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Betsy Baugess

Nova Southeastern University, bebaugess@yahoo.com

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Examining Social Network Site Usage by Older Adults: A
Phenomenological Approach

by

Betsy Baugess

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in
Information Systems

Graduate School of Computer and Information Sciences
Nova Southeastern University

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

Ling Wang, Ph.D.
Chairperson of Dissertation Committee

Date

James Parrish, Ph.D.
Dissertation Committee Member

Date

Maxine S. Cohen, Ph.D.
Dissertation Committee Member

Date

Approved:

Eric S. Ackerman, Ph.D.
Dean, Graduate School of Computer and Information Sciences

Date

Graduate School of Computer and Information Sciences
Nova Southeastern University

2015

Abstract

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

Examining Social Network Site Usage by Older Adults: A Phenomenological Approach

by
Betsy E. Baugess

March 2015

The Internet has infiltrated our daily lives in many ways. Social networking on the Internet is a great example of how the Internet has expanded interpersonal communication. Many individuals have made social networking sites, like Facebook and Twitter, an essential part of their lives and use these platforms to communicate daily. Until recently, young people have been the primary participants in this fast-growing phenomenon, and older adults' participation in the Internet, specifically social networking sites, has lagged far behind. However, in recent years, there has been a noteworthy increase in the number of older adult participants. The increase in older adult participation in social networking sites is important because it seems to signify a decrease in the Internet usage gap called the "digital divide", and because there is strong evidence older adults may greatly benefit from social networking activity. The aging of the Baby Boomers has resulted in significant growth in the senior age group, reinforcing the timely importance of considering the older adults' "digital divide". This study uses a phenomenological approach to explore the experience of older adult users of social networking sites to determine the reasons why more older adults are now making social networking sites part of their lives. The study revealed both negative and positive influences on this choice that include: early negative personal experiences with technology, positive family influences, an increasing prevalence of technology, and technology's transition from complexity of use to ease of use. Although some resulting attitudes of older adults are negative, such as a need to control the role of social media in their life, online social networking plays a positive role in their lives. The probing, detailed nature of this phenomenological study clarifies influences and offers new perspectives, implying that research could benefit from a broader and deeper inspection. Research should consider, as related to the use of technology by older adults, a closer look at the effectiveness of training, potential gender differences in the choice to use technology, and the consequences of negative technological experiences.

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Completing this dissertation has not been a solitary task. Although research, analysis, and actually putting together content were my tasks alone, the conditions that allowed me to do this were the product of effort from many individuals. First and foremost, my husband has always given me the freedom and support to accomplish any task I imagined, and I thank him for that. Cheerfully giving up hours of my time and space on the dining room table taken up by papers, folders, and books are just a couple of examples of his support. My children were always interested, encouraging, and willing to share my time with this task over and over again. My friends and family totally came through for me when I needed their assistance in the data gathering phase--no questions asked. And I so enjoyed this opportunity to be a part of their lives and for them to feel like a part of my efforts. I am blessed to have them in my life.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In the 1990's, Internet usage focused on finding information and accessing data (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1995). Today, the Internet is often used for communication and social purposes (Pfeil, 2007). Social networking sites have commonly become embedded in many people's daily lives as a new way to communicate (Lin & Lu, 2011). Social networking sites are defined as a web service that allows participants to (1) construct a personal public or semi-public profile, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse these lists of connections (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Madden and Zickuhr (2011) from the Pew Research Center report that usage has risen from 5% of all adults in 2005, to 50% of all adults in 2011, and only email and search engines are used more often than social networking sites. A 2014 update (Duggan & Smith) documents the increase to 73% of Internet users who use online social network sites.

The most popular social networking sites offer different experiences. FaceBook is one of the better-known social networking sites. FaceBook played an important role in the most recent presidential election; both Barack Obama and Mitt Romney created FaceBook campaign accounts and posted information in an attempt to influence voters (Gaudin, 2012). FaceBook, publicly available since 2006 (Boyd & Ellison, 2008), is the top photo-sharing website in the world, with 48 billion images (Wilson, Gosling, &

Graham, 2013). Mark Zuckerberg (2012) reported that the number of FaceBook users had reached over 1 billion.

Twitter (twitter.com) and LinkedIn (linkedin.com) are two additional extremely popular social networking sites. Twitter (with more than 280 million active users (“Twitter,about,” n.d.)) is, according to its website, “ the best way to connect with people, express yourself and discover what's happening.” (“Twitter,about,” n.d.). At twitter.com one can follow the daily lives and interests of people all over the world, as reported in their “tweets” (Tweets are short bursts of information that are shared, 140 characters). Another social networking website, LinkedIn, considers itself to be the “largest professional network on the Internet,” with over 300 million users, speaking 19 different languages (“Linkedin Showcase,” n.d.). It boasts members from Fortune 500 companies. Pinterest (pinterest.com), available since 2010 with 70 million monthly users (Bercovici, 2014), is a new growing social networking site, described by its website to be “a tool for collecting and organizing things you love” (“Pinterest About”, n.d.). Lenhart (2009) reports impressive growth in the percentage of Internet users, primarily young people, who use social networking sites from 8% in 2005 to 35% in 2008. Over 80% of online teenagers are reported to use social networking sites (Madden, et al., 2013). This study, however, examines an emerging phenomenon, the usage of social networking sites by older adults.

Older Americans have begun to participate in social networking sites in a big way, the numbers nearly doubling in recent years (Madden, 2010). Madden says that older adults still favor email over social networking sites, but their social networking site

usage is growing rapidly. Almost half of the older adults who are online participate in social networking sites (Duggan & Smith, 2014).

This study uses a phenomenological research approach which seeks to find the “meaning, structure, and essence” (Patton, 2002, p. 109) of a human phenomenon, driven from the “living experience” (van Manen, 1990) or perspectives from everyday life (Greonewald, 2004). Phenomenological inquiry explores these common experiences or phenomenon to arrive at the essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). This study strives to determine the essence of the experience of the older adult’s reasons to use the social interactive activities offered by social networking sites. The study considers the meaning and the context of this choice by capturing the participant’s social and cultural experiences leading to this choice and the experience of making the choice itself.

Problem Statement

There is an expanding field of scholarly research on the topic of older adults’ participation in social networking sites, but the growth of social networking sites, their increased availability, and the increase in the older adult population beg for updated information on the subject (Brandtzaeg, Luders, & Skjetne, 2010; Hogeboom, McDermott, Perrin, Osman, & Bell-Ellison, 2010; Lehtinen, Nasanen, & Sarvas, 2009; McMurtrey, Downey, Zeltmann, & McGaughey, 2010). Because of this gap, the problem considered is the lack of an adequate understanding of why so many older adults choose to use the social interactive activities of social networking sites. Zickuhr and Madden (2012) report that over one-third of the adults over age 65 use social networking sites, as

compared to 13% in 2009. Brandtzaeg, Luders, and Skjetne confirm that the user population of social network websites is growing in diversity to include users of all ages.

A few studies report contradictory information. A study by McMurtrey, Downey, Zeltmann, and McGaughey (2011) finds that older adults do not really understand the digital world and do not use social networking websites, but this study is restricted to a very narrow group of individuals from one facility with an average age of 83. Prieto and Leahy (2012) recognize some usage of social networking sites by older adults, but, relatively speaking, the younger generation of Internet users has a much higher percentage of social networking site users. Attempts to design a social networking site exclusively for older adults have not been successful (Gibson, et al., 2010). However, this study focuses on older adults who have chosen to use the social connecting activities of social networking sites. New information about older adults' choice to use social networking sites offers the potential to reveal reasons why some older adults choose not to use social networking sites.

The increase of older adult participation in social networking site usage seems to indicate that older Americans have made some progress in bridging the "digital divide" described by Lenhart, et al. (2000). Lenhart, et al., characterizes older Americans as the group with the greatest reluctance to use the Internet, made up of individuals who have a strong distrust of the Internet; and who have little interest in whatever the Internet has to offer. Older Americans' negative attitudes have been reinforced by various Internet participation barriers, such as, technophobia, physical limitations (like limited mobility due to aging processes), and lack of computer skills (Trocchia & Janda, 2000). Trocchia and Janda also discuss the contradiction related to limited mobility issues: Older adults'

mobility issues may hinder Internet/social network site usage; conversely, some individuals are able to use the Internet and social networking sites to socialize despite mobility issues that keep them housebound. Multiple studies suggest that, in contrast to younger Internet users, older adults lack confidence in their ability to use technology, need more technical support, and do not trust the Internet or the information it provides (Czaja & Lee, 2007; Gibson, et al., 2010; Lehtinen, Nasanen, & Sarvas, 2009; Sundar, Oeldorf-Hirsch, Nussbaum, & Behr, 2011). Some older adults have very specific opinions concerning social networking sites. They prefer face-to-face contact and find the Internet to be very cold and impersonal (Lee, Chen, & Hewitt, 2011; Lehtinen, Nasanen, & Sarvas). Social networking sites (and their users) may seem silly and frivolous to older adults (Lehtinen, Nasanen, & Sarvas); older people also worry about embarrassing themselves in a very public way when using social networking sites (Gibson, et al.). Bloch and Bruce (2011) report that older adults think social networking sites are “trivial” and a waste of time (p. 3). Zickuhr and Madden (2012) report that one-third of adults over 65 uses social networking sites, so two-thirds of this group does not use social networking sites. Some older adults have made the leap to social networking sites, and others have not. This variant usage may reflect the diversity of this group. The detrimental physical and cognitive effects of aging vary greatly between individuals, resulting in a heterogeneous group with varying needs. Research generally supports the diverse nature of this group (Aula, 2005; Czaja & Lee; Hanson, 2009). The results of this study explains the reasons older adults choose to make social connections within social networking sites in spite of these issues that have characterized their digital divide.

Given that senior citizens may encounter many obstacles that make the Internet difficult to use, and many do not have positive attitudes towards social networking sites, why is the number of older social networking site users growing? Is this change due, in part, to the variety of social networking sites available? Usage of social networking sites is voluntary, and social networking sites are social relationship-focused, not just task-oriented (Kwon & Wen, 2009). Is motivation important in this context?

The use of social networking sites is an important growing phenomenon that offers significant benefits for the older adult. This phenomenon has not been adequately addressed in scholarly research. The research problem addressed is this research gap. This study attempts to contribute to closing this research gap by effectively explaining the motivation behind the choice of older adults to use the social interactive activities of social networking sites.

Dissertation Goal

The goal of this study is to use a phenomenological approach to effectively explain the reasons that older adults use the social tools of social networking sites. Achievement of this goal would inform both the commercial world, and the academic world. Using these results, the commercial world would better know how to design and promote social networking sites to attract older adults. Other fields of study, like the social sciences, would benefit because this information would help explain this current social phenomenon. The medical world would also be interested in understanding this phenomenon, as recent studies suggest psychological benefits for older adults who use social networking sites. McMurtrey, Downey, Zeltmann, and McGaughey (2010) point to

the limited research related to social networking site usage by older adults. So, finally, this study attempts to close the literary gap related to this topic for the information systems.

Research Questions

In this study, the research questions considered are the following:

RQ1: What specific experiences have influenced older adults to choose to use social networking sites to maintain social relationships?

RQ2: What are the common themes and meanings that emerge from the senior citizen's experience with social networking web sites?

RQ3: What kind of meanings, feelings and experiences result from the older adult's choice to use social networking sites to create and/or maintain social relationships?

Relevance and Significance

The Administration on Aging, in the Department of Health and Human Services (2011), reports that the group aged 65 years or older represented 12.9% of the U.S. population in 2009. This report also states that, thanks to the aging of the Baby Boomers, this group is growing at a fast pace, approaching 19% of the population in 2030. Longevity for this group is increasing as well. During the first half of this century, life expectancy will increase to 76 years (Bloom, Boersch-Supan, McGee, & Seike, 2011). The sheer size of this group adds value to their consideration in this study.

Potential Benefits

This study is also relevant because it helps identify the potential benefits of social networking sites. Various studies show the benefits of social networking site usage for the general population, but especially for older adults. This group, as a whole, experiences a shrinking social network after retirement (Gibson, et al., 2010; Lee, Chen, & Hewitt, 2011; Renaud, & van Biljon, 2010). Social networking sites' interconnections and communication tools can expand an older person's social network, increasing (and perhaps broadening) social interaction. Pfeil (2007) reports a stronger sense of well-being in older adults who increase their social interactions. Bell, et al. (2013) confirm that social isolation may present a health risk to older adults. Social interaction decreases older adults' sense of isolation, improving self-esteem and quality of life. More frequent contact with empathetic friends and family offers support for older adults who may be alone and distant from family and friends. Shaw and Gant (2002) find that online social interaction could reduce loneliness and depression. Furthermore, since this age range is commonly a time for retirement from the work force, older adults may not have as much social interaction as they did previously. This lessening of social interaction may seem even more intense because seniors' children are adults and do not live at home. Given these circumstances, it is more likely that older adults could be faced with loneliness or isolation and may benefit from social networking sites.

Potential Dangers

From another perspective, some (Lenhart et al., 2000; Wilson, Gosling, & Graham, 2013) point out that we should study the usage of social networking sites because of their potential dangers, like privacy issues. A social networking site

encourages information sharing amongst large groups of individuals, and privacy is a common concern. In this context a “friend” is just someone who has been granted permission to become one. Users may reveal many details about themselves and their activities to all of these “friends” and possibly to anyone who may visit the website (Kim, Jeong, & Lee, 2009). Other issues related to social networking websites include spreading false information, cyber-bullying, pornography, and downloading computer viruses (Kim, Jeong, & Lee). Understanding potential dangers and informing users of these dangers adds import to this study.

Research Gap

Finally, this study addresses a gap in the literature on social networking usage by older adults. Barker (2012) and others (Brandtzaeg, Luders, & Skjetne, 2010; Hogeboom, McDermott, Perrin, Osman, & Bell-Ellison, 2010; Lehtinen, Nasanen, & Sarvas, 2009; McMurtrey, Downey, Zeltmann, & McGaughey, 2010) assert that there are few studies focused on older adult usage of social networking sites. Most studies of social networking sites have concentrated on younger adults. To summarize, there are significant and relevant reasons to study this fast-growing group’s participation in social networking sites: target group size, the importance of the phenomenon, potential benefits for this group, potential dangers to this group, and a need to close the research gap.

Barriers and Issues

The target population of this study is a homogeneous group of older adults who use social networking sites to create or maintain social connections. Given these criteria, creating this sample group is a challenge. Finding older adults who use social networking

sites is a reasonable task, but identifying a homogeneous group adds difficulty. Without knowing the background of the candidate pool, recognizing a homogeneous group is a challenge. The questions posed to those considering participation must extract enough background information to satisfy this requirement. One characteristic was the age (over 60). Another trait was that the participant does not have a strong professional technical background in computers, to ensure that the group more accurately reflects the common user. The participant was also a user of social networking sites, not just have a social networking site account. They had to have used the site to create or maintain social connections for at least six months. The participants had used at least three kinds of features offered by social networking sites for at least six months. An example is a user who uses email, posts personal information, and plays games on their FaceBook site.

Another limitation is inherent in the phenomenological approach itself. The phenomenological approach assumes that the researcher can truly approach the topic with a clear perspective, unaffected by personal bias or history (Moustakas, 1994). Conklin (2007) recognizes the impossibility of this “perfect” state of subjectivity but goes on to suggest that it is possible for the researcher to, at least, make himself/herself very open to new perspectives, a fresh way of looking at the experience. The researcher strove to achieve this goal. The study uses member checks as another way to ensure that the researcher is not inserting his/her own perspective and intellectual baggage associated with the topic. This study presents transcripts of each interview to the participants for their review to ensure that their personal view has been captured accurately.

There is an assumption that the participants are open, thoughtful and truthful in all interviews. Also, it is assumed that the participants are willing to contribute to examining

their own experiences, both past and present, and look at them with a discerning perspective.

Definitions of Terms

Digital Divide: Inconsistencies, across the population, in technology utilization and expenditures (Pick & Azari, 2007).

Epoche: The Greek word meaning to set aside judgment (Patton, 2002).

FaceBook: FaceBook, as social networking web site, publicly available since 2006 (Boyd & Ellison, 2008), reporting over 800 million users in 2011 (Wilson, Gosling, & Graham).

FaceBook friend: FaceBook friends are people you have selected to be able to see your FaceBook page, and you will see their comments.

Linkedin: A popular social web site, a social network that is centered on business contacts. This site recently reached 200 million members (“Linkedin Press Center”, n.d.)

Noema: In phenomenological studies, the object of the experience, what is felt or perceived (Moustakas, 1994).

Noesis: In phenomenological studies, the intentionality is made up of the noesis, perceiving, feeling, remembering an experience. Each noesis has a corresponding noema (Moustakas, 1994).

Phenomenological research approach: A research approach that seeks to find the “meaning, structure, and essence” (Patton, 2002, p. 109) of a human phenomenon, driven from the “living experience” (van Manen, 1990) or perspectives from everyday life (Greonewald, 2004).

Phenomenological Framework: Moustakas (1994) developed a phenomenological research framework with a transcendental emphasis, based on the concepts of Husserl. Moustakas prescribes a systematic set of procedures which begin with the researcher consciously putting aside all personal bias and prejudgments

Social capital/social network: Relationships with other individuals that provide support, friendship, and information (Wellman, Haase, Witte, & Hampton, 2001).

Social Networking Sites: Social networking sites are defined as a web services that allow participants to (1) construct a personal public or semi-public profile, (2)

articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse these lists of connections (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

Twitter: A popular social website, a micro-blogging service. On Twitter, users follow other users or are followed by others. If you are a follower, you receive all messages from those individuals you follow (Kwak, Lee, Park, & Moon, 2010).

Summary

To summarize, this study utilizes a phenomenological approach to examine older adults' experiences leading up to and including the use of social networking sites as a social instrument in their lives. The study follows the guidelines of phenomenological study, as expressed by Moustakas (1994). Using in-depth interviews, the researcher explores the historical and current context of this decision and further experiences precipitating from this decision. The researcher analyzes the interview data, following the phenomenological guidelines, looking for common themes. Considering these common themes, the researcher, finally, compares/contrasts current research in the use of social networking sites by older adults.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

This review considers background literature from four different areas. To understand the importance of older adults' adoption of technology, the first section presents historical background, documenting older adults' problems with, and barriers to, using technology and their attitudes towards technology. This literature documents the digital divide and the issues that explain why older adults were considered to be part of this gap. The next topic establishes the historical development and growth of social networking on the Internet, explaining and supporting the contemporary significance of social networking. The third section places this study in the context of previous research, research that documents the historical path older adults have followed in choosing to use online social networking. Finally, to clarify this study's research approach, the literature related to the phenomenological research approach is addressed. This section explains the philosophical sources of the phenomenological approach, examples of its application in scholarly research, and details its methods and framework.

Older Adults and the Digital Divide

A base timeline for Internet usage can be explained via the census. The U.S. government assessed computer/modem usage in 1984, but did not assess Internet access from home until 1997 (U.S. Census, 2009). In the late 1990's, computers became more

common in households as the price of technology decreased (Cummings & Kraut, 2002). The relative inequality of computer ownership and Internet access was exposed at the national level in 1995 when a survey, published by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, identified the “information disadvantaged” (p. 2). This survey was based on the telecommunications goal of “universal service” (universal telephone service). Telephone modems were the link to the Internet for personal computers, and “inequality of service” was described as a disadvantage in a world fast-becoming information-centric. Information and access to online information were becoming very important in work, education, communication, and leisure. This survey singled out older adults as one of the most informationally disadvantaged groups (U.S. Department of Commerce).

The Pew study in 2000 characterized the older adults’ issues with the Internet and stated that many older adults did not intend to access the Internet at all. Older adults felt that the Internet was dangerous, irrelevant, expensive, and confusing (Lenhart, Rainie, Fox, Horrigan, & Spooner, 2000). In early days of the Internet, 2001, most older adults who were using the Internet either started using the Internet in their work prior to retirement, or they were encouraged to start using the Internet by a family member (Fox, Rainie, Larsen, Horrigan, Lenhart, Spooner, & Carter, 2001). The influence of family members on older adults’ decision to use social networking sites continues to be significant (Bell, et al., 2013). Furthermore, the level of Internet experience (experienced prior to retirement) in older adults continues to increase. Zickuhr and Madden (2012) reported that 77% of older adults between 50 and 64 use the Internet. Czaja and Lee (2007) reminded us that some older adults want to use technology and are generally not

technophobic, but that technology must be useful and usable, and the older adults may need more training and support. Xie, Watkins, Golbeck and Huang (2012) recognized the older adult's negative attitude and proposed specific training to counteract these ideas, illustrating the relevance of social networking sites to their life.

Issues Related to Aging

Czaja and Lee (2007) presented a set of guidelines to be used as a basis for design that would facilitate technology usage by older adults. Addressing web design to accommodate the physiological and cognitive changes resulting from the aging process, Hanson and Crayne (2005) outlined the work in progress to improve web access for older adults. Hanson and Crayne described, with some detail, the current web design standards directed to this group. The key focus here was that the users can control their web environment. Adaptations for the disabled are closely related to adaptations for the aging process. Newell and Gregor (2002), addressing universal usability, explained that advanced medical care enables people to live longer, and the effects of aging make a significant difference in older adults' Internet skills. They cited problems with older adults' vision, hearing, dexterity and memory problems, along with a higher probability of having a disability. Newell and Gregor explicated various proposed design methods to accommodate these needs. They found that user-centered design, design incorporating users in the design process, does not meet the needs of such a varied group, and the user-sensitive inclusive design, designing for all users, is preferable. It is more flexible in that it considers levels of needs, and this method is being used by the UTOPIA pilot (Usable Technology for Older People–Inclusive and Appropriate) (Newell & Gregor). This design technique meets the needs of the older population, which Newell and Gregor

called “dynamic diversity” (p. 5). Many other researchers have explored the software and web design methods that could be modified to accommodate older Internet users (Chadwick-Dias, McNulty, & Tullis, 2003; Eisma, Dickinson, Goodman, Syme, Tiwari, & Newell, 2004; Hawthorne, 2003; Zajicek, 2004; Zaphiris, Ghiawadwala, & Mughal, 2005; Zaphiris, Kurniawan, & Ghiawadwala, 2007). The impacts of aging on technology access remained so significant in 2012 that Zickuhr and Madden stated that older adults are still less likely to use the Internet. These studies shed light on the intense difficulties that older people encounter using the Internet, but also raised awareness of the positive effects of successful Internet usage for older adults (Newell, Dickinson, Smith, & Gregor, 2006; Osman, Poulson, & Nicolle, 2005).

Experience and Education

Sayago and Blat (2007) identified barriers, outside of aging issues, that affect older adults, including web experience and levels of education. Sayago and Blatt suggested a prioritization of these barriers in order to address the most significant barriers first. Example issues are use of technical jargon and problems using the mouse. Several studies examined usability issues by developing real-life, functioning tools. One example is an Internet portal designed solely for senior citizens (Newell, Dickinson, Smith, & Gregor, 2006). Melenhorst and Bouwhuis (2004) studied a group of older adults, divided by experience level, to assess their perceptions related to Internet use and how those perceptions affect their intention to use the Internet and their actual usage. Melenhorst and Bouwhuis concluded that user experience and user goals for the technology most affect older users’ intentions. Results of this study indicated that a goal-specific approach would be effective. Buente and Robbin (2008) stated that skill and experience are key

factors in predicting Internet usage. Specifically, Bell, et al. (2013) found that older adults who are more skilled in technology are more likely to be FaceBook users. Lenhart, Rainie, Fox, Horrigan, and Spooner (2000) recognized, early on, that a critical factor for older adults' usage of technology is their minimal technology experience. The younger generation has had much more exposure to computers. At the time of this survey, over 78% of young adults used computers, as opposed to 27% of the 60+ age group (p. 10). Later Pew surveys showed an increase in older adults' Internet usage, but the gap between Internet usage by the younger generation and the older generation remains (Jones, & Fox, 2009).

This lack of experience and anxiety about usage would explain why many studies suggested that there should be an increased level of support and more extensive training to motivate older adults to use the Internet (Lee, Chen, & Hewitt, 2011; Mitzner, Boron, Fausset, Adams, Charness, Czaja, Dijkstra, Fisk, Rogers, & Sharit, 2010; Wagner, Hassanein, & Head, 2010; Wang, Rau, & Salvendy, 2011). Older adults lack the skills to use this technology and some propose a solution that focuses, not on attitude changes, but instead on inclusion of older adults in the design processes to implement changes in the interfaces (Selwyn, Gorard, Furling, & Madden, 2003; Wagner, Hassanein, & Head). Lack of computer skills and the resulting anxiety was a common theme in analysis of older adults' technology usage (Eastman & Iyer, 2004; McMurtrey, Downey, Zeltmann, & McGaughey, 2010; Melenhorst & Bouwhuis, 2004). Some proposed training strategies to make up for the lack of experience and education to make the training more effective for older adults, and to inform older adults of the potential relevance of social media in their lives (Norval, 2012; Xie, et al., 2012).

Older Adults' Attitudes

It is not enough to understand the barriers faced by older adults. The attitudes of older adults must be considered as well. Xie, Watkins, Golbeck, and Huang (2012) analyzed the older adults' attitudes towards, and concerns related to, social media. Senior adults insist that technology and the Internet serve a useful purpose (Eastman & Iyer, 2004; Mitzner, Boron, Fausset, Adams, Charness, Czaja, Dijkstra, Fkisk, Rogers, & Sharit, 2010; Nayak, Priest, & White, 2010; Wang, Rau, & Salvendy, 2011). Without a perception of relevant usefulness, and a certain level of interest, older adults are not motivated to overcome the other barriers, like a lack of support, insufficient training, physical and cognitive deficiencies. These deficiencies include a decline in visual acuity, hearing issues, and also a decline in psychomotor skills (Zaphiris, Kurniawan, Ghiawadwala, 2007). Using a mouse is difficult, and distinguishing information on the computer screen can be challenging.

The Silver Digital Divide

The digital divide, which originally focused on access for older adults, is now, more multi-dimensional (Pan & Jordan-Marsh, 2010). Pan and Jordan-Marsh described these multiple dimensions to include extent of use, multiplicity of uses, efficient searching strategies, and information quality. McMurtrey, Downey, Zeltmann, and McGaughey (2010) exemplified this "silver" divide in the differences between younger and older adults and the ways they use the technology. McMurtrey, Downey, Zeltmann, and McGaughey surveyed older adults to determine what technologies they are and are not using and to assess the current web skill levels of older adults. Although this age group has access to substantial disposable income and a strong need to access health care

information and education, most technology is designed for younger people, and there have been few management information systems (MIS) studies that considered this group and their needs (McMurtrey, Zeltmann, & Griffin, 2012). This gap in usage is a much more subtle divide than the earlier digital divide associated primarily with technology access, and the reasons behind this new type of divide are more subtle and complex. The reasons seem to be, in part, a combination of physical and cognitive deficiencies brought about by aging and a lack of technology experience which results in technology usage anxiety and a need for more training and more support. Bloch and Bruce (2011) found that older adults look to the Internet as a one-way information source only, primarily used to communicate with family. To the older adult, technology feels like a young man's game, with little value. Older adults' lack of information about the positive gains from the Internet and their misconceptions feed their lack of motivation to overcome usage barriers.

Social Network Sites on the Internet

Early Social Implications of the Internet

The social impact of the Internet has been a source of research since computers and Internet usage became more common in the late 1990's. Two social science research studies in 2001 attempted to assess the social implications of the Internet (DiMaggio, Hargittai, Neuman, & Robinson, 2001; Wellman, Haase, Witte, & Hampton, 2001). Both studies considered evidence related to both individual and community social capital. Does Internet usage increase, decrease, or add to the development of social capital? Social capital is defined as relationships with other individuals that provide support,

friendship, and information. Other social capital is related to voluntary organizations, politics and community involvement (Wellman, Haase, Witte, & Hampton). The DiMaggio, Hargittai, Neuman, and Robinson study examined existing social sciences research, and the Wellman, Witte and Hampton study used data from a large 1998 survey of web users. Both studies agreed on one point: Internet usage, on the whole, complements social behavior. Internet users do not communicate less in their face-to-face interactions; but, instead, communication on the Internet adds to their communication and social capital (Wellman, 2002).

Early Internet social communities took the form of chat rooms, bulletin boards and online forums. Horrigan, Rainie, and Fox (2001) reported that 84% of Internet users utilized the Internet to get information from one of these types of communities. Horrigan, Rainie, and Fox called this group “Cyber Groupies” (p. 2), 48% of whom contact their group once a week. Other kinds of cyber groups include trade groups, hobbyists, sports team fans, entertainer fans, local community groups, and persons with similar lifestyles, medical conditions, political beliefs, religious beliefs (Horrigan, Rainie, & Fox).

Social Networking Sites

Social network sites provide a web-based service where participants can create a user profile and attract “friends” with whom they share information. Users can navigate social networks through these connections (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Boyd and Ellison documented the history of social network sites, beginning with the introduction of SixDegrees.com in 1997. One significant event in this history is the advent of the business social networks, beginning with Ryze.co in 2001. Ryze.co eventually resulted in the LinkedIn.com web site, a current popular business networking site. Friendster was a

strong early social networking site that failed due to trust issues and technical difficulties (Boyd, & Ellison). Other social networking sites were established in 2003 and after, beginning with MySpace.com in 2003, which allowed the users to personalize their site. However, MySpace faced safety concerns (related to sexual predators) that limited its growth (Boyd, & Ellison). FaceBook was first made available to Harvard students in 2004, then to high school students in 2005, and finally to the public in 2006 (Boyd & Ellison). According to Boyd and Ellison, social network site scholarship has concentrated on a few major topics: individual self-representation in one's profile, networks of friend/connections, online networks versus offline networks, and privacy.

A 2009 study by Kim, Jeong, and Lee documented the current social web site statuses, uses, and issues. They defined a social web site as a site that allows "people to stay connected with other people in online communities" (p. 217). This study named the most popular U.S. sites as MySpace, FaceBook, YouTube, and Flickr, with MySpace and FaceBook boasting the most users, 253 million and 309 million, respectively (p. 218). Kim, et al. defined the top four features of social web sites to include defining an individual profile, making online friends/connections, participating in these groups, and communicating with friends/connections. Kim, et al. further established some of the problems with social web sites, like self-damage when indiscreet personal activities are exposed to potential employers, or damage to others, which could include false information or pornographic material, security, or privacy concerns. A recent study that considered trends in social networking confirms that security concerns still exist for social network users, but many users have found ways to cope with this through security settings (Zhang, De Choudhury, & Grudin, 2014). This study also reported that new

concerns related to activity monitoring and targeted advertising currently worry social networking users (Zhang, De Choudhury, & Grudin). Two studies that concentrated on student uses of FaceBook, found that one benefit of a social networking site is to increase the self-esteem of those who might be experiencing low self-esteem (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008). Other studies investigated why people choose to use social networking sites and found one of the most influential factors was self-enjoyment (Cheung & Lee, 2010; Lin & Lu, 2011). Another study added the idea of perceived encouragement as a factor influencing the choice to use social networking sites (Kwon & Wen, 2010).

FaceBook has become a ubiquitous social tool, so common that many disciplines are interested in the people who use it and how they use it. Factors affecting this interest are the FaceBook policies concerning the sharing of information. FaceBook allows scholars to study profiles of individuals who have not set certain privacy settings to prevent outsiders from viewing their profiles (Rosenbloom, 2007). FaceBook research is so prolific that Wilson, Gosling, and Graham (2012) published a document that organizes existing FaceBook research into five categories: user description analysis, motives for use, self-representation in one's profile, social interaction analysis, and privacy of information. Since FaceBook research is continuously growing, these authors have created a website that represents a regularly updated bibliography of this work, www.facebookinthesocialsciences.org.

Another popular social web site is LinkedIn, a social network that is centered on business contacts. This site recently reached 200 million members ("LinkedIn Press Center", n.d.). Skeels and Grudin (2009) informed us that LinkedIn users can be

generally classified as current/recent students, professionals new to their career, and experienced professionals. LinkedIn is totally focused on professional data and is used to establish and find business connections. Skeels and Grudin explored the joint use of Facebook and LinkedIn in the workplace and found that the key issue to be the mix of social or personal life with professional life. The blurring of these lines for example, the merging of social and professional worlds that include both bosses and employees, can be problematic for some.

Another intensely popular social web site is Twitter, a micro-blogging service. On Twitter, users follow other users or are followed by others. If you are a follower, you receive all messages from those individuals you follow (Kwak, Lee, Park, & Moon, 2010). Re-tweeting is a way to spread the messages that you receive to your own followers. Since the use of Twitter takes place very much in real-time, Twitter users are often focused on current news topics. Kwak, Lee, Park, and Moon compared topics trending on Twitter and topics trending on news web sites, like CNN.com, to assess whether Twitter is more a news website than a social web site. Agrifoglio, Black, Metallo, and Ferrara (2012) surveyed Twitter users to ascertain what motivates them to use the site. Using an extended technology acceptance model (TAM), their results showed that intrinsic motivation and ease of use are the most influential motivating variables in the use of Twitter (Agrifoglio, Black, Metallo, and Ferrara).

This topic is especially important, considering the role of this technology in contemporary crises. For example, Bell, et al. (2013) recognized the power of online social networking, citing its role in the days following Hurricane Sandy, facilitating fundraising and rebuilding. The potential value of social networking sites is only just

being understood. The fact that these are web-based communication tools, and web sites which are likely to automatically track usage and user characteristics, makes them powerful sources of data for analysis.

Older Adults and Social Networking Sites

Pfeil (2007) is one of the first researchers to question whether older adults could, or would, access social networking sites. It is not enough that older adults can access the Internet; they should be able to take advantage of the various forms of communication and social activities that the Internet offers. Her study examined how older adults communicate in online communities in an effort to determine how to best facilitate their communication and social activity (Pfeil). Many studies recognized the benefits of social networking sites for older adults (Cotton, Ford, Ford, & Hale, 2011; Gibson, Moncur, Forbes, Arnott, Martin, & Bhachu, 2010; Hogeboom, McDermott, Perrin, Osman, & Bell-Ellison, 2010; Pfeil; Sundar, Behr, Oeldorf-Hirsch, & Nussbaum, 2011). The most common benefits espoused are relief of depression, relief of stress, and generally improving life-satisfaction through increased social support.

There are several studies that considered obstacles preventing older adults from using social networking sites (Braun, 2013; Gibson, Moncur, Forbes, Arnott, Martin, & Bhachu, 2010; Lehtinen, Nasanen, & Sarvas, 2009; Prieto & Leahy, 2012). A qualitative study by Lehtinen, Nasanen, and Sarvas found that many older adults cannot see the value or relevance in social networking sites; they found the sites to be superficial and not suited to their notion of friendship. Focus groups studied by Gibson, et al. found that many older adults' concerns are related to privacy. Older adults fear identity theft and

would like to closely control how much of their identity they expose. Prieto and Leahy's survey in Ireland revealed that older adults' primary reasons for not using social networks are privacy concerns. Hope, Schwaba, and Piper (2014) examined a small group over age 77: This study confirmed the older adult's concern for privacy, and added a concern for the triviality of social networking sites' content and for the amount of time required for them to participate. Norval, Arnottt, and Hanson's (2014) focus groups also considered obstacles for older adults, also confirming their concern for privacy and adding their desire to have more control over content. Older adults have a lack of knowledge about the sites, and their friends did not use networking sites. Braun's study indicated that an understanding of social networking site usefulness and the assurance of safety are the primary driving influences for older adults to use social networking sites. Table 1 summarizes these studies that have identified obstacles to the older adult's use of online social networking.

Table 1

Prior Research Summarized

	Gibson, et al. (2010)	Norval, Arnott, and Hanson (2014)	Lehtinen, Nasanen, and Sarvas (2009)	Hope, Schwaba, and Piper (2014)	Braun (2013)	Prieto and Leahy (2012)
Theme/obstacle to SNS usage						
Need a purpose	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Possible self - embarrassment	YES	YES				
Distrust		YES	YES		YES	
Privacy	YES	YES		YES		YES
On display/vain,	YES		YES	YES		
Critical mass of contacts			YES			YES
Care of PC			YES			
For young people				YES		
Lack of computer skills		YES	YES			

To summarize the recommendations of studies which consider older adults' obstacles to using social networking sites: Older adults need to understand the benefits and usefulness of social networking web-sites. They have to feel that they can use social networking sites safely and, that their personal information is secure. Although many older adults fear social networking sites and do not understand their value, their use by older adults has grown. Madden (2010) pointed out that the number of users between the ages of 50 and 64 grew 88% in 2009, and the number of social networking sites users over the age of 65 grew 100% in 2009. The numbers continue to grow as reported by Duggan and Smith (2014) to 45% of Internet users over 65. In fact, Madden (2012) reported that older adults are becoming better managers of their private information on social media sites.

Given these usage statistics, it seems strange that this topic has not received a great deal of attention from information systems research. A common theme in this literature is the assertion that very little attention has been given to this group of people and their use of social networking sites, indicating a gap in the research (Barker, 2012; Hogeboom, McDermott, Perrin, Osman, & Bell-Ellison, 2010; Ji, Choi, Lee, Han, Kim, & Lee, 2010). This study is an attempt to close that gap.

The Phenomenological Approach

This section of the literature review traces the origins of the phenomenological methods of inquiry, discusses some of the major concerns associated with a phenomenological study (validity and interviews), and cites various examples of

phenomenological study from many areas, including several examples of phenomenological studies which consider technology-related experiences.

Phenomenological Foundations

The origins of phenomenology lie in philosophy. The German philosopher, Edmund H. Husserl (1859-1938) originated a science that included phenomenology (Patton, 2002). Husserl ignored anything outside of personal experience; for Husserl, personal experience defines reality (Groenewald, 2004). Lavery (2003) said that Husserl thought that psychologists should consider humans as creatures of perception, not just creatures reacting to outside forces. A phenomenon becomes tangible only through human consciousness, humans intentionally grasping a phenomenon. Phenomenological bracketing, according to Klein and Westcott (1994), means that an individual selects a phenomenon, isolates the phenomenon for inspection, uses their imagination to conceive of variances, and merges these variances to arrive at the essence of a phenomenon.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) is another German philosopher, who worked with Husserl. Heidegger takes a different approach to phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology (Lavery, 2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology also focused on human life experiences. Heidegger did not see human consciousness as separate from reality (like Husserl), but closely tied to cultural and historical contexts (Lavery).

van Manen's (1990) perspective on phenomenology centered on "lived experience", advocating the use of the phenomenological approach to more deeply understand one's common experiences (p. 9-10). van Manen did not believe a person could accurately describe an experience when it is in progress. He believed phenomenological reflection is always reflection on prior experience. One's feelings and

interpretation of an experience, as it occurs, change so quickly that one cannot clearly reflect on the experience at that time.

Phenomenological Framework

Moustakas (1994) developed a phenomenological research framework with a transcendental emphasis, based on the concepts of Husserl. Moustakas considered the framework to be transcendental because the researcher is expected to transcend his/her own bias and view the phenomena with a fresh outlook. Moustakas prescribed a systematic set of procedures which begin with the researcher consciously putting aside all personal bias and prejudgments concerning the target phenomena. This step is called “*epoché*”, the Greek word meaning to set aside judgment (Patton, 2002).

The target phenomenon is an individual’s experience. “Experience”, in phenomenology is precisely defined. This experience is framed by intentionality, the perception of an object (Moustakas, 1994). The intentionality is made up of the noesis, perceiving, feeling, remembering an experience, and the noema is the object of the experience, what is felt or perceived (Moustakas). The noema is “not the tree but the appearance of the tree”, and the noesis is the essential meaning of the phenomenon (Moustakas, p. 29). Each noesis has a corresponding noema related by an individual’s conscious intentionality (Moustakas). For example, Cilesiz (2009) defined educational uses of computers at an Internet café as the noema, and using computers educationally as the noesis of the experience. Cilesiz further explained that each experience is made up of textures (external appearances) and structures (underlying structures). Because phenomenology studies a specific lived experience, the participants in a phenomenological study must have significant experience in the phenomenon

(Moustakas). To arrive at a shared essence requires individuals with shared phenomena. A sample group that satisfies these criteria is a homogeneous group (Cilesiz, 2011).

The collected data are descriptions of people's experience, the context of the experience, and how they perceived their experience, usually collected from in-depth interviews (Seidman, 2006). The "how" and the "what" of the experience serve as a frame for the interview questions to elicit the personal experiences (Moerrer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). van Manen (1990) stated that the goal of a phenomenological study is to probe the depths of an experience, not to generalize an experience. To this goal, Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological analytical procedures follow very specific steps: The researcher identifies meaningful participant statements from the interview transcripts in a process called horizontalization and organizes these statements into themes. The researcher transfers the themes into textural and structural forms that represent the participants' experiences at different levels. This transfer results in a rich definition of the experience: its meaning, its related context and the common underlying structures. The researcher also develops composite textural and structural descriptions for all participants.

The researcher then, from the textural and structural composite descriptions, derives the essence of the experiences, the common themes and threads that make the experience universal. Moerrer-Urdahl and Creswell (2004) described Moustakas' process as meshing aggregate experiences from several individuals to arrive at the true essence of an experience. Moustakas (1994) termed this essence as "pure possibilities" (p. 98). For Cilesiz (2011), the essence is the universal or common quality of an experience.

Revealing this common quality is the goal of phenomenological inquiry. Table 2 outlines the steps in the phenomenological process as described by Moustakas.

Table 2

Phenomenological Procedural Steps

Procedural Step	Phenomenological Steps	Step Details:
Preparation	Formulate the research questions	Research question: Seeks qualitative factors Does not seek causal relationships Is illuminated through detailed description
	Candidate selection Develop guiding interview questions "epoche" step:	Researcher prepares self to set aside judgment and bracket the experience
Data Collection	Lengthy individual candidate interviews Follow-up interviews as needed	
Data Organization and Analysis	Organize data in the best form for analysis Analysis	Analysis details: Develop textural description Develop structural description Arrive at meanings and essences

van Manen (1990) concentrated on the relationship between phenomenology and pedagogy. As an example of his pedagogical perspective, he said that phenomenology would not inquire "How do these children learn this particular material?" but it asks, "What is the nature or essence of the experience of learning (so that I can now better understand what this learning experience is like for these children)?" (van Manen, p. 10).

van Manen's works served as a guide for phenomenological writers, and is an important source for phenomenological research in the nursing profession (Dowling, 2007).

Validity of Phenomenological Approach

The validity of a qualitative study, specifically a phenomenological study, is considered by various researchers. Hycner (1985) recognized that the validity of research data is always a question; does the data actually capture the participant's experience? The phenomenological process, as defined by Moustakas (1994), inherently addressed this concern. Moustakas recommended that the researcher ask participants to review the transcripts of their experience descriptions to ensure that the descriptions accurately reflect their perspective. Hycner placed responsibility for validity on the researcher. He felt that the researcher should consider the data carefully and check that the data seems to be truthful and accurate to the participant's narrative. Likewise, Moustakas placed responsibility for validity on the researcher, explicitly, the subjectivity of the researcher. The subjectivity of the researcher, achieved through "epoche", permits the expression of the truest, purest version of the participant's experience, i.e. the most valid information.

Creswell (2007) asserted that adherence to the phenomenology tenets and philosophy is way to assure validity. Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological philosophy and methodology supply detailed guidance for the researcher, and a phenomenological study should follow this guidance as closely as possible. Moreover, many phenomenological researchers used peer checks (Cilesiz, 2011) and/or member checks to increase validity (Cane, McCarthy & Halawi, 2010; Cilesiz). After the interviews have been transcribed and analyzed, the researcher provides the transcripts to the participants for their review and approval. Finally, Cilesiz submitted that transparency of the

complete process can add to the study's validity. Efforts to be transparent would include publishing the "epoche" statement, and the various work products, like the textural description, the structural description, and the composite essays as part of the study.

Phenomenological Interview

The interview is a critical element in a phenomenological study. The phenomenological inquiry often collects data through interviews, comprised primarily of open-ended questions (Moustakas, 1994). van Manen (1990) felt that an experience can best be expressed, and assessed, after the fact, as a recollection. So, the interview is a good way to collect this data. The researcher prepares questions to direct the process, but the goal is to extract a full and complete description of the participant's experience (Moustakas). In the phenomenological interview, it is important to, not only, reconstruct the experience, but to reflect on it and reconsider its meaning. The interviewer plays a significant role in the phenomenological interview. Seidman (2006) believed that, to be successful, the interviewer must be interested in the participants' stories and value this knowledge. This valued participant knowledge is at the heart of the phenomenological inquiry, and the researcher's "epoche" is directed to retaining the clarity of the researcher's view of this data. The idea is to understand the experience entirely from the view of the participant (Seidman). However, the interviewer must, not only, listen well, but be observant. Kvale (1996) suggested that the interviewer must "read" between the lines. For example, an interviewer should be cognizant of the participant's facial expressions and body language. Kvale went on to describe the qualitative interview as an appropriate way to arrive at a phenomenological understanding, addressing real-life situations, giving it qualitative meaning.

Seidman's (2006) book is a guide for the qualitative interviewer. Although the general topic is the qualitative interview, he spoke directly to the phenomenological interview process. Seidman explicated the three-interview series process in detail and explained the phenomenological purpose of each interview, how they are related, and even discussed length and spacing of the three interviews.

The Phenomenological Approach Applied

Since phenomenological investigative procedures focus very generally on human experience, the phenomenological procedures of inquiry are applicable to many areas of research. Examples of phenomenological studies in human and social science include Padilla's (2003) study of a woman's recovery from a head injury, a study of women's experience during pregnancy (Bondas & Erickson, 2001), and a study by Kluge (2002) that considered the experiences of physically active women over the age of 65. The corporate world offers phenomenological studies that describe organizational phenomena, like women who re-enter the corporate work force (Lee & McLean, 2002) and Sherlock's (2002) study of the corporate executive learning experience.

Like this study, there are many phenomenological studies that consider technology. Cilesiz (2011) found phenomenology to be a fitting approach for studying a person's experiences with technology. In fact, she argued that the phenomenological approach could serve to unify existing technology experience research and detailed a specific example to illustrate. The use of technology is integral to the contemporary world, and using the phenomenological approach to study that experience could significantly contribute to the understanding the role of technology in our lives. Another example of a phenomenological study that centers on technology is a phenomenological

study of human interaction with digital entities called pedagogical agents (Veletsianos & Miller, 2008). A phenomenological study by Cane, McCarthy and Halawi (2010) considered the virtual (simulated) training environment experienced by military personnel. Miller, Veletsianos, and Doering (2006) used the phenomenological approach to understand the experiences of an adventure learning educator/explorer in the Arctic. Adventure learners offer an Internet, online educational experience in concert with their real-time adventure, and this study focuses on the experiences of the instructor. These phenomenological studies of experiences with technology spanned a broad range of technological areas, varying from a military simulation experience (Cane, McCarthy, & Halawi) to an educational experience at a Midwestern university (Veletsianos & Miller), from an experience using computer software (Cane, McCarthy, & Halawi) to an Internet experience (Veletsianos & Doering). This suggests a wide applicability for the phenomenological investigative procedures and methods in the world of technology.

Summary

Literature clearly documents that older adults are late-adopters of technology, specifically the Internet, and even later adopters of Internet social networking. Described as the “silver divide”, physical barriers, economics, and personal attitudes account for much of this lag. The growth of Internet social networking sites is astonishing and it has become an important and influential factor in the lives of many people. There are millions of social networking sites users. Although the majority of social networking sites users are very young, social researchers and statisticians track the expansion of older adults’ social networking usage. To understand this experience, this choice of older adults

to use this technology, the phenomenological study is very appropriate. The phenomenological study focuses on the personal experience and offers an opportunity to explore a new perspective to technology adoption.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This section discusses the study methodology. The overall goal of this study was to determine the reasons older adults choose to use social networking sites. Many people make social networking sites a part of their everyday lives. With the recent growth of older adults participating in social networking sites, coupled with the large increase in the older adult population through the aging of the Baby Boomers, this is a significant and timely issue to consider. Using current topical research as a springboard for perspectives, this study delved into the personal consciousness of the subjects and the meanings behind the choice to use social networking sites, seeking to arrive at the essence of this experience.

The choice of research methodology should be driven by the research question (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The first research questions for this study (RQ1) asked--What are the specific experiences that have influenced older adults to choose to use social networking sites? Current research suggests several influences related to the older adult's personal life experiences and their current personal social networking needs (Czaja & Lee, 2007; Gibson, et al., 2010; Lehtinen, Nasanen, & Sarvas, 2009; Sundar, Oeldorf-Hirsch, Nussbaum, & Behr, 2011). These influences include personal characteristics or feelings, like the older adult's experience with computers, a concern for personal security, like a distaste for social networking sites, and a belief that social networking

sites are not relevant to their life. Corbin and Strauss believe that “qualitative research allows researchers to get at the inner experience of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture” (p. 12). Patton (2002) confirms that qualitative study is appropriate for in-depth investigation. Furthermore, the use of social networks is voluntary, a personal choice. So, to explore these personal reasons, in depth, qualitative research methods are appropriate. This research question was answered through personal detailed descriptions of the participants’ experiences.

For van Manen (1990), the specific goal of phenomenology, a qualitative approach, is to gain “a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences” (p. 9-10). The choice of older adults to use social networking sites, an everyday experience, fits well as the subject of a phenomenological study.

Phenomenological inquiry reveals the true essential meaning of that experience through descriptive data and the analysis of this data (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen). Determining the true essential meaning of this experience speaks to RQ1 and RQ2. These research questions seek to identify the common experiences, themes and meanings that influence, and result from, the older adult's choice to use social networking sites, specifically those that affect social relationships.

The uniform, consistent, logical process and well-documented philosophical concepts of the phenomenological approach lent credence to the study. Moustakas (1994) defines the procedural steps for this methodology and supplies the transcendental philosophical concepts that underlie this methodology.

Using the methods of phenomenological inquiry, the study examined the phenomenon of an older adult’s choice to use social networking sites. The data was

collected through interviews. The researcher followed the phenomenological method (specific steps defined by Moustakas, 1994), reflecting on the data and analyzing the data to create the various narratives and descriptions required to arrive at the true essence of the experience.

Approach

Participants and Participant Selection

Moustakas (1994) declares that the first rule of participant selection is that the participant has experienced the phenomenon. Given this criterion, the sampling for the phenomenological study should be a homogeneous group of participants (Creswell, 2007). For this study criteria included:

1. The participant had already made the choice to use social networking sites and must currently have participated in a social networking site.
2. To ensure reasonable depth for the analysis, the participant did not just have an account for a social networking site, but also participated in the social networking site (for at least six months).
3. The participant specifically used some of the social connection features of the site. Social connections are personal relationships with either friends or family. The participants shared their lives through posts to a social networking site, or kept in personal contact using email, or played games on a social networking site like FaceBook.
4. The participants were over 60 years of age.

5. The participants did not have strong professional technical or computer experience. This restriction is needed so that the sample group can more nearly reflect the common user.
6. The participants were ready and able to articulate, in detail, descriptions of their experience with the phenomenon and were ready to reflect on this experience (Creswell, 2007).

The target number of participants was five to ten participants. Since the purpose of a qualitative study is depth of understanding, and not generalization, it is common to have a small sample size, and this is usually a purposeful sample (Patton, 2002). Creswell (2007) confirms that the sample size for a phenomenological study is usually between one and ten participants. This study involved 10 participants.

To better ensure a more homogeneous group, participants were recruited from the local area. The researcher posted flyers at three local library branches, one community college library, and a central library branch in a nearby larger city. The researcher distributed flyers to four local senior centers. The researcher also attended two senior events to raise awareness of the flyers that were posted. Appendix A presents a sample flyer that was used. The flyer requested volunteers and briefly suggested the purpose of the study. The flyer also presented contact information so volunteers could contact the researcher if they were interested in participating. The researcher designed a set of follow-up screening questions to guide the phone conversation and participant selection, aiming for a fairly homogeneous sample group. See Appendix B for the telephone response screening questions. Based on these responses, possible participants were confirmed via a phone call. After the flyers had been posted several weeks, there had

been only one response. So the researcher distributed the flyer directly to friends, in an attempt to reach someone they knew who fit the criteria who would be willing to participate. Through these efforts, nine more individuals were located who met the criteria and participated in the study. The researcher directly confirmed the qualifications of each participant. The adult consent form was delivered personally. At that time, the researcher explained the form and responded to any questions.

Participants were assigned pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. At each of the three interview meetings, the participants were reminded of the procedures to maintain the confidentiality of their data: the pseudonyms, and the safe-keeping of the records. The participants were also informed that they would have an opportunity to review a transcript of the recorded conversations.

Participants consisted of a bookkeeper (Nora), a public school teacher (Daisie), a housewife (Sue), a marketing executive (Nell), a librarian (Joe), an inventory manager (Fred), a research analyst (Dana), a building contractor (Gabe), a social worker (Barry), and a physician (Carol). Nora, Daisie, Sue, Dana, Barry, and Carol were completely retired from the public work force. Joe still works in the public work force. Gabe is semi-retired, and Nell works at what she calls her “retirement” job, as an inventory manager. All are over the age of 60, most in their early 60’s. Nora is in her seventies and Sue is in her eighties. *Instrument Development and Validation*

According to Moustakas (1994), a specific instrument is not prepared for the interviews. Instead, the interview is informal and interactive, with only prepared questions to use as a guideline, and these may not be used at all. The goal of the

interviews was to evoke a complete personal description of the participant's experience, so the interviews were more like conversations.

Moustakas (1994) goes on to say that the interviewer is responsible for providing a comfortable environment for the participant to encourage this response. To ensure a comfortable environment, the interviews were held at the time most convenient to the participant, either at their residence, or another location of their choice. For example, one set of interviews was at a library, and another was at the participant's church. van Manen (1990) agrees that the interview is simply a vehicle to promote this conversation. This study followed the suggestion of Kvale (1996), to prepare a set of guideline questions related to the theme and questions that encouraged interaction with the participant, looking forward to the data analysis. The guideline questions for all three interviews can be found in Appendix C.

The first interview considered the historical context of the decision to use social networking sites and the participant's personal social network. This interview concentrated on the participant's introduction to computer technology and the Internet, their lifelong experience with the same, and their personal social networks. The second interview addressed specifically the participant's experience in choosing to use social networking sites. The participants were encouraged to consider the details of the motivations behind their choice, the specific circumstances at that time, and who or what might have influenced their choice. The third interview was an opportunity for the participant to reflect on relationship between the historical context for the choice and the choice itself. What did this choice mean for them and their life? How did it affect their daily life? What were the reasons they continue to use online social networking?

Data Collection

As the first step of this methodology, to prepare for the data collection, the researcher freed herself from all presuppositions and biases related to the phenomena to be studied. All prior related knowledge and experience were set aside. Husserl refers to this act of clearing all suppositions as the “*epoche*”, a Greek word for abstain (Moustakas, 1994). This “*epoche*” clears the mind of the researcher so that he/she can view the phenomena as a fresh experience, seeing it in a new light without any voices from past experience to slant the interpretation of the phenomenon.

The researcher’s personal “*epoche*”/subjectivity statement can be found in Appendix D. This statement describes her prior experience, the path that led her to this effort and explains how the researcher intended to keep her actions and thoughts as unimpeded as possible. The idea is to bracket the consideration of the phenomena from any outside effects to see its essence as purely as possible. Moustakas (1994) sees this as a reflective, meditative process that takes the researcher to a more receptive state. If the researcher cannot totally remove all bias and pre-conceived ideas, he/she must, at least, consider this potential effect at all times during the study (Peshkin, 1988). Patton (2002) adds that the “*epoche*” is not a single activity but an on-going part of the entire analytical process.

Following the guidelines of Seidman (2006), there were three sets of interviews. All interviews were conducted at locations chosen by the participants. The only requirement for each location was that it be private and quiet so that a clear recording could be made of the conversations.

The interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participants. The duration between interviews varied from a day or two to weeks apart. Most were scheduled a few days apart to follow the guidelines of the phenomenological process. The researcher started each interview with an explanation of the goal of the interview and posed a relevant question to get the thought processes started. Many times, in the case of the second and third interview, (particularly if there was a long interval between interviews), the researcher provided a summary of the prior interview(s) to promote the thought processes as well. The questions were open-ended, and the interview, in order to evoke the personal detail of the experience, became more like a conversation. The researcher guided the interview focus, using the guideline questions.

The first interview concentrated on the history of the individual as related to the experienced phenomenon, stressing the “how” as more important than the “why”. This resulted in a broad view of the underlying events that established context. The first interview considered the life history of the participant as it is related to the topic. Because the experience to be examined was the choice of older adults to use social networking sites, the primary history considered was twofold: The history focused both on the participants’ experiences with technology throughout his/her life, and the characteristics of his/her current social network. Prior to the interview, the researcher developed some basic questions for the interview designed to keep the interview on track. The questions were open-ended, stressing the “how” of the experience. This encouraged a discussion of feelings, motives, and context related to the experience. In practice, this became a participant’s “story” of their introduction and continuing history with computer technology and the Internet. For most, it was the first time they had any organized

thought about this matter, and experienced some revelations. They were able to “stand back” and see more clearly their influences and motivations. This was an in-depth interview, close to an hour long.

The second interview closely followed the first (when possible) because the second interview asks the participant to provide concrete details describing their experience to choose to use social networking sites and the surrounding context (Seidman, 2006). The second interview was almost an hour long, as well. Since the goal of this interview was to focus entirely on this personal decision and its context, for most subjects, it seemed to be a simple, straightforward answer. For some the choice to use online social networking was almost entirely a practical one, a decision to accomplish a specific goal. For others, it was driven, in great part, by the encouragement and influences of others. However, after some thought, all admitted that the surrounding context of the world at the time contributed mightily to this experience and their decision. For most subjects, the second interview, paired with the thought processes of the first interview, was thought provoking.

In the third and final interview (no more than an hour long), the participant reflected on the meaning of the experience in their lives (Seidman, 2006). What does the experience mean for you and your life--now, or in the future? Consider the circumstances that brought you to the phenomenon. The first two interviews are preparation for the third interview, so all of these interviews were relatively close in time (where possible) and at the convenience of the subject. Seidman recommends an interview spacing of three days to one week. The participant was guided to make connections between the experience and other aspects of his/her life. Seidman feels that the process of reconstructing the event,

itself, imparts meaning to the participant. It is this meaning that is the focus of the third interview. In practice, this interview seemed difficult for the interviewee. It was challenging for them to see the larger view of their choices. Often, the researcher tried to provoke thought processes by presenting a brief summary of prior interviews, reminding them of their history with computer technology and the Internet and the details of their choice to use online social networking sites. With this assistance and some encouragement, they were able to see the larger view and to discuss the shared themes derived from their experiences.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. These transcripts were made available to the participants for review and preserved after the study in a secure location, to be destroyed after three years. The subjects were reminded of this plan at the beginning of the interviews.

Phenomenological Data Analysis

The data analysis followed the phenomenological analytical process outlined by Moustakas (1994), to include phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis. The data analysis was based on interview transcriptions.

In preparation for the phenomenological reduction, the researcher transcribed all of the interviews. From the transcripts of the interviews, the researcher identified statements, or units of meaning (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher reviewed the interview transcript multiple times, considered every statement related to the experience, and recorded every significant related statement. The researcher eliminated all redundancies. Moustakas calls this horizontalizing. Conklin (2007) clarifies that these horizons project fresh perspectives to be considered and add depth to the descriptions.

Merging these statements formed the basis of the individual's textural experience description and the common themes. The textural description is the "what" of the experience presented as a narrative (Moustakas). The study incorporated all textural descriptions in Appendices E through N.

Moustakas (1994) calls the next phase the "imaginative variation", seeking the underlying and precipitating factors of the experience (p. 98). Conklin (2007) says that the researcher should consider the statements from multiple perspectives, using imagination and intuition. The researcher worked to find underlying conditions and structural elements that precipitated the experience. This process led the researcher to the development of the structural descriptions, identifying the "how" of the experience. What are the structural elements that led to this experience and meaning of this experience for the participant? The study incorporated all structural descriptions of each interview in Appendices E through N.

Moustakas' (1994) final procedural step is synthesis, combining the textural descriptions and the structural descriptions into the essences of the phenomenon. The essences represent the common threads that define the experience for all participants. To arrive at the essences of the phenomenon, the researcher unified all participant textural descriptions into a composite textural description, integrating common themes and paths and all participant structural descriptions into a composite structural description. These composite studies utilized the results of the earlier steps of phenomenological reduction and imaginative variation. The researcher combined these two composite studies into the textural-structural composite which expresses the common themes and the essence of the phenomenon. The text of all composite descriptions is incorporated into this study in

Appendix O, Appendix P, and Appendix Q. Table R1 identifies the common themes in the final results.

This study considered one more area of analysis. The study considered the resulting phenomenological essences and compared them to existing research on this topic. This comparative technique is similar to that of Cane, McCarthy, and Halawi (2010) who compare the results of their phenomenological study of military simulations systems to the variables of the existing task-technology fit variables to identify new variables. Questions to consider in this analysis included: Do the phenomenological essences match (or relate to) factors in the current research that affect the choice of older adults to use social networking sites? Are there new factors, discovered through the phenomenological study, not present in the current research? Table 3 summarizes the research process.

Table 3

Research Process Details

Process Step	Step description	Details
Volunteer recruitment	Distribution of flyer or flyer information with phone number contact information.	
Participant Selection	Phone screening using questionnaire or face-to-face as appropriate.	
For All Selected Participants:	Introduction and detailed Information	Face-to-Face meeting explaining project, detailing process steps, security of information, and specific commitment.
	Interview Steps	<p>Interview One—gathering historical experiences. -Transcribe Interview One</p> <p>Interview Two –focus specifically on choice to use online social networking. -Participant reviews transcript of Interview One. -Transcribe Interview Two</p> <p>Interview Three – reflect on the meaning of the target experience and the experiences leading to the choice. -Participant reviews transcript of Interview Two. -Transcribe Interview Three.</p>
	Wrap Up Meeting	Participant reviews transcript of Interview Three. -Discuss offer of assistance with computer questions if appropriate.

	-Offer to answer any questions. Express gratitude to participant.
Data Analysis:	Horizontalize the interview statements to arrive at meaning units. -Group the meaning units into themes to develop textural description. -Develop structural description -Integrate textural and structural descriptions into phenomenological essence. -Compare to current research.
Dissertation Update	Update dissertation with details of research process, data analysis, and conclusions.
Data Preservation	Preserve and secure the recordings and transcripts for three years, and then destroy.

Validity and Reliability

A final consideration in this approach was the concern for validity. Concern for validity is a common question in qualitative research because qualitative research does not follow the same scientific procedures as those used in quantitative research (Cho & Trent, 2006). Does the data accurately reflect the target experience?

Cilesiz (2011) asserts that strictly following the phenomenological methods and philosophical assumptions strengthens the study's validity. This study followed all of the recommended phenomenological methodology steps. Addressing the concern for validity, Lavery (2003) suggests that the phenomenological concept of bracketing, isolating the experience from the outside world that increases data validity. The phenomenological researcher's efforts to arrive at an "epoche", to achieve personal subjectivity, reinforces

validity (Cilesiz; Groenewald, 2004). Both bracketing and the researcher's "epoche" were integral to this study. The act of bracketing, isolating the phenomenon from the outside world, and the "epoche" (or reflection) required a directed effort on the part of the researcher. The researcher's personal experience with technology and social media were pushed away to bracket the participants' experience for the researcher's consideration and reflection. To document this process, the researcher includes a statement of epoche/subjectivity. See Appendix D.

One more technique to assure validity is member checks which many phenomenological researchers include (Cane, McCarthy & Halawi, 2010; Cilesiz, 2011). For all interviews in this study, the participants were presented with a transcript of the interview to review for accuracy.

Finally, the questions used to guide the interviews were prepared by the researcher, and prior to the interviews, the reviewer had the questions reviewed by experienced researchers to ensure the validity of their form and appropriateness. See Appendix C.

Formats for Presenting Results

Several types of data were collected in this study. The decisions concerning participant selection, details of the data collection and the analysis were included in the final report. All recorded data, the analysis, and the transcripts will be preserved for three years in a secure location. The themes from the interviews were presented in tabular form. All textural and structural descriptions, including the composite descriptions, were included in the report in the appendices. Excerpts were referenced in the analysis.

Resources

Few resources were required for this project. The resources included the following:

1. Researcher access to the social networking sites that were being considered.
2. Researcher access to phone/email to communicate with the participants.
3. Locating viable participants.
4. A recorder to record the interviews and a way to transcribe the conversation.
5. Tools to analyze the transcription for the phenomenological analysis.

Summary

To summarize, a phenomenological approach was used for this study. The study considered a purposeful homogeneous sample of participants, 10 individuals over the age of 60, who currently use social networking sites to create or maintain social connections, (and who had done so for at least six months), without a strong computer/technical background. Qualitative data was collected through a series of three interviews, following Seidman's (2006) suggested guidelines. Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological methods were followed to perform the data analysis. The researcher followed these steps closely to ensure validity. Participants were assigned pseudonyms to guarantee confidentiality, and they were provided interview transcripts for their review to ensure their information was

recorded accurately. The study included the results of the phenomenological data analysis. The phenomenological, universal “essences” were analyzed in terms of existing research related to the choice of older adults to use social networking sites.

Chapter 4

Results

This study considered the experience of an older adult's choice to use online social networking sites. The phenomenological research method was used to examine this phenomenon through the subjects' firsthand descriptions, their feelings, thoughts, motivations, and the related context (Moustakas, 1994). This was accomplished via the interview process. There were three interviews with each participant. The first interview reviewed the participant's history of Internet and technology usage and their current social networks. The second interview focused entirely on the participant's choice to use online social networking sites. The final interview considered the relationship between the participant's historical context and experiences and their choice to use online social networking sites. This final interview also included a discussion of the role online social networking in their lives. Through open-ended questions, encouragement from the researcher, and the receptive attitude of the researcher, the subjects were persuaded to describe in detail their experiences from multiple perspectives. What or who prompted you to make this choice? Why did you not make this choice before? How did you feel about the choice, before and after? What do you think made you feel like that? The researcher put aside all prior perceptions that might have influenced the process. The results were derived entirely from the voices of the participants.

Data Analysis

Following the steps of phenomenological research, the data analysis began with the horizontalization of the data. The horizontalization step coded the data from the interview transcripts into meaningful units. Since this was a semi-structured interview, the transcript included unrelated data, and the researcher considered only relevant statements. The meaningful units from all three interviews were the source of a textural description for each of the 10 individuals, 10 textural descriptions. Next, using imaginative variation (Moustakas, 1994), the researcher developed the structural descriptions from the textural descriptions. This resulted in 10 structural descriptions. The researcher, from these 10 textural and 10 structural descriptions, created a single composite textural description and a single composite structural description. The textural and structural descriptions can be found in Appendices E through N.

Data Horizontalization

In data horizontalization, the researcher merged each individual's set of three transcripts (documenting three interviews) into a single transcript, resulting in 10 complete transcripts. Using the merged 10 transcripts, the researcher restructured sets of (researcher) questions and (participant) answers into single meaningful participant statements, where appropriate. The researcher also eliminated unrelated statements and redundancy. From the relevant, unduplicated statements, the researcher processed the 10 transcripts to arrive at a complete set of meaningful statements which Moustakas (1994) calls "horizons", "the textural meanings and invariant constituents of the phenomenon" (p. 97).

Imaginative Variation

Using the results of the horizontalization and imaginative variation, the researcher sought to reveal structural elements that defined each experience. Through this process the researcher developed the structural descriptions, one per participant, identifying the “how” of the experience. What are the shared structural foundations leading to this experience? The results of this effort were the 10 participants’ structural descriptions.

Synthesis

The data source for this step was the meaningful statements, the horizons from the horizontalization step, and the shared structural foundations from the preceding step. The researcher used synthesizing logic to uncover the essences or common themes in the descriptions (Moustakas, 1994). As a preparatory step, through imaginative and logical consideration, the researcher transformed the horizons and structural elements into the following 32 potential themes:

1. Limited/no Experience at Work
2. Good experience at Work
3. Fear of Being left Behind
4. Early Technology disappointment/fear/complicated
5. Ease of use
6. Prior experience using Internet
7. Curiosity
8. Computer at home
9. Friends/family with computers/social networking sites
10. Friend/family encouragement
11. Computer/social networking at same time
12. Multiple social networking sites
13. No Multiple social networking sites
14. Enjoyment
15. Bad side of technology
16. Enhancement to social networks/communication
17. No fear of information security
18. Fear of information security

19. Exceeded expectations
20. Careful use of social networking sites
21. Social Networking Conflicts
22. No Social Networking Conflicts
23. Too much information
24. More real for young people
25. Other uses of FaceBook
26. Use only what is useful and valuable, have control
27. Whole new world
28. Bad effects of technology on youth
29. Not real socializing
30. Deceit
31. Cannot avoid technology
32. Youth does not use FaceBook

The researcher refined the set of 32 potential themes to a final set of themes, including the themes that were common to more than one individual, merging themes where appropriate. An example of merged themes would be “fear of information security” and “no fear of information security”, merged into “information security”. This examination resulted in a final set of 26 themes. To facilitate further analysis, each theme was assigned to one of four thematic categories.

The thematic categories are defined as follows:

- Category One includes positive influences in the choice to use online social networking. This category addresses RQ1, defining the specific influences behind the older adult’s choice to use social networking sites.
- Category Two includes negative influences in the choice to use online social networking. This category also addresses RQ1, defining the specific influences behind the older adult’s choice to use social networking sites.
- Category Three includes current online social networking practices, the results of the choice to use online social networking. This category defines RQ2, the

themes that emerge from the senior citizen's experience with social networking web sites.

- Category Four includes current attitudes that affect the older adult's choice to continue using online social networking. This category responds to RQ3, the themes that emerge from the senior citizen's feelings and experiences with social networking web sites.

The Table 4 summarizes this analysis, listing each thematic category, all of its associated themes, and a count of how many participants referenced each theme in his/her interview. Each theme is assigned a sequence number to facilitate later reference. The first character in the sequence number refers to the associated category, categories 1 through 4. For example, the second item in the first category is assigned the sequence number, '(1-b)'. If there is a positive/negative response to the theme, the count for each type of response is indicated in the "Subj. Count" cell for that row. An example is the "Social Networking Conflicts" row.

Table 4

Thematic Category Analysis

Category	Theme defined	Counts
Category One	Theme	Subj. count
Positive influence	(1-a)Computer at home	10
Positive influence	(1-b)Readily available assistance	5
Positive influence	(1-c)Friend/family encouragement to use social networking sites	8
Positive influence	(1-d)Specific goal for social networking sites	2
Positive influence	(1-e)Friends/family using computers/social networking sites	10
Positive influence	(1-f)Good computer experience at work	4
Positive influence	(1-g)Fear of being left behind	6
Positive influence	(1-h)Prior experience using Internet	10
Positive influence	(1-i)New technology-ease of use	8
Positive influence	(1-j)Curiosity	8
Category Two	Theme	Subj. Count
Negative influence	(2-a)Limited computer experience at work	6
Negative influence	(2-b)Early technology disappointment/fear/complicated	10
Category Three	Theme	Subj. Count
Current usage	(3-a)Social networks has enhanced communication and personal social networks	10

Current usage	(3-b)Online social networking is not as desirable as face-to-face	5
Current usage	(3-c)Too much information	5
Current usage	(3-d)Careful use of social networking sites	10
Current usage	(3-e)Social networking conflicts	3yes/7no
Current usage	(3-f)Use only what is valuable-have control	6
Current usage	(3-g)Use of multiple social networking sites	5yes/5no
Category Four	Theme	Subj. Count
Current attitude	(4-a)Technology has bad effects	4
Current attitude	(4-b)Bad effects of technology on youth	2
Current attitude	(4-c)Fear for information security	4yes/6no
Current attitude	(4-d)Internet deceit	4
Current attitude	(4-e)Whole new world	5
Current attitude	(4-f)Cannot avoid technology	6
Current attitude	(4-g)Enjoyment	8

Table R1 in Appendix R documents exactly which participants referenced which themes and the themes are referenced by their sequence number. Textural/structural descriptions can be found in the appendices E through N.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the experience of an older adult's choice to use social networking sites. The study took into account the subject's history and experiences with computer technology and the Internet, and their personal social network. It also focused specifically on their decision to use online social networking, the circumstances at that time (both at work and at home), the source of their motivation to make this choice, their expectations, and their feelings about the choice (before and after, to the current day). The interview process gave the subjects an opportunity to respond to questions directed to understanding all of these topics. The textural and structural descriptions of these interviews detail the responses from two different perspectives, a personal perspective and a broader subjective perspective. Finally, the group's composite textural and structural descriptions enabled the researcher to arrive at the "essence" of the experience, as defined by the phenomenological research process (Patton, 2002).

Research Questions and the Essence of the Experience

The essences or themes of the experience, organized by their categories, provide responses to the original research questions. For convenience, the research questions are repeated here:

RQ1: What specific experiences have influenced older adults to choose to use social networking sites to maintain social relationships?

RQ2: What are the common themes and meanings that emerge from the senior citizen's experience with social networking web sites?

RQ3: What kind of meanings, feelings and experiences result from the older adult's choice to use social networking sites to create and/or maintain social relationships?

Research Question One and Corresponding Themes

Research question one (RQ1) asks what specific experiences have influenced older adults to choose to use social networking sites to maintain social relationships? The themes that are categorized as positive influences and negative influences make up a comprehensive answer to this question. The two themes depicting negative influences are the participant's limited exposure to computers at work and his/her early computer technology disappointments and fears.

Barry was an example of someone who had little exposure to computers at work; the computer was only a tool to do his job. Nora, Daisy, and Joe were only able to observe others using the computer at work. At work, the participants saw the computer as a business tool, not something designed for personal purposes. This limited use of technology did not significantly increase their comfort level with technology.

A number of the participants were turned off by the complexity associated with using early technology, the second negative influence theme. Joe found it to be overly complex and demanding; Nora found the training in technology to be more than challenging and technology, in practice, to be boring. The individual who was most affected by the early technology was Daisy. She stated that the complexity of the early technology instilled a fear of computer technology in her. This negative attitude changed for Daisy in the workplace, but not in a good way. As a teacher, she felt forced (by her superiors) to use technology that made no sense in her job. Almost all participants voiced frustration for the slowness of the early computer technology and how difficult it was to use. Examples are Susan who remembered her impatience with the slowness and Dana

who faced extreme complexities in her technology related work tasks. This early technology had not found a comfortable home in their lives.

At this point in their lives, although there were negative influences that might have discouraged this group's adoption of online social networking, there were also many positive influences. There were a few who had positive technology experiences in their working life, a first step towards adopting more technology. Nell, Dana, and Gabe exemplified this positive influence. Nell was able to use technology to turn around a business to extreme success, using the technology to organize the business tasks and to increase internal communication. Gabe progressively used technology, continuously adopting new technology, to drive his business to increased profits. Dana was an example of someone who adapted as needed to learn the new technologies required to be successful at her job.

During the interviews, the participants related that during this period, as technology became more common, more friends and family members were using computers. Barry saw his family members, especially his daughter adopt the current technology. Nora heard her friends discuss the technology and saw her club use technology to communicate. Her granddaughter and son were enthralled with the new technology. For Gabe, technological growth was manifested in his industry peers. Using technology was becoming a necessity in the construction business. The expansion of technology permeated everyone's life. Recognizing these changes around them, many expressed two emotions—curiosity and a fear of being left behind. Gabe called himself a curious person who is ready to try new things, and he was curious about the new technology, anxious to see what it could do for him. He did not want himself, or his

business, to be left behind. Barry felt his daughter was moving away from him in her use of the new technology, and he took specific actions to catch up by purchasing his first personal computer. Nell is another who was curious as her young friends talked about what they could do on their computers and phones and referred to posted pictures that Nell did not have access to. Because of this, Nell felt a need to catch up with the rest of the world.

Another positive influence was directly related to the prevalence of technology in the world. The majority of the group had some family member or friend who brought a personal computer into the subject's home. For Nell, it was her significant other who had changed her own career to a career in technology. Gabe, Joe, Dana, Susan, Daisie, Carol, and Fred all had spouses who purchased PC's to use at home. This action inherently changed the participant's perception of computers. Through this up-close exposure, they saw the computer, not only as a tool for work, but also for personal use, entertainment, and communication. Most members of the group began to use the computer to communicate via email. Dana, in particular, who lived a distance from her family took full advantage of email. This kind of usage advanced the subjects to, not only more frequent use of the computer, but also to using the Internet.

A common fear in the early days of technology was that the technology was hard to use. You could get "stuck" and not know what to do, and you might break something. This kind of fear was expressed by Susan, Daisie, Gabe, and Fred. But having the computer in your home, with someone who was more experienced than you, (your more "technical" family member) and who was ready to assist, removed some of this concern. Fred described several situations where either his wife or a friend had helped him figure

out how to accomplish his task on the computer. Gabe's wife introduced him to databases and other software she had been exposed to at work. The close proximity of a more technically inclined, helpful person was a significant factor.

The final set of positive influences was specific to the choice to use online social networking. The older adult's choice to do this was never thought-less or random. Two of the subjects had very specific personal goals. Barry wanted to use the tool to gather information for his novel. Carol wanted to stay in touch with her school chums from a class reunion. Everyone else was strongly influenced by either family members or friends. Daisy, Dana, and Gabe wanted to stay in touch with their children and other family members. Susan and Nora were setup to use the site entirely by their children. Nell, Joe, and Fred were urged by their friends who wanted to share common interests. There was always an impetus for the subjects to participate in online social networking, derived from personal circumstances, family or friends.

Research Question Two and Corresponding Themes

Research question two asks what are the common themes and meanings that emerge from the older adult's experience with social networking web-sites. The thematic category of current usage responds to this research question. There were two negative comments on usage from the group. Susan, Fred, Barry, Dana, and Nell, felt that online social networking was not "really" socializing. For them, "real" socializing was done face-to-face. Online social networking was just a convenient way to fill gaps in today's busy life. Susan called this a "crutch", a lazy man's tool. Barry particularly considered his online social networking to be socializing only if he also had face-to-face contact with his online friends. For Barry, all other online contact was not "real".

The second frequent negative comment on current usage was that there was completely too much information on social networking sites. Quantity of information was the general concern for Carol and Dana who did not want to wade through inconsequential comments on what someone made for dinner last night to get to the important events that interested them. A few participants described various conflicts they had encountered in using social networking sites, usually a conflict in political or religious beliefs. Their reaction to these conflicts (or any potential conflict) was the same for all. Everyone was very careful about who they would “friend”, what they posted and what they said on their social networking sites. As Joe indicated, he did not want to “rock the boat”.

Another aspect of the group’s current use of social networking sites is their choice to use multiple social networking sites. The group was equally divided in this matter. Half were satisfied using only FaceBook and did not understand the purpose of the other social networking sites. Susan, Barry, Fred, Nora, and Daisie only used FaceBook. However, others, for various reasons had tried other social networking sites. Carol and Joe were interested in crafts, so they had tried Pinterest. Gabe and Nell were early adopters of LinkedIn for business purposes. Dana tried Tumblr seeking more privacy in posting pictures.

A majority of those interviewed felt that they needed to find a way to control their current use of online social networking. Nora wanted to use social networking sites more judiciously, for significant information only. Barry was worried about becoming a “digiman”, a person who devoted too much time and effort to the digital world. Fred, Dana, Carol, and Susan had concerns for the amount of personal time devoted to online

social networking. These four individuals were all retired, so they were totally in control of their personal time. They wanted to use their personal time in the most effective and efficient way possible, taking advantage of all the good things that social networking sites offer. They wanted to reserve time for hobbies like reading and sports. Seeking a way to manage this control, Dana suggested that she might eliminate all of her Facebook friends that she saw on a regular basis, keeping only the ones she saw more rarely. Carol stated that she would just check it less often. Each was seeking his/her own way to manage this.

Despite all of these concerns, the entire group was in agreement that online social networking had changed their lives in a positive way. Each person very positively storied their current social networking practices and the benefits online social networking provided. Barry had a whole new set of friends from around the country, friendships never before possible. Joe had an online social life where he participated in the successes and events in others' lives, enriching his sparse social life. Online social networking sites played a powerful and positive role in Daisy's life as she and her family went through a serious medical crisis. Online friends offered support and encouragement, and her social networking site facilitated that support. Nora, in her retirement, replaced office friends by enhancing her relationship with other friends from her club and is excited to view pictures from her grandchildren's lives so she can feel more a part of it all. Online social networking allowed Nell to feel closer to her work friends, her distant family, and her high school friends. Gabe had many friends from earlier times in his life who live far away, and he was thrilled to get insight into their lives on a regular basis. All members of

the group said they would not want to live without this powerful, convenient way to communicate.

Research Question Three and Corresponding Themes

Research question three asks what kind of meanings, feelings and experiences result from the older adult's choice to use social networking sites to create and/or maintain social relationships? The thematic category of current attitudes speaks to this question. Inherently, the choice to use online social networking makes the user someone who uses the Internet often. This resulted in a shared set of feelings and attitudes about the Internet, social networking sites, and technology in general.

Most worried about the "bad" effects of the Internet and technology, especially for the youth of today. Many were troubled by the amount of time they spent on the Internet. Barry and Nell were particularly concerned about how much time young people spend on the Internet. They both saw this as unhealthy, almost an avoidance of real life. A few in the group felt that social relationships that exist mostly online were not real social relationships. Carol was disappointed in current software solutions or technology "improvements", like the change to the timeline in FaceBook. For her, this was a counter-productive change, forcing her to do more work. Gabe was worried because of the myriad of ways to access technology and how it allows technology to follow you outside of the workplace. He has often witnessed that one cannot easily escape work to have quality family time when work commitments follow via email and texting.

Some have a concern for information security. Nell had her credit card information stolen at one time, so she was wary. Using technology in his business, Gabe was very aware of the threats to personal information and takes steps to protect that

information. Fred and Dana had general concerns for information security. Dana was mostly concerned for her children, worried that they are not careful enough with their online personal information.

Some shared the belief that deceit is common on the Internet and in online social networking. Fred felt he was misled by some of his FaceBook friends and had to isolate himself from them. Susan was considering the same action for some of her online “friends”. Nora had a close friend who had been less than truthful on FaceBook. Barry asserted that the Internet is an easy place to deceive and admitted that he often said things totally out of character to strangers on the Internet.

The majority of the group felt that the use of technology was unavoidable in their lives. But, in the context of the interview, this did not seem to be a negative statement, just a fact. The prevailing sense was that although the increased role of technology in their lives was inevitable, this group just needed to determine how they would manage it. While Barry would have liked to ignore technology, he acknowledged that, even his bird-watching hobby was enhanced by the use of technology when he wanted to identify birds and their songs. Dana just wanted to manage this technology, specifically social networking sites, so this technology did not over take her personal time. Fred was anxious to learn just enough about using social networking sites to take advantage of the technology and not let it interfere with his leisure time. Susan, Gabe, and Carol just wanted a sense of control.

The phrase “whole new world” (or something similar) was voiced by many when describing the advance of technology, illustrating a sense excitement that accompanied the sense of inevitability. Gabe was always looking for the new and the better technology

solutions. He was ambitious, enterprising, and very curious. Carol recognized this need to adapt to technology too, in spite of her misgivings. In her new retirement she was actively taking advantage of things like “streaming” from the Internet. Based on the positive value technology has provided in their lives, Barry, Daisy, and Nell were excited, looking to the future.

The outcome is that the group understood the value and enjoyment that the Internet and online social networking has added to their lives. Most admitted that they could not see living without their social networking site. Only Dana stated that she was considering dropping FaceBook. Some, like Susan and Fred were anxious to learn how to better use FaceBook. Barry, Gabe, Daisy, Joe, Nora, and Nell very much enjoyed the benefits online social networking offered. Susan and Dana wanted to control the time allocated to it, but still enjoyed its benefits.

Identified Obstacles Compared to Themes

This study considered another area of analysis, a comparison of the resulting phenomenological essences to themes found in prior topical research. Many of the prior studies consider obstacles to the older adult’s use of online social networking sites. Table 1 suggests a representative set of this research and associates to each study the primary obstacles that prevent older adults from using social networking sites.

The obstacles identified in this prior research bear little resemblance to the themes revealed in this study. This study did not approach the question from the perspective of obstacles. Only one of these obstacles is directly echoed in this study, the reference to a lack of computer skills. Three of the study participants had concerns for their computer skills as related to social networking sites, Fred, Nell, and Susan. Their concern did not

prevent them from using online social networking. They just thought they could better use it if they knew more. No other participant made mention of computer skills being an obstacle; however, it is true that all of the subjects had quick access to someone with more technical skills. A quick question to their local “expert” could address any issue they might have because of poor computer skills. The convenience of this assistance may also be the reason that none of the participants were concerned with technical support for their PC. Their “local” technical expert would know what to do.

However, it is also possible that the “lack of computer skills” obstacle may be related to one of the two identified negative influences: The theme, “limited use of computers in the work place”, may correlate to the lack of computer skills “obstacle” in the prior research. If the subjects had limited computer exposure at work, then they most likely had very little computer training to increase their skills. There is not enough information in this study to confirm the relationship between the limited use of computers in the workplace and the “lack of computer skills”.

The circumstances around this group’s adoption of social networking sites likely discounted many of the obstacles identified in current research. Every member of this group had a specific purpose for using social networking sites, so the obstacle of not understanding the purpose of the sites did not apply. Two subjects had their own personal reasons (Barry and Carol). All others were led to using the web-sites by friends or family members, so their goal was to better communicate with these friends and family members. Furthermore, introduction to social networking sites through trusted family or friends removed the obstacle of distrust. Encouragement, from family and friends, to use social networking sites suggested to the subject that online social networking was not just

for young people, eliminating another obstacle. Moreover, this method of introduction to social networking sites took care of the need for a critical mass of contacts, another named obstacle. When these older adults started using social networking sites, they already had family members or friends waiting to be their online “friend”.

The remaining three suggested obstacles include a concern for privacy, a fear of self-embarrassment, and a worry that they would appear vain and on display. None of the participants mentioned these feelings. But every person in the group made it clear that they were very careful about the way they used Facebook. Every member of this group took care in what they posted to the social networking site to avoid controversy or conflict or possible embarrassment. Each was also very careful about who they accepted as their “friend”. They only accepted friend requests from people that they knew personally. Bell, et al. (2013) confirm that older adults only include people they know in their online social networks. All subjects implied that they felt safe because they took this kind of care. Why would their friends expose their information? Even potential embarrassing missteps are forgivable amongst friends. Thus there was no concern for privacy issues, except, in some cases, a general concern for information security on the Internet.

New Concepts

Another question to consider is whether any new concepts related to an older adult’s use of social networking sites were revealed by this study? This study considered the positive influences that precipitated the subject’s use of social networking sites. These positive influences are not topics that have a large body of related research.

However, some of these influences are referenced in studies of the older adults' general Internet use. The 2001 Pew survey states that older adult Internet users either started using the Internet in their work prior to retirement, or they were encouraged to start using the Internet by a family member (Fox, Rainie, Larsen, Horrigan, Lenhart, Spooner, & Carter, 2001). A later study confirms the continued influence of family members on the older adult's decision to use online social networks (Bell, et al., 2013). Also, a more recent study confirms that an increasing number of older adults approaching the age of 60 are using the Internet. Zickuhr and Madden (2012) report that 77% of older adults between 50 and 64 use the Internet. Czaja and Lee (2007) said that technology must be useful and usable for older adults to consider using it, and the older adults may need more training and support. This study confirmed (directly or indirectly) most of these assertions related to general Internet use as applicable to the older adults' use of social networking sites. All participants in this study had in mind a specific use for the web-site, and all participants had someone closely available for support. So these concepts of family/friend encouragement and usability are not new themes related to Internet use, but new in their reference to the use of online social networks by older adults.

Other positive influences represent new views on the topic. The two thematic categories (Category 3 and 4) -- current SNS (social networking sites) usage practices and attitudes towards the Internet/SNS -- have sparse contemporary research. Bell, et al. (2013) confirm that research on the use of FaceBook by adults over 35 is very sparse. It should also be noted that no prior research mentions the second negative influence

(Category 2), the participant's disappointment with and fear of early computer technology and its complicated procedures.

Summary

The structure of the data analysis for this study followed standard phenomenological methodology steps, as described in Table 2. The data to be analyzed was derived from the three participant interview transcripts. These interviews were very "conversational", not structured interviews. The first interview chronicled a history of the participant's exposure to and use of technology, the Internet and online social networking. The second interview focused specifically on the participant's choice to use online social networking, the circumstances, the participant's feelings, and the context. The final interview documented the participant's perspective on the decision to use online social networking as related to his/her personal history with technology and the Internet, along with the context of this decision.

The first step of the phenomenological analytical approach is the horizontalization of the data to arrive at meaningful units, the source of the textural description for each participant. Since the interviews were not structured, more conversational; the researcher had to eliminate a good deal of unrelated information and repetition to arrive at meaningful units and the textural descriptions. The researcher analyzed these textural descriptions, stepping back to see the higher level view, using imagination, to arrive at the structural descriptions. Most participants were close to the same age, so the evolution of technology in their lifetime was similar and their career spans were in approximately

the same timeframe. Those factors contributed to the development of the structural descriptions.

However, this particular group of individuals was from a wide range of backgrounds. No one participant had the same occupation or educational background. The occupations ranged from a physician to a homemaker. Given these conditions, the next phenomenological step, to synthesize a set of common themes, was quite challenging. This synthesis resulted in 32 potential themes, later reduced to 26 key themes. To organize and facilitate further analysis, these 26 themes were organized into four categories: positive influences on the choice to use online social networking sites; negative influences on the choice to use online social networking sites; current characteristics of online social networking usage; and current attitudes towards the use of online social networking.

These four data categories can be associated with each of the study's research questions: RQ1 asked --what are specific influences on the choice to use online social networking. The negative influence category responds to this question and includes the participant's limited exposure to computers at work and his/her early computer technology disappointments and fears. The positive influence category responds to RQ1 as well. A few participants were not turned off by early fears and disappointments and used technology with very positive results to improve their businesses.

During the participant's lifetime, technology was advancing and improving, becoming more common and permeating everyone's lives. Family and friends were using the technology and this technology commonly arrived in the participant's home through a more tech-savvy friend/family member. This friend/family member was also someone

who could help them over the rough spots as they tried out the technology. More and more of the participant's friends/family were using the Internet for communication and information sharing. All of these conditions served to both remove the participant's obstacles to technology use and to be a positive influence on the choice to use online social networking sites.

RQ2 looked for common themes from the experience of choosing and using online social networks. The answer to this question was reflected in the common usage data category. Some participants thought that online social networking was not really socializing and worried about too much information on the Internet. The group of participants was split in their use of multiple social networking sites. Half were satisfied with just one site, and the other half has tried multiple sites. Although most wanted to control their time investment in online social networking, all felt generally positive about the experience.

RQ3 looked for common feelings and experiences related to the choice to use online social networking. The answer was evidenced in the data category of current attitudes. Participants feared for the "bad" effects of the Internet, deceit on the Internet, and too much information on the Internet. Every participant agreed that the use of technology is inevitable, and expressed wonder and excitement for the "whole new world" it offered. All agreed that there was great value and enjoyment in the use of online social networks.

Finally, the analysis compared the study's results to prior research on this topic. Most prior research focused on identifying obstacles to older adults' use of online social networking. This study did not focus on obstacles, but instead on usage, motivation, and

context, and there was little direct overlap with the prior studies. One obstacle identified in prior research surfaced in three participant interviews. Some participants were concerned about their lack of computer skills. But none of these participants let that stop them from using the technology. It was not an obstacle. They only desired to improve their skills to get more out of the technology. The specific circumstances of this entire group of participants seemed to have discounted many of the obstacles identified in prior studies. All of the participants had a specific purpose in mind when deciding to use online social networking, so not understanding the purpose was irrelevant. Most were encouraged and assisted by family or friends so distrust was not an issue, and the technology was clearly not just for young people. Training was not an issue because they had family/friends who could help. A critical mass of users to communicate with had already been reached through family or friends. Finally, any fear of embarrassment or privacy was mitigated because the participants only communicated with trusted friends or family on the social networking sites.

New concepts introduced include a study of the positive influences on the older adult's choice to use online social networking sites and the study of current attitudes of older adult online social networking users. There has been little research in these areas. Some of the early Internet studies on the general use of the Internet by older adults are reflected in this study, like the use of the Internet in the workplace, the importance of motivation from children and other family members, and the usefulness of the technology. But these concepts have not been specifically explored for older adults who use online social networking sites.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations and Summary

Conclusions

The analysis of the interview transcripts including the horizontalization of the data, the imaginative variation, and the synthesis refined the interview information into the essence of the individual's experiences. From these essences, conclusions can be drawn. These conclusions describe the common path that these subjects followed to arrive at the choice to use social networking sites. Further conclusions describe how this common path affected the subjects continued usage of social networking sites, and their current attitudes towards the Internet and online social networking. Finally, the essences suggested in this study can be related to themes identified in prior research.

Influential Factors

It can be concluded that the influential factors affecting the path to an older adult's choice to use social networking sites began much earlier in these subjects' lives. It began in the early days of technology, when these individuals were young adults. At this point in their life many were exposed to the early stages of computer technology, and for most it was not a good experience. Reactions varied from a strong fear of computers, to a distaste for its complexities, to just frustration for its slowness and limitations. In the years following this negative experience, several developments happened in parallel. Computers became faster, smaller, and cheaper. Computer software became more

accessible and more useful to the everyday person. Technology became more and more pervasive; technology became easier to use; and the Internet became a reasonable way to communicate. Because of these changes, more and more people began using computers in their job. As a result, conditions were fertile for the decision to use online social networking.

As time passed, more friends and family were using the Internet and online social networking. Most participants had a computer in their home (usually courtesy of another family member) so they had the opportunity to accept the computer as a personal tool and see how much easier it was to use the advanced technology. Furthermore, there was a more tech-savvy person in the house who could assist them. New computer technology was not nearly as fearful or complicated as it once was.

It can also be concluded, that omnipresent participation in technology was a driving factor for this group. This omnipresence fed the participants sense of being left behind and piqued their curiosity, feelings that propelled many of the participants' to using social networking sites. So the conditions were right. Time had passed since the distasteful days of early technology and with the right purpose and/or encouragement from family or friends, the subjects were ready to choose to use online social networking. The subjects' personal vision of computer technology had changed. The vision was no longer that of a building sized business computer driven by extremely complicated processes. Instead, they saw a personal, approachable computer in their home that they knew could be used by an ordinary person. This home computer connected family and friends, was easy to use, and provided entertainment. The choice to use social networking sites, for these folks, required this specific timing to have the right set of conditions.

Others, who grew up in a different time, under different conditions, would probably have taken a different path to get to this choice.

Usage Habits

This group, the 10 participants in this study, who traveled this path to use social networking sites, established a common set of usage habits for social networking sites. Being unsure of their safety on the Internet and wary of unseen strangers, this group makes very careful use of the social networking web-sites. They only accept friend requests from people they know face-to-face. They are not worried about privacy or security of information because they are amongst friends. This cozy group of friends gives them a sense of comfort and safety. Even so, they are all very careful what they post, avoiding any conflict or issues. Only some of them have chosen to use other social networking sites. Since their decision was driven by a specific communication goal, using a specific social networking site, one web-site seems to satisfy their needs at this time. The time required to actively use a social networking site has become problematic for some, and they are looking to set parameters around their usage to gain control of their personal time. The conclusion is that their social networking site has become a comfortable, safe home for this group.

Attitudes

Based on their prior experiences, these older adults share common attitudes towards technology and the Internet. They have ambivalent feelings about technology, accepting the inevitability of its role in their lives, but excited for the future. They enjoy the Internet and social networking, but they recognize the “bad” side of the Internet and how careful they need to be. Online social networking has changed their lives, keeping

them in daily touch with not only close-by friends and family members, but those far away as well. Through online social networking, they can reach out to support their friends in the midst of medical crises.

As a final conclusion, this group's experience in adopting the use of social networking sites contrasts recognized issues from current research. Prior research recognized only one obstacle common to this study—the lack of computer skills. Another prior-recognized obstacle was that the older adult could not see any purpose to using social networking sites. In contrast, every subject in this study had a specific purpose for using social networking sites, so this obstacle was irrelevant. Many subjects were led to using the web-sites by trusted friends or family members. Bell, et al. (2013) address the powerful role that the children of older adults plays in their choice to use online social networking. This introduction to online social networking by a trusted family member obviated the prior-recognized obstacle of distrust. This same introduction also ensured an initial set of contacts to share information with-- no critical mass obstacle here. Because of the older adult's careful selection of online "friends", this group overcomes the obstacle of concern for privacy. They feel that their information is safe amongst these friends. Having a computer in the home, these individuals got to see technology's easy to use qualities face-to-face. For this group and their particular circumstances, the obstacles became less powerful.

Strengths

This study is strong because of the rich data provided by the interviews. The interviews present a broad and rounded picture of the subject's experience, its historical and current context. It, not only, examines past experiences, but considers the changing

context of the world of technology, and the changing life, influences, and environment of the participants. The results clarify the positive and negative influences related to the older adult's decision to use social networking sites. This affords the reader a new perspective on the obstacles for older adults identified in prior studies. The interviewees' textural and structural descriptions describe how their paths in life and the changing face of technology have reduced the strength of these obstacles.

Weaknesses

This study might be considered weak by some because of the small number of subjects. But the goal of a phenomenological study is to examine the experience in depth. The number of participants is within the normal range of three to ten as advised by Creswell (2007).

Limitations

This research sought the essence of the older adult's experience to choose to use online social networks. For the phenomenological study, the group to be studied should be somewhat homogeneous, sharing the same phenomenon (Cilesiz, 2011). Several criteria were used in participant selection to ensure homogeneity. Participants had to be over 60 years of age, had no strong technical background, and had used social networking sites for at least six months. All of the candidates met these criteria. However, after the fact, it became obvious that a subject's personal experience with technology at work was an important factor to consider. All of the subjects except one, Susan, had worked outside their home. Susan was also about 10 or 15 years older than the other participants. Personal history and the timing of this history were important to the path to get to this choice. So this group was not quite as homogenous as one would prefer.

Another limitation had to do with the subject matter of the interviews. Parts of the interviews, specifically the first interview, dealt with the participant's experiences with computer technology and the Internet. The second interview focused solely on the choice to use social networking sites. Sometimes the participants would confuse the two topics. One of the interview questions was whether the interviewee had any concerns for privacy or personal information security when making the decision to use social networking sites. In part because the first interview had focused on technology and the Internet, and in part because the subjects did not always have the technical knowledge to separate the two, sometimes the answer was related to social networking sites and sometimes it was related to computer security. They seemed, as a group, not to fully understand the potential security issues. First, a few of them had their security settings for FaceBook set up by their family members, people they trust. Also, many knew that they had virus checking and other security software installed on their computers. They did not understand how to separate the security from viruses and malware from the security of their personal information on the Internet. In their mind, there was a sense of security because they were careful about who they accepted as "friends" in their virtual social network. Their answers did reflect their feelings, but their feelings were not realistic from a technical perspective.

Implications

Generally, the implication for researchers is to encourage a broader look at older adults and his/her adoption of online social networking. Older adults carry a long lifetime of experiences that affect how these individuals arrive at decisions and carry out

business. Using their broad set of experiences, older adults take direct personal action to address problems. For example, this group of older adults recognized the dangers of the Internet and social networking sites. The participants took their safety into their own hands, protecting themselves by surrounding themselves by known online friends. Most participants were retired and have complete control of their personal time. As part of this desired control, some participants sought to maximize their personal time investment, looking for ways to control their use of social networking sites.

The implication for developers and owners of social networking sites is a better understanding of what it takes to get older adults to use their sites. According to this study, older adults can best be motivated through family and friends and a need to easily communicate and share. So a smart web-site owner would focus his promotion on this type of motivation, perhaps targeting the family or friends, not necessarily the older adult themselves.

Social networking web-site designers should consider adding some features that make it easier for family members to connect. They could add special statuses or links shared by only select “friends”, in this case, family members. Also, noting the worry for the amount of personal time investment, a web-site designer could add a special status applied to a post by a family member. The system could use this status, so that family members would not have to wade through posts by everyone else to see the status of their relations. In 2014, FaceBook recognized some of these issues and, in response, implemented various new FaceBook functionality (“Facebook Newsroom,” n.d.):

- Stability for Developers & More Control for People
- Making It Easier to Share With Who You Want
- Introducing the Facebook Groups App

Since none of this group noted any awareness of this new FaceBook functionality, FaceBook should find a more effective way to get this information to their customers.

One implication for sociologists is the opportunity to study online relationships between the older adult and friends they might have known many years ago. What does this relationship mean to the two of them? How does it affect their lives? Some of the interviewees saw this as not only a way to keep in touch with old friends but a way to learn about events in their home town. Another statement of interest to sociologists is that online socializing is not real socializing. Socializing is only face-to-face. How can online socializing become more like “real” socializing? What kind of balance between the two kinds of socialization would be optimal?

Recommendations

There are several questions that should be considered, by both sociologists and other types of researchers.

For the sociologist, the lack of response to the posted flyer and the personal requests for assistance could be a useful study. What does it take to attract the older adult to participate in a study? Does there have to be a significant reward? Does it depend on the area, city or country? It would be important for potential researchers to know how to best reach this group.

Other questions worth pursuing are: What motivates older adults to use multiple social networking sites? This group was split fifty-fifty in this matter. Half used only one social networking site, and the other half had tried multiple social networking sites.

Another question is how do negative experiences with computer technology affect individuals? What does it take to overcome these negative experiences? A study could concentrate solely on negative experiences with early computer technologies and how this affected one's future decisions concerning technology.

This study was made up of 4 men and 6 women. As a whole, the men seemed more confident and sometimes made more aggressive decisions related to technology. For example, Barry saw what he thought was a need to get a computer and did so with no assistance from anyone. Gabe was very aggressive in his pursuit of technology. He needed little encouragement or assistance. Bell, et al. (2013) stated that females are more likely to use FaceBook than males. What are the differences between men and women and their decisions about computer technology in general and the use of social networking sites?

Another characteristic of interest, one not directly considered in this study is the older adult's technology training. In this group, all but three of the subjects did not have any exposure to computer technology in post-secondary education. The librarian, the bookkeeper, and the teacher were exposed to computer technology in their post-secondary education. The building contractor, the marketing executive, and the housewife had taken some computer training courses. The results of this educational exposure to technology varied a great deal. The teacher was frightened by its complexity; the librarian was frustrated by its complexity. The technology courses taken by the bookkeeper and the housewife did not impress or interest them. The most enthusiastic of the group was the building contractor who seemed very attracted to technology. What is the key to making technology training effective? Does it need to be precisely targeted to

the specific goals of the students? Should the quantity of information provided be limited, such that it is offered in increments (separated by time) instead of all at once?

A final recommendation is for researchers to take advantage of the phenomenological method of research. The phenomenological method approaches the task in a scientific fashion. It can include several types of validity checks. Following the phenomenological methodology, exploring an experience, results in a very rich set of data. Using the phenomenological methods of analysis, including horizontalization, imaginative variation, and synthesis, one can arrive at the true meaning of the experience. The essence of the experience is a very deep and broad view of the experience, taking into account history, context, and environment. Not only does the study return a rich set of data, but it also offers (because of the broad picture) new perspectives that can be the springboard for more research. For example, a phenomenological study would be a way to broadly explore a phenomenon and its influences and characteristics. A follow-up study could use the results of this phenomenological study to develop a more comprehensive survey questionnaire.

Summary

Duggan and Smith (2014) report that close to half of the older adults who are online also use social networking sites. Research documents the benefits of using social networking sites for older adults (Cotton, Ford, Ford, & Hale, 2011; Gibson, Moncur, Forbes, Arnott, Martin, & Bhachu, 2010; Hogeboom, McDermott, Perrin, Osman, & Bell-Ellison, 2010; Pfeil, 2007; Sundar, Behr, Oeldorf-Hirsch, & Nussbaum, 2011). There has been limited research on this topic (Barker, 2012 ;Brandtzaeg, Luders, &

Skjetne, 2010; Hogeboom, McDermott, Perrin, Osman, & Bell-Ellison; Lehtinen, Nasanen, & Sarvas, 2009; McMurtrey, Downey, Zeltmann, & McGaughey, 2010).

This study was designed to add to this body of research using a research methodology that was different from prior research. This study used a phenomenological research methodology to examine the older adult's experience in choosing to use social networking sites. It considered an in-depth and expansive view of this experience, taking into account the historical context and experiences leading to this choice, as well as the choice itself and the follow-on consequences. The goal of this study was to use a phenomenological approach to effectively explain the reasons that older adults chose to use social networking sites.

Prior Studies

Many prior studies addressed the impediments preventing older adults from using social networking sites. Most of these studies did not target current users of commercial social networking sites. Lehtinen, Nasanen, and Sarvas (2009) studied a small group of older adult friends. The study set up a simple social networking tool for this group to use and analyzed its usage, following up with personal interviews. Lehtinen, Nasanen, and Sarvas found that many older adults could not see the value or relevance in social networking sites; these older adults found the sites to be superficial; and the online relationships did not fit their idea of friendship. A study by Gibson, et al. (2010) considered small focus groups of older adults who did not use social networking sites. These focus groups could not see a purpose for social networking sites; therefore, the sites were irrelevant to them. Prieto and Leahy (2012) did study 17 adults, over the age of 60 who used social networking sites and pointed to privacy concerns as an obstacle.

Braun (2013) (whose study used only age and Internet use as participant selection criteria) said that older adults feared for their safety on these web-sites.

Some recent studies did look a little further than just the older adult's obstacles to using online social networking. Norval, Arnott, and Hanson (2014) used focus groups and a prototype social networking site to discover what features older adults would like to see on social networking sites. Norval, Arnottt, and Hanson found that this group was worried for their privacy and would like to have more control over content. Hope, Schwaba, and Piper (2014) considered a small group over age 77. Less than half of this group used commercial social networking web sites: This qualitative study confirmed the older adult's concern for privacy. Hope, Schwaba, and Piper's participants felt that social networking sites required too much of a time commitment, and had trivial content.

Unlike most prior research, this study did not consider the impediments to older adults using social networking sites, and the targeted group was made up solely of users of commercial social networking sites. Instead of studying the reasons that hinder usage, this study considered the reasons older adults had chosen to use social networking sites. For Hope, Schwaba, and Piper (2014), less than half of the participants were online social networking users. Norval, Arnott, and Hanson (2014) created a social networking prototype recruiting only individuals who had not tried online social networking. Bell, et al. (2013) did focus on older adults who are already using social networking, specifically FaceBook. But, the purpose of that research was different; the purpose was to determine whether using FaceBook really affected loneliness or added social satisfaction (Bell, et al.). So this study differed from prior research, not only in the research approach and the research questions, but in the targeted group of older adults. This study shared some of

the same results as recent studies, but presented a different perspective, adding significant detail.

Use of phenomenological research methods to study experiences with technology has some precedence. Cilesiz (2011) used a phenomenological research methodology to study personal experiences with technology. Cilesiz felt that the broad results of the phenomenological approach, combined with prior research, could clarify the technological use experience. This study used phenomenological research to find the “meaning, structure, and essence” (Patton, 2002, p. 109) of the choice to use technology, in this case, online social networking. Phenomenological research is derived from the “living experience” (van Manen, 1990). To arrive at the essence of the experience, this study collected its data via interviews with 10 older adults who currently use social networking sites. Three interviews gathered the subjects’ voiced experiences. The researcher analyzed this data to arrive at common themes from this experience.

Using the Phenomenological Research Methodology

The study followed the guidelines of phenomenological research, as expressed by Moustakas (1994). Moustakas’ procedures begin with the researcher consciously putting aside all personal bias and prejudgments. This step is called “epoche”, the Greek word meaning to set aside judgment (Patton, 2002). Bracketing is another key concept of the phenomenological method. Klein and Westcott (1994), define bracketing as the selection of a phenomenon, isolation of the phenomenon for inspection, and imaginative analysis to arrive at the essence. The researcher followed these guidelines of the “epoche” and bracketing during the process of gathering data from the older adults in the analysis of the resulting interview data.

Participant selection required that the subject be over 60 years old, have no strong computer or Internet technology background, and have at least six months experience using social networking sites. To protect their privacy, pseudonyms were applied in the final report, and IRB procedures were followed. Participants included 4 men and 6 women. All but two were in their early sixties. The bookkeeper was in her mid-seventies, and the housewife was in her eighties. Each of the participants had a different profession, including housewife, teacher, librarian, physician, research analyst, marketing executive, building contractor, inventory manager, social worker, and bookkeeper. Most individuals were retired or semi-retired. The inventory manager, the librarian, and the marketing executive were still actively working.

The separation of time between the three interviews varied from a day or two to a couple of weeks because the interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the interviewees. The first interview concentrated on the participant's introduction to computer technology and the Internet, their lifelong experience with the same, and their personal social networks. This information established the context for the choice to use social networking sites. The primary topic of the second interview was the participant's experience choosing to use social networking sites. This interview probed for the details of the motivations behind their choice, the circumstances at that time, and any influences. In the third interview the participant reflected on any relationships between the historical context and the choice itself. What did this choice mean? How did it affect them and their attitude towards technology? Why do they continue to use online social networking?

Data analysis also followed the phenomenological research method. The first step horizontalized the data (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher studied and restudied the

interview data, eliminating redundancies, recording all significant statements to arrive at the “what” of the experience, the textural description (Moustakas). The next analytical phase was the “imaginative variation”, seeking the underlying and precipitating factors of the experience (Moustakas). The researcher determined underlying conditions and structural elements that influenced the experience. From this analysis, the researcher developed the structural descriptions, the “how” of the experience. The researcher developed both a composite textural description and a composite structural description, combining textural and structural descriptions for all participants. Then, using the phenomenological process of “synthesis”, the researcher combined these two types of descriptions into a textural-structural synthesis to arrive at the essence of the experience.

Comparison to Prior Research

The final step in the data analysis was a comparison of the results of the phenomenological study to the prior research on this topic. Most prior studies examined the obstacles for older adults to use social networking sites. The single obstacle (identified in the prior studies) reflected in this study was the lack of computer skills, which was mentioned by two interviewees. Though some participants mentioned this problem, it did not stop them from using online social networking.

In this study, the circumstances around these older adults’ experience choosing to use social networking sites obviated most of the obstacles identified by prior research. For example, each participant had a specific purpose for using social networking sites, so the obstacle, “no real purpose” was not applicable. The participants were introduced to social networking sites through trusted family or friends, removing the obstacle of distrust. Their friends and family were already using the social networking site creating a

built-in critical mass of contacts, so that was not an obstacle. Remaining obstacles suggested by prior research were: potential embarrassment, concern for privacy, and a fear of seeming vain. All of the participants made it clear that they used social networking sites very “carefully”. They carefully chose who they accepted as “friends”, and they were very careful about what they posted. This degree of caution seemed to alleviate these remaining obstacles. Their dignity and information were secure amongst friends.

Result Summary

Based on the data gathered from the experiences of the older adults, factors that influenced their choice to use social networking sites began in the early days of technology. These early experiences were generally not good, resulting in either fear of, distaste for, or frustration with technology. As computers improved, and software became more useful, technology, and the Internet became easier to use. More people began using work personal computers and bought their first personal computer. The subjects had friends and family using the Internet and social networking, a computer in their home, a view to the new easy to use technology and a built-in tech-savvy person to assist. So the conditions and the time were right to choose to use online social networking. Once their choice was made, these users used the social networking sites “carefully” to protect themselves and their privacy. Some of the participants are seeking ways to better fit online social networking in their busy life, but, for all, online social networking has become essential, comfortable, and safe.

Appendix A: Flyer Sample

A Research Study about Older Adults who use social networking sites: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.

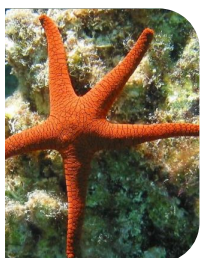


PHD candidate, Nova Southeastern University, who resides in Burlington, N.C. wants to learn more about why older adults choose to use Social Networking Sites.

Would the study be a good fit for me?

This study might be a good fit if you:

- Are over 60 years of age
- Have seriously used social networking sites for at least six months
- Have no professional computer/technical training



What would happen if I took part in the study?

If you decide to take part in the study, you would:

- Meet with the researcher to discuss the study.
- Participate in 3 one-hour private interviews with the researcher over a two week period. All personal information will remain confidential. Pseudonyms will be used in the report.

Researcher will offer the volunteers who take part, an hour of assistance, answering any computer/internet questions

There may be possible benefits if you take part in the study.

- Personal insight into your own choices
- New technical information to make your use of computers/internet easier and/or safer.



To take part in this research study or for more information, please contact researcher: Betsy Baugess at 336-227-8857.



Appendix B: Phone Response Screening Questions- Accept or Decline Candidates

1. What is your age?
2. Are you retired from a professional job?
3. Did you use computers or the Internet in your job?
4. Were you professionally trained in using computers or the Internet either on your job or other job-related technology training classes?
5. Do you currently use social networking sites, like FaceBook, Twitter, and Pinterest?
6. How long have you used these social networking sites?
7. What type of activities do you use on these social networking sites?
8. How much time, on a weekly basis, do you spend on these social networking sites?
9. Do you have frequent contact (via direct interaction, phone, or computer) with family members, at least twice a week?
10. Do you have frequent contact (via direct interaction, phone, or computer) with friends, at least twice a week?

Appendix C: Guiding Questions for Interviews

Guiding Questions for Interview One

Goal: Revealing the participant's historical technology experiences, the meanings of these experiences to the participant and the participants' resulting feelings toward technology, over time (RQ1):

Describe your earliest experience with technology, especially computers and the Internet. Please be as detailed as possible, describing the situation, any related events, your personal impressions and feelings.

What were your expectations of technology at this time? How were these expectations fulfilled? Did those expectations change?

Did you have fears or apprehensions related to technology? Describe the fears and how you dealt with them, using specific incidents.

Could you provide detailed examples of your experiences with technology over time? How did these experiences make you feel?

What was your attitude towards technology throughout your life? Has it changed and can you explain how? Did any outside events affect your attitude? Please provide detailed examples.

What are the effects technology has had on your life experiences? Do you have any specific examples?

What role did technology play in your personal life? In your career?

Goal: Understanding the historical meaning and importance of the participant's Social Networks, and their Social Networks' evolution over time (RQ1):

Please describe your social network, who do you interact with and how do you interact socially, as a young adult, throughout your life?

Describe your friends and family and your relationship with them. What kind of meaning do these relationships provide in your life?

How have these relationships evolved? How has this interaction changed? Did any external events affect these relationships? Do you initiate the contact most often?

Be sure to include both friends and family, current and from an earlier time.

Is maintaining friends long-term something you would strive for? Or is your interest in making casual acquaintances?

Please explain what meaning and importance this has in your current life. How does the social interaction make you feel, both with family, close friends, and acquaintances?

Guiding Questions for Interview Two

Goal: Participant's detailed specific experience choosing to use Social Networking Sites, related attitudes, feelings (RQ2):

Describe in detail your choice to use the social networking site. Describe your motivation, feelings and concerns before and after the choice. What were your expectations?

How did you feel the first time you used the site?

Have your feelings and attitudes toward social networking sites changed over time since your choice to use the site? Can you explain and give specific examples?

Do you believe that you met your earlier expectations? Please explain.

What does the use of social networking sites mean within your life? What areas of your life does this use affect? Describe its importance to you.

Do you remember your goals when choosing to use social networking sites? Did you meet those goals? Please explain.

Have you experienced any conflicts in using social networking sites that might affect your choice to continue using the site? Please explain in detail.

Can you tell me about your social network now? Please include both family and friends, new and old.

Guiding Questions for Interview Three

Goal: Reflection on the personal meaning of experiences, looking for broad themes (RQ3):

Considering your prior experiences with technology and the Internet and your personal path to the choice to use social networking sites, could you reflect on this path, the events in your life that led to this choice?

Can you explain what this choice has meant to you?

How do you feel about the consequences of this choice, and how does this choice alter your life experiences?

What are some examples?

Wrap-up Meeting Guidelines

Participant reviews transcript of Interview

Discuss offer of assistance with computer questions

Offer to answer any questions and express gratitude to participant

Appendix D: Researcher's Epoche/Subjectivity Statement

Moustakas (1994, p. 26), in reference to phenomenological research, and to the researchers, themselves, states that, "Epoche requires the elimination of suppositions". The researcher's goal for this study was to understand the full meaning of the participant's experience with no pre-conceived barriers.

As the researcher, I offer a summary of my background to best explain how I approached the Epoche process. I am not a millennial. I was born mid-twentieth century, at a time when computer technology and the Internet were not available to most people. When I was growing up, there was no computer in my home or in my school. The word "computer" was rarely in the vocabulary of anyone I knew.

Even in my under-graduate years of college, there were no computers available to students. There were "barely" electric typewriters. If you owned a typewriter, it was usually a manual one. Because I was raising a family at this time, I finished my first post-secondary degree a little later than most. My first degrees were in English Literature, and that was what I had to offer the job market. At that time, my family lived near a defense research facility, and I was able to locate a job as a technical editor in the world of computer technology. Degrees in computer technology did not exist, and most computer technology personnel were trained on the job. Computer technology was not commonly available to most people. Computers were used in the world of business, in this case, the Federal Defense industry. The industrial computers used in this area (and most other business areas) were large, expensive and designed to be industry-task specific. No

personal computers existed. I wanted to learn more to improve my technical editing skills, so I began my technical education. I found that I really enjoyed this challenge and wanted to know more. So I started down the educational path to change my career. After several years of computer technology training, I completed my post-secondary degree in Computer Design, and successfully made the career change. I have been working in technology since then. For many years, I was a software developer, and later I began managing other software developers. The types of programs that I supported changed from very specialized, closed, business-specific programs, to programs that are accessible from the Internet. Information and data became a focus in my career in the last 15 years.

So, it was through my participation in this industry that I was exposed to personal computer technology earlier than most people. Friends of mine were using the Commodore 64 at home, programming on that machine to create programs for their families to use. It was fairly cheap to join in this type of activity, and I did purchase and use one of these home computers. The next step was to add a modem to connect to the Internet, and that was pretty easy too, albeit, slow. Needless to say, it was a smooth leap to the PC when it became commonly available and when Microsoft's user-oriented software enticed the world.

One might think that this training and years of experience with technology would hinder achieving an "epoche", but I disagree. I think, first, that growing up in the same "technical" world as most of the participants gives me an advantage. I fully understand the non-technical world of their youth and the technical world they experienced later. I can offer subtle, believable encouragement to help them describe their experiences in more detail. I can say (believably, because I am in the same age group), encouraging

comments, like, “I remember that” or, “I know exactly what you mean”. If I were much younger, a perceived different perspective might intimidate them.

I also believe that my experience in software development, software maintenance, and adult technical training allows me to clear any barriers or pre-conceptions that might hinder my full understanding of their experiences. A software developer’s role, many times, includes gathering customer requirements. This involves, opening one’s consciousness to customer input, not putting your own spin on it, but asking questions that encourage the customer to describe exactly what functionality or experience he/she needs. This is exactly the kind of role a phenomenological researcher must play.

Furthermore, as a software maintenance programmer, your job is to take over responsibility for maintaining a software program that was developed by someone else. When a maintenance programmer is given this responsibility, usually, there is very little documentation describing the original program design. It is your job to clear your mind of whatever design, you might have considered appropriate for this task. Then, the maintenance programmer explores and absorbs, as much as necessary of the software’s original design. This knowledge is critical to promptly responding to issues or functionality changes for the target software. This openness to another programmer’s logic, design, and experiences fits the phenomenological researcher’s needs.

Finally, there is my background as a trainer and instructor. As a technical trainer, it is important to clear your mind of any pre-conceptions about your students and their background, particularly in adult technical education. In adult, technical education, it is very common to have a wide range of experience levels in the classroom. Many students are pursuing a degree after multiple years of technical on-the-job experience. So it is up

to the instructor to present the information in a way that addresses the needs of a wide range of individuals. As a technology instructor in the academic and the corporate world, I present my understanding and perspective on technology. Because many of the adult students have serious technological experience and because the technical world is so extensive and constantly changing, I encourage my students to present their technical experiences and their perspectives. This requires me to be open to other views, clear my own pre-conceptions and broaden my knowledge. Again, this is what is required of the phenomenological researcher.

To summarize, based on my own experience, I am very comfortable with clearing my consciousness of pre-conceptions to absorb new perspectives and ideas to capture the full experience of the participants. I think I have a vantage point to encourage the participant to fully describe the experience. I want to encourage the participants to feel comfortable delivering this information. It is my intent to consciously remind myself of these goals prior to each interview, to reach the “epoche” that is required.

Appendix E: Textural and Structural Descriptions for Carol

Textural Description of Carol's Experiences:

The office had a very unsophisticated system, early on, maybe 25 years ago, a switch from having a paper scheduling system to a system on the computer at work. That was really my office. I was not the person sitting there doing data input. I only saw the results of that effort. My interaction was not with the computer. At some point along the line, maybe in the late eighties, the computers could do a little bit more, and we could hook up to the Internet.

My husband is the one who actually got the computer for our home. He's not super technological, but he's more technological than I am. I think a primary reason was to be able to communicate by email. So my husband jumped right in, but I'm more of a dabbler. I sit down and dabble with it, and then I leave it alone. I walk away. I had no real expectations of the computer when we first got it. It was like, well here's a computer. Okay, that's nice. That's probably a reasonable thing to have. The children are getting old enough so it is something that might be helpful. My kids were very little then, so other than playing a few games on the computer, they did not use it. There were these Barbie games – maybe Barbie hair styling, or Barbie something.

I would do a few things on the computer, but the amount of discretionary time for me was minimal. Working full time and raising a young family does not result in much of that luxury. You come home, and go from work mode to mother mode. Everyone has to be fed. Somebody has to be transported. Homework needs to be done. Laundry is waiting. Baths are to be had, etc.

I had no real fear of the Internet or computers. I was not excited about technology at that point. I would think, “hmm, that’s interesting” and that would be it. A little curious, but was not something I felt really drawn to. I saw it as a tool that could be useful in some specific situations. It was for entertainment and research. I did not see a serious purpose in my life other than maybe email.

Then after five to seven years, my office successfully moved on to computer based billing, so that the two processes were more integrated. Our office implemented the new medical record system just before I retired. This system took, what was laborious, and made it twice the work. It was very disappointing to me. Not only did it worsen the workflow, but it lengthened the documentation process. What you were ended up with was a document that did not really reflect what had happened with your patient. It’s really sad.

As far as my current home life, the computer is highly entertaining. It’s become more important in my retirement. The ability to stream is something I have the time to really take advantage of. I spend several hours every day on my iPad --Doing email, Pinterest. I’ve been using an on-line platform that offers short courses, maybe 10 hours or less, in various creative endeavors. You just buy the class and have lifetime access to it and the instructor via their own internal email. There are several computer programs I can use for my hobby. I’ve installed one on my current computer and just started working with it again. Now the expectation for my iPad was that it was to be my toy. I really did not expect it to be anything useful I do use it for email, but mostly I use it to peruse Pinterest, and watch my crafts classes. Play bookworm and all of that stuff.

I have another reason for spending less time on the computer. I installed Windows-8 which I absolutely hate. The things that I liked about my PC before, was that it was very logical. Windows Eight is not intuitive and does not make sense to me. One of the things that I've been disappointed about in the computer world is that sometimes, as technology moves on, things don't always get new and better. A singular case, in point—there's a simple program called "Greetings Workshop" under the Hallmark label, probably 15 or more years ago that was just a great little program. This was in the days when the kids were little. We were making cards and banners, etc. It was intuitive and easy to work with. With the new and improved program, you can't do these same things anymore. Why did they not build on successes of the past and not just throw stuff away and start again? That exemplifies where I am now in my use of computers. Why are we at this place now, where things are more difficult?

Certainly, texting has become a big thing for me in recent years. I found it is a very useful way to communicate with my children. You wouldn't call someone in the middle of their work day. But you could send them a text and then they can reply when they have a chance. You can communicate in a way that allows you to be a little bit more immediate, but yet not intrusive. They respond when it is convenient.

It is an amazing world. The things that you can access on a smartphone is amazing. Actually, my husband and I are fairly avid bird-watchers. The number of programs you can get, specific to bird-watching is amazing. They allow you to ID a bird or listen to a bird's song. Or keep track of lists of what you've seen. Fifteen or twenty years ago, if you were in the field and you needed to make an identification, you would

have your coat pockets stuffed with field guides. You can replace any number of field guides with what is on your smartphone.

I think the impetus for FaceBook was a school reunion. It was my elementary school. We had the same group of kids together for most of eight years. FaceBook was just getting started, and then we thought it would be a good way to keep in touch. That was in the beginning when everyone (outside of young people) was starting to use FaceBook. So, once you were on, you figured out that you could find out what's going on in your extended family too. What are my nieces and nephews up to? I'm not the world's-best in picking up the phone to call people. In my business, I do a lot of phone communication, so I'm tired of that at the end of the day. I don't spend time on the phone for pleasure. But FaceBook is something you can do on your own schedule. If you happen to be up in the middle of the night, you can comment on something. You can do that without disturbing anyone's sleep.

At first, I spent a lot of time on it. I did not spend hours on it, but I checked it every day – anywhere from 10 minutes to half an hour daily, depending on what was going on, who had news. Then, they changed the timeline. For me, it became extremely cumbersome, and much less useful. Once they initiated this new timeline, it all went haywire. Things were no longer in chronological order. Since then, it does not seem logical to me. If they are going to turn this into work for me, I'm probably not going to use it as much. I'll probably check FaceBook a lot less. I don't want to have to work to keep up, because a lot of what you end up with on FaceBook is what somebody had for dinner last night. I could care less. You know, it's nice to know when someone had a big event in their life, and it used to be good for that.

The other FaceBook thing that I use is messaging-- not the instant messaging, but the mail messaging. I have a group of four good friends, and we would have a message thread on there that would carry on over several weeks. You could pop-in anytime, post a message, and know that everybody got the message. Apparently, they're changing all of that too.

I have a group of extended family members who have been meeting at our family reunion for several years. That's another good FaceBook purpose, to hit a whole bunch of people at one time. I realize you can do the same thing with email, but these people are on FaceBook anyway. I am in several groups on FaceBook myself, part of various hobby groups, some very large and some just a small group of friends who are interested in the same things that I am. We keep each other updated on what we are doing. I have not friended anyone I did not know outside of FaceBook. However, I have formed friendships online with people in the world of my hobby. I met them in the virtual world, and then I eventually met them in person. You run into various types of folks in our age-group. Haven't had any conflicts or issues. I was never afraid

It's not that I really worry about the time spent. I need to control it because there are just other things I would like to be spending my time on. I would enjoy it more if I really felt it was an efficient and productive use of my time.

Well, I think the usage of a computer was becoming inevitable within my professional life. Of course, having kids made a difference. Helping them with their homework and so on-- stuff that requires you to have at least a working knowledge of computers and the Internet.

My kids were on FaceBook before I was. I set myself up on FaceBook. It was not a conscious decision that my life was lacking in social networks. It was more like, I see this tool that could be useful for a specific need. FaceBook met my initial expectations, to be able to keep up with this group of people quite easily. It turned out that I could keep up with a larger group of people too. My social network on FaceBook is made up of family and friends. For me, it's strictly a social thing. My professional life does not intersect with it. I do not seek out other colleagues on FaceBook. It does not come up in conversation.

My church started a FaceBook group and that's how we communicate regularly. It's a really good way to keep up with church events and happenings. It's kind of nice to have extra insight into their lives. Some organizations dedicated to my hobby also have FaceBook groups. So I have a number of friends there as well. I don't generally use FaceBook to communicate with my kids. If I want to communicate, I will probably call. However, I do look to see what they are up to just to see pictures they have posted. Sometimes it is more timely information than what I get from a phone call.

I have not tried any other social networking site, and that has been a conscious decision. I decided early on that FaceBook could take a huge amount of your time. Between just checking email, and keeping up with the people I really want to keep up with, I've spent about as much time as I want to devote to this. I think part of the reason it is a positive experience is because I have put limits on it. I could be a very negative thing if you allow yourself to be sucked into the vortex of checking your FaceBook page every couple of hours like people do.

Structural Description of Carol's Experiences:

Carol's first exposure to computers was through her work, although she did not interact with the computer there at first. She just benefitted from its use in developing her schedule. At home, she was not one to seize technology; her husband got their first computer. Their goal was to use it for email, and Carol recognized that perhaps they should have a computer, but was not excited about its purchase. It was a tool to email friends and everyone else seemed to have one. She was very busy with a full-time job and being mom to her children, so there was little time or interest in exploring. The children used it like a toy and it became a useful tool for their homework.

Technology did not scare Carol. It was only a tool for some tasks in life. Technology continued to expand in her work life, but she still had no direct connection. When her professional life did include technology to record patient examinations, she was very disappointed. It made her life more difficult instead of easier.

In retirement, Carol finally found time to take advantage of technology and social networking, and she used it to pursue her favorite hobby and enrich her social connections in her everyday life. Technology has permeated her life and makes it better in many ways. For example, texting is a communication tool that matches her needs and smartphones greatly enhance her bird-watching hobby. But, Carol is ambivalent about the advances in computing. She has found that improvements in software and technology do not always make things easier. She feels her time is important, and if something is hard to use, it may not be worth her time. Why should we be at a place where computers make things more difficult?

Carol did not seek out social networking. Her introduction to FaceBook just happened to her. It was a way to communicate with a specific set of “old” classmates. It grew from there. She realized that she could easily keep in touch with large groups with this new tool. She could reach out to family, church members and friends and have more insight into their lives. It was a new way to communicate that fit well into her life, friendship on her schedule. Carol restricts her FaceBook to close friends and family, and it does enrich her personal relationships.

Carol has made a conscious decision not to try other social networking sites. She has personal goals she wants to achieve, and devoting time to more social media would stand in the way of these goals.

Appendix F: Textural and Structural Descriptions for Nora

Textural Description of Nora's Experiences:

I took some computer courses at a local technical school, but I did not enjoy it. It was worlds apart from what we have now. It was turning in punch cards and waiting. That was not how I think. I had a hard time with it. I went to work in the business world, and spent my time moving disks from machine to machine. That was not really computer experience, almost clerical work. No thinking. No challenges. I worked for a medical insurance company, keying in the doctor's patient write-ups. My education had some programming in it, but I did not like it and did not use it at all.

I went to work for the public school system. I was doing bookkeeping and accounting for a department, getting information from the computer and putting it all on paper. Later I entered all of the payroll information to send to the mainframe computer to create checks. I did personnel reports not related to the computer. Some of the secretaries had PCs, but I did not. I was responsible when the mainframe had an issue. I would call the repair man and had to stay there until he was done fixing the problem. I never had the time to learn more about PCs. So, I really did not see a PC until I retired and bought my first computer. I don't remember anything specifically that made me buy the computer. All I knew was that everyone seemed to have one and I wanted to know what it was all about. I expected to use it to type letters or something. I played games.

My children were not all computer oriented. My oldest is not as interested as my son and my granddaughter. My granddaughter set up my computer and my connection to the Internet just before I retired. Everyone else was learning it; I could learn it too. I was

in a club that sent reports through the Internet. If I did not have a computer I could not get these reports.

When I started on FaceBook, I did not have any concerns, but my granddaughter tried to scare me. If you notice, my name on FaceBook is not my name. She did that when she set me up. My friends were just beginning to use it. A lot of people were not using it at that time--some family. My granddaughter was on it and her mother was on it. I think she thought it was a way we could all communicate back and forth. I think I joined FaceBook because everybody else had it. Personal friends were talking about, what they saw that on FaceBook. I wanted to see what they were all doing. My granddaughter told me I needed to get on FaceBook. She got me on and made sure I had all of the security I needed.

I thought it would be interesting to see what other people were doing. When I first started using FaceBook, I was very skeptical at first. My impression was that people were saying that they were going to the grocery store, etc. I was not interested in that. I could care less where you are and what you are doing. I would not want to do that. But I was curious so, I decided, okay, I will do it, but I will be more informative if I post anything. I would tell you the reason I am doing this.

I don't worry about my personal information because I'm very picky about who I talk to on FaceBook. I don't put a lot of things on there that would create conflicts. I don't acknowledge anyone unless I know them. I've never had any issues on FaceBook.

I don't communicate with my family on FaceBook, but I see pictures they post. When I was club president, I would send out notices for all of the meetings. The club is using it for the fundraisers, selling pecans and things like that. Before most of it was

word-of-mouth. Now they are using computers to let everyone know that we are selling pecans.

I definitely think it keeps you informed about friends because no one is going to call you on the phone to tell you they are sick. But they might post it to FaceBook. I really think it has increased knowledge of your friends and associations. My grandchildren post pictures to FaceBook all the time. You don't just call your child in college and expect to learn a lot about their life. They are not going to call you either. I know my grandchildren more since they've always got pictures of what they are doing. I do keep in touch with friends on FaceBook that I might not otherwise—friends from high school.

Most communication before FaceBook was by phone and near-by family members. We did get together to have dinners. But the connections were usually by phone. I do have FaceBook people that I would rarely call before. We weren't that close of friends, but now I see them on FaceBook and what they are doing. My friends aren't closer but I know more about them and think more often of them than I did before.

There's a lady in my club who has been my friend for years is not on FaceBook, but her daughter is. So I FaceBook her and talk to her mom through her. The daughter is a singer. So, I go to her concerts and I find out about it through FaceBook. I know another singer friend and I learn about his concerts through FaceBook. If I had not had FaceBook, I would not have known about either one of these people. I go to their concerts/performances. That's not something you would not have known about before, necessarily. So this is part of my social life.

Now, I see it as a tool, especially for the people in my club, I can see what's going on in their lives. So, it's informative to me now for a lot of people. I have a lot of men ask me to be their friends. I don't take that risk. I have come to depend on it. It's a real form of communication for me. It makes me feel more like I'm participating in the world. I could just sit here all day, especially now that I can't drive. But with the Internet, you know what's going on in the world.

Without my granddaughter's help, I would not have made that leap alone. Well, I'm not even sure, how to set it up. I don't remember the first time I logged on. She did not show me what to do. I decided I could figure it out. Because I trusted her setup, I had no concerns. I locked up my new computer recently and my son helped me get it unlocked, over the phone. Technically, learning about my new computer was a lot easier than it used to be. I do have more time now. So it makes me kind of enjoy it.

I probably would say that retiring, leaving all my comrades and such--I saw social networking as a way to communicate with people. But I broke it off because there was a lot of conflict in the office. I did not want to hear that. In social networking online, I did not have to see that back and forth stuff. I can choose who to let in. I've never unfriended anyone. I only include real friends as my FaceBook friends. Like everything, there's good and bad. You just have to let it go. People are people. Everybody is not going to be an angel and there are distrustful people on the Internet.

Structural Description of Nora's Experiences:

Nora took computer courses at a local technical school; she did not enjoy it. Life in technology at that time was not easy, and she did not find a place to use it in the real world. Instead, she spent most of her career manually performing accounting tasks. During this time, computers were not part of her personal life either.

Eventually, she heard enough computer and Internet buzz to make her curious, and convince her that she was missing out on something. She bought her first computer, expecting to type letters and play games. Her son and granddaughter helped her set it up.

Her granddaughter encouraged her to try FaceBook so they could communicate. Nora was very active in a club that sent reports via the Internet, so that was also an incentive. At that time, technology had improved a great bit, it was more pleasurable for her, and retirement opened a lot of free time to explore.

Once she decided to get on the Internet, her granddaughter was there to set her up, so that simplified her jump into technology. She had heard that social networks were used for very trivial information and was determined to use it differently, in a more serious way. Nora keeps her FaceBook network of friends very closed and personal, so she does not feel her personal information is threatened.

FaceBook has enriched her relationships with both family and friends, keeping in touch with more people and learning more about their lives that she could before. For Nora, it made her feel, in retirement, that she's still participating in the world, and information from it adds to her social life. Furthermore, it's a great tool for maintaining contact with club members.

Appendix G: Textural and Structural Descriptions for Nell

Textural Description of Nell's Experiences:

When I went to college, there were no computers. I went to work as a bookkeeper, so my introduction to technology was a ten-key calculator-- all paper driven. Then I became a secretary to the vice-president of sales and marketing. So I did typing. Nothing was computer driven. Next, I worked in food distribution as a broker. Had no computer use at that time. Everything was hand written. Later I went to work for a convenience store chain that was more automated. The stores were connected electronically. But we still did very little office work with this connection. I knew very little about it because I was still in marketing. Marketing was still working with paper, mailing out weekly flyers.

But I went to work for a convenience store wholesaler company. I was vice-president of marketing and everything was automated. Warehousing, and purchasing were managed via a computer program, but it was not a standard computer program. It was one written specially for this purpose. I was delighted to be able to use computers. I noticed that it did cut down the number of people, but I still had a secretary. That was in probably, 1993.

Technology was really foreign to me and it was hard for me to learn. I didn't learn more until I got to another convenience store company. We had a computer system designed to get all of the stores on the same page. This business did not go well, and I had to leave.

So, I was curious about personal computers, but it was not part of my working life. I was never really been computer type person, but I could see its value. I've always

been more interested in the social aspect of the business. I knew technology was coming and I needed to learn it. My learning was more on the job, as the years progressed, more and more companies were using it. People were becoming more efficient at everything they were doing. I began to really enjoy it. When Microsoft came out with Office, that's when I started really getting fascinated with what it could do and how much easier it made everything. It used to take an army of people to maintain the store's price sheets. You would have different price sheets, almost, for each location. So you would have different beer prices in each store with thick price books. The effect of technology was absolutely stunning. It made everything so much easier.

I really began using its benefits when I started working for an oil company. When I first got there, they were solely using paper. I could not believe that they were still in the dark ages. I was the only person in marketing, except for one guy. Earlier, I enrolled at a technical school to learn medical technology to enter the medical field, but that was a dud except for the classes that taught me how to use Microsoft office. I became very, very good at it, especially, Excel. I convinced the owner of the oil company to give me a chance. I could increase his profits. The first thing I found was that these stores were mom and pop locations. Nothing about pricing was formalized -- no merchandising strategy and no consistency. The owner did not care about technology, only his gasoline profits. But I had the background of Microsoft office and I knew how to operate on the Internet. I took one store at a time, cleaned it up, got rid of the dead inventory, re-merchandised everything -- got new fixtures, new endcaps, etc. I automated all of the stores with one PC in each store, and they started communicating. We had satellite dishes on the roof of each location and information was transmitted to the headquarters. The

PCs were used for email and for inventory control. I got rid of ½ million dollars of dead inventory. The vendors took it back. We were very profitable because of this relationship. The vendors were thrilled that I was there. They had been trying to do this forever, and no one was interested.

At first the employees resented it because they were used to running things the way they pleased. Now their actions had more visibility. The operational manager convinced the store managers that they could not operate on their own. I used PowerPoint presentations to explain what profit means and showed them that they could figure out their own gross profit. They began to realize they could take ownership of their own stores. I used the Internet to create documents and newsletters.

My very first experience with the Internet was with work, researching information. I realized you could find anything and everything on the Internet. My older sister used the Internet. But my significant other really was the one who introduced the Internet and computers at home. We met in 1992. She got involved in computer engineering technology and started working in that field.

I did and do worry about people downloading stuff and getting a computer virus. I do worry about security on the Internet. I've had my credit card stolen before the Internet, so I know that it is very possible. I do believe the abuses have gotten greater, and I do not trust it nearly as much as I used to. However, I do not know how we could operate now without it.

I do use texting quite a bit. It's kind of an addiction. I use FaceBook. I'm not really sure how to use it and all it can do. I have lots of friend requests, many of which I

ignore. Then, there's LinkedIn. I've had friends who wanted me to be on LinkedIn. I've never had any conflicts in social networking.

I love YouTube. It does not just tell you. It shows you. I really enjoy a lot of the videos just for fun. I cannot imagine the world without it.

The main reason I chose to use social networking sites, like Facebook and LinkedIn was because most of my friends, and especially younger ones, were using it extensively and questioned me why I was not on Facebook. They tried to tell me what I was missing. Being on Facebook and getting an iPhone -- I could be connected. That's when I started to get really interested. My young friends were really involved, and I lagged behind.

In my online social network, I keep in touch with people like high school friends that I used to not keep in touch with. We're all on Facebook and use email. It has definitely improved my ability to connect with old friends in other parts of the country. I have friends who send me pictures of their kids and their grandkids that I would never be able to see otherwise. It opens up your world. Facebook is a primary vehicle for the people I work with.

My expectations have changed. If something happens I can be in touch immediately with people. My sister is quite savvy with this, and she sends me Facebook information all the time--articles that she has read, of interest. So now, I feel I would be out of touch with what's going on in the world if I did not have the Internet.

On Facebook, I try not to talk about politics with many people. I think it can be scary; you see now where social networking is causing these political groups to form, like ISIS. I used the Internet when I got cancer. I just wanted to know everything I could

about my disease. I had a friend that had breast cancer and she lived in another city a distance away. She would update all of her friends about her treatment progress on FaceBook.

On FaceBook, there are some people I do not respond to. But I think it really keeps you up-to-date with a lot of people that you would not ordinarily keep up with. We are so interconnected now. We are one world now through technology. I would be afraid to communicate in social networking with someone I don't already know. I know nothing about Twitter. But I don't know how or if I would want to Tweet.

My expectations for social networking were not met. I was disappointed. I thought I would like doing it more than I do. I don't like communicating by typing in information. I would rather talk to someone face-to-face. You could be misunderstood. Someone can text something and you don't know their tone of voice. Or it could be in capital letters and seem like they are screaming at you. Talking to people and looking them in the eye is what I want, that's more real socializing.

For social networking, I think it just took time and the pervasive ness of the medium. For instance, I never would have gotten a cell phone if everyone around me did not have one. I never would have thought about getting on FaceBook if many of my friends had not gotten on FaceBook and asked me about it. Social networking sites really add to my everyday life, and I never thought it would. I still don't use it probably to the extent that it could be used. It would do me good if I could learn more about how it all operates, but I don't know that I will ever take that time.

I can see how the one might be addicted to the Internet, spending three or four hours on the Internet outside of work. I know a very young man, who won't leave the

house. I fear for the younger generation. They spend too much time on electronic communication, without talking to each other. Kids today spend so much time in that world. The things they say are so trivial.

The consequences of my choice are generally good. I think it is going to change the world and bring the whole world closer together. It makes you wonder about other countries who have FaceBook. On FaceBook, they can see the kind of life we lead here as compared to the life they lead.

Structural Description of Nell's Experiences:

Nell was not exposed to technology in her college years. When she entered the professional world, for many years the companies she worked for were not using computers either. Technology slowly crept into her working world, first for office tasks like bookkeeping. Although she found it difficult to learn, she definitely took note of how technology reduced the number of needed staff and was much more efficient. Once the suite of Office tools became common, it was clear how much easier they could make tasks. Sales and marketing were perfect for this new technology, and she worked at learning these new skills, going to classes to learn. She finally arrived at a job where she could use these skills to advance, using these skills to turn around the company to make it more profitable. Combining her knowledge of the business and these new skills proved to be a huge success. An important influence in her technological growth was her significant other who is a computer engineer.

Because of her negative experiences with the Internet she uses it with a healthy sense of caution but knows she could not have the same life without it. Nell opted to use FaceBook because she felt she was being left behind and out of her friends' lives. FaceBook is an important tool for Nell. She regularly communicates with family and friends, even high school friends. It allows her to participate in the lives of younger friends as well.

FaceBook is part of her everyday life, looking to it often for updates makes her feel more a part of the world. For Nell, it is not the place for politics, but it is a great source of knowledge. It has become important in her social group when someone becomes ill to keep everyone informed. YouTube and texting are two new types of technology that she is adding to her life.

Nell was disappointed in social networking. She thought she would like it more, but face-to-face communication is still her preference. Nell has concerns for young people who find so much of their social life in technology.

Appendix H: Textural and Structural Descriptions for Dana

Textural Description of Dana's Experiences:

I did not use computers in college at all. I did not use a computer at work for a long time. Then I started working in benefits, and we did use a computer, but it was very complicated for me because we were using cards, and you actually had to know the language. It was very minimal, and then I had kids and did not go back to work for several years. During that time, I really did not have any interaction with technology, except for writing newsletters.

I was definitely curious. When I was raising my children, some of the families had computers and the difference between presentations the children would make for school was amazing. My kids did not have one. So everything was hand-written and drawn. The kids would bring these amazing things to school. The teacher would say it's really not more impressive than what your child is doing. It's just that they have the technology. But, we got a computer, and the kids started using it. I used it mostly for word processing. It was not until 1997, I started using the Internet. My husband worked for a company who came to our house and installed a computer for him. We could all use it; I had an email account; and my children started using instant messaging. That is really when I started using the computer.

My husband knows how to use a computer but he does not work in the field. So, I would say that I'm way more fluent than he is about certain things. I started communicating with my family via email. In 1997, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. So I was on the Internet, when my kids went to school, researching. I found stuff I never

should have found. It was like too much information. So that was an interesting entre into using the World Wide Web which was very slow, dial-up.

Then we moved here in 1998, and I started working. First I started working for a surgical company, taking care of financial things on the computer. So I learned how to use Quick Books. I was working for a company in another state, so I learned how to track documents and send them back and forth. Then I got a job with a research project at the local college. That's when I really started using the computer. I would help get information from the Internet for my PI. I used Excel and Access and had a database that I was working with. I did have to learn a lot, but, truly, I never got super good at any of them. I got good enough that I was able to function on my job. I was not an expert by any stretch of the imagination. So there was incremental improvement and understanding. Technology played a strong role in my career. It was embedded in all of the work I did. We kept evolving.

But, in terms of social media, my oldest daughter graduated from a local college in 2004. She did not use FaceBook. My son started in the same school in 2005, and he spent his whole summer on FaceBook, connecting with all of his future friends. I couldn't figure out what he was doing. To me, it was tedious and too much. So that's when FaceBook really started, when my kids were transitioning to college. You know when it first started, adults did not use FaceBook. It was completely, for the first couple of years, for college students only. I don't know how the door opened for the parents and the older adults to get on.

My sister-in-law kept saying you need to get on FaceBook. She's about 10 years younger than I am, and she knows everything about my kids and I know nothing. She

sees all of their FaceBook postings. I have three kids and by this time, they were all on FaceBook. I said, no, that's for kids. I'm not getting on FaceBook. I did start noticing that a lot of my friends were on FaceBook. I held off. I had that attitude that too many people have it. I don't want to know all of that stuff. I really did not want to infringe upon my children's independence, to spy on them. I didn't want to have to tell them that a message was inappropriate. So I did not want to be that mom on FaceBook. My sister has a daughter who will not allow any of her relatives, except her cousins, to be her friend. She just does not want us to be judgmental of her.

But, over time, because my kids were posting pictures, and they were traveling, that's really why I got on. I said, well if I'm only going to see your pictures by doing that, then I'll get on FaceBook. So, that's how I started. Now I just use it for specific things. I am in certain specific groups on FaceBook--Organizations and things I am involved in.

I thought it was just foolish stuff. I still feel like it is foolish in a way. You go on FaceBook, and you feel like you have to do something. You have to like something to be nice to your friends. I'm paying attention to what you said, so I have to say I "like" it. But, I try to minimize my time on FaceBook. For example, my sister is not friends with people she sees. She's only friends with people who are not part of her everyday life. She basically says that the important things about those friends, she knows because she sees them all the time. So why would she want to be also seeing them on FaceBook.

Before social networking on the Internet, I wouldn't hear from people for years although I was a letter writer. I moved to another country in the eighties, and I would write my parents weekly. Even in the 70's, I did not call my parents very often because it was expensive. But now I'm in touch with people I went to high school with. I keep in

touch with a lot of people which I would not ordinarily keep in touch with if it was not for social media. I enjoy knowing what they are doing. Now I know what's going on in my home town. I like that. These are not my closest friends. But I like these people, and I like knowing what is going on. I like rekindling those relationships.

When I first used FaceBook, it was so much information. But it was fun. You start with three friends. People find you on FaceBook, and you find others are on FaceBook, etc. But it became very quickly the biggest "timewaster". I felt like I was spending too much time. You would go on to check things. You'd find a post. You would read it. They would have pictures, so you'd have to look at all of their pictures. So, you spend time just keep going and going from one thing to another – like exploring on the Internet. When I first retired, I was on a lot more because I had time. Then I thought this was silly. I could spend two hours on FaceBook just looking at things and not getting things done. So, I have limited myself to checking it, maybe in the evening.

I don't usually request to be someone's friend. I wait and let them ask me. I stopped posting anything political during the election. I was getting mad at people who did not agree with me. I decided not to expose my political leanings on FaceBook anymore. It's not a healthy place to be political.

I have been involved with some controversy on FaceBook. That's one of the reasons I defriended a few people. I lived in another state. I tend to be very liberal. We lived in a very conservative town. We did not discuss politics. I guess I did not realize how conservative some of my friends were. They were posting really awful things which were against my beliefs. I'm just going to defriend you. It was mean-spirited stuff. I have no patience with that.

I use Instagram more for sharing pictures because I don't want to put my pictures on FaceBook. There are too many people seeing them. Sometimes, I feel you want to protect people from hurt feelings if they are not included in something.

At first, computers more happened to me. You couldn't really avoid it. I was just more curious. I don't think I had any expectations of the force that it eventually became. I do worry a lot about all the information we put out there. I'm not doing anything I am ashamed of, anything illegal or whatever. So, I'm not really concerned. I'll go and look at something, something I might consider buying. The next thing I know, it's popping up on my FaceBook page. "You might want to look at this." I don't like that. So much information out there is definitely concerning for my children. I was concerned that they might put things out there that they did not really want to be putting out there for the rest of their life. Who knew how that might be construed? I think the real purpose of using social networking was keeping in touch with people. I recognized that people using these modes were keeping in touch with people better than I was. I came to understand that there were great benefits to social networking.

I thought the Internet was great. I thought it was amazing, and I still do. I don't think there's a day that goes by that I don't have a discussion with someone, and we don't know the answer to something. I either look it up right away, or I make a mental note to look it up when I get home.

We don't pick up the phone and call anyone anymore. You send a message in FaceBook or you send a text. I have an account for Tumblr, but I just got into it because I was reading a blog and had to connect to Tumblr to read the blog, so I get lots of email from Tumblr. I just don't have time to follow all of them. I had a friend who died

recently. She had three daughters, and it was through a FaceBook message that they contacted me. That is still how we continue to communicate, very private. I rarely call them; we just message back and forth. Another thing that really concerns me is that the way we get our information is so fractured now. Now we have all of this competing stuff coming through blogs and so many different newspaper sources. You don't know the underlying motivation. You just have to be very careful.

I never have had a problem with someone not being truthful on the Internet, but I am really careful about accepting friends. I'm very limited. I screen everything. I don't have that large a swathe of friends. I don't want to be overwhelmed by it.

You could look at FaceBook as making relationships better or more superficial. Because we all have some acquaintances on FaceBook, we're not really that close to. Knowing so much about these people makes you feel like a voyeur. Do you even care about this information? Some people are so open, it's amazing. I think my FaceBook usage has evolved. I put even less private stuff than I did before. I try to use it less. I want it to be just a tool. You should just use what you want, and that's the nice thing about it—you don't have to use it all. I think it's onerous to hear all these testaments to friends. It becomes too much. I just think it can become very gossipy. There's just too much information from some people.

Because I was delayed getting into computers, I missed some of the hard part. It's so easy to use now. In the eighties, when I was trying to use it at work, it was very complicated. My attitudes have evolved as technology changed. I try to keep up with it, and not be left behind.

I think there are many positives to social media. But I knew when I retired I would have to set some ground rules. I'm not into wasting time; I like to be productive. I only look at it in the evening. Plus, I like to read. I tend to read less if I'm on the computer. Eventually, you develop your own approach as to how you're going to use it—what works for you. I know people who have quit using FaceBook, but I don't think I would ever quit because it is a valuable tool. You do miss out on a lot of information that you're expected to have.

Structural Description of Dana's Experiences:

Dana did not use computers in college at all. When she first encountered computers in her professional world, it was very complicated and hard to use. She left the professional world to have children, and left computers behind until her children started school. At their school she encountered the results of technology in other children's projects. She was very curious and finally got a computer in the 90's through her husband's company. Her parents lived at a distance, so she was able to start communicating with them more often through email. The Internet was also a source of information when she contracted a serious illness, although it was still a dial-up connection

When Dana re-entered the work force, she did start using computers in her job, first for a financial company and then extensively for a research project. In the end, technology played a strong role in her career.

Dana's children used FaceBook, but Dana was not interested. She saw it as something for young people and something quite foolish. A family member convinced her to get on FaceBook after Dana's children posted pictures on FaceBook and that was her only way to view them.

Dana is careful with her FaceBook network and no longer posts political views. There have been some people she had to de-friend because they were saying mean-spirited comments. Dana's participation includes communication with distant relatives and friends and has expanded to groups on FaceBook, but she is trying to minimize her time on FaceBook, choosing carefully what to view on FaceBook. She considers FaceBook to be a time-waster. To Dana, FaceBook relationships can be very superficial. If FaceBook friends include people you are not close to, it seems unnatural that you should know so much about their lives. Some people are just too public in their individual testaments to friends. In general, Dana thinks that it is a valuable tool that she is not likely to give up.

Appendix I: Textural and Structural Descriptions for Fred

Textural Description of Fred's Experiences:

Probably, my earliest experience with any participation on my part with computers would have been 1998-1999 at work. We brought in a computer to help our business which was not computer driven at that time. We were suppliers on the wholesale and retail level, a family-owned business, started in 1954 by paper and pencil kind of people. When the computer industry came out, they would have no part of it.

Vendors were anxious for us to get online, asking us to email or FAX. We didn't even get into FAX until the 90's. It was a slow process because of our ownership. It was not until 2005 or 2006 that I started using a computer personally through work. I needed to keep a better inventory. I knew I could track what I had sold in the past. I could judge how long a certain supply of bolts would last so that I could judge when to re-order. I never did a continuous inventory. I just made this up on my own. I was the only one using a computer then. Business was making as much money as ownership wanted to make. They were comfortable with that.

Another worker who knew about computers pushed for it and pushed me, telling me how much easier it would be for me. Eventually, it was the grandson of the owner. I had retired in 2006, and the son who hired me originally passed away suddenly. So the grandson came in as the owner, and he wanted help. He asked me to come back and help for a couple of years which turned into seven years. I came back, and that's when we really started. He reluctantly said maybe we should do this, got a computer and he got me a computer.

The business was using computers in the office for business records. We still did our invoices in house. We finally hired a lady to do the bookkeeping. She explained to us that she did not want to get into the computer stuff, but she did. The son convinced her. Business had expanded a great deal. She found out that it simpler and she could keep better records. Once you accept that fact, you adjust.

During this time, my son was playing computer games. I was never interested. I'm an outdoor person. I played sports my entire life. At that point in my life, being on the computer was nonsense, a waste of my time. It was stuff that was beyond my comprehension, so it was difficult for me to use. If I got on the computer, I would be on one website and not know how to get onto another website. I had no navigational skills at all. My interest level is much more now than what it was then, but still not as much as other people. Right now, I would like to know more, but it is not a burning desire.

My wife introduced me to computers at home. She had her computer. She worked in state government and had to use them. She tried to enlighten me several times. I just told her that I was not interested I would try it myself and became very frustrated. I had to call her all the time for help, a constant thing. When I retired, three years ago, I brought the computer home and started doing more and more on the computer, my email, going to different web sites that were relevant to my church stuff. Having a technology pastor has changed my attitude as well, moving us into the 21st century. The church has its own web site. At times, the pastor has spent 30 minutes or more on the phone with me, helping me. I still do not have a strong comfort level as I would like.

The church has a web site with people's pictures. Getting to know new people at the church is easier. When a church expands you have a tendency to continue with the

people you know. But we have new people coming in and it's good to be able to associate people's faces with names. It's good to have that picture and their child's picture to know their relationship. Our communication has absolutely improved. 95% of the people on my FaceBook are from my church. It is important for a church to feel unified. We get to do that, in part, through the social networking.

My FaceBook network is mostly church friends. Some put prayer requests on FaceBook. Even some of my social activities outside of church are affected. We have a young man who plays football for a local school, and he and his family go to our church. I've watched him grow up and communicate about the coming games on FaceBook. Everyone in our FaceBook circle participates. It's a great way to communicate other than face-to-face. I have some FaceBook friends who live in a town a good distance away. They have a daughter that my wife and I have "adopted" as our daughter. I communicate with her on FaceBook, messaging her. She went to Germany to study, and I started communicating with her then—nice Christian, sweet young lady. We had a good time with that. I formed a relationship that I would not have formed otherwise.

In the early 2000's, I had no social networks other than church and my immediate family. All of my family lives around here; some have just started using FaceBook. Social media has increased my friend base. There's one military service friend I've kept in contact with. His wife and my wife communicate on FaceBook. Before, we communicated by phone and later by email. I've expanded my network greatly with the expansion of the new church. Through social networking, you find out a lot more about people. When you have a church of this size, you can communicate through this and learn where they graduated from school, a bit about their past history. They can learn about

yours too. You don't have that kind of time to interact with all of these people, so FaceBook helps.

When I first got this phone, I was determined to just Google information I might need. I was determined not to get into the social media because you hear all of these stories about people going on your FaceBook pages and getting personal information. But, I had a good friend at the church bugging me all the time. You need to get on FaceBook so I can talk to you, and he rarely answers his phone. So finally, he talked me into it. I got on FaceBook. I confirmed his friend request. His page was stuff we were both interested in. Next thing you know, somebody else at church wanted to friend me and so on. I have never requested to be a friend on FaceBook. I didn't want to do that. The fewer friends, the less stuff to look through. I just don't need all of that information. Some people put too much information on FaceBook. There's so much in my Timeline, I don't even read everything. I don't use any other social networking sites.

Curiosity was a factor too. Many choir members and other people at church, you hear them talking about it. Did you see that on FaceBook? You're missing out on part of that conversation.

I think FaceBook can be a wonderful thing to see videos, informational stuff, funny stuff, educational stuff. But at the same time, you may learn something about someone you don't want to know. I have unfriended one person just because his outlook on life was not what I thought that a Christian's life should be. Having to interact with this person would be uncomfortable. I decided I did not want to see him anymore. There are two people I stopped connecting with. I'm very careful what I post on FaceBook, usually a comment on someone's picture. I stay away from controversial stuff.

I don't ask to be anyone's friend on FaceBook. One of the reasons is that I felt like that since I was so much against it, it would be hypocritical to go out and friend everybody on FaceBook. I kind of felt if they were interested in what I have to say, they would ask to friend me. I don't' accept friend requests casually any more especially after having had those two experiences.

My expectations have not changed. I use FaceBook to find out what's going on in the lives of people I know. You can't talk to everybody at church. Instead of getting on the phone to talk, they'll just post something on FaceBook. I do have a sister in another city that uses FaceBook, and some young people are FaceBook friends. There's a girl whose son plays on the football team. Her son is my friend. Another girl who sings on the praise team, she's my friend. Her two girls are friends. I don't have a lot of interaction with them on FaceBook, but I'll comment on their pictures sometimes. From them, I do get a little bit insight to the young people. I'm interested in what's going on in the lives of the young people to a certain extent. I have not seen any postings on there that are inappropriate. I've been pleasantly surprised by that. It has enriched my life Learning about young people on social media has given me more hope for the next generation; I know that there are some who have values that I consider to be good values. It enriches your life, like this young lady in Germany, showing horses and stuff. She was able to send pictures from her journey. There was conversation; she made me feel part of her journey.

FaceBook does have its really good points and some bad ones too. I think, some of these people not on FaceBook were like me, just don't want to get into the FaceBook thing. So I think there's a chance that if someone like me talked to them like my friend

talked to me, there might be a chance they would come onto social media. But, for the most part, until something like that happens, I don't see them getting on it. Some members of my family are that way. Sometimes when we are totally against change, until we see the benefits of change we are not willing to do it. Sometimes you just jump in and join. So, I guess I probably just jumped in and joined. You can't avoid it. You must adapt. You can be conservative to a point, but you've got to be able to accept change that's coming.

I did feel like I was missing out on technology--feeling left behind. I already knew I was way behind. I'm just on the very edge of technology. There are things I would like to be able to do. But it's not the biggest thing in my life. I'd rather be playing golf. That's what sparks my interest. I want to use it as much as I can without taking so much of my time.

Having a wife that used technology did help convince me to get a computer, and I don't know what I would do without one now. But the social media part, FaceBook, you don't actually hear a person's voice anymore. Good and bad again. If I had to weigh the percentages – 60 good 40 bad. Really good information out there. When the young lady came back from Germany, I wanted to make a welcome home sign in German. I just spoke into my phone –how do you say welcome home in German, and it just came up. Those types of things really blow my mind. But I still want to control the time I devote to it.

The things you might have wanted to do in the past, you would not have done them because they would have taken too much time. Something that would have taken two hours, now takes five minutes.

Structural Description of Fred's Experiences:

Fred's earliest experience with technology was at work in the very late 90's. He was working in a small business that had avoided technology completely at that point except for basic office tasks. Fred had pushed for computers, but nothing really happened until there was a change in ownership. The business finally adopted technology around 2005. Fred came out of retirement back to the business at this time.

During this time, at home, his son was playing games on the computer. His wife used a computer at work and was very comfortable with computers. But Fred was not interested, and when he tried to use the computer, he was very frustrated. His lack of skills made him even less interested. In the 2000's his pastor changed and introduced technology to church business and the church members. When Fred finally retired the second time, he brought his computer home and started using it for church tasks.

Fred did feel that he was missing out on technology, and was curious about FaceBook after hearing it talked about so much at church. He made the final decision to use FaceBook when one of his church friends encouraged him. His friend offered it to Fred as a way they could share interests, and Fred accepted. For the church, social networking, specifically FaceBook, has played a large role facilitating its expansion. Fred uses FaceBook to manage his role in connecting with the new members. It makes the members of his church circle feel closer and more in touch.

Fred's FaceBook network is mostly church friends, but it also affects his outside life as well when he learns about life events from other church members. Fred uses

FaceBook to keep in touch with friends who live at a distance, and communicates with some young people as well. These communications with young people have given Fred hope for the next generation.

Getting a smartphone has made social networking even easier for Fred though he believes there's just way too much information on FaceBook. He does not have time to process it. Fred has defriended some people when he decided that their outlook on life, as seen in FaceBook was not something that he wanted to see on his FaceBook page. Fred does not ask to be friends of anyone on FaceBook, as he considers this kind of request to be intrusive.

Fred feels that although using FaceBook, you lose that human voice contact, it is true that technology allows you to do things you might have wanted to do in the past. You would not have done them because they would have taken too much time. Something that would have taken two hours, now takes five minutes. So it definitely has a lot to offer the individual.

Fred feels that there are many people like him who just need some kind of encouragement to use social networking, encouragement from their family or friends.

Appendix J: Textural and Structural Descriptions for Barry

Textural Description of Barry's Experiences:

I got my first personal computer in 2002. We used computers at work, but it was sort of an in-house system just to access different files. It was a tool I used to get my work done. I felt I needed to get a personal computer when my daughter was still in school, and I noticed that she was taking keyboarding, and I didn't even know how to type. I felt like maybe I better get on board with this stuff, you know trying to keep up with her. I didn't start using the computer on a regular basis until some years later, around 2006 and 2007. Before then, I played games. I didn't really like it. My daughter stayed on the computer a whole lot more than I did. It did not really interest me. Other family members became involved with computers, and I'm kind of lagging behind. I don't feel the need to keep up with them.

There are some things about technology that I resent. I noticed the last time I was home, that it disengages people. We used to get on the bus and people would engage with each other on the bus or subway and talk to each other. Now everybody is stuck looking at a black screen. The young people have every gadget, and they just seem to be socially inept. Although they may think this is socializing, for me, there's got to be an element of human contact.

The computer just spray paints your third eye some way. I find that most children are devoid of imagination and they can't do anything on their own. When I was a boy we used to go out and form our own teams to play ball at a vacant lot at the end of the block. There were no adults involved. Now they have these soccer complexes managed by the

adults. These young people cannot organize themselves to play games. I saw, in my last couple of years doing social work, the negative effects of that in families. Even the poorest people have an X-Box. It seems to have a really negative effect on their intellectual development, and in a lot of ways, their social development. With my children, specifically my youngest daughter, I made a concerted effort to get her away from that. I would take her out to different places and expose her to different things. Things she could touch she could feel. I taught her how to fish.

I don't remember having safety concerns when using the Internet. But I did recognize that you could be addicted to using the Internet and tried to avoid that. For example, I had heard that people can become addicted to pornography and that scared me a right at the beginning. I had heard of people being afraid they were being watched. That never bothers me.

I noticed recently that people won't answer the phone. But if you text them, they will get back to you. Texting is not personal. It's personal when you can hear someone's voice and its inflection. Texting is a way to disengage, to just get the information and I'm not going to be bothered with you anymore.

I was motivated to use social networking on the Internet because everybody else was using it. I felt like I was being left behind. Most people my age were more proficient than I was. I was the kind of guy who said I won't need that. I would stick to the newspaper and to books. Then, I came to the conclusion that I was being kind of foolish and I did not know how to do simple things. I had to be taught how to cut and paste – simple things like that. I just did not know.

When I was thinking about retiring, I bought my first brand new computer. I

decided to write the Great American Novel and I needed a word processor. I really started using the computer when I started social networking, It was a tool I needed to write my novel. I planned this novel to look at the history of my extended family and the particular town that they lived in. They have a fairly unique history. I started off on FaceBook trying to get in touch with family members and people with the same last name outside my family. My last name is a very common name in this small group of counties.

The novel that I was going to write about this was to address their ideas and behavior that were unique. I downloaded information, starting with FaceBook, for everybody I could find with my last name. You can look at phone books on the Internet, so I started making contact with people. Then it turned into something entirely different, that I really did not expect. These people were very open, willing to talk about it. It interested them, and I made a lot of friends, a lot of connections. I met people who are family, people who are not family, and people who are not sure. FaceBook and the Internet, in general, were great tools for gathering information, but also for making connections. I've been corresponding with some of these people for years now. I spend time daily checking my email and FaceBook. I stay in touch with these people and actually see some of them when they came to visit me. I have a lot of pieces of the novel that I need to put together into something that would be fiction. I needed the computer to work on my book, but it has turned into something that I really enjoy.

I haven't tried any other social media besides FaceBook. I don't know anything about other social networking. Twitter, I barely know what that is. I've heard of Snapchat and Instagram and stuff like that.

My family is really spread out. I have sisters in five different states, and FaceBook is how we stay in touch with each other. I know what they are doing and what's going on with them. I also have a few friends that I grew up with. Ones I have known all my life. I stay in touch with them. They come to visit. I have an aunt, and she is in her eighties, and every once in a while, I'll email her. She knows how to email. Otherwise, I would never be able to see or talk to her. So that's great. Before FaceBook, we had family reunions. We would meet on holidays. Or we would all come back home.

I have friends that are really paranoid about protecting their personal information. But I am not. My FaceBook is public. I only have 150 or 160 people that are friends. You find people with thousands. I only have people that I make friends with. I expanded that a little to people in my family I wanted to keep in touch with. I do follow a few FaceBook commentators to learn more about current topics.

I've had conflicts in social networking, twice. I was reported because of an argument I had with some racist. Somebody kind of talked out of pocket to me and I came back at him. The only other time was when this movie came out that everybody wanted to see. I saw where you could download it and I did. The Internet service called me on the phone, but I said, but if you want to just kick me off, I will just get another Internet service provider.

From social networking on the Internet, I got everything I expected and more. For instance, with the events going on today--Ferguson and all. Today, I started on FaceBook with my friends and the people I communicate with. I have found out more and more and more. I find, myself, especially today, getting angry and upset about this.

It's opened a whole world for me--Outside my community, what I can read in the paper, and what I get from my interpersonal relationships. I have FaceBook people that I communicate with that I've never met. We exchange pictures, grandchildren and children. I have one woman I've been communicating with for 8 years. I've never met her.

But, I don't take social networking seriously. I remember my daughter told me that if a person writes to you in all caps, they are yelling at you. I didn't understand that. But, to her, it's a very real thing. To me, it's not real, and I hardly ever get upset over something or somebody. As a result, I say things I don't mean just to be funny or to poke somebody --things I would never say to someone in person. It's different for the friends that I know personally. We do have conversations on FaceBook as well as in person. I think that's the main difference between the way I look at it and the way younger people look at it.

Overall, concerning use of the Internet, it was my mission to catch up with what everybody else was doing. I ended up straddling the two worlds. I did not get exactly where I wanted to be. My attitudes have changed over time. I don't like to get angry over things that I have very little control over. It concerns me during these last few days was that I would look at the computer and it would seem very seductive. I don't want a slave to anything. I want to know what they know but I don't want to be like these younger people. However, I can't ignore the value of it. The world revolves around this new technology. No way to avoid it.

I know the Internet helps in everything. I like to watch birds. I'm not very good at it. I've only been at it about 10 years. Instead of staring at the computer, you should take

a walk in the park with binoculars. But, the flip side of that is, if you really want to identify birds, you have to identify three field markers, the best tool is the computer. Not only that, you can download the bird's song and call, so you can recognize them when you are watching for them. You can hear it. The two things come together. So I say to myself, Well, I want to get back to nature, to walk in the woods and listen, but I still need the computer to really do it right, like I want to do it.

I believe technology and its instant gratification exacerbates the maturity of children. Now, it's just one button, one little finger and it is there. It takes a little bit of your humanity. In my way of thinking. I don't want to be a "digiman", the digital man. I don't want to be that guy. I want to be more connected to the earth, the way things are, instead of zeros and ones. The redeeming factor is the ways it can enhance your life. In the end, it was a good choice. It has enriched my life. It really has. Sometimes it can get to be a little too much for me. But once I got into it, I don't know now what I would do without it.

Structural Description of Barry's Experiences:

Although Barry's first exposure to computers was at work, Barry's personal experiences with computer technology began through his experiences as a father. His daughter was beginning to be interested in a world he had no knowledge of, and he was feeling left behind, separate from her. He got his first computer to try to better understand and participate in her life. But at first, the computer served purely as a game player. In

spite of this early exposure to technology and his family's participation in technology at the time, he took pride in his independence from this technology.

When his life changed and retirement was in his future, he reassessed his relationship with technology. He saw a need to use the technology to develop and construct his novel. Even with that, he resented any control from the computer, like grammar correction in a word processor. Also because of this planned writing venture and his persistent sense of isolation from new technology, he began to explore the Internet. This is how he came to participate in social networking on the Internet. The combination of word processing, the availability of information on the Internet, and social networking on the Internet was a perfect vehicle for him at this time.

He gained something from this effort that he did not expect. Besides gaining information for his novel, he made new friends around the world and started relationships with family members he never would have otherwise. Barry became even closer to his personal family. Periodic reunions were supplemented with daily FaceBook relationships. He connected with his older relatives in other states, a relationship that would normally be impossible. He was able to move several states away and maintain daily relationships with old friends from home.

But Barry's relationship with technology is mixed. He sees technology (computers, television, Internet) as a real threat to young people. He sees it as potentially the source of our youth's obesity and social ineptness. Technology makes these young people more inactive, and electronic communication replaces personal relationships. The overwhelming role of computer games takes away a child's creativity and ability to organize tasks as well. An expectation of instant gratification has become the norm. His

concerns about technology include how seductive it and addictive it is. This is not just for the younger population, but for himself as well. Technology is not an easy thing to totally ignore, or even to control once you start.

Security on the Internet does not concern Barry. His FaceBook account is public. He is more concerned about how this technology affects him emotionally. There is so much information, almost too much communication, he is overwhelmed and sometimes just takes a break. Since he does spend a lot of time communicating via social networking, he has seen some conflict, but not enough to scare him away.

Although Barry maintains many personal relationships via social networking, other than his personal friends, he cannot take anyone else on the Internet seriously. They are not real to him. Barry has a strong distrust of much information on the Internet, thinks it is too easy to lie on the Internet.

So he has settled into an ambivalent relationship with technology, the Internet, and social networking on the Internet. These technologies have seriously enriched his life and he cannot envision life without them. But he worries about its negative side, its seductiveness, and its addictiveness. He is always cautious and especially concerned for the next generation.

Appendix K: Textural and Structural Descriptions for Susan

Textural Description of Susan's Experiences:

When I got my college degree, computers were not used in any of the courses. In the early days of computers, the eighties, out of curiosity, I took a course at a local college. I'm always interested in learning new things. My husband encouraged me. My husband was an electrical engineer and he was into computers and that sort of thing. He was using a computer at work. He used the home computer a good deal, but I did not. I was not interested. I did not see a use for it in my life at that time. It seemed very slow and frustrating, not very appealing. It used a phone to connect to the Internet. I think I probably lacked a lot of patience. I would get on and I would do two or three things and just get off because everything took so long. I had better things to do with my time.

I took some courses to learn how to do things I could not possibly do today. You know, doing spreadsheets and that kind of stuff. I did enjoy it somewhat, but I did not do it enough to become skilled at it. My husband was moderately helpful when I had issues. I finished doing the school work. But, I don't remember doing anything on the Internet at that time, doing email or anything like that back in those days. None of my friends were using computers at that time. It was not ever part of our conversations. I stayed at home. I did not enter the workforce.

I'm not really certain why I decided to use the computer more. After my husband died, I had the computer in the house, and I was using it some. One of the things that I started doing was I using it for recordkeeping—the checkbook and so on. It made me feel like I knew what I was doing; that I understood what was going on. I don't know when,

exactly, I got onto the Internet. It was probably my children that got me into email and that kind of thing. They like me and they want me to keep moving. They are all into that sort of thing. They have been very encouraging. In fact, I they gave me a iPad.

When I first started using the computer, I had a little concern about hitting the wrong key and things like that. Things go bad, and I don't know how to get back. I don't know how to get out of trouble, and that kind of thing. I'm not very bold about trying new things. I've met people who say well I just hit keys until something comes up, but that's not my mode, no. I work very hard to avoid these situations if I can. I ask someone to help me. I do have some help. My son who lives in another state will get into my computer and straighten things out every once in a while. I have a daughter-in-law here who can do that. My son here can do that. I have a young computer whiz that comes in and takes care of real problems.

I have resolved to go to Apple to learn more about it, so I can use it better. I want to do the workshops so I'll know how to use it more efficiently. All the things I could do with it, I do not do. I use the email, I search and use the Internet, but then I worry about wasting time. Although I do enjoy it, it takes more time than I feel I really have to give.

Of course my social network is not the same as it was 20 years ago. It changes and expands and contracts. You lose contact with people. I have lots of good friends, some relatively new friends. My children are certainly part of my social network. I am in touch with them, at least weekly. I have a son who lives here. I have some friends who I've known since high school, two of them. I have a couple of friends I've had over 50 years that I knew when my babies were babies. So, I have a nice social network that I try to keep up with.

Email, of course, I use on the computer and with social networking. Sometimes I find it very satisfying and rewarding and sometimes not. Sometimes it does not feel very personal. It disappoints me because sometimes face-to-face or hearing them on the phone is better. At the same time, everybody seems to be rushed for time, so it fills a gap that wasn't filled before. I would say I've come to appreciate it because it is available.

As far as social networking sites, my children set it up. I did not know quite what to expect and still don't feel very competent using it. I think they thought it would be something I would enjoy and do. I did not have concerns from things I've heard, but I do, myself, screw up things. Have to have somebody come in and get me straight again. I have a t-shirt that says I'm an analog mind in a digital world, and that's a perfect description. I think once I learn a few more things about using the iPad, I'll enjoy it more. I only use FaceBook.

I use my iPad for FaceBook, email, and I play Words with friends, with several people. I think it's fun and challenging. I enjoy the interaction. I am only somewhat comfortable with FaceBook. One of the things I want to know is how to cut it back. I have people coming out of FaceBook who I have no idea where they came from, advertising things. I want to know how to get rid of that stuff. There's so much on there. I have one friend who posts at least 3, 4 times a day. My picture is not on there. But I know everything is known to everybody. I haven't unfriended anyone. But one of the things that I will learn at the workshop is to eliminate people that I don't care about hearing from.

There's no one on FaceBook that I really dislike. There's somebody who has very conservative political opinions that I don't agree with, and I thought about getting them

off. But then, I was thinking, it's good to know what the other side thinks, you know? So, I'm on the fence about that. Yes, I have friends I really care about deeply. They are very conservative, and I would never eliminate them. But, this stranger, I might chop.

People are sharing lots of information that they did not share before because they did not have the time. That's the thing that I feel is good. I feel that way about my children, the ones that don't live here. We stay in touch a couple times a week through email or phone. So, I know more about what they are doing otherwise. I do try to keep in touch with my grandchildren on the computer. Generally, everyone who is my friend on FaceBook is someone I have met personally.

What's different from the earlier days? Well, I depend on it more. I use it like a crutch. I use it instead of writing letters and communicating with people. It's like good news, bad news. It's a change that we will all get to, some more than others. Some of my friends still don't use computers.

Over time, it's just so confusing, but I think it is all wonderful. It is just coming at us. My attitude now is that it is inevitable. We need to learn how to do it. When it fits into my life, it's okay. I think computers have affected everybody. I do have a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment when I learn how to do things on the computer and the Internet. But I still feel my skills are not where they need to be. My current goals are to feel more comfortable moving around in the computer and that kind of thing. Sometimes, the computer overwhelms with too much information, like the news and that sort of thing. I've been thinking that this computer is just taking up more time than I want to give it. It is such a convenience; you can't get rid of it. It's just essential, but I need to figure out how to make it stay in its place.

I think most of my progression included curiosity and liking to learn new things. I guess having a computer in the house because of my husband helped too. Although my kids set me up for FaceBook, I would have probably done it on my own—maybe not as fast. They push me along. I have always had a way to get assistance

I like many things about it, and I resent some things. It's not real. In many ways, it's too impersonal. It provides contact when you cannot do it any other way. That's good. When I was really indisposed, my son brought me an iPad. It was because I could not get up the stairs where the desktop is. During that time, social networking online was a convenient way to get that. Yes, I did use it to pass the time. It was nice to have that alternative.

Probably, the biggest blessings to me has been that I can see what my grandchildren are doing—because they are not communicating with me directly and keeping track of friends I care about but don't see a lot. The negatives of FaceBook are the time it takes and the loss of personal connections.

Structural Description of Susan's Experiences:

Susan did not use any computers when she went to college. She left college and became a stay-at-home wife and mother. Her husband worked in computers, but they did not have a computer at home until quite late in their lives. She was curious (in the eighties) and took a course at the local college to learn about computers. Prior to that, she saw no purpose for computers in her life.

When her husband retired, he brought a computer into their home, and it connected to the Internet with a dial-up connection. Susan did not use it much; it did not attract her at all, particularly since it was so slow and none of her friends, at that time, were using the computer.

Susan decided to use the computer more after her husband died. She started using it for recordkeeping. It made her feel like she knew what she was doing; that she understood what was going on. Susan harbored some fears at first about hitting the wrong key and messing up stuff, but she has a good bit of technical help available through her family when that occurs.

Susan's children got her to start using email. Her children are all technically knowledgeable and have been very encouraging. She plans to take classes to learn more about her new iPad. Susan worries about wasting time. The computer takes more time than she wishes to give.

Susan's children set her up on FaceBook and she still does not feel competent when using it. They thought she would enjoy it. She does use it to learn more about her grandchildren and keep up with distant friends. Her social network includes good friends, some relatively new friends. She finds online social networking to be enjoyable but frustrating at times. It does not feel personal, and she likes face-to-face communication. Susan wants to learn how to defriend people. Susan keeps her social network on FaceBook very private, only people she knows personally.

Although Susan enjoys technology, she thinks of it as a crutch that she uses instead of having "real" communication with her friends. Sometimes, it seems

impersonal. Often the Internet presents an overload of information. Some of her friends don't use computers at all.

Susan's current goals are to feel more comfortable with the computer. She is always a curious person, eager to learn. She sees it as a convenience; you can't get rid of it. It's essential, but she needs to figure out how to make it stay in its place.

Appendix L: Textural and Structural Descriptions for Gabe

Textural Description of Gabe's Experiences:

Of course there were calculators in the early 70's. The first computer I used was in early 80's, maybe 1981. I worked for a construction company, the first company I had ever worked for that had a computer. Their computer was about the size of my living room. I had no clue what it was doing other than the fact that I had a monitor on my desk and I punched in numbers. It was a DOS program for estimation. I remember punching in the numbers after doing some calculations. After that, it would spit out this wide sheet of paper with basically all the information you just typed in. When I first used it, I was scared, definitely lost. Didn't know what I was doing or what was going to happen. They had given me specific instructions. We were told a mistake could cost the company thousands of dollars. We were very gentle with it.

To me, it did not seem practical at all. I could have typed it in with a typewriter better. That was my first computer experience. They did use the same computer for payroll, and they used it for different property management uses and billing. The person I worked for was very smart with technology. This was not common at that time.

People were talking about how the computer could make the business work better. Sounded like a good investment for the business, so that's what I did. I bought my first computer, a Tandy from Radio Shack for our business. Mostly we did our billing on it. Pretty much it was a big word processor for me. We did not have a lot of software for it. Other than these two things, it was not that great an investment at the time, but a sizeable

investment. I expected to get more out of it than I got. I was underwhelmed. I did use the Internet on it. It was really slow dial-up.

In the construction business, technology has blossomed, and you really have to keep up with technology to be successful. In '88 we bought our first PC with Windows on it, and I was in seventh heaven. It was for work and pleasure since our office was in the house at that time. I was able to buy some software that made the business a lot easier, although the software was quite expensive – like \$6,500. You had to be a really big company to afford it. So we bought cheaper ones, and I got pretty good at Excel, writing my own “programs” that we used in our business. I went back to school a few years ago to take classes in MS Office to brush up and find out what I was missing.

In my church, we have a computer in the office. The minister has a laptop. We have another computer used to run the music, power points, video and audio. My son and daughter-in-law use it to teach classes.

I don't remember back when I first started using the Internet, being afraid of clicking on anything. I did not know or think about anything like viruses, worms, etc., no negative experiences. Nowadays, I think I have 2 or 3 anti-virus soft wares on my computer and other kinds of protection. Something we never even considered in the early times.

The first social networking website I used was My Space. I had no expectations, other than curiosity. I had heard so many people talking about it. I was only on it a few times. It was so foreign to me. You could make connections with other people, but not many of my friends were on My Space. It was mostly young people. It did not feel like the right place for me. It works a lot like LinkedIn. I've been on LinkedIn for several

years, and I have my FaceBook page. I use LinkedIn more than FaceBook. I have a lot of friends and business connections on LinkedIn. The people in my network are people I've worked with and are working with—realtors, marketing people, bankers, construction folks. FaceBook is mostly family

LinkedIn is a good way to keep up-to-date on people and what they are doing. For example, my attorney recently left his current firm and started a business on his own. Through LinkedIn. I like to hear about people's movements and job changes, job anniversaries. That is true networking without going to social events. It's a way to stay on top of business directions. You can get lots of information on there, especially for conferences and business workshops. I'm in various groups on LinkedIn, and then you have the option to follow folks. I follow the Virgin Airlines CEO, and other people. An invitation from a friend of mine got me to try LinkedIn. I have a good sized network now. I like the endorsing part of LinkedIn. So when people see your resume, it looks really good. I have endorsed a few people, for things I knew they could do.

I chose FaceBook, mostly because of family, distant family, to keep up with them. But I was also curious about how it worked. Will it benefit me? No issues or conflicts. I'm not sure it's benefitted me except for keeping up with people. You're maintaining relationships that you would not have otherwise. Before, maybe you would only see them every two or three years. I have a few high school friends and grade school friends, and lots of people in this business who do not live here. It does really enhance my life and my relationships. It started with my father. He got on it to be able to keep up with news on the new baby, his grandchildren, and great grandchildren. He just turned 80. He actually started it when this new baby was born to follow his growth and health. Instead of having

to call everyone every day—made it a lot easier to stay in touch during this crisis. I hear about my hometown from the FaceBook pages of three neighboring towns. When my grandson was born and went through his health issues. FaceBook was a great way for many concerned people, family and friends, to follow his progress. Their constant concern and support helped the family through emails and texts from around the world.

I have never friended anyone on FaceBook who I have not met face to face. I have initiated connections a few times. I either already knew them or had some other kind of connection beforehand. Maybe they were friends of a friend. I did get to know them through the website. FaceBook security is better now than it was. It was pretty open and I tightened it up. Recently, I have seen that some of my realtor friends are posting properties on FaceBook. I think you'll see more and more of that. Commercial sites show realty, but this is posted by individuals.

I did take a look at Twitter. I just wanted to see what it was like and had an invitation. Now there's Instagram. I have no clue what that is. I will look further into both of those things.

I get newsfeeds on FaceBook. I've never had any conflicts on FaceBook. But I don't post much. When I first used FaceBook, I felt a little intimidated, anxious, trying to figure it out, very challenging. I did not have any help. It's probably 60-65 percent of my actual social network. It has added to my relationships. Any time you can keep up with somebody, it's better than not keeping in touch or only see someone once a year. At least you can keep up with some of their lives and monitor growth of children and their activities like sports.

Using FaceBook is pleasurable, but LinkedIn is not only pleasurable but it enhances your business interests. I might even use FaceBook to advertise my own work. I know that I will use both LinkedIn and FaceBook when I go back to work. Recently, you see more and more ads on FaceBook.

We're no-where near where we will be. Computers need to be updated at least every 18 months. Just think about the phones and the iPads and all the new capabilities. We live in an age of technology, can't be avoided.

My wife has always been an influence and helpful. She uses computers in her job. She is an assistant to the Dean of the local medical school. She carries an iPhone and iPad, etc. She's always been involved with computers when we added the computer to our business. Even before that she used computers at the insurance company she worked for. That was likely a factor that influenced me to buy our first computer. She already had experience. She was the one who taught me MS Access. It got me really interested in computers and databases.

I'm a curious person, and I'm one of those people, if it's new I like to know about it. I guess it comes from being in the business. I did not want to be behind. I wanted to be out in front. We went to business technology fairs. At one time we owned a business installing home digital theatre systems. We built smart homes—home security, phones, control pads, heating/air conditioning/ lights. Mostly we were self-taught. We did hire one person who taught us a great deal. I liked that business.

I do a lot of reading, tech magazines. If I don't understand, I might go back to school. I like to continue learning things. It doesn't have to be technology. I went back and got my degree as a certified accountant. I just like to learn.

My children, in their early years were not heavy computer users. Their computer work was pretty much what was necessary for school--writing papers and maybe a few projects. Then after they finished school, they both went into radio. At that time, computers were becoming part of the radio business as well. Rather than spinning records, they played music from audio "vaults". I got involved a little bit. I was exposed to some of that technology when I did a few commercials for them. We got involved in audio vaults later on. We put audio vaults in our houses that could hold 2000 songs, and you would pipe music to all rooms in your house.

Computers have made life easier in some cases and sometimes tougher. The tough part is that you don't have as much family time. Even though, computers make our loads lighter, it seems like we're on the clock 24-7, instead of putting in your eight hours and going home. It seems like we are even working on our days off and we have the technology to support it. They are expected to do it. Not paid to do it.

Structural Description of Gabe's Experiences:

Gabe was exposed to technology very early in his professional life. He got an idea of the power of computers, but he was not impressed with the results, seemed quite impractical. Technology was more difficult then, using dial-up for example, but a safer world without viruses and malware. Gabe was intrigued enough to try a computer in his own business, with limited results. He felt he needed to stay abreast of technology to succeed in his profession, so he updated his system in the 80's with better results using the suite of Office applications and learning some new skills at a local community

college. His wife's computer experience has been a critical influence at each step. She is the one who introduced him to databases. His church life became enhanced with technology as well.

Gabe was an early adopter of social networking on the web. He explored the idea of using My Space. It was not the place for him at the time. But that early exposure and the desire for professional success led him to join LinkedIn. LinkedIn made sense in his professional world to maintain contacts, be aware of any new status, learn from other entrepreneurs, and to hear about learning opportunities. FaceBook was added as a personal connection to family. FaceBook became particularly important when a new grandchild was going through a medical crisis. He has lived various places, and FaceBook is a great way to keep in touch with old friends. Gabe keeps his social network on FaceBook very personal, but he's thinking about ways to use it to further his business. Gabe likes to try new things, so he is looking into other social networking tools.

Gabe is very comfortable with new technology and looking forward to what is next. His professional life has been on an upward trajectory in the use of technology. He reads to keep up with technology advances, is always curious, and will not be afraid to learn new things and to try new technology. Gabe recognizes the increasing power of computers, but also recognizes how lives have changed, especially since we carry our computer connection with us. In a very negative way, our work follows us home.

Appendix M: Textural and Structural Descriptions for Joe

Textural Description of Joe's Experiences:

My first exposure to computers was in Library school, around 1976. My college had a library department head, and that was his main focus at that time, computers—the possibilities that they had for information retrieval. So, we had a computer at the school that we used to submit simple little programs. The programs did not do much of anything.

I even had a graduate assistantship; I was in charge of keypunchers. The instructor had a grant to put the Wilson's Children catalog on the computer, a resource for children's libraries. Towards the end of my academic career, the instructor got a TRS-40. He was proud of that, and we all sat around trying to figure this thing out. We started learning some kind of BASIC to do this, nothing complicated. I did like it, but it was too exacting for me. There was always something! You typed a 'put' when you meant to type 'input', and so on. It would take me forever to find errors. On the school computer, "Oregon Trail" was a very high-tech game. "Oregon Trail" is a step above Pong.

Then in business school classes—got a little experience in FORTRAN and COBOL, etc. These were part of the business courses. But I never touched the computer again as a programmer. As a student, you never saw the computer. You just submitted your cards. Computing is not my thing, but I was fascinated with the concept.

I went to another college, and I reworked their "abyss". Every library you go to has a set of filing cabinets with a lot of information buried in there. I went through it and straightened it out. I thought this is something really neat if you could put it online. Abbie Hoffman was talking about the possibilities of technology, and that excited me. That was

all part of the 60's. It was positive exposure, but it was very limited. As for me, I could not see the really big picture of it. You can print out a list. So, what's next? I didn't have the answer. At that time you were still using ledgers and typewriters.

I could not afford computers because they were so expensive. Back then, AOL, etc. was not that great anyway. You did not feel left out, because it was not that great yet, slow and complicated.

When I entered the real world with this library degree, I had lots of knowledge, but I ended up in temporary jobs, low wages for a very long time, no computer exposure there. Then I got this long run with being a sexton, 30 years as a sexton in one place or another, different churches and synagogues. The sexton is basically the labor force of a church. There was very little computer exposure in that job either, although churches began using computers. The only thing I had access to, was games like solitaire occasionally, but then the church staff had to use it for their church business.

I had friends who had computers. They could do all kinds of neat stuff. But I did not have to money to even try. This was long before libraries had computers. Libraries have a lot of computers nowadays, but this is something that happened just in the last few years.

Later, I got married. My wife got a computer when she went back to school, but I could not use it very much. I could see her do a few things. I could see friends do a few things on laptops. Laptops were a big surprise to me, very exciting. Then I got the job at the local major discount store. I finally managed to save up a little money. I was very curious about it, especially when I found out that you did not have to program anymore. You don't have to put in any commands. It's great. It's no longer work. Now it's fun and

exciting. You still have to think logically. When I got my computer, I jumped to the World Wide Web right away. Before, I was limited to an almanac. But with a computer, you just Google it. I did have another friend who helped me a little. At work everybody was doing it, mostly with smartphones. They talked about it all the time. “Hey we can do this. We can do that”, etc. You want an answer to a question, do this. This made me even more curious and excited.

So, a few years ago, after Christmas, the store had a computer on sale at a reasonable price. Only 2 GIG of memory. I bought it. I took a course at a local community college, learned the basics and went on from there. I can more or less use the computer now. My wife actually comes to me now when things go wrong. This was so different from my first computer experience. It was just amazing how far we had come. When I got my first computer, it was great. It’s right here in my hands, not taking up a whole room.

I wanted to have it as a source of information. I expected this to be an almanac I did not have to buy every year. So, I could say—there’s a movie. What’s it all about? I could look it up. What can I get out of it? Then, I thought, I wonder what it would be like to read books on a computer? --a neat concept. I attempted to read online, but it did not work. I want a book.

I tried Twitter, but I did not particularly like it. I did not like the limited nature of it. You’re only allowed so many characters. I never did figure out Instagram. Don’t know how it works. I did try Pinterest. I look at that occasionally. It’s amazing the variety of things you can find on there. It’s a gathering place for creative people. More than just creative site, there are Hollywood star web sites for example. They have people who like

to publish their list of the top 10 beautiful people in the world, not just creative hobbies. Maybe a site on tattoos--anything you can imagine. The information is not very scientific, but it's there. It's more like blogging. Anyone who wants to share a passion can do it there.

Before I was married, I had a narrow social life. Before recent times, all I had was family and Scouts ---until the computer. The computer is nice because – scouts come and go, friends come and go—but on FaceBook, I can keep in touch with all of these folks. They never fade away. I get to keep up with their lives, comment on their posts, encourage them, wish them Happy Birthday, and so on. I can live through any number of lives vicariously. It provides much enjoyment to me.

I heard about FaceBook from a friend. It sounded neat. I could get on FaceBook and friend scouts. I could kind of keep up with these folks. What my friend said made me curious. It is true that it is very easy to gather friends. FaceBook makes it easy and encourages it. I don't have that many friends. I had no idea what to expect on FaceBook. Thought I might run into someone from my past. But, I think my expectations were pretty low. The first time I used FaceBook, I liked it a lot.

Not quite sure how I started acquiring friends. Maybe my wife suggested the first one or two. Many of them are scouts who have gone through the system and have lives of their own now. They are all adults now, married with kids, etc. Yes, in some ways, I live my life vicariously through others. I lead a simple and quiet life, and this is great. My work and home life fill my hours, so I have only a little personal time, especially for the computer. These people are doing all of these fun things, and I get to watch. Many times,

I'm their cheering squad. Sometimes I feel isolated, like the boy in the bubble. Social network sites give me a chance to look outside the bubble.

Everyone has negative experiences. On FaceBook, you're going to be irritated. For example, we have a friend, I've known since early 70's. He met this woman when her daughter married his son. But, she went through one phase of being very anti-Christian, and this was obvious on FaceBook, making fun of things. I just ignored it. I hardly ever rock the boat.

I don't think I spend an extraordinary amount of time on FaceBook. First, I answer all of the millionaire trivia questions. I'm a trivia nut. That's how I earn my free games. I play the games. I go through the various feeds --- postings from friends, several authors I follow several actors. I find out about new books coming in I want to read, a movie coming up I want to see. I even have one dead author I follow. A lot of the actors use their FaceBook pages for their political activism, and some of them just have fun information. Some are interesting, and some are trash. It all adds flavor to my life.

I don't think I've friended anybody I did not know. I've never unfriended anybody. I haven't friended anybody I work with, a very conscious choice. No matter how innocent you are people will talk and make something out of nothing. It's best to keep it separate. Keep work "work", and so on. I'm careful about what I say on FaceBook.

I'm still playing with the possibilities. I get semi-frustrated --when it's a wonderful thing to be able to look up movies, but if you can't find the time it starts, you get irritated. I always start with FaceBook. If more people used it as a resource, more businesses would use FaceBook.

I don't text. My hands are just too big. Most of those keyboards are so tiny. Then you have to learn the separate language. Not a big deal, but why bother. I'm kind of against it anyway because of the corruption of the language.

I've very much enjoyed my computer. I'm careful what I do. I am still in awe of the whole thing. It's only been about two years. I'm still a newbie. I can't imagine it getting anything but more amazing.

Technology has definitely changed my life experiences. Don't have to go to the library anymore. Now if you have a question, you just get on the computer. If you had to go to the library to get the answer, you would probably just forget about it. It would be a lost opportunity. I like learning things and I love facts. I can find 10000 recipes for apple crisp in a second –darnned amazing.

The first thing you have to learn is not to trust anyone on the Internet. Many things pop up to frighten you or get you to do things. But that is a hard thing to learn. You can keep up with your TV shows. Especially things like Dancing with the Stars, for example. I have several sites I go to. At least one of them, I got a publisher's copy of a book. So I've been able to get free stuff, and first dibs on e-books coming out, and so on--financial benefits—on FaceBook.

Structural Description of Joe's Experiences:

Joe's first exposure to computers was in college in the 70's. He had a professor who was very interested in the possibilities that computers had for information retrieval. There was a computer they could submit programs to. It was the age of keypunch and

simple games like “Pong”. Joe learned a little about the possibilities, but was not interested enough to follow through even after he took some programming courses in business school. It was all too complicated; there were few opportunities; and it was much too expensive.

After college, Joe entered the professional world, but his professional life did not offer any computer opportunities for many years. He saw a lot of interesting stuff through friends but could not afford to take the leap. In recent years, he was able to save enough money to take the plunge. He was even more curious about it when he realized it was not so complex anymore. Joe was so excited he took a course to get started, and then he went to the Internet right away. Joe is a real information junkie, and this was a bonanza for him.

Joe tried Twitter, but did not like it. He uses Pinterest, loves its creative flair and the variety of information. He really uses FaceBook and loves the relationships he can maintain online. His personal life is quiet and sparse. He admits to living a kind of Walter Mitty existence through FaceBook. But Joe uses FaceBook for many things, like following authors, actors, and TV shows, playing games, and getting free stuff.

Joe had no idea what to expect on FaceBook, but he was game to try and acquired friends easily. He has had few negative experiences on FaceBook but is very careful what he posts. He does not have FaceBook friends from work. He is very selective about his friends. Joe had hope for Skype but he does not have a lot of friends to share it with. He does not Tweet or text. Texting would be difficult on the small phone and he’s not comfortable with the special language of texting.

Joe is more than excited about the possibilities for technology and admits it has changed his life. Joe likes learning things and loves facts but is knowledgeable enough to not trust everything he sees on the Internet.

Appendix N: Textural and Structural Descriptions for Daisie

Textural Description of Daisie's Experiences:

My first memory of anything about a computer was when I went to college, about 1971. I was taking Math 101. The computer was in a building as big as this room. Everything that was going to be put into that computer, which now I think you would just type on a keyboard; we keypunched. This was one of those classes where I wished I had gotten a different professor. I don't think I was the only one in there with issues. I don't remember learning anything about the computer. I just remember how time consuming it was to get those keypunches ready. I do not remember anything that was punched in. I just remember the stacks and stacks of cards. I don't remember what happened after we read them in. That was a nightmare class. I passed. But I did not learn anything. Looking back on it now, I think it gave me a fear of computers. The instructor was not harsh or belittling, but he was so excited about it he thought everyone else should be. I felt it was something that I did not want anything to do with.

I don't remember anything about a computer in high school. I absolutely know this, they were not there (when we started college), so far as having a laptop in your dorm room or having a computer lab to go to. There was nothing.

I remember, in my professional life, when we teachers started having computer classes to get familiar even with just turning the computer on. As a kindergarten teacher, we were all in the same boat. Some knew more about computers because they may have one at home or access somewhere else. We may have had one at home then but I could care less about it.

At first, I was nervous, fearing that if you punch the wrong button something bad would happen. You've heard these stories that you lose everything. Or mess it up. But the classes were helpful. Then we had started having one computer in my classroom. It was mainly used for programs that helped kindergarten children with numbers. This was the early eighties. We used it as a center they went to during their day. The kids liked it; it was like games—two frogs plus one frog. How many do you have? It offered variety to the kids; some children learn differently than others. Later, a computer lab was established. That was in the rotating process of specials. So, the students would go to a computer lab one day a week. There would be a classroom with a computer lab teacher. The children liked it. This removed me from the computers. It was part of specials, so this was our planning time.

Later, we had a computer lab for the kindergarten to do reading and language type games. But I was also removed from that because our teacher assistant would take them to that. I think at this point, I thought of it as a toy because they were just playing games, although they were educational games. As time went on, we got to the point so that when I retired in 2005, the class had to do a computer project. It was mainly, like the teacher would create a little book with the child's name in the story. It was the last project I had to do. My daughter was teaching that year. It was taking me so long in the afternoon. It was spring. I was retiring. Let's just get this thing done and turn it in. So I said come down to my room after the kids leave today, and she did. So I kept saying, now what do I do, now what do I do. Finally, she said, Mom, just move over and let me type. We'll be here all night doing this, and she finished it. It took her about a half an hour.

I think I was not trained well enough to do this. Secondly, at that time I was getting ready to retire, and this was just one of those dog and pony show things that somebody (higher up) needed. I guess the reason I never got involved in learning to use this was because somebody else thought it was a good idea for us to do this, not because I wanted to do it.

My last year of teaching, we still hand wrote lesson plans. I'm not sure at what point after I retired, it changed so that you put them on your computer and emailed them to your principal every week. To me, I see computers in that frame as taking more time because it would have taken me more time. I could just jot down lesson plans for my own benefit. If the principal wanted to walk around, which they did, and check to see if you had them, they could. But for me to take my time to email my lesson plans to a principal that could possibly be across the hall from me (in certain classrooms), is ridiculous. I'm sure I did not think about it from an administrative perspective, since it was not my job to run the school. It is also easier for that principal to sit in his office, and turn his computer on, view his email and see your lesson plan. With my retirement, I just dodged having to use classroom computers for administrative tasks.

My husband was always interested in computers but I was not—did not have a need or an interest in that--until my daughters went to college in 1999. There was a messaging tool sponsored through the school. There were very few cell phones, not like it is now, and you did not use them casually, just for an emergency. Using this messaging tool, we communicated with our girls on an everyday basis. I would chat with them and leave a message if they were not there. We were connected to the Internet. But from the time you pushed the button to connect to the point where you were actually connected it

was 20 minutes, dial up. But I had an interest then, and a reason. My attitude definitely changed when I found I could talk to my kids at college.

Actually, my husband was using computers all the time, kind of like playing golf for some husbands. There was only one computer in the house, and it was upstairs. I actually started using the computer for email. I enjoyed letter writing, and that became a quicker way to get the information to the other person. It was so much easier to use MS word, no white out. It was a way to keep in touch with people I had known from years ago, from college. I have had some fears. If my husband weren't there, or if my kids were not easily accessible, the computer would not be used.

I think I moved to FaceBook because of my children. My children would show me pictures of something on FaceBook. Or know something about someone else through FaceBook, and I would not. So and so is "expecting", etc. So one of them set it up for me. I felt, this is probably another case where I'll sit down in front of the computer screen and it will go blank. So I was a little fearful. I did trust my child who helped me. She said, "Here's who my friends are. Who do you want of these?" Then my other children did the same thing. If it was someone I knew and wanted I would say yes. I post very little. I'll share pictures of the grandchildren. My close friends and people my age were on a similar path, and now some are on FaceBook. Some are not. Some, only their husbands are on FaceBook. Pretty much all of them do email now. FaceBook is the only social networking site I use. Social networks have made keeping in touch a lot easier. There's something that I need to let my sister know, all I had to do was to do an email. When we went through a medical crisis, I could email a larger group, rather than individually. I never would have been able to do that before. I would let someone know

about stuff and they would let someone else know, possibly someone I did not know at all. It could travel the world over. I became acquainted with some people I did not know before, some who had been in a similar situation.

I have not had any issues. I see on there where people poke each other, but I don't know what that is. I don't have time to play games. I do chat sometimes. I didn't have many expectations. It just seemed like a fun and informative thing where my children could get information about friends, even distant ones very quickly, new births, etc. I can find any kind of information, like a friend of mine I graduated with -- she tracks the class of 1971 and she announces on FaceBook people who has passed away or had news of some kind. Most of my close friends are on FaceBook now. To me, it feels personal. One big thing, actually, a friend from out of town, we keep up with her daughter, and she posts pictures of her daughter and her family. So when I see her at our next reunion, I'll probably sit with her and chat. So I have a different relationship with some people than you would have had before, and I have new types of relationships with more people. So when you go to your class reunion, you're not totally shocked or surprised when you see people. Through pictures, you might even know who some of them are. People may post something as insignificant, as there's a car show in town this week. This would be something I might not have even known otherwise.

I have not had any personal conflicts. But I am totally amazed some times to see what people actually put on there. You need to be careful of what you post. I've never had any personal experience but I have heard of people losing their jobs after posting something they should not have. I would be very careful if I was still teaching. I would not want to put on there something about staying awake in a faculty meeting.

There's times when I do it more than not. Don't use it every day. I would definitely miss having access to FaceBook. You get insight in your friends' lives. It makes my life different. Now that I have it on my phone, I am more apt to use it. You stay in contact with more people, in a different way. Not many of these people would I actually pick up the phone and call. So, for sure, it has opened up communication to the world. Something I never could have imagined. I have a smart phone now. One night, we went to visit the kids, and they handed me a phone, and they said this is your phone now. We were on a family plan together. I use FaceBook on my phone and also my email. I never expected in my wildest imagination that technology would be what it is today. I could not see beyond the typewriter. I guess a computer to me, to start with, was a way to write a letter. It was not about going to sites or anything like that. It made a difference for me that I had someone in the house who understood computers and could help. If he had not been here, I would rarely get on the computer probably. If it messes up I can get him to fix it.

I'm sure the plusses outweigh the minuses for my choice to use social networking. The concerns I have are more with the phones, the email, the texting and all the conversations with people that you don't have. You can hardly have one without the phone beeping and interrupting your conversation, or an email coming through, or the phone ringing. Social networking adds to, does not take away from my relationships prior to FaceBook. Even my closest friends who do not live here, like high school friends, with texting email and FaceBook, we stay a lot more connected than we did 10 years ago.

I learned more about texting now I have my new phone. I love it because, really trivial things you don't have to know. Someone I know had back surgery, and is at a

rehabilitation center. I texted her – how are you feeling? Have you had anything good to eat? But I would not have called her.

For my sister, who lives quite a distance away, not long ago you had to worry about your minutes for your cell phone, prior to that you had to worry about long-distance charges. It is a different world for keeping in touch with folks at a distance. She used to call once a week, either mom and dad, or me. But now, I may get a text or email or a call almost every day. So we are closer than we were before.

Structural Description of Daisie's Experiences:

Daisie's first experience with technology was in college, but it was not a good experience. Her freshman math teacher assigned his students the task of creating key punch cards for a massive computer. This whole experience soured Daisie's perception of computers, and left her considering them to be very scary and complicated. This was her only exposure to computers in college.

As a professional teacher she had training in computers, learning skills as basic as turning on/off the computer. Daisie was quite nervous because she had heard stories about breaking things by pressing the wrong key. But soon, there was a PC in her classroom for her students to use. It offered variety to the kids, but offered no added experience for her in technology. Soon, the students had computer lab to go to, but she did not learn more about computer then either. She retired from the school system with almost no experience using computers and without a very good feeling about computers. The use of computers in her professional world was mandated by senior officials and not

something she had chosen. Some of the uses of technology, like creating lesson plans felt like a waste of time to her.

For Daisie, computers had been in her home for quite a while. Her husband was always interested, and he was always available to handle any issues she had. She only became interested when she found that she could use it to communicate with her children once they had left for college. She soon started using the computer for email, especially after she retired. For Daisie, it made a difference that she had someone in the house that understood computers and could help her. If her husband had not been here, she would have probably rarely used the computer.

Daisie adopted FaceBook because of her children. Her children showed her pictures from FaceBook and would mention information they had learned through FaceBook. FaceBook seemed to be fun and informative. One of her children set it up for her. Her close friends and people her age were on a similar path, and now some are on FaceBook. Daisie's sister lives in another state, and they find it much easier to communicate and stay other involved in each other's lives. Daisie's family recently had a medical crisis and FaceBook made it easier to keep everyone informed. FaceBook feels personal to her. Though she has had no conflicts on FaceBook, she continues to be amazed at what kind of information people post. Daisie feels, through FaceBook, she stays in contact with more people, in a different way. Her use of FaceBook has increased more since she got her new smartphone.

She feels that the plusses outweigh the minuses for her choice to use social networking. Social networking adds to, does not take away from Daisie's relationships prior to FaceBook. With texting email and FaceBook, her closest friends who do not live

here, like high school friends stay a lot more connected than they did 10 years ago.

Texting is a recent happy recent discovery for Daisie.

Appendix O: Composite Textural Summary

All participants in the study were FaceBook users. About half used other social networking sites, but their responses to the questions were overwhelmingly related to their FaceBook usage.

Most participants went to college in the late sixties and early seventies, during the very early phases of computer technology. Only a few were exposed to computer technology at that time. Generally, this was not a very positive experience. Computers were as large as a building, and the only real access was through an onerous process to keypunch programs and data, to submit jobs and to collect the results later. Adding error correction, a small task might have taken a couple of days to complete. Resulting attitudes varied from the bookkeeper who found the whole process to be boring, to the librarian who was intrigued by the idea, but found the detailed tasks to be too demanding, to the future teacher who was totally disenchanted by the complicated, arduous process. Even those who did not encounter computers in their college career remembered the early days of excruciatingly slow Internet access through telephone modems. So the early stages of computer technology were less than impressive and left most with a very negative view.

For the majority of this group, after their post-secondary experience, the next opportunity for exposure to computer technology was in the workplace. Their work experiences with technology varied. The housewife had no work experience outside the home. Most—the librarian, the teacher, the social worker, the bookkeeper, the inventory manager, the research analyst, and the physician-- used or witnessed the use of computers

as a tool in their job. The computer experience for this group was limited, but they did learn that one could use computer software to accomplish some business tasks. Only two of the participants, the building contractor and the marketing executive, enthusiastically and creatively used the computer and many computer applications in a variety of ways to make their jobs easier and their businesses more profitable. Dana successfully expanded her technical skills as needed to succeed in her job.

On a parallel chronological path, computers were being introduced to their homes. All participants, except the bookkeeper and the social worker, lived with individuals (spouses/significant others) who brought personal computers into their homes. Most purchased the computer to use it for email and entertainment. The social worker and the bookkeeper both purchased home computers themselves. The motivation for the social worker was, in watching his daughter on the computer, he felt left behind. The bookkeeper was motivated by curiosity because of what she had heard about computers and the Internet from friends and wanted to participate.

This desire to use email was, in part, based on the fact that many of the participants' friends and family members were also getting personal computers and coming on-line. So now there were more people to communicate with online. Because of this phenomenon, most participants expressed a desire to not be left behind. Another feeling expressed by the participants--80% of them-- was a sense of curiosity. What am I missing? What are my friends talking about?

In spite of concerns about the complexity of technology and the frustration from the early days of computing technology, most participants agreed that the ease of using

these “new” personal computers and the modern computer software were critical factors in their decision to use the technology.

Coming online, they now had the opportunity to consider the use of social networking sites. When it came to the decision to use social networking sites, most were directly encouraged by friends or family members. Encouragement from children or grandchildren was most common. Some children had married and left the area (the teacher for example), so social networking sites provided a way to share pictures and communicate. At least three, the inventory manager, the librarian, and the marketing executive, were urged by friends to use social networking sites so they could share common interests in their lives. However, there were two participants who had specific personal goals for social networking sites. The social worker planned to use social networking sites to gather information for his novel. The physician joined FaceBook to keep in touch with friends from her elementary school days who had gathered at a recent reunion.

Although some of the participants (Dana, Gabe, Nell, and Fred) had a general concern for information security on the Internet and on their computers, most of the participants had little concern that they might be exposing their private information by using social networking sites. They were all careful about the information they exposed and only included “real” friends in their online social network. To them, the social networking site felt like a safe place. A few (the social worker, the research analyst, and the inventory manager) had experienced conflicts within the online social network because of differing political, religious, or social views. Their responses to these conflicts ranged from, “I will no longer post my political views” to “I will be more careful about

who I friend”. A common and closely related feeling was that, on the Internet in general, there are deceitful people, and the Internet makes it easier to be deceitful. All asserted that they were careful about what they post and who they friend, so as to avoid this kind of issue.

Another common concern for half of the group was the overwhelming amount of information posted by their online “friends”. Some of this information seemed so inconsequential, why post it? It is also true that a few “friends” post what others feel is inappropriate. One consequence of this abundance of information for a social networking site user is that it becomes quite time-consuming to wade through all of this information to get to items of interest to you.

This extreme quantity of information contributed to another complaint by more than half of the group. Many complained about the time it takes to use social networking sites. They felt that some of that time could be better spent elsewhere. For example, Dana would like to read more, and Carol felt that it is not the most efficient use of her time. Gabe described a different problem. He was concerned about the ubiquitous access to technology that brings work commitments into personal life, so work time is never really over. Generally, this group desired to control their personal time. They wanted to take advantage of the better points of social networking and the Internet without “wasting” or impinging on their personal time.

About half of the group expressed the fear that social networking sites do not offer true “socializing”. Some felt “true” socializing can only be done face-to-face, and the balance between face-to-face socializing and online socializing is not what it should be. Barry and Nell felt that this was especially true for young people and were very

anxious for their future. Another negative point was raised by Dana. She felt the use of social networking sites was not “real” socializing just because you know more “things” about more people. She questioned whether that really made you closer friends.

On the question of using multiple social networking sites, the participants split evenly. Half of them said that they had no interest in other types of online social networking and did not really understand these other social networking sites, like Twitter, Instagram, etc. The other half of the group had tried other social networking sites. An example was LinkedIn which they (Gabe and Nell) used during their work life, pre-retirement. Others (Carol and Joe) had personal interests in crafts that led them to Pinterest. Another example is Dana. Because of some dissatisfaction with FaceBook, Dana was exploring other options, like Instagram.

Over half the group recognized that the growth of technology has become an inevitable and essential part of our lives. Although this statement seemed negative, an overwhelming portion of the group (80%) enjoyed the Internet and online social networking. Half of the group showed excitement about the “whole new world” that has become available to them. All participants agreed that online social networking sites have enhanced their personal social networks. They are in contact with old friends on a regular basis, feel more of a part of their friends’ lives, and get news from far-away places they had lived in before. This kind of relationship is more satisfying and would have taken a lot more effort without online social networking sites. Their online social network is broader and deeper than their old personal social network. They have FaceBook “friends”, that were just acquaintances before the online social networking phenomena. Now they know more about these people and feel closer to them. Without a sense of

interfering, parents and grandparents feel more a part of their children's and grandchildren's lives. Furthermore, knowing more about other people's lives often enriches their own lives. They hear about, and sometimes participate, in hobbies and events they had never considered before. People who are going through a medical crisis find support through their FaceBook friends, and the supporting friends' lives are enriched, celebrating small successes, offering encouragement when appropriate. Retired people, no longer in the work force, and sometimes more confined, have a way to feel more a part of the world and not so isolated.

Appendix P: Composite Structural Summary

The influence of the growth of technology and changes in technology are influential factors for this group in their choice to use social networking sites. This group was part of the generation which experienced the early days of computer technology, in general, not a very positive experience. Later, computer technology began to be used in their work environment. Although the technology was easier to use, few truly embraced the new technology; most just saw it as a business tool.

The pervasiveness of technology and its evolution continued to influence this group. Computer technology and the Internet were becoming more widespread amongst their family and friends. Email became more common. As more people began to participate, others became concerned that they were missing something. To avoid this, some began to bring computer technology into their home. For most of the participants, their significant other brought the computer home. Having the computer in the home, the participants began to see computers, not as just a business tool, but also as an easy to use personal tool or source of entertainment, nothing like their negative memories of the early days of technology. Furthermore, the technical support of their significant other gave the participants a sense of comfort in using the technology.

These changes in the use of technology and its ubiquity, created a sense of inevitability, but also a sense of excitement. The participants knew they could not avoid technology. But, on the other hand they could envision so many exciting possibilities, a critical pre-condition to making the decision to use social networking sites.

These progressive steps in technology, now an exciting, accessible, and easy to use possibility, set the stage for the participants to make the decision to use social networking sites. Each of the participants had a clear memory of making the decision to use social networking sites. Most were directly encouraged by a family member, perhaps a child who wanted to share pictures or information, or a close friend who wanted to share interests. Along with this direct encouragement, the encouraging family member often totally set up the participant in the social networking site, promoting a sense of trust that their personal information was secure. The entire group also proactively took their information security in their own hands (in their minds). They only “friended” people they knew and took care what kind of information or comments they posted.

The choice to use social networking sites has proven to be a very positive experience for the entire group. There are annoying issues with using social networking sites that include friends’ who post inconsequential information much too often, and a concern for the lack of “real” socialization. In fact, only half of the group has been brave or interested enough to explore more than one social networking site. Many were seeking a way to control the time spent using social networking sites. However, the entire group overwhelmingly has enjoyed the way that online social networking sites have broadened their social networks and the ways social networking sites have enriched their lives.

Appendix Q: Textural/Structural Composite: Themes/Essences of the Experience

The textural/structural synthesis, through an examination of each participant's experiences, explains the themes that describe this group's decision to use and continue to use social networking sites.

These themes can be grouped into four categories: The first thematic category centers on positive influences. This category includes the evolution of technology and the progression of technology to its current ubiquitous state, and how this advanced their decision to use social networking sites. The second thematic category addresses negative influences with computer technology in their academic environment and their work environment. The third category describes their current usage of online social networking sites. A fourth thematic category outlines the group's current attitudes towards the Internet and online social networking. Why do they continue to use social networking sites? These categories and themes are detailed below.

Category One: Negative Experiences in the Early Days of Computer Technology

The decision to choose to use social networking sites was many times influenced by the individual's computer technology experiences. These participants, because of their age, were exposed to the early days of computer technology. In varying degrees, it was not a positive experience.

Post-secondary education in the late sixties and early seventies offered students little insight into the budding world of computer technology. At this time, most post-secondary education did not include computer technology. Of the 10 participants, only three had any significant exposure to computer technology during their post-secondary

education. For two, their professor was trying out the new technology. The librarian, found it interesting but too complicated. The teacher was terrified by the complexity of it all. The bookkeeper had some training in the “old” technology of keypunch and giant computers, but found it boring. All members of the group remembered the slow speed of the modems that connected them to the Internet. So the early stages of computer technology left most with a very negative view of technology.

Category One and Category Two Negative/Positive Workplace Experiences in the Early Evolution of Computer Technology

The next theme, the role of computer technology in the work environment, could be either a potential negative or a positive influence. For most of this group, computer technology was part of their work environment. Some just witnessed its use, usually basic office technology, like bookkeeping and word processing. Examples included the inventory manager, the bookkeeper, and the librarian. For the social worker, computer technology was just a business tool used in his job. It was a tool that allowed him to enter client data. For the teacher, computer technology was forced on her by her superiors. She thought it did not enhance her job, that it only benefitted her superiors, resulting in very negative feelings. Only the building contractor and the marketing executive experienced an undoubtedly positive influence. They were able to take advantage of this technology to improve their businesses, making their businesses more profitable as a result. Though the use of technology in the participants’ working world had mixed reviews, most saw it as a positive improvement over early technology: The technology was not quite so scary or complex, easier to use; conveniently lived on the desktop, and supported the business. On the other hand, technology seemed to be only a business tool.

Category Two: Positive Influences--Parallel Events in the Early Evolution of Computer Technology

At the use of technology in their workplace was changing, computer technology, in general, was becoming easier to use, and use of the Internet was becoming more widespread amongst their family and friends. Communication through email became more common. This growing phenomenon created interest, and added to the general “buzz”. As the number of people who were comfortable with computers and the Internet increased, the more the rest of the world considered participating. The uninitiated became concerned that they might be left behind and wanted to join. For example, the social worker saw his daughter’s skill in technology growing and took action so he could keep up. Others, like the bookkeeper, the librarian, and the inventory manager heard other people’s conversations about new and intriguing topics, what they had seen online, who they talked to on FaceBook, etc. They felt left out of the conversation and took action to join their friends. In the case of the librarian and the bookkeeper, some of this influence surfaced because they were still in the work force. In their work life, they were exposed to a larger group of people, many who were a lot younger with a different mind-set.

As part of this technological growth and evolution, individuals in the participants’ households brought computers into their home. Having the computer in their home showed the participants that computers were not just a business tool, but could be a personal tool or a source of entertainment. The participants could see up close how much easier it was to use technology, another common theme. The members of the group unanimously related how much easier it had become to use technology. Gone were the early frustrating memories of baffling complexity and frustrating slowness. The presence

in the home of a technically knowledgeable family member is at the core of the next theme. All of the participants agreed that having someone (the one who had introduced the computer to their home) in their home, usually a family member with more technical knowledge was an important factor. This gave the participants an increased comfort level. It made the participants more likely to use the computer because they knew they had a handy source of assistance when their computer screen froze, or they could not find their file.

These “environmental” influences in the workplace and in the home, this “buzz”, resulted in a variety of feelings and desires in the group. Their feelings included excitement and curiosity. A common theme was a sense of inevitability. I cannot avoid technology; it’s everywhere. But, at the same time, they expressed strong excitement. All of the participants voiced in some way, their wonder at the new world, the world of exciting possibilities. Many members of the group, based on the “buzz”, confessed to be very curious. The housewife, the bookkeeper, and the research analyst were examples. Their friends were discussing things they could not understand, and the things their friends described sounded like fun. The building contractor was especially driven by curiosity and eager to try things. These emotions and changes in attitude fueled the participants’ decision to use home computers and the Internet. This was another crucial step towards the decision to use social networking sites.

Category Two: Positive Experiences (Influences)--Choosing to Use Social Networking Sites with Specific Goals

For this group, choosing to use online social networking sites was not a random act. Some of the participants had very specific goals when making the decision to use

social networking sites, and these goals were directly related to the ubiquitous nature of technology, the ease of its use, and the Internet. Two of them, had a specific communication objective, and they made the decision on their own. The social worker, because of the availability of information on the Internet and its ease of use, intended to use FaceBook to make contacts and to gather information for his novel. The physician chose to use FaceBook to keep in touch with a group of schoolmates who had all attended the same class reunion. This speaks to the global nature of participation on the Internet.

The next theme is also directly related to the pervasiveness of Internet participation. The large majority of the group was actively encouraged to use social networking sites by either a close friend or a family member, another common theme. The librarian heard about FaceBook through a friend. The marketing executive and the inventory manager were encouraged by friends who wanted to share photos and information. The remaining participants were directly encouraged by a family member, like a child or grandchild who wanted to share pictures or information. For the teacher it was a way to keep in closer touch with her daughters who had moved out of the area, and the research analyst felt she was losing touch with her children who were posting pictures to FaceBook that she could not see. These circumstances exemplified the theme of personal encouragement to use online social networking.

Category Three: Current Usage Practices and Ongoing Use of Online Social Networking

Other common themes surfaced when the group explained why they chose to continue to use online social network sites in spite of some dissatisfaction. Most participants were irritated with “friends” who post inconsequential information or a great quantity of information. The physician, in particular, objected to the quantity of

unimportant information one has to push through to get to the items of true interest. Hope, Schwaba, and Piper (2014) confirm this concern that social networking sites required too much of a time commitment, and had trivial content for older adults. A second concern/theme often suggested (by the housewife, the social worker, the research analyst, and others) was that online socializing is not true socialization and is a poor substitute for face-to-face contact. It was the “lazy” man’s way out. The marketing manager and the social worker were especially concerned for young people who rely too heavily on online contact in their social relationships. About half were satisfied with using a single social networking web site. The remaining folks used more than one online social networking site. The research analyst was using Instagram to post pictures rather than FaceBook because she can limit the audience of the posting. The building contractor had a strong preference for LinkedIn because it was so useful in maintaining business contacts.

For the research analyst, the physician, and the housewife, in particular, there was a major concern for the amount of time that they devoted to online social networking sites. They thought that using online social networking sites was not an efficient use of their time, and its usage was taking time away from other important activities like reading. The inventory manager was anxious to learn more about how to use FaceBook, but was concerned that it would take too much of his time to do this. He would rather spend that time pursuing his golfing hobby. The end result for these individuals is that they wanted to control their use of online social networks. With this control, they could take advantage of online social networks’ good qualities in an efficient way so that it did

not impinge on time needed for other activities. This desire for control was a prevailing theme.

Despite these problems, the group as a whole enjoys using social networking sites and continued to use online social networking.

Category Four: Current Attitudes and Information Security Concerns

When the family member assisted in setting up the participant on the online social networking site, they usually helped create a profile, updated any security settings, and created an initial set of “friends”. This is a significant step that the participants may not have been able to do on their own. A side-effect of this assistance was that it encouraged a sense of comfort that the participant’s personal information was protected, since a trusted family member helped them do this. Most of the participants expressed little concern for the security of their personal information. But it was also true that everyone in the group took measures to protect their personal information. All members of the group only “friended” people they knew personally. All were very careful about making public their personal information and took care with their posts, another theme. Their trust of the family member who set up their account and their own actions to protect themselves made them feel that they and their information were safe in this environment. A few were also motivated to protect themselves because of conflicts with other FaceBook users. The conflicts resulted from differing political views for the research analyst and from differing religious views for the inventory manager. As a result of this conflict, the research analyst decided to avoid posting any political comments, and the inventory manager vowed to be more careful in his choice of his “friends”. The group as

a whole felt that FaceBook was a safe environment where they felt comfortable in their group of friends.

Despite these current frustrations, the group as a whole continued to use online social networking sites. Overall the sites offered enjoyment and enhanced their relationships with their circle of friends. They all appreciated their new and larger social networks, the networks that helped them keep in touch with old friends like the building contractor who lives two states away from his childhood friends. The bookkeeper and the housewife, both, felt more a part of their children and grandchildren's lives, especially now that some of them are away at college. For the bookkeeper, FaceBook helps her feel more a part of the world now that she has retired and lives alone, and it has opened her world to more people and more interests, like following the musical careers of family friends. For the teacher, the marketing executive, and the housewife, "friends" have provided support in their medical crises, and allowed them to support others in times of need. The entire group found enjoyment in the online social networks and it has become a necessary part of their daily lives. These benefits outweigh the negative aspects and explain why this group chose to continue using online social networks.

Appendix R: Subject Theme References

Table R1 indicates exactly which participants referenced which themes. For more detail describing each theme, the theme sequence numbers can be related to the themes defined in Table 4.

Table R1

Summary of Participants and Theme References

Theme Seq	(1- a)	(1- b)	(1- c)	(1- d)	(1- e)	(1- f)	(2- a)	(1- g)	(1- h)	(1- i)	(1- j)	(2- b)	(4- a)
Dana	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Barry	Y			Y	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Nora	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Daisie	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y		Y	Y		Y	
Fred	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	
Susan	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	
Joe	Y		Y		Y		Y			Y	Y	Y	
Gabe	Y		Y		5	6		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Carol	Y			Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Nell	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y	Y

Theme Seq	(4- b)	(3- a)	(4- c)	(3- b)	(3- c)	(4- d)	(4- e)	(4- f)	(4- g)	(3- d)	(3- e)	(3- f)	(3- g)
Dana		Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Barry	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y

Nora	Y	Y			Y			Y	Y	N	Y	Y	
Daisie	Y	Y				Y		Y	Y	N		N	
Fred	Y	N	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	
Susan	Y	N	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Joe	Y	N			Y			Y	Y	N		Y	
Gabe	Y	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y	N		Y	
Carol		Y	N				Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Nell	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y	N		Y

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