But it doesn't become a exchange of comments. It's more like your comments on top of somebody's and doesn't effectively get into a long amount of conversations like on Facebook right. So Twitter I feel it's more of an impersonal and communication medium, you do communicate. You communicate ideas rather than you keep as a conversation.

3. Would you say you use social media sites only for professional / technical information?

No no, not just technical or professional, depends on who you are following. So if I follow somebody like Obama, Al Gore. I do follow Al Gore. I do get non-technical stuff, like what is Al-Gore doing on climate stuff. I might follow some politicians for instance uh, so it's not just technical or professional. It could be what you want to hear. I might share it with other people, or

just for my own consumption. I don't do much other than these 2. Mainly for sharing with others and maybe adding my own comment because one thing I realised Twitter as a medium or any social medium for instance will one day going to become a tool for others to understand about you as a personality. I'm very conscious about that. So I use Twitter as a way to express my opinion in a way that reflects my personality or reflect my knowledge about something or reflect my opinion, through which people understand who I am. Someday in research, in fact in today's research, I think google does that I'm sure my company can follow too.. Google had a thing where you can actually show the tweets of people. But I think they have cut that partnership.. (not on buzz) but on google search results. So if you do a search, like say if you searched my name, you would get my tweets but I would think they don't show anymore and I think they have cut the partner. It might come out but it might show up on Google. We might get to learn about what people are tweeting. So I'm very cautious about my tweets, about what I do because I understand that it's not just my followers or people who I know who might know about it but others also. So it's not about being professional, it's not about controversial also. It's about my language that I use, my opinion, if like. My opinion, I want to make sure that it's not stupid.. because suppose say some recruiter is trying to recruit me and he goes over - he or she goes over my tweets and realises that this guy doesn't know what he's talking about right so I do a lot of you know. I think twice, thrice, four times before you know I tweet something until I'm completely sure especially when I'm expressing my opinion, right. I might express my opinion about Google and I might express my opinion about Twitter itself so I'm pretty careful with it.

4. Would you say you are concerned about how a recruiter in the future may look at all your interactions on twitter before hiring you?

It's an awareness, not a fear. It's an awareness to make sure I sound as perfect as I can. It is a discipline that I have for myself. I don't think everybody does that. I doubt it. But a lot of people I follow are pretty good and they are all very seasoned tweeters right. So they know what they are talking about. You hardly see anybody getting. Some people might have just 3 word tweets which wouldn't make sense. Maybe in some context, it would make sense for some people but might be senseless for others. I even try not to do that although it's not wrong. It's within their circle right so that might make sense but not for everybody's eyes. Like on Google circles, one circle knows something, other circle doesn't know something. Twitter you can't do that. So everybody tries to do everything. You might have a parallel conversation with somebody which might turn up for other people. So other people don't have the context but few people have. So things like that happen.

5. Do you friend your work colleagues on social media?

Yeah, I think that's possible, but I don't think people are conscious about that because I have my professional folks on Facebook also, my personal network and sometimes you know when I try to provide an update, I'm not able to provide an update. Let's say I want to introduce some Hindi words into my update but my update has which folks you know my professional folks, who don't know a thing about..it's not even like they are indian folks. They are US folks, Belgian, Siberian, all kinds of folks who wouldn't understand a thing of what I'm saying.. so I'm very conscious of that. So Facebook initially I think didn't have that circle concept where I can send a message only to my circle and I can be open about it because only my family know or my friends who

understand the context. Facebook was not set up for that atleast. So yes, what you say makes sense but I don't think people consciously did that because Facebook didn't sort of give you an opportunity to demarcate that. So I have seen lot of people sending links to you know hindi movies and songs or some context where 30% of the people in their own network wouldn't understand a thing. So I don't think that is true. So I've seen that people adding people from their professional account also to their Facebook account but they also come and crib that 'hey, these guys are there. I'm not able to do this' which didn't provide the opportunity which is the advantage of previous Google plus was except that people were finding it difficult to move because they were just so ingrained in Facebook. They cannot move anywhere.

6. Can you tell me about social media sites in your office?

I'm not active on the internal company networks. Not been able to. I didn't feel the need for it I guess or didn't have the time for it. I think social networks should be something where you are taking advantage of it and not the other way around. Shouldn't eat your time. So I'm pretty conscious of that fact and I try to restrict myself to one or two hits. If a link is provided (I trust the links) I don't verify it. If they don't I may not even share it right because you can't verify. And especially they might themselves say that you know I heard if that's the case, even for me it's not enough then how would I share it with other people but if they say I heard this about blah blah blah and by the way here is a link to that. so the link is a good indicator that somebody else is also talking about it and not just one person. So then I'll share it with other people. So then there is a, it's not a question of whether I trust them or not. It's a question of between him and her and me, I trust but may not be the case where I check without details. They may ask me 1000 questions which I don't have the interest to.

(Note: 12th minute into the interview, the respondent was restless, hoping to cut the interview short. This made me rush into asking questions quickly. He ended the interview 20 minutes later because he got a phone call that he had to take and he then had to go to a meeting.)

7. If access to public networks at the workplace were cut off, your reaction

It wouldn't stifle me. Because you know inside of work, you can only do so much. In fact I don't even have the time to do Facebook or tweet. Lot of folks here tweet like 20-30 tweets a day. I really don't know have time. I do maximum 1 or 2 during work hours, but I go home and I tweet more. But I don't have the time here. So I wouldn't care at all. The only thing I might care about is if they cut access to yahoo or emails and all that. Then it's a little bit of a problem. But even that, I think I can deal with it. (Note: when I tell him examples of companies that don't have access to networks in some IT companies, he says that's ridiculous!)

8. Do you think interacting on social media is age –relevant?

(Note: He's not restless anymore & is thinking..)

I wouldn't say it as age because I've seen people ranting regardless of the age, but I believe it's a direct. It's proportionate to the kind of responsibility you have at work.. uh, about how happy or satisfied you are with your work because otherwise there is no ranting there. Of course regardless of all that people have complaints. But you wouldn't feel like breaking out of that in work itself. So it's proportional to what you are doing, how much you are engaged with you know. I have so much on my plate right now that I really don't have the time to complain about it. Like I'm so busy, so occupied at work that these things seem trivial to me. Maybe you would say its about age, but I have seen people regardless of age talking about stuff. So maybe it's a bunch of things

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but you cannot pinpoint that this is the only reason why people are doing this or people are not doing this but for me the important this is how engaged you are at work and whether you really need to do some of these things. And you can very well do these things over the weekend for instance if you are very organised and you can do some of these things over the weekend. Go home, plan your trip online plus you can make a couple of phone calls. You can do that. I don't think you should be restricting. It's not a constraint at all.

9. Would it be fair to say that you think interacting on social media is time-consuming?

Over time, yes.. It's not one time you sit through and add because you may not even discover these people. Sometimes Twitter throws up suggestions that you might find these people interesting based on my profile. Then I might add or others might just follow me because of some tweet I made about constant research and they add me to that. Suddenly I discover somebody because they have added me. I also try to minimise like I said I minimise the number of people I have because it's difficult to manage. I already have some famous people and some of them are tweeting like something like 50 tweets a day. I don't tweet regularly. My presence online is very adhoc. It's not very organised and managed. I don't think about it. Certain days, in one week I wouldn't have tweeted even once because at that time I didn't have anything or I didn't find anything interesting or I've not read something that I feel like I want to share. So it's not very. I would say it's very adhoc. Very adhoc. Based on my time. And not like I keep finding. Some people are regularly getting some time for tweeting. I don't do that. Something comes up I definitely go and tweet and I have a tweet client on my desktop which I keep accessing when I can but even then it's not.. I don't regularly access it.

10. Can you tell me a little about how you manage your time?

Personally, at work I'm neither reactive nor proactive. I mean proactive, yes but I'm not somebody who like you know does things 10 days in advance right because simply don't have the time to think that far ahead of time. But it's not like I keep it if I have to make a presentation that I have to present tomorrow, it's not like I'm going to start tonight. I would have started it atleast 2 days back so mostly on time and not like scampering for the job but at the same time I'm not planning so ahead that.. there are people who do that but I don't like plan 5 days or 10 days ahead and start. That is really (stress on really) organised.

10. Any concluding comments?

I would love to know how they find the time (to interact online while at work). Not judge them. And some of them are actually like how do I tell you like Panicker (my colleague). I don't know if you had the chance to meet him. He tweets a lot and somehow I feel that's part of his work. Right, they need to (note: he got a phone call & had to leave). So yeah, I wouldn't judge them but I would love to learn how they are able to do some of these things and not just me, I mean. see the tweets of Paniker. You know this person Harsha Bhogle (ex-cricketer for the Indian team, now a famous cricket commentator). So Harsha Bhogle responds to Panicker saying that 'you must have 36 hours a day'. So, he (Harsha Bhogle) is retweeting his (panicker's) thing and saying how do you manage to do this? And if somebody like that can have that question, I'm having the same question, how is he able to do it? Not only is he tweeting, but he is able to comment on to others. So which means he has read atleast most part of the links that he sent him which is ridiculous. So I don't know how he is able to do that. So if people can be productive you know, power to them.