PARKER, KRISTI L., M.A. iDisconnect: Smartphones, Social Media and Mobile Mediation. (2014)
Directed by Dr. Kenneth Allan. 152 pp.

This thesis examines the evolution of mobile phones, social media and their impacts on self, social interaction and society. Key elements include how the use of mobile phones blurs fundamental aspects of social organization such as the distinction between public and private life, understandings of time and space and social norms of behavior in face to face interaction. Additionally, social media further blurs these fundamental aspects of social organization of daily life, and offers sites for self-expression to a mass audience which has important implications for personal privacy. The primary data source was focused interviews with 11 smartphone owners and social media users, whether past or present. The study's key findings provide a nuanced understanding of people's relationships with smartphones, social media, each other and their perceptions of mobile mediated interactions. Ultimately, this exploratory work illuminates the complexity of people's relationships with these communicative technologies and invites further research into various and sundry aspects of mobile mediated interactions.

IDISCONNECT: SMARTPHONES, SOCIAL MEDIA
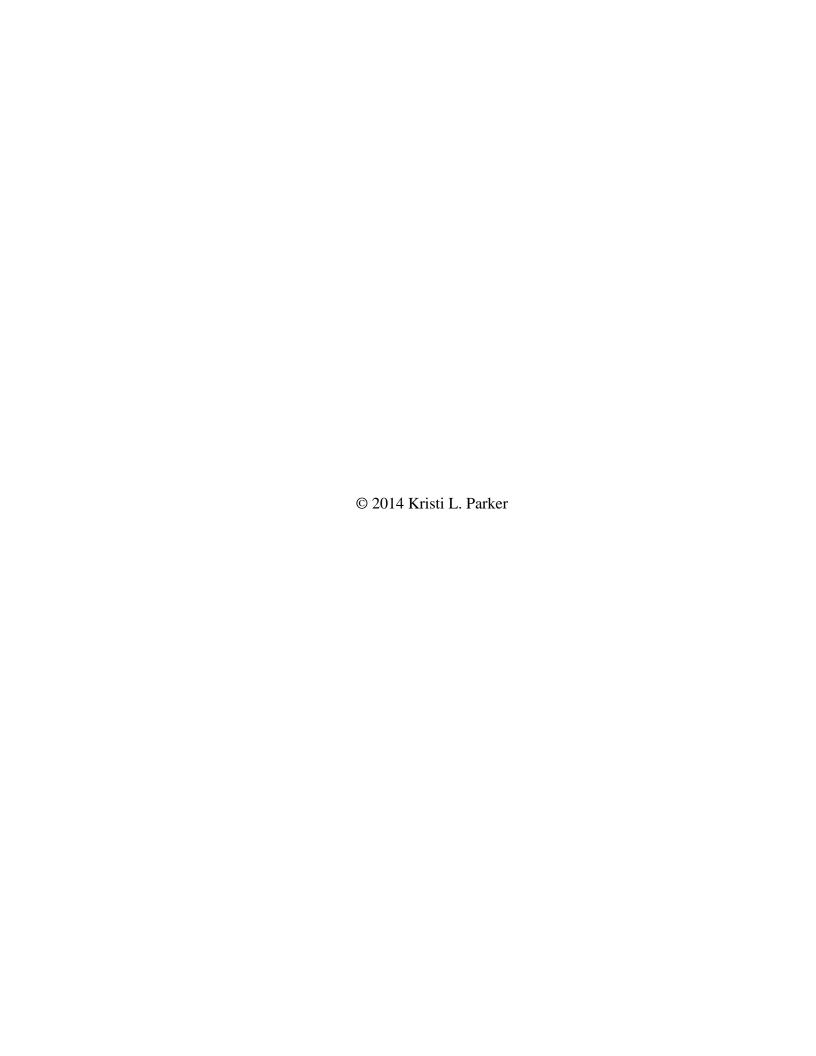
AND MOBILE MEDIATION

by

Kristi L. Parker

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
the University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Greensboro
2014

Approved by

_____
Committee Chair

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair_____

Committee Members_____

_____

_____
Date of Acceptance by Committee

_____
Date of Final Oral Examination

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the early to mid-1990s, the proliferation of mobile phones began in much of Europe and the U.S. Although widespread adoption rates varied greatly across continents, by the mid to late 1990s it was clear that mobile communication technologies were increasingly becoming a part of daily life for many people. In the past couple of decades, technological affordances of mobile devices have continually evolved, and social norms of behavior, uses, perceptions and expectations of these devices, as well as our experiences of ourselves and others in face-to-face interactions, have evolved along with them. Accordingly, since the late 1990s, social scientists have turned an eye toward the myriad ways the widespread adoption of mobile communication devices have changed society.

I came to this project because it seemed that the intersection of smartphones and social media was an important socio-technological moment, and that perhaps, a new way of being in the world was emerging. As a non-native to digital technology, but only by a few years, I had the advantage of observing how mobile communication technologies facilitated changes in forms and flows of social interaction and offered new personal and professional possibilities for flexibility as we became less bound in time and to space. As mobile telephones became ubiquitous, I observed a shift from intrusion to inclusion in

face-to-face interactions and, more generally, daily life. No longer were these simply tools for coordination and an increased sense of security, but they had become a lifeline of sorts; something many people did not feel safe leaving behind. Not only were they fearful of being without it, they were also fearful of not reacting to its beckoning calls from others elsewhere when otherwise engaged with physically present others.

About a decade into this unofficial fieldwork, social media came onto the communicative scene and offered yet another site for examination. From Friendster to MySpace and finally Facebook, new sites for self-expression offered a much larger stage and the ability to reach a mass audience. Quickly, it became clear that this, too, was having a profound impact on face-to-face interaction as conversations were increasingly interwoven with references to content from social media. When the first smartphone entered the market in 2007, conversations and situations were not only laced with references to content, but were increasingly sites for content creation, with social media as the method of dissemination. It was increasingly the case that the focus in face-to-face interaction was on presenting and projecting the goings on of the present here and now to a vast audience of distant others accessible on social media with the smartphone. It was increasingly the case that we found those in range to be out of reach (Zhao and Elesh 2008).

With each new technological affordance, and each observed shift in social life, new questions emerged. I wondered what this meant for situated interactions, intimacy and trust, if we could no longer trust that our presence was enough to warrant another's

sustained attention for the duration of a conversation. What did it mean for the flow of conversations and the exchange of ideas and energy? What importance does the place of the body hold in experience in a world flattened on the screen? What, if any, where the implications for civil society if members were increasingly connected with known others at practically any and all times? How would the network effect private lives lived in public? What kind of people would we become when constantly connected to a device that enables access to nearly infinite others elsewhere? As people live their daily lives connected to social media and mobile apps, sharing ever increasing amounts of personal information that is then calculated, quantified and kept "safely" in computing clouds indefinitely, what would all this mean? Are people aware of how their personal data is used, or is that something that flies under the radar? And, more recently, would there be a distinct change in mobile and social media activity in light of the NSA leaks by Edward Snowden? Put simply, in what van Dijck (2013) calls a culture of connectivity, what kind of people have we become? That these questions cannot be answered easily or definitively, should not keep us from trying. However, to begin to understand any of this, we must first begin to understand how people see themselves, their interactions and their experiences with and of each other and these technologies.

The goal of this exploratory research project is to gain insight into how smartphone users perceive their interactions and relationships are impacted by and enacted with smartphones and social media. I will also explore how users manage connections, identities, interactions, and privacy in this ever-changing communicative landscape. I will examine four overarching research questions: (1) How do participants perceive the place

of the smartphone phone in connecting with and being in the social world? (2) How do users of mobile media view their impact on self and identity? And what, if any, privacy concerns do they express? (3) How do smartphone users view their impact on face to face interactions? And (4) What are users' perceptions of interactions via mobile media?

Instead of taking a strictly thematic approach to reviewing the literature, I will organize this work based on the features available on mobile phones as they evolved from devices for making voice calls to small hand held devices with calling, texting, and photo sharing capabilities, to the current state of so called "smartphones." Additionally, I will be taking a closer look at the affordances of the latest iteration of mobile phone technology, the "smartphone," which has all of the above mentioned features that previous mobile phones had and is also a hand held computer, providing internet access and computational capacity far beyond desktop personal computers available less than a decade ago. Precisely because "smartphones" are the most up to date mobile phone technology and are increasingly common, a discussion of the implications of mobile phones for society without also considering the impact of social media—Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and Vine to name a few—would misunderstand the enormity of consequences of the combination of the two communication technologies. Because social media is often accessed via mobile phones, and, for many, is one of the primary functions of their smartphones utilized on a daily basis, omitting this aspect of mobile telephony would immediately render this work obsolete.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mobile Mediated Interaction: Cell Phones and Society 1.0

The earliest versions of mobile phones provided the same communicative affordances as landline phones with one major exception: instead of being located in a particular physical place, they could be used anytime in anyplace. As Wellman (2000) put it, instead of place as the portal, now the person was the portal. No longer were people calling a fixed line phone where any number of other people might answer; instead, they were attempting to reach a person on their private, mobile phone, via their private portal. In effect, this increased "personalization of communication" (Campbell and Park 2008:381) occurred because mobile phone owners had control over who had their number and the caller knew they were calling to speak to an individual without having to go through a gatekeeper of any sort.

In the beginning, mobiles were primarily used by business people, particularly those who traveled for work and for others who could afford to have one in case of emergency and/or for quick coordination with others while on the go. However, as costs for usage plans and mobile phones decreased significantly, ownership and use became commonplace for people in many countries, including the U.S.

Among the many themes in the literature on mobile phones in the earliest stages of ubiquitous use, the most frequently addressed are: reasons for adoption, how they were used and with whom, evolving social norms resulting from what was seen by many as an intrusive technology, impacts on social interaction, blurring of the public/private divide, new ways of using time and space, and the mobile phone as an extension of the self and a place for identity formation.

Mobile phone adoption was found to be influenced largely by family members, particularly parents who wanted their children to have them for safety purposes (Campbell and Russo 2003). Given that families played a significant role in encouraging adoption of the technology, it is not surprising that findings indicate that cell phones were primarily used to maintain and strengthen existing, close ties (Ling and Yttri 2002; Campbell and Russo 2003; Wei and Lo 2006; Campbell and Park 2008; Hampton 2011; Jin and Park 2012). Scholars agree that cell phones were used for both instrumental purposes such as coordinating activities as well as for relational purposes, such as nurturing existing relationships (Licoppe 2004; Campbell and Park 2008; White and White 2008; Pettigrew 2009).

Once individuals had one, they were then faced with decisions about when, where and how to use the mobile. While many scholars rely on Goffman's theories as a theoretical frame for how face to face interactions are performed and managed, few do it as well as Lee Humphreys in her 2005 study on how mobile phones affect interpersonal relationships. She applies Goffman's concept of "cross talk" to social interactions

between a mobile phone user and the collocated person, and the interaction between the mobile user and the person they are speaking with on the phone. She argues that the collocated person with the cell phone user enacts many of the same strategies as they would if the intrusion from the incoming call was actually a collocated person interrupting the interaction. She also found that the person engaged in "cross talk" finds herself on dual "front stages," at times needing to work on "impression management" on both fronts (Humphreys 2005).

Humphreys (2005) found that, although the reason for the call sometimes lessened the negative feelings toward the collocated person who allowed the intrusion of the caller, overall, respondents reported feeling "annoyed" or "put off" by their friends giving priority to the incoming caller instead of the face to face interaction. In her study, it was clear that both collocated parties understood that the possibility of the intrusion was distasteful, as some respondents preemptively warned the collocated interactant of the possibility of an interruption and necessity to allow the intrusion due to the importance of the caller/call for whatever reason. Mobiles were increasingly intruding upon interactions of collocated actors, and at times were being used not only for instrumental purposes, but increasingly for expressive purposes (Humphreys 2005). The mobile phone was a way for people to establish a sense of co-presence with distant others without consideration of time or space for either actor. With the advent of mobiles, instead of physical proximity as a primary determining factor of co-presence, individuals were able to establish a similar sense of co-presence via "electronic proximity" (Dertouzos 1998 as cited in Zhao 2003:446).

Since mobiles were primarily utilized for strengthening existing bonds and, for some, used to establish a sense of co-presence with distant others, the boundaries between public and private became increasingly blurred through what Fortunati (2002:522) refers to as the "privatization of public space" and the "publicization of privacy". With nearly constant accessibility, the clear demarcation between public and private life that once was a fundamental aspect of modern society, was no longer a given, and, in many cases, was simply no longer an option. With widespread mobile phone ownership, public space was increasingly appropriated for private conversations. With mobile users erected "symbolic fences" (Campbell and Park 2008:378) around themselves, there were inevitable shifts in interaction to accommodate the "always on, always connected" nature of the then new communicative technology. In considering how mobile phones were being used, and given that personal privacy is contingent upon spatial privacy (Ford 2011), as most people became armed with connective technology that rendered them within communicative reach practically anytime, anyplace, Vincent (2006) raised concerns about managing private lives with a device designed for public use.

With changes in the use of space occurring, and normative behaviors in interaction shifting to accommodate these new uses, the uses and perceptions of time also began to shift. As people began to embrace the affordances of mobile mediated contact, work lives were often managed in part during what once would have been considered private time, private lives were managed in what once was considered work time and time/space between activities or events, which had previously been a time and space of

transitioning from one field to another, was suddenly available for what I see as *communicative productivity*. Space no longer regulated communication between an individual and her network, and those "precious moments…which structured the network of relationships inside a rhythm of presence/absence" (Fortunati 2002:518) were then populated with mobile phone use.

Using Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus as theoretical frames, in an article arguing that "a new field of social spaces in between the established ones of home, work and social lives" was created, Hulme and Truch (2006:45) make the case that as mobiles shift uses of time and space, along with the roles and activities acted out in time and space, simultaneity replaces linearity. The liminal time/space between events, which Hulme and Truch (2006:45) refer to as "interspace," has become something different altogether. Interspace was previously said to be important to identity creation, presentation and maintenance and was therefore thought by some to be at least as important, if not more so, than the events before or after it. Previously conceptualized as a transitional space, Hulme and Truch argue that "interspace" has become a field of its own as people use it to connect with other fields via mobile phones. Once a place of reflection about the field one just left and of the field one was moving/transitioning into, Hulme and Truch see it as a field in itself where actors engage in a *communicative economy*, creating, maintaining and strengthening their identities as they go from one physical space to another. Again, we are reminded of the person as the portal (Wellman 2000).

Hulme and Truch (2006) argue that this new field has contradictory effects: it can at once offer opportunities to strengthen identity claims due to reaffirming feedback of connecting, or can potentially render individuals jolted and jarred from the rapid rate of transition from one field to the next. Without the time between fields for reflection, in which we think about what is next before being thrust into it, individuals no longer have or take the time to sort out where they are situated, or to situate themselves. Rather, they are in a near constant tug of war between fields and potentially competing and at times conflicting identities, constantly inserting themselves into one situation, and then another, whether physically or virtually.

As uses of time and space shifted, and new norms began to form out of a necessity for incorporation of these widespread communicative devices, a new reality began to arise. One of the few scholars who addressed large scale changes in society as a result of mobile phones relatively early on was Leopoldina Fortunati in her 2002 article, "The Mobile Phone: Towards new categories and social relations." She builds her argument, first, on the premise that social productivity levels have increased to the point that new perceptions of time and space have been constructed. With people increasingly "working" time and space to expand both and get as much out of them as possible, she argues that "space and time have become the new frontiers of increased social productivity" (Fortunati 2002:514).

Fortunati (2002) sees people's relationship with space as complex and increasingly difficult to understand as a result of previous technological changes such as

television and landline telephones, and so she makes the case that the mobile phone is an instrument that helps people overcome the uncertainty or anxiety resulting from this changing relationship with space. As she puts it, "the mobile phone is a device that enables people, when they perceive the surrounding environment as extraneous to them" to "react to the lack of informative immediacy of the place" by "contact[ing] somebody of their intimate circle…to active the reassuring procedure of recognition," in effect, "strengthening communicative immediacy with their social networks by means of the mobile" (Fortuati 2002:515). She argues that this leads to a situation where people are faced with a choice between what she refers to as "chance socialness" (with those known and unknown, collocated others) and "chosen socialness" with known others via the mobile phone (Fortunati 2002:515).

According to Fortunati (2002:515), people most often opt for the "chosen socialness" with those in the social network rather than "chance socialness" with those physically located and within natural communicative reach, in part because the relationship with this new, expanded space requires a new understanding, even a new reality, of space, which leads to a fascination of sorts with that which is elsewhere, yet reachable, in this new spatial reality. Fortunati points out that an outcome of this relatively new found fascination with elsewhere is that it creates more distance between the unknown, despite their close physical proximity. With the "knowable" at their fingertips, "physical space is in fact emptied of significance" (Fortunati 2002:515).

Prior to the mobile phone, there was significance in putting physical space between oneself and the physical structure one considered home, in "getting out of the house." Getting out of the house involved experiencing and coming into contact with unknowns. One may experience unforeseen circumstances and encounter unknown others, strangers if you will, that likely would not have happened if one were at home. In essence, one had to leave the comforts of home without any assurance that they would come into contact with friends or family, known others, for the duration of their time away. With mobile phones, this time away is no longer a requisite of leaving home, for "the mobile phone in itself becomes a true mobile home" (Fortunati 2002:520). With this new mobile home, a sense of belonging has the potential to expand to many places; however, it is not belonging in that particular space and time, with the particular circumstances and unknown others. The belonging is with the known others accessible via the mobile phone/home in many places and many times, allowing the user to "[bound] back and forth from one place to another," often at the cost of "interrupting the continuity of space itself" (Fortunati 2002:520).

The emphasis on elsewhere means that public space is no longer lived to the fullest, but is instead "kept in the background of an itinerant cellular 'intimacy'" (Fortunati 2002:516). Put another way, public space is relegated to background noise; basically setting the scene of our 'personal' lives. By virtue of this "cellular intimacy" that Fortunati (2002:516) describes, moving further from the unknown with a preference for uniformity and predictability, can lead to becoming rigid and closed. In other words, for those who give preference to known others via mobiles phones in *elsewhere oriented*

interaction, they can become trapped in *a cycle of sameness* that keeps them from experiencing life in a less than *self-centered, self-directed way.*

Fortunati (2002) illustrates how the rigidity and sameness of communication shared between one's intimates is largely lacking in meaning. Rather than content being the focus or most meaningful aspect of interactions with known others via mobiles, the more important matter is that the communication occurs, frequently. In other words, she says that in mobile communicative mode, much like the pre-mobile mode in daily lives of families or close intimates, the principle of "maximum fusion" is kept to (Fortunati 2002:516); that "the contents of mobile calls, 'a greater interest in presenting than representing the world, describing experiences rather than exploring their meanings, exhibiting participation rather than analysing'" (Minnini 1999:57 as cited in Fortunati 2002:516). What Fortunati (2002) wishes to show the reader is that with mobile mediated communication, in a sense, it has to be more about quantity than quality because without the nuances of face to face interaction, where one has additional, non-verbal means by which to convey meaning, mobile communication lacks the richness to be measured on the same scale as face to face interaction.

As is evident, the introduction of mobile phones with calling capabilities alone enacted significant changes in many of the fundamental aspects of being in the social world. New understandings and uses of time and space, blurred boundaries between public and private spheres, changes in perceptions of appropriate and inappropriate interactions with collocated others as mobile phone made "presence" possible with

distant others in settings that were previously not an option, all ushering in an era with

new ways of strengthening ties with those closest to us. This expansion of connective

capabilities and what I call the *communicative economy*, is not only notable, but is also

the beginning of a shift from intrusion to inclusion of mobile phones in daily life.

Textual Intimacy, "Connected Presence" and "Divided Mind"

One aspect of mobile mediated interaction that has had a profound impact on

interaction is the use of mobile phones to capture and disseminate data objects. Early

mobile data objects were text messages, which helped usher in a new concept of gift

giving (texts as gifts), and a way of being across time and space, establishing what

Licoppe (2004) calls 'connected presence'.

The common themes in the literature on users' reasons for incorporating text/SMS

into their communicative economy had to do primarily with it being a more discrete form

of communication and that the asynchronous nature of it made it more efficient at times

when talking was either not an option or not preferred (Riviere and Licoppe 2005; Baron

and Ling 2007; Reid and Reid 2010). By virtue of being less intrusive to face to face

interaction for both the person initiating contact and the person being contacting, and by

not requiring immediate response, texts thereby increase accessibility of those in the

user's personal network (Srivastava 2005). Mobile phone users also report privacy as a

reason for texting instead of talking (Srivastava 2005; Baron and Ling 2007; White and

White 2008; Reid and Reid 2010). This increased access to privacy in public space made

it possible for more intimate messages to be communicated via mobile phones (Oksman

and Turtiainen 2004; Ito 2005; Okabe and Ito 2006; Pettigrew 2009). With increased

14

blurring of boundaries between public and private spheres and with time and space simultaneously being compressed and expanded, increasing the opportunities for access to one's personal network was particularly appealing and had much to do with how the technology came to be used. Like mobile calls before it, texting was, and continues to be, a way to access one's personal network anytime, anyplace.

The perceptions, meanings, uses and gratifications of text messaging on mobile phones have been reported by many scholars. For the most part, they agree that it is used for relationship management within close relationships (Licoppe 2004; Ito 2005; Baron and Ling 2006; Garcia-Montes et al 2006; Okabe and Ito 2006; Vincent 2006; Christensen 2009; Green and Singleton 2009; Pettigrew 2009). The two primary categories of connecting that involve relationship management can be classified as informational (for organizing and coordinating events of daily life) and relational (expressive) (Pettigrew 2009). Another important way in which the technology is used is as a site for self-presentation and identity formation (Licoppe 2004; Oksman and Turtiainen 2004; Srivastava 2005; Campbell and Park 2008; Green and Singleton 2009; Pettigrew 2009).

Although texts are widely used for instrumental purposes, findings indicate that a majority of text messages are used for expressive purposes (Licoppe 2004; Green and Singleton 2009). As previously noted, text messages are typically exchanges between close friends, family members or other loved ones, making it no surprise that they are most often used to establish "relational proximity" between close ties, creating a

connected mode of communication (Licoppe 2004:139). In the connected mode of communication, a combination of interactional media are used to create the communicative "technoscape" (Licoppe 2004:135). With the inclusion of mobile text messaging in the "relational economy," a new way of reactivating, reassuring and reaffirming connections emerges (Licoppe 2004:140). Licoppe refers to this new way of being together "connected presence" (2004:140). To achieve connected presence, the focus is less on the content of messages and more on frequency (Licoppe 2004).

Aside from being convenient, sometimes the choice of texting rather than talking is strategic (Licoppe 2004; Riviere and Licoppe 2005). One such strategic use that falls into the category of relationship management, but is not part of the connected mode, is that of conversational control (Baron and Ling 2006). Some prefer texting because it keeps the exchange short, and therefore saves time and energy that talking might require (Riviere and Licoppe 2005), while others prefer texting because it is less of a threat to their autonomy (Oksman and Turtiainen 2004; Baron and Ling 2006; Pettigrew 2009).

A preference for text over talk is at times a means of distancing from a potentially difficult interaction, having time to think about a response without the pressure of the near immediate response expected in conversations, having increased control of self-presentation in communication (Baron and Ling 2006; Garcia-Montes 2006). Not only does it offer more control over how one might respond to a message, it also provides an opportunity not to respond at all, which can also be a show of power by the person who opts out of the interaction (Pettigrew 2009).

As we consider how "simultaneity of place" impacts face to face interactions, Garcia-Montes et al (2006:72) would have us understand this as having a "divided mind." At the moment we engage with distant others via mobile phone, we are only half there in the mobile mediated interaction and with the collocated interaction. This inattention in face to face interaction and preference to mediated interaction relegates the collocated other to a by-stander and renders their presence insignificant, giving greater importance to connectedness than connecting (Srivastava 2005).

With increasingly busy lives and time and space being emptied out and overpopulated at once by increased accessibility of distant others and persistence of mobile immediacy, people demand more of what Goffman (1973) refers to as civil inattention (as cited in Riviere and Licoppe 2005:118). These demands come in the form of carving out public space for private interaction, as Campbell and Park (2008:378) call it, placing "symbolic fences" around ourselves. As was the case with mobile calls, mobiles with texting capabilities only exacerbate the issue of increased personalization of communication and the role conflicts that can arise when carving out private space in public.

Garcia-Montes et al. (2006:68) argue that "not only do people use technology for their own purposes, but technology also transforms people according to its own rules of functioning" (paraphrasing Illich 1982). Applying what was previously discussed, as the emphasis on connectedness became commonplace, ubiquitous use led to expectations of and dependence on ability to be constantly connected for creating meaning with close

ties, mobile communication technologies became closely linked to identity formation (Licoppe 2004; Oksman and Turtiainen 2004; Srivastava 2005; Baron and Ling 2006; Campbell and Park 2008; Green and Singleton 2009; Pettigrew 2009). Hence, with increased individualization of communication via mobile phones, as well as implications of widespread access to other technological advances in the past couple of decades such as the internet, a new type of individual emerged (Fortunati 2002; Garcia-Montes et al 2006). Additionally, individuals are less influenced by institutions that in the past structured social behavior and facilitated identity formation. This partial disconnect, or uncoupling of identity from institutions also has a profound effect on identity and a sense of belonging (Garcia-Montes et al 2006).

Garcia-Montes et al (2006:69) go on to use Cushman's (1991, 1995) "empty self" and Gergen's (1992) "saturated self" to explain how mobile phones further facilitate the postmodern personality. They explain Cushman's so called "empty self" as an experience of identity by those who lack a sense of belonging to community, tradition and shared values and meaning, and in turn leaves the individual lacking in self-worth and personal convictions (Garcia-Montes et al 2006). As Bauman (2000:20 as cited in Garcia-Montes et al 2006:69) argues, this "produces a kind of 'undifferentiated emotional hunger'". This type of individual with the "empty self" becomes reliant on and desperate for communication with others, relying on a variety of information from various sources to carry on in daily life (Garcia-Montes et al 2006). The self that needs access to connectedness with distant others at all times and which needs near constant feedback or input from distant sources is, as Garcia-Montes et al (2006:69) said, like a plug looking

for/in need of a socket. In this way, the 'empty self' is a 'saturated self' by virtue of plugging in to so many and so much.

As would be expected of any object that provides a means by which to connect to one's entire network and is often worn on the body or within reach at almost all times, people become emotionally attached to their mobile phones (Vincent 2006). As repositories of some of the most intimate data objects (text messages), and places where (mediated) interactions are remembered and revisited, many scholars found that respondents reported feeling lost, alone, or like they might die without their mobile phones (Plant 2002 as cited in Garcia-Montes et al 2006; Garcia-Montes et al 2006; Turkle 2008, 2011).

Taking a step back, and considering the implications of all that has been presented to this point, we see the emergence of what Campbell and Park (2008:371) call a "personal communication society." They argue that society has evolved from a mass communication society, to what Castells (2010a) called the "network society" to what we find today in our individualized, personal communication society, where one's personal network is the bedrock of social interaction and identity. Looking back further, Riviere and Licoppe (2005) apply Richard Sennett's work to argue that perhaps this increasingly personalized communication society leads to an *uncivil society* as a result of the increased emotional and expressive communication in public on mobile phones. With an emphasis on personalization of public space and pervading intimacy in public, according to Riviere and Licoppe (2005), Sennett might argue that people are less interested in joint action

19

than when public space is not saturated with private lives of those moving through and interacting within it.

Visual Viewpoint Sharing, "Ambient Virtual Co-presence" and "Intimate Visual Co-presence"

In the lineup of mobile phone features, the one to come along after the added ability to send short text messages (texts/SMS) was the ability to capture and send digital photographs. With the addition of digital cameras to mobile phones, the next shift in communication began in earnest. Upon release, the digital photography feature advancement on mobile phones was instantly popular. Though uses of camphones and adoption rates for sending photo messages (MMSs) varied some by country for the same reasons rates of texting initially varied (culture and cost), the ubiquitous use of camphones was a forgone conclusion upon release.

Before camphones, personal photography was typically used to capture special occasions, but with the introduction of digital photography on mobile phones, personal photography was suddenly an option for many mobile users any time they had their mobile phone on them. With this change, no longer was visually capturing a moment only a priority for special occasions or left to the chance that someone had a camera with them at the time, but rather practically any moment could be visually captured by a camphone and made accessible to others almost immediately via upload to a blog or by MMS (multimedia message service), or saved for personal consumption or collocated sharing later (Ito and Okabe 2005; Ito 2005; Van House 2009; Satchell and Graham 2010).

In a study of emergent "technosocial situations" resulting from ubiquitous use of camphones, Ito and Okabe (2005) found that the uses of camphones continue usage patterns observed in their previous research on mobile phones, "towards personal, portable, and pedestrian forms of use" (as cited in Okabe and Ito 2006:6). Okabe (2004:4) find that personal archiving is a new use of the mobile phone, in that it is most often used as a personal, "street-level" visual collection of the user's everyday life. Participants in their study report that the most important aspect of these casually snapped photos is their personal viewpoint.

Ito and Okabe (2005, 2006) have two versions of what Licoppe (2004) calls "connected presence," whereby mobile users send text messages to establish a sense of shared experience and awareness of one another. They see "ambient virtual co-presence" (Okabe and Ito 2006:4) as the more general practice of sharing "newsworthy" material, and "intimate visual co-presence" (Ito 2005; Okabe and Ito 2006:9) as visual sharing with an even smaller group of close knit distant others. For them, the visual accessibility and sharing snippets of daily life with a partner is their primary purpose in sharing photos via camphones. Much the same as mobile calls before texts, and then texts thereafter, the focus is on being in touch rather than the content of the messages.

Finally, Okabe and Ito find that peer-to-peer sharing, particularly of things they find "newsworthy" is a common reason for capturing images on one's camphone (2006:12). They emphasis the notion of "newsworthy" in this section because for mobile users, the language they use around it is the same as is used when discussing "material"

for news reports. Whereas "newsworthy" events that were once experienced in daily life were "reported" to friends and family by *telling* them the story of the occurrence, Okabe and Ito find that mobile phone users take advantage of camphones ability for *showing* their stories.

Even in research on the earliest versions of camphones, with limited ways of sharing images captured, perhaps one of the most important findings is that of heightened visual awareness and particular attentiveness to what might be of visual interest to others as one carries on in daily life (Okabe and Ito 2006). When they asked participants if they were thinking of sharing the photos when they took them, the response was a resounding "YES". Exactly what this heightened awareness and attentiveness to what might be of potential interest to others, and the urge to capture and share it could have important implications for how we move through our daily lives. As Okabe and Ito note (2006:14), this heightened visual awareness of camphone users means that the gaze of the camphone is ever present and potentially ready to capture something any of us are doing that someone else might consider to be "newsworthy" or even simply noteworthy. As I continue the discussion of the evolution of mobile telephony and the various and sundry ways in which it has and continues to change daily life, I will return to the shift toward heightened visual awareness, increasingly prolific content creators and what has seemingly become an insatiable urge to share experiences through visual data.

Van House (2009) uses Goffman and Butler's concepts of performativity as theoretical frames to illustrate how sharing personal photography with collocated others

provides an important place for constructing personal and group memories, creating and

maintaining relationships, self-presentation and self-expression (Van House et al 2004 as

cited in Van House 2009:1075). In Goffman's case, they were performing a self, and

constructing an identity, whereas with Butler, they were enacting identity-calling it into

being. She sees the self-authoring aspect of collocated photo sharing as a place for self-

presentation, and the story-telling aspect a place for self-expression, or in Goffman's

terms, places for "facework" and "impressions management." She also argues that the

process of sharing personal photography offers a chance for the person sharing photos to

reflect and come to know and understand herself better, both through the images and the

process of creating a self-narrative around the images. According to Van House, in

creating the autobiographical narrative, we are both performing a self and enacting our

identity in the process.

Satchell and Graham (2010) also take a look at the relationship between mobile

users, visual content creation and identity. In a culture defined by connectivity and

obsessed with constant contact, a key theme among participants was that with the mobile

phone came the obligation to provide updates to others "through capturing and circulation

of experiences" (Satchell 2005 as cited in Satchell and Graham 2010:252). With the

affordances of the mobile app, users put the software to good use for communicating with

their network, making themselves available to some and seemingly unavailable to others.

In many ways, the app allows for the best of both worlds: the opportunity to discourage

unwanted contact, yet still being visually available to those within one's network, in

effect, nurturing intimacy and trust all the while.

According to Satchell and Graham (2010), it was not uncommon for users to have an image up, accompanied by text, to indicate that they were in a meeting, or in some other setting that it would be inappropriate for anyone to interrupt them, but to then contact another friend to meet, in a sense, on the "down low." This practice is a great example of users managing two fronts at once, but, with it, comes the risk of being caught if someone who sees an away message indicating a friend is in a meeting, but then sees her in a café with another friend. Instead of nurturing intimacy and trust, this scenario would have quite the opposite effect.

Another common use is posting photos of what is currently going on is embedding interest arousing text with images. This use is often meant to "give others the picture" of what is going on, encourage those who can to join, and, for those who could not join, to show what they are missing (Satchell and Graham 2010:256). This up to the minute visual capture and posting of moments leads to increased performativity and users making a good show (Satchell and Graham 2010), and is another way that identity is being conveyed with a mobile mediated visual language.

Okabe and Ito (2006:1) argue that "the camera phone is part of an overall trend towards non-voice functions in the mobile." With the rapid rise in camphone ownership, the ease with which most cell phone owners can capture, store and later share large quantities of digital images if they choose, the emphasis on viewpoint sharing, heightened visual awareness, and use of camphones as a means by which to capture, chronicle and frame even the most mundane aspects of daily life as newsworthy or somehow dramatic

(Ito 2005; Okabe and Ito 2006; Van House 2009, Satchell and Graham 2010), it raises the question of whether we are seeing a shift toward a visual language that is taking on far more importance than spoken or written language in the mobile mediated culture. Taking all of this into consideration, it seems that in a culture of mobile mediation, for some, one of the most important ways we come to know ourselves, each other and understand the world around us is through the images we capture and share via camphones.

"Smartphones" Front and Center

The next development in mobile phone technology was the addition of internet capabilities. With lives increasingly lived and led on the go, continued blurring of the public and private boundaries, and increased reliance on computers to manage and carry out much of the communication in our work and private lives, it was an attractive proposition to add internet connectivity to mobile phones. Although the earliest and most basic version with internet access was released in 2002, the first version to become commonplace in certain circles was called the PDA (personal digital assistant) or PalmPilot, and was released in 2003. This was at roughly the same time camphones came on the market.

Although these phones had internet capabilities, due to slow connection speeds, and functional limitations making it difficult to attach images or access content online, the internet function was primarily utilized for sending and receiving emails rather than surfing the internet or accessing other internet content. That said, it should come as no surprise that the early adopters of this technology were those who were initially using them primarily for work, as the boundaries between their work and private lives were

increasingly blurred. The most popular PDA was the Blackberry, sometimes referred to as a "Crackberry" because of the seemingly addictive behaviors users often displayed with the device.

In June of 2007, the next, and arguably most drastic advancement in mobile telephony occurred when Apple Inc. released the first ever iPhone. The iPhone was the first of what we now refer to as "smartphones," and was the only one on the market until October 2008, when smartphones operating on the Android operating system became available. The iPhone was unlike any mobile phone before it, both in appearance and functionality. The most outstanding characteristics of "smartphones" are touchscreens instead of buttons, internet connectivity and that there are "apps" that can be downloaded either for free or at a cost. There are hundreds of thousands of apps, if not more, ranging from those which identify items in the solar system by simply opening the app and aiming one's iPhone at the night sky, to gaming apps, to credit card readers that turn your mobile phone into a place anyone with a smartphone can accept credit card payments, to those which act as a stock broker of sorts. Apps fulfill commercial, personal assistant, entertainment, informational, and educational purposes, just to name a few.

Aside from the various new ways mobile phones could be used, one of the aspects that was most appealing to consumers was that the internet experience on smartphones was more like what users were accustomed to on their PCs. The newness of the interface, new affordances and the ability to easily integrate one's online activities with the already established fascination with mobile phones changed the user profile of mobile mediated

connectors with internet access from mostly business or life management via a PDA, to those who wished to easily access the internet while on the go. The device introduced an entirely new way of connecting to the world via handheld mobiles, and soon came to be utilized not only for communication and information purposes, but also as a leisure activity.

The iPhone expanded users' horizons by integrating their social networking activities, content creating capabilities and making mobile viewpoint sharing to a mass audience a possibility almost instantaneously. Coupled with the ever increasing dependence on mobile devices, this was a huge step in the evolution of mobile telephony and the emergence of an increasingly mobile mediated self. With the introduction of the iPhone, we also saw that for many, mobiles moved further from intrusion to inclusion in social interaction.

In the next section, I transition away from focusing strictly on mobile phones, because as Schroeder (2010:77) argues, to understand "technologically-mediated sociability," we must consider a range of communication technologies rather than investigate any one in isolation. In keeping with this sentiment, I discuss Social Networking Sites, and eventually look at the intersection of mobile phones and SNSs.

According to (De Grazia 2005; Stearns 2001 as cited in Schroeder 2010:82), "consumer culture has been globalized" and mobile phone ownership is "a universal feature of belonging to this culture" (Schroeder 2010:82). As Schroeder (2010) and Katz (2008) see it, although mobiles expand people's choices about when and where to

connect with others, it also constrains choice. To be under 60 years old in "wealthy

industrialized societies" (Katz 2008:443) and not have a mobile phone "is frowned

upon," Katz (2008:443) suggests. The only real choice now is how to spread relationships

through mobile media, not whether or not to have a mobile (Schroeder 2010). Schroeder

(2010:85) sees the main significance not as anytime, anyplace connecting, but, rather, "an

increasingly tethered… and technologically mediated form of sociability and consuming

information." He also argues that the most limiting factor to connectedness (of any type)

is a user's attention (Schroeder 2010:79), therefore an "attention economy" emerges

between devices and forms of multimodal connectedness.

Social Media 1.0

With multimodal connectedness as a reality, it is necessary to turn our attention

from the technological affordances and uses of mobile phones to Social Networking Sites

(SNSs). As mentioned, a discussion of an emergent culture of mobile mediation would be

incomplete at best, and irrelevant at worst, without giving considerable space and thought

to how the convergence of these two connective technologies came to such an ever

present place in the daily lives of millions of people worldwide, facilitating a population

that is increasingly prolific in a new connective economy. Generally speaking, SNSs are

online environments designed as spaces for sharing and connecting with others.

As a result of platform shifts of two of the most widely used SNSs, Facebook and

LinkenIn, occurring in 2008, in talking about Social Networking Sites, I make a

distinction between initial design and uses and the current design and uses. Although

there is surely overlap, there are also distinct and important differences that will be

explored throughout the remaining sections. Originally, SNSs were mostly used for connecting known others and as spaces for connecting with communities that existed offline. However, it is therefore important to make a distinction between SNSs that favor interaction between known others and the often anonymous online communities of the past. Although the most common purpose is to facilitate connections amongst users, the ways and with whom the connections occur vary. Some SNSs, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, favor online interaction between known others, while other social media, such as Pinterest, Flickr and Twitter, are equally likely to connect known and unknown others, simply by virtue of shared interests.

Unlike online communities of the past where users' interactions often began and remained online and were therefore anonymous in life offline, even on SNSs that are widely used by a combination of known and unknown others, identity claims must more closely resemble the real world version than those of online identities in times past (van Dijck 2013; Zhoa and Martin 2008). With another common feature of SNSs being that every user has a profile and some indication of connections to other users, as connecting on these sites becomes more commonplace, congruence between online and offline identity claims became a factor in self-presentation on SNSs (van Dijck 2013). Despite differences in various types of SNSs and their intended audiences, scholars agree that interpersonal communication and self-expression were initially the primary purposes for adopting the technology (Strano 2008; West et al 2009; Mehdizadeh 2010; Schwarz 2010; van Manen 2010; Carr et al 2012; van Dijck 2013).

Sites such as Friendster and MySpace appeared in 2002 and 2003 respectively, but not until Facebook came into the picture did these sites begin to become a part of most people's daily lives, whether because they were members or because they could not escape frequent references to it. As the most widely used (currently with 1.3 billion monthly users) and researched SNS, although a variety of other SNSs are mentioned briefly, I will primarily focus on Facebook because it is the first SNS to go mainstream and still has by far the most users.

A history of Facebook illustrates how rapidly the site gained popularity and became a phenomenon of sorts. Founded in February 2004 as "TheFacebook" by Mark Zuckerberg, a Harvard undergraduate student at the time, the site was meant to mimic actual print versions of so called Facebooks that many universities, groups and organizations used to help members get acquainted with, and contact one another (van Manen 2010). Like the face books it was modeled after, a user's homepage on Facebook featured a photo of the user's choice, space for personal interests, demographic and biographic information, a headline type feature called a "status", a way to contact the user and potentially "connect" with them by sending a "friend" request. If the request was accepted, the contact was now a "friend".

Although the site was initially launched exclusively for Harvard students, by the next month, it was extended to include less than a hand full of other ivy-league institutions. Throughout 2004, it became available to other U.S. universities, and by the end of the year Facebook had nearly 1 million active users (*The New York Times* 2013).

Throughout 2004 and 2005, millions of dollars were invested in Facebook, and by September of 2005, the site had nearly 5 million registered college students as users, and opened up to high schools (*The New York Times* 2013). The requirement for opening a Facebook account was having a ".edu" email address. On September 4, 2006, a mere three days after Zuckerberg rejected an offer of $900 million from Yahoo to purchase Facebook, the ".edu" requirement was dropped, and anyone was allowed to join.

In November 2006, the "share" feature was added, which allowed people to easily share what they were doing on other sites with their Facebook 'friends' (as those within one's Facebook network are called). The "share" feature was the beginning of a turn that was to come in the Facebook platform which began to more easily connect people not only to other people, but also to companies, products and ideas (van Dijck 2013). In November 2007, tailored advertising began on Facebook, selling ads that showed profile pictures along with ads for products they either purchased or shared an opinion about (*The New York Times* 2013). This came as a surprise to many users when they learned their content was used as a "featured ad" for a product they simply "connected" with on Facebook.

For now, I will focus on the state of SNS use, particularly Facebook, up to roughly August of 2008, when there were a reported 145 million active users on the site (Vance 2012). With the popularity and widespread adoption of SNSs, much of interaction moved online, making connections with those near and far, and present and past friends a much easier proposition. As mentioned before, SNSs were used for interpersonal

interaction and self-expression, acting as stages for self-presentation to a mass audience (Carr et al 2012). These sites fulfilled users' desire for having "variable modes of self-presentation" (van Dijck 2013:204), acting as spaces for posting, storing and sharing visual and written accounts of both past and present activities and events.

Van Dijck (2013) argues that the platform largely determines how SNSs can be and are used. As Garde-Hansen (2009) claims in the case of Facebook, the "interface used to be presented as a database *of* users and *for* users where 'each user's page is a database of their life, making this social network site a collection of collections and collectives'" (as cited in Dijck 2013:203). The database platform allowed users to input information in whatever way worked best for them, organizing and ordering information in a spatial, visual way. As databases of personal information, these sites did not tell stories from beginning to end, but instead acted as a montage of a user's life, to be presented in whatever fashion best suited each user. On the database platform, sites did not force users to create a narrative, but rather acted as a space one's treasures. With an emphasis on establishing and maintaining a sense of connectedness between users, early SNSs enhanced real life relationships and supported the expansion of weak ties (van Dijck 2013).

As venues for self-expression, stages for self-presentation and spaces for virtual social interaction, SNSs further challenge our understanding of self, identity, public and private spheres, trust and intimacy. Scholars have taken a variety of approaches to getting at the possible implications of this relatively new venue for social interaction. As a new

site for self-presentation, a logical starting point for some is to determine if people with certain personality traits are more likely than others to use social media (Mehdizadeh 2010). Some scholars examine how users convey meaning and create reality through speech acts in status messages (Carr, Schrock and Dauterman 2012), while others look at users' reasons for selecting particular profile picture(s) and the identity claims they make with those images (Strano 2008). Additionally, the case is made that there is furthering of the fundamental shift of public and private spheres, some arguing that trust, intimacy and privacy are further endangered by increasingly pervasive use of social networking sites (West, Lewis and Currie 2009; van Manen 2010).

Because Facebook users rely more heavily on implicit identity claims, presented visually, rather than explicit claims made via text (Zhao, Grasmuck, and Martin 2008, Mehdizadeh 2010), Facebook is a perfect place for the presentation of an idealized or "hoped-for possible self" (Mehdizadeh 2010:358). That said, I will turn my attention to findings related to visual representations on Facebook. Strano (2008) finds similarities and differences between men and women in reasons for selecting certain types of profile images. Her findings indicate that although most users change their images frequently, women are more likely to change theirs more often, preferring to keep their images more recent. Women are also more likely to report selecting images that make them look attractive. She also finds that women are more likely to describe themselves as smiling in their profile images. She suggests that female Facebook users make these choices to emphasize light-heartedness and beauty in their profile pictures. Women are also more likely to select images where they are pictured with friends, and more likely to depict

special events in their images, suggesting an emphasis on group affiliation and identity (Strano 2008).

She also finds that women who select a photo with a romantic partner as their profile picture are more likely to articulate the reason for that choice differently than men who do the same. Whereas women report selecting a photo with their partner because they are an important part of their life, they also report being more careful to edit the images in a way that they feel does not "give the impression that [they] depend on him too much or that [they] think he defines [their] life" (female respondent as cited in Strano 2008:9). Although they want the partner picture as their profile image, they are show concern about impressions they are giving off.

Unlike women, who focus on images emphasizing group affiliation, beauty and light-heartedness, Strano finds that men select profile images that they believe makes them look unique. Although they are equally likely to display images of themselves photographed with others, Strano suggests that men's preference for "unique" images of themselves indicates an emphasis on presenting a more individualistic identity (2008:9). For men who select images with a romantic partner, men are more likely to report it as making a more explicit claim about his relationship status, for those who might be interested. Strano proposes that this suggests men are doing it for more practical purposes, and that they show little or no concern that being depicted with the romantic partner challenges their individualistic identity claim. Men take a more assertive

approach – a visual assertion of sorts by very intentionally giving the impression of their relationship status.

Despite the differences in visual self-presentation tactics for men and women, it is important to keep in mind that images users select are not the only form of visual self-presentation taking place on Facebook, and other SNSs for that matter. Reese, Zieger-Behnken, Sundar, and Kleck (2007) report that users whose profiles include a *larger number of friends* are perceived as "being more popular, sexy, attractive and self-confident" (as cited in Strano 2008:2). This is a reminder of the made to measure nature of SNSs and mobile networks.

Another approach taken to explore self-expression, self-presentation and impression management in SNSs is to consider how people use written language in constructing identities and creating realities. In their study of speech acts within Facebook status messages, Carr, Schrock and Dauterman (2012:77) define speech acts as "units of dialogue that provide both meaning and reality". Because SNSs enable both interpersonal and mass communication simultaneously, or as they call it, "mass personal media," (Carr et al 2012:88) they find it to be an important new arena to turn our attention to. Carr et al examine status messages to determine the types of speech acts used, and how through the speech acts, users operate within and interact with the communicative environment. They are specifically interested in the construction and purposes of the messages (Carr et al 2012).

Carr, Schrock and Dauterman's (2012) findings indicate that despite being

situated in a mass communication environment, Facebook status messages are used for

interpersonal communication. They found that 60% of status messages were made up of

expressive speech acts. Carr et al explain, expressive speech acts are based on emotional

reactions to situations and used to convey feelings toward a target, in the case of SNSs,

the target is the users "virtual social network" (Kleck et al 2007:3 as cited in Carr et al

2012:79). Like with text messages sent via mobile phones, people use this function

primarily for relational purposes.

The second most common practice in status messages for those on SNSs (39%) is

the use of assertive speech acts, which as Carr et al (2012:87) argue, are used to persuade

the receiver, or in their words, "to get the receiver to form a belief," making them a good

means by which to construct and maintain ones identity. It is worth noting that findings

indicate that humor is present in roughly 20% of all status messages (Carr et al 2012).

They consider this aspect of status messages noteworthy because it is used to demonstrate

relationships, reinforce solidarity and is a mechanism for identity construction (Baym

1995 as cited in Carr et al 2012).

Finally, they suggest that users consider the fact that their audience is varied,

between close ties and weak ties, and sometimes ties from their professional lives and

personal lives. At the time of their research, Facebook status messages were searchable

and viewable by anyone, including those who were not officially in a user's network on

the site. Despite the variability of users' networks in SNSs, it did not dissuade them from

using an expressive mode of communication in their self-presentation. They continued to post what once would have been considered messages better suited for one's private life in these publically accessible settings.

Considering the expressive nature of communication on SNSs as well as the mass audience, Max van Manen (2010) turns a critical eye to privacy concerns for young people. His primary concern is whether technologies that enable and encourage users to expose as much about themselves as they are willing to, such as social networking sites, are "profoundly altering the quality and nature of social relations and especially the possibility and need for self-identity, solitude, intimacy, and closeness among young people" (2010:023). Van Manen argues that "privacy, secrecy, and innerness in young people's lives play a critical role in the development of self-identity, autonomy, intimacy, and the ability of learning to negotiate closeness and distance in social relations" (2010:023). He continues, saying that "in learning when and how to keep things inside and when to share, young people learn to confer their sense of identity, independence, uniqueness, and autonomy" (2010:023). With social media users "literally putting their life on(the)line" (Smith 2008:135 as cited in van Manen 2010:027), there is good reason for concern.

Max van Manen cites Bauman's proposal that we are "living in a confessional society…one notorious for effacing the boundary which once separated the private from the public, making it a public virtue and obligation to publicly expose the private" (Bauman 2007:3 as cited in van Manen 2010:025). Van Manen speculates that perhaps

in Bauman's so called 'confessional society', "in the lifeworlds of the digital generation, the very meaning and significance of the private may be changing if not disappearing altogether for habituated users of social networks" (2010:024).

This speculation is confirmed in research looking at how university students conceptualize public and private, and consider who they would "friend" or accept as a "friend" on Facebook (West et al 2009). Scholars taking up this line of inquiry find that students have a nuanced understanding of privacy, but that they do not see public and private as distinctly different spheres of life (West et al 2009; Livingstone 2008). In the context of SNSs, Livingstone (2008) argues that teenagers define privacy more in terms of having control of disclosure of information about themselves, rather than in terms of the type of information disclosed.

The most important thing to teens and young adults in discussing concepts of privacy as it relates to Facebook is that their 'private' life be 'public' to their Facebook "friends" but 'private' from their parents and other adults (Livingston 2008 as cited in West et al 2009:624). That said, although this disclosure of what once would have definitely belonged to the private realm is being done in a mass media setting, some teens still consider their profile on SNSs to be their own private space (Livingstone 2008). This implies a public that excludes the family (West et al 2009). However, in the case of a respondent who was against the idea of having parents as Facebook "friends" because she thought of her Facebook as her "private life" and was not meant for her family, but rather for "keeping in touch with members of the wider public" (as cited in West et al 2009:621)

we see that family is also excluded from private life as well. In accordance with teens'

nuanced understanding of public and private, and the lack of clear distinction they see

between the two, some scholars have proposed the use of "personal" when related to

"experiences that are constituted around a sense of self or identity, to do with emotions,

intimacy or the body" (Ribbens, McCarthy and Edwards 2001:773 as cited in West et al

2009:625).

With past research establishing some of the ways in which identity claims are

made on social media, and seeing that understandings of public and private spheres are

further blurred with increased popularity of social networking sites, I now turn to

research that examines the relationships between offline personality traits and online self-

presentation (Mehdizadeh 2010). In the early days of social networking sites it was

common for non-adopters to question what kind of people felt the need to put such

personal aspects of their lives online. Mehdizadeh (2010) seeks to shed some light on this

line of inquiry by investigating the manifestation of narcissism and self-esteem on

Facebook.

Narcissism, as defined in this work, "is a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, need

for admiration, and an exaggerated sense of self-importance" (Oltmanns 2006 as cited in

Mehdizadeh 2010:358). Additionally, according to Campbell (1999) "narcissists use

relationships to appear popular and successful" and "relationships are solely pursued

when an opportunity for public glory presents itself" (as cited in Mehdizadeh 2010:358).

Thus, narcissists are the ultimate opportunists, and social networking sites provide bountiful opportunities for self-promotion.

Self-esteem is "a person's overall self-evaluation of his or her worth" (Ames et al as cited in Mehdizadeh 2010:358). These evaluations can be either implicit or explicit, but regardless of the type of self-evaluation, people always strive to maintain or raise their self-esteem (Kramer & Winter 2008 as cited in Mehdizadeh 2010:358). Using a subgroup of Markus and Nurius's (1986) concept a "possible self," Mehdizadeh argues that social networking sites are an ideal environment for users to present a "hoped for possible self" (2010:358).

Mehdizadeh's (2010) findings are from a study using a mixed methods approach, which includes participants completing a test that measures self-esteem, taking the Narcissism Personality Inventory and doing content analysis on participants' Facebook pages. Overall, Mehdizadeh (2010) finds that those with high levels of narcissism and low levels of self-esteem had high levels of activity on Facebook. Again, we see gender differences, with men making more explicit self-promotional claims in the "About Me" section, in "Comments" or "Status Messages" whereas women make more implicit self-promotional claims in their profile pictures (Mehdizadeh 2010). She also finds that it is commonplace and acceptable to boast in "Status Messages," which are designed to broadcast current states.

Mobile Mediated Interaction: Communicative Economy 2.0

Now that the stage has been set, highlighting how mobile telephony and then

Social Networking Sites influenced major transitions in ways we move through time and

space, communicate with others, and exist in the world, it is now important to consider

what happened next. Because Apple and AT&T had a contract, for the first several years

in the U.S. the iPhone was only be available to AT&T mobile subscribers. To take

advantage of the latest version of mobile telephone technology, mobile subscribers either

had to already be AT&T customers or had to switch mobile carriers, often paying an

early termination fee for not fulfilling their contract with their existing carrier. It was

roughly a year after Apple introduced the iPhone when the first Android smartphones

became available, increasing access to smartphones to a larger market.

In the first year of smartphones, those with iPhones were often the envy of other

mobile users, presumably in part because of the easy access to Social Networking Sites

and Google searches on the go. At the same time many iPhone users were becoming

increasingly prolific content creators on SNSs as a result of the new ease with which they

could create and capture content on the go, their phones were increasingly becoming

interaction invaders. This was when meals started being interrupted by photo ops of

plates of food, pints of beer or glasses of wine. Conversations were interrupted when a

person's curiosity got the best of them, and instead of keeping to the flow of the

conversation, small disputes over informational accuracy were settled by a quick Google

search. It was also the same time that Facebook status messages seemingly became a

ticker tape of what once would have been a user's inner dialogue, or sites for showing off one's latest, greatest cleaver or witty observation.

As early adaptors to smartphones became increasingly prolific content creators, SNSs underwent a platform and interface shift. Whereas the emphasis in the first iteration was on increasing connectedness, primarily with known others, and providing a service that became wildly popular in a short period of time, with the platform shift, the emphasis was on connectivity between people, products and ideas (van Dijck 2013). As the technologies and practices advanced and converged, real time connecting was co-opted by network connectivity, and mobile phones, for some, transitioned from intrusion to inclusion in social interaction. This increased connectivity allowed site owners to capitalize on the content created by users.

In the connected, database version of SNSs, users willfully uploaded large amounts of data objects, and finally site owners took advantage of the willingness of users to share valuable information about themselves. According to van Dijck (2013), by shifting the platform to a narrative format, and essentially offering a template for users to upload massive amounts of affect data in a uniform way, corporate site owners were able to monetize connectivity by maximizing data traffic and by having information that was easier to generate a user profile for profit. Gehl (2011:229) defines Web 2.0 as "the new media capitalist technique of relying upon users to supply and rank online media content, then using the attention this content generates to present advertisements to audiences". No longer are these sites simply for posting, presenting and storing personal artifacts in

semi-public databases for users and their networks to access. Instead they are narrative

data driven sites with a new, updated interface encouraging users to input personal data in

a uniform way, and do what Gehl calls (2011:229) "affective processing," where they

connect with products, people and organizations by "liking", "linking" or "commenting"

on their content, while site owners archive massive amounts of data in the background

(van Dijck 2013; Gehl 2011). With an emphasis on the "wisdom of the crowds" in Web

2.0, the ultimate goal is to "capture the processing power of a critical mass of users"

(Gehl 2011:237).

Web 2.0 interfaces always privilege the new, with it appearing at the top of a

news feed or in the most prominent place on a person's page. Site owners value new,

often at the expense of relevance or importance (Gerben 2009 as cited in Gehl 2011).

They also encourage users to value the new and frequently engage in affective processing

of digital artifacts. With this focus on the new, it is not surprising that, as Gehl points out,

for users in Web 2.0, the reward is in the short term, in the immediacy of information

sharing and access, whereas the reward for site owners is much longer term, in the ability

to archive the data and aggregate it for profit. Site owners, through terms of agreement,

take ownership of user data and can then do with it what they wish. They become 'sites

of decontextualized data' that site owners can arrange in any way they wish to create

"knowledge" about a user (Gehl 2011:229).

One way site owners monetize this connectivity is by utilizing location aware

software on mobiles. Since all new mobile phone models have Global Positioning

Satellite (GPS) connectivity, and the default setting on phones is for the GPS to be enabled, our mobiles ping away, tracking us as we move through our days. Site owners capitalize on the convergence of the technologies and the "knowledge" they create, alerting users to 'consumer opportunities' as they go through their daily lives, directing attention to products users previously inquired about online (Gehl 2011:232). They also use other modes of targeted ads, but the location based version is one of the more aggressive. With the connective turn came increased commodification of communication.

In 2008, Facebook took the connective turn and has since added various features to assist in connecting users with commercial interests. In 2011, they rolled out one such feature called "timeline" which was a way of visually organizing the user's life on a timeline that began with the year of their birth (as reported in the profile section of their page) and then populated with the user's posts on Facebook. What this meant was that when "timeline" was rolled out, the "story of a person's life on one page," as Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg referred to it in a video on the features release date, began the year of their birth but the first event after birth was on the date of the first Facebook post. Users were encouraged to fill the timeline in, reflexively creating their online life story and identity.

The exuberance with which users voluntarily take part in this 'affective processing' confounds privacy minded people the world around, but since the work is often highly casualized and done at users' leisure, it is often seen as a form of entertainment (Gehl 2011). Fisher (2010) sees it as part of exploitation for global capitalism as users' desire for diversion is made productive (as cited in Gehl 2011).

Regardless of how one views this, whether the user sees it as entertainment, or the site owner sees it as free labor, what is clear is that the site owners have greater control of the information and what becomes of it than the producers (users) do once it is created and shared. As a result of the curatorial role site owners take on as handlers of massive amounts of personal data and the increased profitability of user generated data allows for new centralizations of power, with those who control flows and storage of data becoming a new form of media power (Gehl 2011).

"The New Hunter-Gatherers": Visual Narratives and Desperately Seeking Social Capital

Although I have already discussed mobile text messages (SMS) and digital photographs as mobile mediated data objects, it is now time to imagine how what I call *prolific content creators* manifest in a culture of mobile mediation where use of smartphones and Social Networking Sites have reached the level of ubiquity. It is difficult for non-users or infrequent users of social media, especially via mobile devices, to wrap their minds around how much smartphones and social media have changed social interaction. However, one need only take a quick look around to have plenty of examples of interactions that would not have been imaginable before the rise of social networking sites as spaces of interaction and mobile handheld phones with computing capabilities that far exceed most desktop computers of just 5 years ago.

One aspect of mobile mediated interaction that has had a profound impact on interaction is the use of mobile phones to capture and disseminate data objects. Early mobile data objects were text messages, which helped usher in a new concept of gift

45

giving (texts as gifts), and a way of being across time and space, establishing what

Licoppe (2004) calls 'connected presence'. Then digital photography entered the realm of

mobile digital photo data objects that could be easily shared, whereby users established a

sense of "intimate visual presence" (Ito 2005; Okabe and Ito 2006:9), most often by

sharing images of their everyday lives. The most common reason for sharing images

captured on mobile phones was and continues to be, for viewpoint sharing (Okabe 2004;

Ito 2005; Okabe and Ito 2006; Lasen and Gomez-Cruz 2009; Van House 2009; Satchell

and Graham 2010; Pink 2011; Van House 2011).

A significant difference between the previous discussion of data objects and the

forthcoming one is that now the potential for widespread dissemination expands beyond

one's mobile phone contact list to their entire social network of online "friends,"

"followers," professional associates they are linked with online, as well as being made

available to anyone with internet access. With smartphones, text, images and videos can

be broadcast around the world within seconds of capture, and in many instances, as they

are being captured. In addition to the potential for widespread dissemination to a much

larger social network, and at times, anyone who is interested in finding a user online,

another important distinction between the earlier discuss of data objects and this is the

importance of the power of the platform in Web 2.0. Unlike with text and images shared

among close ties in earlier iterations of mobile technology, in Web 2.0 all content is

subject to profit motivations, first by the site owners, and then by users themselves (Gehl

2011; van Dijck 2013).

Despite the massive expansion of the audience at the intersection of these communicative technologies, users' sense of "obligation" to update their network also seems to expand as well (Satchell and Graham 2008:252). To begin to understand how this has altered social life, one might think of the before mentioned *fascination with elsewhere* and imagine expanding that exponentially. With the sense of obligation to keep one's network informed, and an expectation by the network to be kept informed, a seeming epidemic of a fascination with elsewhere came over SNS and smartphone users. Excitement about the new technological affordances of smartphones, especially the immediacy with which content could be shared with a mass audience, seemingly increased the urge of content creators to produce more. Coupled with the new narrative platform, SNSs such as Facebook were perfect spaces to kill two birds with one stone; both updating others and keeping up to date on others.

This urge to create a narrative, largely through an emergent visual language, takes hold and mobile and SNS users become what Schwarz (2012) calls "the New Hunter-gatherers," ever eager, ever attentive and ever ready to capture moments for dissemination online. As users create more content, they get more attention. On Facebook, this attention comes in the form of comments, "likes," being "tagged" in friends' photos, and if friends of friends like what they see of a user on the common friend's wall, possible "friend" requests. On Twitter, the attention comes in the form of "followers," "tweets" and "retweets." Remembering that users were previously likened to plugs searching for a socket in affirmation seeking behaviors, one can see how the potential energy to be gained could become intoxicating.

47

With seemingly insatiable appetites for content, constant feedback and affirmation from others, SNS users soon began to realize the profit potential of the connective turn taken by Social Networking Sites. Not only was affirmation and a sense of belonging at stake, but now social capital could be gained. No longer was prolific content creation a means by which to fulfill the obligation and meet expectations of keeping others informed, but instead, it became a potential profit center (Schwarz 2010).

This places mobile mediated interaction at the center of the "attention economy" (Schroeder 2010:79), with users competing on all fronts. This social capital is easily measurable in the new potential profit center since all of the above mentioned means of affirmation ("friends," "comments," "likes," "tweets") are easily quantifiable. In essence, and in economic terms, return on investment, net profit, and the bottom line essentially become part of a mobile mediated social interaction equation. As users enter or fully engage in this emerging market, there is a shift in fascination with elsewhere. Not only are users increasingly fascinated with others elsewhere, they are increasingly fascinated with fascinating others elsewhere.

With the preference for the new, expanding networks and increasing amounts of social interaction taking place on SNSs while on the go, a practice that began as keeping up with close and weak ties soon became part everyday practices for both content creators and content consumers. As the amount of content created and the desire to fascinate increased, users realized that to capture and keep the attention of others, they would need to gather content and keep fresh, new things up and coming. With

attentiveness to audience reception and tailoring content based on potential profit through gain of social capital, commodification of communication became an everyday practice (Schwarz 2012).

For some, what once were sites for self-expression quickly became sites for self-promotion (van Dijck 2013). The practice of embedding interest arousers in text messages carried over nicely here, and a new visual language takes off. By creating a visual narrative, users are encouraged to make a show of their lives. The show, so to speak, takes many forms. This hunting and gathering takes place in a number of arenas-physically intimate encounters, random social settings, ceremonies, concerts, births, even catastrophes. In the game of hunting and gathering, one of most prized occasions is being the first to post, making you the envy of others. Although hunting and gathering content as one moves through daily life is a practice deployed in the grab for social capital, one that is likely less know to either non-users or infrequent users of social media is self-portraiture, or so called "selfies" (Schwarz 2010). Although what makes up the show of one's life on SNSs takes many forms, the common feature is that the user is the star of their show.

In a reality TV obsessed society, where part of the cultural commons is "keeping up with the Kardashians" and finding out who Honey Boo Boo told they "had better 'redneck-ignize,'" there is a sense that pretty much anyone could at least be the star of their own show, and perhaps, become the next big celebrity. Also, with Justin Bieber, the Kardashians, Honey Boo Boo and the cast of "Duck Dynasty" all being products of either

social media or reality TV, or both, a sense that seeking celebrity is a reasonable endeavor in daily life seems to have taken hold (Schwarz 2010). Some even see their constant content creation as an investment in the future.

Whereas SNSs were initially used to *share* moments from users' lives with those who might have missed them, they are now used to *show* others what they are missing Satchell and Graham (2010). Instead of showing meaningful moments, it seems that presence or absence of moments captured and placed online and the amount of attention they garner is what makes them meaningful. In essence, users are making meaning of moments. With profit potential often as part of the equation, something to be gained or lost, one might argue that perhaps the meaning made of moments is determined by the degree to which it fascinated others or generated traffic.

This making of moments and meaning, hunting and gathering, and at times, directing moments made for measure in an online life, desperately seeking social capital, branding and packaging a product, careful curating of life online, and for many, hoping for celebrity, brings us to what I call a *Self for Sale*. The commodification of communication and "exploitation of the present" (Schwarz 2012:80) in a life made to measure in a mobile mediated society is the social environment in which we live. To what extent one chooses to participate or engage in exploiting the present and selling a self is currently unclear.

Warning Signs: "Sleep Walking into a Surveillance Society" as we Leak Personal Information

Mark Andrejevic (2009) is one of the before mentioned people who is confounded by the ease with which users part with personal information, effectively leaking it via interactive technologies. He sees the control and use of information gathered about consumers and citizens as one of the key legal and regulatory issues in coming years. Long before Edward Snowden's leaking of classified information about U.S. surveillance programs that collect, store and access huge amounts of personal data from users around the world, UK Information commissioner Richard Thomas (2005 as cited in Andrejevic 2009:2) warns us of "sleepwalking into the surveillance society." He also warns that "as our lives become mediated by the convenience of digital technology, information about them becomes subject to commercial capture: a logic that [he] describes as a form of 'digital enclosure' of personal information" (Andrejevic 2009:1). He points to a gap in understanding of privacy practices in our wired lives, and "wide ignorance of business practices and the use of personal information" by site owners as possible reasons people so willfully divulge so much information (Andrejevic 2009). All too often, convenience is sited by those who put their "life on(the)line" (Smith 2008:135 as cited in van Manen 2010:027).

Although the public was previously somewhat unclear of the degree to which the personal information they put online as they live their wired lives could be assessed, aggregated and turned over to the highest bidder, it will be interesting to see if and how that has changed for users. Will they report an evolution of privacy concerns as

increasingly targeted ads appear around every turn, or as "big data" becomes part of

ongoing public conversations? Will they talk about privacy, and if so, in what terms?

Summary of Relevant Literature

In the past couple of decades, as mobile phones became part of everyday life,

steady changes in the ways they were used occurred with each technological advance.

Mobile phones exclusively with calling capabilities were functionally equivalent to an

extension of a landline telephone, only now offering connection via voice on the go. This

way of connecting began to blur the distinction between public and private space. As

public space was increasingly coopted for personal communication, mobile phones were

treated as an intrusion on situated interactions. Nonetheless, because mobile phones at the

time were used for personal communication with close ties or for professional purposes,

the intrusion was allowed. The intrusion of incoming calls and interruption in instances of

outgoing calls also began to blur distant and local others, often at the expense of the local

interaction. Interspace was lost as a time and place for personal reflection, and it became

a site for productivity, whether for expressive or instrument purposes. Time, space and

place were increasingly consumed by the communicative economy.

The introduction of short text messaging and picture messaging took the

communicative economy to a new level, as coordination and personal communication in

public was more discrete and could be asynchronous. With these new capabilities, the

beginning of a shift from mobile voice features to visual features began in earnest and a

more connected form of presence emerged. Text messages not only offered increased

opportunities for coordinating, but also became a new site for self-expression. Because

they were more discrete and considered less intrusive, they could be used to communicate increasingly private content in public. As uses evolved, exchanges of these messages became gifts of sorts, especially when shared among intimates. Interest arousers were often included to increase the chance of response, and, as technological capabilities allowed for inclusion of visual content, whether text or photos, mobile users became content creators. Picture messaging allowed for further expansion of visual sharing, making mobile users increasingly attentive to potential visual content they encountered to be captured and shared. In addition to increasing the sense of connectedness between mobile users and close ties, for some, non-voice features on mobile phones also supported expansion of weak ties since the expectation of talking was no longer required for those with whom one exchange phone numbers.

Although the inclusion of internet capabilities was the next technological advance to take place with mobile phones, initially they were used for accessing email on the go. While this was a significant shift in professional settings, internet access via mobiles was not widespread until 2007 when the first "smartphone" was introduced. Smartphones provided an easier to use interface for accessing the internet and navigating web pages and email accounts.

Departing for a moment from a discussion of mobile phone features, it is important to note another technological advance that became widespread before the emergence of smartphones: social networking sites. In 2004, as camera phones became available on the mobile market in the U.S., Facebook was just getting started. Although

other social networking sites such as Friendster and MySpace were somewhat popular,

Facebook quickly took over market share and far surpassed the number of users of all

previous social networking sites combined. This generation of SNSs were online

environments primarily used for connecting with known others and as spaces for

connecting with communities that existed offline. These online environments offered new

sites for interpersonal interaction and new stages for self-presentation to a mass audience

and can be thought of as "mass personal media" (Carr et al 2012:88). At this point, SNSs

did not require users to create a narrative, but rather acted as spaces for posting, storing

and sharing visual and written accounts of both past and present activities and events;

sites for one's treasures. Like text messages and picture messages on mobile phones,

early SNSs enhanced real life relationships and supported the expansion of weak ties.

These technologies simultaneously allowed for connectedness to distant others in ways

and with frequency previously unknown.

In June of 2007, the next and arguably most drastic development in mobile

telephony occurred when the original Apple iPhone was released, to great fanfare. The

most outstanding characteristics of the iPhone at the time were touchscreens instead of

buttons, internet connectivity and hundreds of thousands of "apps" that could be

downloaded for free or for a fee. In addition to the various ways mobile phones could be

used, one of the most appealing aspects of the smartphone was that the internet

experience was more like what they were accustomed to on their PCs. Internet

capabilities on smartphones made it easy for users to integrate their online activities with

their mobile phones. With this shift, they were soon utilized not only for communication and information purposes, but also as a leisure activity.

With mobile phone and social networking activities integrated, content creating capabilities and viewpoint sharing to a mass audience were a possibility almost instantaneously. These new technological affordances further increased users' attentiveness to possible newsworthy material, or content to be created on the go and disseminated to a mass audience almost within a few taps of the screen. This also made any place where a smartphone was present a potential site for self-presentation to a mass audience. Along with increased attentiveness to content came even more fascination with elsewhere. With each new technological advance of mobile phones, the distinction between public and private life became increasingly blurred and the mobile phone's transition from intrusion to inclusion into all times, spaces and places was further realized.

As early adaptors to smartphones became increasingly prolific content creators, SNSs underwent a platform and interface shift to web 2.0 that emphasizes connectivity instead of connectedness. These sites are narrative data driven sites with updated interfaces encouraging users to input personal data in a uniform way, allowing connectivity between people, products and ideas (van Dijck 2013). Social networking sites, commonly referred to as social media since the connective turn of web 2.0, are built on the same premise. In 2008, Facebook took the connective turn and has since added various features to assist in connecting users with commercial interests. Since the

connective turn, many new social media sites and apps have emerged and gained

widespread popularity. In recent years, many of the most popular social media apps have

been exclusively for photo and video sharing, again, furthering the progression to

increasing significance on visual language.

The sharing of information in web 2.0 is masked as entertainment, therefore users

are often unaware of the profit potential provided by their activities and that the

information they provide is being collected, stored and processed for profit. It is often

unclear to users that site owners have taken ownership of their data once it is uploaded to

the site. New forms of media power have emerged, with site owners as new power

brokers in this communicative landscape. Privacy advocates around the world have

sounded warning alarms for years as more and more personal data moves online and

becomes the property of the site owners. Some worry that we are "sleep walking into a

surveillance society" (Thomas 2005 as cited in Andrejevic 2009:2).

As is evident, as smartphones and web 2.0 have become ubiquitous, network logic

applies to ever increasing aspects of daily life as these technologies become incorporated

into our ways of being in the world. However, what is unclear is how mobile users see

the device as impacting their lives. In order to gain insight into how smartphone users

perceive their interactions and relationships are impacted by and enacted with

smartphones and social media, I will explore four overarching research questions: (1)

How do participants perceive the place of the smartphone phone in connecting with and

being in the social world? (2) How do users of mobile media view their impact on self

and identity? And what, if any, privacy concerns do they express? (3) How do

smartphone users view their impact on face to face interactions? And (4) What are users'

perceptions of interactions via mobile media?

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

In an effort to illuminate users' perceptions of how the use of smartphones and social media impacts "connecting" with others, situated interactions, self-presentation and identity formation, I first conducted an expansive review of literature examining the evolution of mobile telephony and the social implications of each iteration of the technology. The discovery that each additional affordance of the technologies impacted fundamental aspects of social life and various social psychological processes, at times in unexpected ways, made it clear that it was important to have users of mobile media share their perceptions of mobile mediated interactions and the meanings they attributed to interactions with, around, and via these technologies. Because this research is meant to explore the nature of individuals' *experiences of* and *with* the technology, as well as their *perceptions* of connections made with others either via these devices, or with them present, I use a qualitative method—focused interview—for the primary data source.

Focused interviews were chosen because they are particularly well suited "to studies of responses to situations encountered in everyday life" (Merton and Kendall, 1956/1990:11). The focused interview is set apart from many other types of interviews in that "the primary objective is to elicit as complete a report as possible of what was involved in the experience of a *particular situation,*" allowing for data that encompasses

qualities "essential to an understanding of the nature and meaning of the responses" (Merton and Kendall 1956/1990:21). It is important not to mistake "focused" here tomean that the interviews are the same or similar to structured interviews, as they are quite different. The aspect that makes them "focused" is that they are concerned with collecting information on participants' *experiences of particular situations.* This form of questioning entails the researcher asking the participant to "reflect back" or "think back" on particular situations and share with them how they experienced them.

Like other methods of interviewing, the focused interview "allows for a diversity of relevant responses, whether or not these have been anticipated by the inquirer" and "encourages the interviewee to continue his self-exploration of an experience until some measure of clarity is attained" (Merton and Kendall 1956/1990:13). It is extremely important in exploratory qualitative research to facilitate opportunities for unanticipated responses and themes to emerge, allowing research participants "to express [themselves] about matters of central significance to [them] rather than those presumed to be important by the interviewer…uncovering what is on the interviewee's mind rather than his opinion of what is on the interviewer's mind" (Merton and Kendall 1956/1990:13).

The emphasis in the focused interview on gaining a more nuanced understanding of participants' experiences made it a good fit for this study. The focused interview is quite similar to the so called "intimate ethnography" with an emphasis on openness to ambiguity, contradictions and complexity (Turkle 2008:4). "It is not about trying to get something 'out of' participants, but rather creating a space for whatever is there to

emerge" (Turkle 2008:6). This interview technique made it possible to focus the inquiry on known themes in mobile telephony while allowing flexibility to adapt to particulars of each participant's experiences. An openness to and expectation of ambiguity, contradictions and complexities allowed new themes to emerge during the interviews and opportunities to explore those more fully.

To obtain the interview participant pool, I emailed students in two of my thesis advisor's undergraduate classes to provide information about the study and recruit volunteers. As students contacted me to volunteer to participate, we corresponded via email to set up a time and place for the interviews to take place. Because I did not have enough volunteers from the recruitment email, I visited one of his classes to recruit participants face-to-face. After giving a brief explanation of the study, I passed a sign-up sheet with specific interview slots (date and time) around the class. The sign-up sheet also had an option for any interested parties who were available during the week I was conducting interviews, but not for the specific time slots indicated, to provide contact info and times they would be available to meet that week. Seven additional students signed up during the class, and I was able to confirm the interviews via email correspondence with them within a couple of hours. Because I had exceeded the intended sample size of ten participants, it was not necessary to make additional classroom recruitment efforts.

In total, I conducted eleven face-to-face focused interviews, ten of which were with undergraduate students at an accredited University in the Southeast, one of which

was with someone who heard about the study from a friend and volunteered to participate. Because the non-student participant who volunteered was of the first to volunteer, I decided to increase the sample size to eleven so that I could keep my ten person sample of students from the accredited University at which I recruited. All of the interviews were conducted in a private departmental office on campus.

The demographics of participants are as follows: eight females, three males; three African American/Black and eight Caucasian. Participants ranged in age from 21 to 33 years old, but of the student participants, the age range was from 21 to 28 years old. The data on gender, race and age of respondents were based on participants' appearances, personal narratives and information gleaned during interviews.

During the interviews, I took hand written notes and used an audio recorder upon receiving consent for recording. After each interview, or in instances where interviews were back to back, I used the audio recorder to make notes based on my immediate recall of the interviews and referenced places in my hand written notes to give particular attention when I returned to transcribe the interviews. Some of the primary aspects I reported on in the recorded interview notes were things such as body language at particular moments during the interview, unexpected responses and particularly passionate responses. Note taking was often quite detailed in hopes that it would help in making meaningful connections between my hand written notes, transcribed interviews and observations made during interviews. The interviews, and recorded interview notes, were transcribed at my earliest convenience. My hand written interview notes were also

typed and combined with the corresponding participant transcription and recorded interview notes.

Once all of the interview data was collected, transcribed, and additional notes from the interviews compiled and typed, I coded and analyzed according to topics used to create my research questions and interview prompts. As I analyzed the data, I also made notes on emergent topics. After the first coding, I determined trends in the data and determined how best to proceed with recoding the data. I then recoded, collapsing multiple categories into one and created new ones as needed, at which time I reassessed and determined trends in the data. Finally, the project concluded with an analysis of findings and a discussion of possible implications.

One participant in particular offered an opportunity to collect data from an unexpected source, as well as unanticipated challenges in interviewing. A student with hearing impairments was one of the first to respond to the email recruitment effort. Because we were corresponding via email, I only became aware that the student was deaf in what would have otherwise been one of our final correspondences before the actual interview took place a couple of days later. Upon learning this, and since I am not proficient in American Sign Language (ASL), I immediately began to consider how this would play out in the interview logistically. Would there be an interpreter? Was I responsible for coordinating the interpreter with the University Office of Accessibility Resources & Services, or was this something the student would arrange? Because my research design relied on focused questions, but open ended responses, the presence or

absence of an interpreter would make a tremendous difference. As far as I could imagine at the time, the absence of one would obviously completely change the means by which I posed the questions and the participant responded, but would likely also change the content of those answers due to my inability to communicating in ASL and the participant's status as a non-native speaker of American English. Although at many different times during the next couple of days, I was preoccupied with the before mentioned questions, a full interview schedule did not allow time for me to conceptualize and create a new instrument in the event that an interpreter was unavailable. After consulting with several faculty members in the department for advice, the primary provision that was arrived at was that, if needed, we could use a laptop for the participant to type responses to my interview prompts. I, and the faculty members, assumed that the participant would likely be able to respond quickly by typing responses.

Aside from logistical considerations and concerns, the prospect of having the opportunity to add the perspective of a deaf person was exciting and raised more than a few questions that I had previously not considered. Would this shift in the mainstream communicative landscape toward a more visual language, whether via images or text, affect hearing and deaf people differently, and, if so, how? Would changes in the communicative landscape have a greater impact on those with hearing impairments, and, if so, how? Would this bridge communicative gaps between hearing and deaf people in unforeseen ways? Would this increased reliance on visual based expression rather than audio result in more social connections between hearing and deaf people? Would it also result in more employment opportunities for deaf people? These questions and many

more, made this unexpected development a gift to the study. The real question at that point was whether or not I would be able to sufficiently *access* the participant's perspective.

A few days before the interview, the student inquired if an interpreter was mandatory, to which I responded that although it was by no means necessary, it would likely be helpful. The participant then explained that, although she was a very good lip reader, having an interpreter would be helpful in clarifying questions and responses. That said, at that point, the student was unable to confirm whether one would be available through the University's services. The student explicitly communicated the wish to participate regardless of whether an interpreter was available or not. The day of the interview, I was notified that an interpreter would not accompany the participant.

The interview procedures for the deaf participant were necessarily somewhat different than those for the hearing students. After giving the idea of simply providing her with my interview prompts in a Word document and having her type her responses, I determined that was not a good format. Among several problems with that approach was that my "prompts" were never intended to be direct questions asked of participants, but rather written in shorthand as reminders for me of topics I hoped to inquire about and variations on language to help focus participants' responses on their experience of the particular situations of interest. It was also particularly problematic because, even if the language in the prompts was re-crafted for a participant audience, it would basically be the same as having the participant complete an open-ended questionnaire, and would no

longer have the qualities I deemed most important in choosing focused interviews and intimate ethnography as my method for this study. My primary concern was that by simply providing an electronic page of prompts to be responded to in text, and without the openness to complexities and the affordance of flexibility to adapt as the interview went on, there would no longer be an emergent quality to the interviews.

With limited time to make changes to my method, I determined that perhaps the closest we could come to replicating interview style utilized with other participants was for me to read the questions to her (as she said she was a very good lip reader), and give her a chance to ask for clarification before then giving her the laptop to respond. At least this way, there would be some sense of an exchange and more room for to create a shared interpretation of the text of the questions. That said, the questions were on the document she was typing her responses to, in case she wanted or needed to reference them as she responded. I would then read her responses and make every effort to have it guide me in the next question(s). Instead, the responses were not as in-depth as expected, took far longer than anticipated, and relied heavily on the text in the prompts rather than the language that emerged in our initial interaction around the question. Based on her responses and the time it took to craft and type them, I quickly knew that I needed to look ahead as she typed and significantly alter the language of the upcoming questions. I did that on a hard copy of the prompts I had in hand, and took a moment the next time she passed the laptop back to me to make many of those revisions.

Within the first half hour, although the data I was getting was good, it was clear that we would not touch on many of the intended topics, much less the new questions that arose as a result of her participation in the study. We decided that I would ask the questions and then type her spoken responses as she talked. I sat very near her so she could read my transcriptions quickly and easily after each response and make any necessary revisions, clarifications or perhaps expand on her responses. This worked much better than the previous approach, but still took more time. About an hour into the interview, and having not touched on many of the topics I planned, the participant asked how much longer it would take because she was hungry and would need to go soon. I quickly assessed the remaining themes and picked a couple to touch on before ending the interview.

Gender is the only *participant* demographic variable that I make distinctions about in certain findings. The reason for focusing on gender differences in some instances was because the variation in responses contrasted considerably, and I thought it would therefore be irresponsible not to report on the variation. Although the student sample for interview participants had more females than males (70% female, 30% male), it was roughly representative of the overall student body of the university at which the study was conducted. The same can be said for the racial composition of the sample. Although gender is the only *participant* demographic that distinctions are made about, I do however make some distinctions in their perceptions of various age based differences of smartphone and social media uses.

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, it was not necessary to get a nationally representative sample. Instead, I chose an undergraduate student population for this study (with the one exception of the non-student volunteer) in an effort to have my sample be relatively close in age and of an age that they are likely technology natives to social media, and possibly smartphones. Exploring commonalities and differences found in this sample can inform future research by identifying emergent themes in smartphone and social media use. Additionally, it can provide a comparison group for those who are not undergraduate students or of the same generation.

The bias inherent in selecting a sample consisting only of college students (with one previously mentioned exception), is that it is not generalizable to society as a whole. Other possible limitations of this study are the sample size and that all of the student participants are sociology majors or minors. In theory, as students of sociology they would have previously developed a sociological imagination and therefore have a different take various aspects of self, identity and social interaction. In future research, scholars might want to consider a larger, more nationally representative sample.

At some point, either in the above or in an appendix, you should give an indication of the questions you asked. I know it's a focused interview, but it's clear from the above that you had initial prompts.

CHAPTER IV

THEORETICAL FRAMES

Erving Goffman on Self, Social Interaction and Stage and Manual Castells on a Globally Networked Society

In order to explore some of these issues and consider what kind of person we are seeing emerge since the technological moment when mobile telephony and social networking came together, I turn to Erving Goffman and Manual Castells. In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman (1959) provides a theoretical frame for understanding how people perform selves in everyday interactions. In *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture,* Castells (2010a, 2010b) provides a theoretical frame to help us understand how advances in information and communication technologies over the past couple of decades have enabled social changes which are impacting societies worldwide.

Goffman on Self in Social Interaction

In Goffman's dramaturgical approach to self and identity, he uses the theatre as a metaphor for understanding face to face interactions in everyday life. Using this logic, individuals present selves and make identity claims in social interactions. In so doing, they take care to get as much information as they can from others in a social encounter to inform their definition of the situation which lets them know how best to direct their

actions in the given context. Part of achieving a definition of the situation is the individual's presentation of a front. The front consists of a setting for the performance (i.e., location, props, scenery and décor) and a personal front, which includes of appearance and manner. By virtue of signs that are intentionally given, such as language, dress and overall look, and others that are unintentionally given off, such as manner and demeanor, social actors make impressions upon the audience.

The making of a successful performance does not rely on the authenticity of the claims being made or a connection to "reality," but rather that the audience responds as if what is presented is "real." Therefore, actors go about the performance using impression management strategies in an effort to have the audience accept the identity claims they make with the before mentioned expressive tools. If trouble arises whereby claims come into question, social actors use a variety of strategies and tactics in an effort to restore or reshape the definition of the situation, attempting to avoid embarrassment; and, more importantly, reestablish ritual equilibrium. Goffman informs us that we understand ourselves and our social world through acting out roles, presenting and performing a self to and for others, and then acting and reacting based on how they respond to our proclaimed self in the interaction.

Important to the framework presented is that although individuals must define for themselves any given situation in which they act, it is not through individual effort alone that performances are "pulled off" and in effect "bought" by the audience. In fact, while Goffman argues there is no guarantee that other participants will accept the definition of

the situation of the performer, or that they will agree completely on one amongst themselves, for the performance to have a chance at success, other participants in the performance must co-operate. The audience accepts "performed cues on faith" (Goffman 1959:58) and engages in "mutual acceptance of lines" (Goffman 1967:11), which, in the end, adds a ritual dimension to all social encounters and commitment to face work. This cooperative work is necessary not only to preserve a sense of reality regarding the situation, but also because once a line or performance is accepted, "he and others tend to build their later responses upon it, and in a sense become stuck with it" (Goffman 1967:12).

In addition to the cooperative nature of the encounter, fronts themselves may involve teamwork. An interaction team is a group of people who co-operate to maintain a particular definition of the situation, either in a single interaction or a series of interactions. Team members have a great deal of power in that they have knowledge of information that the audience does not, and could thereby give the performance away if they chose to. Despite the ever present danger that a performance can be given away at any moment, the audience and other participants in the performance tend to mirror back the same or similar definition of the situation to allow the show to go on.

Each performance has different regions: front stage, back stage and off stage. On the front stage the lead actor and any supporting actors (team) put on the performance for an audience. The audience is made up of those present for the performance but not part of the performance team. The back stage is a place where only fellow performers/team

members are found either preparing for the performance or otherwise engaging in a way that is unlike or inconsistent with their front stage performance. This region is off limits to anyone other than team members, but at times others enter unexpectedly, exposing aspects of the performance they are not intended to know. Off stage is neither front stage (where performers, team members and audience are present), nor back stage (where only performers and team members are present), but is instead outside the performance or performance preparation space whereby those who are not privy to the performance are found.

This is a general overview of Goffman's dramaturgical theory; however, throughout this work I will elaborate on and apply specific aspects of this approach to relevant instances found in the data. I use this as one of two primary theoretical frames in this study, but, because Goffman's approach was originally intended to apply to everyday performances of self and identity claims in face to face interactions, I now turn to aspects of Manual Castells' work which helps us better understand the macro level implications for interconnectivity in a network society. I combine the micro level approach of Goffman with the macro level approach of Castells to illustrate how networked performances of self play can out on the big stage of the world wide web and social media.

Manual Castells, *The Network Society*

In his three volume trilogy, *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture*, Manual Castells (2010a) argues that a new social structure has emerged. In light of advances in information technologies which have upended ways and workings of and in

the world on individual and systemic levels, Castells proposes the *Network Society* as a theoretical frame of understanding this new social structure. Although this is obviously a macro level conceptual frame with implications far beyond the scope and scale of this thesis, it sets the stage for understanding social interaction and globally networked selves.

Castells argues that in the *Network Society*—in an age of widespread personal computing and internet access—information is the new currency/capital and the logic of networks the new structure. In this new social structure, network logic applies to important aspects of social organization such as time, space, persons, institutions, and states, making connectivity to the network a key component for communication and participation in society. A network is made up of interconnected points called nodes, through and by which information flows. Networks are flexible, have no center, with no time or space between nodes and functions based on the principle of inclusion or exclusion, also called binary coding; a node is either in or out. Once in, network logic takes over and alters conceptions of time and space. In what Castells calls the space of flows, new possibilities arise for organizing simultaneous social practices regardless of geographic space. Likewise, network logic abstracts time to what he calls timeless time, reducing its importance to essentially being an electronic paper trail, or a time stamp indicating when certain activities took place.

Power is also reorganized when network logic is applied. In the case of nodes, size matters. As the quantity of connections and velocity of flows of information increases, so do the possible reach and influence of the information flowing to and

through that node. The node's processing power increases as it functions as a switch of sorts, opening a gate to information flows to its network, making large nodes the power-brokers of the network society. The information network also provides a structure for the global economy, where profit is reverted to financial flows that are then invested globally (Allan 2011:215).

In this networked state of affairs, the economic focus is on production and reproduction of new information, thereby making increased information processing, storage and dissemination capabilities the engine of technological innovation. Castells says that this network of networks is "ultimately dependent upon the nonhuman capitalist logic of an electronically operated, random processing of information" (as cited in Allan, 2011:216). With an increasingly global economic and labor market, capital and labor are often no longer in the same time and space. With work being split between many locals at any number of times, "the work process is thus globally integrated but fragmented locally, resulting in the individuation of labor, increased flexibility, and instability of work" (Allan 2011:216).

Castells (2010b) also discusses impacts on politics, arguing that with increased access and exposure to massive amounts of information, politicians are in a struggle for attention. Since politicians are essentially elected based on popularity, image making has always been a part of political strategy. However, getting attention in a media saturated environment requires an adjustment to means by which they acquire the sought after attention. In what Castells (2010b) calls media politics, these attention seeking politicians

indulge in personalized politics rather than platform oriented politics, knowing that the quickest way to take down an opponent is to create a scandal.

According to Castells (2010b), this has had some possibly unforeseen consequences for the state, with the public becoming increasingly disgusted by and with politicians, thinking they are all morally questionable, corrupt or at least suspect. This lack of confidence in politicians coupled with the global flows of information and money, threatens the legitimacy of the state. The nation state is no longer situated as the preeminent power, but is instead relegated to being one of potentially many powerful actors in a game of power plays. Because a node can be an individual, NGO, company or institution, in a network society it should be conceptualized as a network state, where decision-making and power sharing is negotiated among nodes (Allan 2011:217). With the power brokers in network society as those who control storage and flows of information, connecting people, places, production, reproduction and placement of information, ideas and imagery coupled with the politics of scandal and loss of trust in politicians, "the new state is the network state" (Allan 2011:217).

Considering the impacts of communication and information technologies on society as a whole, and then applying the same network logic to the individual since making the transition from place as portal to person as portal (Wellman 2000), one can only begin to imagine the implications. Although this does not begin to scratch the surface of Castells' three volume treatise on *The Information Age*, it provides another grammar with which to approach the topic. The Presentation of Self as a "Node" in

Everyday Life works well for understanding the self as a mass market performance piece produced in a network of nodes on platforms that bring personal image making to the fore of the communicative economy. I argue that we find individuals acting and acting out on a global scale, yet often only considering their local audience.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

Getting the Device, Connecting and Managing Flows

To "illuminate the subjective side of the technological experience" and "how

what we have made is woven into our ways of seeing and being in the world" (Turkle

2008:3), I first inquired with participants about how they socially connect before moving

on to their experience of getting their first smartphones, expectations of the device, and

ways of managing the flows of information enabled by the device.

Socially Connecting

When asked how they connect socially, whether face to face, talking via

smartphone, texting, social media, email or any other form of correspondence, most

participants listed texting and social media among the top two ways. For those who

tended to emphasize academic and professional purposes, email was typically among the

top two. Only two people mentioned calling or taking calls as the primary way of

connecting socially. Most others listed talking on the phone as the least likely way of

connecting, some going so far as to say they could not remember the last time they talked

with someone on the phone. The main exception to the general "no talking" rule was

when connecting with parents or older relatives. As one participant put it, his parents

"aren't very technologically savvy yet," so he has to call them if he wants to talk to them.

Almost all participants reported being excited and having expectations about getting their first smartphone. Reasons for being excited varied, with some participants focused on the technological affordances of the device itself, while others focused on connectivity with others and the world. As one participant said, "I was really excited to have all my networks in one place." Although reasons for being excited varied somewhat, the reported level of excitement was similar. The following participants capture the general mood of most. As one participant put it:

> I was definitely excited about getting the iPhone…I could do so much more on it. It was definitely exciting just to be in contact with the world. It was definitely a plus for work, business, the teams that I coach, school, just staying in contact with a lot of different things. I do everything on my phone so it was definitely a plus…with the iPhone it's all these devices in one, so I see it as a good investment.

> When I first got my iPhone I was super excited! It was shipped my parents' house (an hour and a half away) and they had to bring it to my college and I opened it and pretty much just ignored them for the rest of the time they were there. They just pretty much left and I didn't say anything because I was so invested in looking at this phone and playing with it and looking up and downloading all of these apps. It was a big deal! The first thing I did was call my then boyfriend, now fiancé. I was like "I got it finally!" I was so excited! I had to show it off for the rest of the day. I was like a kid at Christmas!

Of all the participants who went into smartphone ownership with excitement and high expectations, all but one either had their expectations met or exceeded. Although she did not consider herself particularly attached to her previous mobile phone, one participant reported:

I was also very excited because iPhones are so trendy right now and everyone uses them and talks about how wonderful they are so I wanted to see what the hype was about. So whenever I did get the iPhone I was a little excited to get it and jump on the bandwagon and see if that reality was real for me. I had extremly high expectations because people said they couldn't live without their phone, but I feel like I could live without my smartphone. It wouldn't be entirely ideal, but I feel like I could, so my expectations weren't completely met.

The only participant who was not eager to "jump on the bandwagon" said she was "dragged begrudgingly into the smartphone kind of world" as a gift from her boyfriend who is "head over heels for electronics and new technology." Although she "really didn't want it" she "likes it now." When asked why she didn't want a smartphone, she responded:

because I don't use social media and I feel like everybody has it for that…I just wondered what I would do with it. I thought I was just going to talk and text, this doesn't make any sense. I just thought don't spend the money on it. I'd rather have something else.

She went on to say that he got really frustrated with her because he just "wanted me to be with the population as far as phones go." As it turns out, she loved her smartphone so much because she no longer spent so much time in campus computer labs printing articles, and could instead read them on her phone, take notes and use them as a refresher just before class or meetings. In fact, she loved it so much, it made her want a tablet.

The Whole (Networked) World, In Your Hand

When asked how they use their phones most, some participants said they use them for "everything!" As we discussed their uses further, a few common themes were for academic/professional purposes, relationship management and entertainment. For those

who use them primarily for academic or professional purposes, efficiency of communication was the most important affordance of the smartphone. This additional efficiency helps them be productive, and as one claimed, more "successful" since it allows him to be in several places at once. Without it, he claimed he would not be able to accomplish nearly as much.

For the most part, participants use their phones for connecting with friends, family, loved ones and a vast audience of others elsewhere. One participant declared that her smartphone is "the hub of all things social," and that without it, she doesn't know how she and her friends would even go about making plans to get together and go out. Several participants also mentioned the perceived necessity of their smartphones for keeping up long distance romantic relationships. For those who were in long distance relationships at the time, it was one of the primary benefits they mentioned for having a smartphone, whoever another participant shared a story of ending a long distance relationship, in part because it was so smartphone dependent:

> I was in a long distance relationship and I actually ended it because I said I was just tired of being in a relationship with your name on my phone. It was just like "I see your name, and that's how I identify with you on my phone, and then we're texting all day, but it's still, the texting is a conversation that could be had in 15 minutes but instead it takes hours and I think it's a poor substitute instead of making an effort to drive and see you it's how about we just skype, or facetime or whatever…it's a good thing to be able to keep in touch with them when they are not there but it's also a bad thing because it almost emphasizes the fact that, or amplifies, I think that's a better word for it, it amplifies the fact that you're not actually together. It's nice that I can be able to text you but it's also just a reminder that I have to text you, that I wish you were here that I can't look at your face. Sometimes you're like, you can't even picture what they even look like. I know that sounds so crazy, but when it is just a name on a phone, that's what you get excited to see is that they texted you.

Another common use was for entertainment purposes and to assuage boredom.

Participants often discussed how their smartphone could be used to entertain them at any

point they experienced "down time." This practice was not exclusively when they were

alone, but in fact, was often in the presence of others, sometimes even when they were

otherwise "engaged" in interaction but became bored. For example, several participants

said they sometimes use them during class if it gets boring. Despite hearing this several

times early on in the interviews, it was still a bit of a surprise that the two most common

answers to when they were most likely to use their smartphones were "when I'm bored"

and/or "all the time."

Separation, Anxiety and Being Without the Network Lifeline

Much like one might imagine since so much of connecting is done via

smartphones these days, people are very attached to their devices. In recounting stories

about being without their smartphone, whether because it was lost, misplaced, broken or

simply left behind for some reason, a majority of participants reported high levels of

anxiety, fear, stress, extreme boredom and even a sense of being "alone" or feeling as

though they might "go insane." As one participant reflected back to times she was

separated from her phone, she said:

> You feel so disconnected, because I guess you don't ever feel alone if you have
> your phone because you can just call or text somebody, especially if you're like
> bored or if you don't want to make eye contact with someone on the street, you
> can just take out your phone and pretend that you're doing something. When you
> don't have your phone you're not as distracted so you kind of notice that missing
> component. Because when I have an extra minute I look at my phone. When I
> don't have my phone I'm looking around, like 'what am I doing?' What am I
> supposed to be doing?'

She continued:

> I've broken my phone before and that's been very upsetting…those were very stressful times. I was really upset that I couldn't call or make any calls, and I thought how am I going to get in touch with my parents-they live about an hour and a half away? How am I going to get a different phone. It was very stressful not having my phone.

Another participant who left her phone behind for the day while "having tons of fun" at Disney World still missed having her phone because she "wondered what was going on in the rest of the world." Interesting that now even the *Magic Kingdom* competes with the handheld device.

Boredom was a resounding theme in the difficulty that arises without ones' smartphone. One participant tells a story of being without his phone once for about a week when he was working the night shift as a security guard, and said he was "pretty bored all the time" and thought he was "going to lose my mind without the phone." He continued, "I know it sounds silly, but it was pretty rough." Another participant echoed the sentiment, saying "I was totally lost without it. I totally cried. I was very upset," and when I asked why it was so upsetting, she responded: "because it is everything! I couldn't do anything…go online, text, play games, I was so bored!" When I asked how she felt when she got it back, she responded: "I was sooooo happy. I text everybody. I was sooooo happy! All was back to normal!"

The following story further illustrates the level of distress participants felt when separated from their devices.

I was only without a phone for maybe 2-3 hours, but even in those 2-3 hours I was panicking just because I knew once I got to school that Monday I needed to have something and that was going to kill me. So I knew that even if I had to wait until that Sunday (the next day), I knew I had to have something before school on Monday. So even though I was only without a phone for about 3 hours I did panic in that way because I was thinking ahead so much…thinking what am I going to do when I have to drive to school? What am I going to do when I get home? How am I going to tell everybody to meet up for lunch? I needed to have my phone to text or get online quick because trying to get on a computer or something on campus can be hard, so I needed something convenient. That was the only time it has ever happened and since I have been very careful. I will not put it in my shirt or someplace that's not safe. I learned my lesson.

The only participant who reported an entirely different reason for anxiety when unintentionally separated was in regard to the security of her device and privacy of the data on it. She is one of only two participants who often leaves her phone behind because, as she says, "she can live without it," but even still, security comes in to play in a different way for her.

Unlike the participants who have been upset by the separation from their smartphones, one participant who had never been unintentionally separated from her phone quickly responded to the question saying:

I've intentionally turned it off. I mean, if I'm just really overwhelmed, I'll just turn my phone off or leave it at my house so I don't have to worry about it. I do that on purpose. There hasn't been a time when I forgot it and freaked out. I've only intentionally left it behind.

We see here that although the absence of the smartphone can be overwhelming for some, the same is true for some in its presence. With that in mind, we now consider a byproduct

82

of such a pervasive communication technology in a society where most presume it is always close at hand.

Information Flows and Expectation Management in *"Timeless Time"* and a *"Space of Flows"*

For most participants, the phone, and thereby the *network*, is ever present, with, near or on them, so they must find ways to regulate the *flows* (Castells 2010a) of information made available by their smartphones. When asked if either they or others have expectations about response times to calls, texts or other form of communication accessed on the smartphones, interesting things emerged. The most immediate responses were regarding expectations of response times for text messages. Although many participants noted that "it depends" on who you are sending it to, most said that because the assumption is that everyone has their phone on them pretty much all the time, the expectation of immediate access and a rapid response is common. Many went on to say that what "it depends" on is how well you know the person you are sending the message to. Whereas some said that knowing a person well increases the expectation of a rapid response, others noted that if you know they aren't particularly attached to their phones, then you would simply expect that they respond within a few hours. Others said not knowing the person well increased rapidity of response for them.

Several people specifically discussed two features on the iPhone: the "read receipt" which, when activated, lets the sender see when the receiver has read the text, and the icon of what we might recognize as a "thought bubble" from a comic, which appears when the recipient of a text begins typing a response. Alone, this time stamp

confirming that it has been sent, received and read can cause conflicts because the sender then gets the sense that "something is wrong," they are "being ignored," or that the recipient "just don't want to talk" to them. Coupled with the appearance and then disappearance of the "thought bubble," indicating that a response was begun, but then abandoned, often takes it to another level. When asked what happens when expectations aren't met, several participants said emphatically "people get UPSET" and the recipient is potentially confronted with "why haven't you responded? I know you read my text." Fortunately for some, they were already aware that the feature could be disabled, and the others were delighted to hear it, saying that would make life "easier" or "less stressful." For all iPhone users, the read receipt and thought bubble were things that were at least mentioned, if not discussed at length.

One participant in particular expressed how all the other participants discussed the "read receipt" and other ways they feel their phones encroach on their autonomy:

> Sometimes I feel like my phone, between email, texting and calling, I just don't want to be bothered by anybody and my phone gives people access to bother me all they want…I just don't want, I just don't like, there's just too much, it just gives people too much of a connection with me all the time and sometimes I don't want that. Sometimes I just think "if I want to talk to you, I'll call you. Don't call me. I'll call you." I just sometimes want my privacy and I feel like with the smartphone, it's hard to get that … I actually, as far as access goes, there's that thing on iPhones, where other people with iPhones, can see if you're typing or not. I did away with that because I have a friend who was like "I saw you read my text, why didn't you respond?" and I was working on an assignment, please leave me alone. Please leave me alone! The whole access thing, I don't like people having that kind of access to me. I feel like if I wanted someone to know where I was I would personally tell them, so there's no reason for them to bombard me with texts trying to figure it out.

With an emphasis on access, connectivity and immediacy, it is understandable that expectation management is part and parcel to a networked self.

<center>**Social Media: Networked Performativity**</center>

Consistent with previous literature, for participants in this study social media is still a site for self-expression, self-presentation and identity formation (Strano 2008; West et al 2009; Mehdizadeh 2010; van Manen 2010; Carr et al 2012; Schwarz 2010; van Dijck 2013), and users often have different sites for different expressions. As the number of social media options expand, so too do the performance portfolios of users. In the expansive communicative landscape, there are sites for several selves to be presented and performed. All but one of the participants had at least one active social media account, while most had two or more. The person who did not have an active account was active in the past but has since either deleted or deactivated all of her accounts. Although there was some variance in the social media sites and apps used, several trends emerged that were common among most users.

All participants had a *Facebook* account which offers a platform for connecting via visual and written narratives, as well as with a simple click on the "like" or "share" features. Most participants who had multiple social media accounts considered Facebook "old school" or the standard, but, for most of those participants, it was no longer their preferred social media outlet. For those who still exclusively used Facebook, their use changed over time either as their audience of known others grew to include a wider array of weaker ties or as they became increasingly aware that at times, unknown others could easily access their information posted on social media. One such user who has migrated a

<center>85</center>

majority of his social media use from Facebook to Twitter explained his reason for keeping his Facebook account this way: "I use it mainly just to keep up with people. That, and it's got *my history* of when I was born, where I went to school."

Many used *Twitter*, a social media site that functions much like a microblog or running commentary of whatever the user wishes to share. Twitter can be thought of as a networked version of the way early cell phone users utilized text messages to create a sense of "connected presence" (Licoppe 2004) through a running commentary with known others, except, Twitter is to a mass audience. Many participants likened the function of Twitter to that of the Facebook status message, but for those who use both accounts, their previous status message practices have migrated to Twitter and they no longer post status messages on Facebook. Frequency of use with Twitter was rather high for those who listed it as one they were active on at the time. As one participant put it: "I'm pretty much on Twitter most of the day, just updating the 'news' feed and seeing what's going on."

Most used *Instagram*, a photo sharing app/site, to create a networked version of "ambient virtual co-presence," again, to a mass audience (Okabe and Ito 2006:4). The same practice of sharing "newsworthy" or interesting photos with catchy captions, or so called "interest arousers" (Satchell and Graham 2010:256) is used here. *Snapchat*, a photo and video sharing app, can be likened to the networked version of "intimate visual co-presence" (Ito 2005; Okabe and Ito 2006:9). It is used with a much smaller group of known others and the visual content, whether photos or video, cannot be selected from

the user's library, but instead has to be created and sent in quick succession. Another

unique aspect of Snapchat is that the content is automatically deleted within 10 seconds

of viewing. The immediacy of the content communicated via Snapchat and that it is

automatically deleted within 10 seconds of being opened makes it unique to what has

been previously explored in the literature in this work.

Vine was mentioned by a few participants as a frequently used app that consists of

six second video clips that are mostly humorous and frequently shared with others. The

participant who discussed Vine most said it is not uncommon to get lost in it and spend

an hour or two watching the six second shorts before they realize how much time has

passed. Another app that was mentioned by many participants was *Facetime*, which is a

standard feature on Apple's iPhone. This app is a video calling app that has gained

popularity over the past couple of years, and offers users the advantage of being able to

see the person they are talking to on their smartphone.

As participants discussed the social media sites and apps they used, several of

them mentioned discontinuing use of various apps because they "weren't contributing" to

them. Although some of them liked what they saw on the sites, they either deactivated

their accounts or seemed to think of themselves as one person said, "a freerider" on the

app. It was interesting to hear some say they left a particular online environment because

they weren't "contributing," while some others admittedly and gladly remained

spectators in many of the social media environments they frequented. In fact, some of the

same participants who reported leaving some sites due to their lack of contribution all

remained on Facebook, a few in more of a spectator or audience role than any other.

Self by Design

At this point, it is clear that social media users have plenty of platforms, or stages, on which to present and perform selves, and make identity claims. Some users were very clear on their approach to social media use, while some others had a great deal of variance in their uses of social media, and yet others gave nuanced accounts of their approach to the performance space. One participant, in particular, was very clear about *what* she uses it for now:

> I use social media to promote events. I use Facebook to share news articles that I
> think are interesting and/or important AND I use Facebook to promote
> MYSELF… through status updates, which I guess is very similar to Twitter,
> where you kind of have a limited space to put a succinct communication out to the
> world; and then through photos.

As she continued talking, it was evident that *how* she would use it had not always been so clear. She continued:

> …I don't really post too much political things anymore. I used to post a lot of
> political stuff and it seemed like I got really involved in caring about what people
> wanted to say about things that I was posting, or I got really emotionally attached
> to things that people would say about this thing that I was uploading on Facebook.
> So, at one point, actually a couple of years ago, I deactivated for a little while
> because I felt that I had a really unhealthy relationship with the internet, so I sort
> of had to reconfigure my relationship with Facebook and what I wanted to use it
> for; and, I think that, who am I creating this person for that I am on the internet?
> I'm not sure. Myself, maybe? Partially. It's a way of making myself maybe feel
> good. And then also I think I want to create sort of an online identity that is
> somehow attractive to other people, so that they will either listen to me or be
> interested in what I'm doing because I feel that somehow that can be influential
> and influencing can be useful. So, I guess I never really thought about that, but,
> yeah. I don't know.

88

She went on to say:

> I think it's honestly-I think a lot of it is for me and I think for other people too, (pause) I think it's a lot, it's like a long, big expansive performance piece. I think that's how I like to think about it because you can tailor it in any way you want, and really what I'm doing on the internet is creating a persona. I mean, really. Because no one choses the pictures that I put up, just me. I take them. I edit them. I upload them. The stories are stories that I tell. If I don't want to share something I don't share it. I think about how what I'm saying or posting is going to, how that's going to relate to this persona or character that I've started to create, and I think it's interesting to think about billions of people doing that same thing. I don't think that billions of people are doing that; I think that a lot of people just sort of post at will and don't really think about the fact that they're creating an identity, or aren't even doing that, but I think it's not any, you cannot say that the representation of a self on the internet is "*your* self." That can't be, I just don't think that can be. There's no way to fully represent a person on a Facebook profile. So you have to choose the things that you, you know, design *your self* by.

Adopting some of Goffman's (1959) language, here we see that this participant ended her *performance* of a politically charged self for a while, left the *stage* and reworked her message before returning. Although she is still very much the same political person she was before, she found a hostile *audience* and perhaps those she thought were *teammates* ended up knowing too many of her secrets. Either way, that performance has left the stage.

Other participants were also keenly attuned to the performative possibilities of the social media platform. As the following participant put it:

> I think because people in my generation have always had social media in one form or another, at least from an age that they would have a desire to use it, so it's, I don't think that they necessarily rely on social media, but we all intuitively understand that it is a way to create your identity. It is a tool, a device, an avenue, an opportunity to help create your identity and then kind of expose it to the world. So not only help you create it, bring it into existence, but also spread it in a way.

So I'm not going to say necessarily "show off" but look at me look at my identity, it's the same as yours, it's different than yours, it's more artsy than yours, it's more photographed than yours. So not that it's necessarily a competition, but it's a comparison quite a bit. I think your identity, people's identity probably is created before social media but social media is the device to show it off, transmit it sort of.

On the other hand, this participant had a different take on the "normalcy" of using social media as a platform for performing a self.

It's to the point now that I don't understand when people told me that so and so has an album with 40 pictures of themselves. I don't get that. That seems narcissistic to me. I don't know who would look through those photos, but it has just gotten to the point where everything is so fake online. I mean, who cares what you look like in real life, you can make yourself look like a super model online if you want. It's so fake there are no more actual interactions with people which are so much more important. There's no more verbal interaction, it's just typing and looking at pictures…It's just, it's odd to me and it's very fake.

She then continues with a story that possibly indicates that the awareness of essentially *selling a self* to an audience on social media is not reserved for those who have been using social media for years. Talking about her thirteen year old cousins, she says: "they intentionally take pictures TO POST to Facebook. It's not like they just take pictures because they think something is pretty, they take pictures especially to post on Facebook. Especially girls in these, not suggestive postures, but in these boobies together, shot down the shirt…you know the angle." It seems that these girls got the memo that "sex sells" and they were working their audience.

I use these three to illustrate a range of perceptions of social media use as a site for self-expression and identity formation. It is interesting to note that of each of the three

featured here, the first participant understands social media primarily as a place for performance and is a prolific content creator when active on social media. Throughout the interview she talked about how "fascinating it is to see the choices people make and how people live out their lives out online," yet she revealed that not only did she deactivate a couple of years ago, but feels the need to deactivate every six months or so to reassess and reconnect with "what is really important." At one point she said "when I'm active on Facebook, I feel insane."

The participant who thinks of a networked presentation of self as "intuitive" for her generation, is also someone who considers herself an exception to the general rule of how her generation uses social media. Although she has active social media accounts, she feels herself to be most self-expressive in face to face interactions. In talking about how she expresses herself on social media, she says:

> I think one part of my identity is in terms of traveling a lot. I really do identify with being a globe trotter and I have used Facebook to show my people I cannot interact with in person. So I do use it to show what I'm doing, where I'm traveling, what's going on in my life.

This fits into her natural, intuitive framework of social media use for her generation. Although she considers face to face interactions as her primary sites for self-expression and sees herself unusually unattached to her smartphone in comparison to her friends who said "they couldn't live without them," it only makes sense that she would use social media as another "avenue" or "tool" by which to claim a "globe trotter" identity. In using the "tool" and taking the "avenue," it offers the "opportunity" to broadcast the identity

claim to a much wider audience. In a Goffmanian sense, social media is a big *stage* for her show.

On the other hand, another participant is clear that she sees little to no value in identity claims made via social media, and, in fact, calls all such claims into question precisely because misrepresentation is so easy achieved. She tells stories of witnessing countless false claims made by others about themselves, as well as people making false claims about others on social media.

It should come as no surprise that this is the one participant who no longer uses any type of social media, because as she put it:

> I had never had an intention of putting any type of social media on my phone because if I did my drama would just follow me everywhere I went. It would mean full access to all the drama of everyone in your friend list, and half of them aren't even your friends really.

To be clear, not only does she not have social media on her smartphone, she no longer uses it at all. Even still, she says that "even though I don't have any type of social media, I still have friends call and text me upset about something ON social media. I can't get away from it, really!"

Although all of the participants featured here agree on the performative power of the platform for a networked self, how they think and feel about it varies greatly. Other participants' perceptions of social media fell along a spectrum between positive or negative and, in many cases, had evolved over time. With only one exception, regardless of where they were in perceiving social media as beneficial or not, positive or negative,

or any other continuum with opposing ends you can imagine, they were all active on social media when we met.

Types of Social Media Users

Throughout the interviews, most participants were candid about their social media use and motives, but when it came time to talk about other people's uses, the level of candor increased exponentially. In fact, in many instances, they talked more about others than themselves. In talking about their own and other's use of social media, I heard the same phrase over and over again: "there are different kinds of social media users." Although some said there was "no judgment" because as one participant noted, "everyone has a right to use it," it was clear that certain uses were held in higher regard than others. It was interesting because of the "types" laid out by participants, most of them seemed to consider whichever "type" they fit into to be normative behavior. For that reason, and the fact that most participants mentioned their use changing over time, it seems that all of the participants in this study considered themselves to be *the new normal*. In discussing the types, the themes that emerged were: political/issue posting, oversharing, "normal" sharing, looking around, "older people" and gendered differences. I will use the first participant to offer a detailed account of user types as a jumping off point for the discussion of user types. As she put it:

> There are different kinds of social media users. During the election season or this duck dynasty stuff, there are a lot of people that are constantly posting every article the find to support their opinion, subsequently adding a status that goes along with it. That gives me the impression that they are desperate to hear themselves talk and share their opinions. I don't understand the point of even putting that on social media, just talk about it with someone who agrees with

you…but they just put it on there and then there will be a big argument. It's very negative. I don't like that.

And then there are people that post selfies and then post statuses like "getting my haircut today, so excited" and then smiley face. And then I'm like "okay, great" I don't know.

Then there are normal people that will post a status like "just got back from study abroad, missed my friends" and then they post the pictures, and that's nice and I'm like, okay I won't judge you for that one.

Then there is my mom who "tags" herself in all of my pictures or "likes" or says something funny and then my aunt or my great aunt, Sarah Jane puts up old pictures of herself and her sisters. Then, my mom will post something, and she'll get 50 something "likes" it's like that, the older generation they use it as a connection from their old high school or old college people. It's almost like an online reunion, so they're all excited to see that stuff, and there are a lot "likes" and a ton of comments.

She continues with her assessment of the generational differences, saying:

They're really active on Facebook, but I guess since my generation is a little jaded about it, we've seen it all, we've been connected to these people since Facebook existed so it's not so novel, we're not "liking" everything. They crack me up, liking all of my stuff. My friends will tell me "your mom liked a picture I posted" and I just think yeah, just ignore it.

The types she mentions were the primary types most others mentioned as well. Because participants' way of talking about social media use in "user types" emerged during the first few interviews, in subsequent interviews in which it did not arise organically, I introduced it as a question regarding impressions one might get about someone from their social media account. This was fruitful because as each participant either voluntarily offered their version of user types or did so in response to the "impressions" question, nuanced differences in participants' perceptions also began to

94

emerge. In response to the impressions one might get question, one participant offered

her take:

> ...it depends on what kind of Facebooker they are because there are some who post every day or every second and then there are some that post just every once in a while, so there's only so much you can get from it…you can't tell a whole person from Facebook.

And she later continued:

> Yeah, if they post a lot of stuff you know they can't stay away from Facebook. If you're a moderate poster like me, that's fine but if you post a lot of stuff on Facebook it's really ridiculous, and then there are some who are barely on Facebook at all. You can also tell the type of Facebooker they are based on what they post and how often.

Aside from the few participants saying they do not post much and mostly use social

media to look around for information and see what is going on with others, this was the

only mention of people who do not post much on social media. When I asked the

previous participant what impression she had of those rare posters or someone who was

not on social media, she said:

> You can't really get an impression of them because they don't have a lot of stuff there. You can just tell they are probably there so they can have connections with past friends, so if you lost their number or something, you could get in touch with them. So it's like having another contact point instead of losing your friends, it's another middle man type of thing, if they don't post a lot on their Facebook.

After talking it out a little more and saying that it does not indicate to her that someone is

asocial or shy, she continued:

I think if you really don't use Facebook like that then I think it says you're doing
something better than that. If you're not on your phone 24/7 then it's actually
more intriguing.

I was surprised by this statement as I can safely say this final sentiment is not

shared by all. I have heard in both formal and informal settings that "if you're not on

Facebook, you don't exist." The lack of any other mention of people who are not on

social media makes me wonder. It would be interesting to inquire with others on their

perception of those who do not use social media, to see if in that case "it depends."

Only one participant mentioned political posting in neutral terms, and the only

participant to mention making political posts temporarily deactivated as a result of the

responses to those posts. All other participants who mentioned political posting portrayed

it as "annoying," "infuriating," "stupid," ridiculous," "irritating" or otherwise

problematic. In talking about political posters, another participant had even more to add

in saying:

A lot of it is opinion…a lot of it. Don't get me wrong, I will see people post some
stuff that they do know what they're talking about, but most of it is an opinionated
rant. Sometimes it irritates me, but I really find it funny when people go on these
2 page rants and they have absolutely no clue what they are talking about. I think
"do you really think that's going to happen, let's be logical about this." I think
most of it is just opinionated.

A topic that has received a great deal of popular press lately, so called "selfies"

came up with some frequency in the interviews. Although opinions varied about this type

of posting, the following quotes mark end points for a range of responses. One participant

could not understanding "what the big deal is" about selfies, saying "that's what social

media is for." The other end of the spectrum offered was "I think selfies are ridiculous. I cannot STAND the duck face that all these girls do. The puckered lip thing. I think it's absolutely ridiculous." While most participants said that too many "selfies," perhaps pointed to self-absorption, the participant who did not see why people make a big deal about them, also said that the "abundance of them shows that it is normal" and again added, "besides, that's what it's for."

The "old people" theme came up in most interviews. Much the same as the account above, other participants recounted tales of family, sometimes distant relatives, friends' family members and any other "old" or "older people" who somehow just did not understand how they should use social media. Participants discussed how "old people" love the "share" and "like" features so much, and comment "inappropriately." One participant summed it up when saying "I don't really comment on people's stuff too much. I feel like the old mom that comments on stuff and ruins the whole post." It is worth nothing here that most participants who have multiple social media accounts, including Facebook, mentioned using Facebook differently than before, in part because they now have so many of these "older people" as "friends." In a Goffmanian sense, they take advantage of other social media sites for audience segregation purposes.

Although gender was not mentioned in the first detailed account of "user types," it was explicitly mentioned in a few interviews while implied in other interviews. One participant covers the basics in saying:

I think that girls are typically more inclined to take selfies and to sort of try to attract male attention for whatever purposes. Females…that's really all I can say about females that I can think of. Males are the ones usually posting controversial topics or advocating for something or pressing issues, that's what I've noticed with them. I think both genders are equally inclined to try to interact with the other gender through social media usage. I think that's probably pretty even in terms of contacting people and trying to message people and talk to them.

Others told stories of female friends "shopping their 'friend' list" for potential romantic partners and on the flip side, being incredibly cruel and "catty" with other females. Although the above example indicates that males are more likely to post more issue oriented topics and to advocate for something, in this study, it was clear that a particular topic that becomes a controversial issue when posted on social media is politics.

Another type that came up frequently was those who tend to "overshare." This took different forms for different participants, as some, based on the criteria other participants laid out, would have been considered oversharers themselves. Therefore, the theory of relativity certainly applies to perceptions of "oversharing." Aside from frequency of posts being an indication of oversharing, content was also important. This gets complicated though, because some see it more in terms of *where* things are being shared. For instance, some sharing is seen as inappropriate but, if the exact same content was shared on another social media stage, it would be completely "acceptable" and "normal." Aside from the before mentioned *selfies,* which were cast in a negative light by most, other recurring trends in oversharing included detailed information about proposals in engagement announcements, constant status updates on Facebook, "depressedness" as

one participant mentioned, "relationship drama," people "exploiting their children" too much by posting what should be "precious moments shared with a select few loved ones" and negativity of all kinds. In fact, the most outstanding theme was the "flow of negativity" that pervades social media. I will return to further discuss repeated references to negativity in the discussion section.

Considering that most of the participants had something to say about the impressions they had of others based on what was presented on social media, and their often keen awareness of social media as a place for performativity, it was only natural to ask if either they, or perhaps they thought others, were attentive to their audience when posting on social media. Their responses took a variety of paths. First, seeking "affirmation" and "validation" was a main theme for many when talking about how others use it. Only one participant admitted to using it in that way for herself. The affirmation and validation they mentioned comes in the form of "likes," "followers," "retweets" and "comments." It was when they spoke of others' use of social media to generate traffic or "likes" that some participants thought of those "types" of social media users as "needy people." On the other hand, when they talked about their own deliberate posting of crowd pleasing content, it was thought to be "normal" use and "what it's designed for." As one participant put it:

> I'm not going to say that it's comprehensive, if I post a photo and people don't like it, I will say this, I would like a couple likes, so if there was something that nobody I knew in the world would care about, then I wouldn't post it… before I post something a small part of me considers will it have "likes" because that is one of the main functions of Facebook, but ultimately even if I think it will receive hardly any likes I'll still post it because it's something I want to share. So

you do think about what other people actually "like" it, but you also consider do I really actually want to post it. I know if I post something funny, I'll get 200 likes, I know if I post a slutty picture, I'll get 5,000 likes..whatever.

After reiterating that she could not speak for everyone, she continued:

I think a lot of people do post things though for attention, for pressing the "like" button, I do think that definitely, that it can be a competition because they might feel more popular or more liked, or maybe better about themselves if they can get 100 likes and that it's a game for them sort of. I don't think some people are doing it for a show and some people are using it for, I don't know why people use social media. I do think a lot of it is for "likes."

Another participant echoed the sentiment in saying:

For me, certain pictures I post up just because I want to get "likes" but there are a lot of pictures I post up because I just love posting pictures so I'll just post it up. But yeah, there are a lot of people who are putting certain stuff up about their lives that they want to get comments on or "likes" and stuff.

This participant went on to give the following examples of posts she considers in this

light, by those she later referred to as "needy people":

I have some friends who will post, like if they are dressed really nice, they will post it up trying to get feedback, and people will say "oh, you look really nice." And there are some statuses, I have two or three friends that are super depressed and like to put all their depressedness on their statuses and try to get people to comment "Oh do you need help? Text me."

Another participant had an even made a more critical assessment of this type posting on

social media.

I feel like Facebook has gotten to the point that it's ridiculous that people get validated by it, get their self-worth from it. There are all these studies where people are getting clinically depressed if their photos don't get enough "likes." That's insane, considering that 80% of the people you don't know on your "friend" list and you only get 10% of your "friends" "like" it. I mean, who are you kidding? These people don't know you and you're letting it get tied into your chemical balance in your brain. That's bizarre. That's bizarre to me!

It is worth noting that this participant often talked in clinical terms when assessing others' uses of social media, but when she cited the before mentioned studies, I inquired about those and learned that her first BA was in Psychology. Suddenly, her frequent use of clinical language and critical assessment of possible social psychological implications throughout the interview made more sense.

Evident from the participant accounts above, perceptions of these behaviors vary. As one might imagine, some participants take this type of behavior into consideration when managing their connections online. The following story illustrates what sometimes happens when people share too much personal information:

I mean, they put everything about their relationships on Facebook. I can almost say a few friends who I know have broken up this week, who got back together, who got cheated on, cheated with, all from their posts on Facebook. I didn't even have to click on their name. When a post gets a lot of comments or "likes" it shows up first on your news feed. I will see this thing showing "just broke up" "#happytobesingle" and I'm just like "why do you know that? Why do we need to know that about you? And sometimes those friends like that, I will just delete them because it just gets so tiring and so sickening.

And she continues:

And the same thing for the friends who are so depressed all the time. I'm like you have so much to be happy about: you're alive, you probably still have your

101

parents, you have food and shelter, be happy about something. If my friends are too depressed or too dramatic I will just delete them. I only want and need positive things in my life so I only want to see positive things from other people.

Of course, there are other ways of managing one's connections. Another

participant described another way, in saying:

I had to block one lady who would comment on stuff, and I had never really talked to her and for some reason she just adored me and would just constantly comment on my stuff. I like the blocking system though, because that one woman, when I was blocking her I had to be really carefully doing it because I don't want her to find out, so I thought she might get on her husband's one day and find out, so I had to block him too. I didn't want to make her feel bad that I blocked her, so if I block them both it will look like I just deleted my Facebook and if she thought I just blocked her that would make her sad so I just blocked them both. It just looks like I don't exist.

As if the picture of social media use was not already complicated enough, when

the topics of managing connections and privacy come up, things get even murkier. There

was a great deal of variance in strategies, and each time I thought I saw trends emerging,

the next participant would contradict them. The summary of findings is as follows:

whereas some considered "knowing" a person in "real life" as the first criteria for

deciding whether to "add," "accept," "friend," or "follow" someone, others did not have

the need to know someone to connect with them online. Once connected, opinions varied

about reasons and best practices for disconnecting. Whereas some "deleted,"

"unfriended" or otherwise disassociate themselves (by "blocking") on first sight of

behavior that was either displeasing or, in their view, inappropriate, others thought it

"juvenile," "overly dramatic" and "ridiculous" to "unfriend."

At first, it intuitively made sense to me to think that those who were more selective in connecting were more likely to have privacy concerns when considering who to connect with. This was true for some, but not others. For those who were more privacy oriented and therefore more selective in who they connected with, it also made sense to think that they would be more likely to disconnect if they saw something that, if discovered by others, could spoil their performance. This was true for some, but not all. I thought that perhaps this could be explained because those who were more selective in *teaming* (Goffman 1959) up with others would be less likely to find themselves displeased with by postings from those they connected with because of their more careful selection process. Thereby they would have less reason to disassociate themselves from the other. Though, this was true for some, it was not for everyone.

In regard to privacy, what I did find was this: the participants who expressed concern about privacy because of present and future professional implications were more selective in who and how they connected online and were often more critical of how others expressed themselves on social media. For those who expressed privacy concerns more in terms of how their performance of self on social media would impact their present and future personal relationships (as opposed to professional), they tended to be more selective in what they shared, but not necessarily in who they connected with. Although some were somewhat likely to be more critical of others' social media activity, others had a "live and let live" attitude about it. Some participants expressed privacy concerns only in terms of "not wanting to deal with the backlashes" from their current online audiences. In one such case, the participant simply had multiple accounts for

multiple audiences, and referred to them in terms of "discretionary" and "non-discretionary" accounts. Of all the privacy concerns that were expressed, only one participant mentioned commercial use of personal data. Although "drama," "cattiness," and "an abundance of negativity" were the reasons cited for deactivating her social media accounts, it seems noteworthy to mention that she is the only participant who is inactive on social media and sees no reason for return.

Impacts on Situated Interactions

When I asked participants how smartphones had changed face to face interaction, I was surprised by the uniformity of responses. One person simply said "if you look at most people who are out these days, they've got their face down in their phones, not really paying attention to what's going on around them." Another said "it makes it less face interactive, less personal since you can talk to someone with your face not, not looking at them, just looking at your phone…" Another participant said she thinks "it has severely crippled personal interaction" in large part because face to face is where trust, intimacy and bonding take place, and when people are constantly attentive to and/or distracted by their device, it makes coming to trust someone and forming those bonds very difficult. Another participant says that she has learned from her experiences with her fiancé to stop talking when someone is looking at their phone because "he's so invested in this game or whatever that he forgets to look up and actually have a conversation with whoever is around."

Every respondent felt strongly that smartphones had "hindered" or had been "detrimental" to face to face interactions, and most discussed how and why at length. The following perception captures most of the aspects of their accounts in saying:

> Honestly, I think it has destroyed the personal one on one or the group interaction as a whole, if we're being honest…When all you're doing is texting with people half the time, like I said earlier people don't really call each other anymore, it's all text.

When asked how it has destroyed them, he responded:

> I really don't think people, when they are sitting down like this or they're out hanging out doing whatever they're doing, I don't think they really know how to talk to each other anymore, or when they do talk to each other, they talk like they text. I don't know, it's just, and then their English and grammar is bad and they can't hold a full conversation, and I think that, I think that a lot of times especially with these young kids they are so involved with social media that it's killing their education to the point where they can't hold a full conversation with anybody, or at least an intelligent conversation. It's sad, it really is…I think people are so wrapped up in that device that it's distancing them.

Although I anticipated some people would indicate that smartphones had negatively impacted face to face interaction, I mistakenly thought that most people who are considered "technology natives" to mobile phones would not have such a negative assessment of the impacts, particularly since so many of them use mobiles in the same ways they identify as "destroying face to face interaction, intimacy and trust." As I dug deeper, and asked them to reflect back and share an experience when the presence or use of a smartphone *negatively impacted* face to face interaction, it was striking that most of

them responded very quickly with a detailed account of one or more personal experiences of this kind.

I then asked them to reflect back and share an experience when the presence or use of a smartphone *positively impacted* a face to face interaction. A couple of participants initially answered quickly in saying they had "Facetimed" with a friend, which was positive because it gave them a chance for a "face to face" interaction with the friend. After clarifying that by "face to face" I meant situated interaction, they reconsidered and thought for a while. Of those who could come up with a face to face interaction that could be positively impacted by the presence and/or use of a smartphone, only one participant had an actual experience, while all the others gave hypothetical situations. The one participant's real life experience was a time when she and a friend were out together and used Facetime to contact a mutual friend and chat. Several people used this kind of scenario or sending a Snapchat to a friend as their hypothetical positive impact, while others said "googling" something when they were not sure of an answer.

Although it was surprising that only one person could recount a smartphone having a positive impact on face to face interaction, the following hypothetical situation stood out among the rest:

> If you are, maybe this scenario has happened, you are out with a friend or someone you know enough to be at the bar with but you're not close friends, and you're not sure how your friendship is developing. Then it almost seems like a friendly gesture to say "hey, do you want to take a picture together?" and you would pull out your smartphone. So the fact that you're asking for a photo with them is kind of a thing because it is like saying hey "I like you as a person." So using your smartphone and then posting it on Instagram to show "hey, we're

106

becoming friends" not necessarily to show off but just to say hey "I like you enough to put this on my social media site."

It is interesting that the gesture of asking for a photo was meant as a sign to the individual, and that posting it was a signal to both parties and their mass audience of that developing friendship. The presence on the stage then becomes a sign too.

Another unexpected outcome was that several participants said they could not think of a way that a smartphone could positively impact face to face interaction. A couple said that quickly, then turned to the before mentioned hypotheticals as the only possible positive impacts smartphones could have on situated interactions.

Users' Perceptions of Mobile Mediated Interactions

Next I asked about times they were most likely to use their smartphones. Not surprisingly, boredom was again a recurring them. The only participant who never mentioned boredom in his interview said his use is "primarily for business, rather than pleasure." Although no one mentioned using their smartphone as an alarm, it is likely that was simply thought to be a foregone conclusion. That said, one participant said:

> Right after I turn off my alarm in the morning in bed, I check the weather, then I check my email then I check my texts on viber from my boyfriend, and that is without a doubt when I will use it for certain. It's just as regular as brushing my teeth.

This, then, has become a ritualized behavior for this participant.

Another participant could not indicate a particular time that she was more likely to use her smartphone, instead saying "I have a compulsive need to constantly check

notifications, pictures, updates, articles, emails, texts, all that. I'm compulsively looking

at it." Although she was the only participant to say it in so many words, several people

required clarification on what I meant by asking about when they were most likely to use

their phones. After the first person asked for clarification on the question, I began asking

them to "tell me when—situations, circumstances or particular times—you were most

likely to use our smartphone." Even with the further clarification, they a few participants

did not understand the question. Once we came to an understanding of the meaning of the

question, I realized that, for them, the question made no sense because they were "most

likely" to be using their smartphones at any time and in any circumstance.

In regards to when they were least likely to use their smartphones, several

participants said it is when they "need to focus and/or get something done." They often

reported having to physically separate themselves from their phones, by leaving them in

another room or putting them in a drawer. As one might imagine, several said at dinner or

in class, but each of those proclamations were then altered either with the "it depends" on

how well you know the person or the "unless it's boring" clause. One particular response

stood out for me:

> I am least likely to use my phone when I'm having a face to face conversation. At
> work because I value my job. In class, one because it's a respect thing for the
> professor and also I don't want to miss any material because the person that text
> me, tweeted or called me, unless it's an emergency, they will still be there after
> class. What else? When I feel like it's a respect thing I am least likely to use my
> phone. When I know that someone else might have a problem with it on a
> professional level, I won't use it. So that's probably mostly when I won't use it.

This response stood out for several reasons. First, that it was so comprehensive in spelling out situations in which he was least likely to use his phone, but also because of the moralistic language used. Unlike the others who could list places they were theoretically less or least likely to use their smartphones, they left room for interpretation. However, this participant had "respect" as his umbrella and in later discussion mentioned every place, situation and circumstance that all of the other participants mentioned as least likely, and later impolite or inappropriate for smartphone use.

During the first couple interviews, I hesitated in asking the next question, thinking it was too similar to the previous one and that their responses should be implied based on the previous two questions. What emerged, though, was further evidence that their relationships with their devices are far more complex than I had initially imagined. When asked to "tell me about times, places or situations you feel it is impolite or inappropriate to use smartphones," I was surprised that some responded with the very places they also said were places they were most likely to use theirs.

Although a couple themes remained from the previous "least/less likely" question, a couple of new ones emerged. The respect and dinner/meal themes carried over from the previous question, but other responses were on a date, in a car, when talking about something "important" or engaged in a "meaningful" face to face interaction, and for some, class is an absolute no phone zone. What was interesting about the findings was that again, there were caveats. Whereas, for some, class was an absolute no go, others who said they were "most likely" to use their phones in class were also those who said it

was inappropriate or impolite to do so. For several of the participants who had what I saw as contradictory responses based on their responses to where they were most likely to use their phones, they typically qualified or justified the contradiction by indicating it was not that they had never done it or would not do it if and when it was "boring." Even for some who were most adamant about times, places or situations using a smartphone would be inappropriate or impolite, "it depends" was part of many responses.

Again, we see that there are no clear cut answers, and even those that at first seem as such are quickly rewritten by their authors. This brings to mind how this constant rewriting of the rules of engagement, with many instances where "it depends" on many things, could help explain why all of the participants would quickly and easily recount experiences of smartphones negatively impacting face to face interaction. Using Goffman's language (1959), either the person who is seen as being impolite or inappropriately using their smartphone has a different definition of the situation than the other parties or they have failed at maintaining their expressive cues, as evidenced by them showing less engagement in the interaction than the other deems appropriate.

In addition to having no shortage of first-hand knowledge and experience with smartphones negatively impacting face to face interaction, participants were just as likely to have first-hand experience with social media being the source of conflict. Much the same as the findings throughout this study, some participants had more stories than others, but, unlike the case of smartphones negatively impacting face to face interaction,

most of the social media conflicts were left unresolved or resulted in cutting off ties with those involved in the conflict.

Many of the stories fit squarely in the category of "relationship drama," but, by the end of the interviews, I thought that perhaps the category could be relabeled as "men and women behaving badly." One take was of a women taking screenshots of text exchanges between themselves and someone else's partner who was either hitting on them or involved in a secret relationship with them, and then posting the screenshots to social media and "tagging" the girlfriend with a message saying "look at 'your' man now." Another was women targeting other women with whom they considered themselves in competition for the same guy and either making false claims about them on social media or making cruel comments about their appearance in photos posted on other people's Facebook walls.

A couple of guys mentioned that they had "gotten in trouble" with girlfriends in the past for "liking" or "commenting" on another woman's photos. Their girlfriends wanted to know "why are you liking her photos?" For both guys, they expressed degrees of disbelief that their girlfriends would be upset by that, because, as they explained it, "that's what you're supposed to do on Facebook; comment and like things." This is a reminder that "gender differences" was an unsolicited, recurring theme for participants. As one participant said, whereas she has known "women to shop their 'friend' lists for potential partners and then go to their page and 'like' or 'comment' in hopes that they will start 'talking,'" it is no surprise that these men's girlfriends think they have other

intentions behind doing the same thing. For the male participants in the study, they said

that, although they knew women got upset about it sometimes, they were still always

somewhat surprised because it seemed so strange to them that "liking" a photo on

Facebook would mean anything other than you "liked" the photo.

Several participants sited political postings as sources of conflict, which could

explain their distaste for seeing any mention of politics on social media. After hearing the

story of a conflict that arose on social media and resulted in "unfriending" each other, I

asked if there was ever a resolution to the conflict since the primary players in it also had

to see each other in person sometimes. In his response, the following participant captured

several aspects of other participants' stories of social media as a source of conflict and

how they are usually resolved in saying:

> From what I've seen that's about the only resolution. People start "unfriending"
> people and never talking again and people picking sides. I've never seen a
> positive resolution to anything negative like that that's happened on social media,
> which is kind of sad because it kind of kills the idea of that open mindedness and
> that debate style. Just being able to debate something and…it also goes back to
> what I was talking about earlier with one on one or group interaction. People
> being able to sit down and debate something. First of all social media has killed
> that because now everybody goes and bickers about it online and then there is no
> middle ground, there's no, I guess when you're in public like this, or you're in a
> group thing, usually you've got a mediator there. Online there's no mediator.
> People pick sides. Everybody agrees with them or everybody agrees with the
> other one. You'll get that one person who comes in and says "c'mon, is this really
> worth it? Come on guys..." and then somebody IMMEDIATELY comes in and
> shuts that person down and they are like "alright, I'm out of here, I'm not dealing
> with this childish stuff." So, I feel like online not only has it killed the ability to
> talk about things in a CIVIL way, it has gotten to the point where you can't really
> even mediate it anymore. You've just got people picking sides and it gets out of
> hand and ridiculous and 'defriending' people, and they are probably people that
> they have to see every other day or that they're going to run into and that gets

awkward and then they end up having an argument face to face. It's ridiculous to me.

He later added:

I think it keeps people closed minded and very opinionated and not open to new ideas and listening to other people's arguments.

Several participants told stories of conflicts occurring on social media, with people who had no first-hand knowledge of the situation "piling on" and "picking sides" and ultimately ending with people cutting ties on social media and in person. One participant said that social media "amplifies everything" and "spreads ignorance." Others referred to social media as an "instigator" and "agitator."

Only two participants offered examples of social media as a site of conflict resolution. One said told of a couple of experiences when she wanted to apologize to someone about something, but confronting them face to face was too difficult. Instead, she was able to apologize by private messaging them on Facebook, which made their next face to face exchange more pleasant. Another recounted a story of her Uncle's estranged son contacting his father on Facebook after five years of being out of touch. The two were able to reconnect and have since spent time together and started building a relationship without the influence of the son's mother, who kept them from communicating before they connected via social media.

After establishing that all participants thought smartphones negatively impacted situated interactions, and many of them—although active and often enthusiastic social

media users—reported "more negativity than positivity," I asked the following questions: 1) What would *your* social world be like without a smartphone? 2) What would *the* social world be like without smartphones? 3) What would *your* world be like without social media? and 4) What would *the* world be like without social media. Much like other instances throughout this report of findings, I think the best way to capture the complexity of participants' relationships with smartphones and social media is to reduce the editorial role I take in presenting their stories by keeping the excerpts in long form to ensure that their voices come through. The following participants' accounts of life without smartphones illustrate how intertwined these devices are in the activities of everyday life and how deeply and fundamentally they alter experiences of the present, here and now of our bodies.

Answering the first of this set of questions, the participant who is in a transcontinental relationship, and therefore relies on her smartphone and social media to maintain the relationship, said this:

> I don't want to say less efficient, but in the academic and professional realm, for sure less efficient…besides my relationship with my boyfriend I don't know how different it would be for me personally…but definitely the boyfriend, that's number 1. I wouldn't know what he looks like without social media or skype. I mean, I hope I wouldn't forget what he looks like, but I might not remember exactly how he looks or how he talks or this kind of thing without social media. So, not too different except for the boyfriend, for me.

And after considering it further, she continued:

> I wouldn't remember entirely. I wouldn't remember exactly. Especially if you never see someone and the only way you connect with them is through social

114

media, in a funny way you wonder if they really exist…you don't know unless you and see and hear them.

For the student who previously mentioned using his smartphone more for "business, rather than pleasure," he imagined his social world without a smartphone in this way:

I hate to say it but it definitely would be just a mess. It's not because I can't live without my smartphone, but it's just such a wonderful tool that I can do multiple things. If I didn't have my smartphone I wouldn't be able to have three jobs, be in college, have my internship, coach two basketball teams, see my daughter on a regular basis. I wouldn't be able to do all of that because I wouldn't be able to be in all those places at once. I wouldn't be able to coordinate all of that and be successful at doing all of that without my smartphone… It just depends on what you're using it for. There are just different ways you can use your phone, so if you're using it in a positive, business like way, trying to get things done and be successful, then working without that tool is definitely hindering your success in what you're trying to do and accomplish. So, my life would be a mess, honestly, and I can definitely adapt and overcome so I wouldn't need my phone, but as of now, it would be a mess.

Whereas these two participants saw their lives without smartphones as diminished, some of the others had a different take, a more positive assessment of life with their smartphone. One participant had a quick and relatively simple answer:

I'd probably be more personable, more sociable. I'll get invited to go out downtown and stuff through your phone or Facebook or whatever, and I just don't feel like going but I feel like if I saw them then I would kind of feel obligated to go.

The participant who deactivates her social media account every six months or so quickly responded that "it would probably be a lot simpler. It would probably be A LOT

simpler, but I would probably be a little more lonely."After only a moment of silence, she

re-envisioned her imaginary future without her smartphone, saying:

> Maybe I wouldn't be more lonely, maybe I would just be into other things…I
> think without it I would probably, you know, I hate to say this because I don't
> really want to hear myself say it, I think I'd probably be healthier mentally. I
> think that I would miss it, I think that I would miss the interactions BUT I think
> that I would feel more connected to the earth and the universal energy that exists,
> that I think that we forget about because we're trying to create our own universe
> and our own energy and (long pause) I think that we forget that, hmm, there's
> already this (pause) way that life connects us all through, you know, existing,
> breathe, movement. There are already those innate connections, but they're just
> not the ones that you're creating, you know. And I think that people forget that
> because we have this desire, and the ability now, to control, or the illusion that we
> have the ability to control and to create these worlds. We forget about the
> connections that are innate, existing within us already. So, I think that when I
> unplug, deactivate, disconnect, that's the thing, maybe that's the thing that I'm
> going back to, is that realization, remembering that…oh, this shit is all already
> here, it's just not all in this little box.

And the participant who was "like a kid at Christmas" and "so invested in her

smartphone" when her parents delivered it, and who also missed her phone during her

last visit to Disney World because she "wondered what was going on in the rest of the

world, offered this:

> I definitely think we would all be a lot more attuned to each other and would sit
> down and have face to face interactions like we used to. I know one of my friends
> had a smartphone and he went back to a flip phone because he said it was too
> distracting from the world. I definitely think he's right. Even my fiancé and I have
> talked about it and we are like, we don't focus on each other… I definitely think I
> would probably be happier. I am really happy with it, but I would probably be
> happier if I would go out and do whatever it is we're supposed to do without our
> smartphones. And when we're on our honeymoon, we already agreed that we are
> not taking our phones into the park, because we are going to Disney World, so we
> aren't taking our phones in with us because that's our time. We're going to be
> celebrating just getting married, we don't need to take our cell phones with us,

and they have photographers so they can take all of our pictures for us, so we don't need it. So, I'm excited about that because that's one week away from our technology.

The following account is another that captures a couple of key themes which emerged throughout this work, downtime and boredom.

> Instead of sitting at home playing candy crush on your phone, let's go out to the park on a pretty day like today. I want to say it would really help society, I really want to but I think for a while people would just suffer. It's really dumb for that to happen, but I think for a while people would be so bored, I wouldn't be surprised if some people just lost their minds.

After discussing how it would take time to get accustomed to being without it and the inconveniences of having to check email from a computer, he continued and captured a recurrent theme in his imaginary social world without a smartphone in saying:

> For a while it would probably, in situations where I'm bored or I'm not busy, I'd have to find a way to entertain myself or do something in some downtime or make me go out and do other things instead of just sitting around looking at my phone, which would be a good thing. I might actually get more work done.

When we shifted the question to the bigger picture, THE social world, the tone changed a bit. The participant whose life would "be a mess" without it because he would be unable to keep up with all the places he needs to be at once to be successful imagined the social world without smartphones this way:

> People would think the world would come to an end if someone was to take their smartphone away. "Okay, new rule: no smartphones for everyone." People would freak out for sure. They would freak out! That would just be so crazy. It's crazy to think about. People would freak out and think the world was coming to an end.

117

After discussing the conveniences and affordances of smartphones and how they can be used "for positive reasons," the tone began to change and soon it became clear how conflicted he was about ways the incorporation of these devices into daily life has impacted our experiences of the world and each other. He continued:

> I feel like people would interact differently with each other for sure. At first we wouldn't know how to and then we would have to learn how to converse with people and how to think critically. Almost a sense of "out of the box" type of thinking. Smartphone, the invention itself, that was definitely out of the box (thinking). I mean all of the things we can do on a phone, that's crazy, but here we are today so. The world would still turn for sure, BUT it would be a definite adjustment, if we didn't have smartphones at all to begin with the world would definitely be different, I don't know exactly how, but it would definitely be different. Technology might not be where it is today in my opinion. People wouldn't be able to stay in contact as frequently as they are now with family members and friends if we were just stuck on letters or phone calls, that can hinder it. If you're not home, well then I can't talk to you. It takes three or four days to send a letter across the states. Communication would definitely be hindered if we didn't have smartphones. A lot of different changes…so, I mean, I think it would be good...to have a day where nobody had a smartphone, to just talk to someone, to interact, do something else other than just being on your phone. Being outside, or trying something different, new things. I can pull up a picture of art up on my phone so why do I need to go to an art gallery? I can do that from my room. I mean, just trying new things, traveling. You can see the world on your phone, so people say I don't need to go there, I've seen that. Yeah, but have you experienced it? So that would be a wonderful thing. People limit themselves I think with their smartphone because they have so much access yet they are so limited. They have so much access to things on their phones yet they are so limited in life experiences. It's kind of ironic to me.

I dug a little deeper to see what else he had to say about "life experiences" and after a long, poetic discussion of engaging all the senses, and in a sense mind, body and spirit, he added one final thought:

The big picture is we're so limited by so much access that we have on our phone. It just puts us in a box and it actually cuts off our wants and needs to do those things.

While his narrative covered more ground than some others, it certainly covered much of what everyone expressed.

It was somewhat surprising to hear how difficult it was for participants to imagine life without a smartphone, since several of them asked for clarification as to whether I meant smartphones specifically, or cell phones in general, and several of them had only had their smartphones for two years or less. Also surprising was how much they seemed to struggle with it, because, as they tended to speak more passionately and for far longer about the negative impacts of smartphones and ways the world would be better off without them, at some point, most of them returned to convenience and productivity.

The next set of responses tells a bit of a different tale. When I asked participants how their social world and the social world would be different without social media, with little exception, the sentiment was the same: aside from the obvious result of it being more difficult or even impossible to remain in contact with so many distant others, their lives would have "less drama," "less BS," "less negativity" and be "less stressful." Three participants said their lives would be significantly different for very specific reasons: the one in the transcontinental relationship who relies on her smartphone and social media for that relationship to thrive, one who met his fiancé through social media during high school, and another who met his best friend on social media during high school. Even for

these participants, other than the exceptions of those key relationships, they reported

everything else mentioned above.

Again, it was interesting to see how the tone changed when they responded about

the social world without social media. Aside from the three previously mentioned

exceptions, the others felt their social worlds would not be vastly different. These

accounts were selected precisely because of how different they were.

> The world as a whole. I don't think this world could even survive now without social media or anything because it's celebrities, it's not just an average American anymore. It's celebrities, it's politicians, government officials, almost everybody now and their whole family has Facebook, twitter, Instagram. It's just so many people in the system that I just don't think it could survive without it because so many depend on it now. Now, if it were to gradually start to use other things or go back to the old ways, I think that eventually we could survive but I think if Facebook just shut down right now, I think people would be like "NO, what is going on! I can't keep in contact with this person. What am I going to do?" I don't think people would know what to do with their lives. Going back to my couple of friends, the one who was in "twitter jail" for a couple of days, she didn't know what to do. She was so bored, she didn't know what to do, what to talk about, said there was nothing to talk about. She said there was just nothing interesting when you couldn't share it with other people. And I'm just like, come on, go talk to somebody, go outside, go do something.

> We're not ready to go back to that stage because we feel like we've developed so much because of that. I think that because people think about so much you can do now in a positive way, that people just don't think about it in a negative way. People don't think about what happens negatively with Facebook. They don't think about how their images are being used in other ways. They don't think about the negative things. They just think about "oh the likes I get" and "oh the comments I get" and "the people I can share things with." So for that reason, I just don't think people would know what to do with their lives. I think people would get so depressed.

> I don't think people are at the point where they would be like, I'm going to go back to doing things the old way. I think people would find another path, like when people started saying Facebook was getting boring, twitter popped up then twitter got boring, Instagram popped up, Instagram got boring, vine popped up, so

it seems like every time one social networking site gets boring, another one pops up instead of us going back to let's just not have social media. We aren't ready to just say let's just go back to not having social media. To go back to saying okay if I meet you face to face and I need to know how to say certain things and I have to make sure I know how to say things correctly, and look properly. I just don't think the world as a whole would know what to do right now. It goes back to a lot of things. Employers now put jobs on social media sites. What happens if you don't have social media, you wouldn't know about these positions, you may not be where you are today because you wouldn't know what was going on. So, there's just so much depending on it, just completely depending on it. The world wouldn't know what to do without it.

And the other side of that coin was expressed by this participant:

I feel like there would be a lot less drama. I feel like people, particularly my age, would be a lot more informed on the actual facts instead of just Facebook posts and twitter crap. I am talking specifically about politics. I feel like it's a sad day when someone votes for somebody because they have a Facebook account with 500,000 followers instead of actually going to their webpage and seeing if they actually agree with their platform, not "I love their Facebook page. They really love young people, they have social media, they're just like me." I feel like people would be actually informed. I feel like their communities would be more tight knit. And when I said "drama" earlier, I don't mean just drama between people, I mean drama in general…in a community, rumors would spread as fast as they do and negativity and webs of animosity wouldn't build as fast as they do.

I guess there are some pros, it's nice that there is social media because if someone is in Afganistan you can keep in touch. So there's a way for people that you would otherwise not be able to keep in contact with, you can…but there's also always email for that too. There's always something that could accomplish that.

People talk about it's so great that everyone is so interconnected, and I just don't think it is. I think people having their private lives is so important. The more people you get involved in your private life, the harder it's going to get, especially romantic relationships.

So, I don't think it has done that much good. And it has opened the door, thinking about the Facebook thing and politics, it has opened the door for a lot of deception. For people who believe what they read and see on social media and don't double check it, it's bad. It makes me embarrassed for people my age because I feel like a lot of people I'm around think that way and it's just not true. People vote for a candidate, like you said, because they love their Facebook page

121

and candid x didn't have it. But wait a second, do you believe in x, y and z. No, well you just voted for it. It gives people the illusion that they are smarter than they actually are. Making people think that they know more about a subject than they actually do is a dangerous, dangerous thing, especially when they interact with each other because then it can just…they all think they're really smart and then they go and vote.

Although all of these questions required them to imagine something that will likely never be at this point, their responses speak volumes to their perceptions of social implications of these technologies. Much like with other portions of the interviews, participants' narratives seemed to shift as they reflected on their mobile media use and put words to things that many of them claimed they had either never thought of, or never expressed.

At the end of most interviews, I asked participants if they had anything else they wished to add. The following two excerpts stood out. The first was offered by a participant who celebrates many aspects of her life with a smartphone, particularly that it is so many devices in one, and frequents social media, although being somewhat skeptical of what she sees there. Her parting words were:

> Every generation has their different things that they focus on or different innovations and ours is definitely technology. A lot of people focus more on that, and I feel like the government or the wealthy people are definitely taking a hold of that and trying to get people to focus on that, and focusing on their social drama instead of focusing on the world drama and what we need to focus on because that is more important to our lives than our little friend drama that we have. So technology is our generation's things. I mean, technology is definitely a good thing in certain aspects, even if we can't stop it, I think we just need to focus on more things, technological things that would help us as a people. I don't think social media is helping us at all because it's just creating more negativity than positivity and I just don't, I'm not a big fan of what we're turning into with all the social media, especially with the smartphones and stuff too. There's always

literally something new and something "better" and then we're also spending our money on something we shouldn't be spending our money on and we're then spending $1000 on something new that is going to change in two seconds and we should be spending our money on something else that's more important.

The following excerpt is from the only participant who called herself a "technology native." She asked me "have you ever heard 'if it's not on Facebook, it's not real?'" to which I responded "yes" and shared that I had also heard "if you're not on Facebook, you don't exist." After expressing shock at that, she continued:

That's something that I get very frustrated with because I have been in situations in the past where people say "if you don't put the relationship on Facebook then we're not in a relationship" and so I think, what happened before Facebook? Were people never in relationships, did they never get married before Facebook was there to put it on? Facebook is social media, it's not reality, it is reality but it's not reality, it's a fabrication of people's lives that they use to tell their story with technology. It bugs me to no end that people think that if something is not on Facebook, it's not real. Now that I think about it, a lot of conflict can probably arise from that in terms of relationships. So in terms of usage, people use Facebook to validate their life and, that, I don't approve of it but that's the way most of society uses it. In terms of uses, they use it for validation I think.

Summary of Findings

When asked how they socially connect, whether face to face, talking via smartphone, texting, social media, email or any other form of correspondence, most participants listed texting and social media among the top two ways. For those who tended to emphasize academic and professional purposes, email was typically among the top two. Only two people mentioned calling or taking calls as the primary way of connecting socially. Most others listed talking on the phone as the least likely way of connecting, except when connecting with parents, or more generally, "older people."

Almost all participants reported being excited and having expectations about getting their first smartphone. Reasons for being excited varied, with some participants focused on the technological affordances of the device itself, while others focused on connectivity with others and the world. Although reasons for being excited varied somewhat, the reported level of excitement was similar. Of all the participants who went into smartphone ownership with excitement and high expectations, all but one either had their expectations met or exceeded. Only one participant was not excited to get a smartphone, saying she was "dragged begrudgingly into the smartphone kind of world." Although she was not interested in owning a smartphone, her expectations were not only exceeded, but having a smartphone made her want a tablet.

When asked how they most use their phones, although some participants said they used them for "everything," a few common themes were for academic/professional purposes, relationship management and entertainment. For those who use them primarily for academic or professional purposes, efficiency of communication was the most important affordance of the smartphone. This additional efficiency helps them be productive and, as one claimed, more "successful," since it allows him to be in several places at once.

For the most part, participants use their phones for connecting with friends, family, loved ones and a vast audience of others elsewhere. It was described as "the hub of all things social" by one participant, whose sentiment was echoed by many. Several participants also mentioned the perceived necessity of their smartphones for keeping up

long distance romantic relationships. For those who were in long distance relationships at the time, it was one of the primary benefits they mentioned for having a smartphone; however, another participant shared a story of ending a long distance relationship, in part because it was so smartphone dependent.

Another common use was for entertainment purposes and to assuage boredom. Participants often discussed how their smartphone could be used to entertain them at any point they experienced "down time." This practice was not exclusively when they were alone, but, in fact, was often in the presence of others, sometimes even when they were otherwise "engaged" in interaction but became bored. The two most common answers to when they were most likely to use their smartphones were "when I'm bored" and/or "all the time."

Much like one might imagine since so much of connecting is done via smartphones these days, people are very attached to their devices. In recounting stories about being without their smartphone, whether because it was lost, misplaced, broken or simply left behind for some reason, a majority of participants reported high levels of anxiety, fear, stress, extreme boredom and even a sense of being "alone," "lost" or feeling as though they might "go insane." The only participant who reported an entirely different reason for anxiety when unintentionally separated was in regard to the security of her device and privacy of the data on it. Unlike the participants who have been upset by the separation from their smartphones, one participant had never been unintentionally separated from her smartphone said she has only ever been separated from it because she

intentionally left it behind, explaining that others' expectations of access to her and the constant flow of contact was at times unwanted, overwhelming and felt like an invasion of privacy.

In regard to regulating the flows of information made available by their smartphones, when asked if either they or others have expectations about response times to calls, texts or other forms of communication accessed on the smartphones, the answer was affirmative. The most immediate responses were regarding expectations of response times for text messages. Although many participants noted that "it depends" on whom you are sending it to and the content of the message, most said that because the assumption is that everyone has their phone on them most of the time, the expectation of immediate access and a rapid response is common.

Many participants reported using several social media sites for different purposes. All but one of the participants had at least one active social media account, while most had two or more. The person who did not have an active account was active in the past but has since either deleted or deactivated all of her accounts. Although there was some variance in the social media sites and apps used, several trends emerged that were common among most users. All participants who had active social media accounts had a Facebook account. For those with multiple social media accounts, Facebook was considered "old school" or the "standard" of sorts; as one participant said, the site that had his "history." All participants with multiple social media accounts used more discretion in determining what they posted on Facebook because they had more

connections with family, former bosses, other "old people" and weaker ties. Others that were frequently mentioned were Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Vine and Facetime.

There was a range of perceptions of social media use as a site for self-expression and identity formation. Although most participants agreed on the performative power of the platform for a networked self, how they thought and felt about it varied greatly. On one end of the spectrum was a participant who thought of her life on social media as "a big performance piece" in which she carefully creating and curated a persona. On the other end of the spectrum was a participant who was dismayed by how "fake everything is" on social media and that people believed anything they saw there. Someplace between these two extremes was the participant who reported that her generation "intuitively understands" that social media is a place for identity formation and dissemination. Others' perceptions of social media fell somewhere along this spectrum.

Most participants were candid about their social media use and motives, but in many instances, they talked more about others than themselves. In talking about their own and others' use of social media, I heard the same phrase over and over again: "there are different kinds of social media users." Although some said there was "no judgment" because as one participant noted, "everyone has a right to use it," it was clear that certain uses were held in higher regard than others. Most participants seemed to consider whichever type they fit into to be normative behavior. In discussing the types, the themes that emerged were: political/issue posting, oversharing, "normal" sharing, looking around, "older people" and gendered differences.

127

When asked if they or perhaps they thought others were attentive to their audience when posting on social media, responses took a variety of paths. First, seeking "affirmation" and "validation" was a main theme for many when talking about how others use it. The affirmation and validation they mentioned comes in the form of "likes," "followers," "retweets," "comments" and "friends." It was when they spoke of others' use of social media to generate traffic or "likes" that some participants thought of those types of social media users as "needy people." On the other hand, when they talked about their own deliberate posting of crowd pleasing content, it was thought to be "normal" use and "what it's designed for."

There was a great deal of variance in strategies for managing connections on social media and, with such a limited sample size, I was unable to detect any trends. The summary of findings is as follows: whereas some considered "knowing" a person in "real life" as the first criteria for deciding whether to connect with them online, that was not true for others. Once connected, opinions varied about reasons and best practices for disconnecting. Whereas some "deleted," "unfriended" or otherwise disassociate themselves (by "blocking") on first sight of behavior that was either displeasing or, in their view, inappropriate, others thought it "juvenile," "overly dramatic" and "ridiculous" to "unfriend."

A few trends did emerge regarding privacy. The participants who expressed concern about privacy because of present and future professional implications were more selective in who and how they connected online and were often more critical of how

others expressed themselves on social media. For those who expressed privacy concerns more in terms of how their performance of self on social media would impact their present and future personal relationships, they tended to be more selective in what they shared, but not necessarily in with whom they connected. Although some were likely to be more critical of others' social media activity, others had a "live and let live" attitude about it. Some participants expressed privacy concerns only in terms of "not wanting to deal with the backlashes" from their current online audiences. Most participants managed this by having multiple social media sites with different audiences. Of all the privacy concerns that were expressed, only one participant mentioned commercial use of personal data, and although "drama," "cattiness," and "an abundance of negativity" were the reasons cited for deactivating her social media accounts, it seems noteworthy to mention that she is the only participant who is inactive on social media and sees no reason for return.

When I asked participants how smartphones had changed face to face interaction, I was surprised by the uniformity of responses. All participants felt strongly that smartphones had "hindered" or had been "detrimental" to face to face interactions, and most discussed how and why at length. They also noted that trust, intimacy and bonding with others had been negatively affected by smartphones. All participants were able to respond very quickly with a detailed account of one or more personal experiences in which the presence or use of a smartphone *negatively impacted* face to face interaction. However, only one participant had a real life experience of the presence or use of a smartphone *positively impacting* face to face interaction. An unexpected outcome was

that several participants said they could not think of a way that a smartphone could positively impact face to face interaction.

Of the most likely times, places or situations to use smartphones, when bored was the most common answer. A few participants were unable to indicate when they were "most likely" to use their smartphones because they were mostly likely to be using them any time and in any circumstance. In regards to when they were "least likely" to use their smartphones, common responses were when they needed to focus and when they needed to get things done. They often reported having to physically separate themselves from their phones, by leaving them in another room or putting them in a drawer. Several participants said at dinner or in class, but they also noted that "it depends" and if they became "bored," then they might use them.

When asked to "tell me about times, places or situations you feel it is impolite or inappropriate to use smartphones," some responded with the places they also said were places they were most likely to use theirs. Although a couple themes remained from the previous "least/less likely" question, a couple of new ones emerged: on a date, in a car, when talking about something "important" or engaged in a "meaningful" face to face interaction, and for some, class is an absolute no phone zone. Whereas, for some, class was an absolute no go, others who said they were "most likely" to use their phones in class were also those who said it was inappropriate or impolite to do so. There are no clear cut answers, and even those that at first seem as such are quickly rewritten by their authors.

In addition to having no shortage of first-hand knowledge and experience with smartphones negatively impacting face to face interaction, participants were just as likely to have first-hand experience with social media being the source of conflict. Much the same as the findings throughout this study, some participants had more stories than others, but, unlike the case of smartphones negatively impacting face to face interaction, most of the social media conflicts were left unresolved or resulted in cutting off ties with those involved in the conflict. Many of the stories were about "relationship drama" or political postings. Several participants told stories of conflicts occurring on social media with people who had no first-hand knowledge of the situation "piling on" and "picking sides" and ultimately ending with people cutting ties on social media and in person. One participant said that social media "amplifies everything" and "spreads ignorance." Others referred to social media as an "instigator" and "agitator."

Only two participants offered examples of social media as a site of conflict resolution. One told of a couple of experiences when she wanted to apologize to someone about something, but confronting them face to face was too difficult. Another recounted a story of her Uncle's estranged son contacting his father on Facebook after five years of being out of touch.

As participants imagined their social lives without smartphones, they offered conflicted stories. Those who had a more positive assessment as they imagined their lives without smartphones tended to focus on being more attentive to others in situated interactions, experiencing life more fully by being present in the here and now, and being

more productive without the distraction of the phone. Of the particularly conflicted accounts, boredom and uncertainty of what to do with downtime were sighted as initial concerns, but, as they continued talking, they said it would be good and get them to "go out and do something" instead of just "being on the phone all the time." On the other hand, a couple of participants imagined their lives without smartphones as somewhat diminished. One participant said his life would "be a mess" without his smartphone and that he would not be able to accomplish as much as he needs to maintain his current obligations. The participant in the long term, transcontinental relationship said that, although her life would otherwise not be very different, she wondered if she would remember what her boyfriend looks like. All participants said they would miss the conveniences afforded by their smartphones.

Stories of what *the* social world would be like without smartphones were equally conflicted, but a little more extreme in nature. One participant said "people would think the world was coming to an end," but went on to say that it would be good for society for the same reasons mentioned by those with positive assessments of their lives without smartphones. In fact, some participants thought that in addition to making people more fully in the present, the absence of smartphones would also raise the level of discourse.

When I asked participants how their social world and the social world would be different without social media, with little exception, the sentiment was the same: aside from the obvious result of it being more difficult or even impossible to remain in contact with so many distant others, their lives would have "less drama," "less BS," "less

negativity" and be "less stressful." Three participants said their lives would be significantly different for very specific reasons: one met his fiance on social media, another met his best friend on social media their freshman year in high school, and they remain very close friends and the other would not be able to maintain her long distance relationship. Even for these participants, other than the exceptions of those key relationships, they reported everything else mentioned above. Much like each individual's imagined world without smartphones and social media, some imagined the social world without social media with delight while others thought it was unfathomable. Whereas one participant thought communities would be tighter knit, another believed society could not exist without it because too much depends on it now.

They experience much of life either on their smartphone or with their smartphone, finding it as a source of connection with known and unknown others as part of a world wide web of information flows. However, when they imagine life without the device, they reflect on their lives with the device and talk about a world full of information but flat on experience. In imagining life without their smartphones, they become everyday philosophers, questioning the meaning of life, experience and knowledge, and conclude that living and experiencing life on a smartphone is a poor substitute for the "real thing." As it turns out, what they come to as they create narratives of their experiences in daily life with smartphones, is that although thoroughly entertaining and central to their ways of being in the world today, the world and their lives on the screen are flat.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

As I listened to these eleven people tell their tales of life with mobile media, I was struck by the language they used and how, as the interviews progressed, their stories began to take different shapes. Many of them were putting words to daily actions they had either never given much thought, or had just never spoken. On the other hand, some had given mobile and social media use a great deal of thought, and arrived with stories they hoped to tell. Interestingly, though, with very few exceptions, even they seemed somewhat surprised by what they had to say at some points during the process. In most accounts the language used included some combination of networks, performance, reality, positive and negative emotions, experience, moralistic and measured language to convey their "unique" relationship to technologies. For some, they cannot imagine living life without, whereas for others, they can only just imagine it.

In their reflections of getting the device, with only one exception, participants talked in terms of hype, trends, getting with the population, jumping on the bandwagon, connecting with the world and having all of their devices and networks in one place. Their accounts were riddled with eager anticipation, excitement and increased connective possibilities; their networked futures were bright. As they described using their device, they focused on access to information and others, entertainment, convenience, and as a

tool for both social and professional success. Once they had their device, living without it sometimes generated extreme boredom, anxiety and a sense of disconnection that left them feeling lost and alone, often unsure of what to do with themselves, their time and how they would connect with others.

Whether alone or with others, their attachment to the device and the access it afforded them to others and others to them came at the cost of their attention to the present moment, the here and now of their bodies in time and space. Although the level of distraction they reported in the presence of their smartphones varied, they all agreed that even the possibility of connecting made its presence distracting. Although only one participant explicitly said she felt a compulsion to check her phone frequently for incoming contacts or social media updates, many described similar behavior. Aside from making it difficult to focus and get things done, when discussing their use of smartphones they primarily focused on the positive implications. For them, personally, the convenience, connective and entertainment affordances were worth the price of their attention.

As the discussion turned to social media and how they and others use it, the story lines began to diverge. They told of types and kinds of users, people prone to oversharing, old people, needy people, opinionated people, political posters and affirmation and validation seekers. Though they all had types to tell about, they tended to see themselves as using it as it was meant to be used. Some celebrated the expansive

stage for a big performance piece, while others could not understand the point of all the drama.

Some of the most surprising themes that emerged during the interviews were: the amount of negativity and drama streaming through social media, how unwelcomed political posting was and how strongly many of the felt about others use of social media. It was surprising that every participant discussed, at length, the amount of negativity streaming through social media, yet all but one of them remained active on social media. I was also surprised that with only one exception, all agreed that political posting was something they were neither interested in seeing nor doing, some going so far as to say it was infuriating, frustrating, stupid, ridiculous, pointless and only spreads ignorance. They generally explained that they felt that way because with the wider audience of distant others and their networks, a sort of mob mentality seemed to prevail. Instead of it being a safe space for sharing and debating ideas, they saw it as a space where people ranted and shared often ill-informed opinions, and any dissent, resulted in a piling on by others and all parties involved becoming increasingly entrenched in their views.

With "big data" in the popular press—particularly with increased targeted marketing, privacy settings changing frequently on popular social media sites, often with initial complaints from active users and in light the Snowden leaks about NSA practices—the ways in which they expressed privacy concerns, or lack thereof, came as a surprise as well. Although a couple participants expressed a great deal of privacy concerns about known and unknown others accessing their personal information, the

others tended to be more concerned with the audience of people within their network. Even those who expressed privacy concerns without being explicitly asked if they had any, were for the most part focused on present and future implications for personal relationships or professional opportunities. The participant that mentioned government use of personal information posted on social media related this to people posting illegal activities online and later being prosecuted, or posting things online that could damage current or future legal cases with which one was involved. There was only one mention of possible commercial use of personal information. Regardless of the negativity and drama they all reported, again, the convenience, access to others and others to them, and entertainment provided by social media was enough to keep them there.

As a node in the network, the rules for engagement are not clear cut. What we find are people who are swept up in a space of flows, living life in timeless time, performances of self and identity claims are switched and sorted in an intricate matrix of simultaneous fronts. Once activated, in the network of flows, people become nodes and all fronts require time and attention to be maintained and maximized for optimal performative productivity. In a personal networked society of selves, where return on investment is closely correlated with careful curation and selling of self, image making is an ongoing production where the personal, professional and political come together. Always personal in a world of professional, mass market oriented producers of self, the individual is political, whether they realize it or not.

As for how they see themselves, it depends largely on where you pick up their stories. Although they say they are "happy" with their devices and see them as necessary to keep up with the world and expectations of connectivity, when asked to consider their lives without it, some think they would be happier, have simpler lives and would experience life more fully. Others think that their lives would initially be a mess, lonely and, for some, so boring they might lose their minds, but they also said that once they moved beyond the initial shock of the loss, they too would enjoy a life richer with experiences in places other than on their phones. Interestingly, those who started their stories of an imagined life without a smartphone as boring, messy and perhaps lonely, ended up talking at greater length about how limited and complacent we have become as we rely on our devices for connectivity.

Although they feel more connected with and by their smartphones, they express a keen sense of disconnection from the natural environment and others in that space. Certainly others have pointed out that the connections enabled by the device distract us from our immediate environment, but we see here that it is not only a disconnection from their time in space; they also feel disconnected from each other and, in some cases, themselves. With this connectivity, we find companionship in our devices and windows to other lives and a vast world of entertainment. Indeed, they describe their lives with a whole world in their hand, but greatly lacking in experience of the world outside their handheld device.

Several participants had previously studied abroad for a semester or year and discussed differences in mobile cultures between the U.S. and their host countries. Although there were subtle differences among the explanations of host country cultures, what remained the same was that Americans, at home and abroad, rely far more on their smartphones. As they described their host countries, general rules of engagement with others and use of smartphones in public still seemed to apply. In fact, there did seem to be a consensus on mobile phone etiquette and the practice of using one's mobile in the connected way of communicating with distant others would not be taken kindly in local interactions. Therefore, it would be interesting to conduct a cross cultural analysis of mobile media use.

Although it was not previously discussed in this work, several participants expressed a great deal of concern for what they referred to as "the younger generation." Of their common concerns were cyberbullying and that, unlike "the old days" where you might get bullied during one class, once you left that class it was over until the next time you returned. The inescapability of similar torment, and how the distance between people acting out on the screen tends to amplify negative behaviors, had many participants concerned for younger social media users. Most of those who discussed concern in this way have younger siblings who are currently in middle school and high school. They also voiced concerns about lacking social skills, ability to think critically, lack of physical activity and a lack of interest in getting out and experiencing things. A couple of participants quoted their younger siblings as saying "there's an app for that" when asked anything from "why not go outside and ride a bike" to "have you and your friends

ever…" It would be interesting to take the similar line of inquiry in 10-15 years— with those born after smartphones became widespread—about their perceptions of life with mobile devices to see if they share any of the same concerns. However, by then, there will have been many new iterations of mobile technologies, making the smartphone a relic of the past for the current "younger generation."

The Presentation of Self as a "Node" in Everyday Life works well for understanding the self as a mass market performance piece, but still something is missing. With entertainment and boredom as key trends in the data, perhaps another future direction for research is to add Adorno & Horkheimer's Culture Industry framework to the mix of Castells and Goffman to consider the selves/nodes as products of the culture industry. Perhaps in the network society, as people have become distracted by creating virtual selves as nodes, these selves have become the products being pushed by the culture industry. The six second shorts on Vine that participants mentioned point to entertainment products by individuals for a mass audience having made their way into the market in the culture industry of a networked society of selves.

Smartphones and social media have become ubiquitous in U.S. society and many other places in the world in less than a decade, and the impacts become increasingly apparent with each new day. The rate at which technological advances occur can be mind boggling at times, making the study of such devices seem like an effort in futility. One need only turn to the popular press to see future directions of mobile and social media, and then to imagine how it could impact individuals and society. For instance, technology

companies, after making the watch obsolete for many, are bringing it back with mobile

"companion" wearable devices in the form of watches. They are considered companion

devices because, as of yet, most are not meant to stand alone, but, rather, are used with a

smartphone. This way, instead of having to pull one's phone from the pocket or have it

on the table, it will be strapped to their wrist. A couple of days ago, Google announced a

partnership with the world's largest eyeglass designer and manufacturer to mass produce

their wearable mobile device, Google Glass. Just yesterday, Facebook signed a $2 billion

deal with a virtual reality company because they see the new direction in social media

extending to 3-D virtual hang time with "friends" (Wingfield and Goel 2014). Despite

being outpaced by technology, as we have seen in the past and can therefore speculate

that the same will be true in the future, with each new technological advance our ways of

going about our daily lives change to accommodate and often incorporate the new

technologies. As these important socio-technological moments occur, it will be

imperative to understand people's perceptions of themselves, others and their place in the

world with these devices so that we may better understand how we might function as a

society.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andrejevic, Mark. 2009. "Privacy, Exploitation, and The Digital Enclosure." *Amsterdam Law Forum* 1(4). Retrieved April 10, 2013 (http://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/amslawf1&div=46&id=&page=).

Ash, James. 2012. "Attention, Videogames and the Relational Economies of Affective Amplification." *Theory, Culture & Society* 29(6): 3-26.

Baron, Naomi S. 2008. "Adjusting the Volume: Technology and Multitasking in Discourse Control." Pp. 177-193 in *Handbook of Mobile Communication Studies*, edited by James E. Katz. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Baron, Naomi and Richard Ling. 2007. "Emerging Patterns of American Mobile Phone Use: Electronically Mediated Communication in Transition." Retrieved on April 9, 2013 (http://doczine.com/bigdata/2/1366989405_23054102ae/emerging-patterns-of-american-mobile-phone-use-3.pdf).

Bennett, W. Lance and Alexandria Segerberg. 2011. "Digital Media and The Personalization of Collective Action." *Information, Communication & Society* 14(6): 770-799.

Campbell, Scott W. and Nojin Kwak. 2010. "Mobile Communication and Social Capital:
An Analysis of Geographically Differentiate Usage Patterns." *New Media &
Society* 2(3): 435-45.

Campbell, Scott W. and Tracy Russo. 2003. "The Social Construction of Mobile
Telephony: An Application of the Social Influence model to Perceptions and Uses
of Mobile Phones within Personal Communication Networks." *Communication
Monographs* 70(4): 317-334.

Campbell, Scott W. and Yong Jin Park. 2008. "Social Implications of Mobile Telephony:
The Rise of Personal Communication Society." *Sociological Compass* 2(2): 371-
387.

Carr, Caleb T., David B. Schrock and Patricia Danterman. 2012. "Speech Acts within
Facebook Status Messages." *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 3(2):
76-96.

Castells, Manuel. 2010a. *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture Volume
1: The Rise of the Network Society*. 2nd Edition. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-
Blackwell.

Castells, Manuel. 2010b. *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture Volume
2*: *The Power of Identity*. 2nd Edition. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Christensen, Toke Haunstrup. 2009. "'Connected Presence' in Distributed Family Life."

  New Media & Society 11(3): 433-451.

Ford, Sarah M. 2011. "Reconceptualizing the Public/Private distinction In The Age of

  Information Technology." *Information, Communication & Society* 14(4): 550-

  567.

Fortunati, Leopoldina. 2002. "The Mobile Phone: Towards New Categories and Social

  Relations." *Information, Communication & Society* 5(4): 513-528.

Garcia-Montes, Jose M., Domingo Caballero-Muñoz and Marino Pérez-Álvarez. 2006.

  "Changes in the Self Resulting from the Use of Mobile Phones." Media, Culture

  & Society 28(1): 67-82.

Gehl, Robert. 2011. "The Archive and the Processor: The Internal Logic of Web 2.0."

  New Media & Society 3(8): 228-244.

Gergen, Kenneth J. N.d.a. "Technology, Self and the Moral Project." Retrieved March

  13, 2013 (http://lib.trinity.edu/research/citing/ASA_Style_Citations_4.pdf).

Gergen, Kenneth J. N.d.b. "Cell Phone Technology and the Challenge of Absent

  Presence." Retrieved March 13, 2013.

  (http://www.academia.edu/2634328/Cell_Phone_Technology_and_the_Challenge

  _of_Absent_Presence).

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York:

Doubleday.

Goffman, Erving. 1967. *Essays on Face to Face Behavior*. New York: Anchor Books.

Green, Eileen & Carrie Singleton. 2009. "Mobile Connections: An Exploration of the

Place of Mobile Phones in Friendship Relations." *The Sociological Review* 57(1):

125-144.

Hampton, Keith N. 2011. "Comparing Bonding and Bridging Ties For Democratic

Engagement." *Information, Communication & Society* 14(4): 510-528.

Hulme, Michael & Anna Truch. 2006. "The Role of Interspace in Sustaining Identity."

Knowledge, Technology, & Policy 19(1): 45-53.

Humphreys, Lee. 2005. "Cellphones in Public: Social Interactions in a Wireless Era."

New Media & Society 7(6): 810-833.

Humphreys, Lee. 2010. "Mobile Social Networks and Urban Public Space." *New Media

& Society* 12(5): 763-778.

Ito, Mizuko. 2005. "Intimate Visual Co-Presence." Retrieved on March 13, 2013

(http://keitai.sfc.keio.ac.jp/lab/blog/pdf/ito.ubicomp05.pdf).

Ito, Mizuko and Daisuke Okabe. 2005. "Technosocial Situations: Emergent Structurings

of Mobile Email Use." in *Personal, Portable, Pedestrian: Mobile Phones in*

Japanese Life. Edited by M. Ito, D, Okabe and Matsuda, M. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Jin, Borae and Namkee Park. 2012. "Mobile Voice Communication and Loneliness: Cell Phone Use and the Social Skills Deficit Hypothesis." *New Media & Society* November 30. Retrieved on March 10, 2013 (http://nms.sagepub.com/content/early/2012/11/26/1461444812466715).

Lasén, Amparo & Edgar Gómez-Cruz. 2009. "Digital Photography and Picture Sharing: Redefining the Public/Private Divide." *Knowledge, Technology, & Policy* 22: 205-215.

Licoppe, Christian. 2004. "'Connected Presence: The Emergence of a New Repertoire for Managing Social Relationships in a Changing Communication Technoscape." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22: 135-156.

Licoppe, Christian and Zbigniew Smoreda. 2006. "Rhythms & Ties: Towards a Pragmatics of Technologically Mediated Sociality." Pp 911-961. Retrieved March 13, 2013

(http://ses.telecom-paristech.fr/licoppe/documents/Recherche/Ch20-Licoppe_rhythms.pdf).

Livingston, Sonia. 2008. "Taking risky opportunities in youthful content creation: teenager's use of social networking sites for intimacy, privacy and self-expression." *New Media and Society* 10(3): 393-411.

Mehdizadeh, Soraya. 2010. "Self-Presentation 2.0: Narcissism and Self-Esteem on

Facebook." *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* 13(4): 357-364.

Milner, R.M. 2009. "Working for the Text: Fan labor and the New Organization."

International Journal of Cultural Studies 12(5): 491-508.

The New York Times. 2013. Online Interactive Timeline. July 24, 2013. Retrieved July

31, 2013 (http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/technology/facebook-

timeline.html)

Okabe, Daisuke. 2004. "Emergent Social Practices, Situations and Relations through

Everyday Camera Phone Use." Paper presented at Mobile Communication and

Social Change, the 2004 International Conference on Mobile Communication in

Seoul, Korea, October 18-19, 2004.

Okabe, Daisuke and Mizuko Ito. 2006. "Everyday Contexts of Camera Phone Use: Steps

Toward Technosocial Ethnographic Frameworks." To appear in *Mobile

Communication in Everyday Life: An Ethnographic View*, edited by Joachim

Höflich and Maren Hartmann. Berlin: Frank & Timme. Retrieved April 10, 2013

(http://www.itofisher.com/mito/archives/camphones.okabeito.pdf)

Oksman, Virpi & Jussie Turtiainen. 2004. "Mobile Communication as a Social Stage:

Meanings of Mobile Communication in Everyday Life among Teenagers in

Finland." *New Media and Society* 6(3): 319-339.

Pettigrew, Jonathan. 2009. "Text Messaging and Connectedness Within Close

Interpersonal Relationships." *Marriage & Family Review* 45: 697-716.

Pink, Sarah. 2011. "Amateur Photographic Practice, Collective Representation and the

Constitution of Place." *Visual Studies* 26: 92-101.

Reid, Fraser J.M. & Donna Reid. 2010. "The Expressive and Conversational Affordances

of Mobile Messaging." *Behaviour & Information Technology* 29(1): 3-22.

Rheingold, Howard. 2008. "Mobile Media and Political Collective Action." Pp. 225-240

in *Handbook of Mobile Communication Studies*, edited by James E. Katz.

Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Rheingold, Howard and Eric Kluitenberg. 2006. "Mindful Disconnection:

Counterpowering the Panopticon from the Inside." *Hybrid Space* 11: 28-37.

Riviere, Carole Anne & Christian Licoppe. 2005. "From Voice to Text: Continuity and

Change in the Use of Mobile Phones in France and Japan." Pp. 103-126 in *The

Inside Text: Social, Cultural and Design Perspectives on SMS*, edited by Richard

Harper, Leysia Palen and Alex Taylor. The Netherlands: Springer.

Satchell, Christine & Connor Graham. 2010. "Conveying Identity with Mobile Content."

Pers Ubiquit Comput 14: 251-259.

Schroeder, Ralph. 2010. "Mobile Phones and the Inexorable Advance of Multimodal

Connectedness." *New Media & Society* 2(1): 75-90.

Schroeder, Ralph. 2006. "Being There Together and the Future of Connected Presence."
    Presence 15(4): 438-454.

Schwarz, Ori. 2012. "The New Hunter-Gatherers: Making Human Interaction Productive
    in the Network Society." *Theory, Culture & Society* 29(6): 78-98.

Schwarz, Ori. 2011. "Who Moved My Conversation? Instant Messaging, Intertextuality
    and New Regimes of Intimacy and Truth." *Media, Culture & Society* 33(1): 7-87.

Schwarz, Ori. 2010. "On Friendship, Boobs & The Logic of the Catalogue: Online Self-
    Portraits as a Means for the Exchange of Capital." *Convergence* 16(2): 163-183.

Srivastava, L. 2005. "Mobile Phones and the Evolution of Social Behavior." *Behavior &*
    Information Technology 24(2): 111-129.

Strano, Michele. 2008. "User Descriptions and Interpretations of Self-Presentation
    through Facebook Profile Images." *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial*
    Research on Cyberspace 2(2), article 5.

Turkle, Sherry, ed. 2007. *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With.* Cambridge, MA:
    The MIT Press.

Turkle, Sherry, ed. 2008. *The Inner History of Devices.* Cambrdige, MA: The MIT Press.

Turkle, Sherry. 2008. "Always-On/Always-On-You: The Tethered Self." Pp. 121-137 in
    Handbook of Mobile Communication Studies, edited by James E. Katz.
    Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Turkle, Sherry. 2011. *Alone Together*: *Why We Expect More from Technology and Less From Each Other.* New York: Basic Books.

Vance, Ashlee. 2012. "Facebook: The Making of 1 Billion Users," *Bloomberg Businessweek*, October 4, 2012.

Van House, Nancy. 2009. "Collocated Photo Sharing, Story-telling, and the Performance of Self." *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies* 67: 1073-1086.

Van House, Nancy. 2011. Personal Photography, Digital Technologies and the Uses of the Visual." *Visual Studies* 26(2): 125-134.

van Manen, Max. 2010. "The Pedagogy of Momus Technologies: Facebook, Privacy and Online Intimacy." *Qualitative Health Research* 20(8): 023-032.

Van Dijck, José. 2013. "'You Have One Identity': Performing the Self on Facebook and LinkedIn." *Media, Culture & Society* 35(2): 199-215.

Vincent, Jane. 2006. "Emotional Attachment and Mobile Phones." *Knowledge, Technology, & Policy* 19(1): 39-44.

Wei, Ran and Ven-Hwei Lo. 2006. "Staying Connected While on the Move: Cell Phone Use and Social Connectedness." *New Media & Society* 8(1): 53-72.

West, Anne, Jane Lewis and Peter Currie. 2009. "Students' Facebook 'Friends': Public and Private Spheres." *Journal of Youth Studies* 12(6): 615-627.

White, Peter B. and Naomi Rosh White. 2008. "Maintaining Co-Presence: Tourists and Mobile Communication in New Zealand." Pp. 195-207 in *Handbook of Mobile Communication Studies*, edited by James E. Katz. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wingfield, Nick and Goel, Vindu. 2014. "Facebook in $2 Billion Deal for Virtual Reality Company," *The New York Times*, March 25, 2014.

Zhao, Shanyang. 2003. "Toward a Taxonomy of Copresence." *Presence* 11(5): 445-455.

Zhao, Shanyang and David Elesh. 2008. "Copresence as 'Being With': Social Contact in Online Public Domains." *Information, Communication & Society* 11(4): 565-583.