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When Contexts Collapse: Managing Self-Presentation Across Social Media

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>> I was in your spot just last year, and I think one of the cool things is that all this week you guys have gotten to see what I hope is some of your academic heroes talk to you. I certainly have gotten to see some of my academic heroes this week and that's the great thing about this experience. But what I'm going to show you today is that, you know, I'm a little bit closer to where you are right now and, you know, kind of show you my research journey and the steps that I've been taking over the past six years since I've been out of grad school. And what I think about with research and some of the challenges that I face, and some of the challenges probably that you face and the questions that I ask myself as I go through research. I changed the title from -- from what it originally was. I am going to talk about one of my studies but I figured I would take a step back since we are kind of talking about the bigger picture here and talk about some of these bigger challenges that we deal with every time that we're thinking about research and what are the bigger impacts of these studies that we do rather than you know just narrowing it on the one thing. So the title I've -- my new title "Technology and Relationships" is complicated, a little play on FaceBook status update. So -- Finding My Path -- and what this is about is, you know, when we go to grad school we have all these ideas about what we want to study. I can tell you that when I started my Master's Program, I had no idea what I wanted to do. I had no idea that I would be studying anything related to the internet, let alone that I would be studying social media, or FaceBook, or relationships. I had actually been rejected from The University of Maryland twice. [Audience laughter] So I finally -- they finally accepted me, [audience laughter and clapping] third time is a charm. I was -- I have a Comm. undergrad. I had been working as an editor. I wanted to go back to grad school. I thought I wanted to do in Sociology, I had been rejected there and I finally said, "Okay, I'll go back to Comm." I got rejected by the Maryland Comm. Department and then finally went back to Georgetown and that was my second year at Georgetown. And they're like, "What is your thesis on?" First week of school and I'm like, "Crap. I have to pick a thesis topic? Like this is the rest of my life, I need to pick a thesis topic." So I'm like I'll do something on the internet you know, of course, big topic. So this is ideal like, you know, I have all these big ideas, well the internet is impacting the way we do things, okay, that's a big idea. But then you have to figure out, "Well how do I get from that big idea -- big ideas I have about something to meaningful results?" We all have these ideas about relationships between whatever variables we're interested in. But getting from this point A to point B is not as easy as it seems, and to all of you who have yet to write a dissertation, I will tell you this right now. There is such a thing as too big of an idea. You're going to learn when you're writing your dissertation that no matter what you think about your dissertation being this Magnum Opus [audience chuckle], this grand thing, you know, it's not going to be, it's just a beginning. It is not the end, it is the beginning of a stream of research and you shouldn't think of it as this kind of huge thing. But so this big idea, how do I break it down? So one way to do it is to think about what is my research question? You think about this every time that you're starting a new research project but I think you should do this when you are just as a researcher and you should reevaluate this as you go and you evolve as a scholar. What is my main research question? What do -- who I'm I as a researcher? Where are my main kind of goals and what are the questions that I'm asking? So like for me, I would say right now as a researcher, these are kind of the -- where I sit. I sit at the center of these kind of three main constructs or ideas where communication practices and this idea of audience and this idea of privacy, these are all big ideas in and of themselves and I sit somewhere in the middle and most of my research that I do is driven by questions that somewhere fall on that middle, which is always a good idea to sit down and think about it. And one thing I did as a grad student and I still do today is I'll write on post-its, these big ideas I have and I'll put them on the wall or something like that. So that when I'm sitting I

might look at them and just think about them and when you're all, you know, diving really deep [bell] into your dissertation or just a study and you're really focused on this one thing, is to take a really nice step back to be able to think about the big picture. You'll be able to think about your research in such a way. It's not, I'm doing a study of how people use FaceBook for purpose X to get outcome Y but more of, "How do these communication practices help people develop more meaningful relationships?" Or, "How do they help them," you know, "when they're unable to interact," you know, other offline environments and these kinds of bigger picture ideas. So that is -- that is the first challenge we had as researchers thinking about where our research falls. The second challenge I would say we have as researchers is narrowing, and again as grad students, this is the problem I think that as grad students you probably have the most. You go to your advisor and you say, "Oh, I have this great idea for my dissertation." Your advisor looks at it and says, "Okay that's a good idea, now go and you know, cut out this, and this and this, and come back to me, make it more manageable. So this idea I have about technology and relationships, so I can narrow this down in multiple ways. So I can narrow it down in terms of the technology, I could focus on a specific technology. I could choose to just focus on FaceBook which if you have followed any of the other [laugh] few research, we tended to focus, on FaceBook. I could choose to focus on specific types of relationships, you know, things like look at romantic versus casual relationships, look at specific types of network characteristics, a lot of the work that Bernie [phonetic] does, does that kind of things. So that's another challenge we focus in research. Several people have noted the challenges of collecting data. It's hard. It's hard to collect data especially when reviews, doing data collection and you're using social media and all these different online sites. I know Cliff went over some of these and probably some other people did, but in my four years at MSU just doing research with FaceBook, we probably faced nearly every data collection challenge that you could probably have, when it came to FaceBook. Scott Golder for those of you who know him he is co-editing a special issue of Cyber Psychology that is specifically on methods in social media and I don't know when it's coming out. We were thinking of submitting something just about like our experiences of doing this, we didn't get around to it but probably coming out next year but I think it will be a good issue. So I mean -- some of the challenges you focus -- you face when you're doing this, it's just picking the right methods so this goes back to you figuring out what my question is. Does my method match my question? You know you can't just pick any old method. Certain methods work for certain questions and certain don't. Reliability and self-reports -- so sometimes perceptual data is good, sometimes it's not. So Laura Burke has done lots of research with FaceBook server data. She found that people are extremely accurate when they are asked to report how many FaceBook friends they have. So you asked them about how many FaceBook friends do you have? And then you look at the server level data and it's the reliability as a book point. I think the correlation is about 4.9. If you ask them how much time they spend on the site, they are extremely unreliable. So that's something that is important to your analysis, you probably don't want to rely on self-reports. So that's just one example of when self-reports might be bad. In terms of service like Cliff was saying you know, data sweeping, don't do it on FaceBook anymore, depends on the site. What you can and cannot take from a site. FaceBook is starting to work with some researchers. Twitter seems to be allowing more researchers back in again after they kind of shut everything down. Differences across populations of users, the way we see this as a big problem is that within -- largely within psychology, we see it within the field of communication and several other fields, they tend to rely on student samples for everything. Well guess what? College students use technologies in vastly different ways than other populations, not for everything, but for a lot of things. So then you can't generalize other populations, so it's important to, one, if you're doing research with college students acknowledge this in your limitations. But two, to undergo research that does use these other populations and this is difficult with a site like FaceBook or with like Twitter because the adoption rates are increasing among these populations it is getting easier, you know, you just have to realize that yes the convenience of getting a student sample going to the classroom, to your university you need to just work a little harder to get it but it's research that needs to be undertaken and several other fields, and we need to be willing to put in that extra work to get these populations. Researching less popular sites and finding that population can be difficult because then if it's usually the convenient sample. Doing research on E2, Cliff was again, talking about the difficulties in doing that, you

know how do you find the users and then get the users to agree to participate in your research when it's not a site that's widely used? Something that we've seen with FaceBook is that these sites are constantly evolving. So the -- at least in journals it's not so much of an issue with conferences, it's a two-year process often. So I publish a paper on specific FaceBook features, by the time the journal publishes it, those features either don't exist or they've evolved to such a degree that the paper is not obsolete it just, it doesn't really make sense anymore. So my paper doesn't really matter in the field. So how do you deal with that and again it's kind of taking a step back and not talking about well, it's FaceBook's features, but looking at it within the broader spectrum of these technologies and how these affordances can allow us to do things. And then getting a representative sample can be really hard. So we did a study in which we were trying to get FaceBook adult users for interviews and we decided to use FaceBook ads. Has anybody here used FaceBook ads to recruit? Did you have success Patrick?

>> I got zero over two months [audience laughter].

>> How much did you have to pay for your zero participants?

>> Nothing, I didn't pay any.

>> Oh, you didn't pay anything?

>> I chose the method I paid by click.

>> Okay.

>> So nothing [inaudible] can happen so...

>> Yeah, you can pay per view or something or...

>> Yeah, so view is about 100 or so...

>> Yeah. Anybody else use that? Oh gosh, so we did -- we used that. We were able to get I think 30 people to take the little screener survey which led to 17 interviews and we spent -- it ended up being like \$20 a person that we had to pay just to do it. I mean it was.

>> That's a lot of money.

>> Yeah it was a lot of money.

>> So for me I was like, I wasn't too mad about the experience, because at the same time, I don't want to see my students, you know, from my [background music] university only [inaudible] thing or whatever.

>> Yeah.

>> I just made sense of it.

>> Yeah. So this is a balance you know somebody like PR Internet has the ability to spend the \$40,000 to \$50,000 that they spend every time that PR's say -- does one of those national firm surveys, though even that has its inherent problems because they have this huge -- they have this increasing bias with non response but, you know, that's more representative than a student sample but then yeah, you have this,

you're trying to get a representative sample but you can't get enough people, so how do you balance that? That's another challenge.

>> Compared to the bad old days, \$20 a person doesn't sound too bad. But I spend more than \$10,000 to get samples on paper by mailing them to people.

>> Yeah. Yeah, but this is also you know, we're on a -- it took us that -- it also took us three months I think to get those 20 people.

>> It actually doesn't sound all that bad [audience laughter].

>> It's like a lifetime [audience laughter].

>> [Inaudible]

>> In [laugh] internet time it was like a lifetime. So to kind of echo some of the things Lydia was saying, there's a fourth challenge and that's analyzing data, and also to echo what's up with saying. One, you can't do every method and two what Lydia was talking about was about asking for help, don't hold onto everything and be afraid to ask for help. Data analysis is hard you're not going to know every method. A lot of times you might not -- you're not going to be an expert on what you're trying to do, so one of the challenges that you face is that you might have this dataset but you might not be the expert so who do you go to? If you're collaborating with people, somebody on your team might be the expert on data, that data analysis. So have them do it. If you're doing your dissertation it might be the question of do I have the time to learn this new method and do the specific analysis or do I do a simpler analysis, you know, and finish my dissertation, or you know, these kinds of same questions you have to ask yourself when you're doing it. So that's the fourth one. That's just yeah, that's just something that you have to answer -- ask -- answer on a personal basis. So those are kind of four challenges that I think we deal with every time that we're dealing with research. So now I'm going to kind of talk about one of my research projects and how I deal with those four challenges.

>> Does everybody recognize this picture? [Laughter].

>> Yes.

>> So our dear friend [inaudible] -- who I've heard multiple times, this is from his book cover presentation "The Self in Everyday Life." Big fan of the book, so his work on self presentation kind of guided one of my studies that was on context collapse and I'll get into what context collapse is in a minute but so my main research question for this study was how context collapse impacts our use of outcomes that we can get from using social network sites. So what context collapse is -- people that talk about this idea of selective self presentation, so we all know what self presentation is, it's how we present ourselves. Selective self presentation is this idea that we highlight certain traits, we minimize other traits, and that that varies depending on who our audience is. So one way to look at this and to use a real life example, that some of you who can remember back about five years, might remember. Let's say you have one audience of coworkers and you present as, you know your bank intern, you dress nice in a suit and then you go to work. You have another audience, your friends. You go to a Halloween party, you dress up like a fairy, your name happens to be Kevin Colvin and you live in New York. A problem happens, you have some bank friends and some other friends who come together, say on a site like FaceBook and this is context collapse. The two distinct contexts, people from these contexts come together in this situation, it doesn't have to be a line, somebody from work and somebody from this party could meet in a grocery store and they just happen to know each other but this is the idea of context collapse. This is a real story, "Value Add" in 2007 made a big

deal out of all this because this guy -- the picture in the left looked just like him but he wrote a letter to his boss saying I have a family emergency, I have to go home for the next few days but he wanted to go to this Halloween party. Well one of his co workers at the bank was his FaceBook friend, saw the pictures, sent it to their mutual boss, this mutual boss then sent him an email saying you know, basically you're fired, P.S nice wand. So yes, this is what happens when, you know, your friends from different types of environments come together. This is a potential negative impact of context collapse.

>> [Inaudible].

>> Probably not. Let's use friend in quotes here. This is the problem with FaceBook it has destroyed our understanding of the word friend. So context collapse, like I said is not limited to online environment. The kind of quintessential offline example of context collapse is at a wedding, everybody's been to a wedding probably, this is the ultimate experience where people from all different facets of your life suddenly have to come together for a big party and it's very awkward and you as the bride or groom then have to find a way to self present, that is somehow consistent for everyone and you know, you're good with your college friend and you're partying but then your grandparents are right there so you can't party quite as hard and then do whatever and then say hi grandma. This is managing all these different versions of the self as you move around the room. The thing with technology, what technology in accordance with what technology does is that it tends to attenuate this process and the way it does this in the case of FaceBook, in the case of Twitter is that it provides this convenient organization of your connections. FaceBook friends, the Twitter followers, this is interesting where it brings all these connections together. And this in my opinion is kind of going back to the big picture why this is important beyond FaceBook, why this matters in the big picture. So technology is changing or exacerbating existing structures and processes of how we interact with people in our network and the outcomes that are derived from this. So, I don't know how many people will get that joke -- no one? [Inaudible audience comment] So this is my network and the idea is that the red -- the pink circles are different clusters, so they represent different groups of people so for example there's a college cluster, a high school cluster, a grad school cluster, a Michigan state cluster that little group of four people who's not connected to anybody else, grad school study abroad but the idea that I have all these distinct groups that are connected by maybe one or two people I have this kind of middle cluster that is more heavily connected to the different groups but I do know these people in kind of more distinctive environments and when I'm interacting on FaceBook, when I post a status update, you know I'm sharing it generally with everyone, so I need -- if I'm actually thinking about it you know, I need to think about, well I have all these different audiences and how do I self present? Do I need to worry about, will this group like what I'm saying? Will this group, will they have a problem with it? Most people don't think about it like that, I do all the time because I'm hyper sensitive about these things but -- so I think there are kind of three ways in which context collapse can affect the way we use technology. The first would be a strength or weak ties argument. So Grant [inaudible] his argument about the strength or weak ties, if you haven't read that article you should definitely read it. I think it's just useful even if that's not in your field of study. And that's the idea that FaceBook creates this very large network of people, most of them are weak ties they're going to be able to provide us potentially with useful non redundant information. So if we have any -- he always used the example of when someone was looking for a job. But this type of information that our strong ties who have had the same information as us, might not have. So I have an information need, I post it to FaceBook and then somebody in my network, might have the answer and they might be able to respond. The thing about FaceBook is that it allows for a very kind of quick transmission of information and it allows even weak ties who might not be willing to actually pick up a phone and call you, at a much heavier cost to them to do so. They might be willing to type in a few words, "Oh I've been, you know, -- go and look at this website," or something like that. Another potential effect of context collapse relates to privacy, so people might actually engage in the privacy controls that a site provides, they might then segment their audience, they might try to recreate the boundaries that they have offline to restore the structure and that way they can create the differentiated self presentations that they do in other environments. Finally it's this idea of

lowest common denominator which I pull from Barney Hoggins's work which is his idea that in this environment where we have all these different types of people, we're only going to post things that we think are applicable to everybody. So if I have even one person as a Facebook friend who I think I might offend with a post, I'm just not going to post it. So the problem with this last approach is that it can dramatically limit the type of contents we're willing to share and what we're thinking about, well what are the resources that can be gained from using social network sites? You think about, well what do people at Michigan State study? We say we study, research social capital, so it's a problem. So how does context collapse potentially affect our use of social network sites and outcomes? Let's break this down into parts. Let's first talk about the outcomes. Outcomes could be thought of in terms of resources. So resources can be social capital. Social capital -- Nicole Ellison, my advisor, always says there is the original friend with benefits. Social capital is the resources, the benefits that we get from interacting with members of our social network. This can be things like instrumental support, social support. It can be a broaden world perspective, it can be new ideas, it can be novel information. So but what we found is that through research mainly from our team from research by people in Facebook working with our -- we found that there are positive associations between characteristics of people's use of Facebook and social capital. So usually the more someone is engaged with the site, the more they're using it, the higher their perceived social capital. So going back to that idea lowest common denominator, if I'm not posting that much, because I'm worried about offending or you know, somehow annoying people on my feed, one thing that we recently found is that, this kind of just carries a lot of face ability, in order to approve social capital, if social capital is what I get from interactions with my social network. Well my network is not going to know I have a resource need unless I am willing to disclose that need to them. So therefore, we need to be disclosing to get to that social capital. So if we're following the lowest common denominator approach and we're not really making that many disclosures then it's going to be all the harder for us to then approve social capital. Next we have to think about privacy and I imagine that might be a question or two about privacy. Because it -- keep coming up, it's always a fun topic to talk about. So privacy concerns, the two parts about privacy I'm going to talk about privacy concerns certainly can impact people's use of these sites. Privacy concerns can be broken up into various types of categories but I'm just breaking them into two it could be concerns about who is in my network? So do I trust everyone who is in my network? Who is my network made of? And then concerns about kind of the publicness of the information is being shared. So if I have these high privacy concerns, research has shown that then I'm less likely to make disclosures, so this is mainly work by Fred Stutzman. The higher concerns the concerns I have the less I am willing to disclose. So that said, if I'm willing to use these privacy settings, so maybe I'll use this friend's list feature -- which is a lot like Circles, a lot of people aren't aware of it but it's just like Circles, it existed before Circles, which allows people to create these kind of artificial walls and then distribute content to separate lists, well maybe then if I'm doing that, that can kind of mitigate these concerns and allow me then to make these disclosures and get the social capital. So that's what this study was all about. How are these kind of forming variables related? Privacy, disclosures, [snapping] audience and [snapping] social capital -- so audience, I think is probably one of the most poorly operationalized variables out there, and if anybody can give me a good operationalization of how people have done this in this kind of research I would love to hear it. And most of the research looking at kind of thing, people do, the number of friends people have on a site or the number of followers people have and well that's all well and good, it's very dimensional, you know there's all kinds of reasons why you know, you shouldn't just use that for example people like friend whoring and all these kind of things it doesn't accurately represent people's actual qualities.

>> What is it?

>> Friend whoring.

>> It comes from -- no it comes from Donath and Boyd 2004 of. So it's not my term, you can thank them.

>> Wait, what is it though, actually?

>> Friend whore -- that was just this idea that you're collecting friends on a site solely to inflate your number because you seem more popular when you have more people. Yeah, so [inaudible]. It was used on a Friendster, so. So I see audience's kind of these three inter related constructs. So one, network site, how many people are in my network? Yes it is important. Two, we have to think about intimacy or relational closeness. How close I'm I with people on my network? So I'm going to have this variation of, you know, tie strengths. I'm going to have people who I'm very close to, I'm going to have people who I'm very weak with. I'm going to have this range in between and diversity. I'm going to have people from all different aspects of my life, I'm going to have people who are from these different categories of friends and that's kind of getting at the context collapse issue. These different contexts represent it, so that's how I conceptualize and then operationalize audience in this study. Privacy -- privacy is another tough one. When I think of privacy, I love Irwin Altman. He is my guy when it comes to privacy. He says privacy is the selective control of access to the self, and we regulate that through social interactions. I love that he talks about regulating privacy through interaction and that we can regulate, that we can just control this, we can -- he also talks about controlling it by doing things like shutting a door. I can control my privacy, if I'm having a private conversation with somebody in a room, I can shut the door and shut out the rest of the people who are in the house. But you can regulate your social interaction on FaceBook for example by going in to the privacy settings and changing the privacy settings. Again, we can break this into privacy concerns and privacy controls and then there's all these different things that become a part of it. I mean there's just so many different things and this I think becomes problematic. I think other people have brought this up of the very complex -- increasingly complexities surrounding privacy. I've done some qualitative research in which -- with people who are very concerned about privacy, who have done pretty much all of these different things to control access and you've got to wonder at what point. Are you spending so much time trying to control access that either one, you know, if you're losing enjoyment on this site or two, you know you're not, you're spending more time controlling than you are using and then you're losing out on the benefits to doing that. So then I was thinking like, so sites like FaceBook, they're -- I love FaceBook for trying to make privacy so granular and to give me so many options, but that's because I am obsessed with privacy and I spend so much time trying to learn about it but I'm not the normal user. So if you're trying to balance the two, I really think it's impossible and I think FaceBook has utterly failed at this. Because we want a site to be useable and we want the privacy to be accessible and useable and have the average person be able to go in and know what they're doing and know where an update is going and what you know, they're fully allowed and what you can see and all these things. I just don't think that these things match up because for usability you want something that is simple and has a few clicks and you can, you know, it's very intuitive but when you look at these privacy settings, it's just go to your account and look at the privacy. It's many, many clicks and many, many settings and if you want to try to set up a Friend List I dare you to try to do it in less than, like 10 clicks. Even I have such a hard time finding it now, it's so buried. So this is very frustrating that they, you know, say that they want to keep, help users you know make things as private as they want to and then the technology is so complicated that I think your average user would have a hard time with it. If we talk about disclosures, [bell] you think about disclosures and social media, what's the kind of -- the first thing you think about? The most common disclosure that you, people make fun of on a social media site?

>> Relationship.

>> Bathroom.

>> Bathroom, what?

>> Relationship status.

>> Relationship status.

>> Lunch.

>> Meals.

>> Meals. Yeah, meals. So, yes, people tend to post about all kinds of boring stuff, bowel movements I mean. So you know, [laughter] I really I just want to Sponge Bob in my presentation but you know a lot of people will say like who cares? Like, why are you posting this stuff to your Twitter or FaceBook, nobody cares. Well, the thing is, from a communications perspective these types of disclosure do at some level matter and we can't analyze them, even, even having a drink with breakfast and I'm sure she means orange juice, you know minus the vodka but, you know, there's ways to look at disclosures besides just counting them or something like that. So one way to do it is to look at what Wheelless and Grotz called "The General Disclosive-Ness Scale," and they looked at all these different characteristics of disclosures and how -- until we can look at them and we can look at things like; one on the amount, which is what most people do when they're looking at disclosures. How many disclosures are people making? That makes sense but we can look at things like the intimacy, or the depth. We can look at the conscious intention. How much thought is a person putting into a post? When I write a status update and I actually think in my head like about the wording of it, about who's going to see it, about these kinds of factors. The honesty, the positivity, positivity is a big thing on FaceBook, if you look at FaceBook research about the content of FaceBook updates, they always tend to be much more positive than negative, people don't like seeing negative FaceBook updates. So we can look at these kinds of characteristics of disclosures -- even about breakfast. And the social capital, hopefully all of you have heard about social capital life at this point -- from Cliff's mouth or somebody else's mouth but bridging social capital as I said is about this idea of accessing new ideas, novel information versus world views, bonding social capital is much more about inclusion, it's about instrumental, it's about social emotional support. We tend to always use the Williams Internet Social Capital Skills ISCS from 2006. There are some critiques about them so, you know, we're always looking for new ways to measure it. I figured I would include some social capital and actions items. People do ask questions on FaceBook and we had some critique on that recently. So here is a good example of bridging social capital interaction I have a foot problem in January -- or in April, sorry, and I asked on FaceBook if anybody had had a similar foot problem because none of my close friends ran, but I knew I had FaceBook friends who ran. So I posted on FaceBook like, "Hey my foot is hurting here, I'm running a 10 k in a week. Like should I be worried about this?" And I got -- I got 11 comments back, you know, basically going through like, is it this? You know, where does it hurt? Da, da, da, da, da. So that would be an example of me taking advantage of my weak ties because I knew my strong ties weren't going to be able to help me, and give me this information that I would have a hard time getting otherwise from my close ties. Bonding social capital, this is the cutest dog in the world, his name is Rufus. My poodle Rufus tore his ACL in January. I was distraught so I posted to FaceBook about it, and yeah I had a lot of people posting like, oh he'll be okay, so, you know, it's just me upset and, you know, I was seeking kind of emotional support in most of my close friends and, you know, other dog lovers would post support. So this is how kind of bridging and bonding may function on a site like FaceBook. So what I did was I did structural equation modeling. For anybody who's unfamiliar with structural equation modeling or the benefits of that versus other types of analysis, it allows for multiple dependant variables. So you can, you just have, pretty you can just draw a model, draw the paths, if you're using a program like AMAS [ph] you just literally draw the circles, you draw the paths and you can create latent variables which is combinations of multiple items which feed into a single variable and you can do things like CFA, Confirmatory Factor Analysis. So I did that and I'm going to kind of a very do the high-level telling of the analysis. I'm not going to go into everything really deep with it, [bell] but what I found was that when looking at audience -- so this is size and diversity people's networks. So as peoples' -- no, friends on FaceBook, as that network got bigger and more diverse so they had, you know, they had friends from high school, they had faculty -- this was with grad students. They had faculty in their network. They had people

from their church in their network; they had a greater number of people as it was getting larger and more diverse. They're more likely to use the "Friend List" feature -- that was the privacy settings I used. They were making a greater number of disclosures. They were more positive in those disclosures and they were more intimate in -- with those disclosures and they thought about what they were posting more. They also had higher perceived bridging and bonding in social capital. So as your network got bigger and more diverse you saw positive increases in all of these factors. When we add in the privacy concerns and the paths to disclosures, things are a little trickier. Privacy concerns was more negative related as we might expect, the greater the privacy concerns the less you're going to post, the less intimate you're going to be and the less consciously intended you're going to be positive wasn't included in it, with the privacy settings to disclosures, the only thing that was related was conscious intention. So if I use the Friend List feature I thought more about what I was going to post, which kind of makes sense because if I'm segmenting my audience and I have all these lists I need to think about well who I'm I going to send this update to? So that might be one way to explain it. Then finally, for the disclosures the more -- as the amount of disclosure increase, as the conscious intentions increase and as the positivity increase I perceived I had greater social capital so depth was unrelated. So I've realized that's a lot to take in, but kind of the main takeaways here from that model. You can say that one's network size and what, who the people are in your network is related to one how you engage, so the characteristics of my disclosures is going to have an impact on what I say unless I -- it's also going to impact with my perceived access to specific types of resources as measured by the social capital scales. I think more importantly and this is kind of looking at the disclosure of scale, the disclosure relationship, it's not just who you're connected to. So it's not just through your networks size, it's the characteristics of those disclosures that affect your perception to the access to resource. So in five of the eight models that I ran, the link from disclosures to social capital the Beta was stronger than the Beta from audience through disclosures. So disclosures was having a much stronger impact on the model, so in a way you could say that by making a disclosure on a site like FaceBook, it's a way of signaling to your network, hey I'm here. There's a lot of noise, there's a lot of traffic happening on these sites. But by posting a status update it might be a way to remind your network hey, remember I exist, one if you're not somebody who posts often or if they have a lot of friends. Hey, I'm here and hey I might have something that's useful to share. If I'm sharing a link that my people might like, if I'm sharing useful information, they might be like more likely to reciprocate. So it's signaling my presence in the network. It's signaling to them in a way that they might be willing to write something back, they might be willing to do something for me down the line. And then finally these site features may help mitigate context collapse. The interesting thing here was that the lowest common denominator would argue that the size or diversity of your network might not, you would be amount of disclosures should go down, but I found the opposite. So it could be that because some people are using these features they're finding a way around that approach. So maybe if they didn't have that feature they might just post less, but they're finding that, "Hey, if I can use these features I can segment my audience and I can kind of get around, having to worry about offending somebody or something like that." But it was a minority of people who use this; it was right around 20% who actually said they use Friend List to segment their audience. There's also implication of design, I'm not a design person but I certainly see ways in which FaceBook can be better designed especially when it comes to things like how to set up privacy to make it more successful, when you think about this diverse user base, people who are not as technologically savvy. When we did those interviews, when we used FaceBook to recruit those people and we had that horrible time, most of those people were over 50 and one of those things we talked about them with was how they used the site and you know what types of trouble they had using the site, and one of the things they re-iterated again and again you know, well I posted an update I'm not sure who it's going to or I might not post an update because I'm scared of who's going to see it or I had somebody call me or why you know, why can this person access this and I didn't realize that I set it to public. So this idea of like, just this low literacy, this FaceBook literacy I guess you could call it, when it comes to using these features and they're simple ways to you know change the design of the sites you kind of deal with those kinds of things, so I think it could be dealt with. So, coming full circle, you just start with this big idea that you have -- for me it's always about just have this relationship between technology and

relationships for your own, sure it could be something different, and then you have to deal with all of these different challenges that I went through. One of the things about any type of research is that when you finish a research study you should be left with the impressions. It should inspire you to do your next study. You shouldn't just finish your next study and be like, "Okay, everything's answered. I'm done with that, I'm done, it's all good." Hopefully it inspires you, it leaves you with looking to do that next study whatever it's going to be. Another important thing that I encourage all of you to do is to really push boundaries. So don't just say, "Oh well this person has this measure." It doesn't really fit exactly what I'm looking for but hey it's been validated and so I'll just use it, you know, don't just accept what's out there and force it into your research. You know if something doesn't fit, make something that works for you and then push to make, you know, and see if that's better because it might be. And then this is, I realize this is somewhat non related but it just, was thinking about it and it's something that comes up again and again and I just wanted to end on this. Non significance is not a bad thing in any research. A lot of people come up and will say to me like, "Oh, I just analyzed my data and nothing's significant." And then I'm like, "Okay, but that's not necessarily a bad thing, because non significance is important, what if other researchers have always found significance and your non significance means that there's something else going on?" So, you know, I realize that's kind of [inaudible] but -- but hopefully that helps you kind of as you do your research and if you have any questions, I'm happy to take them.

[Applause]

>> Yeah.

>> You talked about privacy and security as being a balance.

>> Yeah.

>> Are you familiar with the work that [inaudible] maybe just bouncing against each other or ways that can increase both and do you think that that's actually possible?

>> Can you give me any example of somebody who is in that?

>> Yeah, so the musical privacy and security law that's in [inaudible] is similar.

>> Okay.

>> Some other things like, you know, asking people questions about how [inaudible] and then suggesting sets of [inaudible] rules and maybe even, you know, helping them figure out how to change something in a particular direction and if it's kind of useable but...

>> No, but I would love if you could like send me a link to the lab because I'm not familiar with that. A lot of work -- a lot of like my kind of thinking of this, again it originates with Altman and then was forwarded also by Sandra Petronio who is the -- is the person behind communications privacy management theory, since my background is in communications. So she is the one who kind of does this. Well there's privacy and then there's disclosures and they're kind of these two incompatible things.

>> Yeah, that's sort of why they held that --that's actually one of the sort of quirks in the program is that [inaudible]...

>> Oh yeah, I would love to learn more. Okay.

>> Social capital scales is something that I've thought about too, because I really don't like the Williams scales because they separate online and offline...

>> Yeah.

>> ...which immediately conceptually when I highlighted it, you just can't interpret it, if you know someone online who can blah, blah, blah.

>> Yeah.

>> So or, I have suggestion on, like how did you guys do it? Like how did that work because I couldn't...

>> So we have never -- at MSU we've never done the offline, online distinction.

>> Right.

>> So the early FaceBook research that Nicole, Cliff and Chip did, they did at MSU so they were doing this in an analyzed context and in recent years we've moved more toward thinking about it on, either within your social network in general. So we say, "Like, think about your social network, this includes you know, people, you know, your neighbors, your co workers you know, everyone in your social network or think about your FaceBook friends, think about interactions you have with them both on the site and in other locations." But you know trying to get someone to think of just that network as a subset of their entire social network and we've just...

>> Did you use the same question?

>> We used the same -- yeah, we used the same items and we just don't, you know, it's pretty easy to change the wording because it's you know, [inaudible].

>> Sure, sure. In my suggestion which I did do but I don't, which I haven't published it yet, I just presented -- is using regular social support skills not -- and I -- this is the sort of a discussion we've been having about the internet not a separate world issue.

>> Yeah.

>> But I just found -- validated a pretty long history of social support skills which correspond very much conceptually to everything we're looking at for social capital and they have -- it comes a lot from the health literature where they look at social support and I think they're a little better than -- I'll actually sound a little like [inaudible] or something important to think about because finding the right questions that social capital, there's a lot hinging on it and I'm asking, you know, maybe people can chime in -- is look for a regular social capital scales.

>> Yeah, so...

>> Look for internet skills all before this because the question should be things like, "Well if you needed X..."

>> Yeah. So one I used is Katrina and Russell's Social Position Scales...

>> Okay.

>> ...which is five dimensions of social support.

>> Right.

>> The one thing that kind of leaves out is more of the bridging.

>> Bridging [inaudible].

>> Yeah, so I found a lot of stuff that kind of fits on bonding, the dimensions of bonding where we've had a hard time in things like the position generator, the name generator that more of the sociologist and all of those who have used for -- for [inaudible] but we've had very bad you know we've had no success trying to use those and getting those to actually be predictive with anything.

>> Bridging is more of a challenge. The thing with social support is that when you think about social capital, social support is what bonding social capital produces. So you're literally measuring conceptually its consequence. So I think social support fits perfectly through bonding on [inaudible]...

>> Yeah.

>> ...because I think it's a bit of a challenge in becoming a bit...

>> Yeah, maybe.

>> Or think about [inaudible].

>> Yes, then talking about the interpersonal social [inaudible] scale on color?

>> Yes, color. That's a very good one I encourage people to look at it. It's not a college version [inaudible] and it has a long history. So you can use it to compare with a lot of stuff. It has a lot in common with the Williams' because that's kind of allure to his drawing on it but this does a lot more -- then you can talk to other literatures.

>> Yeah.

>> And say this is you know what we got from FaceBook [inaudible]. I'll look for it to see if I can find it.

>> Okay, great. Yeah.

>> Maybe to play devil's advocate but when you could talk about privacy and security, and then you talk about FaceBook, if someone really has something and they have a privacy issue or a security concern on posting something why would they or shouldn't they post it on FaceBook in the first place? And if -- if we gave them more options and make it more clear to them how they can do it private that's [inaudible] [banging sounds] then we're just giving them the false impression that private manufacturers, government and companies and everyone can see.

>> So, okay, one I think we're kind of mudding privacy and security here and I'm not a Computer Scientist, security in for example Computer Science is a very different beast and I think some people use privacy and security interchangeably. I'm talking about, you know, people having concerns about their privacy or using privacy settings which I think is a little bit different than at least my conceptualization of security. When you're using privacy it might be -- so for a college student for example, the college student from -- I've done

focus groups with college students. One college student told me she wanted to post pictures from spring break; she hadn't told her parents she went on spring break, so -- because she wanted all her friends to see it. So she blocked the album from her parents, you know, so that would be an example. It's not an issue of you know, not wanting the government to see, it's not just like this big security issue. It's -- it's more of a, you know, again managing different versions of the self. Really if you were being grounded [chuckle] but more than anything else, this idea of managing self and keeping this self, those identities consistent with the different versions of self. If I want to, you know, if I'm kind dumb enough to want to mouth off about my boss and I want to do that on FaceBook well I better damn well, you know, block that post from my boss, you know, not that I would ever do that, Jenny [laughter].

>> [Inaudible] in front of everyone.

>> But you know, I think that there are plenty of examples when it's not a security issue when people -- we're not -- when I post things that are local, I only send them to a local list. I don't send, you know, if I'm sending something that is happening around Maryland I don't want to post that where my friends in California who are going to see it because I don't feel like they need to see it. So I mean I think there's plenty issues that when people wanting to use these types of things but it's not an issue of security, when it more of just like managing...

>> Like shouldn't you, I mean [inaudible] interphase you said, "You know to line up with [inaudible] that you design." Wouldn't it be necessary if we could just to make clear that yes you're probably allowed to see it, but there's still a lot of people who would...

>> Sure and - and, you know, if you are really serious about you don't want somebody to see it, maybe you shouldn't post it at all. I mean that's what Eric Schmidt I think said in one of his famous, you know, foot and mouth interviews when he talked about kids changing their name at 18 and all of these kinds of things. He also said, "Well, if you also don't want anybody to see it just don't post it."

>> Yes.

>> But you know what, I mean, that's not going to stop people in the end. People -- people like to share content otherwise these sites wouldn't be popular in the first place. But...

>> Actually it was a little bit different, he said it was kind of the opposite, right? He said, "If you have something to hide or if you have some behavior that you wouldn't want to post maybe you shouldn't be doing that behavior."

>> Yeah...

>> It was kind of [inaudible]. [Audience laughter] For example...

>> Because if something happens then you should be [inaudible].

>> Right.

>> Yeah.

>> Right, if you're LGBT and you know, it's dangerous for you to disclose that...

>> Then you shouldn't be LGBT?

>> Maybe you should just be straight. [Audience laughter] I think that.

>> Oh gosh, that's much worse than what I thought.

>> I just think that you're being a little bit too generous [audience laughter].

>> Ah, that is much worse.

>> And the fact that the service does encourage this sense of this selective sharing...

>> Sure.

>> ...is well in the hacker security sharing community, it's essentially a honey pot for personal disclosure. It gets you to do it, and then -- I thought your first example was a good one. Really we ought to be saying to people, "Don't tell Facebook almost anything except lowest common denominator things and don't use those selective sharing features, they don't really work," because all it takes is -- it's not about the ACL, it's about an [inaudible], it's about the human bridge, somebody is granted access and then they're going to repost it and then they're going to tell -- I mean, it's probably true that when it comes to not doing things that you shouldn't do, if your parents told you not to do it, you shouldn't do it. As a good parent I should say, you know, [audience chuckle] yeah so it seems pretty dangerous that you're going to go to the party and tell your boss that you're going to a family event instead and then believe that you're going to actually upload those photos. Further, you know you, shouldn't go to the party in the first place because it's not the photos that you took to that you uploaded...

>> Yeah.

>> ...it's the photos that somebody else took that they uploaded and tagged with your name. So you're not going to continue this.

>> You're playing with fire. I always thought it was interesting with Google Plus when you repost something that somebody shared with a circle, it just pops up with a warning like hey this person only shared this with a limited number of people just be warned about this, whereas, Twitter which wouldn't allow you originally to retweet something from a private account. I think you -- there's a way you, I mean to stop you from copying it and re doing it, but yeah the way that different technology deal with this kind of private to public path but -- yeah.

>> Yeah, you talked about limited use of the Friend List feature. In my view that seems because it's so darn hard to use that feature especially if you were [inaudible] came out. It's really buried and you can't like -- well, it used to be you couldn't even see what's [inaudible]. You couldn't see the list, you know, you had to go through 10 clicks just to get there.

>> This is my -- this is my great [inaudible] lists. I have been a list user for a long time and it was so varied and then Google Plus comes out and everybody's like, "Oh my gosh, there's this new amazing feature," and I actually wrote this blog post and it was like this has been around forever, this is how you get to the list and, you know, the problem is -- is when you have this network embedded and you have to then go back and [background banging] retroactively add everybody to it, the time commitment and the involvement and energy to it, it's, you know, is it worth it to do that versus Google Plus when you're doing it as you're adding people and you're just immediately doing it? It's much, much easier to do it. But now I find that even I'm having it and then FaceBook came out with this smart list in which you're intuitively picking who is in these

lists that they have self-created which just makes me angrier. Like who are you to say who my close friends are and, you know, who these other people are. So -- so I think they've mangled the opportunity for a list you know, not that it's really hurt them that much since people only two minutes in a month on Google Plus, you know, and it hasn't really taken people away from FaceBook to Google Plus but yeah, this must jab at Google Plus.

>> [Banging sound] But there is a way to do a friend's list feature that works and FaceBook kind of haven't figured that out yet.

>> Oh certainly, I mean I use them fairly extensively and like I said 20% of my sample did use them and so people are using them just -- they make it hard which they shouldn't be doing, so. All right, thank you guys.

[Applause]