Online Lives? – Personal Diaries on the Web

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Rebecca L. Maxwell

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Project Adviser: Dr. Susan L. Kline, PhD., School of Communication

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Dedicated to the memory of gURLpages.com

For giving me the space for my first online diary.

VITA

May 5, 1983……………………………..Born, Fairbanks, Alaska

June 2005……………………………..B.A. Communication, The Ohio State University

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Abstract

Online diaries and journals have been in widespread use since 1995 and now there are millions of online diarists sharing their thoughts, feelings, and opinions with the world as well as interacting with others through these online diaries. The online diary offers incredible potential for self-expression but also communication with others through the online diary audience. We sought to understand the preferences and practices of the online diary writer by administering an online survey posted to online journals and online journal communities. Our methods were grounded in Uses and Gratifications research which seeks to understand users' motives for using media as well as self-presentation and self-esteem theory and relational dialectics theory. Survey questions assessed online diarists' uses, gratifications, and functions of online diaries; the structure, elements, and writing process; the diarists' orientation towards self or the audience; levels of development in online relationships made through online diaries, and online diarists' level of self-esteem.

Online diarists identified several uses, gratifications, and functions of their online diaries. Diarists saw their writing as reflecting on life, as enabling them to keep in touch with others, as helping them feel included, and helping them develop their opinions. They also used their diaries to vent emotions, to archive self-experiences, and to receive responses from others. Online diarists most identified their online diaries with confessionals, autobiographies, and memoirs, and identified their online diaries least as promotional or creative forms of expression. The participants were also likely to include personal information, such as real name, introspective biography, and personal disclosures on their online diary and indicated that they write out of habit and think about their online diary before and after writing in it. Responses for self-audience orientation questions indicated that online diarists construct their identity through writing but

responses from the audience were also important to them. Questions assessing the levels of development in online relationships indicated that relationships are taking place through online diaries and these relationships are characterized by high levels of breadth, depth, and understanding. Differences across different scales for self-esteem and age were also found. Generally, respondents with low self-esteem indicated that they use their online diary for identity construction and to feel included or liked. Respondents with low self-esteem were also more likely to hide their offline identity in cyberspace and included personal information with less frequency than those with high self-esteem. Those with higher self-esteem were more oriented towards their community of readers, had larger networks of readers, shared their online diary with people offline, and said they understood their readers more. Older online diarists tended to use their diaries for more personal functions, like gaining self-efficacy, while those who are younger were more likely to use their online journal to keep in touch or get advice from others. Additionally, those who are older constructed their identity more through writing and those who are younger are more focused on their readers and a perceived audience community. The younger online diarists were more likely to change or adapt their online diary content for their readers, and their relationships with their readers were characterized with more breadth and understanding. The online diary seems to act as a management tool for satisfying needs for connection and autonomy that are normally in tension. The online diarist also said that they have developed relationships through online diaries, indicating that communication through online diaries is not superficial or based on anonymity. The online diary is evidence that there can be developed relationships as well as personal expression through Computer-Mediated Communication.

Introduction

Thoughts, emotions, and worries are swirling around in my head as I toss and turn in bed, trying to get to sleep after a stressful day. Finally, I cannot take it anymore. I get out of bed, put on my glasses, and open my LiveJournal client software program. For ten or fifteen minutes I type rapidly, trying to organize the things in my head that are keeping me awake. Suddenly, I become tired, my mind is calm, and I fall back into bed, sleeping peacefully.

After a productive and eye-opening summer working in Los Angeles at a graphic design firm, I take time away from packing my suitcase back to Ohio to sit down at the computer and write. I start to get misty-eyed as I write about my summer experience which is coming to an end, remembering the good times, the beautiful places that I saw, the ways I spent the hot southern California weekends, and the experiences I gained from working a full work week for the first time in my life. Feeling pensive and sad, I finish writing to go back to packing and reflecting.

My teeth are gritted and I am fuming as I type passionately and angrily, my keyboard shakes. I have just had an argument with a friend and I need help. I write about the experience, venting my feelings and my frustrations. I ask questions, hoping that the people that I know read my online diary will respond with their suggestions and support. When I receive comments on my online diary post, I feel relieved, and I read my online friend's comments and suggestions with an open mind.

Ever since the age of sixteen in October 1999, I have been keeping some form of an online journal or diary. The scenarios described above are just a couple of examples of how my online journal is a part of my life and how it functions in my life. My online journal is not only a part of what I do, it is a part of who I am. It is a discussion board, a confessional, a logbook, and

a place to try creative writing, among many other things. Through it I have joined supportive and entertaining online journal communities, made friends, and recorded and cataloged nearly six years of life experiences. If I ever wonder what I was doing or thinking my first term at college, I simply consult my LiveJournal online diary archives. Of course, if I have a new experience or problem I want to write about, all I have to do is open a web browser, login, and type.

I understand my motivations and reasons for keeping an online journal, but I am not the only online diary writer on the World Wide Web. Online diaries are by no means a new and fledgling phenomenon on the World Wide Web. Anyone and everyone with access to the WWW can have their own online diary. With the advent of hosting sites such as LiveJournal.com, design and coding skills are no longer a prerequisite to keeping an online journal (Serfaty, 2004). Thus, in just the past five years, the number of online diaries (sometimes called "weblogs," or "blogs") has skyrocketed from 100,000 to over 4 million (Woods, 2005: p. 26). The online journal hosting site LiveJournal.com alone hosts over 2.5 million active journals – and this number is constantly growing. Hosting sites such as Diaryland.com, Xanga.com, and BlogSpot.com also host thousands and thousands of online diaries. Although the Pew Internet and American Life Project reports that just 9 percent of American adults using the World Wide Web have created an online journal, diary, or "blog," Pew also reports that over 8 million Americans have used an online journal at least once (Pew Internet and American Life). With millions of online diarists writing from around the world, it is clear that research must be conducted in order to understand the motivations and practices of the online diary writer.

While online diaries can vary infinitely in their appearance, structure, and content, they tend to be very personal in nature, and offer possibilities for interaction and community-building. The fact that the writers place their diaries on the World Wide Web intuitively suggests that an

integral part of the online diary writing experience is to communicate and connect with others.

Recently, online diaries have been touted as not only a great way to express self and connect

with others, but they can also serve myriad other functions. The Wall Street Journal reports that

"blogs" can be used to connect employers and prospective employees (Maher, 2004, p. B10).

Time Magazine details how famous filmmakers like Peter Jackson (*The Lord of the Rings*

Trilogy) and George Lucas (*Star Wars* films) use online journals to document their filmmaking

process and update fans as well as market their upcoming movies (Lev & Philadelphia, 2005, p.

66). USA Today reports that troops stationed in remote locations such as Afghanistan use online

journals to keep in touch with family and friends in the United States while chronicling their

difficult war experiences (Memmott, 2005, p. 13a). Popular music artists such as Billy Corgan,

formerly of the band Smashing Pumpkins, and rockers Marilyn Manson and Fred Durst of Limp

Bizkit use online diaries to communicate with fans and give them a glimpse into the more

personal side of their lives (Telling, 2004, p. 22). Philanthropic and charity organizations also

use online journals or "blogs" to communicate their messages and raise funding (Wallace, 2005,

p. 33).

Aside from these filmmakers, rock stars, philanthropists, and soldiers, there are millions

of other online diary writers who write in their online diaries every day. Why do these people use

online diaries? Diaries are no longer only secret, hidden under the bed or protected by lock and

key; today, millions write online diaries that potentially millions more can read and explore.

With the Internet increasingly becoming an integral part of daily life and experiences, it is

important to understand how and why online diarists use their online diaries.

Researchers from varying disciplines have studied the online diary and present

fascinating questions to help elucidate the phenomenon of the online diary. The primary

objective of this study is to understand the uses, gratifications, and functions of the online diary for the online diarist. Uses and Gratifications research by Stafford, Kline, and Dimmick (1999), Dimmick, Kline, and Stafford (2000), Charney and Greenberg (2002), and Flanagin and Metzger (2001) show that different types of mass media and communication media serve different need satisfactions for the user. The online diary is a communication media that is unique in its possibilities for personal self-expression and communication, and thus it is important to understand the uses, gratifications, and functions that it serves for its users.

In addition to understanding the motives of diarists, Kitzmann (2003) and Serfaty (2004) argue that the structure of online diaries and Web Pages influences the online diary, and so we also would like to learn more about the overall structure of the online diary. Relational dialectics explained by Baxter (1994) proposes that individuals experience tension between connecting with others and expressing individuality. This theory raises interesting questions about whether online diarists orient their writings towards themselves or to an audience. Research by Parks and Floyd (1996) and Stafford et al. indicates that relationships that take place through Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) can be very developed and meaningful. Online diarists can communicate and connect with their readers and so it is important to see how developed these relationships are. Research by Rosenberg (1979), Arkin (1981) and Tedeschi and Norman (1985) suggest that people with varying levels of self-esteem present themselves differently in social situations. Therefore, we also would like to explore the concept of self-esteem to see if there are differences in how low self-esteem and high-self esteem individuals use their online diaries.

Researchers have conducted both empirical and narrative studies of online diaries. In order to present the knowledge found in these studies, a review of the literature is presented next.

Literature Review

Although online journals have been used widely since 1995 (Serfaty, 2004; McNeill, 2003; Sorapure, 2003; Zuern, 2003), they still have not been studied very much by social science researchers. Much of the research on online journals and diaries has been conducted by humanities researchers who have conducted narrative analyses on various aspects of online journaling. Lejeune (2001) has studied both online and offline diaries, humanities researchers such as McNeill (2003), Sorapure (2003), Kitzmann (2003), Serfaty (2004) and Kennedy (2003) have examined personal self-expression and the impact of the audience in online diaries, and researchers like Cohn, Mehn, and Pennebaker (2004) and Kawaura, Kawakami, and Yamashita (1998) have conducted empirical studies of online diaries.

One of the most prominent online and traditional "paper" diary researchers whose works are mostly in French is Philippe Lejeune. In his essay, "How Do Diaries End?" Lejeune (2001) examined paper diaries kept by writers over long periods of time during the nineteenth and twentieth century. Specifically, he examined the documented evidence for how diarists have ended their diaries. Lejeune maintains that diaries are different from autobiography because unlike autobiography, which has an end point (the point that the writer finishes the autobiography), diaries are presumed to continue forever (or at least until the end of the life of the diarist.) The diary is always pointing towards the future while the autobiography deals with the past. By examining these paper diaries, Lejeune found that diary writers can become incredibly dedicated to their journals; in fact, their writing habits tend to reflect life events. Some diaries Lejeune examined contained examples of diary writers ending their diaries at certain momentous events in their lives – for example, getting married or meeting a life partner (p. 6). This trend emphasizes the fact that diaries can become very important to the life of the diarist.

The diarists who chose to abandon their diaries at a certain momentous event in their lives are emphasizing the fact that they want to move on to the next phase of their life. They associate their diary so much so with their earlier self, the "self" that wrote in the diary before the momentous event, that they decide to stop writing in the diary completely.

Through analyzing these diaries kept over decades by dedicated diary writers, Lejeune also discovered several functions of diaries. Not everyone keeps a diary; those who do keep a diary keep one for certain reasons. Diary writing serves different functions in their lives. The same could certainly be said for writers who chose to keep their diaries online. The first of Lejeune's four functions is "To Express Oneself:" "to release, to unload the weight of emotions and thoughts in putting them down on paper… putting something down on paper means separating it from yourself, purifying and cleansing yourself" (p. 5). These words are out on paper, away from the writer, giving them a sense of purging and "purification" of feeling. The thoughts and emotions captured on paper live in a separate world, that the diarist can open or close the cover to as they wish. This function is complicated when applied to the diary writers on the Internet. In cyberspace, the hypertext of an online journal is constantly present; the words are always available, twenty-four hours a day, to potentially millions of readers on the World Wide Web.

Another of Lejeune's diary writing functions is "To Reflect." In this function, "the diary offers a space and time protected from the pressures of life… you take refuge in its calm to 'develop' the image of what you have just lived through and to meditate upon it, and to examine the choices to be made" (p. 6). This function is different from the first function, "expressing oneself," in that instead of just pouring out emotions and thought onto paper, the diarist actually takes time to reflect on what these emotions and events mean. The third of Lejeune's diary

writing functions is "To Freeze Time." This function is not as inherently personal as the first two diary writing functions. To freeze time means "to build a memory out of paper, to create archives from lived experience, too accumulate traces, prevent forgetting, to give life the consistency and continuity it lacks" (p. 6). The final function that Lejeune found for writers of diaries is "To Take Pleasure in Writing" (p. 6). This function is fairly self-explanatory and involves writing "to give shape to what you live, to make progress in writing, to create an object in which you recognize yourself" (p. 6).

Lejeune's four functions pose interesting questions about how diaries exist on the World Wide Web. His first two functions, "To Express Oneself" and "To Reflect," are such intensely personal activities that one wonders why a diarist would choose to keep such personal writing on what is considered to be an impersonal medium, where just about anyone can read what the diarist writes, and anyone can stumble across the online journal by surfing around. If the "expressing oneself" and "reflection" functions exist for writers of paper diaries, how would such a function translate to an online diary? Clearly, diary writing functions are changing for writers of online diaries. Reflection and expression in such an open medium must work differently for writers of online diaries as opposed to traditional diarists. Additionally, memory capturing and writing development that take place in diary writing could be potentially hindered or helped by the writings' presence in cyberspace

McNeill (2003) took the on paradoxical idea of personal disclosure in a public forum by examining online diaries and their relationship to their offline counterparts in the context of personal interactions between the online diary writer and the audience. McNeill cites research by Lejeune that states that the personal nature of the diary contradicts the fact that it is displayed in such a public forum on the Internet. The public yet private or personal nature of the online

diary "confounds traditional distinctions between public and private writings and functions" (p. 26). In analyzing the online diary, one must dismiss all notions that the diary is private and secretive. McNeill then presented an analysis of the presence of the audience in the online diary. According to McNeill, the writer of an online diary is constantly cognizant of the audience. The audience is strangely attracted to the online diary because it is so personal. The online diary can resemble a confessional, and readers like to read secrets and personal information. Yet it is the anonymity of the Internet that allows the self-disclosure of the online diary writer to the audience, which an online diarist McNeill interviewed calls "the paradoxical combination of complete anonymity and a startling level of intimacy" (p. 27).

Even though McNeill repeatedly states her lack of enthusiasm about the actual content of the online diaries, she believes that the paradox of public/private and personal disclosure/public consumption is remarkable. By reading online diaries, most notably the famous Steve Schalchlin of "Living in the Bonus Round" (www.bonusround.com), McNeill observes that "online diarists are acutely aware of their readers, whose desires, expectations, and reading practices shape the texts that the bloggers produce" (p. 32). By writing an online diary, the diarist presumes that others will want to read what they are writing (p. 32). In fact, the online diarists McNeill quotes cry out for an audience and for interaction: "'drop me a comment or something so that I know somebody reads these!'" (p. 35). Creating an audience of readers, incorporating their responses into the diary (through commenting features, discussion boards, etc.) and communicating with them "means that the diarist has both joined and created communities, acts that inform the texts he or she will produce" (p. 32). In order to invite in new readers and make them feel welcome in their "community," online diarists use specific names and descriptions of people and places around them. Not only do readers want to be invited in to the online diary writer's community,

but they expect full self-disclosure, confessions and are angered if they are lied to or if information is omitted, even though the anonymity of the Internet makes lying easy (p. 37-38). McNeill cites virtual community researcher Rheingold (1993) in supporting the idea that a community is forming because there are "webs of personal relationships in cyberspace" (p. 5). The fact that online diarists make "personal and virtual connections" through their online diaries suggests that not only is communication and connection taking place, but perhaps personal relationships are developing as well. The creation of online communities also has the potential for impacting the online diarist's offline life.

McNeill concludes her discussion with analysis of the experience of Steve Schalclin of "Living in the Bonus Round." Schalchlin is a songwriter living with AIDS and his online diary is an example of the synthesis of online and offline lives. As Schalchlin states, "When I began this diary six years ago, I could barely function in the 'real' world. But in cyberspace, I was a superhero" (McNeill, p. 40). What had originally began as a "goodbye letter to the world" became one of the most important parts of his life; it became his means of functioning, "his diary consequently foregrounded the physical toll AIDS was taking on his body, his online presence compensated for these offline disabilities" (McNeill, p. 40). Additionally, the way he wrote his diary became the way he decided to live his life. He divided his diary into books and volumes, and Schalchlin states that "this simple act has a profound effect because it changed the way I perceive life itself… Now, instead of thinking of life as this long highway without end, I see it [as] little segments of time in which I can accomplish great things…. But more importantly, I look forward to each new book, wondering what will come but fully knowing that it is totally up to me to generate the life that will come" (McNeill, p. 42). Furthermore, he embraced his community of readers with the altruistic goal of educating the public about AIDS: "he invites

readers to think of themselves as part of a connected community, a group that now, through him, all "know" someone with AIDS, and therefore have personal interest in the fight against the disease" (p. 42).

Sorapure (2003) analyzed award-winning online diaries from the site Diarist.net in her narrative piece, "Screening Moments, Scrolling Lives." She argues that certain characteristics of the online diary influence its creation. The first characteristic that she identifies is the online diary interface. Online diaries exist as "a set of ones and zeroes… electrical impulses sent through the circuits of a computer or network" (p. 4). Writers are separated from their text as it exists in electrical form. Online diaries are also not as permanent as traditional paper diaries since they exist in binary code and can be easily lost or deleted. Sorapure also argues that the database-like format of online diaries influences the production of online diary writing: "Representing the self in database form – creating and coding information about oneself, populating a database that readers subsequently query – develops and reflects a sense of identity as constituted by fragments and segments, each of which is separately meaningful and equally significant" (p. 8). Sorapure continues to argue that this "disjointed" organization of the online diary is a "paratactic structure," borrowing from the grammatical term that "avoids establishing transitional connectives that would suggest how items are related" (p. 13). In other words, each online diary entry is equal in its importance, and the only "transitional connective" that relates the diary entries together is the particular author of the online diary (p. 13). She examined Diarist.net award-winner Ftrain.com, which invites the audience to explore different routes of navigation through the online diary in order to create meaning of the online diary. This paratactic structure of online diaries as well as the fact that online diary readers often jump from diary to diary, reading bits and pieces of people's online lives, promotes "gaining access to the thoughts

and experiences of another person, and making decisions that create meaning and enable readers to explore their own interests" (p. 18).

Sorapure also examined the presence of the audience as an influence on the creation of online diaries. It is the "audience hovering at the edge of the page" that is the impetus for online diary creation, and this expression online is "intrinsically public" (p. 9). Thus, online diarists use their diaries in order to make connections with others. In some of the online diaries Sorapure examined, she found that the diarists insisted upon monitoring who is part of their audience. In one particular example, an online diarist asked if anyone from her "offline life" discovered her online diary to e-mail her and let her know that they are reading. Sorapure concludes that "by asking these readers to tell her if they decide to read her journal, Athena shows that the content of her entries is influenced by knowing who reads them" (p. 11). Monitoring the "online" and "offline" readers of the audience shows that "the act of keeping a diary on the Web is thus both grounded in daily life and dissociated from it" (p. 12). Overall, Sorapure believes that online diary writing is not a "solitary venture" but a way to connect with others, and these "others" influence the creation of the online diary (p. 13).

By studying and interviewing online diarists, Kitzmann (2003) has observed a certain phenomena occurring that further influences the lives of online diary writers. Kitzmann argues that an online diary enables the writer to "exist" in another space besides their physical body; a space mediated by identity, privacy, reality, and time (p. 51). According to Kitzmann, this is a "place from which the world is examined, interpreted, and remembered" (p. 51). What is so different about the online diary is that they "depart from the conventions of written diaries most specifically in their experiential conditions – conditions arising from being situated within the material/social realms of computer-mediated communication" (p. 63).

Identity, the first dimension examined by Kitzmann, is presumed to be the center of all online diary writing. The online diary "stands in the place of the individual who wrote it" (p. 54). Kitzmann argues that the content of online and traditional diaries does not change much since the center of diary writing is always the "self." However, the privacy aspect of the online diary significantly affects self-expression, because the online diary is a communication tool and a means to connect with others. In some way, communicating through online diaries allows diarists to join communities by "writing from the heart" and makes their lives "significant through the feedback and support of readers" (p. 55, 56). These conclusions highlight the conflict in the online diary of representing self identity and writing for others. Kitzmann proposes that the audience is always anticipated and this influences the self that exists in "that different place." Reality is also "fetishized" in online diaries, as it is presumed that the real self is always represented and not simulated (p. 60). The fact that diarists can publish and receive responses in "real time" also influences the online diary and the online diary writer (p. 60, 62). Time influences the online diary "self" because "one writes now to have a presence in the future – an act of self-preservation" (p. 61). Kitzmann's argument supports earlier conclusions proposed by Lejeune (2001) that a primary function of diary writing is to archive life.

Two more relevant analyses of online expression were conducted by Kennedy (2003) and Zalis (2003). Kennedy proposes the idea of "technobiography" which seeks to understand the unique experiences of individuals using technology. By analyzing her experience instructing distance learning project she calls "Her@," Kennedy challenges the notion proposed by Turkle (1995) and others that people use virtual identities to mask their offline identities. The participants of Her@ used the Web Pages they constructed to display personal information and photos or information about their diverse cultural heritage. Kennedy proposes that because

participants of Her@ did not hide their offline identities, the perceived anonymity of the Internet gave them the freedom to express aspects of their identities that they might otherwise conceal. Zalis (2003) also discusses the issue of self-expression by studying multimedia and unique websites and web projects. Zalis concludes that these online projects are a means for self-presentation and a place to express ideas, and hypermedia and other special web effects can create a more dynamic virtual space. Zalis also touches on the issue of "home" and how users can create a space on the web that is secure, free, and a comfortable place for self-expression.

Serfaty (2004) examined common structural properties of twelve different online diaries to determine how these properties influence the online diary production. Serfaty also argues that online diaries are "a quintessentially American phenomenon" and that "online diaries renegotiate the public/private dichotomy" (p. 458). The first structural property identified by Serfaty is "accumulation," when online diarist employ online media (pictures, audio, video) and hypertext as a means to "[create] a rounded character… as opposed to the flat bi-dimensionality and rigid order imposed by print on a blank page" (p. 460). Serfaty explains that online diaries are "open-ended" as opposed to "closed" because, like Lejeune (2001) described, they continue without any end in sight, unlike an autobiography. Self-reflexivity of online journals means that the online diarists reflect and justify keeping an online diary, which means that they not only reflect on their lives in general but the specific experience of keeping an online diary. Serfaty also explains that online diaries involve "co-production" because readers can change and add to the text with the use of comments, guestbooks, and discussion boards attached to the online journal. Besides identifying these structural features, Serfaty argues that online diaries are an "American phenomenon." In a search for French and English online diaries at Google.com, Serfaty found that French:English online diary ratio is "one to roughly 36.5" (p. 466). Citing essays from

Emerson, Serfaty explains that online diaries glorify mundane events and the lives of individuals, which "issue[s] a declaration of independence from conformity and external rules – in other words, the American quest for self-reliance" (p. 469). Serfaty continues into an analysis the public/private spheres in the online diary and argues that the computer screen acts like the separation between self/other and the presence of the "other" influences the online diary text (p. 469-471). Serfaty's analyses thus point to how structural elements as well as the presence of the audience influence the online diarist's diary writing.

"The Gnome in the Front Yard and Other Public Figurations: Genres of Self-Presentation on Personal Home Pages" by Killoran (2003) examined personal online Home Pages and cites other studies on online Home Pages to determine whether or not Home Pages are a unique digital genre. First, Killoran discovered that personal Home Pages are not so personal after all – in fact, many of them fall under the category of what he calls "The Gnome in the Front Yard." This "Gnome in the Front Yard" concept is taken from the following idea by Tim Berners-Lee, "the inventor of the World Wide Web" (Killoran, 2003, p.69). This concept proposes that "the personal home page is not a private expression; it's a public billboard… It's openness, and it's great in a way, it's people letting the community into their homes. But it's not really home. They may call it a home page, but it's more like a gnome in somebody's front yard than the home itself" (Killoran, 2003, p. 69). In addition, studies cited by Killoran indicate that large percentages of personal Home Page users avoid displaying personal information on their Home Page, such as personal data or a short autobiography. One particular study found that 76 percent of the sample of personal Home Pages were rated in the lowest categories of personal disclosure (Killoran, 2003, p. 68).

The studies cited suggest that perhaps online expression is not as personal as it is believed to be. In fact, Killoran states that no matter the audience of an online expression genre, such as the personal Home Page, personal information would be "redundant:" "On home pages created primarily for an audience of family and friends, a personal introduction would be redundant, and on home pages created for an audience of chat room interlocutors, real-life personal revelation would compromise the author's on-line chat identity" (Killoran, 2003, p. 68). Killoran's study suggests that online expression does not have to be personal. If one were to apply Killoran's conclusions to online journals, some might assume that online journals are not very personal, or that the majority of them are not very personal. How personal are online journals? Do they invite readers into the writer's online "home," or are they merely the "gnome in the front yard?"

Killoran also concludes that these "personal" Home Pages borrow almost exclusively from existing genres of expression. In fact, Killoran proclaims that "people producing homepages are drawing on their knowledge and experience of verbal and paper presentations of self to help them construct their electronic presentations" (Killoran, 2003: p. 73). Therefore, Killoran suggests that personal Home Pages are not a new genre but an amalgamation of prose, poetry, biography, personal facts, and hyper-linked digital media. This borrowing from other genres does not mean that experimentation and expression are hindered. In fact, one Home Page studied by Killoran featured a morphed form of digital expression, an "autoble," an "autobiographical ramble" that experiments with characteristics of other genres of expression, the autobiography and the rant or "ramble" (Killoran, 2003, p. 74). This "autoble" further stresses that online expression genres borrow from existing genres of expression, but also points out that experimentation and morphing of characteristics is possible.

Although Killoran's study dealt primarily with personal Home Pages, one can possibly conclude that online diaries borrow from existing genres of expression. However, the experimentation seen in the "autobles" indicates that perhaps enough experimentation is taking place in online journals which points to the creation or evolution of a new genre of expression. It is important in a study of online journals to determine what elements of other genres of expression are utilized in online journals. By questioning participants about their use of genres of expression and elements in their online diaries, research can determine whether online diaries constitute a new genre of expression or are simply amalgamations of past genres. Having participants in a study on online diaries identify which expression genres their online diaries are most like would also help to determine how personal online diaries are.

A notable empirical study on online diaries was conducted by Kawaura, Kawakami, and Yamashita (1998). Conducted near the beginning of the online journal phenomenon, this study sought to determine some of the functions of online diary writing. The study sought to gather a sizeable sample of online diarists and determine their different motives for keeping an online diary. Kawaura et al. determine that there are several different categories under the umbrella of what a "diary" is: "a composition written in prose by the storyteller about the day-to-day-activities of an individual with himself or herself as the central character" (p. 235). This general definition of a diary as defined by Kawaura et al. seems to only mirror the "To Freeze Time" function that Lejeune (2001) describes as "creating a memory out of paper." Kawaura et al. maintain that all online diaries to some extent deal with the day-to-day activities of the individual writer; yet some diaries accomplish more than that.

The four different diary "categories" that Kawaura et al. (1998) define for the study are memoirs, journals, diaries, and open diaries. While their terminology complicates this literature

review; as up to this point the term "diary" and "journal" have been used interchangeably, Kawaura et al. simply separate different functions of diary writing into different categories. A memoir entails "records of fact oriented toward the self," a journal is "records of fact oriented toward a reader," a diary is "expressions of sentiment oriented toward the self," and an open diary is "expressions of sentiment oriented toward a reader" (Kawaura et al., p. 236). However, the authors do not pretend that these categories are mutually exclusive; they acknowledge that "there are a number of cases where a record of events, or memoir, and expression of sentiment, or… diary, coexist" (Kawaura et al., p. 236). The purpose of the study, then, was to determine what functions of diary writing are most important and present for writers of online diaries.

Search engines of personal home pages and diaries in Japan were utilized to obtain a large sample of 1,529 sites. The maintainers of these pages and diaries were e-mailed a questionnaire about "Web Diaries (motives for posting diaries, the gratification of a diary…) and the home pages (the private information posted); Internet use; individual psychological variables and demographic traits" (Kawaura et al., 1998, p. 237). Kawaura et al. received 377 valid responses. In analyzing the responses, the authors discovered that some writers were definitely more oriented to either public or private self-consciousness, indicating that different motivations and functions for writing Web Diaries exist. Those who were more oriented towards public self-consciousness publicized their Web Diaries more. Additionally, participants in the study who belonged in the "public self-consciousness" group of either memoirs and open diaries presumed that the reader was more interested in them as people and readership was based on those who were most interested in the writer as a person. Those whose diaries were more inclined to the "private self-consciousness" tended to write journals or diaries and believed that their readers were more interested in the information and intimate details provided in their Web Diaries.

Another empirical study involving online diaries was conducted by Cohn, Mehl, and Pennebaker (2004). Cohn et al. downloaded online diary entries of 1,084 U.S. diarists from LiveJournal.com from a four-month period, the two months preceding and following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Using the computer text-analysis program Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC), they analyzed the linguistic content of the online diary entries before and after the 9/11 attacks. A primary goal of this study was to understand "how long emotional states linger" after traumatic events (Cohn et al., p. 688). Using LIWC to analyze the emotional positivity, cognitive processing, social orientation, psychological distancing, and preoccupation with September 11 of the diary entries, Cohn et al. (2004) found that the diary entries reflected "pronounced psychological changes" (p. 689, 687). The diarists "expressed more negative motions, were more cognitively and socially engaged, and wrote with greater psychological distance" (Cohn et al., p. 687). The findings by Cohn et al. reflect the fact that online diarists use their diaries to express their true emotions and mental states and that online diaries themselves are tools for self-expression.

These various studies propose that online diaries can serve different functions for their writers. Lejeune (2001) found that the diarists use their diaries to reflect, express emotions, archive experiences, and enjoy writing. McNeill (2003) Kitzmann (2003) and Sorapure (2003) found by examining online diaries that self-presentation and other personal uses and gratifications are important, but the presence of the audience influences the online diarist significantly. Kennedy (2003) found that people do not always hide their offline identities in cyberspace and Zalis (2003) presented the different ways in which diarists and Web Site creators use hypermedia to express themselves. Serfaty (2004) found the online diary to be an "American" form of expression that is influenced by its structural properties and the presence of

the audience. Killoran (2003) cited evidence from studies on personal Home Pages to declare that online expression is not necessarily characterized by high levels of personal self-disclosure. Kawaura et al. (1998) found that writers of online diaries tended to orient themselves towards either public or private self-consciousness.

Given these lines of work, it is reasonable to suggest the need for further systematic research on the subject of online diaries, perhaps by utilizing concepts and perspectives from contemporary communication and mass communication theory. The next section reviews communication concepts and perspectives that may be useful for studying online diaries, and the proposed questions for research.

Uses and Gratifications

Central to many studies of media is the Uses and Gratifications perspective (Greenberg, 1974; Rubin 1977, 1979; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Flanagin & Metzger, 2001; Charney & Greenberg, 2002). Researchers use this perspective to attempt to understand media use based on user needs and the satisfaction of those needs. The Uses and Gratifications perspective has been used to study different types of mass media, such as television, radio, newspapers, and it is now being used to understand how people use the Internet. This perspective has several basic assumptions, the primary assumption being that the audience is active and acts in a goal-directed manner. It is the audience (or the user of the media) that determines what media they choose to use. Different media compete with each other and different media offer varying types of "need satisfaction" (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974, p. 75). That is, television offers certain need satisfactions that newspapers do not, and vice versa. The Uses and Gratifications perspective also assumes that the users of the media are "sufficiently self-aware to be able to report their interests and motives" for using particular media (Katz et al., p. 75). Some of the most prominent Uses

and Gratifications researchers are Greenberg (1974) and Rubin (1977, 1979) who have used this perspective to study television and television programs use. Initial studies of media in the Uses and Gratifications perspective often pose open-ended questions to participants to determine motivations for media use. Then, later research adopts these responses to create scales and measures to assess user motivations for media use. For example, Greenberg (1974) constructed a thirty-one item scale for assessing television need satisfactions by asking and analyzing open-ended questions posed to children about why they like watching television. Later research by Rubin (1977, 1979) used this scale in further research on television uses and adapted the scale to include just twenty-four items. Often, users will report that a certain media fulfills multiple need satisfactions. For example, Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) studied predictors of Internet use and found five different motives that users reported for using the Internet: interpersonal utility (communicating with others via the Internet), pass time, information seeking, convenience, and entertainment (p. 175, 186).

A method that Uses and Gratifications researchers employ in order to understand the different need satisfactions that different media offer is to compare several media types in their studies. For example, Flanagin and Metzger (2001) compared nine different media, including face-to-face communication, newspapers, television, and different functions of the Internet in order to determine the uses and motivations for uses of these different media. They found that people use interpersonal media such as the telephone, e-mail, and CMC for relationship maintenance, bonding, and other social functions. They also found that media like books, newspapers, and Internet information retrieval were used for entertainment and informational purposes. Face to face communication was used widely across different functions, both social and information-seeking.

Niche theory, which "predicts that a new medium will compete with established media for consumer satisfaction, consumer time, and/or consumer advertising dollars" also compares different media in order to understand motives and need satisfaction; for example, Dimmick, Kline, and Stafford (2000) compared telephone and personal e-mail uses and gratifications (Dimmick et al., 2000, p. 227). Different sociability gratifications for the phone and e-mail were found: the phone offered more need satisfaction for expressing caring, companionship, and giving advice, while e-mail offered need satisfaction for communicating with people who live far away and who respondents did not normally have time to communicate with. E-mail also offered "gratification opportunities" for fitting into hectic schedules and communicating with people across different time zones (Dimmick et al., p. 239). Dimmick et al. found that there was competition between e-mail and telephone but also that the two media were not proper substitutes for each other. These findings highlight the assumptions of the Uses and Gratifications perspective that different media can offer different need satisfactions to the user. However, findings by Charney and Greenburg (2002) on uses and gratifications of Internet indicate that uses of the Internet were not different from motivations for using other communication media. Their results indicate that gratifications for different media can be similar or overlap.

Studying online diaries from a Uses and Gratifications perspective could be particularly useful. Since online diaries have not been widely studied, it is important to first understand *why* people use online diaries. Identifying motives and need satisfactions of online diaries is a primary objective of this study. Similar to the methods of Stafford et al. (1999), this study will ask open-ended questions in order to determine the uses, gratifications, and functions of online diaries. Narrative analyses of online and offline diaries such as Lejeune (2001), McNeill (2003),

and Sorapure (2003) have observed some functions of online diaries, such as venting or connecting with an audience. Our research is also grounded in the uses and gratifications approach and niche theory (particularly Stafford et al. and Dimmick, Kline, & Stafford, 2000). This approach will help to determine the uses, gratifications, and functions of online diaries, particularly the affective, cognitive, and communication functions.

 RQ1: What are the uses, gratifications, and functions of online diary writing for online diarists?

Online Diary Structure

 The term "online journal" or "online diary" intuitively suggests that online journals and diaries are nothing more than the "online" version of their offline counterparts. These terms suggest that little differs between a paper diary locked with a key and a hyper linked, archived online diary that offers multiple opportunities for interaction (e.g., a discussion board, e-mail link, etc.). Clearly, online and offline diaries differ in their very nature. Therefore, researchers have explored the question, "What *does* make an online diary different from an offline diary?" One way to identify the differences between offline and online diaries would be to ask online diarists what writing structures their online diaries resemble and what elements they put on their online diaries. Serfaty (2004) argues that structural elements of the online diary influence its production. Determining whether online diarists identify their online diaries more with personal self-expression genres or communication structures would elucidate differences between the offline and online diaries. Killoran (2003) also questions the level of personal disclosure in online journals and online forms of expression. Determining if diarists include personal information and hypermedia elements in their online diaries would also indicate the level of privacy or personal information sharing in online diaries.

Lejeune (2001) also found that writers of offline diaries could often become very attached to their diaries. Asking online diarists about their writing processes and how they think about their diaries in their lives would help gain insight into how attached or devoted they are to their diaries. Hence the next series of research questions were advanced:

RQ2a-c: What is the structure of the online diary? What visual and textual elements do online diarists include in their diaries? What is the online diary writing process like?

Self versus Audience

Online diarists place their diaries in a very public medium where potentially millions of people can read their writings. Many online diarists have audiences of "readers" who can read and respond to what they have written in their online diaries. Online diarists also express their personal feelings and thoughts in their online diaries. Considering the analyses of the online diary audience by McNeill (2003), Sorapure (2003), Kitzmann (2003), and relational dialectics theory (Baxter, 1994), it becomes apparent that it is important to understand how readers orient their writing. They write personally, but they also communicate with an audience of readers. Intuitively, there exists a tension between orienting writing to the self (expressing personal emotions, thoughts, etc.) and to the audience (communicating and interacting with readers, writing to entertain or inform readers).

This tension can be explained by Baxter's work in relational dialectics. Baxter (1994) has identified that there are three opposing dialectics in relationships. The internal manifestations of these three dialectics are connection-autonomy, predictability-novelty, and openness-closedness (Baxter, p. 34). The external manifestations of these dialectics are, respectively: inclusion-seclusion, conventionality-uniqueness, and revelation-concealment (Baxter, p. 34). The differences between these internal and external manifestations is that internal manifestations of

the dialectic are "inherent within the relationship and refers to opposing tendencies, both of which are necessary for intimacy" while external manifestations are "inherent between the relationship and the broader social order" (Baxter, p. 10). The dialectic "connection-autonomy" is an opposing tension resident in all relationships. Each party in any relationship has needs at both ends of the dialectic. As Baxter (1994) states, "an intimate relationship necessitates that the two parties forsake some of their autonomy in order to construct an interdependent bond, yet too much connection between partners paradoxically can jeopardize that bond because the parties have lost their individual identities" (p. 11). Satisfying needs at both ends of the spectrum can cause tension and problems in relationship. Online diarists could suffer this tension. For example, an online diarist might want to vent and express negative feelings, but when they do, they bore or alienate their readers. The diarist still wants to express feelings but also wants to maintain their connection with their readers. The online diarist will experience tension while deciding which end of the dialectic is more important. Typically, a need at one end of the dialectic will remain somewhat unsatisfied at all times. However, Baxter suggests that there are management strategies for dealing with these tensions. These include balancing needs on both end of the dialectic, prioritizing one need and neglect the other, applying certain needs at certain times, and "reframing" needs so they are not in opposition (Baxter, p. 15-16).

Given that there is this tension between expressing self and communicating with others in online diaries, it is important to understand how online diarists orient their writings (self-audience), how they deal with their audience and privacy, and how they manage expressing self versus communicating with an audience:

RQ3: How does the presence of an online diary "audience" of readers affect the online diarist's experience? Are online diarists oriented more towards themselves or to their audience?

Levels of Development in Online Relationships

  If online diarists do have audiences of readers, do they form relationships with them? If relationships are formed, how developed are these relationships? Parks and Floyd (1996) examined the development of online relationships by surveying users of Usenet discussion newsgroups. They found that nearly two-thirds of the participants had relationships with people they had met through the Internet newsgroups (Parks & Floyd, p. 86). This study also found that these relationships had depth, breadth, and other characteristics of developed relationships. Contrary to other theories cited by Parks and Floyd (media richness theory, social presence theory, social context clues theory) that suggested that online communication would be "more impersonal and nonconforming" than other forms of communication, their findings proposed that online communication relationships can actually be very developed and meaningful (p. 81). Stafford, Kline, and Dimmick (1999) also found that a primary motivation for using e-mail was to maintain interpersonal relationships. These relationships were not "shallow" or "impersonal;" many respondents indicated that they used e-mail as a means to connect with friends and family (Stafford et al., p. 15, 12). Meaningful relationships can be had through different kinds of CMC, be it newsgroups (Parks & Floyd) or e-mail (Stafford et al.). We propose that meaningful relationships are taking place between online diary writers and their readers.

  Therefore, in this study we propose to adapt items from Parks and Floyd (1996) in order to determine the level of development of the relationships between the online diarists and their readers. Characteristics that could be measured are breadth, depth, predictability/understanding and commitment of relationship between online diary reader and online diarist:

  RQ4: Do online diarists develop relationships with their readers? If so, how developed are these relationships?

Self-Esteem

Personality traits and factors can influence how a person behaves in social situations, even in cyberspace. One such important personality trait is self-esteem. The concept of self-esteem has been studied widely across disciplines but one of the most prominent self-esteem researchers is Morris Rosenberg. He defines self-esteem as "a positive or negative orientation toward an object" (1979, p. 54). Those with "high" self-esteem have a positive orientation towards themselves and those with "low" self-esteem have a more negative orientation towards themselves. High self-esteem is not characterized by superiority over others, rather, a positive appreciation of self and self-worth. Those with low self-esteem think that they are "unworthy, inadequate, or otherwise seriously deficient as a person" (Rosenberg, p. 54). Low self-esteem often occurs when there is discrepancy between a person's "ideal self" and their "real self"- they cannot be who they desire to be and thus feel negatively about themselves in their current situation (Tedeschi & Norman, 1985, p. 309).

One strategy that users employ in order to deal with the discrepancies between ideal selves and actual selves and low self-esteem is called impression management. This strategy deals with how people manage their identities in social interactions, while self-esteem theory deals primarily with cognition of the self. Tedeschi and Norman (1985) argue that while these two theories operate in different domains (external/internal), "both processes serve the power interests of the individual and therefore are not in conflict" (p. 310). Impression management can be characterized as either assertive or defensive. Assertive impression management involves "ingratiation or self-promotion tactics" and serves to make the individual look better in front of a group (Tedeschi & Norman, p. 314). Affiliation tactics can include conforming to others; those who use assertive impression management dislike being alone and "tend to be strongly

influenced by others" (Tedeschi & Norman, p. 316). These people could be described as high self-monitors. Defensive impression management includes defensive strategies such as self-handicapping and is more categorized with low self-monitoring, "establishing long-term identities… emotional stability, and credibility" (Tedeschi & Norman, p. 317).

These theories on impression management could be very important to how people with different levels of self-esteem interact with others and present themselves on the Internet. Research cited by Leary and MacDonald (2003) indicates that there are drastic differences in how people with varying levels of self-esteem present themselves. Generally, those with high self-esteem present themselves in a positive light "to enhance social approval and acceptance" while those with low self-esteem are more "protective" "to avoid losses in approval and acceptance" (Leary & MacDonald, p. 407). These findings seem odd considering that those who already have a positive self-evaluation of themselves want to promote themselves so they gain even more positive evaluations. However, Leary and MacDonald explain that "there is often an advantage to increasing one's acceptance and standing in a group even when one already feels accepted" and those with low self-esteem engage in protective behaviors so as not to lose any amount of acceptance that they already had (p. 407). Additionally, Arkin (1981) found that those with higher self-esteem have self-presentation styles that are more risky whereas the self-presentation styles of those with lower self-esteem are more cautious. Research by Koehler and Trimpop (1996) that compared CMC with FTF interactions concluded that those who used CMC to communicate had higher levels of self-esteem, but we seek to understand how individuals with varying levels of self-esteem use online diaries. Therefore, it would be interesting to see how those with differing levels of self-esteem use their online diaries and how they interact with others through their online diaries. We propose to test participants' levels of self-esteem and

compare them with the motives and practices of online diarists:

RQ5: Do the responses to questions on diarist motives, uses, and gratifications, the online diary structure, elements, and writing process, diarist practices in managing self-expression and audience adaptation, and levels of development in diarist-audience relationships vary as a function of self-esteem?

<div align="center">Method</div>

Procedures

A convenience sample of participants was recruited from a recruitment script posted on communities and online diaries at Xanga.com and LiveJournal.com. Xanga.com and LiveJournal.com are two web services that offer free online journal/diary hosting to their members.

A recruitment script was posted on web services. On LiveJournal.com, a "community" is an organized space, structured like an online diary but similar in content to a message board, that can have potentially thousands of members. Community members have access to post on the "community" journal. Each member of this "community" also has a LiveJournal account. Many with a LiveJournal account keep an online journal or diary on Livejournal.com. Thus, the members of the online "communities" are often online diarists who happen to belong to a discussion-board like community where they discuss particular topics. Communities generally are focused around a certain topic of discussion – e.g. the "iPod" community has thousands of members who post and discuss the digital music player made by Apple Computer, the iPod. The postings on communities are generally not "locked" and are open to the public. In order to post these recruitment scripts on these communities, I used a LiveJournal.com account and joined the communities in order to gain posting access. Therefore, I was an actual "member" of the online

diary site. From the membership of these communities, I specifically solicited people who keep online diaries – not just those people who use their Livejournal.com accounts to discuss topics on "communities."

The subject matter of the communities was varied. A recruitment script was posted to an iPod community, a Seinfeld Community, and an Ohio State University community. The recruitment script was posted to these communities on LiveJournal.com because of the large size of the community. The average member size of these communities was 1340 members (i.e. 1340 other online diarists). In addition to postings on LiveJournal communities, some survey participants offered to post the URL to the survey on their online diaries and they did so on their Xanga.com diaries.

The recruitment script gave general information about the study and the researchers, and asked the reader to visit a URL on the Ohio State University School of Communication server to complete the online questionnaire. The recruitment script is presented in Appendix A.

Participants

There were 101 participants who completed the online questionnaire. Five participants' responses were discarded because they were under the age of 18 and three participants' responses were discarded because they did not finish the questionnaire. Thus, there were 93 total valid responses to the questionnaire and 93 participants whose responses were analyzed.

Participants who completed the questionnaire were 14% male and 86% female. The ages of the participants ranged from 18-46. Most participants (64.6%) were between 19 and 22 years of age. Eighty-three percent of participants were either currently enrolled undergraduates or had completed some undergraduate education or had a bachelor's degree. One percent had associate degrees, 3.3% had postgraduate education and 13% were not college educated. Nearly 81% of

participants identified themselves as white, and 6.5% Asian, 1.1% African American/Black, 1.1% Native American or Alaska Native, 4.3% Hispanic or Latino/a, 5.5% Other or No Response.

Generally, the participants had a lot of experience with keeping an online journal or diary. Participants had been keeping an online journal or diary for an average of 2.77 years (SD=1.71) and wrote in their online journals an average of 3.19 times per week (SD=3.69). Nearly 39% of participants also kept an offline or "paper" diary.

Participants were also asked about their network of readers. They were asked, "Who knows about your online journal?" and asked to check all that apply: "friends, acquaintances, family, co-workers, close friends, significant others, other (please specify)." Participants averaged 3.37 types of readers (SD=1.36) from the list above who knew about their online diaries.

Tasks and Measures

Open-ended uses and gratifications task. Participants were asked a series of open-ended questions on the questionnaire similar to studies conducted on use of e-mail and telephone and niche theory (Stafford et al., 1999). In order to understand the uses and gratifications of keeping online diaries, participants were asked about their motives for keeping an online diary: "What are your reasons/motivations for writing in an online journal? What do you hope to accomplish with your online journal?" They were also asked about what they liked ("What do you like about writing in an online journal?") and disliked ("What do you dislike about writing in an online journal?") about keeping an online diary. The methodology of these questions was similar to Stafford, Kline, and Dimmick (1999). See Appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire.

Responses to these three questions regarding diarist motives for keeping their online diary, as well as their likes and dislikes about keeping an online diary were unitized into separate responses following the procedures of Stafford et al. (1999). Each response was then categorized using general principles of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Categories were formed based on similarities of semantic prepositional content and conventional synonyms of language use.

Reliability was assessed by having a second coder assess 20% of the responses. Unitizing and categorizing reliability was acceptable, with the following Cohen kappas: motives, $k = 82$; likes, $k = .80$; dislikes, $k = 82$.

Uses and gratification scale. Items were gathered from previous work on uses and gratifications from new media (Dimmick et al., 2000) as well as from work on on-line diaries including measures adapted from Lejeune (2001), Kitzmann (2003), McNeill (2003), and Kawaura, Kawakami, Yamashita (1998). There were 50 items consisting of three sections of questions regarding the diarist's uses, gratifications, and functions of the online diary. Items followed a 1-5 Likert-type response format (5= "Strongly Agree," 1 = "Strongly Disagree). Some items were taken from Dimmick et al. (2000) and sought to determine the affective, cognitive, and communication functions of online journals based on previously existing measures used in niche theory studies. Other items were based on functions, uses, and gratifications identified in studies such as Kawaura et al. Lejeune described certain personal self-expression functions and McNeill and Kitzmann described functions of online diary writing related to the self-other concept and audience interaction. Some items were adapted from online diary functions described in Lejeune, McNeill, and Kitzmann and included in the scales.

Sample questions included "I use my online journal to unload thoughts and emotions," "I use my online journal to reflect on life experiences," "My online journal represents my life," "Writing in my online journal gives me power over who I am," and "Writing in my online journal helps me unwind."

Online diary structure. Online Diary Structure items asked participants what elements they include in their online diaries (e.g., types of writing or types of media) and what structure their online diaries resemble (newsletter, confessional, etc.). These questions were adapted from Killoran's description of elements included in personal Web Pages and online genres of expression. Online Diary Structure items were 26 items using a 1-5 Likert-type response format (5= "Strongly Agree," 1= "Strongly Disagree" or 5= "Always" and 1= "Never") adapted from Killoran (2003).

Sample items included "My online journal looks like or resembles letter writing," "My online journal looks like or resembles a confessional," "I use or display personal data on my online journal," and "I use or display photos of my environment on my online journal."

Writing process. Seven items were developed from Lejeune (2001) and Kitzmann (2003) to determine what the online diarist's writing process is like and how devoted or obligated diarists are to their online diary. These items also utilized a 1-5 Likert-type response format (5= "Strongly Agree," 1= "Strongly Disagree"). Sample questions included "I write regularly out of habit," and "I sometimes go back and reread entries."

Expressing self versus audience adaptation. Items on Expressing Self versus Audience Adaptation were adapted from McNeill (2003), Kitzmann (2003), and Sorapure (2003). These items were designed to determine whether online diarists orient their writings and practices towards the self or towards their audience. These items also were designed to determine what

type of an audience the diarist prefers. Fifty-six items followed a Likert response format, with 5 = "Strongly Agree" and 1 = "Strongly Disagree" the anchors of the scale.

Sample items included "The center of my online journal writing is myself," "I construct myself through writing," and "I regulate who has access to my online journal."

Development of online relationships. Sixteen items were developed from the study done by Parks and Floyd (1996) on levels of development in online relationships. These items followed a 1-7 Likert-type response format, with 7 = "Strongly Agree," and 1 = "Strongly Disagree. These items measured the depth, breadth, interdependence, and predictability/understanding and commitment of online relationships.

Sample questions included "My readers and I depend on each other," "My readers and I have a great deal of effect on each other," and "I feel I could confide in my readers about almost anything." Items for each characteristic of relationship development were tested for internal reliability and in the case of interdependence, understanding and commitment, some items were dropped to achieve acceptable reliability (alphas are presented in Table 9). Upon determining internal reliability items were averaged to form measures of online relationship interdependence, breadth, depth, understanding, and commitment.

Self-Esteem. Participants were also asked to complete the Self-Esteem Scale from Rosenberg (1979). This scale assesses the participant's level of self-esteem and consists of ten items following a 1-4 Likert response format (4 = "Strongly Agree," 1 = "Strongly Disagree).

Sample items included "I feel I have a number of good qualities," "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself, and "I take a positive attitude toward myself." After recoding the relevant items, they were averaged to form a measure of self-esteem.

<div align="center">Results</div>

Uses and Gratifications of Online Diarists

　　Open-ended responses. The first research question of the study sought to identify the uses, gratifications, and functions of online diary writing for online diarists. First, we asked participants several open-ended questions. Answers to the first question, "What are your reasons/motivations for writing in an online journal? What do you hope to accomplish with your online journal?" were categorized and the frequency and percentage of each motivation is displayed in Table 1.

　　Sixteen distinct categories of motives or reasons for keeping an online diary were reported. The largest category of motivations/reasons identified from the responses to the first open-ended question was "To keep in touch with or update others." Fifty percent of respondents ($n = 45$) said that one of their motivations for keeping an online diary was to keep in touch with or update friends, family, and others about what was going on in their lives. Some typical responses included, "To keep those who I am not in regular contact with updated on my life," "it's a way for my family and friends, who don't live around here, to keep tabs on me," and "To have a source for my friends to go to if they're worried or curious about me."

　　Another large category was "To archive experiences." Thirty-nine percent of respondents ($n = 35$) said that one of their motivations was to write down and preserve their memories, experiences, and feelings. Typical responses included, "I like keeping track of what's been going on in my college and my personal life" and "to keep a log of my life that I can look back on for both sentimental and resourceful reasons."

　　"To vent/express emotion," was another large response category, with 39% of respondents ($n = 35$) listing it as one of their motivations for keeping an online diary. Some responses included, "to write down some things that are bothering me or just to talk about my

day," "to get everything out of my head and put somewhere else," and "it serves as an outlet to let it all out."

Other response categories included "To share and discuss ideas" (18%, $n = 16$), "To reflect on the past" (17%, $n = 15$), "To receive responses from others" (16%, $n = 14$), and "Advantages over Offline Journal" (14%, $n = 13$). For percentages and frequencies of all motivation response categories, please see Table 1.

Responses to the question, "What do you like about writing in an online journal?" were categorized using the same principles. The frequencies and percentages of responses to this question are displayed in Table 2. Respondents reported seventeen distinct categories of likes about online journaling. The largest response category was "Freedom to express self/vent." Thirty-three percent of respondents ($n = 29$) said that they liked being able to express themselves in their online diaries. Some typical responses included, "I like being able to vent, and express myself without worrying about burdening someone else," "I can express my feelings almost without censor," and "If I'm having a crummy day I can write about it just to 'vent.'"

Twenty-nine percent of respondents ($n = 26$) said that they like "Getting Responses/feedback" from others. Some typical responses from this category include, "I can get immediate feedback from friends, can get opinions from people who I do not necessarily know well," "friends and online acquaintances can leave me messages to cheer me up," and "I like getting feedback on my entries and such, get input from a lot of people."

Nineteen percent of respondents ($n = 17$) said that they liked that their online diary was easy to use. Some responses from this category are, "It's easy and convenient," and "It's an easy way of writing about what's going on in my life." Some other categories of responses from this question include "Easy to keep in touch with others" (19%, $n = 17$), "Advantages over paper

journal" (18%, $n = 16$),"Knowing that others are reading" (16%, $n = 14$), and "Archiving and preserving memories" (15%, $n = 13$). For percentages and frequencies of all response categories from this open-ended question, please see Table 2.

Frequencies and percentages of categorized responses to the third open-ended question, "What do you dislike about writing in an online journal?" are displayed in Table 3. The largest response category to this question was "Unwanted/Ambiguous Audience." Respondents who said this was a dislike about their online diaries did not like the fact that they did not have control over who read their online diary. Twenty-eight percent of respondents ($n = 25$) said this was a dislike and some typical responses included, "I don't like the wrong people being able to read things about me," "[I don't like] the possibility of family members finding out!," and "The fact that my personal feelings can be seen by a lot of people that I might not know."

Sixteen percent of respondents ($n = 14$) said they disliked editing their writings. Some responses from this category include, "Sometimes I can't say exactly what I want to say for fear of what others might think," Sometimes, I have to censor what I say, because it's still online, meaning that there are others whom I might offend if I just type whatever I want," and, "I cannot be as honest or open as I would like to be, because I am always conscious of my audience." Fifteen percent of respondents ($n = 13$) said they disliked the potential for abuse on their online journal/diary. Some typical responses from this category include, "Some things I have written have gotten me into trouble with my family," "People can find it and use the info against you," and "someone could stalk me if I gave out too much information."

Some other response categories include, "Privacy Issues" (15%, $n = 13$), "Technology Issues" (14%, $n = 12$), and "Disadvantages compared to offline journal" (10%, $n = 9$). Respondents reported eleven distinct categories for their dislikes about online journaling. For

this open-ended question, respondents reported fewer categories than other open-ended questions. Additionally, the percentages for each category were lower when compared to distinct categories for other open-ended questions. These numbers indicate that perhaps respondents did not have as many dislikes about online journaling as they had likes and motivations for online journaling. It is also possible that respondents felt more strongly about their specific dislikes and chose to focus on writing about those specific dislikes rather than listing every single detail that they disliked. Also, only 88 out of 93 respondents answered this question, indicating that some participants did not have dislikes or chose not to report their dislikes. For percentages and frequencies of all response categories from this open-ended question, please see Table 3.

Closed-ended responses. Another way to answer RQ1 was through the analysis of the scale items constructed from uses and gratifications/niche theory studies (Dimmick et al., 2000; Stafford et al., 1999; Kawaura, Kawakami, Yamashita, 1998) and narrative analyses of diaries (Lejeune, 2001; Kitzmann, 2003; McNeill, 2003).

The pool of items related to diarists' uses and gratifications was subjected to exploratory factor analysis, with varimax rotation. Items were eliminated if they cross-loaded on more than one factor and if they did not load above .45. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was acceptable (.819), and factor analysis was appropriate for Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant. The analysis produced a 7 factor solution (eigenvalues > 1) that is displayed in Table 4.

The factor resulting from the analysis with the highest average mean was "Helps me reflect on life/self." The factor included items such as "I use my online journal to reflect on life experiences" and "I use my online journal to meditate on life." This factor had a mean of $M =$ 4.57. Respondents also gave three other factors higher than average means. Online diarists

believed that their diaries "Helped them keep in touch, gain info, advice" (M = 4.18). This factor included such items as "Writing in my online journal helps me give or receive advice on personal matters or issues" and "Writing in my online journal helps me keep in touch with people." They also agreed that their online diary was "A pleasant way to fill time" (M = 4.13). This factor included such items as, "Writing in my online journal helps give me relief from boredom," and "Writing in my online journal can be a pleasant way to fill time." Finally, online diarists reported that their diaries "Helps me develop opinions" (M = 3.85). This factor included such items as, "Writing in my online journal helps me analyze complicated issues and events," and "Writing in my online journal helps me develop my opinions and reasoning." Correlational tests with these factors and age and self-esteem yielded a negative significant (r = -.26) relationship with age and "Helps them keep in touch, gain info or advice," with younger diarists more likely to use their online journal to keep in touch or gain information or advice.

Three other factors emerged in the factor analysis. These means were closer to 3 indicating that the average participant did not agree as strongly with these functions. The factor "Gives me self-efficacy" included items such as, "My online journal disciplines me," and "My online journal makes me feel like I am capable of determining my future/fate."   A positive significant (r = .37) relationship between this factor and age was found. Those who were older were more likely to say that keeping their online journal gives them self-efficacy.

The factor "To feel included, liked" included items such as "I use my online journal to feel included," and "I use my online journal to make friends."   A negative significant (r = -.22) relationship with self-esteem was found with this factor. Those who had lower self-esteem were more likely to use their online journal to feel included and liked.   Finally, the factor "Helps me define who I am" included items like, "Writing in my online journal gives me power over who I

am," and "Writing in my online journal helps me define who I am." Correlational tests with demographic characteristics and self-esteem resulted in a negative significant ($r = -.29$) relationship with self-esteem, with those who had lower self-esteem were more likely to use their online journal to help define who they were.

Comparisons between open-ended and closed-ended response motivations. Obtaining both open- and closed-ended responses about diarists motivations permitted comparison between the categories. Four themes were repeated across both types of responses: diarists saw their writing as reflecting on life, as enabling them to keep in touch with others, as helping them feel included, and helping them develop their opinions. Categories emerged from the open-ended responses, however, that were not a focus for closed-ended items. Using their diaries to vent emotions, to archive self-experiences, and to receive responses from others were motives which were discovered that were distinct from the closed-ended items.

Structure and Elements , and Writing Processes of Online Diaries

The purpose of RQ2 was to determine the structure and elements of the online diary that online diarists most identify with as well as gain insight into the online diarist's writing process. The results for these research questions are presented in Tables 5, 6, and 7.

Online diary structure. Means and standard deviations for different online diary structures are presented in Table 5. A higher mean denotes a higher level of agreement with the statement, "My online journal looks like or resembles (structure)." The respondents said that their online diaries most resembled a confessional ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.05$), an autobiography ($M = 3.67$, $SD = .921$), and a memoir ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.17$). The respondents said that their online diaries least resembled novel writing ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 1.29$), a poem ($M = 2.03$, $SD = 1.31$), or a personal ad ($M = 1.44$, $SD = .827$). All other means and standard deviations for this question are

presented in Table 5. Respondents seemed to identify their online diaries most with personal expression genres rather than creative, commercial or "news" genres of expression.

Online diary elements. Means and standard deviations for online diary elements are presented in Table 6. Higher means denote a higher frequency of including a certain element on the online diary. Respondents indicated that they are most likely to include their real name ($M =$ 3.62, $SD = 1.41$), an introspective biography ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.00$), and personal disclosures ($M = 3.56$, $SD = .949$) on their online diaries. They also indicated that they are least likely to include photos of their environment ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 1.24$), photos of their friends ($M = 2.66$, $SD = 1.31$), and photos of their families ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 1.23$) on their online diaries. Means and standard deviations for other online diary elements are presented in Table 6. Respondents indicated that they include personal information on their online diaries most frequently and photos of family, friends and their environments less frequently.

Self-esteem, age, and online diary structure and elements. A series of Pearson correlations were conducted between age, self-esteem, and online diary structure, elements and process. These correlations are presented in Tables 5 and 6. As can be seen, younger respondents were more likely to include personal data ($r = -.26$), their real name ($r = -.33$), and photos of friends ($r = -.22$), and less likely to include introspective biography ($r = .24$). Those with high self-esteem were more likely to include their real name, photos of themselves, as well as photos of their friends (rs were .25, .25, and .24, respectively). There were no other significant correlations.

The writing process.

Another purpose of RQ2 was to gain insight into the online diarist's writing process. We wanted to find out how much online diarists think about their diaries while away from them and

how disciplined or obligated they are to their online diaries. The means reported for these questions indicated moderate to high levels of agreement with the statements (see Table 7). A mean of 4.36 for the question, "I sometimes go back and reread entries" indicates that respondents care enough about their online diaries to spend time after they have written in them to review what they have written. Comparing the data for the questions "I write regularly out of habit" ($M = 3.97$) and "I write regularly out of discipline" ($M = 2.77$) shows that online diarists write in their diaries more out of habit than obligation and self-discipline. However, online diarists also agree that it is important for them to update their diaries regularly ("It is important that my online journal is updated regularly," $M = 3.43$).

Respondents also indicated that they think about their online diary before writing in it ($M = 3.43$) and some time after they have written in it ($M = 3.51$). Diarist also indicated a moderate level of agreement that they imagine their online diary read by others in the future ($M = 3.52$).

The writing process items were subjected to correlational tests with age and self-esteem. A positive significant correlation with responses to the statement, "I think about the entries I have constructed some time after I have written them" and self-esteem ($r = .24$) indicates that those with higher levels of self-esteem tend to think about their online diary entries more after they have written them.

Expressing Self versus Connecting with Audiences

The purpose of RQ3 was to determine whether online diarists express self or connect with their audiences in their online diaries. Two factor analyses were completed on the 14 items presented for "Expressing Self Online", and the 23 items presented regarding diarists' "Online journal readers." Similar procedures were followed for these factor analyses. The resulting factors, with relevant alphas, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 8.

Three factors emerged from the first factor analysis. The factor, "Diarist hides/protects off-line identity in cyberspace" included such items as, "I hide my offline identity in cyberspace," and "I utilize pseudonyms to protect my identity." These subscales were subjected to correlational tests with self-esteem and age. A negative significant ($r = -.35$) correlation between SE and this hides/protects self was found. That is, those who had lower self-esteem were more likely to hide their offline identity in cyberspace. A positive significant ($r = .22$) relationship between this factor and age was also found. Those who were older were more likely to hide or protect their offline identity in cyberspace.

The factor, "Diarist constructs identity/self through online writing" included items such as "The center of my online journal writing is myself," and "I construct myself through writing." This subscale was subjected to correlational tests with self-esteem and age. A positive significant ($r = .25$) relationship between this scale and age was found. The mean on this scale (> 4) also indicates that many participants strongly agreed that constructing self was a feature of online diary-keeping.

Finally, the factor "Inconsistency of online self" including items like "If people from my offline life read my online journal, it would be inconsistent with my online persona." This factor was negatively correlated with self-esteem ($r = -.47$). The mean on this subscale ($M = 2.42$) indicates that participants tended to disagree that their online and offline selves inconsistent.

Five factors also emerged from the factor analysis of the online journal reader items. The first, factor, "Reader comments give diarist's life significance" included items such as "Comments from my readers of my online journal make my life seem more significant," and "I want people to read my online journal. This factor was tested for correlations with age and self-esteem and a negative significant ($r = -.25$) relationship with age was found. This correlation

suggests that those who are younger are more likely to believe that comments on their journal give their life significance.

The factor "Diarist alters writing based on his/her awareness of readers" included items such as "I change what I write based on the knowledge that other will read what I write," "I am aware of my readers while I write in my online journal," and "I incorporate readers' comments into my online journal." This subscale had a negative significant ($r = -.33$) correlation with age, with those who are younger more likely to alter their writing based on awareness of readers.

The scale, "My diary has created a community of loyal readers," consisted of items such as "My diary has created a community of loyal readers" and "I assume readers will want to comment on my writings." This scale had a positive significant ($r = .22$) relationship with self-esteem. Those who had higher self-esteem are more likely to say their diary has created a community of loyal readers. A negative significant relationship ($r = -.28$) between this subscale and age was also found.

"Diarist expects readers to participate, not lurk" was a subscale discovered through factor analysis consisting of two items. This factor had a negative significant ($r = -.26$) relationship with age. Therefore, participants who were younger were more likely to expect their readers to participate and not "lurk" on the online diary.

The subscale "People in my offline life read my online diary" consisted of two items and had a positive significant ($r = .40$) relationship with self-esteem. Those with higher self-esteem were more likely to share their online diary with those in their offline life. Self-esteem and age were also subjected to correlational tests with the "network size" question from the general online journal use patterns questions. Respondents were asked how many groups (groups of readers, e.g. friends, family, co-workers, etc.) they shared their online diary with. Respondents

reported an average network size of 3.37 groups ($SD = 1.37$). A positive significant ($r = .30$) correlation between this network size and self-esteem was found. That is, those with higher self-esteem had a larger network of readers and shared their online diary with more groups of people.

Development of Online Relationships

The purpose of RQ4 was to determine whether relationships between online diarists and their readers existed and if these relationships were highly developed. Questions were adapted from Parks and Floyd (1996) and sought to measure depth, breadth, interdependence, and predictability/understanding and commitment of online relationships. The relevant means and standard deviations of five factors resulting from exploratory factor analysis are contained in Table 9. As can be seen, the means of most of these factors are relatively high. The Parks and Floyd items were anchored by a 1-7 scale where 1= "Strongly Disagree" and 7= "Strongly Agree." Therefore, the midpoint of this scale would be 3.5. Each factor had a mean above this midpoint except Interdependence ($M = 3.26$) which fell slightly below the midpoint. Means for some factors were a significantly above the midpoint, particularly Breadth (M = 4.94) and Depth ($M = 4.70$).   Means for Understanding ($M = 4.25$) and Commitment ($M = 4.01$) were not as high but still a significant amount above the midpoint of the scale. These means indicate that the average respondent agrees that their relationship with their online diary readers is characterized by breadth, depth, understanding, and commitment.

Considering the percentages of respondents who answered the Parks and Floyd items at or above the midpoint of the scale, most respondents agreed with items indicating high levels of development in their online relationships. Nearly 86% of respondents answered the Breadth factor items at above the midpoint of the scale, and nearly 83% of respondents answered the Depth factor items above the midpoint of the scale. Sixty-eight percent of respondents answered

the Understanding items and 62.4% Commitment items above the scale midpoint. These high

percentages, particularly for Depth and Breadth, indicate that respondents thought that their

relationships with their online diary readers were developed. Only one factor, Interdependence,

had a near majority of respondents answer below the midpoint of the scale (47.5%). Thus, not

only do online diarists have developed relationships with their readers, but these relationships

have depth, breadth, and meaningful characteristics such as understanding and commitment

associated with them.

To determine the extent to which these components of relationship development were

intercorrelated, Pearson correlations were computed between these relationship characteristics.

These relationship components were significantly inter-correlated, but those relationships ranged

from a weak relationship between understanding and interdependence ($r = .21$) to a moderately

strong correlation between commitment and interdependence ($r = .58$).

Finally, a series of Pearson correlations were used to examine the relationship between

these components and self-esteem, as well as with age. These results are also presented in Table

9. As can be seen, age and self-esteem were not significantly correlated with relationship

interdependence, depth, or commitment. However, age was negatively associated with

relationship breadth ($r = -.26$). Those who were younger were more likely to discuss a breadth

of topics in their online diaries.   Age was also negatively correlated with relational

understanding ($r = -.21$). Those who were younger were more likely to report higher perceived

understanding of their readers. There was also a positive significant ($r = .22$) correlation between

relational understanding and self-esteem. Those with higher self-esteem were more likely to

have higher perceived understanding of their readers.

<div align="center">Discussion</div>

The purpose of this study was to find the uses, gratifications and functions of online diary writing for the online diarist as well as to gain insight into the online diary structure, elements, and writing process. We also wanted to learn more about how diarists orient their writings (to themselves or to their audience) and how developed the relationships between online diarists and their readers are. We also wanted to test these findings in relationship to demographic variables and self-esteem.

The open-ended and closed-ended results for uses and gratifications items indicated that diarists had both personal and communication needs that they fulfill with their online diaries. Fifty percent of respondents indicated that one of their motivations for keeping and online journal or diary was to keep in touch with others. Being able to communicate with friends and online diary readers was important to the online diarists. They said they enjoyed receiving responses and comments to their online diary writings from their audience. They also expressed concerns about their audience, and said they disliked the potential for abuse by their readers and disliked having an unknown or unwanted audience. However, the many of the aspects respondents said that they enjoyed the most about keeping an online diary were related to personal expression. Respondents said that they liked and were motivated by being able to vent and express emotion, archive their experiences, and create a logbook of sorts in which they could preserve memories and feelings. These responses reflect the functions of traditional diary writing that Lejeune (2001) identifies, specifically the "express oneself," "reflect," and "freeze time" functions. Online diarists fulfill their needs to express themselves and connect with others through their online diaries.

The means of factors resulting from factor analyses on closed-ended uses and gratification items indicate that online diarists most agree that they use their online diaries to

reflect on themselves and their lives ($M = 4.57$) (see Table 4), and they agree least that they use their online diaries to gain self-efficacy ($M = 3.04$). The high mean for reflection on self and life ($M = 4.57$) mirrors responses found in the open-ended uses and gratifications. Some of the most frequently reported likes and motivations for keeping an online diary were venting emotions and reflecting on life and experiences. A relatively high mean for communicating with others as uses and gratifications of online diaries ($M = 4.18$) reflects the responses from open-ended uses and gratification tasks that an important part of keeping an online diary is to communicate and connect with others.

The structures that the respondents said their online diaries most resembled mirror their responses for the open-ended uses and gratifications task. Diarists said their online diaries most resembled confessionals, autobiographies, and memoirs, which fits well with what respondents said they liked about keeping an online diary (the freedom to vent and express themselves). The respondents did not identify their diaries with communication or news genres, even though they also said that a primary motivation for keeping an online diary was to keep in touch with others (see Table 5). Unlike Killoran's (2003) discoveries that Web Pages are not necessarily very personal, diarists indicated that they frequently include personal elements, such as their real name and introspective biographies, on their on online diaries. What the respondents include less frequently, however, is photographs of personal parts of their lives – friends, family and their environment. Contrary to Serfaty's (2004) idea of "accumulation" that online diarists will strive to include text, hypermedia, photos, and other elements in order to create a more bi-dimensional picture of themselves, respondents did not report high frequencies of including theses elements on their online diaries (see Table 6). The responses for writing process items indicate that users write out of habit rather than discipline. They are also thinking about their online diaries during

their offline lives, as they agree with statements that they think about their diary entries before they write them and read diary entries after they write them. These results reflect Lejeune's (2001) findings that online diarists can become dedicated to their diaries.

Moderately high means of scales of items resulting from factor analysis on expressing self versus audience orientation items indicates several things. The mean was relatively high for orienting writing to the self ("Diarist constructs identity/self through online writing," $M = 4.04$), and slightly less for orienting towards the audience ("Reader comments give diarist's life significance," $M = 3.79$; "Diarist alters writing based on his/her awareness of readers," $M = 3.45$); these statistics further show that writing in the online diary is a personal form of expression. McNeill (2003) and Sorapure (2003) argue that the online diarist is always aware of the audience while writing. The results of this study show that while the audience and communicating with others through the online diary is important, expressing self and writing personally is also an important function. Personal identity as the center of the online diary emphasizes Kitzmann's (2003) point that the self is the main focus of online diary writing. The moderately high means for audience awareness also support Kitzmann's proposal that audience response and communication has great significance for the online diary writer. To consult Baxter's (1994) suggestions for managing tension of relational dialectics, it seems that online diarists are balancing their connection-autonomy needs at both ends of the dialectic. The means for different factors of orienting towards self/audience did not differ greatly and thus there seems to be a harmonious balance between the two different writing orientations for online diarists. The online diary seems to be a medium with which to reconcile or manage these needs which are usually in tension. The online diary is thus a management tool that people can use to express themselves ("autonomy") and communicate with and connect with others ("connection").

Given that online diarists consider communicating with their readers an important part of keeping an online diary, it is not surprising that the results from the items adopted from Parks & Floyd (1996) indicated that the relationship between diarist/reader is a developed one. Means for scales resulting from factor analyses were fairly high, particularly depth, breadth, and understanding (see Table 10). Commitment and interdependence were not as high as the other characteristics, but generally the results for these different properties of relationships indicated that the relationships between the online diary reader and the online diary writer are fairly developed. Comparing these means to means calculated from the factors reported in Parks and Floyd, there are some noticeable differences. The means for breadth ($M = 4.94$) and depth ($M = 4.70$) are considerably higher than found by Parks and Floyd (breadth, $M = 4.16$; depth, $M = 4.46$). The mean score for the one predictability/understanding item that emerged from factor analysis ($M = 4.25$) was higher than the mean for the five-item factor presented by Parks and Floyd ($M = 3.99$). The mean for interdependence ($M = 3.26$) was lower than what was found by Parks and Floyd ($M = 3.81$). There was only a slight difference between our findings for commitment ($M = 4.01$) and Parks and Floyd's findings ($M = 4.02$). Clearly, relationships that take place through online diaries are characterized by more depth and breadth than the online relationships studied in Parks and Floyd. These findings could be explained by the fact that diarist and audience connect on a more personal level – online diarists reported often venting or discussing personal issues – than do users of newsgroups. Relationships between online diarists and their readers are also categorized with about the same level of commitment and a much lower level of interdependence.

It is important to note that not only do online diarists indicate that they have relationships with their readers, but these relationships are not fleeting and superficial – they have depth and

breadth, and the relationships are important to the online diarists. Large percentages of respondents also indicated that they had developed relationships. By considering frequencies of responses at or above the midpoint of the scale, as Parks and Floyd (1996) did, the following differences across relationship traits are apparent. Eighty-six of respondents answered the Breadth factor items above the midpoint of the scale, and nearly 83% of respondents answered the Depth factor items above the midpoint of the scale. Only 57% of respondents in Parks and Floyd reported Breadth at or above the midpoint of the scale and just 21.4% of respondents reported Depth at levels above the midpoint.

The other factors of Predictability/understanding (68%) and Commitment (62.4%) also had percentages higher than reported in Parks and Floyd (1996) (Predictability/Understanding, 59.2%; Commitment, 49.0%). The results for Interdependence again indicated that relationships made through online diaries are not as interdependent as those studied by Parks and Floyd. These percentages indicate that online diarists are not only making and maintaining relationships through their diaries, but these relationships are developed and especially characterized by high levels of Breadth, Depth, Commitment, and Understanding. One possible reason why the relationship results in this study were not as highly characterized by Interdependence is the type of audience diarists often have. Many readers of online diaries are online diarists themselves, and therefore they might feel more autonomy and not as dependent upon other diarists. They have their own opportunities for expression in their online diaries, and they also have other readers of their own.

Self-Esteem and Age

The scales on motivations, structure, elements, and self-other were subjected to correlational tests with the Rosenberg SE scale and demographic characteristics. Many

interesting and statistically significant relationships were found with age and self-esteem. The significant correlations with age were not expected

Self-esteem. The two important uses and gratifications of online diaries (expressing self, connecting with others) were reported differently by participants with different levels of self-esteem. Generally, respondents with low self-esteem indicated that they use their online diary for identity construction and to feel included or liked. Respondents with low self-esteem were also more likely to hide their offline identity in cyberspace and included personal information with less frequency than those with high self-esteem. Those with higher self-esteem were more oriented towards their community of readers, had larger networks of readers, shared their online diary with people offline, and said they understood their readers more. It seems that the orientation of the online diarists varies as a function of self-esteem. That is, those with lower self-esteem generally orient their writings to themselves (although they want to fit in), but hide their identities, and those with higher self-esteem are more concerned about their audience and do not hide their offline identities. These results support Tedeschi and Norman's (1985) ideas on how those with varying levels of self-esteem conduct themselves in social and self-expression by utilizing impression management strategies and self-monitoring. These results also support the findings by Arkin (1981) that those with higher self-esteem will be more self-promoting and those with lower self-esteem will be more cautious in self-presentation.

Age. The correlations found between scales and age were a surprise, particularly since the ages of the participants were not evenly distributed – most participants were between the ages of 19 and 22. Generally, the findings were consistent across the different RQs and scales. Older online diarists tended to use their diaries for more personal functions, like gaining self-efficacy, while those who are younger were more likely to use their online journal to keep in touch or get

advice from others. Additionally, those who are older constructed their identity more through writing and those who are younger are more focused on their readers and a perceived audience community. The younger online diarists were more likely to change or adapt their online diary content for their readers, and their relationships with their readers were characterized with more breadth and understanding. These differences based on age could possibly be explained by maturity – the majority of the participants were college students between the ages of 19 and 22. The older participants were most likely out of college and had been in the work force for at least a few years. These lifestyle changes could alter their perception of their online diary and their online diary audience. Older participants also have had social opportunities outside the undergraduate educational experience, and thus, they may not feel as inclined to search for new social networks online.

Significance

This research study is significant not only because it is an empirical study in a topic area that has not been widely researched in the social sciences disciplines, but also because it attempted to be very exhaustive. We did not choose to focus on one aspect of online diary writing – for instance, the online diarist/audience relationships – but instead, we researched this topic and explored many areas of study – the online diary structure, expressing self versus connecting with the audience, and uses, gratifications and functions of the online diary. Online diarists manage the tensions in relational dialectics (Baxter, 1990) through their online diary: they express themselves, yet they can also connect with others. The online diary is a management tool for the conflicts and problems that can result from tension in relational dialectics. Differences that resulted from self-expression functions and audience orientation functions were consistent across different scales and can be explained by differences in age and

self-esteem. This study thus presents interesting news to self-esteem researchers on how people

with varying levels of self-esteem express themselves online and use online diaries and CMC.

Validity of Responses and Respondent Reactions

When conducting any survey online, there is always the possibility that participants could

fabricate information or lie. However, in this study, there was no incentive offered to the

participant (except sincere gratitude) for participating. The survey was long, involving time and

mental effort to answer over one hundred questions. Completing the survey took approximately

thirty minutes, which is not exactly a short survey. Since there were no incentives given for

taking the survey and it did require such a time commitment, it is reasonable to assume that the

participants who participated were genuinely interested in the subject matter at hand (being

online diarists themselves) and therefore as honest as they could be in completing the survey.

Additionally, the recruitment script postings on online communities at LiveJournal.com

received many supportive comments. Online diarists would reply to the recruitment script in a

comment, saying such things as, "I filled out the survey! Good luck with your research!" and "I

participated! It was interesting!" One participant even linked to the survey in his online diary and

composed a diary entry in response to the thoughts and feelings he had about online diary writing

after taking the survey. I was very grateful and delighted to not only gain participants to my

study, but also to receive such supportive responses. These comments further lead me to believe

that the participants in this study were honest, genuine, and sincerely interested in the topic at

hand.

Limitations and Ideas for Future Research

While this study does have its strengths, it also has limitations. First, the sample size was

not random or very large ($n = 93$). We used a convenience sample. The online diary population is

large and difficult to pinpoint in a manner that would lend to a random sample. However, future research on online diaries should focus on obtaining a large, random sample of online diarists with varying demographic characteristics. Also, the sample was not evenly split between men and women. Eighty-six percent of the participants were women, even though Cohn et al. (2004) cites research that says "demographic research indicates that users of 'social' Web sites like livejournal.com are representative of the American population" across demographic characteristics (p. 688). Whether the gender-skewed sample we obtained indicates that there are more female online diarists or women are just more likely to participate in online surveys is not for certain. However, it would be useful if future studies attempted to gain a more gender-balanced sample and determine if there are differences across responses based on gender.

Some responses found in the open-ended uses and gratification task were often not represented in closed-ended surveys. The "archiving/looking back" function was often reported as a motivation or like about using an online diary and it was not represented in the uses and gratifications scales. Also, some participants stated technological advantages of the online diary that motivated their use of online diaries. Future studies should consider these different open-ended responses in constructing scales or surveys for online diarists.

Many respondents indicated that they enjoyed being able to vent emotions in their online diary. This function suggests possibilities for future social scientific research. Venting can be considered a mental health function that contributes to mental and spiritual well-being. It would be interesting to conduct an experiment with online diaries. Participants could be tested on their levels of depression and other mental health indicators, then asked to keep an online diary for some period of time or some frequency. Then, the participants could be tested again to see whether or not the measures tested at the beginning of the study have changed or not. A similar

kind of test with keeping an online diary and communicating with readers and self-esteem could also be conducted.

Some online diary research suggested that online diaries are instances of "lives online" (Zuern, 2003), but the findings of this research study show that online diaries are more than that. The self and the audience are important in online diary writing. More than anything, I believe that the practical implication of my findings is that the online diary is a management tool for easing the tension between connecting with others and expressing self. Beyond that, the online diary serves different functions in the diarist's life. It is a part of their lives emotionally and socially. I argue that online diaries are not simply lives on lives, but there is integration between online and offline life. Online diaries are a tangible and visible manifestation of how using the Internet and "self" are connected.

Table 1

Open-ended Response Motivations for keeping an Online Diary

Motivation	*n*	% (*n=90*)
To Keep in Touch with or update others	45	50%
To Archive and Preserve Events and Experiences	35	39%
To Vent/Express Emotion	35	39%
To Share and Discuss Issues	16	18%
To Reflect on The Past	15	17%
To Receive Responses from Others	14	16%
Advantage over Offline Journal	13	14%
To Meet New People	11	12%
Be Like Other Journalers/Friends	10	11%
To Read other Journals	9	10%
Enjoyment/Relieve Boredom	7	8%
Writing Practice/Experimentation	6	7%
Want Attention	6	7%
To be Creative	4	4%
Experiment with Technology	4	4%
Others	15	17%

Table 2

What Diarists Like about Online Journaling

Likes	*n*	% (*n=89*)
Freedom to Express Self/Vent	29	33%
Getting Responses/"Feedback"	26	29%
Ease of Use	17	19%
Easy Way to Keep in Touch with Others	17	19%
Advantage over Paper Journal	16	18%
Knowing that Others are Reading	14	16%
Archiving/Preserving Life and Memory	13	15%
Anyone can read it	8	9%
It's Secure	8	9%
Can meet People	7	8%
Sharing Thoughts	6	7%
Experiment with Design	4	4%
Relaxing	4	4%
Can sort Through Issues	3	3%
Is entertaining	2	2%
Can Read Others	2	2%
Others	11	13%

Table 3

Diarist Dislikes about Online Journaling

Dislikes	n	% (n=88)
Unwanted/Ambiguous Audience	25	28%
Censoring Writings	14	16%
Potential for Abuse	13	15%
Privacy Issues	13	15%
Technology Issues	12	14%
Disadvantages Compared to Offline Journal	9	10%
Disadvantages v. Face to Face Communication	6	7%
Drama/Conflict Issues	5	6%
Not Read Enough	4	5%
Obligation	5	6%
Others	13	15%

Table 4

Uses and Gratifications of Online Diarists from close-ended items

Types of Uses	Eigenvalue	% Var	*M*	*SD*	SE *r*	Age *r*
Helps me reflect on self, life	3.68	15.35	4.57	.531	.09	.05
(5 items, α = .88)						
to unload thoughts and emotions to reflect on life experiences to reflect on myself for general reflection to meditate upon life						
Gives me self-efficacy	2.98	12.45	3.04	.928	-.13	.37***
(3 items, α = .78)						
disciplines me makes me feel like I am capable of determining my future/fate gives me self-efficacy						
To feel included, liked	2.86	11.94	3.05	1.13	-.22*	-.14
(3 items, α = .87)						
to feel included to feel liked to make friends						
Helps me develop opinions	2.57	10.71	3.85	.969	-.13	.18
(3 items, α = .90)						
helps me analyze complicated issues and events helps me develop my opinions and reasoning helps me make up my mind about important issues and events						

Table 4

Uses and Gratifications of Online Diarists from close-ended items, Continued

Types of Uses	Eigenvalue	% Var	*M*	*SD*	SE *r*	Age *r*
Helps me keep in touch, gain info, advice	2.50	10.42	4.18	.821	.14	-.26*
(3 items, α = .86)						
helps me give or receive advice on personal matters or issues helps me keep in touch with people helps me give or receive information with people						
Pleasant way to fill time	2.19	9.12	4.13	.769	.09	.08
(3 items, α = .73)						
helps give me relief from boredom helps give me something to think about besides my own problems can be a pleasant way to fill time						
Helps me define who I am	1.95	8.14	3.08	.942	-.29**	.06
(4 items, α = .86)						
gives me power over who I am helps me define who I am to give my life consistency to give my life continuity						

Note. * *p* < .05; ** *p* < .01; *** *p* < .001. SE = Self Esteem. Mean scores denote higher levels

of agreement.

Table 5

Online Diary Structure

Structure	Mean	SD	Pearson r SE	Pearson r Age
Confessional	3.92	1.05	-.17	.09
Autobiography	3.67	.921	-.01	-.07
Memoir	3.49	1.17	-.07	.14
Creative Writing	3.11	1.36	.12	-.06
Offline Diary	3.09	1.34	.04	.02
Prose	2.76	1.48	-.03	.15
Letter Writing	2.67	1.13	-.09	-.04
News Editorials/Op-ed	2.66	1.27	-.13	.12
News Articles	2.52	1.20	-.12	.19
Song Lyrics	2.48	1.40	.04	-.03
Novel Writing	2.39	1.29	.02	-.11
Poem	2.03	1.31	-.01	.05
Personal Ads	1.44	.827	.08	-.11

Note. Higher scores denote higher levels of agreement. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. SE = Self-Esteem.

Table 6

Online Diary Elements

Element	Mean	*SD*	Pearson *r* SE	Pearson *r* Age
My Real Name	3.62	1.41	.25*	-.33**
Introspective Biography	3.61	1.00	.01	.24*
Personal Disclosures	3.56	.949	.15	.02
Confessions	3.52	1.12	.02	.10
Descriptive Biography	3.50	.985	.09	.02
Personal Data	3.43	1.07	.14	-.26*
Photos of myself	3.16	1.27	.25*	-.19
Avatars	2.88	1.57	.13	-.06
Song Lyrics	2.78	1.36	.07	-.16
Graphics	2.76	1.33	.19	-.18
Photos of my Environment	2.70	1.24	.10	-.17
Photos of Friends	2.66	1.31	.24*	-.22*
Photos of Family	2.28	1.23	.10	-.19

Note. Higher scores denote higher frequency of including element on online diary. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.   SE = Self-Esteem.

Table 7

The Writing Process

Question	Mean	SD	Pearson r SE	Pearson r Age
I imagine my online journal read by others in the future.	3.52	1.12	.033	.008
I sometimes go back and reread entries.	4.38	.847	-.055	.125
I write regularly out of habit.	3.97	1.07	.020	.053
I write regularly out of discipline.	2.77	1.10	.160	.039
It is important that my online journal is updated regularly.	3.43	1.14	.082	.092
I think about my online journal during the day before writing in my online journal.	3.43	1.30	.090	.153
I think about the entries I have constructed some time after I have written them.	3.51	1.08	.24*	.01

Note. Higher scores denote higher levels of agreement. * *p* < .05; ** *p* < .01; *** *p* < .001.   SE = Self-Esteem.

Table 8

Managing Self and Other in Online Diaries

Self-Expression versus Reader Adaptation	Mean	SD	Pearson r SE	Pearson r Age
Self-expression				
Diarist hides/protects off-line identity in cyberspace (4 items, α = .78)	2.30	8.56	-.35***	.22*
Diarist constructs identity/self through online writing (3 items, α = .62)	4.04	.737	.14	.25*
Diarist regulates access to diary (3 items, α = .86)	3.50	1.27	.04	-.08
Incorporating Readers into the Self				
Reader comments give diarist's life significance (2 items, α = .80)	3.79	.638	-.04	-.25*
Diarist alters writing based on comments from readers (4 items, α = .72)	3.45	.814	-.14	-.33**
My readers comment on my writings (2 items, α = .71)	3.46	.849	.22*	-.28**
People in my offline life read my online diary (2 items, α = .86)	3.71	1.04	.40***	-.15
Diarist expects readers to participate, not lurk (2 items, α = .80)	2.76	1.05	-.04	-.26*
Network size on those who know about online diary	3.37	1.37	.30**	-.18

Note. Higher scores denote higher levels of agreement. *p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001. SE = Self-Esteem.

Table 9

Levels of Development in Online Relationships

Scale/Items	Mean	SD	SE r	Age r
Interdependence (2 items, α = .91)	3.26	1.55	-.04	-.19#
My readers and I depend on each other.				
My readers and I have a great deal of effect on each other.				
Breadth (3 items, α = .90)	4.94	1.31	.01	-.26*
The communication between my readers and I is limited to just a few specific topics. (R)				
The communication between my readers and I ranges over a wide variety of topics.				
The communication between my readers and I covers issues that go well beyond the topic of any one particular newsgroup.				
Depth (3 items, α = .72)	4.70	1.29	.12	-.16
I tell my readers exactly how I feel.				
I feel quite close to my readers.				
I feel I could confide in my readers about almost anything.				

Table 9

Levels of Development in Online Relationships, Continued

Scale/Items	Mean	*SD*	SE r	Age r
Understanding (1 item)	4.25	1.52	.22*	-.21*
I can accurately predict what my readers' attitudes are.				
Commitment (3 items, α = .78)	4.01	1.37	-.03	-.12
The relationship I have with my readers is a big part of who I am.				
I would make a great effort to maintain my relationship with my readers.				
The relationship with my readers is not very important to me. (R)				

Note. Higher scores denote higher levels of agreement. # = $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. SE = Self-Esteem.

APPENDIX A

My name is Rebecca Maxwell and I am a student in the School of Communication at The Ohio State University. I am conducting a study with Dr. Susan Kline to gain a better understanding of online journal writers. Online journal writing is an interesting way of using the Internet and expressing self online. Unfortunately, not much is known about online journal writers as there has been very little research on this topic. I am conducting this study to better understand why people keep journals and diaries online and how it affects their lives.

If you keep an online journal or diary, we would love for you to participate in this study. As both an online diarist myself and a researcher, I am interested in how online journals affect the lives of those who keep them. There are no right or wrong answers – the questionnaire simply asks about your online journal writing experience, and will only take about 45-60 minutes of your time to complete. Your participation would be so valued and appreciated. While we do not have any compensation to give you for participating, we would be more than happy to share the results of the study for you after it is completed.

Your responses, and should you provide an e-mail address, will be kept strictly confidential. However, while we make every effort to protect your confidentiality, no guarantee of internet survey security can be given, as transmissions can be intercepted and IP addresses can be identified. However, your responses will be kept strictly confidential once collected and we will NOT use IP addresses or e-mail addresses to identify your responses. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

Please visit [insert URL to survey on School of Communication web server] to find out more information and complete the questionnaire. Thank you!

Rebecca L. Maxwell maxwell.146@osu.edu
Dr. Susan Kline kline.48@osu.edu
614-292-0464
School of Communication, The Ohio State University

APPENDIX B

The following are questions about your experiences as an author of an online journal. This research is being conducted by Rebecca L. Maxwell and Dr. Susan Kline of from the School of Communication at The Ohio State University. We are trying to gain a better understanding of authors of online journals. Please answer all questions as honestly and completely as possible. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and will be destroyed after the study is completed.

Instructions for individual sections are provided on the following pages. If you would like to receive the results of this study after it is completed, please enter your e-mail address below. Your e-mail address will be kept strictly confidential and will be used ONLY to send you the results of this study.

☐ YES, I am interested in receiving results of this study. I understand that my e-mail address will be kept strictly confidential and will be used only to send me the results of this study.

E-mail address (e.g. name@e-mail.com): _____

If you have any questions please contact:
Rebecca Maxwell at maxwell.146@osu.edu
Dr. Susan Kline at kline.48@osu.edu or by calling 614-292-0464 to leave a message for either Rebecca Maxwell or Dr. Kline.

If during this study you wish to withdraw from the study, please close your browser. Partially completed surveys will NOT submit any information to the completed survey database if you close your browser before hitting the "Submit" button on the final page of the survey. There will be an indicator on the final page telling you which is the last page of the survey.

This survey asks questions about your experience as an online journal writer. If at any time during this study you are feeling upset or distressed, please feel free to contact Ohio State University Counseling Services at 614-292-5766 or http://www.ccs.ohio-state.edu/

Please click "Continue" to continue to the Participant Consent Form and begin the questionnaire. BY CLICKING CONTINUE YOU CONFIRM THAT YOU ARE AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER. The questionnaire should take approximately 45-60 minutes to complete.

Online Journal Writing Experience

1. First, how long have you been keeping an online journal?   ____ years _____ months
2. Do you keep a paper or offline journal?   ____ yes   _____ no
    2a. If so, for how long have you been keeping it?   ____ years _____ months

3. How often do you write in your online journal?   _____ Times per day
                                                             _____ Times per week
                                                             _____ Times per month

4. Who knows about your online journal?   Check all that apply.
    ___ Friends
    ___ Acquaintances
    ___ Family
    ___ Co-workers
    ___ Close Friends
    ___ Significant Others
    ___ Other (please specify) _____

5. What are your reasons/motivations for writing in an online journal? What do you hope to accomplish with your online journal?   Try to be as complete as you can.

6. What do you like about writing in an online journal?

7. What do you dislike about writing in an online journal?

8. What emotions/feelings do you have while writing in your online journal?

8. Who do you think a typical reader of your online journal is? What sort of person is a typical reader?

9. Describe a typical entry, or provide a link to a typical entry.
What are some frequent subjects you write about in your online journal?

10. If you keep an offline or paper journal, can you compare and contrast your <u>online</u> journal with your <u>offline</u> journal?

Structure of your online journal

Please answer each item, using the 1-5 scale provided.

	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1

My online journal looks like or resembles:
1. Letter writing
2. Memoir
3. Autobiography
4. Creative writing
5. Offline diary
6. Personal ads
7. Poem
8. Prose
9. News articles
10. News Editorials/ Op-Ed
11. Song Lyrics
12. Novel Writing
13. Confessional

Please answer each item using the 1-5 scale provided.

	Always 5	Often 4	Sometimes 3	Seldom 2	Never 1

I use or display the following on my online journal:
1. Personal data
2. Descriptive biography
3. Introspective biography
4. Personal disclosures
5. My real name
6. Photos of myself
7. Photos of family
8. Photos of friends
9. Photos of my environment
10. Graphics
11. Avatars
12. Confessions
13. Song Lyrics

The Writing Process

Please answer each item, using the 1-5 scale provided.

	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. I imagine my online journal read by others in the future.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I sometimes go back and reread entries.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I write regularly out of habit.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I write regularly out of discipline.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. It is important that my online journal is updated regularly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I think about my online journal during the day before writing in my online journal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I think about the entries I have constructed some time after I have written them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Expressing yourself online

Please answer each item, using the 1-5 scale provided.

	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. The center of my online journal writing is myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I construct myself through my writing.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I have a lot of freedom to express my ideas online.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I feel anonymous on the internet.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I hide my offline identity in cyberspace.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I think I can be anyone in cyberspace.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. I keep personal information out of my online journal in order to protect my online persona. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

8. If people from my offline life read my online journal, it would be inconsistent with my online persona. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

9. If people from my offline life read my online journal, they would be surprised by what they would read. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

10. I keep my identity (real name, etc.) anonymous. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

11. I utilize pseudonyms to protect my identity. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

12. I use locking tools (filters, password protection, defining access to certain users or groups, etc.) to protect my online journal. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

13. I want to be part of an online journal community. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

14. I want to be like other online journal writers. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Your online journal readers

Please answer each item, using the 1-5 scale provided.

	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1

1. In my online journal I have control over personal information about myself. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

2. I regulate who has access to my online journal. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

3. I let people I know in my offline life read my online journal. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

4. I like to have people I know in my offline life read my online journal. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

5. I prefer to have only people I know via cyberspace read my online journal.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

6. I try to protect my online journal from certain people.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

7. Comments from readers of my online journal makes my life seem more significant.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

8. Social support from readers of my line journal makes my life seem more significant.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

9. I intend for other people online to read my online journal.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

10. I change what I write based on the knowledge that others will read what I write.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

11. Writing in my online journal gives me a sense of community.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

12. I have found friends with similar interests to mine through writing my online journal.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

13. I prefer to have my audience to keep quiet.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

14. One or more of my online journal readers have become part of my online journal writings on a personal basis.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

15. I am aware of readers while I write in my online journal.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

16. My diary has created a community of loyal readers.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

17. My readers comment on my writings.   ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

18. I assume readers will want to comment on my online journal.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

19. My readers are similar to me.   ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

20. I want people to read my online journal.   ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

21. I incorporate readers' comments into my online journal.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

22. I am annoyed by people who "lurk" on my online journal; that is, those that read but do not comment.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

23. I expect readers of my online journal to comment or participate in discussions about my online journal.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

My Audience influences:

	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
24. the structure of my online journal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
25. the topics I choose to write about.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
26. how I express my feelings.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
27. what specific thoughts I choose to say.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
28. how I express my opinions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please answer each item, using the 1-7 scale provided.

My Online Journal Readers:

	Strongly Agree 7	Agree 6	Slightly Agree 5	Neutral 4	Disagree 3	Slightly Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1

1. My readers and I depend on each other.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

2. My readers and I have a great deal of effect on each other.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

3. My readers and I have little influence on each other's thoughts.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

4. The communication between my readers and I is limited to just a few specific topics.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

5. The communication between my readers and I ranges over a wide variety of topics.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

6. The communication between my readers and I covers issues that go well beyond the topic of any one particular newsgroup.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

7. I tell my readers exactly how I feel.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

8. I feel quite close to my readers.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

9. I feel I could confide in my readers about almost anything.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

10. I have told my readers what I like about them.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

11. I am very uncertain about what my readers are really like.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

12. I can accurately predict what my readers' attitudes are.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

13. I do not know my readers very well.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

14. The relationship I have with my readers is a big part of who I am.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

15. I would make a great effort to maintain my relationship with my readers.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

16. The relationship with my readers is not very important to me.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

1. I have met one or more of my online journal readers.   _____ yes _____ no

Functions of an online journal

Please answer each item, using the 1-5 scale provided.

Strongly Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

I use my online journal

1. to unload thoughts and emotions. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
2. to reflect on life experiences. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
3. to reflect on relationships. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
4. to reflect on my self. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
5. for general reflection. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
6. to meditate upon my life. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
7. to help me make decisions. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
8. to socialize with others. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
9. to feel included. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
10. to feel liked. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
11. to make friends. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
12. to give my life consistency. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
13. to give my life continuity. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
14. to take pleasure in writing. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

My online journal

Please answer each item, using the 1-5 scale provided.

	Strongly Agree 5	Slightly Agree 4	Neutral 3	Slightly Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1

My online journal …

1. represents my life. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
2. represents my life experiences. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
3. is a self-monitoring tool. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
4. is a place for self-expression. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
5. disciplines me. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
6. is a place to document my progress. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
7. is a reflection of myself. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

8. makes me feel like I am capable of determining my future/fate.
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

9. gives me self-efficacy. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
10. is a place for preserving memories. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
11. is a place for constructing identity. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
12. is a spiritual form of experience. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
13. is a personal therapy tool. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
14. is a literary production. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
15. is a necessity in life. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Please answer each item, using the 1-5 scale provided.

Writing in my online journal	Strongly Agree 5	Slightly Agree 4	Neutral 3	Slightly Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1

Writing in my online journal…

1. gives me power over who I am. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
2. helps me define who I am. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
3. helps me unwind. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

4. helps me figure out issues or problems I am having. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

5. helps me better understand myself. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

6. helps me to understand the people in my life better. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

7. helps me remember past events. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

8. Helps me analyze complicated issues and events ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

9. Helps me develop my opinions and reasoning ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

10. Helps me make up my mind about important issues and events ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

11. Helps give me relief from boredom ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

12. Helps give me something to think about besides my own problems ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

13. Can be a pleasant way to fill time ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
14. Can be dramatic ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
15. Can be often entertaining ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
16. Can be often exciting ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
17. Helps me share ideas and opinions ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
18. Helps me express personal messages ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

19. Helps me give or receive advice on personal matters or issues ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

20. Helps me keep in touch with people ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

21. Helps me give or receive information with people
☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

My Self

Please answer each item, using the 1-4 scale provided.

	Strongly Agree 4	Slightly Agree 3	Slightly Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I feel like I have a number of good qualities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. I certainly feel useless at times.	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. At times I think I am no good at all.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Demographic Information

Please answer the demographic questions below. None of the data you provide will identify you, and all of the data will be terminated when the study is complete.

1.   Please indicate your gender by checking one of the following boxes.
☐ Male
☐ Female

2.   Please indicate your age in the space provided below.
_____

3.   Please check the box below that indicates the highest level of education you have achieved?
☐ No High School Diploma
☐ High School Graduate
☐ Associate Degree
☐ Current Undergraduate Student. If so, what is your rank (FR, SOPH, JUN, SNR)?
_____
☐ Some Undergraduate School (not currently enrolled and no degree)
☐ Bachelor's Degree
☐ Master's Degree
☐ Professional Degree (MD, JD, etc.)
☐ Doctorate Degree (PhD)
☐ Other

4. Please check the box that most accurately indicates your employment status.
☐ Part-time
☐ Full-time
☐ Don't work

5. Please check the box below that most accurately describes you.
☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
☐ Asian
☐ Black or African American
☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
☐ White
☐ Hispanic/Latino/a
☐ Other _____

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