

‘Pro’ Social Media: Using Key Social Psychological Theories to Increase Prosocial
Engagement on Social Media Sites

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Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Heriot-Watt University

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July 2015

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Abstract

Prosocial Behaviour has a strong history rooted in Social Psychology. However, it has yet to be researched in the realm of social media. This line of research aims to better understand Prosocial Behaviour in social media environments and learn how to increase positive engagement online through the theoretical framework of Walther's (1996) hyperpersonal model of computer-mediated communication. Four studies were conducted to obtain this goal. The first two studies explore what factors affect prosocial behaviour on social media sites. In particular, study one examines how gender, appearance, and number of social media friends affect whether or not individuals will give aid to their friends. The outcome suggested that the less social media friends a person had, the less likely the individual would help. Study two delves into whether the bystander effect and personalisation affect Prosocial Behaviour on social media sites. The bystander effect did not affect helping but personalising a message made it more than two times more likely that an individual would receive help. The third study looks at some barriers that prevent prosocial behaviour on social media sites. Three main barriers resulted including 'Information Overload,' 'Can't Live with It, Can't Live without It,' and 'Privacy and Permanence of Information.' The final study examines Prosocial Behaviour in a social media context through the means of two events where social media played an important role in helping behaviour. These events exemplified that social media is a powerful tool and can be used to effectively promote Prosocial Behaviour and also provided support for Walther's hyperpersonal model. As the first to delve into helping behaviour on social media sites, this thesis advances the current body of knowledge on Prosocial Behaviour. In addition, the four studies provide vital knowledge on how to increase prosocial behaviour online using Walther's (1996) hyperpersonal model on CMC. With the current Social Media Revolution and time spent online, it is vital to make social media engagement more positive and user friendly. The three main ways to increase positive online engagement gleaned from this thesis are 1) Make things personal, 2) Create a social media group with a hierarchical structure, and 3) Edit privacy settings and friend/follower settings on personal social media pages to fit one's individual needs.

Acknowledgements

There are several individuals whose work to this thesis deserve acknowledgement. First, I would like to thank my supervisor, Terry Lansdown for his help in guiding me through the PhD process. I would also like to thank Nicola McGuigan and Charles Evans for their aid in providing feedback on my thesis. In addition, I want to thank my previous supervisors Bjarne Holmes and Adrian North for their time and assistance. Of course, I am forever indebted to my parents for their unending love and support while I undertook a PhD overseas. And last, I want to thank my undergraduate Professor, Heather Haas for encouraging me to study abroad and inspiring me to do a PhD.

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Table of Contents

Chapters

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Overview
- 1.2. Research Questions
- 1.3. Thesis Overview

2. Literature Review

- 2.1 Overview
- 2.2. Prosocial Behaviour
 - 2.2.1 What is Prosocial Behaviour?
 - 2.2.2 Why Do People Help?
 - 2.2.3 The Bystander Effect
 - 2.2.4 Factors that Affect Prosocial Behaviour
- 2.3. Prosocial Behaviour in Online Environments
 - 2.3.1 Overview
 - 2.3.2 The Psychology of Online Environments
 - 2.3.2a Impersonal Model of Computer-Mediated Communication
 - 2.3.2b Interpersonal Model of Computer-Mediated Communication
 - 2.3.2c Hyperpersonal Model of Computer-Mediated Communication
 - 2.3.2d Barriers that Inhibit Effective Computer-Mediated Communication
 - 2.3.2e Cyber Archaeology & Technological Determinists
 - 2.3.3 Online Environments and Prosocial Behaviour
 - 2.3.4 The Bystander Effect Online
 - 2.3.5 Personalisation
- 2.4. Social Media
 - 2.4.1 Overview & Definition
 - 2.4.2 Types of Social Media Sites
 - 2.4.2a Social Focused
 - 2.4.2b Career Focused
 - 2.4.2c Culture Focused

2.4.3 Uses of Social Media

2.4.2a Impression Management & Self-Presentation

2.4.2b Social Capital & Popularity

2.4.2c Self-Disclosure

2.4.4 Issues & Concerns with Social Media

2.4.4a Privacy

2.4.4b Polarisation

2.4.4c Social Comparison & Jealousy

2.4.4d Cyber-bullying & Online Trolling

2.4.4e Attention Economy

2.4.5 The Use of Social Media to Organise

2.5 Conclusions and Next Steps

3. Definitions and Theoretical Framework

3.1 Prosocial Behaviour

3.2 Social Media

3.3 Theoretical Framework

4. Study One: No Help for the Friendless: The effect of gender, appearance, and number of Facebook friends on helping behaviour

4.1 Overview

4.2 Method

4.2.1 Participants

4.2.2 Design

4.2.3 Measures

4.2.4 Procedure

4.3 Results

4.4 Discussion

5. Study Two: “[Insert Name Here]”: The effect of group size and personalisation on the response rate to Facebook messages

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Overview

5.3 Method

5.3.1 Participants

5.3.2 Design

5.3.3 Procedure

5.3.4 Measures

5.4 Results

5.5 Discussion

6. Study Three: Social Media Engagement

6.1 Overview

6.2 Method

6.2.1 Participants

6.2.2 Procedure

6.2.3 Results

6.2.1 Main Themes

6.3 Discussion

7. Study Four: ProSocial Media in Action

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Overview

7.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses

7.4 Method

7.4.1 Participants

7.4.2 Procedure

7.5 Results

7.5.1 Overview

7.5.2 Giving Tuesday Tweets

7.5.3 SnowedOutAtlanta

7.6 Discussion

8. Conclusions and Contributions to Knowledge

8.1 Summary of Results

8.2 Conclusions

8.3 Contributions to Knowledge

8.3.1 How to Increase Positive Engagement Online

8.4 Limitations and Further Research

References

Appendices

A. Pilot Study from Study 1- Attractive/Unattractive Male and Female Ratings Sheet

B. Social Media Use and Gratifications Scaled, adapted from Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008

C. Multi-Dimensional Emotional Empathy Scale (Mayer & Caruso, 1998)

D. Short-Term Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975)

E. Semi-Structured Social Media Engagement Questionnaire

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Overview

The subjects of empathy, altruism, and helping behaviour have fascinated philosophers and religious scholars for hundreds of years. This is exemplified in folklore, religious texts, and philosophical musings. Over the past century however, academics have become interested in questions on why, when, and how individuals are motivated to engage in behaviour that benefits others. This specific area of scholarship is coined 'Prosocial Behaviour.'

Prosocial Behaviour encompasses a wide category of actions that are 'defined by society as generally beneficial to other people and to the ongoing political system' (Piliavin, Dovidio, Gaertner, & Clark, 1981, pg. 4). More simply put, Prosocial Behaviour is a voluntary act intended to benefit another (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2007). The study of Prosocial Behaviour has been of particular interest to social psychologists, and research in this area is prolific. The research began in earnest after the brutal murder of Kitty Genovese in the 1960s. She was cruelly stabbed and murdered in New York City near her apartment complex (Rasenberger, 2004). She screamed several times, and it was noted that although 38 people heard the incident, no one came to her aid. Only one person phoned the police and this was 30 minutes after the event (Rasenberger, 2004). The public outrage led to a surge of research in what motivates helping behaviour.

The bulk of research on helping behaviour was led by two psychologists named Latane & Darley in the mid-1960s following Kitty Genovese's death. Their studies led to the development of a cognitive model of helping behaviour entitled the Decision Model of Bystander Intervention (Latane & Darley, 1970). This model postulates that when individuals are faced with an opportunity to help, there is a five-step decision making process that occurs. First the individual must become aware that the event is taking place. Then the individual must interpret the event correctly. Third, the individual must feel personally responsible for dealing with the event. Fourth, the individual must decide what action to take. Finally the individual must engage in the helping behaviour. As a precondition, the person must possess the necessary skills and resources to be able to

help. In addition, Latane & Darley's research found that in the third step, feeling personally responsible, the more people who observe the event taking place, the less likely it is that someone will be helped (Latane & Darley, 1970). This theory, known as the bystander effect, has been supported multiple times with subsequent studies. Latane & Darley (1970) found three processes that cause the bystander effect. The first is audience inhibition which is the process by which individuals do not help in fear that their behaviour will be negatively evaluated by others. The second is social influence which is the process by which the presence of others inhibits helping when a bystander sees that no one else is helping. The last process is called diffusion of responsibility which is the concept that individual accountability disperses when others are present because people feel that someone else will help (Latane & Darley, 1970).

Successive research has highlighted other important factors that also affect Prosocial Behaviour. For example, numerous studies indicate men help more than women, especially if the victim is a woman and also in situations with a higher possibility of harm (Eagly & Crowley 1986; Hogg & Vaughan, 2010). But women are more likely to help in low levels of harm, and women are also more likely to notice an event (Pilavin & Charng, 1990). Women seem to have a lower threshold for noticing and report to be more empathetic than men (Pilavin & Charng, 1990). Women also score higher on the vicarious response to another's expression of affect. Eagly and Crowley (1986) state that helping can be viewed as role behaviour and is therefore regulated by the social norms that apply to individuals based on the roles they occupy. To support this idea they explored gender roles to explain some of the gender differences in helping behaviour. Gender roles are defined as norms applicable to individuals based on their socially identified gender (Eagly & Crowley, 1986). In the female gender role, women are expected to place the needs of others before their own. Female roles are oriented towards caring, nurture, and responsibility. Women are generally more empathic than men (Eagly & Crowley, 1986). Male gender roles are geared towards heroic behaviour, chivalry, strength and independence. The man is supposed to protect the weak and defenceless. Eagly & Crowley (1986) conducted interviews with individuals about their helping behaviour. They found that women rated themselves significantly more comfortable in helping than men. Females also judged themselves as more likely to help than men, and both sexes rated women as more likely to help.

In addition, attractive people are helped more than unattractive people (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1983; Kelley & Byrne, 1976; Mallozzi, McDermott & Kayson, 1990; Benson, Karabenick, & Lerner, 1976). For example, Benson & Lerner (1976) placed the photograph of either an attractive or unattractive model on a college application that was lost and needed mailing. The application was more likely to be mailed if the attached photograph was of an attractive person. Also, physically attractive people are more likely to obtain a loan, to get a donation for a tetanus shot, to get directions, to get a letter mailed, to get help on an experiment, to get help with a malfunctioning car, and to receive assistance after falling in a subway (Dommeyer & Ruggiero, 1996).

Personalisation is also important in regards to helping behaviour (Heerwegh, 2005; Joinson & Reeps, 2007). Heerwegh (2005) conducted a study where he emailed participants to participate in an online web survey by either personalising the email with their first names or not. He found that when personalisation was applied, participation rate was significantly higher. Joinson & Reeps (2007) conducted a similar study but had an additional condition where they included both the first and last names of individuals. They found that addressing individuals by just their first name was the most effective in increasing response rates.

An incident in 2000 draws parallels with the Kitty Genovese murder in the 1960s but in an online setting. Larry Froistad confessed to murdering his daughter to 200 others on an online self-help group. Only three of the bystanders reported this to authorities (Markey, 2000). Like the Kitty Genovese case, this outraged the public and stemmed research from social psychologists.

Yet, while experiments and studies on Prosocial Behaviour are abundant, most of the research has been conducted prior to the creation of the internet and the subsequent burst of on-line activity. In the age of smart phones, wireless internet, the 'cloud,' and Web 2.0, understanding human interaction online is imperative. Although researchers have begun to examine Prosocial Behaviour in online environments, the few studies that have been done deal with online games, email, chat rooms, and discussion boards and have ignored the most popular activity on the internet- social media (Voepel, Eckhoff, & Förster, 2008; Wang & Wang 2008; Lehdonvirta, Lehdonvirta, & Baba, 2011; Lehdonvirta, Nagashima, Lehdonvirta, & Baba 2012; Joinson & Reeps 2007; Heerwegh

2005; Yechiam & Barron 2003, Barron & Yechiam 2002). Markey (2000) found that the theory of bystander intervention can also be used to explain and predict intervention in an online context. Markey (2000) observed 4833 participants in 400 different chat rooms on Yahoo. He had a confederate log on to the chat room and asked the group ‘Can anyone tell me how to look at someone’s profile?’ Assistance was received more quickly when help was asked for by specifying a person’s name. Diffusion of Responsibility has also been explored in email environments. Barron & Yechiam (2002) sent out an email request to one or multiple people at once with a helping question saying ‘Is there a biology faculty in the institution.’ The list of email addresses were either school email addresses or yahoo and hotmail email addresses. There were three conditions: 1) email sent out to a single participant 2) email sent out to multiple people at the institutional email address 3) email sent out to multiple people at the yahoo and hotmail email addresses. The subject line of the email was ‘Please Help.’ The results found that there were more responses to emails addressed to a single recipient, that these responses were more helpful and lengthier. Addressing emails one at a time rather than 5 at a time had a positive effect. Single emails received more responses and responses with a larger share of helpful information that contained information above and beyond the request (Barron & Yechiam, 2002). Barron & Yechiam (2003) continued on this idea and examined diffusion of responsibility on discussion group communities. They either sent emails to all the subscribers of a discussion group or emailed members of the discussion group individually asking them to fill out a short survey. They found that recipients were three times as likely to fill out the survey when they were emailed individually (Yechiam & Barron, 2003). Blair and colleagues (2005) did a similar study where they sent out an email to participants asking for the web address for the university library. The email either said, “Would one of the two of you/ one of the 15 of you/ or one of the 50 of you mind helping?” They found that the virtual presence of many others inhibits email responsiveness but unresponsiveness did not directly increase with proportion to group size (Blair et al., 2005).

In addition to research on Prosocial Behaviour on social media being slight, the research that has been done focuses far too heavily on the negative aspects such as cyberbullying and online video games leading to violent behaviour while ignoring the positive aspects that social media can provide (Smith, Lachlan, & Tamborini, 2006;

Hinduja & Patchin, 2007; Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2007). Along with the heavy focus on cyberbullying and video game violence, there is a negative view towards online activism. For example, there are many who argue that social media promote a weak, unsuccessful form of activism coined 'Slacktivism' (Morozov, 2011). This term describes the lazy, ineffectiveness of online activism. Others agree that online social and political activity often fails to achieve real world change and that the only success it brings is a mere Twitter 'retweet' or a Facebook 'like' or 'share' (Conroy et al, 2012). There is a strong criticism that these prosocial online tactics do not have a significant lasting effect because activism associated with social media is dependent upon weak tie relationships such as Twitter followers and Facebook 'friends' that are merely acquaintances whereas meaningful activism requires a strong, robust, organisational structure (Morozov, 2011).

The negative focus of social media as well as the current slacktivism debate is similar to the impersonal model on computer mediated communication (CMC) (Walther, 1996). There are three main stances that researchers take on CMC: impersonal, interpersonal, and hyperpersonal (Walther, 1996). The impersonal stance states that CMC is the most impersonal mode of communication because of its anonymity, lack of social cues, and isolating nature. The impersonal model states that CMC is only useful for task-based encounters and not communication. The interpersonal model acknowledges the negative aspects of CMC while recognising the assets that CMC has to offer over Face-to-Face (FtF) interactions. For instance, in CMC, users have the power to edit and mould their responses, users can be anonymous if they wish, and users can respond asynchronously. The hyperpersonal model is the most positive view. Researchers in this camp believe that CMC can surpass FtF interactions (Walther, 1996). These three theories can also be applied to social media sites. Can social media foster hyperpersonal interaction or is it simply another mode of impersonal communication?

Understanding more about Prosocial Behaviour on social media sites and the positive aspects of social media is essential in the age of smart phones, Web 2.0, and the Social Media Revolution (Qualman, 2009). Web 2.0 was first coined in 2004 to describe the new phenomenon of collaboration and participation that was occurring on the World Wide Web by software users and internet users. Instead of platforms being created by individuals alone, they were being collaborated on and continuously changed and

modified (Anderson, 2007). Web 2.0 marked the beginning of what has now become the most popular activity on the internet- social media (Qualman, 2009). Since its inception roughly a decade ago, social media have rapidly increased in size and scope. Social media sites such as Facebook, My Space, and Twitter have exploded in popularity, and the average American spends over three hours on social media sites a day, and 55 minutes on Facebook alone, and over 24 million Britons log on to Facebook each day (Bowe, 2010; Sedghi, 2014). Now, one can use social media on his/her mobile phones as well as other mobile devices, and the boundaries between online and FtF communications are beginning to merge. With social media being the most popular activity on the internet and so much time spent interacting via social media, it is essential to understand when, how and why individuals engage in Prosocial Behaviour online and how to optimize on positive, beneficial interactions while limiting the negative aspects (Qualman, 2009).

1.2 Theoretical Framework and Research Questions

So far, the limited research on Prosocial Behaviour in social media environments has provided a large gap in knowledge, which leaves many questions to be answered. For one, does Prosocial Behaviour in social media environments elicit the same results as in the offline world? What variables matter most for helping behaviour on social media? Is social media promoting a form of lazy online activism or can it be a tool for stimulating positive social change? Is social media a venue for hyperpersonal communication? My theoretical framework is shaped around Walther's (1996) model of hyperpersonal interaction on CMC. Social media has the potential for hyperpersonal interaction with its fast and precise information exchange and its ability to manage weak-tie relations more efficiently. Yet, to achieve hyperpersonal interaction we first need to understand the variables behind prosocial behaviour on social media sites, barriers of prosocial behaviour on social media sites, and real-world examples of hyperpersonal social media sites.

The most recent research on helping behaviour in online environments has supported research done in real world settings, especially with the Bystander Effect (Markey, 2000; Barron & Yechiam, 2002; Yechiam & Barron; 2003). As discussed at length in the Overview section on pg. 1 &2, the studies on the Bystander Effect done in

chat rooms, emails, and discussion room environments mimicked the classic studies done by Latane & Darley in the 1960s. The more people were involved in the chat rooms, discussion rooms, or emails, the less likely individuals were to help with an online request (Markey, 2000; Barron & Yechiam, 2002; Yechiam & Barron; 2003; Blair, Thompson, & Wuensch, 2005). Is this also the case with social media environments? My first and second studies are built upon the Bystander Effect and also want to see which variables impact whether individuals will help or not on social media sites (Latane & Darley, 1968). The Bystander Effect is one of the most well replicated constructs in social psychology and provides a basis for understanding Prosocial Behaviour in online environments. My third study is a focus group that aims to find some of the hindrances of prosocial behaviour and hyperpersonal communication on social media sites. My last study investigates whether or not social media can be used to promote change or whether it is simply online ‘Slacktivism.’ It uses two real-world events where Prosocial Behaviour occurs online to understand further if social media promotes or hinders helping behaviour.

The past research mentioned briefly above and in more detail in Chapter 2 as well as my theoretical framework have led to the following research questions:

- 1) Is prosocial behaviour on social media sites comparable to the offline world?
- 2) What variables influence helping on social media sites? Do gender, attractiveness, and the bystander effect make an impact?
- 3) What factors are hindering prosocial behaviour and hyperpersonal communication on social media sites?
- 4) Do individuals use social media for prosocial action?

To answer these research questions a mixed design approach will be employed - A Critical Approach and the Experimental Approach (Myers, 2005; Gergen, 1973). The Critical Approach views knowledge as positioned ideologically and is therefore wary of the scientific method (Gergen, 1973). The Critical Approach will be utilized for my first study with focus groups on social media engagement. The Critical Approach can be beneficial in examining complex questions and building new theories. This qualitative method is ideal for the beginning stages of a research project, especially in this case since

research on Prosocial Behaviour online is in its infancy stage. The Experimental Approach takes a positivistic stance on knowledge and uses quantitative methods to test theories by employing the scientific method (Myers, 2005). The Experimental Approach provides a firm basis and structured technique for acquiring knowledge. In addition, a strong aspect of the experimental method is the amount of control the researcher has over the study (Shaver, 1987). By manipulating certain variables, the experimenter can accurately test certain hypotheses. Yet, with this comes its own set of issues such as external validity. With appropriate research in this area scarce, a mixed design approach will provide a strong basis to begin to understand Prosocial Behaviour online. I used qualitative studies to help guide and strengthen my experimental work as discussed below.

1.3 Thesis Overview

This research aims to better understand Prosocial Behaviour in social media environments and learn how to increase positive engagement online. The Chapters will be outlined as followed. Chapter Two addresses the background research and literature on Prosocial Behaviour, social media, and Prosocial Behaviour in online environments. Chapter Three examines the theoretical framework and definitions used to guide my research. Chapter Four through Seven review experimental contributions to the thesis. Specifically, Chapter Four reports a study on the effect of group size and personalisation on the response rate to Facebook messages. It reports on whether the Bystander Effect and personalisation affect Prosocial Behaviour on Facebook. Chapter Five describes the second study considering the effect of gender, appearance, and number of Facebook friends on helping behaviour. The study explores if these three variables affect whether or not individuals will give aid to their friends. Results of the first two studies revealed mixed outcomes in supporting prior theories which evoked questions on whether there were differences in the online environment that might explain the differences in the results. To try to gain some insight into this issue as well as gather information on what factors are detrimental to prosocial behaviour on social media sites, three focus groups were carried out. The final study is presented in Chapter Seven- Prosocial Behaviour through the means of two events where social media played an important role in helping

behaviour. Chapter Eight summarises the research reported in this thesis, presents contributions to knowledge and overall conclusions. These four studies provide a strong start into research on Prosocial Behaviour online as well as providing suggestions on how to increase positive online engagement. In a world where connectivity is becoming easier, more efficient, and more reliable, social media in some form is here to stay. For this reason, it is crucial to understand how individuals are engaging on these sites, how individuals are helping one another on these sites, and how to get the best results from time spent on social media. The following chapters will explain these ideas and studies in more detail.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Overview

The following three research areas, Prosocial Behaviour, Social Media, and Prosocial Behaviour online are reviewed below to set the research in this thesis into context. Although each area was briefly mentioned in the introduction, the most important and current research in each area will be discussed in further detail in regards to this thesis.

2.2 Prosocial Behaviour

2.2.1. What is Prosocial Behaviour?

McDougall was the first psychologist to mention Prosocial Behaviour in his Social Psychology textbook published in 1908. He argued that Prosocial Behaviour was a result of tender emotions created by the parental instinct and saw these sympathetic instincts as the root of all altruism (McDougall, 1908). As mentioned in Chapter One, pg. 1, Prosocial Behaviour is now described as a wide category of actions that are ‘defined by society as generally beneficial to other people and to the ongoing political system’ (Piliavin et al., 1981, pg. 4). Prosocial behaviour encompasses helping behaviour, altruism, and cooperation (Hogg & Vaughan, 2010; Schroeder et al., 1995). Helping behaviour is the broadest term and refers to any form of individuals offering help to another which improves the well-being of the other person (Schroeder et al., 1995). Altruism refers to the truly selfless acts that are potentially motivated by empathy and compassion (Hogg & Vaughan, 2010). Cooperation is described as when two or more people come together to work toward a common, beneficial goal (Schroeder et al., 1995). These terms will be discussed and analysed in more depth in Chapter Three.

2.2.2 Why Do People Help?

There are many psychological ideas and concepts on why people help. One of the theories is the Biological and Evolutionary Approach to Prosocial Behaviour. The

Biological Approach asserts that helping behaviour is an innate trait in humans to increase survival and that we help others to preserve our genes (Penner et al., 2005). Four constructs under this approach include Mutualism, Kin Selection, Reciprocal Altruism, and Group Selection (Penner et al., 2005). These four constructs each presume that helping others benefits the individual and maximises a person's survival. There also seem to be genetic bases for altruism. From an evolutionary standpoint, Prosocial Behaviour is beneficial for a group's survival (Shroeder et al., 1995). For example, the left hemisphere of the brain is thought to be more strongly associated with prosocial emotions like empathy and altruism and these emotions have a neurochemical basis (Buck, 1999; Buck, 2000). Buck (1999, 2000) suggests that such responses are innate and that heredity may play a role because these positive emotions facilitate cooperation and communication between species that results in evolutionary advantages (Buck, 1999; Buck, 2000; Penner et al., 2005).

Another theory is the Social Approach to Prosocial Behaviour. The Social Approach posits that helping is a learned behaviour and can be explained in terms of Classical Conditioning, Instrumental Conditioning, Observational Learning, and Modelling. Proponents of these views claim that people learn the rules of social behaviour by watching others. Most research on this has been done in relation to television, music, and video games (Sprafkin, Liebert & Poulos, 1975; Mares & Woodard, 2005; Greitmeyer, 2009b; Greitmeyer 2011). While most research illuminates the negative effects of the media on social behaviour, the limited research that has been done indicate that media can also influence Prosocial behaviour as well. For example, an early study on the relationship of media and Prosocial Behaviour was conducted by Sprafkin, Liebert, & Poulos (1975). They found that children exposed to television with prosocial content exhibited more prosocial behaviour. Mares & Woodard (2005) conducted a meta-analysis on the relationship between prosocial media and prosocial behaviour and found that it was 'as easy to persuade viewers to be pleasant as it is to be violent' (Mares & Woodard, 2005, pg. 313). For example, in a study by Friedrich & Stein (1973), four year old children were more likely to display altruistic behaviour after watching the show, 'Mr. Rogers'. The children were more obedient to rules, more tolerant, and more persistent at tasks (Friedrich & Stein, 1973). Greitemeyer (2009b) found that exposure to songs with prosocial lyrics is related to prosocial tendencies. It increased prosocial thoughts and

fostered prosocial behaviour. Greittmeyer (2011) found similar results in relation to prosocial behaviour and video games. Participants who played a prosocial game as opposed to a neutral or aggressive video game were more likely to help the experimenter afterwards.

Another philosophy behind Prosocial Behaviour is the Biosocial approach. The Biosocial approach is the interaction and combination of biological and social factors. The Biosocial approach includes the Empathy Altruism hypothesis, the Bystander-Calculus model, the Negative State Relief model, and the Selfish Egoistic hypothesis. The Empathy Altruism hypothesis states that individuals are motivated solely by the purpose of increasing the welfare of the recipient. The Bystander-Calculus model states that 'in an emergency a bystander calculates the perceived costs and benefits of providing help compared with those associated with not helping' (Hogg and Vaughan, 2010, pg. 265). The Negative State Relief model suggests that individuals help others to get relief from negative emotions. The Selfish Egoistic hypothesis, on the other hand, states that individuals only help to receive recognition, financial reward and positive outcomes. This theory is one of the most popular of the Prosocial Behaviour theories. Many believe the only reason that individuals help others is for personal gain.

2.2.3 The Bystander Effect

It is not unusual for real life events to stimulate social psychological research. This is exemplified in the research on obedience following World War II and research on racial prejudice in the 1960s and 70s in the United States. This was also illustrated by the murder of Kitty Genovese in 1964 and the subsequent research on helping behaviour (Rosenberger, 2004). As stated in Chapter 1, pg. 1, the studies led to the findings on the Bystander Effect. Real life events often highlight aspects of human nature that are not fully understood or social problems which require attention which stems psychological research. One of the main findings out of the plethora of studies (listed below) was that the social inhibition aspect of helping is a fairly consistent phenomenon (Latane & Nida, 1981). People are less likely to help in an emergency when there are others present, than when they are alone and the greater the number of people present, the less likely it is that

anyone will help (Hogg & Vaughan, 2010). As stated in Chapter 1 (pg. 1 & 2) this phenomenon has been coined 'the Bystander Effect.' The effect of group size on helping behaviour was one of the most consistent findings from early research by Latane & Darley and is still replicated in present research in online environments (Markey, 2000; Barron & Yechiam, 2002; Barron & Yechiam, 2003). The first studies in this area strongly support this finding. In 1968, Latane & Darley simulated an emergency situation where participants heard a confederate have a fake epileptic seizure over an intercom where there were one to five unseen others present. The presence of bystanders reduced the individual's feelings of personal responsibility and lowered the speed of reporting the seizure. Latane & Darley (1968) conducted another experiment where participants in a waiting room encountered a simulated situation where a stream of smoke began to seep into the room through a wall vent. Their response was observed through a one-way glass, and the dependent variable was the length of time the participant remained in the room before leaving to report the smoke. Some participants were alone; other participants were with two confederates, other participants were with two other naive individuals. Confederates avoided conversations and didn't react to the smoke. Participants in the alone condition reported smoke with a mean latency of two minutes after noticing it. Three quarters of the participants reported the smoke before the experiment ended (experiment lasted six minutes). In the condition with two confederates, only one out of ten of the participants reported the smoke before the experiment ended. In the condition with three naive subjects, only 38% of the groups had a person report the smoke. As stated in Chapter 1, pg. 1, from these experiments Latane & Darley (1970) developed a model of helping behaviour that involves a series of processes. When individuals are faced with an opportunity to help, there is a decision making process that takes place. This includes first noticing the event, then interpreting the event correctly, feeling personally responsible for dealing with it, deciding what to do, and engaging in the behaviour. The person also needs to possess the necessary skills and resources to act.

The Bystander Effect also has detractors. Some argue that the Bystander Effect is too simplistic to describe bystander intervention (Levine, 1999; Wegner & Schafer, 1978). Another plausible explanation could be the theory of objective self-awareness (Wegner & Schafer, 1978). Objective self-awareness is a state of conscious attention directed toward the self which produces various intrapersonal effects (Wegner & Schafer,

1978). For example, individuals exposed to self-focusing stimuli become more likely to suppress aggression, more likely to attribute responsibility for negative events to the self, and are more likely to help others (Wegner & Schafer, 1978). The larger the size of the group, the less likely the person has 'bystander objective self-awareness' and hence the less likely he/she will be to help (Wegner & Schafer, 1978). This idea has been labelled the 'concentration of responsibility' (Wegner & Schafer, 1978). Support for this construct has been shown in studies testing bystander intervention in young children. Very young children are incapable of viewing the self from the perspective of another, and studies have shown that diffusion of responsibility does not occur in young children but does occur among teenagers and adults (Staub, 1970). Also, the type of bystander has shown to be important. One study by Bickman in 1971 manipulated the type of bystander present and found that responsibility did not diffuse in the situations where the additional bystander was perceived as incapable of helping. Other research has increased individual's self-awareness by having them look at themselves in the mirror or write a short biography of themselves and have shown that participants are more likely to help others after becoming more self-aware (Duval et al., 1979).

In addition, a similar murder case that took place in 1993 highlighted some flaws in the Bystander Effect. James Bulgar was a two and a half year old boy that was abducted by two 10-year-old boys and then murdered. There were 38 witnesses (much like the Kitty Genovese case) and (again) no one intervened. According to interviews with the bystanders, failure to intervene in the murder was affected by the assumption that the three boys were brothers and did not want to intervene in a family matter. This had implications for how the event was interpreted. Critics argue that the traditional five step bystander intervention model by Darley & Latane (1970) is problematic in this situation because it fails to distinguish between categories of bystanders, the ambiguity of social roles, and the hazards of interfering with other people's affairs (Levine, 1999; Cherry, 1995). In this case, it is possible that bystanders did feel personal responsibility but did not want to intervene in the affairs of another family (Levine, 1999). Levine (1999) disagrees with Darley & Latane's model and argues that it is more useful to think of the question of intervention in terms of the way social categories are deployed and make sense of and account for the event rather than the question of how many people are present at the time. Cherry (1995) argues that with the Kitty Genovese case, the

translation from event to research topic is an example of what she calls ‘culturally embedded theorising’ and a number of important features of the original paradigm such as gender and male violence towards women were not included because they were not yet recognised as problems at the time. It was a prototypical example of male violence on a female, yet neither gender nor physical violence was included in the early laboratory research from that time period (Cherry, 1995).

2.2.4. Factors that affect Prosocial Behaviour

As learned from Chapter 1, pg. 2, gender and appearance are two main factors that can affect whether individuals receive help or not but there is a plethora of research that highlights additional factors that are also important. One major factor is mood. Happy moods motivate helping behaviour. This phenomenon is called ‘the glow of good will, the warm glow of success’, and ‘feel good, do good’ (Isen, 1970; Isen, 1972; Batson et al., 1979). Negative moods cause mixed results in Prosocial Behaviour research. For example, negative moods such as anger and disgust have been found to decrease helping behaviour, whereas moods such as guilt and sorrow motivate helping (Weiner, 1980; Regan, Williams, & Sparling, 1972; Salovey, Mayer, & Rosenhan, 1991). This is postulated to be due to the Negative State Relief model which states that people who feel bad are more likely to help someone else in order to improve their own mood (Baumann, Cialdini, & Kenrick, 1981). Music can improve mood which can then lead to increased helping. This was shown by an experiment performed by North (2004). In this study 646 users of a university gym were played either uplifting or annoying music while they worked out and then asked to sign a petition in support of a charity or distribute leaflets on the charity’s behalf. Virtually all the participants were willing to help in the low cost condition (sign the petition). But, individuals in the uplifting music condition were prepared to help more in the high cost task condition (distribute leaflets).

Social norms are another factor that influences helping. There is the social responsibility norm, the golden rule norm, the mind your own business norm, the reciprocity norm, and to the victor belongs the spoils norm (Schroeder et al., 1995). The reciprocity norm is similar to the ‘golden rule’ norm of doing unto others as they do to you. The social responsibility norm is the idea that individuals should help others who are

dependent and in need of help. The 'mind your own business' norm is the idea that one should not interfere or meddle in other's lives (Hogg & Vaughan, 2010). Yet, the difficulty with norms is that they are often contradictory and vague. Norm-centred explanations for helping are also difficult to apply (Macaulay & Berkowitz, 1970). Further, there is little evidence that people actually think about norms when choosing a course of action (Macaulay & Berkowitz 1970). When people intervene they normally help quickly and seem to be guided by their first reactions.

Empathy is related to Prosocial Behaviour. Empathy can either be altruistic in nature or produce aversive arousal such as personal distress and sadness (Pilavin & Charng, 1990). There are many theories about how empathy relates to Prosocial Behaviour. The Empathy Specific Punishment hypothesis states that when people feel empathy they help in order to avoid empathy specific punishments such as shame and guilt. The Negative State Relief model proposes that empathy creates personal sadness that needs to be removed and that the egoistic desire to manage personal sadness is primary cause of helping behaviour (Pilavin & Charng, 1990). The Empathy Specific Rewards hypothesis states that through prior experience people learn that special rewards are attendant on helping such as social praise and honour. According to this hypothesis, when individuals feel empathy they help others because they know that a reward will be the result. The Attribution Effect model (Wiener, 1980) proposes that if a need is beyond the victim's control, this leads to empathy and helping, whereas if a need is seen as controllable, this leads to anger and withholding of help.

Similarity is another factor that increases helping (Gaertner & Bickman, 1971). More similarity between a solicitor and a subject (i.e. similar appearance, race, apparel, attitude, etc.) leads to enhanced helping behaviour (Gueguen, 2003). Gaertner & Bickman, (1971) found that white subjects help a solicitor of the same race more than a black solicitor. The same effects are found for status, appearance, and political attitudes. The 'Just World hypothesis' is also related to helping. The Just World hypothesis is that idea that people get what they deserve in life and deserve what they get (Lerner, 1980). Zuckerman (1975) found that students who scored higher on the 'Just World' idea helped others more than those who didn't before an exam. But there was no difference after the

exam. He concluded that they did that to make themselves more deserving of a good grade on the exam.

2.3 Prosocial Behaviour in Online Environments

2.3.1 Overview

More recently, Prosocial Behaviour has been researched in relation to computer-mediated communication. Research on this topic increased after the Larry Froistad case (Harman, 1998). As mentioned previously in Chapter 1, pg. 3, Froistad confessed murdering his daughter to 200 people in an online self-help group. Only three of the bystanders reported this to authorities (Markey, 2000). Like the Kitty Genovese case, this outraged the public and stimulated research from social psychologists on helping behaviour in online environments (Markey, 2000; Barron & Yechiam, 2002; Barron & Yechiam, 2003). But before delving into this research it is important to understand the psychology of online environments and some of the theories and viewpoints that psychologists are basing their research on.

2.3.2 The Psychology of Online Environments

The fundamental goal of CMC theory and analysis is to explain the relationship between the affordances of different technologies and the communication that results (Whittaker, 2003). Computer mediated communication (CMC) has been described as an 'altered state of communication' including altered physical environments, altered time and space, and altered structures in communication (Vallee, Johanson, & Sprangler, 1975). Initially, CMC systems were used to facilitate and coordinate emergency tasks among geographically distributed individuals or groups (Hiltz & Turoff, 1985). CMC has a variety of advantages over other media. For one, it combines the interactivity and group features of FtF communication with time and place independences and new modes of communication storage (Liu & Ginther, 1999).

There are many differences between CMC and FtF communication. Bordia (1997) synthesized the experimental literature and found these key differences. For one, individuals take longer on CMC to finish tasks. Second, CMC groups produce fewer

remarks than FtF groups. Thirdly, CMC groups perform better on idea generation tasks and they produce more non-redundant ideas. Fourth, there is greater equality of participation in CMC groups. Fifth, when time is limited, CMC groups perform better than FtF on tasks involving less and worse on tasks requiring more social and emotional interaction. Yet, given enough time, CMC groups perform just as well as FtF groups. Sixth, there is reduced normative social pressure in CMC groups. Seventh, the perception of partner and task is poorer in CMC. Eighth, in CMC, evaluation of the communication partner is poorer under conditions of limited time. Ninth, there is a higher incidence of uninhibited behaviour and CMC induces a state of deindividuation which thus leads to uninhibited behaviour. Lastly, CMC groups as compared to FtF groups exhibit less choice shift on attitude change (Bordia, 1997).

One of the first debates with CMC and one that continues today is whether or not CMC is harmful or beneficial for its users. There are three main stances that researchers take on CMC: impersonal, interpersonal and hyperpersonal (Walther, 1996). Researchers that believe the impersonal theory on CMC think that CMC is the most impersonal mode of communication based on its lack of social cues and isolating conditions. The interpersonal stance recognises the negative aspects of CMC but also observes its usefulness in social interaction. Hyperpersonal is the most positive theory, stating that CMC has the power to move beyond FtF interaction (Walther, 1996).

2.3.2a Impersonal Model of Computer-Mediated Communication

Early research on CMC took the impersonal stance and hypothesized that it fosters impersonal interaction and is only beneficial with task-oriented communication (Walther, 1996). This view on CMC indicates that CMC is less emotional, more business-like, depersonalised, task-oriented, and cold (Liu & Ginther, 1999). An early study by Kraut and colleagues (1998) found that the internet increased loneliness, social isolation, and depression. Researchers and individuals were worried that time spent isolated in front of a computer would take away from social relationships. The computer is often considered to be one of the most socially distancing and impersonal modes of communications. Researchers speculate this is because computer user's attention is absorbed by the task of communication itself (Matheson & Zanna, 1988). Matheson & Zanna (1988) found that

CMC users reported the highest levels of private self-awareness and the lowest levels of public self-awareness. Private self-awareness is the aspect of awareness attuned to covert aspects of the self, feelings, attitudes and beliefs, whereas public self-awareness is the aspects of the self, sensitive to the attention and evaluation of others. Computer conferencing and email was said to reduce interpersonal affect and group solidarity (Walther, 1996). CMC was also found to be higher with hostile and profane speech which is called “flaming” (Garton & Wellman, 1995). CMC also leads to decreases in group effectiveness, increases in time required to complete tasks and decreases in member satisfaction in group decision making compared to FtF groups (Baltes et. al., 2002). CMC may make relational development difficult or impossible (Walther & Bunz, 2005). CMC being impersonal could be because of the lack of nonverbal cues and interactivity. This could also be due to Social Presence Theory which states that the fewer channels or codes available, the less attention paid to other social participants (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976). Social Presence Theory analyses how well media provides information about the presence of others including facial expression, tone of voice, and other attributes (Short, Williams & Christie, 1976). As social presence declines, CMC becomes more impersonal. The fewer number of cues, the less warmth and involvement users experience (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976).

Other theories can also explain the impersonal aspect of CMC. For example, Sproull and Kiesler (1986) argue that CMC reduces social context cues due to Information Richness Theory or Media Richness Theory. This theory suggests that each media carries richness according to the number of cues they convey and CMC lacks in information richness. Rich media is media with greater bandwidth and media that support multiple verbal and non-verbal cue systems. Bandwidth is the term used for the amount of communication cues systems can display. CMC has the lowest bandwidth whereas FtF interaction has the most. Media Richness Theory is one of the most popular models of CMC and used the most in research on CMC (Walther, 2011). The richness of the medium is determined by 1) multiplicity of cue systems supported by the medium 2) availability of immediate feedback provided by the medium 3) message personalisation and 4) potential for natural language or language variety (Daft & Lengel, 1986). There are also two main aspects of CMC that could make it difficult to comprehend messages- 1) a paucity of social context information and 2) few widely shared norms governing its

use (Kiesler, Siegal, & McGuire, 1984). In addition, CMC comprises the same conditions needed for deindividuation such as anonymity, reduced self-regulation, and reduced self-awareness (Deiner, 1980). Deindividuation is the psychological state of decreased self-evaluation causing anti-normative and disinhibited behaviour (Deiner, 1980). Anonymity in a crowd can be associated with the breakdown of traditional values and norms.

Another theory in the impersonal perspective is called Cues Filtered Out (Culnan & Markus, 1987). Since CMC has no verbal cues, CMC is limited in what it can do and the social functions that involve those cues. Sproull & Kiesler (1986) state that CMC lacks cues to individuality and normative behaviour and as a result, CMC users become deindividuated and normless. Signaling Theory (Donath, 2007) shows why certain signals are reliable and some are not. There are two types of signals, 1) assessment signals and 2) conventional signals. Assessment signals are artefacts that have some characteristic with which they are associated and conventional signals bear socially determined symbolic relationships with their referents and are not as trustworthy (Donath, 2007). Text based discussions online are dominated by conventional signals since there are only text based statements. Since text-based statements can be faked, there is a wariness of whether individuals online can be trusted.

2.3.2b Interpersonal Model of Computer-Mediated Communication

The second main perspective of CMC is the Interpersonal model. Some researchers acknowledge the negative aspects of CMC but argue that CMC can produce positive effects and can be beneficial for its users. One theory in this perspective is the Channel Expansion Theory (Carlson & Zmud, 1994). This theory posits that as individuals gain more experience with a particular communication medium, the medium becomes richer for them. Another theory is called the theory of Electronic Propinquity (Korzenny, 1978). Korzenny (1978) states that psychological closeness is experienced by communicators and those communicators are connected through the electronic media. Yet the main theory in the interpersonal perspective is Social Information Processing theory (SIP) (Walther, 2015). SIP offers fundamental assumptions about communication and how to approach its analysis. SIP is an approach based on principles in social cognition and interpersonal relationship development (Walther, 1992). SIP focuses on how

communicators undertook the processes of social influence, impression formation and management, information processing, and relational communication across settings and contexts. Researchers found that the accomplishment of communication functions involved the combination of verbal as well as non-verbal cues. This approach suggests that the communicators will adapt their textual and linguistic behaviours to the solicitation of socially revealing and relational behaviour. Communicators also already have the skills to write expressively when a FtF or phone conversation is not available and that this skill can readily transfer to electronic messages. SIP also assumes that communicators seek to develop relationships no matter what medium they use and that they will use whatever cues are available (Walther, 2015). CMC can be beneficial in that it focuses on the task and decision making and takes out affect which can enhance group work (Walther, 1996). In addition, more work can be done and there can be equal group member participation on CMC (Walther, 1996). CMC might also make social structures more equal and social standards less important. There is also fast and precise information exchange on CMC and reduction of irrelevant status differences (Kiesler, Siegal & McGuire, 1984).

Culnan and Markus (1987) take a social information processing perspective on CMC. They think that communicators in CMC are driven to develop social relationships but that this takes more time because expression of deciphering of cues is slower in CMC. For the interpersonal perspective, time is the most important variable. CMC should reach levels of relational development identical to FtF given no time restraints (Walther & Parks, 2002). Kiesler, Siegal, & McGuire (1984) conducted an experiment and found that people communicating via computers took longer to reach a consensus than FtF groups when given a decision making task but they also exchanged fewer remarks because typing took time. Group members in CMC participated more equally and were more uninhibited. This led to an increase in remarks with swearing, insults, and name calling or “flaming.” This study clearly represents both the positive and negative aspects of CMC that can occur. The same aspects that enable a more equal work environment and increased participation such as anonymity and lack of verbal cues also enable an increase in negative remarks and “flaming.”

Another theory of CMC in the interpersonal perspective is the psychobiological model. This theory predicts variations in cognitive effort in computer-mediated tasks

(Kock, 2004). The model proposes that there is a negative causal link between the “naturalness” of a communication medium and the cognitive effort required for knowledge transfer. This link is counterbalanced by schema alignment and cognitive adaptation. The psychobiological model posits that the degree to which a medium supports an individual’s ability to convey and naturalness is more important than facial expressions and body language (Kock, 2004).

2.3.2c Hyperpersonal Model on Computer-Mediated Communication

The last stance on CMC is the Hyperpersonal model (Walther, 1996). The hyperpersonal model states that CMC is more desirable than FtF interaction. This could be due to Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects (SIDE) (Lea & Spears, 1992). SIDE theory surmises that because of the absence of cues in CMC, any cues you do have, take on value because of the over-attribution process. SIDE theory also states that the absence of individual cues enhances awareness of the group dimensions of identity and interaction and reliance on related norms and standards (Postmes, Spears, & Lea, 2000). In addition, factors that are typically associated with deindividuation such as anonymity and reduced self-regulation which can actually reinforce group norms and strengthen group boundaries. The sender optimises their own self presentation and there is the selection and employment of favourable impressions which are enhanced on CMC. The hyperpersonal model posits that CMC users take advantage of the interface and channel characteristics that CMC offers in a dynamic fashion in order to enhance their relational outcomes (Walther, 2007). This produces interaction that is more desirable than FtF interaction. Another advantage of CMC is that it is editable. This luxury is not afforded by FtF interactions. The hyperpersonal model depicts CMC users as creative and opportunistic rather than passive (Walther et. al, 2015). CMC involves a high degree of human agency and users can appropriate its channels and its technological characteristics to suit their communication needs.

There are four concurrent routines that together seek to explain CMC’s support of relationships with greater desirability and intimacy than occur in offline counterparts. The first is receivers. Receivers may tend to exaggerate perceptions of the sender when receiving messages. The second is senders. Text based CMC facilitates selective self-

presentation. The third is channel. There is time to edit and construct idealised perceptions on CMC. The final is feedback. When a receiver comes upon selectively presented messages and idealizes its source, the individual may respond in such a way that reciprocates and reinforces the modified personae (Walther, 2015). This is also called behaviour confirmation (Walther, 2011). Walther (2007) conducted a study where he had students enter an online discussion forum and either told them they were chatting with a professor or told them they were chatting with another student. The students that thought they were chatting with a professor spent longer contemplating, constructing, and editing their messages (Walther, 2007). This provided strong support for the Hyperpersonal Model of CMC. Duthler (2006) conducted a study measuring the politeness of voice mails with email messages and found that email requests were more polite than voicemails and the results were consistent with Walther's (1996) hyperpersonal model. In CMC, communicators are able to manipulate their identity, time the transmission of their messages and plan, organise and edit their communication in pursuit of relational goals.

Another hyperpersonal aspect of CMC is that since CMC provides individuals greater control over their messages and their self-presentation, this can reduce individual's anxiety and they may develop a preference for online social interaction (Caplan, 2005). Individuals believe they are safer, more efficacious, more confident, and more comfortable with online interpersonal interactions than FtF interactions. Another theory is Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Succession (Stephens, 2007). Stephens (2007) stated that combinations of ICT predict communication effectiveness in organizational communication. Communication is more effective with 1) successive versus single message transmissions and 2) complementary versus singular channel usage. Repetition of a message through two types of channels causes the greatest communication effectiveness and efficiency. This theory is all about maximising modalities (Stephens, 2007).

CMC can also be characterised by high levels of self-disclosure (Joinson, 2001). For example, medical patients report more symptoms and undesirable symptoms when interviewed by computers (Joinson, 2001). Joinson (2001) conducted three experiments on CMC and self-disclosure and found that dyads disclosed more personal information and more information about themselves. The presence of a video led to significantly less

disclosure and heightened private self-awareness and reduced public self-awareness led to increased levels of self-disclosure (Joinson, 2001). Tidwell & Walther (2002) did a study where they had participants interact via CMC or FtF. CMC participants asked more questions and also had increased levels of self-disclosures. FtF had higher levels of others expressions like non personal statements of fact, exclamation imperatives, and greetings. CMC used a greater proportion of uncertainty reduction strategies. These are strategies one uses to predict another's attitudes and behaviours such as intermediate questioning and disclosing with partners (Tidwell, Walther, 2002). CMC participants employ a greater proportion of more direct, interactive uncertainty reduction strategies than FtF participants. The probes and replies were more intimate and led to higher levels of attributional confidence by CMC participants. Internet use has also been found to be associated with more contact with family and friends. Extroverts experienced more positive affect as their internet use increased (Walther & Parks, 2002). Jiang and colleagues, (2011) found that CMC interaction intensified the association between disclosures and intimacy relative to FtF interactions. This was mediated by increased interpersonal relationship attributions observed in CMC. Equivalently intimate disclosures produce greater intimacy in CMC than FtF. The receiver's inflated attributions of intimate disclosures can contribute to the creation of hyperpersonal states online (Jiang et al, 2011).

Maybe a more realistic framework on CMC lies somewhere in between these three camps. Spears and Lea (1994) use Foucault's metaphor of the "panopticon" to argue that relational and information features of CMC can increase surveillance and control as well as democracy and equality. They refer to Foucault's Power/Knowledge relation which says that enhanced access to information implies greater choice of control and can extend one's sphere of influence, yet this can also cause problems (Foucault, 1980). For example, the Panopticon (Foucault, 1997) is a device invented by the utilitarian moral Philosopher Bentham for use in correctional facilities as a means of surveillance and control. The incarcerated are unable to see each other, preventing interaction which induces obedience and conformity. Panopticon is the ultimate technology of control. Spears and Lea (1994) argue that there are parallels between panopticon and CMC. For example, individuals are isolated at one's cubicle and more information is known to their

superiors. Employers can trace emails and web history. There is a hierarchical observation, normalisation and the objectification and individualisation of the subject.

2.3.2d Barriers that Inhibit Effective Computer-Mediated Communication

Regardless of which theoretical camp one is in regarding CMC, it is evident that there are barriers that inhibit effective communication. This is especially evident in group work. Using the Social Information Processing theory, Walther (1992) developed six rules to overcome some of these barriers in group related online work which he calls “virtual teams.” He describes virtual teams as groups in which interdependent members collaborate from different locations using communication technology (Walther & Bunz, 2005). Rule #1- Get started right away. CMC groups should start work right away in order to avoid running out of time. Rule #2- Communicate frequently- trusting behaviours are associated with frequent exchanges. Rule #3- Multitask getting organised and doing substantive work simultaneously. Rule #4- Overtly acknowledge that you have read one another’s messages. Rule #5- Be explicit in what you are thinking and doing. Rule #6- set deadlines and stick to them. Another issue that arises from CMC is Information Overload. Information overload is defined as “information presented at a rate too fast for a person to process” (Hiltz & Turoff, 1985). In order to avoid information overload an individual must learn screening skills and develop shared norms about sending behaviour as to not impose unwanted materials on others. Instead individuals deal with information overload by just ignoring information. Another problem that can occur is Information Entropy which is when incoming messages are not sufficiently organised by topic or content to be recognised as important (Hiltz & Turoff, 1985).

Nardia (2005) believes that communication and interpersonal connection goes beyond bandwidth and has to do with the three dimensions of communication. These are affinity, commitment, and attention. These three dimensions are constantly monitored and negotiated and managed through social bonding, expression of commitment, and capture of attention. Nardi (2005) believes that communication requires significant interaction and work to sustain the relationship over time regardless of whether an individual is communicating FtF or via CMC.

2.3.2e Cyber Archaeology and Technological Determinists

Another area of research into CMC is called Cyber Archaeology. Cyber Archaeology is defined as the systematic exploration of cyberspace at the level where cyber materials impact on online behaviour (Jones, 1997). Cyber Archaeology studies virtual communities. Virtual communities are more than just a series of CMC messages; they are a sociological phenomenon (Jones, 1997). A virtual community's cyberplace is called a virtual settlement. A virtual settlement's conditions are 1) minimum level of interactivity 2) a variety of communicators 3) minimum level of sustained membership. 4) a virtual common public space where a significant portion of interactive group CMCs occur. Rheingold stated that "virtual communities are social aggregators that emerge from the net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough with sufficient human feelings to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace (Rheingold, 1993, pg. 5).

Technological determinists propose that the inventions and adoption of a particular technology will lead to a particular set of outcomes. Levinson (1990) argues that media technology will evolve towards human function. Gurak (1995) had four beliefs about CMC. He thought that 1) CMC would change the workplace for the better. 2) CMC will do away with the physical classroom. 3) CMC will enhance democracy. 4) CMC is egalitarian. Rather, CMC has been shown to be influenced by social contexts. If we view technology as prerequisites rather than determinants then it is possible to construct a hierarchy of explanation of human behaviour.

2.3.3 Online Environments and Prosocial Behaviour

As stated above, virtual communities are social networks formed or facilitated through electronic media (Eysenback et al, 2004). Virtual communities can be a great environment for prosocial behaviour. For example, they can be used as mental health and social support interventions. They are also called "electronic support groups." Rheingold (1993) believed that a virtual community is a "response to the hunger for community that has followed the disintegration of traditional communities around the world" (pg. 61). Eysenback and colleagues (2004) conducted a study and failed to find health benefits of peer to peer online support but no negative effects were found either.

Lin (2010) explored the concept of online community through the lens of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and found that affective commitment has a positive relationship to how heavily the member participates in knowledge sharing. Social norms were also an influence (Lin, 2010). Knowledge sharing is a process through which people gain knowledge by learning from others experience and first-hand knowledge (Sun, et al., 2009). Members of these virtual communities are willing to contribute their knowledge and experience when there is no benefit to them because it is part of being a member in the online community (Xu et al., 2012). This is a strong example of prosocial behaviour. Trust and reciprocation are also important. When members feel that their efforts and knowledge will be reciprocated, they are more likely to share (Sun et al., 2009).

Online support groups are another example of a prosocial environment online. Green & Himelstein (1998) found that more than 46% of online users sought information via the internet about a medical or personal problem. The information often came from an on online support group. Moya and colleagues (2008) studied Walther's (1996) theory of hyperpersonal communication in an online Alzheimer support group. They found that online support groups make possible the formation of hyperpersonal relationships by increasing and enhancing member's motivation, level of participation, and level of self-disclosure and that through the unique features of online communities (anonymity, communication styles, and patterns of interaction) the formation of hyperpersonal relationships can be formed. Online communities can foster genuine relationships and even have the potential to supersede FtF communication (Moya et al, 2008). The formation of hyperpersonal relationships is determined largely by the member's motivation and level of participation in the support group.

Turner, Grube, and Meyers (2001) studied hyperpersonal communication within an online cancer support group. They found that respondents participated more within the online community when they perceived that the depth and support that they received from the online group was high and when the depth and support from their offline friends and family was low. Participants also participated more (through posting and emails) when they had met some of their online community FtF than users who had not met anyone FtF. Turner, Grube, and Meyers (2001) used optimal matching theory (1990) to explain hyperpersonal communication on online support groups. Accord to optimal matching

theory, certain forms of support may be beneficial following certain types of stress. For example, stressors that individuals have no control over require more emotional support and stressors that individuals can control require more practical support. Optimal matching theory suggests that a person's development of a medical illness requires strong social and emotional support. A support network is defined as "a group of people devoted to promotion of proper diagnosis, treatment and prevention of a specific condition, primarily through patient education and support" (Camosy, 1996; pg. 278).

Teodoro & Naaman (2013) found that social media can help initiate and maintain challenging activities like exercise and diet. The newsfeeds or "social awareness streams" (SAS) have implications for public help promotion. What would have been private health entries are now interactive public disclosures. Twitter is a "networked individualism" environment where each user communicates and interacts with a set of individual contacts and there are no well-defined communities (Wellman, 2003). Instead, ad-hoc communities form mostly due to the hashtag symbol (#). Twitter translates hashtags into clickable links that allows users to see other messages with the same hashtag. The @ symbol references other users. These symbols create loosely defined communities. Messages are also archived in reverse order. The presence of others in these networked publics facilitates the existence of an imagined audience and guides the development of behavioural norms within the virtual environment (boyd, 2007). The role of an 'audience' helped with weight loss, accountability, social support, and impression management. Relevant to Walther's hyperpersonal model, CMC is advantageous to the message sender. Participants aspire to be motivational to others but in the process that are actually motivational to themselves (Teodoro & Naaman, 2013).

Workman & Coleman (2012) studied an online sub-reddit site called Two X Chromosomes (2X) where woman share information and experiences with other like-minded women. Reddit is the largest internet message board in the world (Shaer, 2012). Members of 2X share news stories and current affairs that affect woman, ask other women for advice, and discuss feminism, all in a trusting and supporting environment. In 2013 there were 150,000 subscribers to 2X (Workman & Coleman, 2012). They found that 2X fulfils the need for a safe place and it provides information and comradery that community members couldn't find in their offline worlds. This is another example of

Walther's (1996) hyperpersonal model. Communication on the 2X online community's sub-reddit site exceeded FtF communication due to trust, privacy, and support.

Bosancianu and colleagues (2013) found a link between prosocial behaviour and social capital. Social capital is defined as features of social organisations such as network, norms and trust that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit (Portes, 1998). Bridging social capital is inclusive and fostered in networks where membership is not restricted to a certain group. Bonding social capital is exclusive and fostered in tight knit networks of family members and close friends. It is known as the "sociological superglue" that gets members through emotional stages in their lives. Bosancianu and colleagues (2013) found that offline and online prosocial behaviour was correlated with each other. Online prosocial behaviour is more associated with online social capital than offline social capital. Bonding social capital is higher for offline interactions rather than online interactions.

One issue with online communities is that the majority of people leave quickly and contribute little (Ren et al., 2011). Ren and colleagues found that insights from group identity and interpersonal bond theories can be leveraged to increase member attachment in online community design and therefore increase member retention and contribution. For example, member retention and participation in online communities depends largely on attachments and the members' affection towards and caring for the online community. People who are attached to a group evaluate their group more positively than those less attached. Attachment works through group identity whereby people feel connected to a group's character and purpose. Attachment also works through interpersonal bonds. Group categorization elicits identity based attachments. Information about the group increases identity based attachments. Group homogeneity increases group based attachment. Intergroup competition increases liking of the group. Information about individual members increases bond based attachment. Interpersonal similarity increases bond based attachment. Familiarity with members increases liking of them. Interpersonal communication leads to interpersonal bonds (Ren et al., 2011).

Another issue with online communities is that the characteristics associated with CMC such as anonymity and more freedom with editing text that lend to positive outcomes such as increased self-disclosure, honesty, and more social support also have

negative effects and can lead to anti-social behaviour online. For example, anonymity creates issues with flaming, trolling, deindividuation, and “catfishing.” A catfish is someone who pretends to be someone they're not using Facebook or other social media to create false identities, particularly to pursue deceptive online romances (Backer, 2010). As mentioned above in the section on Impersonal theory on CMC, (pg. 18) text based discussions online are dominated by conventional signals and lack rich cues and therefore text-based statements can be easily faked (Donath, 2007). Because of this, CMC is an environment where deception is easily created and there is a wariness of whether individuals online can be trusted. Sproull & Kiesler (1986) state that CMC lacks cues to individuality and normative behaviour and as a result, CMC users become deindividuated and normless. This can lead to deindividuation which leads to online trolling, flaming, and cyber-bullying. Baker (2001) and Cox (2006), describe trolling as the posting of incendiary comments with the intent of provoking others into conflict. Naraine (2007) also adds “ludicrous rants, inane thread-jackings, personal insults, and abusive language” to the list (pg. 146). CMC provides varying degrees of anonymity that may encourage a sense of impunity and freedom from being held accountable for inappropriate online behaviour (Hardaker, 2010).

Cho & Aquisti (2013) examined how online commenting was affected by different degrees of commenters’ identifiability and how to combat the issues of trolling and flaming in online environments. They looked at real name accounts on social network sites, pseudonym accounts on social network sites and pseudonymous accounts outside of social network sites. They found that when commenters use an identifiable social network site account they are less likely to use offensive words but a greater number of people prefer to use their pseudonym accounts. More websites are making it where people can only comment if they link their comment with their social networking site or email so that there will be less flaming and trolling.

2.3.4 The Bystander Effect Online

The Bystander Effect has been simulated in online environments such as chat rooms, discussion forums, and emails (Markey, 2000; Barron & Yechiam, 2002; Yechiam

& Barron, 2003; Blair et al, 2005). In each of the studies, the cyber presence of online others inhibited individuals' likelihood to help.

Yet, not all studies on helping in an internet context have found results that support the bystander effect. For example, Voepel et al (2008) conducted a study where they posted a helping question in 33 different sized Yahoo! Groups. Although the bystander effect seemed to be stronger among the groups sized below 250 people response rates increased again with group sizes larger than 250. In addition, the response time was fairly similar for all group size categories and they found no significant linear relationship between group size and response rate or group size and time needed for responding, or group size and quality for response. Voepel and colleagues thought the increase in response rates for groups higher than 250 people might be because of user anonymity. Audience inhibition could decrease the larger the size of the online group leading to more responses to the helping question. The mixed results in the Bystander Effect in online environments leads to further questions regarding variables that are affecting behaviour online and highlights a gap in the current research.

2.3.5 Personalisation

As discussed in Chapter 1, pg. 4, personalisation is an important factor in increasing response rates and helping behaviour in online environments (Heerwegh, 2005; Joinson & Reeps, 2007). Addressing an individual by their first name is the strongest predictor of eliciting a response. Heerwegh (2005) and Joinson & Reeps (2007) align this finding with the social exchange theory which states that the actions of individuals are motivated by the return their actions will bring (Heerwegh, 2005). Personalised salutations may be encouraging social desirable behaviour among participants and that personalisation increases the reward of a survey by making them feel more important and valued (Joinson & Reeps, 2007).

Gueguen (2003) conducted a study that examined helping behaviour according to the similarity theory in an online context. The study consisted of emailing participants to fill out a questionnaire; the solicitors sending out the emails either had the same name as the participants or a different name. When the participants received the email by the confederate with the same first name, compliance to the request increased (Gueguen,

2003). This study confirmed the similarity theory with helping behaviour and also showed the importance of a name in self-identity and as a factor that influences the perception and evaluation of people. Gueguen (2008) conducted another study that investigated helping behaviour according to similarity theory in regards to ethnicity. For his study he emailed participants from four separate email addresses with different genders and names- either male or female and either with a typical French or North African name. He found that when a solicitor was of different ethnic origin than the subject, the subject was less likely to help and that female solicitors were helped more than males (Gueguen, 2008).

Yet, personalisation needs to be understood in context since almost all of the research with personalisation in online environments has been done with survey methodology work. With that said, as with research on the Bystander Effect in online environments, personalisation is another variable that has not been studied in regards to social media. This highlights substantial gaps in research and unanswered research questions. For example, do personalising social media messages elicit a higher response rate? How can personalisation be used in social media settings to increase Prosocial Behaviour?

2.3.5 Online Gaming

Although under researched, online gaming is another aspect of the online world being studied in relation to Prosocial Behaviour. Most research on online gaming focuses on the negative aspects of online gaming including addiction and its impact on aggression (Ng & Weimer-Hastings, 2005; Wan & Chiou, 2006; Kim et al 2008). Lehdonvirta (2012) studied help seeking behaviour in an online game context. He found that avatar gender is a significant predictor of help seeking behaviour among the target population. Players using male avatars are less likely to receive help than players using female avatars, and players using male avatars are more likely to receive help solicited via indirect help seeking requests than players using female avatars (Lehdonvirta, 2012). Indirect help seeking requests involved an act that does not directly make a request, but implies so. For example, directly asking “could you help me with some milk?” versus the indirect, “I’m in trouble because I don’t have any milk” (Lehdonvirta, 2012).

Lehdonvirta conducted a second study on the instances of help giving on an online game. They coded and analysed conversation logs and found that female avatars are more likely than males to provide assistance in the form of material support and labour and no more likely than males to provide emotional support. Female avatars are more likely to give help to male avatars than other females (Lehdonvirta, 2011). Wang & Wang (2008) examined the reasons players help others in online games. They found that altruism and reciprocity had a positive impact on Prosocial Behaviour. Prosocial behaviour was not affected by gender for same sex beneficiaries but Prosocial Behaviour for opposite sex was significantly affected by gender. Male users were more likely to help females. This finding is similar to the research on Gender and Prosocial Behaviour discussed in Chapter 1, pg. 2. Men are more likely to help, especially when the victim is a woman. This is especially interesting that it also rings true with online avatars where the person's real appearance is not seen but is instead depicted through a cartoon character. Altruism and reciprocity was not affected by gender (Wang & Wang, 2008). Prosocial behaviour has also been studied in online virtual reality environments. Gilliath et. al, (2008) studied whether a virtual person in need would elicit reactions from participants and whether these were related to prosocial traits. People higher on the compassion dimension were more likely to help. They also studied head and eye movements in relation to compassion and found that more compassionate people were more inclined to look at and stay near the virtual beggar (Gilliath et. Al, 2008).

The co-construction theory can also shed light on helping behaviour in an online environment. This theory states that adolescents are psychologically connected to their online worlds similarly to their offline worlds (Wright & Li, 2011). Most of the previous work on co-construction theory focuses on negative online interactions such as cyber aggression, and little attention has been given to positive online exchanges. The internet has brought individuals convenient information exchanges as well as opportunities to communicate in positive ways. Co-construction theory states that young adults may treat their prosocial behaviours in the digital world as an extension of their prosocial dispositions. Wright & Li (2011) found that undergraduate students' face to face prosocial behaviours significantly predicted online prosocial behaviours displayed through social networking sites, chat programs, emails and text messages which supports the co-

construction theory. Young adults socialize in their online world similarly as they do in face to face interactions (Wright, 2011).

Social ‘loafing’ is another factor that can lessen helping behaviour. Social loafing occurs when people exert less effort on a collective task than they do on a comparable individual task. People work hard when they think that their effort will help them achieve outcomes that they value (Karau & Williams, 1993). The collective effort model identifies conditions under which people will socially loaf less which include a) believing that their effort is important to the group’s performance, b) believing that their contributions to the group are identifiable, and c) liking the group they are working with. Ling and colleagues (2005) studied the social loafing theory on an online movie rating website. 904 participants received an email inviting them to rate movies online. Five different groups of emails were sent out. One group was sent an email saying that they had a unique movie rating taste and that their opinions were valuable, the second group was sent an email saying that ‘rating movies helps you’ the third group received an email saying that rating movies helps the website, and another said rating movies helps you and the website and the fifth group said nothing. The study found that those in the ‘unique’ group rated 18% more movies than the non-unique group. Mentioning the benefits of rating the movies decreased participation (Ling et. al., 2005).

2.3.7 Online Activism and the use of Media to Organise

Another internet phenomenon with Prosocial Behaviour is the ‘Activism’ versus ‘Slactivism’ debate. Proponents of online Activism posit that Web 2.0 is based upon the same ideas that fuel efforts toward change which include the need to interact, share, and pursue goals and that technology offers a huge potential to connect (McCafferty, 2011). The internet is a strong vehicle that promotes collective action and can shape group-brokered collective action by encouraging self-organised engagement (Schumann, 2014). Collective Action is defined as “actions undertaken by individuals or groups for a collective purpose, such as the advancement of a particular ideology or idea or the political struggles with another group” (Postmes & Brunsting, 2002, pgs. 290-291). Collective actions emerge as an expression of personal hopes, lifestyles and grievances not based on the agendas and incentives of formal groups (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

But, if the action is for personal benefit, then it is just a personal action. Social media and its interactive tools may shape the nature of collective actions by shifting the focus from centralised, group driven engagement to personal participation (Schumann, 2014). The internet enables citizens to report and promote engagement to their personal social network. Collective actions hence become more inclusive and enable citizens to discuss and coordinate collective actions.

The power of social media is so strong, that Stanford University has a program on 'Liberation Technology' that's purpose is to understand how to use information technology to defend human rights, improve governance, empower the poor, promote economic development and pursue a variety of other social goods (McCafferty, 2011). No matter what an individual's cause is, you can find a way to connect to that cause using social media and the internet. Activists are using this technology to create videos and blogs and web pages to 'pull at the heart-strings' and get people to help. But, there is criticism that these tactics do not make a significant lasting effect. As discussed in Chapter 1, this idea is called 'Slacktivism' which combines the words "slacker" and "activism" and describes the lazy, ineffectiveness of online activism (Morozov, 2011). 'Clicktivism' is another term that is used interchangeably with Slacktivism which signifies the ease of which individuals can click on an online petition or a Social Media activist page and feel like they are actually helping when in fact nothing actually changes. Slacktivism has been argued to hurt real civic action because an individual's inner urge to help has been satisfied by the low cost, low risk activity (Lee & Hsieh, 2013). Morozov (2011) takes a quite negative stance of the internet and social media and posits that the internet is nothing but a net delusion that binds us to an online environment which in fact limits democracy. Gladwell (2010) agrees with this pessimistic view that digitally networked action is ill equipped to bring about systemic change. He says that digitally networked activism fails to generate committed collective action when the going gets tough (Gladwell, 2010). This is because high risk activism is a strong-tie phenomenon and social media is built around weak-ties. Schumann (2014) found that weak-ties introduce diverse and often counter-attitudinal information that could in fact undermine the mobilizing effect of information. Being exposed to novel but attitude-inconsistent information online reduces the willingness to take collective actions (Schumann, 2014). Yet, the internet, and social media in particular also enable individuals to establish and

manage weak-tie relations much more efficiently, enhancing the scope and speed with which information that is available within a network can be assessed (Schumann, 2014). This increases collective actions by providing quick and easy access to information. In addition, information that is gathered online prompts dialogue with fellow users through email in chat rooms and social media, and these discussions foster weak-ties and encourage exposure to direct calls for action (Schumann, 2014).

Gladwell (2010) also believes that social media are effective at increasing participation, not motivation. In addition, Gladwell (2010) argues that social media are about networks and not about hierarchical organisation. Networks don't have a centralised leadership structure or clear lines of authority and have difficulty reaching consensus and setting goals. If you are taking on an establishment, you have to be a hierarchy. Social media makes it easier for activists to express themselves but harder to have any impact (Gladwell, 2010). Other scholars criticise that internet enabled technologies undermine civil or political actions because people are "lonely bowlers" who prefer to be entertained online rather than engaged in their communities (Putnam, 1995). Yet, with these opposing views, it is unclear as to how much technology does to inspire people to actually enact change.

Other researchers argue that slacktivism could help activism based on the cognitive dissonance theory. This theory posits that individuals are motivated to reduce cognitive dissonance by altering their behaviour or cognition to be consistent with previous action (Lee & Hsieh, 2013). To test this theory, Lee & Hsieh (2013) conducted a study to see if performing one form of slacktivism (signing an online petition) would undermine subsequent civil action (donating to a charity). They found that slacktivism can actually increase likelihood of participation in subsequent collective action. Participants who signed the petition were more likely to donate to a charity when the charity was related to the petition's cause. Yet, if people declined to sign the petition, they actually donated more. Lee & Hsieh (2013) speculated that this could be because they felt guilty for non-compliance which is known as the "moral cleansing effect." Moral balancing is another reason for this. Performing good deeds license us to perform bad deeds and performing bad deeds requires personal cleansing with good deeds.

Positive media also affects Prosocial Behaviour due to the General Learning Model. The General Learning Model suggests that media exposure affects internal variables consisting of cognition, affect and arousal which lead to behaviour. Greitemeyer (2009) found that listening to prosocial songs increased whether people would donate to a charity.

In addition, social media has been a useful tool for revolutions and oppositional movements. In the past years, the most successful movements in Egypt were those using media (Lim, 2012). The oppositional movement in Egypt from 2004-2011 were called 'Revolution 2.0' Cooper (2011) once said, 'If you want to liberate a society, just give them the internet!' Others argue that the revolution would have happened without the internet. 'Techno-utopian scholars' believe that the internet enhances political participation, civil society, and democracy. 'Social network represents tools and spaces in which various communication networks that make up social movement emerge, connect, collapse and expand' (Lim, 2012, pg. 234). Individuals only participate in collective action when they recognise their membership in the relevant collective (Wright, 2011). 'Kefaya' - means 'Enough' and was the unofficial name of the Egyptian movement for change. It was a simple message that was able to embrace different groups, backgrounds, and political parties. Intermodality means that the overlapping of networks of various media is necessary for a social movement to move beyond its online following to a larger audience (Lim, 2005). Social networks are crucial for mobilization. Digital networks help maintain strong and weak social network ties. During the 2010 Haiti Earthquake, Red Cross received seven million dollars in less than four days via a text message campaign (Lee & Hsieh, 2013) and the KONY 2012 video gained more than 100 million views in less than a month.

The internet has been hailed as a liberation technology that empowers and strengthens civil society (Diamond, 2010). Internet use fosters offline collective actions (Schumann, 2014). Internet based collective actions are low-threshold actions. They require little time and pose little risk. The internet diversifies the opportunities for experienced supporters and breaks down barriers of participation for previously unengaged citizens enhancing the overall scale of collective actions (Tufecki, 2012). Also, there is a positive relationship between frequency of social media use and political

participation. Social media can promote personal and group identity constructions which are both key antecedents for political behaviour. Valenzuela (2013) surveyed the Chilean protests and found a positive relationship between frequency of social media use and protest behaviour. More frequent social media use was predictive of more frequent use of social media for information, opinion expression, and joining social causes. Social media use appears to be a significant tool for certain forms of activism. Social media are a tool for rather than a cause for political action.

There is also a politically minded, beneficial hacker culture on the internet. These individuals are called “hacktivists” and are involved in creating open-source software programs that can be used freely to circumvent the attempts by government corporations to control the internet experiences (Kahn & Kellner, 2004). Hacktivists have also created open office which is the free alternative to Microsoft and free WiFi. In addition, the number one use of the internet is targeted information retrieval and information that is gathered online can foster offline collective actions by promoting online discussions (Schumann, 2013). The internet has been referred to as a means to “galvanise, coordinate, collaborate and overthrow” (Krotoski, 2013, pg. 145).

There are also negative outcomes of social media for political and activism use. For example, at the end of 2013 Twitter estimated there was approximately 10.75 million fake-twitter users (D-Yonfro, 2013). This is called “sock puppetry” and these fake accounts are used to try and sway and manipulate. It is applied to online marketing, political support and terrorist coercion. Twitter is a powerful vehicle for persuasion. Web-based botnets command a considerable portion of twitter traffic. Cyborgs are part human and part bot. There are human assisted bots or bot –assisted humans. Meat puppets are guns for hire and are able to be marshalled at a moment’s notice. The tolerance of large numbers of noticeably non-genuine twitter followings is described as ‘slacktivism’ (Waugh, et. al., 2012). Slacktivism reduces the capability of meaningful interpretation of activism. The 2013 Australian Federal elections were subject to large numbers of automated, non-trustworthy, fake twitter followers who re-tweeted messages in support of the two opposing political leaders. Twitter support as reported is not a reliable metric for depicting the impact and influence of political issues and online discourses (Waugh et. al., 2012). Slacktivism is an accepted component in new media. In addition, there is a trend in

online blogging where bloggers will cite key words in their blogs so that google will put them at the top of their search engine. This is called Google Bombing and ‘Clogging’ because it clogs up the search engine with blogs (Kahn & Keller, 2004). In addition, researchers argue that the internet can create negative outcomes to activism due to the time displacement effect (Putnam, 1995). The time displacement effect states that because of the unlimited amount of information and entertainment that can be found online, citizens no longer have the time or interest to be involved in the community, sports or church (Putnam, 1995). Also, most internet users are only gathering and not contributing to content online. Only 1% are generating content and 99% are lurking (McConnell, 2006).

2.4 Social Media

2.4.1 Overview and Definition

As discussed in Chapter 1, pg. 5, Social network sites (SNS) have experienced a massive boom since their creation a few years ago, and it has now become the most popular activity on the internet (Qualman 2009). Boyd & Ellison (2008) define SNS as web based services that allow individuals to ‘1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system 2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connections 3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system’ (pg. 211). They differ from forums and discussion groups in that users can create his or her personal profile within the site and are able to share information, photos, and videos with other users.

2.4.2 Types of Social Media Sites

There are many social media sites that are currently in use, with all of them having a similar purpose of maintaining existing social connections (Ross et al., 2009). The main categories of social media sites in use are social-focused such as Facebook, Twitter, GooglePlus, and MySpace; activity-focused such as LinkedIn, Pinterest, and CafeMom; and Culture-focused such as Biip.no, Mixi, and Ren-Ren.

2.4.2a Social-Focused

Facebook is the largest and most popular social media site with over 1.2 billion monthly users worldwide and over 1.6 billion page views per day (Sedghi, 2014). Facebook is also the top photo-sharing site on the web with more than 14 million photos posted everyday (Stone, Zickler, & Darrell, 2010). Facebook provides the opportunity for users to create their own profiles where they can post information about themselves, their educational background, work history, hobbies and interests, relationship information, and post pictures. Users can also send private and public messages to friends as well as share videos and pictures. Currently with over 800 million users and translated in over 70 different languages, Facebook is a unique tool in understanding social interaction and online behaviour. Facebook has been used most often in research because of its immense popularity and substantial growth in the last few years.

Twitter is a microblogging service that allows users to post messages called tweets of up to 140 characters (Boyd, 2010). Twitter was founded in 2006 to enable people to share short textual messages with others in the system. The @user syntax is used to refer to others and address personalized messages to them. The # hashtag is used to mark and categorize tweets so that others can follow conversations on a particular topic. Retweeting is the twitter equivalent of email forwarding where users post messages originally posted by others. People can 'follow' others but the other user doesn't have to reciprocate. For the people that you follow, their tweets appear in reverse chronological order on your main Twitter page (Johnson, 2009). Twitter also has a collection of social network, live search, and link sharing. The twitter community is sometimes referred to as 'Twitizens' (Johnson, 2009). Twitter is referred to as the new model of social creativity (Johnson 2009). User profiles are minimal and public.

GooglePlus is a social media site that is owned and operated by Google. It is the second largest social media site with over 540 million active users (Yeung, 2013). Like other social networking sites, users can create their individual profiles and connect with other users. Specific to GooglePlus, users can create their own 'circles' and share content with specific circles. GooglePlus also has 'hangouts' which are free multi-user video conference calls.

MySpace is also popular and was first used by Indie rocks bands to promote their music (Urista, 2008). Myspace is different from Facebook and other social media sites in that it allows users to use HTML code and change the features and appearance of their sight. Users are allowed to add music, colourful backgrounds and special features. It also allows individuals to pick their top 10 friends and display this in their profile. Facebook and Myspace combined, account for over 95% of social media visits by US users (Lynn & White, 2010).

2.4.2b Activity-Focused Social Media Sites

There are also activity related social media sites such as LinkedIn, Pinterest, CafeMom, and Cross.tv just to name a few. These sites are designed with a specific activity in mind that connects its users. For example, LinkedIn is a social media site designed specifically for Business and professional networking. With over 255 million users, it is the most popular professional social media site (ebizMBA, 2014). Users can create their own profiles and list their work experience, skills, and previous jobs quite like a resume. Many companies use LinkedIn to recruit new employees. Pinterest is another activity based social media site that is rising in popularity with over 70 million users (Hortwitz, 2013). Pinterest is a site where users can collect and 'pin' different websites and ideas to a virtual blackboard that stores their pins. CafeMom is a social media site oriented towards mothers and mothers-to-be. Cross.tv is a faith-based social media site. There are numerous other examples and more sites are created on a daily basis.

2.4.2c Culture-Focused Social Media Sites

Although Facebook is the most popular social media site worldwide and was the most used in 127 out of 137 countries analysed there are still other social media sites for different cultures (Alexa, 2013). Ren-Ren and Q-Zone are social media sites specifically for China. Q-Zone is the largest with over 623 million users (Millward, 2013). Q-Zone is more similar to MySpace in that users can customise and personalise their online pages with Ren-Ren has over 30 million users (Lee, 2012). Ren-Ren is coined 'the Chinese version of Facebook' (Gustin, 2011). Similar to Facebook, Ren-Ren was developed

specifically for college students but then opened to the public. Mixi is Japan's top social media site. Mixi is unique in that its main focus is meeting new people based on similar interests. Individuals must be a resident of Japan to join Mixi (Koichi, 2008). Biip.no is a social media site for Norway and is the second most popular site in Norway behind Facebook.

2.4.3 Uses of Social Media

Social media has many uses, with its main being maintaining social connections (Ross et al., 2009). Individuals also use social media for impression management, self-presentation, self-disclosure, and social capital. Psychologists are interested in how individuals portray themselves on these sites and the implications of using these sites.

2.4.3a Impression Management and Self Presentation

Identity and impression management are strong reasons why individuals use social media. In line with Walther's hyperpersonal model of CMC, individuals can manage what information is seen by others and what they want to portray on their personal social media site. Winter and colleagues (2011) found that self-presentation and identity is one of the major motives of using these sites. Identity is the part of the self by which we are known to others (Zhao et al., 2008). Zhao (2008) calls Facebook a 'multi-audience identity production site' (Zhao et al., 2008). Social media users are now the creators of content and 'the stars of their own production' (Pempek et al., 2009). They control what information they make public and what content they want to portray to others. They have more managing power over their image (Reese et al., 2007). MySpace is a form of impression management where individuals can 'write themselves into being' (Boyd, 2007). Facebook profile pictures can be seen as a form of 'implicit identity construction' in which users display personal characteristics through images (Strano, 2008). Now, with the power of digital pictures and photo editing software individuals have the ability to 'reinvent themselves' by manipulating digital images (Strano, 2008).

Research has shown that individuals portray their most idealized self on their Facebook profile page and have been known to 'stretch the truth a bit' in their online self-

presentations to portray themselves in the best light (Zhao et al., 2008). The shooting and editing practices have changed photography from picture taking to picture making and with these practices individuals can shape a photograph into an idealized image representing social norms about desirable personal characteristics and socially accepted notions of family, gender romantic relationships, and parenthood (Strano, 2008). Pempek and colleagues (2009) as well as Lewis & West (2009) found that both males and females untagged photos of themselves on Facebook due to the fact that they did not like their appearance or their behaviour in the photo (Pempek et al., 2009; Lewis & West, 2009). This ‘untagging’ behaviour identifies the importance of ‘image’ and presentation portrayed through their profiles. To study identity management on social media sites, Strano (2008) studied individual’s Facebook profile pictures, and found many gender and age norms at work. Strano found that women changed their Facebook picture more often and were more likely to include pictures of their friends in their Facebook profiles, although men were just as likely to feature their romantic partner and family in their profile picture as women. Women smiled more than men in their profile pictures and included more up close photos of themselves. Women tended to portray themselves in a more seductive light and made seductive poses and wore clothing that emphasized their sexuality. Older users were more likely to display images of themselves alone and were less likely to change their profile pictures.

2.4.3b Social Capital and Popularity

Social Capital and Popularity is another reason for using social media. The number of friends displayed on one’s social media site is a vestige of the friend connections the user has accrued. Social media sites differ from everyday interaction in that social media ‘friends’ often reach several hundred, whereas in real life settings, friend networks usually consist of 10-20 people (Tong et al., 2008). Socio-metric popularity is a term that corresponds to the number of friends or connections one has (Tong et al., 2008). Research on socio-metric popularity has shown that popular individuals receive more positive ratings on measures of liking and potential friendship from peers, they are judged as more trustworthy and kind (Tong et al., 2008). Kleck (2007) found that the number of friends indicated on one’s Facebook page triggers more positive social judgments.

Popularity, pleasantness, heterosexual appeal and confidence of the profile owner were rated higher when the owner had a high number versus a low number of Facebook friends. Research has also shown that having too few friends as well as too many friends is perceived more negatively than those having an optimally large number of friends (Tong et al., 2008). Tong et al (2008) found that there is a curvilinear relationship between the amount of Facebook friends an individual has and other's perceptions of their physical attractiveness. Individuals with the fewest friends were rated the lowest on physical attractiveness and individuals with the highest friends were also rated lower on physical attractiveness. The highest was the group with around 300 Facebook friends. Zywicki & Danowski (2008) found that the more sociable extraverted individuals with high self-esteem were more popular both offline and online. The less sociable individuals with lower self-esteem strived to look popular on Facebook. Reese et al (2007) attribute this to the concept of 'Basking in Reflected Glory (Cialdini, 1978). This concept states that people choose to accentuate the positive aspects of themselves by associating with specific others that makes them look good. To test this they created fake Facebook profiles that either had a high (221), medium (62) or low (9) number of Facebook friends. Their profile picture was either a picture or a question mark. They found that the subject in the high number of friends condition was rated as more pleasant, sexy, and confident than the profile with few friends. The number of friends you have within your Facebook social network affects other's people's perceptions of you. Note that this information is unique to social media as you normally don't know the size of a person's social network in an offline setting. Online communication offers new ways/tools of conveying impression enhancing information (Reese et al., 2007).

There is a link between Facebook use and social capital among college students (Ellison, 2007). Social capital is resources that derive from the relationships among people in varying social contexts – 'an investment in social relations by individuals through which they gain access to embedded resources to enhance expected returns of instrumental or expressive actions' (Lin, 1999 pg. 32). Social networks provide access to information and opportunities that might not be available within a set of close-knit relationships. Sometimes reciprocity occurs where people obtain benefits from the network and then give back to the network (Steinfeld, 2009). Social network sites may help individuals create and maintain social capital because SNS enable interaction and

reciprocity with a larger network of social connections (Steinfeld, 2009). The larger network is more likely to contain weak-ties. Putnam calls this ‘bridging social capital’. There is a strong connection between use of social networks and higher levels of bridging social capital. Bonding social capital is the support that originates in close knit relations such as intimate friends and families provide emotional support and tangible benefits.

2.4.3c Self -Disclosure

Self-disclosure is another reasons individuals use social media. Self-disclosure is defined as verbal and non-verbal communication revealing information about an individual (Greene, Derlega, & Mathews, 2006). It is not surprising that Facebook results in higher self-disclosure when its slogan is “Facebook helps you connect and share with the people in your life.” Sharing is an integral aspect of social media. Social media does not have the rich cues that are available in FtF communication and therefore demands more self-disclosure for individuals to benefit from interaction. Self -disclosure and social connection are motivators that foster online interpersonal communication (Ledbetter, et al., 2010). Self-disclosure can be particularly rewarding on social media sites in regards to social contacts and friendships (Hargittai & Hsieh, 2010). Self-disclosure is an integral part of building relationships. There is a reciprocal relationship between trust and self-disclosure (Christofides, Muise, & Desmarais, 2009). Individuals that disclose more on social media receive more social support (Goldner, 2008). Individuals are more likely to disclose information on Facebook than they are in everyday life and self-disclosure on Facebook was significantly predicted by the need for popularity (Christofides, Muise, & Desmarais, 2009). The risk of limiting information on social media is greater than the risk of self-disclosure.

Zhao and colleagues (2008) found that on social media, individuals show rather than tell about themselves. Disclosure is therefore an act of identity-construction. In addition, individuals are more likely to express positive rather than negative emotions on social media and present better emotional well-being than in real life. Emotional self-disclosure helps users elicit social support and improve intimacy with friends (Qui, et al., 2012). One theory that could explain this is the Enhanced Self-Disclosure theory in CMC. This theory says that CMC stimulates self-disclosure due to the lack of non-verbal cues

(Valkenburg & Peter, 2007). The finding that online communication enhances self-disclosure is one of the most consistent outcomes in CMC research (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007).

2.4.4 Issues and Concerns with Social Media

Although social media is connecting people, informing individuals, and providing a space for self-presentation, communication, and individual expression, it also has negative consequences associated with its use. For example, privacy is a huge concern. Social media makes its revenue through third party advertisers that have access to user's information. In addition, social media is a haven for social comparison and jealousy. Being connected to hundreds of one's family, friends, and acquaintances means being bombarded with idealised online portrayals of their everyday lives, which can lead to negative consequences. Social media can also increase polarisation, cyber-bullying, and trolling. In addition, individuals are given access to more information than ever before and need to learn how to effectively manage this information to not become overwhelmed.

2.4.4a Privacy

Privacy is one of the main issues and concerns with social media. Social media has changed the public discussion about managing privacy online (Madden, 2012). What are the dangers of sharing so much personal information online? Does privacy concerns impact individuals social media use? Privacy can be viewed in different ways. Privacy is the ability of individuals to control when, to what extent, and how information about the self is communicated (Westin, 1967). Another definition of privacy is the security against intrusion from the government (Schement & Curtis, 1995). Privacy is also defined as the choices individuals make to restrict the information that they share (Madden, 2012). Privacy isn't just about hiding things. It's about self- possession, autonomy and security (Garfunkel, 2000). Sharing too much information online can have bad implications for future employment; it can result in identity theft, and have a multitude of other negative

consequences. Therefore, it is important to understand how to navigate privacy applications on social media sites and tailor them to one's needs.

There seems to be a disconnect between what users are saying about privacy and their actual online behaviour (Madden, 2012). Acquisiti & Gross (2006) found that an individual's privacy concerns are only a weak predictor of his membership to the network. Privacy-concerned individuals still joined the network and revealed great amounts of personal info. Some manage their privacy by trusting their ability to control the information they provide and the external access to it (Acquisiti & Gross, 2006). Madden and colleagues (2013) found that youth are sharing more personal information on their social media pages than in the past and although they are choosing to use privacy settings, they are sharing information with a very large network of friends. In addition, most teens aren't worried about third party access to their data. Yet, Stutzman and colleagues (2010) and Krasnova and colleagues (2010) found that privacy concerns do impact social media use. High level of privacy concerns lead to fewer disclosures online (Stutzman, et al., 2010; Krasnova et. al, 2011). Also, most users choose restricted privacy settings and profile "pruning" and "unfriending" is on the rise (Madden, 2012) Women are significantly more likely to use privacy settings on social media (Madden, 2012).

2.4.4b Polarisation

Social media and polarisation is another issue and concern. Contemporary media and the internet have created a culture of polarization in which people primarily seek out points of view to which they already subscribe (Sunstein, 2001). People's views become more extreme because their views are corroborated and they grow more confident in knowing the shared views of others. Homophily describes the principle that when interactions between similar people occur more often than among dissimilar people, this can lead to polarization, inequality and extremism. Homophily can also limit people's exposure to social worlds. Group polarisation happens when the members of a deliberating group move towards more extreme views. Dramatic social events tend to polarize attitudes. Gilbert (2009) suggests that people go online to argue rather than to agree. Change in media technologies have altered how people first learn about major news events. Yardi & Boyd wanted to know if people became more extreme in their posts

after they tweeted about them. The 140 character tweet restraint and the speed to which topics ebb and flow make meaningful discussions difficult. Yardi & Boyd (2010) gathered over 11,000 tweets from over 6800 twitter accounts from the first 24 hours after the shooting of Dr. George Tiller. Dr. George Tiller was a late-term abortion doctor who was killed on May 31, 2009 (Hutmacher, 2010). Twitter users voiced strong opinions on abortion and very polarized hashtags #pro-choice #prolife. Yardi & Boyd (2010) found that people were more likely to reply to people who shared the same view. Twitter is exposing people to multiple diverse points of view but the medium is insufficient for reasoned discourse and debate, instead privileging haste and emotion. Yet, the wide range of interactions on twitter may promote positive social outcomes.

2.4.4c Social Comparison and Jealousy

Social comparison is another problem that can arise from social media. Haferkamp & Kramer (2011) conducted two online experiments where individuals looked at profiles with either an attractive or unattractive photo and also looked at profiles with successful or non-successful occupations. Participants were then given PANAS, Body Image Scale, Satisfaction with Career Scale, and Rosenberg Self Esteem scale. People who looked at attractive photographs had less positive emotions and had higher discrepancy between their own body versus their ideal body and were less satisfied with their own body (Haferkamp & Kramer 2011).

Muise (2009) found that exposing one's social network activities in a public domain has negative consequences for one's romantic and sexual relationships. Muise created the Facebook Jealousy Scale and found that women score higher on the scale than men. Jealousy is defined as the emotional reaction on a threat to the relationship (Utz & Beukeboom 2011). Individual's contacting their past partners was the most common trigger for jealousy. They also found that trait jealousy had the highest correlation with Facebook jealousy (Utz & Buekeboom 2011). Facebook is unique in that it gives people access to information about their partner that would otherwise not be assessable. Social media increases the amount of info people receive about their partners. They have access to their partner's wall postings and daily activities. This can induce jealousy, especially in long distance relationships (Utz & Beukeboom 2011). Social media is an environment

that offers a socially acceptable way of monitoring your partner's behaviour. Jealous people monitor more (Utz & Beukeboom 2011). Buunk (1997) differentiates between reactive/ anxious and possessive jealousy. Reactive jealousy is positive related to relationship quality. Possessive jealousy is un-related. Monitoring behaviour is an aspect of possessive jealousy (Buunk, 1997). People in committed relationships experienced less jealousy than those in less casual ones. Utz & Beukeboom (2011) investigated not only jealousy and social media use, but relationship happiness and social media use as well. They found that trait jealousy, monitoring behaviour, and need for popularity were positively related to SNS jealousy. Relationship satisfaction and SNS use predict higher SNS relationship happiness than jealousy in reaction to partner's activities on a social media site. For low self-esteem individuals, need for popularity, trait jealousy and monitoring behaviour predicted SNS jealousy. For high self-esteem individuals, monitoring behaviour and SNS use for grooming were main predictions for SNS jealousy. Almost half of the sample did not engage in monitoring behaviour offline (look through drawers, bags, read texts/emails) but were much more likely to engage in monitoring behaviour online (Utz & Beukeboom 2011).

2.4.4d Cyber-bullying and Online Trolling

Cyber-bullying is yet another problem with social media. Cyberbullying has recently emerged as a new form of bullying and harassment (Slonje & Smith, 2008). As mentioned above in the section on Prosocial Behaviour in Online Environments (pg. 26), attributes of social media such as semi-anonymity can cause deindividuation, which makes it a conducive environment for cyber-bullying and online trolling. Cyber-bullying is defined as 'an aggressive, intentional act carried out by an individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot defend him or herself' (Smith et al., 2008, pg. 376). Types of cyber-bullying activities include flaming, harassment, cyber-stalking, denigration (put-downs), impersonation, outing and trickery, and exclusion (Willard, 2006). As defined previously on pg. 30, trolling is defined as the posting of incendiary comments with the intent of provoking others into conflict (Baker, 2001; Cox, 2006).

2.4.4e Attention Economy

Another issue that stems from social media is called attention economy. Attention Economy refers to the fact that in an age where information and content has grown so abundant, one thing that is limited is individual's attention (Simon 1971). The academic Herbert Simon was the first to coin the term 'attention economy.' He stated 'in an information-rich world, the wealth of information means a dearth of something else: a scarcity of whatever it is that information consumes. What information consumes is rather obvious: it consumes the attention of its recipients. 'Hence a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention and a need to allocate that attention efficiently among the overabundance of information sources that might consume it' (Simon 1971, pp. 40–41). Attention Economy also relates to the Time Displacement Effect discussed previously on pg. 39. Because of the unlimited amount of information that can be found online, citizens no longer have the time or interest to be involved in the community, sports or church (Putnam, 1995).

2.5 Conclusion and Next Steps

There was an increase in research on helping behaviour after the Kitty Genovese case. In the late 1990's after Larry Froistad confessed to murdering his daughter in an online support group, this moved Prosocial research online. Yet, for some reason, this has not been taken into the realm of the most popular activity on the internet, social media (Qualman, 2009). Although there has been a lot of research done on social media since its inception, Prosocial Behaviour and social media research is non-existent. It is not known whether helping behaviour on social media sites mirrors that of the real world, or what factors increase may change helping behaviour on these sites. There is also a gap in knowledge as to what factors are deterrents to prosocial behaviour. And, can social media promote an effective form of online activism? Or is Slacktivism the unintended result? In a similar vein, is social media impersonal or can it be another form of hyperpersonal communication? Are there steps one can take to make social media more hyperpersonal? To address this research gap, a set of four social media studies were conducted and will be discussed in the subsequent chapters. Yet, first, it is important to explore in more detail Prosocial Behaviour in the context of social media, and to develop a firm understanding

of its origins, scope, and definitions.

3.1 Prosocial Behaviour

The literature review highlights that there are a handful of terms which are interchangeably used for Prosocial Behaviour including but not limited to helping behaviour, empathy, charity, altruism, and cooperation. Although these terms are interchangeable, there are distinct differences in their meaning. For example, as previously mentioned in Chapter 1, pg. 1, Prosocial Behaviour encompasses a wide category of actions that are ‘defined by society as generally beneficial to other people and to the ongoing political system’ (Piliavin et al., 1981, pg. 4). Helping behaviour is an action that provides benefit to a person(s) in need of aid with no prior promise to give reward in return (Bar-Tal, 1982). Robinson & Curry (2005) describe altruism as the purest form of caring, selfless, and non-contingent upon reward, and thus a predecessor of prosocial cognitions and behaviours. Although these terms are very similar there are clear distinctions between them which are made clearer in Table 3.1 below created by Chaoluck & Medlin (2012). The main differences depicted in Table 3.1 between the three terms are that Altruism does not expect anything in return and does not consider the cost of the behaviour. Helping behaviour is more specific and provides direct help and rewards, whereas Prosocial Behaviour and Altruism can provide indirect rewards to society as a whole.

Table 3.1: Distinctions Between Helping, Prosocial, and Altruism (Chaoluck & Medlin, 2012)

	Helping	Prosocial	Altruism
Purpose of the Behaviour	Benefit other(s) (in specific term)	Benefit others (in general term) Increase the well-being of both benefiter(s) and	Benefit other(s) (in specific term) Increase the well-being of

		recipients	recipients
People Involved in Behaviour	Two people or more The helper(s)- recipient(s)	Two people or more, but expect to impact on society The benefiter(s)- recipients	Two people or more The giver(s)- recipient(s)
Path	Direct	Direct/Indirect	Direct/Indirect
External Reward Expectation	Can be expected but no promise Approval and friendship, power gain, monetary reward (Weiner, 1980)	Low expected, Can be refused Social recognition, encouragement from others, social support/relationship (Twenge et al., 2007)	None (Millon, 2003)
Internal Reward Expectation	Consider	Intendedly and Unintendedly Consider	Considered Very Low
Nature of Internal Reward	Feeling of praise and honour in their own eyes (Diamond & Kashyap, 1997)	Understanding development, social responsibility (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010)	Accidental receiving
Cost	Considered	Considered	Not Considered

I will focus solely on the terms Prosocial Behaviour and helping behaviour for this thesis. This is because the research questions discussed in Chapter 1, pg. 6, focus on questions of social media engagement, factors that influence helping behaviour, and how individuals are using social media for prosocial action and do not consider altruism and cooperation. The term Prosocial Behaviour will be used when discussing the broader implications of research in general, whereas helping behaviour will be used for my individual studies. The operational definition for Prosocial Behaviour for my thesis is any act that benefits another person, institution, or social framework. The operational definition for helping behaviour will differ depending on each study depending on the helping task and will have to do with whether or not the participant acquiesced with the certain request. This is because helping can come in different forms and can be measured in different ways. For example in study two, the helping behaviour requires filling out a 10-minute survey for a friend. Helping will be measured on whether or not they carry out the request by completing the survey. Each study will describe the operational definition of the helping behaviour measured in detail.

3.2 Social Media

Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) describe social media as ‘a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content’ (pg. 61). To illustrate, Kaplan & Haenlein (2009) believe that in order to understand social media, one must first comprehend Web 2.0 and User Generated Content (UGC). As discussed in Chapter 1, pg. 5, Web 2.0 is the term used to signify that the internet is moving into a second phase; transitioning from a work tool that was specifically designed for scientists and the military into a global, improved, participatory phenomena (Anderson, 2007). Kaplan & Haenlein consider Web 2.0 as the ‘platform for the evolution of social media’ (pg. 61). One must also understand the term ‘User Generated Content’ (UGC) in order to understand social media. UGC is content that is publicly accessible, creative, and created by users or consumers of an online system or service. Another term that is used quite often and was stated and defined in Chapter 1, pg. 5, is social network sites or SNS. SNS

include websites such as Facebook, MySpace, Google Plus, Friendster, Twitter, and LinkedIn, to name a few. Social media differs from SNS in that it includes a broader range of online communities where networking is not the main focus such as but not limited to blogs, YouTube, Wikipedia and numerous others. New sites are being added daily.

For the purposes of this thesis, the broader term ‘social media’ will be used for continuity and clarity. Some studies will research particular sites such as Facebook or Twitter, while others will look at a broader range of social media sites by asking about individuals’ use of social media as a whole. The operational definition of social media used for this thesis is any site that is available online where an individual can connect and share with others. I will justify the use of certain social media sites in more detail for each specific study.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

My theoretical framework is based on Walther’s (1996) model of hyperpersonal communication mentioned in the Introduction and the Literature Review (pgs.2, 12,& 27-29.) I postulate that social media has the ability to be more desirable than FtF interaction due to fast and precise information exchange, high levels of self-disclosure, and social media’s ability to successfully navigate weak ties (Walther, 1996; Joinson, 2001). But, there are obstacles to overcome to achieve hyperpersonal communication on social media sites which include flaming, online bullying, and information overload. How can we use Walther’s (1996) hyperpersonal model of communication to overcome these barriers?

The first two studies will also be examining The Bystander Effect. As stated in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, (pgs. 2,10, & 19) the Bystander Effect suggests that the presence of other people inhibits individual’s ability to help based on the idea that people assume others will help built on three main processes; audience inhibition, social influence, and diffusion of responsibility (Latane & Darley, 1970). It can be argued that the Bystander Effect provides a robust basis to understand Prosocial Behaviour in online environments (Latane & Darley, 1970; Latane & Darley, 1968, Markey, 2000; Barron & Yecchiam, 2002; Barron & Yecchiam, 2003). Yet, even though real world experiments on the Bystander Effect have been replicated in online environments, it seems too simplistic

to assume that there are not different mechanisms at work in the online environment that could be the underlying cause of behaviour. Also, as mentioned in Chapter 2, pg. 14, critics argue that the Bystander Effect doesn't account for the categories of bystanders, the ambiguity of social roles, and the hazards of interfering with others' affairs (Levine, 1999; Cherry, 1995). In addition to these issues, the theory of the Bystander Effect was found back in the early 1970s before the invention of the internet. There are many differences between online and offline environments that need to be taken into account. For one, online environments are usually asynchronous. People log on and off at their leisure. In addition, online environments do not have the same reliable and rich cues that exist in the real world such as facial expressions or tone of voice. How do these variables affect Prosocial Behaviour? It seems more than plausible that there are many different and novel variables occurring in social media settings, which may interfere with helping behaviour.

In addition, Latane & Darley's (1970) five-step model of helping behaviour was also created in the early 1970's and is arguably problematic when applied to online environments. For example, their model states that when individuals are faced with an opportunity to help, there is a decision making process that takes place. This includes first noticing the event, then interpreting the event correctly, feeling personally responsible for dealing with it, deciding what to do, and engaging in the behaviour. The person also needs to possess the necessary skills and resources to act. Yet, these five-steps are not so straightforward when applied to online environments, especially social media sites, which may limit the applicability of the five-step model in an online context. Also, interpreting the event correctly can be tricky without any non-verbal cues, which could lead to wrong interpretations. For example, when participants were asked to rate others' personalities in an online chatroom they provided accurate ratings when chatting one to one with a participant, but were not accurate when there were many others present in the chatroom (Markey & Wells, 2002). Feeling personally responsible can pose another problem on social media sites because of the sheer number of individuals that use these sites. How does the presence of virtual others impact personal responsibility?

Walther's (1996) Model of Hyperpersonal Communication as well as The Bystander Effect, Latane & Darley's five-step model of helping behaviour, and

Slacktivism will all be applied online to social media sites (Latane & Darley, 1970;). Can social media go beyond FtF communication to achieve hyperpersonal communication?

To begin to answer these questions, the next section, Chapters 4-8, introduce the empirical portion of the thesis. Chapter Four reports my on research on the impact of gender, attractiveness, and number of Facebook friends on individuals' willingness to help.

Chapter Four: No Help for the Friendless: Gender, Appearance and Number of Facebook Friends' Impact on Helping Behaviour

4.1 Overview

To understand how social media can most efficiently be used for prosocial behaviour and hyperpersonal communication we must first understand what factors are influencing whether individuals help or not. Many factors influence helping behaviour in the offline world. Three that have been thoroughly researched include gender, appearance and diffusion of responsibility. As discussed in the previous chapters, research has shown men are more likely to help, attractive people are more likely to receive help, and people are less likely to help when others are present than when they are alone (Eagly & Crowley, 1986; Benson & Lerner, 1976; Dommeyer & Ruggiero, 1996; Latane & Darley, 1970). To date, these factors have not been applied to a social media setting. To further understand helping behaviour in a social media context and whether it relates to helping behaviour in general, the impact of gender, appearance, and number of social media friends on helping behaviour was investigated.

Three hypotheses have been developed from the published research:

Hypothesis 1: Women would be helped more than men.

Hypothesis 2: More attractive individuals would be helped more than less attractive individuals.

Hypothesis 3: The individuals with less social media friends would be helped more than the individuals with more social media friends because of diffusion of responsibility.

Hypothesis 4: Individuals who are more empathic will help more.

Hypothesis 5: Individuals who spend more time on social media sites will help more.

Hypothesis 6: More extraverted individuals will help more.

4.2 Method

4.2.1 Participants

276 individuals participated in this study. They were recruited by a University research pool and a Psychology online research website. 183 were female and 92 were male. Their ages ranged from 13 to 61 years of age, with 65% ranging from 16 to 21 years of age. 86% of participants came from the United States and the United Kingdom (167 American, 70 British, 19 European, 9 Asian, 7 Spanish, and 4 Australian).

4.2.2. Design

A 2 (Appearance) x 2 (Gender) x 2 (Facebook Friends) factorial design was employed. Fake Facebook profiles were created for each of the 8 conditions, which included Attractive versus Unattractive, Male versus Female, and Few (5) versus Many (550) social media friends. Few versus Many social media friends was used to depict diffusion of responsibility because how many friends one has represents how many people see a Facebook message and therefore how many people are present. The profiles were created using the Facebook profile template and changing the profile picture and the number of friends using the Microsoft Paint program. Everything else remained the same in each condition. Attractive versus unattractive was measured by a pilot study where pictures of males and females from the website 'hot or not.com' were rated on their level of attractiveness. 12 headshots of attractive and unattractive males and females (3 photos for each group) were printed out in colour on a sheet of paper. Then, fifty individuals were asked to rate each picture on a scale of 1-10 on the attractiveness of each headshot (1 being very unattractive and 10 being very attractive). The lowest scored male and female were used for the unattractive category, and the highest score male and female were used for the attractive category. A copy of the pilot study hand-out is located in Appendix A (pg. 146). Helping questions were also tested using a pilot study. Three helping questions were needed for the study. The first one being relatively easy, the second requiring more effort on the helper's part, and the third requiring a lot of effort. Several helping questions were tested by asking individuals if they would help if their Facebook friend asked them certain questions. The questions were then chosen based on individual's response to help. The first being a relatively easy helping question 'Will you press the like button on my Facebook status', the second requiring more effort on the helper's part 'Will you help me rake leaves?' , and the third being a difficult helping

question, 'I am having trouble and need money, will you donate a month's salary?' The pilot study confirmed that most people would help by 'liking' someone's status, about 50% would help rake leaves, and rarely would they help donate a month's salary.

4.2.3 Measures

Social Media Use and Gratifications

The Social Media Use and Gratifications Scale was created in 2008 for Myspace and was an appropriate fit for the time, but it needed to be updated and other items needed to be added. For example, their scale was only 11 items and included 'I use social media for dating purposes,' 'to keep in touch with old friends,' 'to post information about myself.' 25 more questions were added to these 11 including seven open ended questions measuring participants' level of social media use (e.g. 'How long do you spend on social media sites a day?') and 28 items measuring participants' social media use gratifications (e.g. 'I use social media sites to keep up with friends and family.'). Participants rated their degree of agreement with each item using a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A copy of the scale is located in Appendix B (pgs.147 &148).

Empathy

Empathy is a characteristic that is often correlated with a higher level of helping behaviour. Empathy was assessed using Mayer & Caruso's (1998) Multi-Dimensional Emotional Empathy Scale. 30-items measured participants' emotional empathy (e.g. 'the suffering of others deeply disturbs me'). Participants rated their degree of agreement with each item using a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Larger numbers indicate higher levels of emotional empathy. A copy of the scale is presented in Appendix C (pgs. 149 & 150).

Extraversion

Extraversion was assessed using Eysenck & Eysenck's (1975) Short-Term Revised Eysenck personality Questionnaire- EPQR-S. Only the 12 item Extraversion scale sub-section was used (e.g. 'I am a talkative person'). Participants rated their degree of agreement with each item using a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Larger numbers indicate higher levels of extraversion. A copy of the scale is shown in Appendix D (pg. 151).

4.2.4 Procedure

Participants were directed to a website where they first answered demographic questions and questions on their social media use. They then selected a random item (one of Jupiter's moons) that led them to one of the eight conditions, where they were then asked, 'If this was your Facebook friend, would you agree to his/her request?' for each of the three helping questions. Then, they answered the Extraversion and Empathy scales.

4.3 Results

First, the percentage of help for each condition was calculated. The average was totalled from the like, rake, and money questions. Results are shown below in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Percentages of Help for each Condition

	Yes	No	Total	PercentYes
UnattractiveMaleFewFriends	35	79	114	30.7%
UnattractiveMaleManyFriends	41	40	81	51.3%
AttractiveMaleFewFriends	65	76	141	46.1%
AttractiveMaleManyFriends	42	45	87	48.3%
UnattractiveFemaleFewFriends	48	57	105	45.7%
UnattractiveFemaleManyFriends	48	42	90	53.3%
AttractiveFemaleFewFriends	49	56	105	46.7%
AttractiveFemaleManyFriends	49	56	105	46.7%

Then, a Pearson's χ^2 test was used to see if the three helping control questions were consistent with the pilot study results. That is, more people (71%) helped in the 'like' condition, about half helped in the 'rake' condition (55%), and the least helped in the 'money' condition (11%). As shown in Table 4.2 below there is a significant difference between the percentage of participants that said they would help in the three different conditions (Pearson's $\chi^2 = 220.23$, $p < .001$).

Table 4.2: Percentages of Help for each Helping Question

	Yes	No	Total	%Yes
Like	197	79	276	71%
Rake	151	125	276	55%
Money	29	247	276	11%

*Pearson χ^2 220.2 Asymp. Sig (2 sided) $p < .001$ ****

A Pearson's χ^2 test was then conducted to test the three hypotheses. As shown in Table 4.3 below, the first hypothesis that women would be helped more than men was not supported. There was no significant difference between the percentage of help given to men compared to women. (Pearson $\chi^2 = 1.8$, $p = ns$)

Table 4.3: Percentages of Help for Female/Male Conditions

	Yes	No	Total	% Yes
Female	194	211	405	48%
Male	183	240	423	43%

Pearson χ^2 1.8 Asymp. Sig (2 sided) .180

In addition to seeing if more help was given to the female or male conditions, I also tested whether the male or female participants helped more. To test this, I assigned a number one to instances where the participants said they would help, a number two to the instances where participants said they would not help, and a 0 to the conditions they did not take part in. I then took the average for each condition. A lower number meaning more individuals helped in that condition. Both males and females scored .19 and there was not a statistical difference in the amount of help given by male or female participants.

The second hypothesis that more attractive individuals would be helped more than less attractive individuals was not supported. There was no significant difference between the percentage of help given to attractive versus unattractive individuals as shown in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Percentages of Help for Attractive vs. Unattractive Conditions

	Yes	No	Total	%Yes
Attractive	205	233	438	47%
Unattractive	172	218	390	44%

Pearson χ^2 1.8 Asymp. Sig (2 sided) .180

The opposite of the third hypothesis was found. As shown in Table 4.5 below there is a significant difference between the percentage of participants that said they would help in the few friends versus many friends conditions. The condition with five Facebook friends were significantly less likely to be helped than the condition with 550 Facebook friends. (Pearson $\chi^2 = 4.29$, $p < .05$).

Table 4.5: Percentages of Help for Few Friends vs. Many Friends Conditions

	Yes	No	Total	%Yes
Few Friends	197	268	465	42%
Many Friends	180	183	363	50%

Pearson χ^2 4.286 Asymp. Sig (2 sided) $p < .05^$*

This was especially seen with the rake helping question, see Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6: Percentages of Help for Few Friends vs. Many Friends for Rake Question

	Yes	No	Total	%Yes
Few Friends Rake	75	80	155	48%
Many Friends Rake	76	45	121	63%

Pearson χ^2 value- 5.705 asymp.sig (2 sided) $p < .05^$*

A loglinear analysis was performed to see if there were any interactions between the variables and there were no significant interactions.

For the fourth hypothesis, I thought that individuals who rated as more empathic would help more. To test this hypothesis I created an overall “help score” by weighting each of the three conditions with a help number. The like condition was assigned one point. The rake condition two points and the money condition three points. If the individual said they would help in more than one condition, these scores were added together. The logic being that the conditions increased with the amount of effort required to help with the task; so the larger the help score, the more helpful the participant. I then correlated this with individual’s empathy score. Contradictory to the hypothesis, there was not a significant correlation between the participants help score and their empathy score. More empathetic participants did not help more.

To test the fifth hypothesis that individuals who spend more time on social media sites will help more, a Pearson correlation was conducted on whether individuals helped and the amount of time the participants spent on social media sites a day. Although there was a negative correlation (the longer they spent on social media a day, the more likely they were to help) the correlation was not statistically significant.

To test the sixth hypothesis that more extraverted individuals will help more a Pearson correlation was conducted on whether individuals helped and their extraversion scores. Although there was a negative correlation (the more extraverted the individuals were, the more likely they were to help) the correlation was not statistically significant.

4.4 Discussion

Contrary to hypothesis one, two, and three, helping behaviour on social media sites did not follow the same rules that apply to helping behaviour in general (Benson & Lerner, 1976; Eagly & Crowley, 1986; Latane & Darley, 1970). The first hypothesis that women would be helped more than men was not supported. There was no significant difference between the percentage of help given to men compared to women. Nor was there a significant difference in the amount of help given by male and female participants. The second hypothesis that more attractive individuals would be helped more than less attractive individuals was not supported. There was no significant difference between the percentage of help given to attractive versus unattractive individuals. The opposite of the third hypothesis was found. The condition with five Facebook friends were significantly less likely to be helped than the condition with 550 Facebook friends. (Pearson $\chi^2 = 4.29$, $p < .05$).

This brings up the question of why didn't gender, appearance, and diffusion of responsibility affect helping behaviour in a social media setting? Let's begin with gender and appearance. Various reasons could explain these effects. For one, it could be that gender and appearance are more salient in face-to-face interactions. Online photos do not have the same rich cues for gender or appearance as face-to-face interactions, such as pitch of voice or facial expressions. As you can recall from the Literature Review (pg. 27) CMC reduces social context cues due to Information Richness Theory or Media Richness Theory. This theory suggests that each media carries richness according to the number of cues they convey and CMC lacks in information richness (Sproull & Kiesler, 1986). This was true for this study. The only information the individuals had to go by were a name, a picture, and how many friends they had. This finding could also be explained by Social Presence Theory. Social Presence Theory analyses how well media provides information about the presence of others including facial expression, tone of voice, and other attributes (Short, Williams & Christie, 1976). The participants did not have that information to go by to make their decision of whether or not they would help which could explain why gender and appearance did not affect their decision.

Also, a major theory of why males help more than females are because of gender roles such as male chivalry. Gender roles are defined as norms applicable to individuals

based on their socially identified gender (Eagly & Crawley, 1986). In the female gender role, women are expected to place the needs of others before their own. Female roles are roles oriented towards caring, nurture, and responsibility. Women are generally more empathic than men (Eagly & Crawley, 1986). Male gender roles are geared towards heroic behaviour, chivalry, strength and independence. The man is supposed to protect the weak and defenceless. It could be that the helping tasks that the participants were asked “Will you like my status?” or “Will you help rake leaves?” or “Will you donate a month’s salary?” were gender neutral helping roles and therefore did not elicit any gender differences in helping. Yet, Eagly & Crawley’s research from the 1980’s is quite outdated and gender roles and norms have been argued, criticised and re-defined since, which could be another reason why there weren’t any gender differences in helping.

The number of friends condition brings up many queries. For one, maybe the condition of ‘few friends versus many friends’ wasn’t actually measuring diffusion of responsibility; maybe it was more a measure of ‘socio-metric popularity’ or ‘social norms.’ For example, one of the main reasons individuals use social media is for social capital and popularity. The number of friends displayed on one’s social media site is a vestige of the friend connections the user has accrued. Research on socio-metric popularity has shown that popular individuals (individuals with more social media friends) receive more positive ratings on measures of liking and potential friendship from peers, and they are judged as more trustworthy and kind (Tong et al., 2008). Kleck (2007) found that the number of friends indicated on one’s Facebook page triggers positive social judgments. Popularity, pleasantness, heterosexual appeal and confidence of the profile owner were rated higher when the owner had a high number versus a low number of Facebook friends. Research has also shown that having too few friends as well as too many friends is perceived more negatively than those having an optimally large number of friends, which suggests, there is a ‘number of friends norm’ that is at work (Tong et al., 2008). People with a large number of friends were rated as disingenuous. Tong et al (2008) found that there is a curvilinear relationship between the amount of Facebook friends an individual has and other’s perceptions of their physical attractiveness. Individuals with the fewest friends were rated the lowest on physical attractiveness, and individuals with the highest friends were also rated lower on physical attractiveness. The highest was the group with around 300 Facebook friends. It could be possible that there is

a 'norm' number of Facebook friends that is socially acceptable and anything above or below this number is considered abnormal and affects how individuals are perceived by others. This finding could also have something to do with the effect that similarity has on helping behaviour. The participants in the study had a mean number of 404 friends, which is much closer to the condition of 550 friends, compared to 5 friends. Research has shown that the more similar a person is to the individual soliciting help, the more likely it is that they will help the person (Gueguen, 2003; Gaertner & Bickman, 1971; Bickman & Kamzam, 1973; Egner & Crano, 1975; Keasey & Keasey, 1971; Suedfeld, Bochner & Matas, 1971).

Zywica & Danowski (2008) found that the more sociable extraverted individuals with high self-esteem were more popular both offline and online. The less sociable individuals with lower self-esteem strived to look popular on Facebook. Reese et al (2007) attribute this to the concept of 'Basking in Reflected Glory (Cialdini, 1978). This concept states that people choose to accentuate the positive aspects of themselves by associating with specific others that makes them look good. To test this they created fake Facebook profiles that either had a high (221), medium (62) or low (9) number of Facebook friends. Their profile picture was either a picture or a question mark. They found that the subject in the high number of friends' condition was rated as more pleasant, sexy, and confident than the profile with few friends. The number of friends you have within your Facebook social network affects other's people's perceptions of you. Note that this information is unique to social media as you normally don't know the size of a person's social network in an offline setting. Online communication offers new ways/tools of conveying impression-enhancing information (Reese et al., 2007).

Indeed, there were limitations to this study. For one, this study simulated a social media setting to control for extraneous variables. This meant that the participants were speculating on how they think they would behave if they were in that situation. This could have impacted the results as individuals do not always behave how they report. Yet, this experiment was designed with that in mind and a controlled experiment was chosen for its advantages in regulating outside variables.

In summary, this study shows that the variables that affect helping offline such as gender, attractiveness and the number of people present do not have the same effects

online. Contrary to past research, it shows that online behaviour does not always mimic the real world. The following chapter hopes to address a few of the limitations in this study. Chapter Five reports a study that took place in a real social media setting to try to eliminate any participant speculation. The next chapter also pinpoints the Bystander Effect by focusing solely on this variable.

Chapter Five: “[Insert Name Here]”: The Effect of Group Size and Personalisation on Response Rates to Facebook Messages

5.1 Introduction

Study One suggests that helping behaviour does not behave in the same ways on social media sites as it does offline. For example, females were not helped more than men and more attractive individuals were not helped more than unattractive individuals. What was surprising was that individuals with fewer Facebook friends were helped less than individuals with many friends. This led me to believe that I was not accurately measuring the Bystander Effect but rather socio-metric popularity or social norms. To pinpoint the Bystander Effect and helping behaviour in a social media setting I relied upon the literature of the Bystander Effect in online environments to develop Study Two.

The body of research on the Bystander Effect (Markey, 2000; Barron and Yechiam, 2002; Barron and Yechiam, 2003; Blair et al 2005) suggests that the interaction between computer mediated communications is governed by the same laws as in other contexts; and the theory of bystander intervention can also be used to explain and predict intervention in online environments. To date, email has been the main online domain that has replicated the Bystander Effect. For example, addressing an email request to a single recipient as opposed to multiple people elicited not only more responses, but responses that were lengthier and more helpful (Barron & Yechiam, 2002). This finding also carries over to online discussion groups. Members of discussion groups are three times more likely to fill out a short survey when emailed individually rather than when sent an email to the entire discussion forum subscription list (Yechiam & Barron, 2003). Yet, not all studies on helping behaviour in an internet context have found results that support the bystander effect. For example, a study conducted in the chat room “Yahoo! Groups” posed a helping question in 33 different sized Yahoo! Groups. No significant linear relationship between group size and response rate was found (Voepel, 2008).

The effect of personalisation in online settings is another topic that has interested researchers. Referring to individuals by their names significantly increases helping behaviour and response rates not only in the offline world, but the online world as well

(Heerwegh, 2005; Yechiam & Barron, 2003; Markey, 2000; Joinson & Reeps, 2007). The positive effects of personalisation have been shown with emails and online chat groups. The type of personalization has also been shown to be important. Addressing individuals by their first name rather than their first and last name is the most effective in increasing response rates. First names are less formal and increase the feeling of personalisation (Joinson & Reeps, 2007).

These recent studies along with the classic research on helping behaviour shed light on the power of the Bystander Effect as well as personalisation and how it is applicable in both offline as well as online environments. Yet, with the most popular activity on the internet now being social media and the constantly increasing time spent on these sites, it would be beneficial to know if the Bystander Effect and personalisation also occur in this fast growing segment of the online world (Qualman, 2009).

5.2 Overview

To begin research in this area, the present study investigates whether diffusion of responsibility and personalisation increase helping behaviour in a social media context by manipulating the number of friends sent a private Facebook message soliciting help and whether or not they are greeted by name to see if this increases response rates.

Hypothesis 1: Sending the message to fewer individuals will increase the likelihood that an individual will help

Hypothesis 2: Referring to the individuals by name will increase the likelihood that an individual will help

Hypothesis 3: Sending the message to fewer individuals plus referring to them by name will provide the highest response rates

Hypothesis 4: More empathic individuals will respond to the condition sent to more individuals without personalisation

5.3 Method

5.3.1 Participants

176 individuals were recruited from a Scottish (Heriot Watt) and a North American (LaGrange) University to send out Facebook messages to their friends (Recruits). 146 were from a Scottish University and 30 were from an American University. 115 of the recruits were female and 61 were male (mean age= 20.65, SD= 4.27). All recruits were social media users and all had active Facebook accounts. Recruits spent an average of one hour and 50 minutes on Facebook a day (mean = 109.06 minutes, SD= 94.88) and had an average of 398 Facebook friends (mean =398.31, SD=101.38). There was no significant difference between time spent on Facebook or amount of Facebook friends between the Scottish and American university recruits. A total of 471 participants were contacted from the recruits, of whom 81 (17%; 55 females, 26 males) completed the survey (Participants). Participants spent an average of an hour and a half on Facebook a day (mean= 96.75 minutes SD= 114.85) and had an average of 402 Facebook friends (mean= 402.42, SD=286.12).

5.3.2 Design

The study employed a 4 x 2 factor independent subjects design. The first factor was “Group Size” which had four levels (1, 3, 6 or 9 Facebook friends). The second factor was “Personalisation” which had two levels (greeted either by name or no name).

5.3.3 Procedure

Recruits were first asked to fill out a series of questionnaires including an empathy questionnaire (Multi-Dimensional Emotional Empathy Scale, Caruso & Mayer 1998), an extraversion scale (Short-Term Revised Eysenck personality Questionnaire- EPQR-S, Eysenck & Eysenck 1975) and questions on their social media use (adapted from Raacke & Bonds-Raacke 2008) . A copy of the Multi-Dimensional Emotional Empathy Scale is presented in Appendix C (pg. 149 & 150), the Social Media Use and Gratifications Scale is located in Appendix B, (pg. 147 & 148), and the EPQR-S is shown in Appendix D (pg. 151). Then, the recruits were assigned to one of the eight conditions which included

sending one private Facebook message to either one, three, six, or nine of their Facebook friends and either greeting them personally by name or generically by ‘Hi’ or ‘Hi all.’ They all sent only one message (either to one or multiple friends at once). They were given a random letter produced by the ‘Random Letter Generator’ website and were instructed to type in the letter in the “To: Box” and choose the first friend(s) that appeared.

The message said:

‘Hi (either insert friend’s names (1, 3, 6, or 9) or just say ‘Hi all’),

Would you mind filling out a quick survey for my friend’s research project? The survey takes approximately 10 minutes. The survey link is _____.

Thanks,

(Insert Recruit’s First Name)

The survey link took the individuals to an online questionnaire where the number of individuals who responded out of each condition was tracked.

5.3.4 Measures

Social Media Use and Gratifications

An adapted version of Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008) Social Media Use and Gratifications Scale was used to assess participants’ online social media usage. The 36 item scale included seven open ended questions measuring participants’ level of social media use (e.g. “How long do you spend on social media sites a day?”) and 28 items measuring participants’ social media use gratifications (e.g. “I use social media sites to keep up with friends and family,”) Participants rated their degree of agreement with each item using a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A copy of The Social Media Use and Gratifications Scale is located in Appendix B, (pgs. 147 & 148).

Empathy

Empathy is a characteristic that is often correlated with a higher level of helping behaviour. Empathy was assessed using Mayer et al's (1999) Multi-Dimensional Emotional Empathy Scale. 30-items measured participants' emotional empathy (e.g. "The suffering of others deeply disturbs me"). Participants rated their degree of agreement with each item using a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Larger numbers indicate higher levels of emotional empathy. A copy of the Multi-Dimensional Emotional Empathy Scale is presented in Appendix C, (pg. 149 & 150).

Extraversion

Extraversion was assessed using Eysenck & Eysenck's (1975) Short-Term Revised Eysenck personality Questionnaire- EPQR-S. Only the 12 item Extraversion scale subsection was used (e.g. "I am a talkative person"). Participants rated their degree of agreement with each item using a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Larger numbers indicate higher levels of extraversion. A copy of the Short-Term Revised Eysenck personality Questionnaire (Extraversion Only) Scale is shown in Appendix D, (pg. 151).

5.4 Results

A total of 471 individuals received a private Facebook message from one of the 176 Recruits. 81 individuals out of the 471 (17.2%) responded to the request and completed the survey.

Table 5.1 below shows the response rates for all eight of the conditions.

Table 5.1: Response Rate for All 8 Conditions

	Response	Non Response	Total	Response Rate
1 Name	11	42	53	20.8%
1 No Name	10	42	52	19.2%
3 Name	14	37	51	21.2%
3 No Name	9	42	51	17.6%
6 Name	13	53	66	19.7%
6 No Name	4	68	72	5.5%
9 Name	15	48	63	23.8%
9 No Name	5	58	63	7.9%

To test the three hypotheses, four χ^2 tests were performed. The first χ^2 was performed to test the first hypothesis that sending the message to fewer individuals will increase the likelihood that an individual will help. The result of the χ^2 test was not significant ($\chi^2 (3) = 5.09$). The number of people in each condition did not affect response rates. The response rate (how many individuals completed the online survey) was highest in the three person condition (22.5%) and lowest in the six person condition (12.3%) as shown below in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Response Rates for Group Size

	Response	Non Response	Total	Response Rate
One Person	21	84	105	20%
Three People	23	79	102	23%
Six People	17	121	138	12%
Nine People	20	106	126	16%

$\chi^2 5.09$ Sig (2-sided) $p > .05$

A second χ^2 test was performed to test the hypothesis that greeting the individual by name would increase response rates. Greeting the individual by first name instead of just a generic ‘Hi’ or ‘Hi all’ dramatically increased helping behaviour. The χ^2 was statistically significant ($\chi^2 (1)= 9.97, p<.01$) and based on the odds ratio, individuals in the name condition were 2.23 times more likely to complete the questionnaire than individuals in the no name condition shown in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3: Response Rates for Personalisation

	Response	Non Response	Total	Response Rate
Name	53	180	233	23%
No Name	28	210	238	12%

$\chi^2 9.97$ Sig (2-sided) $p<. .01^{**}$

To test the last hypothesis that sending the message to fewer individuals plus referring to them by name will produce the highest response rates, group size data was split into two categories- those referred to by name and those referred to generically. Then a separate χ^2 test was performed for each category. Contrary to the hypothesis, a smaller group size did not increase response rates in the name condition, ($\chi^2 (3) = 1.15$).

Table 5.4: Response Rates for Group Size and Name

	Response	Non Response	Total	Response Rate
One PersonName	11	42	53	20.8%
Three PeopleName	14	37	51	27.5%
Six PeopleName	13	53	66	19.7%
Nine PeopleName	15	48	63	22.7%

χ^2 1.15 Sig (2-sided) $p > .05$

In support of the hypothesis, a smaller group size did increase response rates in the no name condition (χ^2 (3) = 8.06, $p < .05$). As seen in Table 5.5, the response rates decreased dramatically in the six and nine people conditions.

Table 5.5: Group Size and No Name

	Response	Non Response	Total	Response Rate
OnePersonNoName	10	42	52	19.2%
ThreePeopleNoName	9	42	51	17.6%
SixPeopleNoName	4	68	72	5.5%
NinePeopleNoName	5	58	63	7.9%

χ^2 8.06 Sig (2-sided) $p < .05^*$

A loglinear analysis was performed to see if there was an interaction between Group Size and Personalisation. There was no interaction. In addition, the empathy and extraversion scale scores of the recruits were compared with the percentage of participants that responded to their request and no significant correlation was found.

In regards to the fifth hypothesis that more empathic individuals would respond to the condition with more people and no personalisation, the mean empathy scores were calculated for the respondents in each condition presented in Table 5.6

Table 5.6 Empathy and Extraversion Scores for Respondents in Each Condition

	Empathy	Extraversion
OnePersonName	3.60	3.67
OnePersonNoName	3.67	3.51
ThreePeopleName	3.53	3.28
ThreePeopleNoName	3.79	3.70
SixPeopleName	3.89	3.39
SixPeopleNoName	3.69	3.94
NinePeopleName	3.47	3.63
NinePeopleNoName	3.71	3.85

When looking at the mean scores, they are fairly similar. To break this down to see if there was a significant effect for the personalisation condition, mean scores were calculated for Empathy and Extraversion and then an independent samples t-test was conducted to see if there was a significant difference between the scores. There was no significant difference between the empathy and extraversion scores for the name versus no name condition ($t = -.88$, $p = ns$) as shown in Table 5.7 below.

Table 5.7 Empathy and Extraversion for Personalisation Category

	Name	No Name
Empathy	3.62	3.71
Extraversion	3.49	3.69

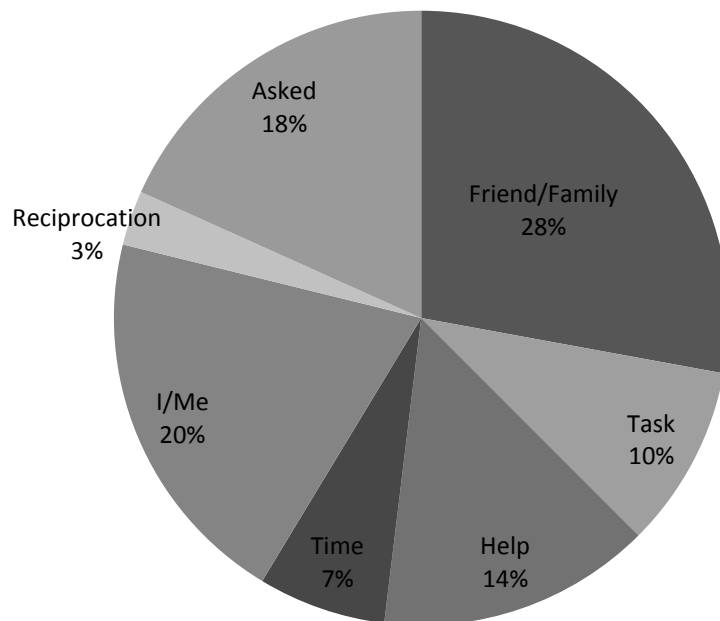
In addition, the measures empathy, extraversion, and the participant's social media use were correlated with their response times. No significant correlation was found.

In the last part of the online questionnaire, the participants were asked an open-ended question inquiring 'Why did you help?' Their answers were then coded using Thematic Analysis by two raters. Agreement for the themes was high with only seven disagreements between the raters out of a total of 104 ratings. (A few of the responses fit into multiple categories). The seven disagreements were resolved by a 3rd rater. A two out of three majority vote was taken to place the seven disagreements into categories.

77 of the 81 participants responded to the question and seven themes were unveiled. The themes have been grouped as 'Friend/Family', 'Task-Related', 'Help', 'Time/Procrastination', 'I/Me', 'Reciprocation', and 'Asked'. Participant's answers could fall under multiple themes. The Friend/Family category had the most answers with a total of 29 and a few examples of the responses include 'He's a good friend of mine,' 'Because she is family,' and 'Because she's one of my best friends.' The Task Related category had a total of 10 answers. A few examples include 'It seemed like a simple task,' 'Because it was a fast task,' 'Research is important.' The Help Category had 15 total answers and included statements such as 'Because I like to help,' 'I wanted to help them out,' and 'I like helping people.' The Time/Procrastination category had seven answers and included statements such as 'Because I'm in the library avoiding work,' 'To procrastinate a little bit,' and 'I had time to do so.' The 'I/Me' category had the second highest amount of answers with a total of 21 and included statements such as 'Because I'm a top bloke,' 'Because I'm nice,' and 'Because I'm a nice person.' The Reciprocation category had three answers, and included statements such as 'She has helped me in the past,' 'He'd do

the same in return,’ and ‘She’s done similar things for me.’ And the last category ‘Asked’ included 19 statements, such as ‘Because he asked me to,’ ‘Because a friend asked me to,’ and ‘I was asked to help.’ Another researcher was asked to help put the statements into the seven categories and the themes and answers were in agreement except for seven discrepancies. A 3rd rater was used to solve the discrepancies. Figure 5.1 below shows the percentages for each category of why participants helped and as you can see, Friend/Family is the highest answer with 28%, followed, by I/Me with 20%, Asked with 18%, Help with 14%, Task at 10%, Time at 7% and Reciprocation at 3%.

Figure 5.1 Why did you help?



5.5 Discussion

A total of 471 individuals received a private Facebook message from one of the 176 recruits. 81 individuals out of the 471 (17.2%) responded to the request and completed the survey. The first hypothesis that increased group size would reduce response rates was not supported ($\chi^2(3) = 5.09$). The second hypothesis, that greeting the individual by their first name would increase response rates was supported ($\chi^2(1) = 9.97$,

$p < .01$). Participants in the name condition were more than two times more likely to complete the questionnaire than individuals in the no name condition. The last hypothesis had mixed results. Although smaller group size did not increase response rates when salutations were personalised, the smaller group size conditions dramatically increased response rates when the messages weren't personalised. Lastly, more empathetic and extraverted recruits did not receive more help than their less empathetic and extraverted counterparts.

The lack of support for the first hypothesis that the fewer amount of people included in the message would increase the response rate raises one main question. Why does this study differ from the multitude of research supporting the Bystander Effect in offline (Latane & Darley, 1968) as well as online environments (; Markey, 2000; Barron & Yechiam, 2002; Barron & Yechiam, 2003; Blair et al., 2005)? There could be a myriad of reasons for this finding. For one, social media differs from other online spaces in a variety of ways. As stated in Chapter 3 (pg.51), it is asynchronous but individuals vary in how often they visit the site and how long they spend on the site a day. Some individuals might not check their account frequently which could have impacted response rates. Also, Facebook 'friends' vary significantly. Individuals are connected to their closest friends as well as people that they may have only met once on social media sites. To try to control for this, Recruits randomly selected friends to send the message to but perhaps closer friends were chosen in particular conditions which could also have impacted the results. In addition, Markey (2000) found in his research on diffusion of responsibility in internet chatrooms that specifying a person's name in the chatroom eliminated the effect of diffusion of responsibility (Markey, 2000). This was also found in this study. The name versus no name condition eliminated the bystander effect when the message was personalised. This finding supports Latane and Darley's (1970) theory that individuals are more inclined to aid a bystander when they feel personally responsible for helping.

In addition, when referring back to the three processes that make up the Bystander effect- audience inhibition, social influence, and diffusion of responsibility- two of the three processes do not have the same power in social media situations. For example, audience inhibition states that the presence of others can inhibit helping because the bystander is fearful that if they help, their behaviour will be negatively evaluated by other

bystanders. In this case, the other bystanders would not have known whether or not the Participant helped by filling out the survey. The same is true for social influence which states that the presence of others inhibits helping when a bystander sees that no one else is helping. The Participants would not have known whether or not the other people helped or not. That leaves the third process diffusion of responsibility as the only process that had any influence which greatly reduces the impact of the Bystander Effect.

The second hypothesis, that referring to the individuals by name will increase the likelihood that an individual will help, was strongly supported. Greeting the individual by name was the strongest determinant in eliciting a response and more than doubled the response rate. This finding is in line with past research on the positive effects of personalising salutations in offline as well as online environments (Heerwegh, 2005; Yechiam & Barron, 2003; Markey, 2000; Joinson & Reeps, 2007). Reasons for the strong increase in response rates when personalising the request could be explained using basic social psychological theories. For example, this finding supports the social exchange theory as well as the reciprocity heuristic (Cialdini, 1984; Heerwegh, 2005; Joinson & Reeps 2007). These theories state that individuals feel respected and valued when referred to by name which results in them feeling responsible to return the respect by complying with the request (Cialdini, 1984). However, Objective Self-Awareness is another theory that could explain this phenomenon. Past research has found that individuals exposed to self-focusing stimuli are more likely to help others (Wegner & Schafer, 1978). The personal salutation could induce objective self-awareness by directing the attention of the participant inward, therefore increasing the likelihood that the individual will help.

The third hypothesis, that sending the message to fewer individuals plus referring to them by name would provide the highest response rates, had mixed results. When the messages were personalised, there was no significant difference between response rates. Yet when the messages were not personalised, increased group size decreased response rates. This finding is interesting for a variety of reasons. For one, it is in line with previous trains of thought stating that diffusion of responsibility is too simplistic a theory to explain bystander intervention. Critics of the theory of diffusion of responsibility argue that diffusion of responsibility research focuses too much on the number of people present and ignores other important factors such as bystander self-awareness, the social meanings

behind non-intervention, and social categories (Wegner & Schafer, 1978; Levine, 1999). The present study highlights the issue that the Bystander Effect might be too simplistic a theory to explain and understand helping behaviour and bystander intervention, particularly in a social media environment. Social media environments are even more complex in that other social norms and factors are at work. For one, individuals use different devices to access social media such as desktop computers, laptops, mobile phones, tablets, and others. The type of device they are using could also play a part in whether they decide to help or not. For example, it is hard to complete an entire survey on a mobile phone so individuals could have not helped because of accessibility.

In addition, factors such as empathy and extraversion that have impacted helping behaviour positively in the past did not have significant results for this study.

The open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire inquiring ‘Why did you help?’ provided valuable insight into the participants reasons for complying with their friend’s request. The top reason listed was to help out friends and family members. It would be interesting to know the level of friendship between the participants and the Facebook friend. Does helpfulness proportionately increase with level of friendship? The second highest reason was the I/Me category. People seemed to do the survey for selfish reasons. They thought it would be interesting or they helped because they thought they were a nice person. This question provides a starting point at learning about helping behaviour in social media venues.

Indeed this study had limitations. One limitation was the language used in the Facebook request message. To keep extraneous variables minimised, each message was worded identically except for the name versus no name salutations. Although this limited outside variables, it did create other issues. For one, people have unique styles in the way they communicate and the wording could have come across as strange for some of the participants. Also, for close friends of the recruits, the message could have appeared too formal. Another limitation is that if a participant did not help by completing the survey, no information was obtained and therefore there are no data on their empathy, social media use, or extraversion scales to include in the analysis.

There could also be alternative explanations for these findings. For one, social media is a venue where spam and malicious software (malware) are prevalent. Spam is electronic messaging systems used to send unwanted bulk messages to individuals and it unfortunately invades most internet environments (Drucker et al., 1999). Malware is defined a program that has malicious intent. Examples of such programs include viruses, trojans, and worms (Christodorescu et al., 2005). Thus, individuals could have avoided opening the private message or clicking on the link in fear of spam or malware. This could have been accentuated in the conditions where no name(s) were specified as spam is most common in impersonalized messaging, although more sophisticated malware and spam are beginning to use personalization as a tactic to get people to click on links and open messages. Yet, many antivirus programs installed on computers highlight sites that are suspicious. In addition, Facebook provides a small photo next to the link to provide further information on the website. In this case, there was a small photo of the website that said 'Research on Social Media' in large letters which is an unlikely spam or malware candidate. This makes it doubtful that fear of spam impacted the results.

In addition, this study has practical implications. For one, with social media being used not only by individuals but by businesses and industries, it is important to know the most effective way in eliciting help and responses from individuals. It is also beneficial for researchers as well who are increasingly using social media as a recruitment tool to find participants. This study suggests that personalising salutations is an effective way of eliciting more responses and raises important research questions about the validity of diffusion of responsibility in online environments.

In conclusion, this study provides a start for understanding helping behaviour in a social media environment as well as applying relevant social psychological theories to online behaviour. It highlights the similarities as well as differences between offline and online human behaviour as well as highlights the importance of personalisation in online requests. It would be beneficial to extend on this research. Some possible directions for future research include taking this study into other social media environments such as LinkedIn or Twitter and seeing if the results translate across social media platforms, as well as investigating further the variables that affect individuals' helpfulness and engagement on social media sites.

The first two studies reported here have elicited results different from past research which brings up questions on how and why Prosocial Behaviour on social media sites differs from real world interactions and what factors and variables account for this. For this reason, my next chapter will focus on research into individuals' social media engagement. I aim to use several focus groups to step back and reflect on my theoretical framework and re-evaluate my ideologies and beliefs about Prosocial Behaviour online in order to gain insight into factors that could have influenced the results. I aim for the focus groups to bring to light why the first two studies had mixed results.

Chapter Six: Study Three- Social Media Engagement

6.1 Overview

The results from Study One and Two were different from my hypotheses and different from past research. This brought up many questions on how and why helping behaviour on social media sites is eliciting different results than helping behaviour in general. To answer these questions, three focus groups were formed to glean information about individual's social media use and to find out what barriers are impeding on prosocial behaviour on social media sites.

6.2 Method

6.2.1 Participants

To gather a wide-ranging and representative sample, focus groups with different age groups and different work backgrounds were formed. I wanted both male and female genders of different ages and work backgrounds. The first focus group consisted of 10 co-workers from an engineering company in Scotland. There were three females and seven males who ranged from 25-60 years old. The second focus group consisted of 13 teenage students who were 16 and 17 years of age. There were six males and seven females. The third focus group consisted of nine females in their 40's and 50's in a community support group.

6.2.2 Procedure

Three separate focus groups were conducted consisting of questions regarding individual's social media use and engagement. The focus groups were semi-structured and lasted twenty to thirty minutes. The focus groups were intended to flow like a conversation with specific topics and questions led by the researcher. The focus group included questions such as "How do you manage your interactions with such a large number of acquaintances and friends?" and "Has there been an incident or situation when you would not interact with someone on social media?" The semi-structured questionnaire schedule is available in Appendix E, (pg. 152).

To analyse the three focus groups, I used a qualitative approach called ‘Thematic Analysis’ (Howitt & Cramer, 1995). Thematic analysis is a widely used analytic technique in the social sciences (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Aronson, 1994; Joffe, 2011). This approach relies highly on data familiarisation. In order to adequately and thoroughly identify the themes from the focus groups, the researcher must be fully immersed in the data by carrying out the interviews him/herself as well as transcribing her/his own data. Then, the data go through a process where it is continuously coded and modified until clear themes are identified and supported with examples from the interviews. The names of the participants from the focus groups have been changed to keep anonymity.

6.3 Results

The three focus groups provided a wealth of information on why and how individuals are engaging with social media sites and what issues are preventing social media from being a hyperpersonal environment for its users. There were distinct differences among the groups but also main barriers of social media that emerged from the three focus groups. The community support group members were the most positive about social media and social media was the most hyperpersonal place for this group. Social media is a place for them to connect with other members of society who were dealing with similar issues. For example, Molly said ‘Peer support is very important, cause there are times where for your own safety, you withdraw at home and that is when you can go online.’ The co-workers focus group was more wary of social media and also frustrated by it. Ronald said the reason he didn’t use social media was because ‘I get so many pestering emails and requests to join so and so or whatever and so and so want to be your mate and all of that!’ The teenage focus group had the most love/hate relationship with social media. Some were on social media all day while others rarely checked their sites. Although there were distinct differences among the groups’ social media engagement, there were also many similarities and general themes that emerged from the focus groups.

6.3.1 Main Barriers

1) Information Overload

From all three of the focus groups there was a consensus of an online ‘information overload.’ Social media is a venue where they are bombarded with news, photos, and information that they don’t always want, and each group had different techniques and methods for dealing with the excess of information.

The participants from the co-workers focus group mainly ignores a lot of what is posted on social media sites because of the sheer enormity of it. For example, Louise explains, ‘I only ever really check personal messages, I never read the feeds and that, it’s just whatever I get, whatever is directed to me.’ Doug agrees with Louise, ‘Yeah, I ignore most of it.’ Heather adds by saying, ‘I mean, I go through sometimes and I’ll deliberately say I don’t want to get those bits of information, it’s just too much.’

The teenage focus group uses a similar tactic by only looking for anything new that deals with them personally. Ian explains, ‘I see if there is anything new, then I get off of it. I just fly on and off it.’ Jerry agrees ‘Yeah, I only spend about 10 seconds on social media. I look for anything new. No, nothing new, click away.’

The members of the community support group tried different techniques with keeping up with all of the information. Sarah took an active approach and just removed certain people from her newsfeed. She stated, ‘I actually take certain individuals off my newsfeed because they were posting every ten minutes. But other participants would try and keep up with all of the information and got overwhelmed and annoyed. Margaret said, ‘I get irritated with the newsfeed, so I go so far and I think, well.... If there’s anything else, I’m not looking at it.’

2) Can’t live with it, Can’t live without it

The second theme “Can’t live with it, Can’t live without it” was very prevalent throughout the three focus groups. There was a strong sense of negativity and frustration towards social media, yet participants were logging on continuously and spending a lot of their free time on these sites. The following are some examples from the focus groups that highlight some of the frustrations with social media. One participant in the community

group noticed a new feature on Facebook which showed how many people had viewed each post on the site. She was baffled at how this was possible. And said ‘But how do they know if they read that post because if there is any number of posts on their page, all they have done is opened their page, they don’t have a retina scan do they? And you also might leave multiple pages up on the screen and then come back to them.’ This new feature got the participants talking about all of the different ways it can be misinterpreted by others. They were worried that people might think that they didn’t care because they had not responded straight away or that someone might think they were ignoring them when in fact, they hadn’t seen the post at all.

Gordon from the teenage focus group stated ‘It does get kind of annoying I guess. Like all the drama, all the relationship statuses, all the cheating posts and all the moaning that people do.’ Jan goes on to say that there is too much drama on social media sites and that Facebook is ‘annoying.’ Then Jeff agrees and adds that, ‘People are like deliberately vague for like whatever purposes and people are like really sad and they really want someone to chat and I’m like no, go away, I don’t like you.’ The group then goes on to discuss how frustrating they found it when people they didn’t know ‘friended’ them on these sites. Jake said, ‘Someone added me with like zero mutual friends, and it kind of annoys me. You just wonder where they found you from or why did they find you?’

The co-workers focus group expressed clear frustration with social media as well. They even started joking about it at the end. Stuart said, ‘If someone could invent unsocial networking that would be great.’ Doug goes on to say, ‘Yeah, the “Antisocial Network.’

Yet, even with all of the clear frustrations that were reiterated in each focus group about social media, the participants still spend hours of their day logged on and connected to these sites. This was especially true for the teenage focus group. For example, although they shared a lot of negative attitudes towards Facebook, most of their friends and family were on it so they didn’t want to miss out on anything and would constantly keep checking it. Jan said, ‘I spend ages on social media. I just keep refreshing Facebook or Twitter until something interesting comes up.’ Kate then said ‘Everyone has it, so you like have to have it.’ Then John replied, ‘Yeah, it’s the norm.’

Social media had an even stronger impact on the community group. Sarah stated, 'It's of great value to me personally to know that the group isn't just happening once a month.' The online presence of the group provides the participants with a sense of belonging and well-being that seems to make the frustrations worth it. Social media was of value for different reasons for the co-workers focus group. Alan stated. 'We actually used Facebook to get 20 people to work for us for this last job. It is very useful in finding outside people to come and do work for us.' Even with all of the negativity and frustration, the focus groups found value from social media and did not want to lose that connection to their online communities.

3) Privacy and the Permanence of Information

Privacy concerns were another issue that kept being raised. Each focus group was worried about privacy in their own way. The community support group was so worried about privacy that they made their group completely private on Facebook, which means that it is not even searchable and no one that is not in the group can see any posts or comments. Sarah stated, 'Security is a big issue for us and that's why we arranged for this Facebook site to be private, and not just private but secret, which means that it doesn't even show up on our lists of interests.' Margaret goes on to say that, 'You can just be reassured that what you post is just to members of the secret group.'

The co-workers were wary of what they put on their Facebook sites. Heather said 'I am very careful to never put anything that would be compromising regarding work on Facebook.' Her co-worker Louise then goes on to explain that her friend works in Human Resources and that, 'I know they aren't supposed to but I know a lot of Human Resources people that search Facebook when they are interviewing people and stuff.'

The teenagers were wary of these issues as well. Jake said, 'You have to be careful with what you put up because once it's on there, like yeah, you can delete it but people have already seen it. Kate said, 'Yeah, people constantly judge you whatever you do.'

The focus groups used different tactics for navigating the privacy issue. The community group went to great lengths to ensure their social media group page was completely private so they could have a safe environment to be open and honest. Both the

co-workers and the teenagers were careful with what they posted and were aware that anything they posted was going to be seen and judged by others. The majority made their profiles only viewable to just their Facebook friends.

6.4 Discussion

Three main barriers of social media emerged from the focus groups: 1) Information Overload 2) Can't Live With It, Can't Live without It and 3) Privacy and Permanence of Information.

The focus groups provided insight into social media engagement, prosocial media in online environments and also my theoretical framework. For example, the contradictory findings in my studies could have resulted from the first theme entitled 'Information Overload.' As you can recall from the Literature review, (pg. 30) 'Information Overload' is defined as 'information presented at a rate too fast for a person to process (Hiltz & Turoff, 1985). 'Information Overload' could be a key hindrance for prosocial behaviour on social media sites and why individuals don't help. It is not that they are uncaring or unkind, but they simply have not noticed due to an abundance of information. This also relates to Latane and Darley's (1970) 5 step model of helping behaviour referred to in the literature review (pg. 11). Their model states that when individuals are faced with an opportunity to help, there is a decision making process that takes place. This includes first noticing the event, then interpreting the event correctly, feeling personally responsible for dealing with it, deciding what to do, and engaging in the behaviour. The person also needs to possess the necessary skills and resources to act (Latané & Darley, 1970). If individuals are ignoring most of people's post or only looking for information specifically directed at them personally then they are not even getting past the first step of Darley and Latane's Model.

The comments from the participants and the 'Information Overload' barrier relates back to a topic discussed in the literature review called 'Attention Economy' (pg. 50). As you can recall, 'attention economy' refers to the fact that in an age where information and content has grown so abundant, one thing that is limited is individual's attention (Simon 1971). This was brought up numerous times in the focus groups and each group viewed this overabundance of information negatively. Most of the members of the focus group

just ignore most of what is posted on social media sites. But those that try to wade through all the information just get frustrated and annoyed. Attention Economy' can be another reason why individuals aren't helping on social media sites. With texting, mobile phones, social media, online games, and an unlimited number of ways to amuse oneself, attention is scarce, and perhaps many things are going unnoticed.

'Information Overload' could also be why the personalisation of messages was so effective in eliciting help in study two. As you can recall if participants in Study 2 were referred to by name, they were more than twice as likely to help their Facebook friend by completing an online survey. Past researchers attest this increase of help to social exchange theory and believe that personalised salutations may be encouraging social desirable behaviour among participants and that personalisation increases the reward of a survey by making them feel more important and valued (Joinson & Reeps, 2007). Yet, with the feedback from the focus group, it could just be that individuals are only looking out for information directed at them and ignore the rest and looking for personalised messages is their way of navigating the 'Information Overload.'

The second barrier, 'Can't Live with It, Can't Live Without It' shed light on an interesting point discussed in the literature review on the impact of mood on helping behaviour. The participants in the focus groups voiced their frustrations and annoyance with many aspects of social media. As you can recall from the literature review, mood can be a strong predictor of whether an individual helps or not but many times elicits mixed results. For example, negative moods sometimes decreases helping behaviour and sometimes increases helping behaviour. It was found that guilt and sorrow motivate helping. This could be due to the negative state relief model which states that people who feel bad are more likely to help someone else in order to improve their own mood. It would seem plausible that the frustrations individuals are experiencing with social media plus the problems of information overload would be a fatal pair for helping behaviour.

And lastly, the third theme on 'Privacy and the Permanence of Information' brings up many issues. The community group went to great lengths to ensure their social media group page was completely private so they could have a safe environment to be open and honest. Both the co-workers and the teenagers were careful with what they posted and were aware that anything they posted was going to be seen and judged by others. A

member of the work focus group stated ‘I am very careful to never put anything that would be compromising regarding work on Facebook.’ Being guarded about information lends to an environment that lacks self-disclosure. The privacy concern also brings up an issue with the other side of the coin of Prosocial Behaviour- help seeking behaviour. If individuals are worried about privacy online and are apprehensive about sharing or posting personal information then it could make social media a shallow, superficial space where individuals are not getting or lending help because the information is simply not out there.

In addition, the three focus groups each represented one of the theoretical camps of CMC. The work focus group viewed CMC as impersonal. The teenage focus group viewed CMC as interpersonal. The community group is a prime example of hyperpersonal communication at work on social media sites. As you can recall from the literature review (pgs. 27-29) the hyperpersonal model posits that CMC users take advantage of the interface and channel characteristics that CMC offers in a dynamic fashion in order to enhance their relational outcomes (Walther, 2007). This produces outcomes that are more favourable than FtF interaction (Walther, 2007). For example, Sarah stated, ‘It’s of great value to me personally to know that the group isn’t just happening once a month.’ The community group took advantage of social media by creating their own Facebook group and altering the settings to fit their needs. The group has eliminated many of the barriers and problems of social media such as privacy issues to cater to them. The result is a positive place where each group member feels safe to share and communicate. This is similar to Joinson’s (2001) work on self-disclosure on CMC. Individuals were more likely to disclose more personal information and more information about themselves on CMC. In addition, research from Sproull & Faray (1995) found that when communities are formed around a common interest, they are likely to share common experiences despite the fact that it is a community of strangers and this can lead to “more positive relation than the accidents of location-based FtF communities afford” (pg. 45).

From my first two studies and the three focus groups, it is clear that there are many more variables at work with Prosocial Behaviour on social media sites. With this new information from the focus groups, I have a stronger idea of why I was getting different results from past research in my first two studies. In addition, there are also

many barriers at work that prevent Hyperpersonal interaction on social media. These include information overload, privacy issues, and frustrations and annoyances with social media. The next chapter contains the last study which looks at two online examples of prosocial behaviour on social media sites.

Chapter Seven: Study Four- ProSocial Media in Action

8.1 Introduction

The aim of the final study is to further examine the “Slacktivism” debate that argues that social media encourages a lazy form of activism and is not a place for real activism (Morozov 2011) and to also look at two social media examples where prosocial behaviour is being carried out online. So far I have examined factors that affect prosocial behaviour and factors that are barriers to prosocial behaviour but what about real-world examples of online helping behaviour? Does online activism truly exist? Can hyperpersonal communication exist on social media sites? This will be examined through the means of two events where social media played a vital role in helping behaviour. These events were Giving Tuesday 2013 and SnowedOutAtlanta2014. Giving Tuesday began in 2012 in the United States as a way to give back to charitable organisations during the holiday season following the chaotic consumerism displayed during Black Friday and Cyber Monday. In 2013, other countries followed suit to make it a world-wide online giving phenomenon. This event trended on twitter with the hashtags #GivingTuesday and #Unselfie as thousands tweeted about their donations or volunteer efforts. The ‘unselfie’ was a term created for this event where individuals were urged to take a picture of themselves giving back or donating to a good cause and upload it to their Instagram or twitter accounts.

The Facebook, group “SnowedOutAtlanta” was created by Atlanta resident, Michelle Sollicito after two inches of snow created a traffic gridlock in Atlanta that quickly turned chaotic. Children were stranded in schools, people were stuck in their cars, with no place to sleep (Garner, 2014). Sollicito checked her Facebook that night and saw friends offering help or asking for help on her Facebook feed but they were not connected. She sensed a strong need and created an open, online Facebook group where people could easily join and connect to one another. In less than 24 hours the group gained over 50,000 members (Kendall, 2014). Group members banded together and offered their assistance and resources to those in need. Two weeks later the group was reactivated as a second winter storm hit Atlanta. Sollicito was praised for her efforts and labeled the ‘Snow Angel of Atlanta’ to which she replied ‘To those who say that I single-

handedly united all the people of Atlanta, I tell them that I did it with the help of 50,000 friends, and an awesome tool called Facebook' (Sollicito, 2014).

Slacktivism, coined by Morozov (2011) is a term that describes the lazy, ineffectiveness of online activism. "Clicktivism" is a term used interchangeably with slacktivism, which signifies the ease of which individuals can click on an online petition or a social media activist page and feel like they are actually helping. There is a strong criticism that these tactics do not make a significant lasting effect because activism associated with social media is dependent upon weak tie relationships whereas meaningful activism requires strong, robust, organisational structure. Morozov (2011) posits that the internet is nothing but a net delusion that is defined by cyber utopianism and internet centrism that blinds us to an evolving internet landscape that may actually limit democratic possibilities. Yet, these two events are just a small example of online activism and Prosocial Behaviour. I hypothesize that the 'Slacktivism' argument is not only overly cynical but also, not true. Both Giving Tuesday 2013 and SnowedOutAtlanta resulted in a unique communication medium where prosocial behaviour could be offered and received that could not have occurred prior to social media's creation.

To understand more about Prosocial Behaviour in a social media setting and how and why people are giving of their time, money, and resources; a content analysis was conducted on the tweets from Giving Tuesday 2013 and from the Facebook group page "SnowedOutAtlanta" 2014.

8.2 Overview

Whereas the previous studies focused on pinpointing factors that affect Prosocial Behaviour on social media sites, this study aims to research Prosocial Behaviour in action by studying two real events that used social media to carry out their goals. This study also aims to further understand the 'Slacktivism' debate.

8.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: Is social media a place for online Slactivism? Or does true online activism exist?

Research Question 2: Why, how, and when do people help on social media sites?

Hypothesis 1: ‘Slacktivism’ is too cynical a view and true online activism does exist.

Hypothesis 2: People help on social media sites when they notice the event and have the right resources to act.

8.4 Method

8.4.1 Participants

16,493 tweets were downloaded from Tuesday, December 3, 2013 from 5:10am until 5:10pm using the hashtags #GivingTuesday and #Unselfie. The 12-hour time slot aimed to capture an entire workday on Twitter in hopes of maximizing on user engagement. In addition, 371 Facebook posts were downloaded from the group page SnowedOutAtlanta on January 29, 2014, and 235 posts were downloaded from February 13, 2014.

8.4.2 Procedure

Tweets were downloaded using an open access Twitter Archiving Google Spreadsheet (TAGS version 5.1, created by Martin Hawksey) using the hash tags #GivingTuesday and #Unselfie. 16,493 tweets were collected from Tuesday, December 3, 2013 from 5:10am until 5:10pm. The tweets, since high in volume were analysed by searching for certain key terms in Microsoft excel. These search terms led to commonalities and patterns among the tweets. For example, it was quickly evident that a charity entitled the Salvation Army had many tweets. Once identified it was easy to use excel to count the tweets with Salvation Army within the tweet. Then, systematic ways of

identifying the donor organizations were used to identify charities with multiple supporters. In many cases the @ sign was used to identify the re-tweeter, or the organization that the original tweet was designed to support. The text function was used to identify the first and second @ tweeted, and the result was sorted alphabetically. Next, since, many of the tweets referenced an http site; this text was extracted and matched for the same http. Finally, an attempt was made to match the tweeter against the charity to see if the tweeter was a potential donor, or a charity requesting support or thanking a tweeter to be able to further identify the tweets.

The 606 Facebook posts were downloaded using the Facebook analytics page and then copy and pasted into an Excel spreadsheet. The 606 posts were just a small sample of the multitude of posts that were made to the Facebook group. The Facebook posts were analysed and categorised into themes using ‘Thematic Analysis’ (Howitt & Cramer 1995). This approach relies highly on data familiarisation. The data goes through a process where it is continuously coded and modified until clear themes are identified and supported with examples [from the tweets and posts themselves] (Howitt & Cramer 1995).

8.5 Results

8.5.1 Overview

To answer the two research questions 1) does online activism truly exist? And 2) Why, how, and when do people help on social media sites? The Giving Tuesday Tweets and the SnowedOutAtlanta posts were analysed. The Giving Tuesday tweets were analysed first. 16, 493 tweets were collected. A large variety of charities were mentioned as well as tweets from famous celebrities. The celebrity tweets helped promote Giving Tuesday and resulted in the most retweets. The SnowedOutAtlanta Facebook posts were categorized manually. The main categories that emerged from the posts were as follows: problem resolved, thanks, help needed, help offered, prayers, information requested, suggestions provided, information provided, complaints, provide praise, bump, and comments.

8.5.2 Giving Tuesday Tweets

16,493 tweets were collected. The downloaded tweet data included the identification stream, the user, the tweet itself, the user's language, the time of the tweet, the profile of the tweeter, the source of the tweet, the profile image of the user, the user follower count, the user friends count, and the status url. Tweets were posted from individuals, businesses, and charities. First, the duplicate tweets were eliminated which dramatically reduced the tweets to 9,452. These duplicates were not re-tweets, these were computer download glitches where the same exact tweet was downloaded multiple times. With 1826 tweets, the Salvation Army surpassed the others by a wide margin. Then, systematic ways of identifying the donor organizations were used to identify charities with multiple supporters.

Using all these techniques, 8122 of the 9452 tweets were categorized. Once these tweets were categorized, the remaining tweets were individually analysed, to include actually looking at the internet site that was available if it was tweeted. To answer the first research question 1) Does social media activism truly exist? By analysing the tweets, many individuals not only mentioned donating to charities but also donating and volunteering their time. The following charities were mentioned (Table 8.1 lists those with more than 20 tweets). A broad range of charities were referenced, including local charities such as the YMCA and local parks to national, well known charities such as the American Heart Association and the Salvation Army. For example, in this tweet, the Salvation Army is responding to a tweet by Austin Malone, who posted an 'Unselfie' 'We love it! RT @AustinMahone Hey @SalvationArmyUS! I took an #UNselfie for #GivingTuesday What do you think?(:' In this tweet, the United Way is urging others to volunteer by tweeting 'Be #Unselfie, Volunteer Today!'

Tweeters included the charities themselves, who, in general were either thanking tweeters for their support or tweeting have donors consider their charity for giving Tuesday. Approximately 4553 tweets identified as supporting a specific charity, 1965

tweets could not be identified to a specific charity with a large portion of this supporting Giving Tuesday. 1534 tweets were identified as having been tweeted by a charity.

Table 8.1: Charities Mentioned in Giving Tuesday Tweets

	Tweets by Charity	Tweets by Others	Total Tweets
Salvation Army	8	1828	1836
Giving Tuesday	0	1965	1965
Food Banks	23	267	290
UN Foundation	23	179	202
Free the Children	0	126	126
Upworthy	7	111	117
Girlup	0	111	109
ADRAIntl	9	61	70
PFFOrg	37	30	67
NASPA	12	47	59
FamilyLivesOn	48	9	57
Autism	47	8	55
Donors Choose	8	44	52
University of California	15	36	51
Cancer	5	45	50
SAALLSTARS	15	30	45
Snap2Live	3	41	44
Good Will	27	16	43
Free Morgan	1	36	37

Smithsonian AfricanArtOutreach	4	33	37
UNvolunteers	6	31	37
Awearness	13	23	36
Habitat for Humanity	14	22	36
American Heart Assn	3	29	32
Red Cross	6	26	32
United Way	18	14	32
Climate	7	24	31
International Teams	14	16	30
Dalai Lama Fellows	13	18	31
Cystic Fibrosis	2	28	30
UNDP	9	21	30
IndieGoGo	6	22	28
Baycrest Foundation	7	21	28
STEM Fields	13	12	25
BBBSA	9	18	27
Unicef	0	26	26
ShotAtLife	9	14	23
Ronald McDonald	9	12	21

Several of the categories uncovered interesting results. The Salvation Army tweets were, by far, the largest of any charity. These tweets appear to be generated from 3 tweets from people with a large following. First, Austin Mahone, a pop singer with 4.7 million followers, tweeted an unselfie. In the next 120 seconds, 530 tweets were sent in support of Giving Tuesday, 512 of which were re-tweets of Austin Mahone's tweets. A total of 1,733 of the Austin Mahone re-tweets resulted. In addition, Kelly Rowland, a singer with a 5.7 million twitter following, tweeted, with a result of 75 re-tweets, including one by the XfactorUSA with almost 2.5 million followers. Duane Reade, with

over 1.4 million followers generated 9 tweets for the Westside YMCA in NYC. The Smithsonian with over a 1 million followers generated 37 tweets for their African Outreach program. A tweet generated by Jean Michel Cousteau with 27,000 followers generated 37 tweets to save Morgan the captured ORCA. DeNada Brewing Company offered \$1 for every re-tweet up to \$250. They got 243 re-tweets in the 12-hour period analysed. This helped answer the second research question on how, why, and when people help online. Social media is different in that individuals are weeding through a lot of information on their social media pages, so they first have to notice the event. From the tweets, it was apparent that a lot of publicity and re-tweets on Giving Tuesday were given after a celebrity or athlete posted a tweet about Giving Tuesday. On twitter, lots of individual ‘follow’ celebrities, and celebrity publicity impacted who helped or not.

In addition, published articles about Giving Tuesday were the source of many tweets, most of which did not identify a specific charity. The Forbes article generated five charity and 28 non charity tweets, a Huffington Post article generated four and 22, respectively, and article by Matthew Bishop generated two and 25 respectively, and George Kelly article zero and 20. Also, over 237 tweets were generated to support giving Tuesday in honour of the cartoon Newspaper comic feature “Peanuts” represented by the tweet @Snoopy, the initial tweet being generated by the Peanuts tweet with 195,000 followers as shown below in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2: Published Giving Tuesday Articles and Snoopy

	Tweets by Organisation	Tweets by Others	Total Tweets
Snoopy (IHO)	0	237	237
Forbes Unselfie Article	5	25	30
George Kelly Article	0	24	24
Huffington Post Article	4	20	24
Matthew Bishop Article	2	18	20

Other General themes that were uncovered in the analysis include volunteer which was mentioned in 177 tweets, children, or kids in 485, youth in 81 , women in 118 and girls in 166 as shown below in Table 3. An example of the ‘Volunteer’ tweet category is ‘I volunteer my time, so make this your defining moment.’ An example of the ‘Children’ category is: ‘I give because I care about our nation’s children.’ An example of the ‘Youth’ category is: ‘So happy to be able to support @Stokeorg on #GivingTuesday. Such an awesome organisation that helps youth.’ An example of the ‘Womens’ category is: ‘Supporting Women’s Pheonix Chorus on #GivingTuesday makes you feel #Unselfie.’ An example of the ‘Girls’ category is: ‘Protecting Girls from violence is important to many of our staff.’

Table 8.3: Other General Themes

	Number of Tweets
Volunteer	117
Children/Kids	485
Youth	81
Women	118
Girls	166
Total	967

The tweets helped answer the first research question about online activism. All of the tweets were positive and included ways to give to charities or other organisations and helped show that true online activism does exist and goes beyond lazy slacktivism or clicktivism. Although one could argue that tweeting is just as easy, if not easier than signing an online petition and is an example of Slacktivism, most of the tweets involved an action as well. For example, people tweeted that they were giving a donation or volunteering. And, many took a selfie as proof. As well, with 9,452 tweets, there were no petty remarks or social media bickering involved in the Giving Tuesday tweets. Social media can be an easy venue for online confrontation and one sly remark can quickly escalate into a heated argument, but this was not the case with Giving Tuesday. In addition, it was apparent that celebrity tweets significantly impacted whether or not individuals re-tweeted the message. On social media noticing the event is crucial, and Twitter users were more likely to notice and re-tweet the event if a high profile twitter user tweeted about Giving Tuesday.

8.5.3 SnowedOutAtlanta

SnowedOutAtlanta was different from Giving Tuesday in that it was created by a local citizen (Michelle Sollicito) because of an immediate need to offer help to those who were stranded or stuck due to weather conditions in Atlanta, Georgia. Because of the longer format and the fewer number of posts, they were analysed and coded manually. The main categories that emerged from the analysis were as follows: problem resolved, thanks, help needed, help offered, prayers, information requested, suggestions provided, information provided, complaints, provide praise, bump, and comments. An example of a post from the problem ‘resolved’ category is ‘She made it home finally at 9:30 this morning. Thank u all for the help and prayers.’ An example post from the category ‘Thanks’ is ‘YOU are awesome!! Thank you for helping!!’ Table 8.4 below shows an example from each category.

Table 8.4 SnowedOutAtlanta Category Examples

	Examples
Problem Resolved	‘She made it home finally at 9:30 this morning. Thank u all for the help and prayers.’
Thanks	‘YOU are awesome!! Thank you for helping!!’
Help Needed	‘My brother and sister in law are stuck at exit 7 on 285 heading towards 85. She's pregnant and he's handicapped. Their phones died at 1am and we've lost contact, but I don't think that area is moving...does anyone know? They've been out there since 11:30 yesterday morning.’

Help Offered	‘I’m off I-20, exit 59- if your close and need shelter, good, blanket- you name it! Please respond to this and I’ll make it your way!’
Prayers	‘Adriane I am saying a special and specific prayer right now for your mom's strength and safety. I know it's not much but it's what I can do. I know you are scared honey. Hugs to you.’
Information Requested	‘Steph I was trying to figure out a way we could take food to people? Any thoughts?’
Suggestions Provided	‘With all this as a possibility. If motorists must travel or be on the road they need to have an emergency kit prepared with some crackers, snacks and water in the car at all times. Kitty litter as well. A few bags if need be. They are about 3 bucks for some cheap stuff and it will help you gain traction on ice.’
Information Provided	‘I-95 Northbound is in good shape!’
Complaints	‘Right now, that should be illegal. These tow companies stand to make small fortunes on the misfortune of others. They should be given ample time to get back to their cars when it is safe to do so. Hopefully if they are towing abandoned cars, they are not charging people to do so, and are doing it as a means of just helping clear the road ways.’
Provide Praise	‘Thank God for his mercy on the city of Atlanta...southern hospitality at its finest...all the friendships create everlasting bonds, tap yourself on the back Atlanta!!!!’

Bump A term used when individuals would comment or reply to a post so that it would return to the top of the page. It signified the importance of the post and the need for others to see it.

Comments ‘Adriane, my sister is in the same boat on Roswell Road in Buckhead. I know that doesn't help your mom, but know you are not alone.’

Table 8.5 below lists the categories from the first and second snow storm and the total from both events.

Table 8.5: SnowedOutAtlanta Categories

	1st Snow Storm (Jan 29th)	2nd Snow Storm (Feb 13th)	Total
Problem Resolved	6	0	6
Thanks	38	7	45
Help Needed	16	5	21
Help Offered	40	5	45
Prayers	8	14	22
Information Requested	29	20	49
Suggestions Provided	35	38	73

Information Provided	111	54	165
Complaints	30	14	44
Provide Praise	33	8	41
Bump	17	27	44
Comments	50	63	113
Total	414	255	669

The complaints category was divided into sub-categories which included General, Government, and Media and is shown below in Table 8.6. An example of a General Complaint is “Unliked and unfollowed! And my message to all the northerners making fun of us is to find a different way to get to Florida. The Georgia border is closed to you!” An example of a Government Complaint is “”Let’s see if our Governor can get it straight this time! Stop pointing fingers and create a plan, a workable plan.” An example of a media complaint is “We are not stars (We are not Chipper Jones) so for you to mention him on the news and not ordinary working citizens about rescuing people, show your stations character 11Alive”.

Table 8.6: Complaints: Sub Categories

	1st Snow Storm (Jan 29th)	2nd Snow Storm (Feb 13th)	Total
General	19	14	33
Government	5	0	5
Media	6	0	6
Total	30	14	44

The Comments category was also divided into sub-categories which include General, Petty, and Weather and is shown in Table Six. An example of a General Comment is “Stay safe!” An example of a Weather Comment is “Lol! I'm moving to FL for the winter!” An example of a Petty Comment is “Joan Hobble Todd I have seen your anti-Christian comments on here and you absolutely will not win an argument with me about global warming but go ahead and try if you're bored and desire.

Table 8.7: Comments: Sub Categories

	1st Snow Storm (Jan 29th)	2nd Snow Storm (Feb 13th)	Total
General	35	54	89
Petty	3	6	9
Weather	13	3	16
Total	50	63	113

One thing that is important to note, is that out of the 606 posts that were analysed only 9 of those posts were petty. Most of the petty arguments had to do with arguments about religion or global warming. But, overall, this just included 1.5% of the posts.

8.6 Discussion

To summarise the results for the Giving Tuesday tweets, a broad range of charities were referenced, including local charities such as the YMCA and local parks to national, well-known charities such as the American Heart Association and the Salvation Army. Several of the categories uncovered interesting results. For one, when looking deeper at the Salvation Army tweets which were by far, the largest of any charity, the tweets

appeared to be generated from three tweets from famous people with a large following. In addition, published articles about Giving Tuesday were the source of many tweets, most of which did not identify a specific charity. The tweets helped identify that online activism does exist and that social media is not just a place for Slacktivism. It also helped identify that publicity by celebrities on twitter significantly increases whether or not individuals help. To sum up the results from the SnowedOutAtlanta posts, 606 posts were analysed. The main categories that emerged from the analysis were problem resolved, thanks, help needed, prayers, information requested, suggestions provided, information provided, complaints, provide praise, bump, and comments.

One of the main conclusions that can be drawn from these two events is a powerful argument against the ‘Slactivism’ debate. As mentioned in the literature review, there is a strong dispute that Prosocial Behaviour online does not exist and that it is just a venue that promotes a lazy form of activism coined “Slactivism” (Morozov 2011). These two studies were two strong examples against the Slacktivism debate. Both events went above and beyond ‘clicktivism’ and ‘slacktivism’ and were true examples of online Prosocial media in action. Although Giving Tuesday and SnowedOutAtlanta are just two examples, they are strong cases of helping behaviour being effectively carried out through social media sites. Out of the 9,452 tweets on Giving Tuesday that were downloaded, none were negative and out of the 606 SnowedOutAtlanta posts, only 9 were petty and involved arguments among some of the individuals posting. Petty posts only contributed to 1.5% of the total posts which is quite surprising considering how easy it is for heated arguments to escalate, especially on a venue that can be as anonymous as social media. Especially in SnowedOutAtlanta, individuals went beyond the walls of their WiFi connections and took to the streets to help those in need. These two cases are also strong arguments against the idea that meaningful activism requires strong, robust, organisational structure as well as strong-tie relationships. Even with the weak tie relationships of twitter members and the members of the Facebook Group ‘SnowedOutAtlanta,’ significant prosocial action was achieved. In addition the only “strong, robust, organizational structure” that was required was creating an online group that can be achieved in a matter of minutes. Strangers went out of their way to pick up stranded passengers, or provide shelter, and deliver food and water to those in need. If they couldn’t help in that way, many provided useful suggestions and information online.

Also, while it is not possible to determine how many of the tweets and re-tweets actually generated a gift, the Huffington Post reported that donations for this year's Giving Tuesday drive were up 90% over last years, and the Salvation Army reported that their online kettle donations were \$2.4 million this year, a \$.3 million increase over last year. Michelle's foresight, and initiative in creating 'SnowedOutAtlanta' clearly resulted in a unique communication media where help could be offered and received that could not have occurred prior to social media's creation.

In addition, as you can recall from the literature review (pg. 38), Gladwell (2010) argues that social media can't bring about social change because social media are about networks and not about hierarchical organisation. Gladwell believes that networks don't have a centralised leadership structure or clear lines of authority and have difficulty reaching consensus and setting goals. If you are taking on an establishment, you have to be a hierarchy. Social media makes it easier for activists to express themselves but harder to have any impact (Gladwell, 2010). Michelle Sollicito proved Gladwell wrong. She created her own hierarchy on 'SnowedOutAtlanta' where she was the 'leader.' She moderated the posts, got certain people in touch with others, and was available if anyone needed her. She set the tone by helping others in need and people followed her lead. This created a unique environment with the benefits of social media and the benefits of a centralised leadership structure.

'SnowedOutAtlanta' and Giving Tuesday are also strong examples of Walther's hyperpersonal model of CMC (Walther, 1996). The hyperpersonal model posits that CMC users take advantage of the interface and channel characteristics that CMC offers in a dynamic fashion in order to enhance their relational outcomes (Walther, 2007). This produces interaction that is more desirable than FtF interaction. Another advantage of CMC is that it is editable. This luxury is not afforded by FtF interactions. The hyperpersonal model depicts CMC users as creative and opportunistic rather than passive (Walther et al 2015). CMC involves a high degree of human agency and users can appropriate its channels and its technological characteristics to suit their communication needs. This accurately describes the individuals in 'SnowedOutAtlanta' and 'Giving Tuesday'. The members of these two groups used the interfaces of social media to not only enhance their relational outcomes but also for a prosocial goal. They were creative

and opportunistic rather than passive. They made social media work for them so it was more desirable than FtF interaction because of what they were able to accomplish easily and effectively.

Yet, the tweets and posts also highlighted some negative aspects of social media. For example, back and forth arguing occurred multiple times on the ‘SnowedOutAtlanta’ Facebook page. One comment about religion or one use of foul language word could spark multiple posts among some of the group members which were shown in the 9 petty posts. Posts about helping others could quickly morph into a religious or philosophical debate that escalated quickly.

Another interesting finding was the significance of tweets by Famous twitter users. The popularity of Salvation Army tweets benefited greatly by the first tweet by the famous pop singer, Austin Mahone and as mentioned in the results section, many famous artists helped charities by tweeting about them and others quickly followed their lead. This highlights the importance of a strong following on twitter. Twitter popularity is essential to get the word out and create online activism on this social media venue. This could possibly be a direction to take further research. How much impact do celebrity tweets have? Does the amount of impact increase with the amount of followers?

Indeed, there were limitations to this study. For one, these are just two isolated events that occurred and can only be generalised with caution. But with that said, Giving Tuesday is an annual online giving event, and SnowedOutAtlanta is being used as a guide for putting social media to good use during disasters.

Giving Tuesday 2013 and SnowedOutAtlanta were two real social media examples that provided valuable insight into Prosocial Behaviour online. The both provide strong arguments against the negative outlook on Online Activism coined ‘Slacktivism’ and provide evidence that pairing the unique connecting tools of social media with Activism and Prosocial Behaviour is a powerful unison. They also relate to my thesis as a whole because individuals can glean from this research that social media has its positive benefits and how to maximize these benefits while ignoring and hopefully getting rid of the negatives that were openly discussed in the focus groups.

The next chapter, Chapter Nine, aims to recap and review the results of my individual studies, draw conclusions on the discovered results, and discuss how they contribute to knowledge in general.

Chapter Nine: Conclusions and Contributions to Knowledge

9.1 Summary of Results

To try and understand more about how Prosocial Behaviour is carried out on social media sites, five studies were conducted. For my first two studies, I wanted to replicate some of the first studies on Prosocial Behaviour and take them into a social media setting to see if the same variables affect whether people help or not online as well as understand the bystander effect in a social media setting. In my first study entitled ‘No Help for the Friendless,’ I manipulated gender, attractiveness, and amount of friends to see how these three factors impacted whether or not individuals would help. Contrary to my hypotheses, I found that social media sites did not follow the same rules that apply to helping behaviour in general and that the variables that normally increase helping behaviour such as attractiveness, being a woman, and having less people around did not have the same results when applied to social media sites (Benson & Lerner, 1976; Eagly & Crowley, 1986; Latane & Darley, 1970). For example, there was no significant difference between the help given to men compared to women. There was no significant difference between the help given to attractive versus unattractive individuals. Having five Facebook friends was significantly less likely to result in help than for those with 550 Facebook friends.

For my second study entitled ‘Insert Name Here’, I was not happy with how the bystander effect variable was measured in Study One. Although at first, I thought that having 5 versus 550 friends would be a good representation of how many cyber bystanders were ‘present’, the amount of Facebook friends seemed to be more a measure of popularity and social norms. To solely focus on the bystander effect and fix this for my second study, I had participants send a private message to either one, three, six, or nine of their Facebook friends in one individual message. They either referred to their friend by name or just said ‘Hi’ or ‘Hi all.’, The first hypothesis that increased group size would reduce response rates was not supported. The second hypothesis stating that personalising the message by greeting the individual by their first name instead of just a generic ‘Hi’ or ‘Hi all’ would increase response rates was supported. Participants in the name condition were more than two times as likely to complete the questionnaire than individuals in the

no name condition. The last hypothesis had mixed results. Although smaller group size did not increase response rates when salutations were personalised, the smaller group size conditions dramatically increased response rates when the messages weren't personalised. Lastly, more empathetic and extraverted recruits did not receive more help than their less empathetic and extraverted counterparts. Again, although personalisation was found to increase response rates, the bystander effect did not have the same power in a social media setting.

The contrary findings to past research in my first two studies lead to a rethink of my original theoretical framework based on diffusion of responsibility. In addition, I wanted to further understand what factors were deterrents to prosocial behaviour on social media sites. A third study consisting of three focus groups was conducted on individuals' social media use. Three main themes emerged from the focus groups: 1) 'Information overload' 2) 'Can't live with it, can't live without it' and 3) 'Permanence of information.' For the first theme, 'Information overload,' members of the focus group felt that too much information was shared on social media and there was not enough time to sift through all of it. The second theme, 'Can't live with it, can't live without it,' brought to light the contradictory feelings that social media creates for its users. On one hand, they love the fact that they can stay connected to family and friends with such ease and efficiency, yet on the other hand they did not like all of the petty information that people posted. The last theme, 'Permanence of information,' depicted the focus groups' fears of having so much of their own information available online. The participants realised that once something was posted it couldn't be undone and this elicited feelings of unease.

For the final study, two online activist events were examined- Giving Tuesday and SnowedOutAtlanta. A broad range of charities were referenced, including local charities such as the YMCA and local parks to national, well know charities such as the American Heart Association and the Salvation Army. Several of the categories uncovered interesting results. For one, when looking deeper at the Salvation Army tweets which were by far, the largest of any charity, the tweets appeared to be generated from three tweets from famous people with a large following. In addition, published articles about Giving Tuesday were the source of many tweets, most of which did not identify a specific charity. To sum up the results from the SnowedOutAtlanta posts, The main categories

that emerged from the analysis were problem resolved, thanks, help needed, prayers, information requested, suggestions provided, information provided, complaints, provide praise, bump, and comments.

9.2 Conclusions

These studies demonstrate advancement in our understanding of Prosocial Behaviour on social media sites. With the ever increasing amount of time spent online and in particular on social media sites, it is imperative to understand how individuals are behaving on these sites. The first study showed that the variables that affect helping behaviour offline such as gender, attractiveness, and number of people present does not have the same affect online. Various reasons could explain these effects. For one, it could be that gender and appearance are more salient in face-to-face interactions. Online photos do not have the same rich gender cues as face-to-face interactions such as pitch of voice or facial expressions. The number of friends condition also brings up many queries. For one, maybe the condition of ‘few friends versus many friends’ wasn’t actually measuring diffusion of responsibility; maybe it was more a measure of ‘socio-metric popularity’ or ‘social norms.’ Contrary to past research, study one showed that online behaviour does not always mimic the real world and this study highlighted the importance of understanding more about social media engagement and the factors that are influencing whether or not individuals help. This study highlighted that helping behaviour online could be impacted by different factors than in FtF settings.

For study two, the Bystander Effect and personalisation on social media sites was observed. Again, contrary to past research, the Bystander Effect was not replicated on social media sites. This could have happened for a multitude of reasons. For one, social media differs from other online spaces in a variety of ways. Like email, it is asynchronous but individuals vary in how often they visit the site and how long they spend on the site a day. In addition, some individuals might not check their account frequently, which could have impacted response rates. Also, Facebook ‘friends’ vary significantly. Individuals are connected to their closest friends as well as people that they may have only met once on social media sites. To try and control for this, participants randomly selected friends to send the message to, but perhaps closer friends were chosen in particular conditions

which could also have impacted the results. Yet, one of the most likely reasons is that the name versus no name condition eliminated the bystander effect when the message was personalised. The second hypothesis, that referring to the individuals by name will increase the likelihood that an individual will help, was strongly supported. Greeting the individual by name was the strongest determinant in eliciting a response and more than doubled the response rate. This finding is in line with past research on the positive effects of personalising salutations in offline as well as online environments. This finding also highlights the simplicity of increasing positive engagement online. By simply addressing an individual by name, response rates can be doubled. Personalisation is also in line with Walther's (1996) model of hyperpersonal communication. Using the channels provided on the computer, such as editing text and personalising messages, Walther (1996) believed that CMC could be better than FtF communication. This was seen by personalising the messages. By simply editing the message and adding the receiver's first name, response rates were more than doubled. The third hypothesis, that sending the message to fewer individuals plus referring to them by name would provide the highest response rates, had mixed results. When the messages were personalised, there was no significant difference between response rates. Yet when the messages were not personalised, increased group size decreased response rates. This finding is interesting for a variety of reasons. For one, it is in line with previous trains of thought stating that diffusion of responsibility is too basic a theory to explain bystander intervention. The second study highlights that diffusion of responsibility does not seem to occur on social media sites and more research needs to be done to find out why this is, which will be discussed in the Limitations and Further Research section below.

The focus groups provided insight into which factors deter prosocial behaviour on social media sites and also my theoretical framework. For example, the contradictory findings in my studies could have resulted from the first theme entitled 'Information overload.' 'Information overload' could be a key reason why individuals don't help on social media sites. It is not that they are uncaring or unkind, but they simply have not noticed due to an abundance of information. This also relates to Latane and Darley's (1970) five- step model of helping behaviour referred to in the literature review (pg. 10). Their model states that when individuals are faced with an opportunity to help, there is a decision making process that takes place. This includes first noticing the event, then

interpreting the event correctly, feeling personally responsible for dealing with it, deciding what to do, and engaging in the behaviour. The person also needs to possess the necessary skills and resources to act (Latane and Darley 1970). If individuals are ignoring most of people's posts or only looking for information specifically directed at them personally, then they are not even getting past the first step of Darley and Latane's Model. The comments from the participants and the 'Information Overload' theme also relates back to a topic discussed in the literature review called 'Attention Economy' (pg. 25). Attention Economy refers to the fact that in an age where information and content has grown so abundant, one thing that is limited is individual's attention (Simon 1971). This was brought up numerous times in the focus groups, and each group viewed this overabundance of information negatively. Most of the members of the focus group just ignore most of what is posted on social media sites. But those that try to wade through all the information just get frustrated and annoyed.

'Information overload' could also be why the personalisation of messages was so effective in eliciting help in study two. As you can recall, if participants in study 2 were referred to by name, they were more than twice as likely to help their Facebook friend by completing an online survey. Yet, with the feedback from the focus groups, it could just be that individuals are only looking out for information directed at them and ignore the rest and looking for personalised messages is their way of navigating the 'Information Overload.' The second theme, 'Can't live with It, can't live without it,' shed light on an interesting point discussed in the literature review on the impact of mood on helping behaviour. The participants in the focus groups voiced their frustrations and annoyance with many aspects of social media. It would seem plausible that the frustrations individuals are experiencing with social media plus the problems of information overload would be a fatal pair for helping behaviour. The next step would be finding ways to combat information overload and the frustrations that associated with social media that hinder helping behaviour which will be discussed in the Limitations and Further Research section below.

In addition, the community support group was a prime example of hyperpersonal communication online. They were active agents in creating their ideal online space for self-disclosure and took advantage of the Facebook group interface to enhance their communication and relational outcomes (Walther, 2007). This produced interaction on

their online social media group that was more desirable than FtF interaction. They were able to self-disclose personal information and receive support from fellow members. Hyperpersonal CMC involves a high degree of human agency and users can appropriate its channels and its technological characteristics to suit their communication needs. This is exactly what the community support group did. They created an online group, edited their privacy settings and created an ideal space to converse and offer support to one another.

The final study on Giving Tuesday 2013 and SnowedOutAtlanta were two real social media examples that provided valuable insight into Prosocial Behaviour online and also the hyperpersonal model of communication (Walther, 1996). The both provide strong arguments against the negative outlook on online Activism coined ‘Slacktivism’ and provide evidence that pairing the unique connecting tools of social media with Activism and Prosocial Behaviour is a strong and powerful unison. They also relate to my thesis as a whole because individuals can glean from this research that social media has positive benefits and how to maximize these benefits while ignoring and getting rid of the negatives and deterrents to prosocial behaviour. In addition to the community support group, Giving Tuesday 2013 and SnowedOutAtlanta were also examples of the hyperpersonal model of communication. Both groups appropriated social media’s channels to be used for a common good. They found a way to use weak-ties and online acquaintances to help others and were very successful in doing so. In this way, social media was more advantageous than FtF communication because of the amount of people that could be reached in a limited amount of time. Individuals could use their own friends and weak ties as well as others to create a very large social network that could identify the needs of others and adequately help.

9.3. Contribution to Knowledge

The studies presented in this thesis are novel and unique. They mark a firm start into taking classic helping behaviour research questions and moving them into the realm of social media. The studies are also distinctive in that they focus on the positive aspects of online interaction instead of the more pervasive and researched negative topics such as

online bullying, online gambling, or aggressive video games (Smith, Lachlan, & Tamborini, 2006; Hinduja & Patchin, 2007; Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2007). It is important to research the positive aspects of social media so one can maximise on the helpful features and make the most of their time online. This would not only make social media a more productive and conducive place to communicate and share with others but also make for a better online experience for everyone.

In addition, this thesis highlighted the fact that Latane & Darley's five-step model of Bystander Intervention needs to be revised to be applicable in a social media context. For one, the issue with 'Information Overload' that was brought up by the focus groups points out that many helping incidences are probably going unnoticed due to the large amounts of material being posted on social media. Another issue with the model that can be problematic on social media sites is interpreting the event correctly. Without visual or vocal cues, things could easily be misinterpreted. Ways to combat these issues are listed below in section 9.3.1. This thesis also highlighted that Walther's (1996) model of hyperpersonal communication is still relevant and can be applied to social media sites.

9.3.1 How to Improve Prosocial Engagement Online

These five studies provide a strong start into understanding Prosocial Behaviour online. One can use the outcomes and results to improve prosocial engagement on social media sites and make it not only a more positive experience but also a place to adequately and efficiently respond to the needs of others. The outcomes of my five studies provided the following recommendations into how to improve positive engagement on social media sites.

1) Make Things Personal- Study Two, [Insert Name Here]: The effect of group size and personalisation on response rates to Facebook messages showed the importance of simply addressing an individual by name when writing a private Facebook message. This was even the case for messages where multiple people were involved. Just including the person's name more than doubled the likelihood that the individual would respond to the message and help by completing the online survey. Making things personal on social media is a simple tool that can radically increase engagement and responsiveness. This

can be done by addressing a person by name, sending a private rather than a public message, or including more personal information such as a picture.

2) Create a Social Media Group with a hierarchical structure- SnowedOutAtlanta was the fastest growing Facebook group in history with over 50,000 members amassed in 24 hours (Garner, 2014) The group made it possible for individuals to communicate issues and solve problems with ease and efficiency. The Facebook group was an easy access, open online space to share information and concerns about a community problem. It also did so well because there was someone in charge of the group who not only led the group but delegated tasks. This hierarchical structure is needed for prosocial behaviour and activism to be effective (Gladwell, 2012). This easy tactic can be carried over into other social problems and issues and could be an easy way to bring people together to solve certain tasks.

3) Edit Your Privacy Settings and Friend/Follower Settings- Annoyance and negativity with social media was a common theme that kept coming up with the focus groups in Study Three. A lot of the negativity generated by social media has to do with either privacy concerns or annoyances by other people's posts. Most social media sites have tools where you can customise the settings to fit your individual needs. For example, you can make your social media profile private so it can only be viewed by your friends, or you can make it completely public. In addition, you can block certain people's posts from your newsfeed if they annoy you or you can completely defriend them. Although customising your social media settings can take some time in the beginning, it can get rid of a lot of grievances and make the social media experience much more pleasant.

9.4 Limitations and Further Research

One of the limitations to these five studies is that except for the twitter data in Chapter Eight, there are not extremely large sample sizes. One of the advantages of social media is the availability of vast amounts of data. Yet, with collecting large data sets comes issues with ethics. For example, Facebook has received negative attention in the news recently for a study they did on social media and emotions. Researchers manipulated over 700,000 user newsfeeds without the individuals consent. They left out

certain emotional words out of individuals newsfeeds to see if this impacted the amount of ‘likes’ or comments that individuals made. The researchers did not collect informed consent or tell individuals that they had the right to participate or opt out of the study which violated ethical research on humans (Arthur, 2014). Although my studies have fewer participants they provide a way to ethically carry out research on social media sites and researchers can use these methods to get a larger data set in an ethical way. The second study in Chapter Four entitled ‘Insert Name Here’ was especially novel in that I used individuals to send messages to their friends who then became the participants. If the friends filled out the survey they were taken to a website that informed them of the study and gave them the option to participate or not. In addition, having massive size data sets like Facebook’s study can also be problematic in that statistically everything starts becoming significant and correlated.

Another limitation is that in Study One ‘No Help for the Friendless,’ fake Facebook profiles were used and individuals had to speculate on whether or not they would help. This design was employed so that the variables of gender, attraction and amount of Facebook friends could be manipulated and kept constant to avoid any extraneous variables. Yet, this created certain issues of its own. For example, individuals had to speculate on whether or not they would help and people are not always accurate in their speculations. An additional limitation is that unfortunately, there is no data on individuals that did not help in Study Two ‘Insert Name Here.’ If individuals did not click on the link in the Facebook message and complete the survey then I have no data on them at all. Subsequently, I don’t know why some participants didn’t help. This could be a possible direction for a future study, to follow up with the non-helpers or to devise an experiment where somehow information can be gathered on the non-helpers.

Although these studies provide a start into understanding Prosocial Behaviour on social media sites there are many directions further research could take. For instance, although my first two studies brought to light that the bystander effect is too simplistic a theory to describe whether or not individuals help in an online setting, the studies did not find what variables are affecting help besides personalisation and amount of social media friends. What other variables effect whether individuals help or not? Another suggestion for further research would be a study on the type of technology used to access social

media. For example, if one is using their mobile phone, it is less likely that they will help a friend by doing a survey as the device is not conducive to that. Also, if they are using social media on their mobile phone it means they are probably on the go and do not have time to help others or engage in Prosocial Behaviour. Another direction this research could take would be to identify the variables that affect what information individuals decide to attend to. A theme throughout the studies and especially in the focus groups was 'Information Overload.' Social media is a place with a plethora of posts, videos, pictures, and information. How do individuals make the judgement of what to ignore and what to look at? How do individuals manage so much information? These five studies provide a good start into Prosocial Behaviour online but there is much more research to be conducted.

The conclusions from my studies and the three recommendations to improve positive social media engagement are a strong start into making social media a more positive place for social interaction. Although it is important to understand the negative aspects such as online bullying and addictive online gaming, it is also important to study the positive aspects so we can improve on activities that are such an integral part of our everyday lives and learn how to actively and effectively use social media for online activism and prosocial behaviour.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Pilot Study for Study One- Attractive/Unattractive Males and Females Rating Sheet

Please rate these individuals level of attractiveness on a scale of 1-10, 1 being extremely unattractive and 10 being extremely attractive. Place your number rating below the picture.



Appendix B. Social Media Uses and Gratifications Scale

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

Are you male or female? _____

What is your age? _____

Where is your nationality? _____

What is your country of residence? _____

What is your relationship status (i.e. single, married, separated, divorced) _____

Do you use social media sites? _____

What is your social media site of choice? _____

Do you have a Facebook account? _____

If yes, how long have you had your Facebook account? _____

How many minutes do you spend on Facebook daily? _____

How many pictures do you post on a monthly basis? _____

How many friends do you have? _____

How many profile pictures do you have? _____

Have you edited your privacy measures? If so, what have you done?

Using the 1-5 scale below indicate your answer to each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding. The 5 point scale is as follows.

1=Strongly Disagree

2=Disagree

3=Neither Agree or Disagree

4=Agree

5= Strongly Agree

- ___ I use Facebook to keep up with friends and family.
- ___ I use Facebook to make new friends.
- ___ I frequently comment on other people's wall.
- ___ I use Facebook to post pictures.
- ___ I use Facebook to locate friends from the past.
- ___ I always browse the newsfeed when I log on.
- ___ I am still Facebook 'friends' with my ex-boyfriends and often browse their profiles.
- ___ I use Facebook to share information about myself.
- ___ I normally send private messages instead of publically writing on friend's wall.
- ___ I use Facebook for dating purposes
- ___ I use Facebook to keep informed about events
- ___ I would befriend my boss on a social media site.
- ___ I have different privacy measures for different Facebook friends.
- ___ I frequently communicate with my boss on Facebook.
- ___ I frequently communicate with my co-workers on Facebook.
- ___ I am involved in a lot of Facebook groups.
- ___ Most of the pictures I post include family members.
- ___ I rarely post a photo of just myself.
- ___ I use Facebook as a way to express my identity.
- ___ Men mainly use social media sites to network and advance their careers
- ___ Women mainly use social media sites to communicate with others
- ___ I am scared of the consequences of sharing so much personal information on social networking sites.
- ___ I use Facebook to procrastinate

Appendix C. Multi-Dimensional Emotional Empathy Scale (Caruso & Mayer 1998)

1.	I feel like crying when watching a sad movie.	Strongly Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree
2.	Certain pieces of music can really move me.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	Seeing a hurt animal by the side of the road is very upsetting.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	I don't give others' feelings much thought.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	It makes me happy when I see people being nice to each other.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	The suffering of others deeply disturbs me.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	I always try to tune in to the feelings of those around me.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	I get very upset when I see a young child who is being treated meanly.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	Too much is made of the suffering of pets or animals.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	If someone is upset I get upset, too.	1 2 3 4 5
11.	When I'm with other people who are laughing I join in.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	It makes me mad to see someone treated unjustly.	1 2 3 4 5
13.	I rarely take notice when people treat each other warmly.	1 2 3 4 5
14.	I feel happy when I see people laughing and enjoying themselves.	1 2 3 4 5
15.	It's easy for me to get carried away by other people's emotions.	1 2 3 4 5

16.	My feelings are my own and don't reflect how others feel.	1 2 3 4 5
17.	If a crowd gets excited about something so do I.	1 2 3 4 5
18.	I feel good when I help someone out or do something nice for someone.	1 2 3 4 5
19.	I feel deeply for others.	1 2 3 4 5
20.	I don't cry easily.	1 2 3 4 5
21.	I feel other people's pain.	1 2 3 4 5
22.	Seeing other people smile makes me smile.	1 2 3 4 5
23.	Being around happy people makes me feel happy, too.	1 2 3 4 5
24.	TV or news stories about injured or sick children greatly upset me.	1 2 3 4 5
25.	I cry at sad parts of the books I read.	1 2 3 4 5
26.	Being around people who are depressed brings my mood down.	1 2 3 4 5
27.	I find it annoying when people cry in public.	1 2 3 4 5
28.	It hurts to see another person in pain.	1 2 3 4 5
29.	I get a warm feeling for someone if I see them helping another person.	1 2 3 4 5
30.	I feel other people's joy.	1 2 3 4 5

Appendix D. Extraversion Scale from the SHORT-FORM REVISED EYSENCK
PERSONALITY QUESTIONNAIRE (EPQR-S)

Using the 1-5 scale below please rate each item on a 1-5 scale. 1- Completely disagree- 5
Completely agree

1.	I am a talkative person.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	I am rather lively.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	I enjoy meeting new people	1 2 3 4 5
4.	I can usually let myself go and enjoy myself at a lively party.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	I usually take the initiative in making new friends.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	I can easily get some life into a rather dull party.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	I tend to keep in the background on social occasions.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	I like mixing with people.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	I like plenty of bustle and excitement around me.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	I am mostly quiet when I am with other people.	1 2 3 4 5
11.	Other people think of me as being very lively.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	I can get a party going.	1 2 3 4 5

Appendix E- Semi-Structured Social Media Questionnaire for Focus Groups

What are your expectations of social media?

What do you want to get out of social media?

How do you use social media?

What is your social media site of choice and why? (A lot of these questions are geared towards Facebook because that is the main site people use presently, but if you use another site more often, please chime in when appropriate)

How do you manage your interactions with such a large number of acquaintances and friends?

Do you use any of the privacy settings? If so, which ones?

Have you noticed any rules or norms of the appropriate way to use these sites? What are some of the rules or norms you follow when using social media?

Has there been an incident or situation when you would not engage with someone on social media? If so, why?

What do you think of social media avatars/profile pics- do you feel that is an accurate representation of the individual? Have you ever not engaged with someone do to an avatar?

Have you ever denied or not accepted a friend request? If so, why?

Have you ever defriended a person?

If so, why?

Have you ever used the 'unsubscribe' function rather than defriended a person?

If so, why?

Do you ever filter out your number of friends and get rid of some of them?

What are some of the benefits you receive from using social media?

What are some of the concerns you have with using social media?