Double Effect: Measuring the Ethical Beliefs
and Practices of Social Media Users

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Chapter I

Introduction

Do you remember Lonelygirl15? This was a series on YouTube that gathered a huge following; a following that believed Lonelygirl15 was really a 16-year-old girl sharing her life with the world online. The series turned out to be a spoof that successfully fooled even the keenest web observers. Perhaps you heard about the Swedish nurse who, in 2008, posted pictures on her Facebook account of brain surgery during which she assisted, or the CNN iReport that falsely claimed in 2008 that Apple’s CEO Steve Jobs had suffered a heart attack?

Those are just a few examples of how technology has enabled messages online to reach audiences in breathtaking numbers with speed and proliferation rates referred to as “viral.” The availability of many online publishing platforms has perpetuated a “we’re all journalists now” attitude in the multitude of options now available for user-generated content. But does this powerful tool bring with it the professionalism and ethical beliefs and practices of not just media professionals but that of any profession, or are contributors leaving their professional codes at the doorstep of technology? Social media provide an unfiltered content creation mechanism for anyone with something to say or sell, but when the results are controversial, it also begs the question, “Didn’t they know what would happen?”

As more information mistakes (as opposed to intentional acts) occur due to user-created content, it appears social media may require more than new views on teaching and technology. It may require an adjusted approach and a new ethical framework for
decision-making and evaluating action on the Internet. A starting point may be to look at the changes that have taken place in journalism while realizing that new communication technology has created new challenges in many professions. Friend and Singer (2007) discussed in their book, *Online Journalism Ethics*, how the process of newsgathering has changed the function of would-be online journalists or bloggers. A chapter written by Singer (2007) highlights the notion of a journalist being attached to a particular process that technology has challenged. The idea of journalist as gatekeeper and agenda-setter, Singer wrote, has become “deeply engrained over the years, particularly in connection with the idea of serving the information needs of a democratic society” (p. 41). The online environment changes that, and Singer described the exploration of gatekeeping as the following:

A journey through a hall of mirrors in which an infinite number of participants simultaneously fill overlapping roles as sources, audiences, and information providers. The journalist has very little say in what any given individual will decide is important to think about; indeed, the key issue may well be what issues people tell the journalists they want to think about. The traditional notion of gatekeeper fractures, too; the journalist no longer has much if any control over what citizens see, read, or hear. (2007, p. 41).

Singer (2007) used this to explain the ideas traditionally used to distinguish the journalist from the nonjournalist, such as professionalism and process, have become problematic in today’s online media environment. She suggested that “journalists in our current media environment are best defined not by who they are or even what they do,
but by how and why they do it” (p. 42). Singer’s take on roles in the new media
environment suggest a new “playing field” much more level than in previous generations.

Keen (2007) sees these changes as a “democratization of information” (p. 34). He
wrote, “the cult of the amateur has made it increasingly difficult to determine the
difference between reader and writer, between artist and spin doctor, between art and
advertisement, between amateur and expert” (Keen, p. 34). As a result, Keen (2007) saw
this as a corrupting force in our “national civic conversation” (p. 34).

Similarly, Gotterbarn (2007) puts a spin on the “tragedy of the commons” theory
fearing a “spoiling of the commons” in terms of the Internet (p. 12). The “tragedy of the
commons” is in reference to the notion that if common agriculture space (in a village, for
example) is not respected it will be spoiled and unfit for use by anyone. Gotterbarn
(2007) says “to maximize the value of the net, we need to encourage intelligent restraint
and the maturity of respecting the commons” (p. 13). Referring to the many socially
geared opportunities on the web as the “Clogosphere” Gotterbarn (2007) pleads that to
avoid eventual censorship from outside regulation “internet professionals should suggest
and encourage self censorship by the development of an ethics of the commons” (p. 13)
by not doing or encouraging anything that would interrupt the preservation of this
resource’s value and maintain it as something to be respected. “The Cyberspace can be a
valuable resource if we do not encourage turning it into the CloggedSpace” (p. 13).

**Statement of Problem**

The previously mentioned incidents of medical unprofessionalism on Facebook,
unfiltered reports on CNN’s iReport Web site and opaque video postings on YouTube
illustrate how social media provides a platform through which audience members can
become authors. This situation may effectively take the editorial decision-making role out of the hands of those who are trained and experienced in the ethics of producing media messages and put that decision-making power in the hands of the unaware or untrained. Journalists are presumed to be trained and practiced in ethical decision making and to adhere to professional codes of ethics that work to prevent harm to others, while the audience-turned-author may be more likely to cause harm with online actions because their perceptions of privacy, transparency and other items that normally receive attention in most professional codes of conduct may differ greatly.

**Significance of Study**

Although Cenite, Detenber, Koh, Lim, and Soon (2009) conducted a study that quantified the ethical beliefs and practices of bloggers in two categories (personal and nonpersonal), few studies have been conducted on online ethics and there is need for further research on the topic of ethics and user-generated messages online. Coleman and Wilkins (2004) conducted a quantitative study on the moral development of journalists as compared to other professions. Their study found that journalists ranked fourth most ethical behind seminarians/philosophers, medical students, and physicians. Their study, however, did not address issues regarding behavior in the social media environment.

Therefore, the significance of the current study encompasses not only bloggers who make up a portion of social media users but broadens the net to include users of applications such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. This study also offers a comparison between the results of students in business programs and communication programs, where journalism is studied, in terms of their behavior when authoring information through the use of social media.
In conjunction with possible future research, this study could be used as a predictor for how students’ ethical beliefs and practices will carry over into the professional arena and will also help to fill in obvious gap in current literature.

**Theoretical Perspective**

The evolution of audience to author facilitated by social media presents new ethical challenges. The researcher suggests the criteria of double effect reasoning (DER) for use when evaluating whether there is moral justification of an action that brings about harm when it is determined that the harm was not the agent’s intention. Traditional considerations and formulations of the double effect principle include cases involving medical decisions, killing in self-defense, strategic versus terror bombing, or suicide. Examples to consider in the social media environment include the actions of propagandists, neo-Nazis, and campaign staffers who post misleading information online (Keen, 2007), or, as mentioned previously, when a nurse posts pictures online from her experiences with brain surgery.

The criteria provided by double-effect reasoning could prove insightful when evaluating the intent of the person producing and delivering information online and whether the action is morally justified. Technology has undeniable power and advancements in communication technology have placed that power in the hands of many, regardless of their intentions. And the truth is, rumor and lies disseminated online—intentional or not—can tarnish a person’s or organization’s reputation or ruin someone’s career or livelihood (Keen, 2007).

The evaluation of an agent’s intent and foresight calls for a new way of looking at user-created messages online. Double effect has had many interpretations and many
names, including double-effect doctrine, the principle of double effect, and double-effect reasoning. All versions of the concept center on the idea that a single action can bring about two results, of which one (the harmful result) was not the agent’s intention. Contemporary amalgamations see double effect as a set of criteria rather than a single principle or unifying theory. According to Kaczor’s (1998) historical overview of double effect, the criteria have arisen from applications of more fundamental principles to particular cases, and history is not clear as to whether the criteria were understood by past authors and philosophers as principles. The researcher chooses to refer to double effect as a set of criteria for the purposes of this study.

Cavanaugh (2006) sets forth the most modern version of double-effect reasoning. His criteria are as follows:

1. the act considered independently of its evil effect is not in itself wrong;
2. the agent intends the good and does not intend the evil either as an end or as a mean; and,
3. the agent has proportionately grave reasons for acting, addressing his relevant obligations, comparing the consequences, and, considering the necessity of the evil, exercising due care to eliminate or mitigate it. (p. 36).

In applying these criteria to social media it is necessary to look at the current state of the technology in question. Journalists, news media audiences, and consumers have witnessed a technology revolution in recent years not seen since the advent of moveable type. The ability to access the Internet from nearly anywhere on a myriad of devices has put the marketplace of ideas in more hands and in front of more eyes than ever before. In fact, a United Kingdom-based data collection agency, CODA Research Consultancy,
released a study (“Wi-Fi enabled,” 2010) that reported Wi-Fi-enabled mobile handset penetration in the United States would quadruple between 2009 and 2015. This means 149 million people could have the Internet in their hands at the end of the next five years.

CODA reported that smartphones will dominate the market in devices used in Wi-Fi hotspots.

The notion of “social media” speaks to the multidirectional nature of the communication platform it provides and the community-building ability available to its users. No longer is an audience passive. Consumers of information can participate and make known their views about online content and participate in lively discussions with others who have the same interests. Social bookmarking allows users to share their Internet finds with others. Commenting on blog posts, news articles, videos and more has created a dynamic feedback loop once only available to focus groups and people willing to write letters to the editor on paper with pencil, so to speak. All of these aspects seem to call for an updated tool for decision making, something all users of social media can use to wade through content and make reasoned judgments on what they are seeing online before furthering its dissemination on the World Wide Web or putting a stop to the perpetuation of false information online.

Other Theories

In order to get a well-rounded perspective on double-effect reasoning it is important to place it in perspective of several other concepts and theories. According to Cavanaugh (2006) double-effect reasoning has an overtly anti-consequentialist slant. He states “all proponents of DER reject consequentialism’s founding claim; namely, that in evaluating an act consequences *alone* [sic] matter” (p. xxiii). Cavanaugh (2006) goes on
to say that the intent and foresight distinction “cannot” have moral relevance in act-evaluation if a commitment is made to a consequentialist theory. This emphasizes the principle’s anti-consequentialist nature. Because of this, Cavanaugh (2006) argues that understanding the moral relevance of the intent and foresight distinction in his version of double-effect reasoning is gained by reviewing Kant’s ends-not-means principles.

Cavanaugh’s treatment of the double effect principle relies on the belief that it is wrong to treat someone as a means to some other goal or end, rather than as an end in himself/herself. In the *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant relates: “So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as means only” (1988, p. 58).

Cavanaugh (2006) divides his argument for ethical relevance into two parts: “that of intent itself and that of intent vis-à-vis the person victimized by the act” (p. 134). Concerning the act itself, he argues that “in terms of the first facet, one claims that intent of some good or bad effect makes for a better or worse act than would foresight of the same” (p. 134) and has Aristotelian-Thomistic roots, according to Cavanaugh (2006).

Cavanaugh (2006) also calls on Kant in defense of the second aspect or “the victim” of the act which “has Kantian grounds; and reflects the moral status of persons as never properly treated as mere means” (p. 134). Cavanaugh (2006) uses double effect reasoning to overcome the “inextricable” binding of good and evil (p. 144) by providing criteria that take into consideration an agent’s pursuit of good by considering his or her intentions toward that good and at the same time avoiding evil.
Case Studies

Facebook Fail. A search for “Facebook” on Google News quickly highlights the growing number of questionable incidents taking place in the realm of social media. Many professional arenas are revising their codes of ethics to encompass social media and provide at least a rough guide for their employees. The medical profession, for instance, is one field struggling with new ethical dilemmas. Physicians, medical centers, and medical schools are trying to keep pace with the potential effects of networking regarding clinical practice. In an e-mail to students and faculty of Harvard Medical School, Dean for Medical Education Jules Dienstag wrote "Caution is recommended . . . in using social networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace. Items that represent unprofessional behavior that are posted by you on such networking sites reflect poorly on you and the medical profession. Such items may become public and could subject you to unintended exposure and consequences” (Jain, 2009).

A 2008 study from the University of Florida notes frequent Facebook use among medical students and residents (Thompson et al., 2008). The study found that many students felt unprepared in the areas of professionalism and ethics. In terms of social networks, Thompson et al. (2008) noted the following:

Posting information online is not unprofessional, nor is finding friends, future partners, or associates. However, given the findings of this study, medical students and residents may not associate negative professional consequences with their current and future practice of sharing information that could be misinterpreted (p. 956).
Other incidents involving medical professionals and Facebook include posting photographs from the operating table. *The Times* in London reported a nurse in Sweden shared photos on Facebook of brain and back surgery (Boyes, 2008). The article reports cameras are banned from operating rooms, but the nurse apparently took the photos using her cell phone and then posted them.

In February 2010, a New York physician’s assistant received attention after he posted photos on his Facebook account of himself performing medical procedures. LoHud.com, a Web site covering the Lower Hudson Valley in New York, reported the physician’s assistant admitted to posting the pictures, and he said, “It was poor judgment at that time” (O’Donnell, 2010).

The physician’s assistant was identified by LoHud.com as Leo Caamano. Although the photos have since been removed from Caamano’s profile, the article reported one of the photos in question showed “a grinning physician assistant, Leo Caamano, holding a syringe at a man’s neck. ‘When you can’t start a line in a junkie’s arm...go for the neck!’ the caption read” (O’Donnell, 2010). The article also reported that Caamano’s profile contained an entire photo album titled: “Bloddy (sic) Mess” that contained other graphic images from the family medical clinic where Caamano worked.

If these actions are examined through the lens of the criteria of double effect reasoning, we could concede that under the first criterion, the acts could be deemed morally justified. The criterion says “the act considered independently of its evil effects is not in itself wrong” (Cavanaugh, 2006, p. 36). In the case of Caamano and the Swedish nurse, posting photos online is not wrong or harmful when taken out of the specific context of these particular actions and their respective consequences. The nature of social
media is that people who belong to these communities and networks do so because of the opportunity it gives them to share parts of their personal world with everyone else. Taken on its own, that is not an act thought to be condemnable or immoral.

The second criterion deals with the agent’s intention. Cavanaugh (2006) says an act is justified if “the agent intends the good and does not intend the evil as an end or as a mean” (p. 36). In the two incidents mentioned previously, we can only make assumptions regarding the intention of the respective agents. From the publicized information, we can gather that, especially in the case of Caamano, photos were published to his Facebook account in an effort to elicit reaction and gather recognition from his friends. In essence, his intent was to appear “cool.” We can assume that the photos were not posted, in either case, to purposely expose a patient or to expose a failing in the administration of the individual medical establishments. Patients were not identifiable in the photographs, and neither Caamano nor the Swedish nurse alluded to the identity of any of the patients in the photographs. There is no evidence to suggest that Caamano or the nurse were trying to expose their employers or cause them harm by calling attention directly to their employers in the photographs or the captions included with the photographs. In these cases, the possible harm to the employer was most likely not the intention of the social media user.

In considering the third criterion of double effect reasoning, which takes into account the proportionality of the unintended evil consequence to the intended good ends, the actions of Caamano and the Swedish nurse are troubling. These cases seem to posit the weight of one’s personal standing among friends against their professional standing among colleagues – it is a very individual decision as to which is more important.
Although it’s difficult to be certain, these medical professionals may have believed popularity among their social peers was more important than the respect of their professional constituency and the trust of their employers. Cavanaugh’s (2006) third criterion requires that the agent “has proportionately grave reasons for acting, addressing his relevant obligations, comparing the consequences, and, considering the necessity of the evil, exercising due care to eliminate or mitigate it” (p. 36).

In these cases, the posting of pictures on personal Facebook accounts by medical professionals obtained from a professional medical environment fails to obtain moral justification under the third criterion set forth by double effect reasoning. One could argue that these medical professionals saw grave reason to post the photos (in order to gain reputation with their online social community) because they put less emphasis on their professional lives. However, because Caamano and the nurse received negative comments from “friends” on Facebook regarding their choice to post the photos, including questions of possible HIPPA violations, their reasons appear to not be grave enough to win over even their “friends.”

**iReport…False Information.** On Oct. 3, 2008, the iReport division of CNN experienced one of the pitfalls of allowing the audience to become the author. CNN invites anyone to sign up for an iReport account and share stories. A pop-up window on the CNN iReport site provides a disclaimer: “So you know: iReport is the way people like you report the news. The stories in this section are not edited, fact-checked or screened before they post. Only ones marked 'CNN iReport' have been vetted by CNN” (iReport.com, n.d.).

An “iReporter” by the screenname of “Johntw” posted a report at 9 a.m. and said Steve Jobs, Apple Inc.’s CEO, had been rushed to the emergency room with signs of a
heart attack. The iReporter claimed to have the information from a “reliable source” (Blodget, 2008). Apple stocks fell just over 10 percent shortly after the iReport began making its way around the World Wide Web—which did not take long. Apple was contacted by several media outlets, and categorically denied the claim. Apple stocks rebounded later the same day.

A Securities and Exchange Commission investigation was launched; however, no details of specific findings were available at the time of this writing. With the information that is known, though, we can assess the incident with the criteria of double effect reasoning by first recognizing that the act of becoming an iReporter and sharing information online in itself is not harmful. However, this case is problematic in light of the second criterion. Details of “Johntw” are thin and his intention is unknown. However, in following Anscombe’s (1957) recommendations for determining one’s intention (pg. 43), we can look at some of the facts. Bloomberg (Scheer, 2008), citing anonymous sources, reported the iReporter was an 18-year-old and “investigators haven’t found evidence the teenager tried to profit from driving down the stock” (Scheer, 2008). Intention is the focus of double effect reasoning, and the Bloomberg article notes this as a focus in an SEC manipulation case saying it “would probably hinge on the writer’s intentions” (Scheer, 2008), according to a former enforcement agent with the SEC.

Did “Johntw” appropriately weigh the good and bad effects of his actions before posting the false information online? If we assume he was simply publicizing information he believed to be true, his actions could be justified by applying the criteria of double-effect reasoning. Obviously, in this case, there is no justification if this was merely a “prank” and “Johntw” knew the information was false from the start. Reports
on the incident indicate that this was “Johntw’s” first and only post to the iReport Web
site.

**Truth and Lies on YouTube.** The question of intent also plays an important role in
evaluating YouTube’s “Lonelygirl15” phenomenon. In May 2006, a girl named “Bree”
appeared on YouTube and began divulging to the world insights into her life, diary-style,
two minutes at a time. Captivated by this cute, kind of offbeat girl who claimed to be 16
years old and homeschooled by her somewhat fanatically religious parents,
Lonelygirl15’s audience grew to more than 2 million viewers (McNamara, 2006).

Early on, some viewers questioned Lonelygirl15’s authenticity but had no proof
of a hoax. In September 2006, after many assumptions and accusations, Bree was “outed”
as an actress from New Zealand and two filmmakers admitted to producing the videos
(Heffernan and Zeller, 2006). Some fans were devastated that this answer to their geeky
prayers was not real at all (Heffernan and Zeller, 2006).

Reporters called the video diary everything from a hoax or a prank to a new form
of art, while some ranked it as a kind of “false document” and therefore gave it the same
status as Orson Welles’ “War of the Worlds” (Zeller, 2006). Being labeled a false
document would give Lonelygirl15 some credibility as a work of art, but Eileen Pollack,
an English professor at the University of Michigan told the New York Times the
determination in this case would lie in the intention of the creator. “If the intent is just to
say ‘gotcha,’ it’s a prank,” while the authors of legitimate false documents, in literary
terms, want the audience to figure out the ruse at some point and want to simply make the
audience consider the nature of reality (Zeller, 2006).
As for the intent of the creators in this case, filmmakers Ramesh Flinders, a screenwriter and filmmaker from Marin County, Calif., and Miles Beckett, a doctor turned filmmaker, released a statement defending themselves against accusations of Lonelygirl15 being a marketing scam from a “big corporation,” stating:

Our intention from the outset has been to tell a story – A story that could only be told using the medium of video blogs and the distribution power of the Internet. A story that is interactive and constantly evolving with the audience (McNamara, 2006).

Before Bree was revealed, many people expected to begin seeing product placements in the video diary (Sternbergh, 2006). The event spawned a new term – WikiTV – as a way of describing how the audience participated in Bree’s life and at times how their comments changed the plot (Sternbergh, 2006). While the truth about the series brought disappointment to many fans and exposed the loose nature of trust in online communities, the filmmakers’ intent was not one of harmful means or ends. The filmmakers could most likely foresee the potential harm of misleading the audience but obviously gave more weight to the experimental nature of their new “art form” than to the need for transparency with their audience, apparently viewing full disclosure as a detriment to the overall goal of the project.

Although the set of criteria used in the cases above was not referred to as double effect until the 20th century, most have pointed to 13th-century theologian St. Thomas Aquinas as defining the foundation for the theory. A history of double effect begins with Aquinas and traces to the 19th-century work of Jean Pierre Gury to Peter Knauer and Thomas Cavanaugh in the 20th century and is discussed in Chapter II.
Purpose of the Study

Martin (2007) expresses a concern for students of the social media era saying “as students live more of their lives on the Internet using sites such as Facebook, YouTube, personal blogs and Second Life, those of us in the older generations may need to rethink how we can better mentor them to become good Web citizens” (p. 12).

Therefore, in light of the case studies mentioned above, the purpose of this study is to determine if there is a need for ethical training across professions in terms of user-created messages online via social media platforms.

Hypothesis

According to Coleman and Wilkins (2004), journalists consistently outscored many other groups of professionals in two small-scale quantitative measures of professional moral development. Their study dealt mainly with traditional media concepts, such as investigative reporting and editorial decision making. Coleman and Wilkins’ (2004) study, however, points to data that enforces the idea that journalists, as a profession, adhere to a higher level of professional ethics than many other professions. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H₁: It is hypothesized that upper-level undergraduate students in communication studies programs will score higher on an ethical practices and beliefs survey compared to upper-level undergraduate business students taking the same survey.

Research Questions

As mentioned before, the number of blogs alone, exclusive of the number of social media accounts that exist online, has grown at astonishing rates in the last 10 years.
By collecting categorical data relating to how often and why research participants are using social media, the following questions will be addressed:

RQ1: How do levels of social media usage differ between upper-level undergraduate communication and business students?

RQ2: What are the differing reasons for using social media between upper-level undergraduate communication and upper-level undergraduate business students?

RQ3: How can the intent of social media users be measured or determined in regard to its weight in using double effect reasoning.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this paper, the following terms will be used in regards to the definitions set forth:

Double-effect reasoning (DER). As seen in the review of literature, this set of criteria has been called many things over time. The researcher is choosing to refer to the criteria as double-effect reasoning and subsequent references throughout the paper will be made accordingly. The criteria of double-effect reasoning refer to Cavanaugh’s (2006) definition and are as follows:

1. the act considered independently of its evil effect is not in itself wrong;
2. the agent intends the good and does not intend the evil either as an end or as a mean; and,
3. the agent has proportionately grave reasons for acting, addressing his relevant obligations, comparing the consequences, and, considering the necessity of the evil, exercising due care to eliminate or mitigate it. (p. 36).
**Social media.** This term will refer to any platform for communication users can access on the Internet that allows them to create a profile in order to interact with other users in the community of that platform. Examples include MySpace, SecondLife, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and Digg.

**User.** The term user in the context of this paper refers to any participant in social media.

**User-generated messages or content.** These terms refer to any messages or content that is posted online in a social media platform by a user of the platform.
Chapter II

Review of Literature

History of Double Effect

Aquinas’s (1921) *Summa Theologica* provides not only two examples of what will later become known as double effect but also reviews what differentiates one’s intention from mere choice and discusses what determines the good or evil of an act. Aquinas wrote that intention by definition means “to tend to something” (Aquinas, I:II Q. 12 A.1). He put one’s will as a starting point because it “moves all powers of the soul” (Aquinas, I:II Q.12 A.1). Will, Aquinas wrote, is an act of absolute volition toward the “enjoyment” of the ends through ordained or related means (I:II Q. 12 A.1). “Intention,” he wrote, is also an ending point of the movement of one’s will (Aquinas, I:II Q.12, A.1).

Aquinas (1921) states the difference between choice and intention as:

In so far as the movement of the will is to the means, as ordained to the end, it is called ‘choice’: but the movement of the will to the end is acquired by the means, it is called ‘intention.’ (I:II, Q.12, A.4)

He exemplified this by stating we can have intention of an end result without having previously determined the means with which we will achieve that end. Choice, as Aquinas explained it, is how we use our will to determine the means by which to acquire our intended ends (see Figure 1).

Cavanaugh (2006) uses one of Aquinas’s examples regarding health and medicine and simplifies it to illustrate the choice/intention and will relationship to ends and means. “I will the end, health; choose the means, medicine; and intend the concrete, complex unity of end-through-means, health-by-means-of-medicine. One wills ends; chooses
means to them; and intends both ends and means ordered toward their achievement” (p. 95).

**Figure 1. Aquina’s explanation of Choice and Intention**

Aquinas (1921), also addressed the issue of killing in self-defense, an issue from which other philosophers and theologians have drawn the criteria that make up double effect. Nothing “hinders one act from having two effects, only one of which is intended while the other is beside the intention” (1921, II:II Q.64 A.7). In this example, an agent’s intention to defend himself against an intruder, therefore, can have the accidental effect of killing that intruder, the accidental effect being beside the intention.

Kaczor’s (1998) comparative and in-depth history of double effect moves from Aquinas to Jean Pierre Gury and refers to the 19th-century French Jesuit as a “causist.” Kaczor regards Gury as the oft-considered originator of the “modern notion” of double-effect reasoning (p. 300). He saw Gury as the beginning of a detachment from use of “the virtues” (Kaczor, p. 301) as an emphasis in determining the morality of an action (as Aquinas had), and moving more toward law as a point for analysis.

Gury’s work translated by Boyle (1980), stated:

It is licit to posit a cause which is either good or indifferent from which there follows a twofold effect, one good, the other evil, if a proportionately grave
reason is present, and if the end of the agent is honorable—that is, if he does not intend the evil effect. (p. 528)

Boyle’s (1980) translation found there are four criteria with which to judge an action coming under scrutiny via double effect. They are:

1. the ends are morally acceptable,
2. the cause, (or as we understand it, “intention”) must be good or at least indifferent
3. the good effect must be primary or immediate, and
4. there must be a grave reason for positing the cause. (Boyle, 1980, p. 529)

According to Boyle (1980), Gury saw double-effect reasoning as a “principle of excuse,” while Boyle and Aquinas saw the concept more as a theory of “justification” (p. 529).

Peter Knauer’s (1969) “Hermeneutic Function of Double Effect” gives double effect a much more central role in human decision making. He explored the various historical formulations of double effect and presented his work with the underpinning that double effect “brings into usage a criterion which is implied in every decision of conscience” (Knauer, p. 56). His work uniquely argues that “the concept of ‘effect’ is not used here as a correlative to ‘cause’” in reference to Aquinas’s writings “but in a more general sense; ‘aspect’ might be a more exact term” (Knauer, p. 28). Knauer also presented the most simplistic version of the criteria of double effect. Taking the historically stated four criteria, he presented the formulation as follows: “One may permit the evil effect of his act only if this is not intended in itself but is indirect and justified by a commensurate reason” (p. 29).
In reference to the aspect of one’s intention, Knauer’s (1969) writings also work to correlate Aquinas’s concept of the “direct” will of someone with the concept of the “commensurate reason” (p. 49), where we understand commensurate to mean that an act has neither sacrificed too much nor gained too little in regard to the end the agent seeks.

Knauer (1969) used Aristotle’s discussion of bravery as an example to illustrate the notion that “morally right behavior is a mean between two extremes which can be recognized as too much or too little” (p. 39); he concluded that in terms of bravery, prudence is the mean between the two extremes of foolhardiness and cowardice. Knauer used this as a way of implying a formal structure of winning and losing. He also points out this example is founded on the principle of double effect. Knauer wrote, “Evil may be accepted if in exchange if, in relation to the whole, the smallest possible evil is exchanged for the highest possible gain” (p. 39). The author concluded that “a reason for an act can prove to be commensurate only if the whole horizon is considered and not some particular aspect” and that conscience has to do with a broader or more “whole” picture (p. 56). He saw the whole as a determinative point of view for morality.

Double effect determines the moral worth of an action by the intention of the agent. This requires a look at intention in ethics, its role, how it is determined, and how it has been viewed in the past. While an agreed-upon definition of intention remains elusive among scholars, there is an understanding that the need to separate what we intend with our actions from what we might foresee through our awareness of causal relations exists if we are to understand and apply double effect.
**Intention and Foresight**

Seen throughout the history and origins of double effect reasoning the focal point of the principle is shared between an agent’s intention and an agent’s foresight. In order to better understand these, a review of the use and definition of intention in ethics follows.

Anscombe’s 1957 publication, *Intention*, presented a collection of her lectures on the topic. She spent much time distinguishing “expressions of intention” from “predictions,” and suggested that by asking “why” of a situation, the intention of person can be signaled (Anscombe, p. 40). In the first edition of *Intention*, Anscombe introduced a scenario to explain the dimensions of one’s intentions, which has been widely used in the study of double effect. She described a man who works operating a water pump, replenishing a house’s water supply with water that happens to have been poisoned over time. Anscombe explained the man pumping the water did not “lay the poison” and that “in the acts of pumping poisoned water nothing in particular is necessarily going on that might not equally well have been going on if the acts had been acts of pumping non-poisonous water” (p. 41). If the man answered the question, “Why did you replenish the house’s water supply with poisoned water?” with, “I just wanted my pay” instead of “to polish them off,” we can conclude that his intention was not to poison the people in the house (Anscombe, p. 42).

This discussion of one’s intention is important in review of the second criterion of double effect in that “the agent intends the good and does not intend the evil either as an end or as a mean” (Cavanaugh, 2006, p. 36). Anscombe (1957) supposed one’s intention is purely “interior” in nature and that, while it might seem easy for one to lie about his or
her interior intentions, discovering the “truthfulness” in one’s answers can be determined by observing the facts (p. 43). If the man pumping water says he does not care about the inhabitants of the house and is just doing his job, then Anscombe wrote it is “therefore necessary that it should be his usual job if his answer is to be acceptable” (p. 43).

Because double effect allegedly allows for one act to have two outcomes, one intended and one beside the intention, a distinction between the intended and unintended, arises (Aquinas, 1921).

In one of the most recent and thorough reviews of double-effect reasoning, Cavanaugh (2006) stressed the importance of clarification of the terms involved in double-effect reasoning and indicated a preference for “intended/foreseen” (p. 74). He stated “intended” is the clear choice for the first part of the distinction because “this is precisely what means and ends share: being intended” (Cavanaugh, p. 75). He dismissed the use of side effect in distinguishing an intended outcome from an unintended outcome and stated his preference for foreseen and expressed concern that side effect can be too ambiguous in that not all side effects can be foreseen. Cavanaugh affirmed his choice, stating the distinction “applies to the agent’s relation to the consequences of the action. ‘Foreseen’ aptly indicates that the agent knows or believes something about the side effect” (p. 75). This indicates the agent has an awareness of possible cause and effect relationships between the means through which they achieve their ends and possible foreseen, but unintended results. This would also help to dissuade those who try to deny responsibility for possible harmful, foreseen, but unintended, outcomes. According to Cavanaugh, the distinction has ethical relevance because all the terms described relate to the agent of the action.
**Intention’s Function**

Anscombe (1957) discussed the interior or psychologically private nature of human intent, and many scholars have questioned how is it that we are to know what a person sincerely intends. Bratman’s (1987) *Intention, Plans and Practical Reason* provides an in-depth account of the ingredients of intention. According to Bratman, intention includes commitment as one of its characteristics as it relates to the agent’s commitment to action. A primary function of Bratman’s theory of intention is to provide a full characterization of commitment’s role in one’s intention. Briefly, according to Bratman, commitment as involved in intention has two main dimensions: volitional commitment and reasoning-centered commitment.

Bratman (1987) described volitional commitment as having to do with the relationship between intention and action, and he introduced the term “pro-attitudes” to differentiate ordinary beliefs from intentions and desires (p. 15). He stated, generally, pro-attitudes “play a motivational role: in concert with our beliefs they can move us to act” (p. 15). He explained a further split in how desire functions in that “ordinary desires” act only as “potential influencers,” while intention is a conduct-controlling pro-attitude (p. 16).

**“Inertia of Intention”**

In terms of the reasoning-centered commitment, Bratman (1987) attended to the future-directed nature of intention. His use of the word “reasoning” stemmed from the fact that once we make a volitional commitment of intention, we must “reason” through the steps for achieving that which we intend. He described a near domino effect of closely related elements that take an agent from volitional commitment through reason-
centered commitment to the end intended. Bratman referred to this as the “inertia” of intention (p. 17).

Both dimensions of commitment relate to action, and Bratman (1987) recognized this relation as involving a kind of “synergy,” which, he says, “taken together these two dimensions of commitment help explain how intentions play their characteristic role in supporting coordination, both intrapersonal and social” (p. 17). Bratman wrote these characteristics work to provide a kind of guarantee through both the inertia and the conduct-controlling pro-attitude of intent, and that when the time for action arrives, an agent will at least try to carry out what he intended.

**Social Media**

In terms of social media, the relevance of one’s intention is becoming more and more apparent when trying to evaluate user-generated information online. Most recently, this is seen in the revision of the Radio Television Digital News Association’s ([RTDNA] n.d.) best practices guidelines for social media and blogging. The new guidelines specifically state that when using content from a blog or other social media site, one should ask, “Who wrote the comment and what was the motivation for posting it?” (RTDNA, para. 6).

As seen in the cases of the false CNN iReport, the YouTube lonelygirl15 lie, and professionals displaying poor judgment when posting pictures on Facebook, the potential for causing harm online exists in plentiful opportunity. Before the umbrella term of social media, there were Web logs or “blogs.” Blogs were originally part of the citizen, civic, and participatory journalism movement. CyberJournalist.net, a site that calls itself “the premier news and resource site about how the digital technology is transforming the
media,” (About, CyberJournalist.net, n.d.). The site provides a “Blogger’s Code of Ethics” they say is modeled after the code provided by the Society of Professional Journalists. The Code stresses honesty and fairness, minimizing harm and accountability (Blogger’s Code of Ethics, CyberJournalist.net, n.d.). CyberJournalist.net states in its explanation of the code that there was much debate as to whether all bloggers should adhere to a code, when not all bloggers were journalists and vice versa.

CyberJournalist.net goes on to say it reasoned in favor of a code because “responsible bloggers should recognize that they are publishing words publicly, and therefore have certain ethical obligations to their readers, the people they write about, and society in general” (Blogger’s Code of Ethics, CyberJournalist.net. n.d.)

The first blog appeared in 1994 with Justin Hall’s online diary from Swathmore College (Harmanci, 2005). Since then, the technology has changed, morphed, and adapted to create a ripple effect of changes across all communication professions, from an estimate of only 50 blogs in 1999 (Drezner & Farrell, 2004) to Technorati.com’s 133 million recorded and indexed blogs since 2002 (Winn, 2009). Technorati.com (Winn, 2009) is the self-titled first blog search engine that indexes blog posts, making them searchable almost instantaneously. Technorati.com (Winn, 2009) releases a “State of the Blogosphere” every year with facts and figures that illustrate the otherwise amorphous and intangible blogosphere.

As more and more professionals outside of the media and communication industry utilize applications such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to access an audience and disseminate information, discussions regarding professional ethics and the role of gatekeeper abound. The growth of these platforms fueled the debate regarding
who is a journalist. Some bloggers vie for journalist status to gain access to big events, as seen during the 2008 Democratic National Convention (Hertzfeld, 2008), and some journalists fear special labels are a slippery slope to “licensing,” which could lead to censorship (Meyer, 2002).

**Standards and Definitions**

Ugland and Henderson (2007) wrote the matter of “who is a journalist is salient in at least two separate domains: law and professional ethics” (p. 242). Ugland and Henderson (2007) stressed the importance of understanding which context one is referencing before posing the “are they a journalist” question. The authors noted the contexts of either law or ethics come “each with its own purposes and consequences” (p. 242). The authors also noted a prevailing attitude of “I’ll know it when I see it” (Ugland and Henderson, 2007, p. 242) or fear of committing to an agreed-upon label. Within ethics, however, the authors suggested three categorical definitions that differentiate among public communicators, second-level journalists, and top-level journalists. These definitions are based on, among other things, the regularity with which one disseminates information and the process one follows to gather, produce, and disseminate information. While their definitions do not solve the “who is a journalist” problem, they explain possible working definitions within the two contexts of ethics and law and address those definitions within the framework of the media gatekeeping theory by indicating “as power shifts away from a handful of traditional news organizations toward a diverse collection of individuals and institutions, the matter of who defines the parameters of journalistic behavior must also shift” (Ugland & Henderson, p. 259).
Berkman and Shumway (2003), in *Digital Dilemmas*, recognized a problem of labeling as well and, although the authors offered no leaning toward what is right, wrong, or workable, they explained the following possibility:

Some say only those working in traditional media count, and some argue that those with a college degree and/or substantial professional experience qualify, while others suggest that it depends not on the medium or employment status but rather on the intent of the individual—that is whether or not they are collecting information with the purpose of disseminating it to the public. (Berkman & Shumway, 2003, p. 64).

Berkman and Shumway (2003) agreed with authors such as Ugland and Henderson (2007) that the legal aspect of the definition debate is seminal to the discussion of who is a journalist because labels in the ethical domain are only as good as the standards consistently applied by those being labeled. Berkman and Shumway discussed how technology has changed the gatekeeping function of journalists and relied on authors Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel (1999) to do so.

In *Warp Speed: America in the Age of Mixed Media Culture*, veteran journalists Kovach and Rosenstiel (1999) painted a picture of how a super-speed news cycle has forced journalists to shift their focus. Kovach and Rosenstiel attended to the double-edged nature of independent news websites or blogs. While the ever-broadening choices of news have eliminated the gatekeeper, the authors noted the speed at which news is happening will be the ruin of its standards, commenting, “In practice, the lower standards tend to drive out the higher” (Kovach & Rosenstiel, p. 7). Their negative view of the effects of new media on standards and practices came early in the boom of web-centered
or social media and relied on truth as the redeeming factor that would allow journalists
and journalism, in whatever form it should take, to rise again to perform at what they saw
as the traditional, higher standard.
Chapter III

Methodology

Instrument

The Kent State University Institutional Review Board approved the instrument developed for this study on March 1, 2010. The survey is provided in the appendix.

An anonymous, self-reporting survey of adults was conducted. The survey consisted of a section that provided categorical, demographic information and provided data on the level of social media use among respondents.

In order to gauge the ethical beliefs and practices of the research sample, a survey was adapted from Cenite et al. (2009). The survey was approved for adaptation by authors Cenite and Detenber on February 6, 2010. Cenite et al. (2009) surveyed the ethical beliefs of and practices of more than 1,200 personal and nonpersonal bloggers and found that both, in general, supported a code of sorts. The wording has been edited to encompass users of all social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) instead of being geared specifically toward bloggers. Cenite et al. used focus groups to identify several categories of ethical issues. These categories were used in creating the 7-point Likert scale. The scale includes four factors or categories that represent indexes in truth-telling, accountability, attribution, and minimizing harm. In addition to the four factors used by Cenite et al., a fifth was added and modeled after the existing survey’s structure in order to gather data on the issue of transparency. There are 21 items included in the survey.

Traditionally, Likert scales are “widely used to capture responses about attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions” (Keyton, 2006, p. 103). This seemed an appropriate way to
measure the ethical beliefs and practices of the research participants. Keyton (2006) noted that surveys and questionnaires are the most common quantitative method for collecting data regarding communication phenomena (p. 103). In addition, Babbie (2007) notes that survey research is frequently used as a mode of observation in the social sciences and that it is also “probably the best method available to the social researcher who is interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly” (p. 244). Babbie (2007) goes on to emphasize that surveys may be used for both descriptive and explanatory purposes in addition to exploratory initiatives (p. 244). In contrast to an interview method of surveying, another benefit of using a self-reporting survey for this study, which involved questions regarding one’s ethical beliefs, is “respondents are sometimes reluctant to report controversial or deviant attitudes or behaviors in interviews, but are willing to respond to an anonymous self-administered questionnaire” (Babbie, 2007, p. 275).

Participants

Participants in the study included junior- and senior-level undergraduate students in both the College of Communication and Information and the College of Business at a Midwestern university. There were approximately 2400 juniors and seniors total in both colleges at the time of the study. In this population, a portion of participants were accessed through a pool of students with an academic requirement to participate in research projects throughout the semester. These participants received 2.5 points for participating in this study.
Sample Size

One strength of using survey research in this study is related to the sample size. Babbie (2007) notes that self-administered surveys make large sample sizes feasible and that is “very important for both descriptive and explanatory analyses, especially wherever several variables are to be analyzed simultaneously” (p. 276).

Babbie (2007) regards this kind of sampling as a “purposive or judgmental sampling.” Babbie’s text says that it is sometimes “appropriate to select a sample on the basis of knowledge of a population, its elements and the purpose of the study.” However the author goes on to say “…such sample design would not provide a good description (of either group) as a whole, it might suffice for general comparative purposes” (p. 193). A judgmental sampling was used in this study because the researcher had knowledge of the population and chose them specifically based on assumption made from that knowledge. The researcher felt the two groups would provide a good comparison of how two different professional fields of study used the same tools (in this case, social media online). As for the raw number of respondents, Keyton (2006) notes that “generally, the greater the number of cases, or data points, the more reliable the data” (p. 187).

Procedure

Participants who were part of the research pool and who received academic credit for their participation were reached via the College of Communication and Information’s Communication Research Online Participation System (CROPS) site. Students who belong to the research pool registered on that site to take the survey. The researcher received a list of e-mail messages/addresses from the registration system and the link to the online survey was distributed to those e-mail addresses as their owners registered
with CROPS. Students who participated for credit received direction at the end of the survey to e-mail the researcher a notification e-mail in order to receive credit for their participation.

All other participants were contacted through LISTSERVs set up in the College of Business and the College of Communication and Information. These e-mail lists reach all undergraduates. LISTSERV addresses were obtained from the senior administrative secretaries of each of the colleges. Contacts were provided with the appropriate proof of Institutional Review Board approval and supplemental materials to preview before allowing the researcher use of the LISTSERV.

Data was collected for a 15-day time period between April 5, 2010, and April 19, 2010. Reminder e-mails were sent (this includes the CROPS participant emails and LISTSERVs) on April 9, 2010.

Validity and Reliability

In terms of research instruments such as surveys, Babbie (2007) notes that while reliability does not ensure accuracy, it should ensure that an instrument or particular technique “applied repeatedly to the same object, yields the same result each time” (p.143). While reliability of an instrument is important, Babbie warns that it should not be confused with validity which refers to the extent to which an “empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration” (2007, p. 147). Statistical tests exist to determine the internal reliability of a measure. Williams, Rice and Rogers (1988) suggest reliability can be estimated by “comparing portions of the measure, such as items in a scale, with the total measure (such as by computing Cronbach’s alpha between each item and the total score on a scale)” (p.61). Keyton
(2006) reported that researchers should calculate the internal reliability of any instrument that includes multiple items and suggests Cronbach’s alpha, also referred to as “internal reliability, or internal consistency” (p.109) to calculate that reliability. Keyton (2006) also notes that statistical software programs can be used to calculate the reliability coefficient for sets or series of items for all respondents (p.109).

Therefore, this survey’s internal reliability was measured through the use of Cronbach’s alpha. Expressed as a value from 0 to 1.00. Keyton (2006) explained that 0 would indicate no internal consistency among respondents, while 1.00 would indicate respondents answered all items in a particular subset (in this case, truth-telling, accountability, attribution, minimizing harm, and transparency) in a similar way.

Cenite et al.’s (2009) study classified the reliability coefficients into the same four categories for both ethical beliefs and for ethical practices. Their results produced a reliability coefficient ranging between .68 and .88 for all categories.

Following a series of demographic questions that was used to determine what college or field of study respondents belonged to and to gage their social media use the survey included two sets of seven-point Likert scales broken into four categories each. The four categories or principles were derived in Cenite et al.’s (2009) study through examination of existing ethical guidelines and codes while ethical practices were based on focus group discussions, news reports and pre-test results.

The ethical practices section of the current study contained 21 statements (see Appendix A). Of these, seven were combined to form the truth telling practices index (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .88$), four statements made up the accountability practices index (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .81$), four for the attribution practices index (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .55$), and
five for the minimizing harm practices index (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .95$). The participants were asked to express their level of agreement with the statements on the ethical practices (where 1 = ‘strongly disagree’ and 7 = ‘strongly agree’).

Ethical beliefs were measured similarly using 15 statements (see Appendix) of which three statements were used to form the truth telling beliefs index (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .94$), four for the accountability beliefs index (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .90$) and four for the minimizing harm beliefs index (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .90$). The scale used in the beliefs was the same as in the practices section. These were all consistent with Cenite et al.’s study.

An additional section was added to gather information on how respondents felt about transparency when using social media. This section was added based on the structure of the Cenite et al. (2009) study. Five statements were used to determine the transparency index (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .57$). The lower alpha on this index would indicate that maybe a revision of the statements is necessary to achieve a higher reliability score.

Statistical data was collected through Qualtrics (n.d.). Qualtrics is online survey software that allows a user to build, send, and analyze surveys. In comparison to Survey Monkey, another widely utilized online survey software, Qualtrics offers a more sophisticated data collection tool in its availability of experimental research design, easy-to-use interface for both researchers and respondents and it allows the researcher to download data directly into SPSS or Excel. One review of Qualtrics said the software “offers an extremely rich feature set and performs extremely well compared to other survey software in its price range” (“Qualtrics review,” 2008). The review, which was conducted while Qualtrics was still in a “beta testing” mode in 2008, also noted that the software “offers a fantastic array of question types, a well-designed survey development
interface, good fielding/survey promotion capabilities and a powerful reporting engine (“Qualtrics review,” 2008).

Analysis

In following Cenite et al.’s (2009) analysis of the ethical beliefs and practices of bloggers, this data was analyzed using an analysis of variance, or ANOVA. The ANOVA allows for the comparison of an individual’s scores on the dependent variable, or the survey, according to the groups or categories to which they belong for the independent variable (Keyton, 2006). Data collected was exported from Qualtrics for analysis in SPSS.

An independent sample t-test was used to test for significance in levels of usage between the two groups. A t-test is used to test for differences in the means of two categories of an independent variable (Keyton, 2006, p. 201). In the case of this study, there are two groups of students that represent the independent variable. The dependent variable was a set of choices regarding how long the respondents were signed on to a social media platform per day. Keyton (2006) says the dependent variable “must be of continuous level data at the interval or ratio level” (p. 202).

An exception to the previous analytical tools, RQ2 was concerned with finding out what the reasons for using the Internet and social media were between the two groups, or independent variable. A cross tabulation or “contingency table” was used to display the frequency data. Keyton (2006) says “such an arrangement makes it easy to see how frequencies for one variable are contingent on, or relative to, frequencies for the other variable” (p. 200). This kind of analysis is limited to variables of nominal data and
“cannot directly determine causal relationships;” however, it can help a researcher make “causal statements” about the data (Keyton, 2006, p. 201).
Chapter IV

Results

Demographics

A response rate of 2.8% was achieved. Only 63 total responses were used after filtering the initial 140 participants and eliminating the freshman and sophomores who responded to the survey. Of the usable responses 45 (66.2%) reported they were in their junior year while 23 (33.8%) were seniors. The number of responses from the two different colleges were nearly even. The College of Business had 30 (44.1%) participants while the College of Communication had 33 (48.5%).

Other demographics (see Table 1) included age and sex. More women (55.9%) participated than men (42.6%) while one person declined to answer the gender question. Age was broken into four categories. No one under 18 participated in the survey. Forty-five (66.2%) of the participants were age 21 to 30, five (7.4%) of the participants were 31 to 50 years old and two (2.9%) reported they were over 50 years old.

An overwhelming 89.7 percent of participants reported they used Facebook the most out of a list of social media platforms, 95.6 percent said they had a Facebook account, while only 7.4 percent said they have a blog they update regularly.

Overall, respondents said they used the Internet primarily for personal (69.1%) rather than for professional (4.4%) or academic (26.5%) reasons.

Another interesting demographic dealt with whether the respondent had taken any kind of ethics course. Only 14.7% said they had taken a course related to ethics at this point in their college careers. That leaves 85.3% of the juniors and seniors that participated in the survey lacking a course in ethics in general or specifically in their
chosen field of study. Those who responded that they had taken a related course were asked to list the name of the course.

Table 1: Demographic information for College of Communication and Information students and College of Business students (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Communication (N=33)</th>
<th>Business (N=30)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary reason of use</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has a blog they update regularly</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has a Facebook account</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td><strong>Social Media platform used most</strong></td>
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</tr>
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<td>Twitter</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MySpace</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How often signed on to social media platform</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5x’s/day</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5x’s/day</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grade Level</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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Research Questions and Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that participants from the College of Communication and Information would score higher on an ethical beliefs and practices scale than their counterparts in the College of Business. A significant difference in survey results occurred on only two of the belief indexes. In all other instances there was no significant difference between the two groups’ responses.

A one-way ANOVA (see Appendix C) was used to test for differences in survey scores between students from two different colleges. In regards to beliefs, scores differed significantly on two of the four ethical principles indexed. Scores differed significantly on the truth telling index, $F(1,65) = 4.80$, $p=.032$ and in regards to the attribution index, $F(1,63) = 4.08$, $p=.048$. All other results on the beliefs portion of the survey showed no significant difference (see Table 2) In terms of the practices and transparency portion of the survey there were no statistically different results between the two colleges (see Table 3). Overall, this indicates a rejection of the hypothesis.

Table 2: Mean belief scores of College Communication and Information students and College of Business students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical Beliefs</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>College of Communication and Information</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truth telling</td>
<td>5.42*</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution</td>
<td>5.09*</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimizing harm</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College of Business</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truth telling</td>
<td>3.63*</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution</td>
<td>4.58*</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimizing harm</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*indicates differences are statistically significant at $p < .05$
Table 3: Mean practices scores of College Communication and Information students and College of Business students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical Practices</th>
<th>College of Communication and Information</th>
<th></th>
<th>College of Business</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truth telling</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimizing harm</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ1 asked what the differences were in the levels of social media usage between communication students and business students. They were asked to rate how often they are signed on to a social media platform. An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in levels of usage. The results of the t-test revealed that there were significant differences between the mean levels of usage for students in the College of Communication and Information (M = 1.52, SD = .508) and students in the College of Business (M=1.27, SD = .450); t (60.965) = 2.060, p = .044. The results suggest that College of Communication students had a significantly higher level of social media usage than the College of Business students (see Table 4).
RQ2 asked how the reasons for using social media differed between upper-level undergraduate communication and business students. Cross-tabs were used to compare the nominal data (see Table 4). Participants were allowed to choose more than one option from a list of reasons for using Facebook specifically. Of all the participants ($N=33$) in the College of Communication all of them (100%) said they use the application to communicate with friends. Family (67%) and school (46%) were the second and third most popular reasons and work (21%) was the least likely reason for students in the College of Communication to use Facebook.

The College of Business participants ($N=30$) had a similar order as communicating with friends (93%) was the highest-ranking choice. Family (57%) and School (50%) were nearly an even split while work (13%) was not as popular of a choice for students in the College of Business.

### Table 4: Independent $t$-test between college and social media usage level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Usage</th>
<th>$N$</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$df$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time spent signed on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>.508*</td>
<td>2.048</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.450*</td>
<td>2.060</td>
<td>60.965</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*indicates difference is significant at $p < .05$
Table 5: Reasons for social media usage (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Communication (N=33)</th>
<th>Business (N=30)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Columns do not add up to 100 because participants were allowed to choose more than one option in the survey.

RQ3 asked how or if intention can be determined of an agent. This was addressed with available literature on the topic and has two aspects, the first is theoretical and the second is practical. It should be said from the outset that neither approach has a solid “answer” or even a widely accepted formula for determining a person’s intent, however the discussion of both will be helpful in determining future research and choosing an approach that is agreeable in this context.

Hoek, Jamroga and Woolridge (2007) have argued that intention is difficult to handle theoretically “first, because there is no clear agreement on what exactly an intention is, and while there are several competing models of intentions, none is without drawbacks; and second, because intentions cannot be studied in isolation—they must be considered in the wider context of an agent’s mental state,” (p. 287). Of course, that has not prevented many philosophers and theorists from working toward an answer.

Bratman (1990) has written at length on the topic and in a collection of articles called *Intention in Communication*, attempts to present a condensed sketch of the issue. He says we “use the concept of intention to characterize both our actions and our minds” (p. 15) Bratman continues to discuss “pro-attitudes” (intention, desires and valuations
being such while ordinary beliefs are not), as mentioned previously in this research. He considers intention to be a “conduct controlling pro-attitude,” leading an agent to action, beyond mere thoughts, considerations or “potential influencers” (p. 22 and 30).

Another important distinction to consider in this review is that intending to do something and doing something intentionally are not the same thing. Bratman (1987) argued that intending to do something is more concerned with the actual coordination of someone’s plans and that intention is often separated from other mental states such as belief and knowledge. Cohen and Levesque (1992) note that belief and knowledge are usually considered in the form of “propositions” while the content of an intention falls into a category that leads to action. This goes along with Bratman’s (1987) argument that rational behavior must include the consideration of a third mental state (along with belief and desire), that being intention.

Cohen and Levesque (1990) organize Bratman’s argument for how intentions play roles different from desires into the following items:

1. Intentions normally pose problems for the agent; the agent needs to determine a way to achieve them.

2. Intentions provide a “screen of admissibility” for adopting other intentions.

3. Agents “track the success of their attempts to achieve their intentions.

Four more functional roles or properties of intention have been argued as necessary. Cohen and Levesque say that if an agent intends to achieve “X,” then:

4. The agent believes X is possible.

5. The agent does not believe he will not bring about X.

6. Under certain conditions, the agent believes he will bring about X.
7. Agents need not intend all the expected side effects of their intentions (p.36).

In more symbolic terms, someone “X’s” intentionally if and only if they “X” as an end (“Y”) or a means to an end. For example, an agent “X’s” so that he can “Y” under these assumptions it would indicate that “X” was carried out with intention. Anscombe (1957) and Bratman (1990) agree that the difficulty comes with determining whether a judgment of the previous statement is true.

The second aspect of my review of how intention is determined takes a step into the world of law and looks at the requirement and concept of *mens rea* or literally “guilty mind.” Sayre (1932) addresses the frequency of the concept through history saying “for hundreds of years the books have repeated with unbroken cadence that *actus non facit reum nisi mens sit rea*.” A literal translation being “the act does not make a persona guilty unless the mind be also guilty” (p. 974). Sayre (1932) goes on to say “it is therefore a principle of our legal system, as probably every other, that the essence of an offence is the wrongful intent, without which it cannot exist” (p. 974). This follows in line with the theoretical or philosophical overview of intention and Bratman’s (1987) supposition that intention is a conduct controlling pro-attitude that leads to action. The two together indicate that without intention, an act cannot make the agent culpable, in law or in theory.

In their research on stalking, Dennison and Thomson (2002) look at the relevance of intent and how it may be determined. They state “while *actus reus* is not overly difficult to establish if the acts in question took place, establishing *mens rea* is more difficult given that a person's intentions can be less obvious” (p. 544). They go on to say that, difficulties aside, intent can often be “inferred by the actions that have taken place,
the circumstances surrounding the event, and by considering objectively, what a reasonable person could have foreseen as a likely outcome” (2002, 544). This again emphasizes a relationship between action and intention and echoes Anscombe’s (1957) accounts of determining intent through contextual clues as discussed in chapter two of this research.

Another example of how intent is determined or dealt with legally is offered in United States v. Greenbaum (1943). This was a case of introduction of a prohibited article in interstate commerce (in this case, rotten eggs). When counsel had to determine whether the defendant had “guilty knowledge” or “mens rea” they “prescribed inquiry, a preliminary requisite to prosecution, is designed to search out the possible innocent mind of the particular offender by establishing before trial, his good faith or the extent of his actual knowledge and willfulness” (138 F.2d 437, p. 4). This description of interviewing again falls in line with Anscombe’s notion of using context and answers to simple questions about an event as ways of determining the intent of an agent or person in question.
Chapter V
Discussion

The results of the survey indicate that students’ use of social media may be very similar across professions. The groups’ responses were much more homogenous than expected, indicating that while different professions are using the same tool, the way they are using it and the ethical beliefs behind their decision making and actions online are quite similar. This may indicate that while long standing professional codes of ethics have tried to include updates to cover new and evolving technological forms of communication, a better approach may be to create an ethic that would apply and appeal to everyone using the same tools.

College of Communication students valued truth telling and attribution beliefs at a slightly more significant level than College of Business students, which follows with some of the major themes in ethical communication education. Usage and choice of social media platforms were nearly the same in both groups which also indicates that perhaps instead of ethical training that is specific to the field of study, students and in turn, professionals, may benefit greatly from ethical training that is specific to the tool they are using: social media. Double-effect reasoning offers a three step process by which a user can evaluate what they see on a social media platform, or even use the criteria to evaluate their own proposed actions before posting or doing something online that may ultimately cause harm to someone else. Even if the harm is not intended, the criteria would alert the user to a possible unintentional, yet harmful outcome, giving them a chance to reason out their actions and possibly reach a better approach or solution.
Cavanaugh (2006) points out that “good and evil inextricably bind” (p. 201) and that the double effect criteria and the principle supporting them “proposes (as do all ethical norms) that we voluntarily do good and avoid evil” (p. 144).

Stevenson and Peck (2010) suggest a slightly modified version of Cavanaugh’s (2006) criteria to be used in social media cases that employs the term “harm” instead of “evil” and makes more precise the consideration of accepted norms:

1. the act considered separately from its unintended harmful effect is in itself not wrong;
2. the agent intends only the good and does not intend harm as an end or as a mean; and,
3. the agent reflects upon his/her relevant duties, considering accepted norms, and takes due care to eliminate or alleviate any foreseen harm through his/her act (p. 10)

The revised criteria seem suitable for working toward an ethics toolkit for social media.

Respondents were also asked to share what they thought was the biggest problem facing social media and if they had any concerns regarding their profession and social media. Respondents were very vocal on the topic and all but nine of the respondents replied to the open-ended question. The three most mentioned issues were bullying, privacy and the spreading of false information or false identity online.

One comment mentioned another area of concern specifically, which is a disconnect between online and “real life.” The participant said “I think the biggest problem would be people not taking responsibility for their actions online and then expecting the online
world and the real world to not affect each other.” Another participant voiced concern in terms of business and what they call “half truths” saying “I worry that public opinion about my company will be affected by inaccurate information.”

In regards to the relationship between news organizations and social media, another participant expressed concern saying “I believe one of the biggest issues facing social media today is false information being spread at a rapid pace. News sources can release information that can be spread rapidly to thousands of people via social media. It could cause unnecessary panic if the description is not valid.”

One particularly long comment focused on accountability and the confusion that a chain of accountability can cause online. The comment also points to the problems an overload of options can create. The respondent writes there is “no accountability” and that “it’s VERY difficult for my generation to find a news entity that we trust online and STICK to it. We find ourselves going to many different news sources from Google news to ‘post-again’ forums like Digg and ReadIt to CNN.com to NPR, Wikipedia and so on.”

**Limitations and Further Research**

While surveys are noted as an appropriate measure of attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions in the study and research of communication, there are weaknesses. Keyton (2006) stated that using surveys as the sole method of data collection means “the data produced are largely descriptive and can only describe relationships between variables” (p. 180) and because data are collected at only one point in time, it is difficult to determine causal relationships. Keyton suggested collecting data across multiple points in time as a way to overcome this in future research.
Other issues include low response rates within the research sample. The researcher hopes to overcome this by aggressively promoting the survey among the population, leaving the survey open for 15 days, and sending out reminder communications before the survey is closed.

Another limitation of survey research is what Babbie (2007) notes as inflexibility stating: “Studies involving direct observation can be modified as field conditions warrant, but surveys typically require than an initial study design remain unchanged throughout” (p. 277). The researcher anticipates that new questions will arise from this study and plans to use the data collected to propose further research on a larger scale that would utilize a mixed methods approach in an attempt to overcome some of the limitations of the initial study.

The groups were more homogenous than expected so in future research it is suggested that another group be selected for comparison. The researcher suggests a group in the medical or scientific fields as their motives and ethics may differ more greatly than the groups used in this study. Social media use is of great debate in the medical field and that group may provide greater degree of variance in responses. Another aspect to consider in future research includes how, if at all, decision-making differs when communicating through a mobile device or if perceptions of what is moral or acceptable differ when a similar act is carried out online versus in person.
Appendix A

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

I use the Internet primary for one of the following reasons:

- Personal
- Professional
- Academic

I have a blog that I update regularly.

- Yes
- No

I have a Facebook account.

- Yes
- No

I use Facebook for the following applications (You can choose more than one):

- Work
- School
- Family
- Friends

I am:

- Male
- Female
I am:

- Under 18
- 18-20
- 21-30
- 31-50
- Over 50

I use the following social media platform the most:

- Twitter
- Facebook
- MySpace
- A blog
- Other

I consider myself to use social media:

- Less than 5 times a day
- More than 5 times a day
- I am signed on 24/7
- Other
I am a student in one of the following colleges:

- College of Communication
- College of Business

I am a

- Junior
- Senior
- Other [ ]

I have taken a course on ethics while a student at Kent State University

- Yes
- No

If you answered “yes” to the previous question please indicate the title of the course(s).
## Ethical Practices

Please evaluate the following statements based on your experiences with blogs or other social media platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter. “Content and information” includes pictures, video, and text. “Users” are defined as anyone utilizing the previously mentioned applications to put content online.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>I don’t</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I strongly disagree</td>
<td>I disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I make up characters in my posts.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I exaggerate facts or figures in my posts.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I make changes to already published items on my blogs and/or social media postings.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes distort facts in a way that favors my opinion.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I present false information.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I include fictitious material in my postings.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have included facts which may not be accurate in my postings.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please evaluate the following statements based on your experiences with blogs or other social media platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter. “Content and information” includes pictures, video, and text. “Users” are defined as anyone utilizing the previously mentioned applications to put content online.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>I don’t</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I strongly disagree</td>
<td>I disagree somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I disagree</td>
<td>I agree or disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I agree</td>
<td>I agree strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take responsibility for any negative impact that my postings online may have.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I own up to my audience the mistakes I have made in my postings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I write in a way that I would want others to write about me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I correct any misinformation I post.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I correct any misinformation in my posts I make it known to my audience.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please evaluate the following statements based on your experiences with blogs or other social media platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter. “Content and information” includes pictures, video, and text. “Users” are defined as anyone utilizing the previously mentioned applications to put content online.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>I don’t I agree</th>
<th>I strongly disagree</th>
<th>I disagree</th>
<th>I agree</th>
<th>I strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I give credit to any sources from which I obtain information.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my posts, I list picture credits for images I do not own.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I copy and paste a substantial amount of material from another website, I clearly indicate it to my readers.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I borrow material from other websites for my posts without attributing it to its source.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please evaluate the following statements based on your past and present experiences with blogs or other social media platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter. “Content and information” includes pictures, video, and text. “Users” are defined as anyone utilizing the previously mentioned applications to put content online.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>I don’t</th>
<th>I strong disagree</th>
<th>I disagree</th>
<th>I agree or disagree</th>
<th>I agree</th>
<th>I strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I write abusively about others online.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I post confidential information about others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I post private information about others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I write about others in a disrespectful manner online.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I discriminate against a particular group or groups online.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Ethical Beliefs**

Please evaluate the following statements based on your experiences with blogs or other social media platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter. “Content and information” includes pictures, video, and text. “Users” are defined as anyone utilizing the previously mentioned applications to put content online.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>I don’t</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>I agree</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I strongly disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I disagree somewhat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t agree or disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree somewhat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honesty should be a guiding principle when people use social media.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling the truth should be a guiding principle when people use social media.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Users of social media should make sure their content is always accurate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please evaluate the following statements based on your experiences with blogs or other social media platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter. “Content and information” includes pictures, video, and text. “Users” are defined as anyone utilizing the previously mentioned applications to put content online.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>I don’t</th>
<th>I disagree</th>
<th>I disagree</th>
<th>I agree</th>
<th>I agree</th>
<th>I strongly agree</th>
<th>I strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Users of social media should be responsible to their audience.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Users of social media need to be accountable to their audience.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Users of social media should take responsibility for any harm that their “postings” cause.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Users of social media should be answerable for any negative consequences that their “postings” may have.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please evaluate the following statements based on your experiences with blogs or other social media platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter. “Content and information” includes pictures, video, and text. “Users” are defined as anyone utilizing the previously mentioned applications to put content online.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>I don’t</th>
<th>I don’t</th>
<th>I somewhat disagree</th>
<th>I disagree</th>
<th>I agree</th>
<th>I somewhat agree</th>
<th>I strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Users of social media should credit others’ work that they use in their own posts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Users of social media ought to get permission to use substantial parts of others’ work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Users of social media should never plagiarize.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Users of social media should respect copyrighted materials.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please evaluate the following statements based on your experiences with blogs or other social media platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter. “Content and information” includes pictures, video, and text. “Users” are defined as anyone utilizing the previously mentioned applications to put content online.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>I don’t</th>
<th>I disagree</th>
<th>I agree or</th>
<th>I agree</th>
<th>strongly agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>It is important to be mindful of others’ feelings when using social media.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to treat everyone with dignity when using social media.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Users of social media should protect the confidential information of the people about whom they are posting.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to respect people’s privacy when using social media.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transparency

Please evaluate the following statements based on your experiences with blogs or other social media platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter. “Content and information” includes pictures, video, and text. “Users” are defined as anyone utilizing the previously mentioned applications to put content online.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>I don’t</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I strongly disagree</td>
<td>I disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I have been paid to write about a product online, I disclose this to my audience.</td>
<td>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would accept payment to write about a product online.</td>
<td>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would not accept payment to write about a product online if I was forbidden to disclose the payment to my audience.</td>
<td>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I post information online to gain respect in my field.</td>
<td>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I include truthful biographical information on all my social media and/or blog accounts.</td>
<td>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please respond to the following open-ended question. Thank you.

What do you see as the biggest issue facing social media today? Do you have concerns for your profession in regards to the use of social media? What are those concerns?

Are you a COMM15000 student? If so, please click “yes” below and follow the instructions to receive your credit.

- Yes
- No

COMM15000 students, please e-mail spuzo@kent.edu upon completion of the survey to receive credit. Please put “survey complete” in the subject line.
Appendix B

Survey Adaptation Approval
On 2/5/10 11:35 PM, "Benjamin Hill Detenber" <TDetenber@ntu.edu.sg> wrote:

Hi Stacy,

Thanks for sending your adaptation of the blogging ethics instrument. It looks like it works pretty well in the new context with little modification. How are you going to obtain your sample of respondents?

Regards,

Ben

On 1/31/10 8:41 PM, "Mark Cenite" <macenite@pmail.ntu.edu.sg> wrote:

Hello Stacy, the answer is a provisional yes. Just please let us know how you plan to adapt it—it will be useful for us to know. I’m cc’ing my co-author Ben Detenber. Thank you. —m.

From: Puzo, Stacy [mailto:stevenson@wksu.org]

Sent: Friday, January 29, 2010 8:59 PM

To: Mark Cenite

Subject: Request to adapt survey from "Doing the right thing online: A survey of bloggers' ethical beliefs and practices."

Importance: High
Mark -

My name is Stacy Puzo Stevenson and I am a graduate student at Kent State University’s School of Journalism and Mass Communication. I am working on my MA thesis and would like to request permission to adapt the scale used in "Doing the right thing online: A survey of bloggers’ ethical beliefs and practices" for use in my thesis research.

I wanted to initiate contact with you and if you require a formal written request I will arrange to send you a scanned PDF.

Many thanks in advance for your time,

Stacy Puzo Stevenson
Appendix C

ANOVA Tables
### ANOVA - Beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>TT</strong></td>
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<td>81.829</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>81.829</td>
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<td><strong>B</strong></td>
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<td>1109.275</td>
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<td>98.748</td>
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<td>72.720</td>
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<tr>
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### ANOVA - Practices

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<td><strong>TT</strong></td>
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<td>20.398</td>
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<td>1.704</td>
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<td>81.098</td>
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<td>2579.771</td>
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References


Stevenson, S. E., & Peck, L. A. (In progress). ‘I’m eating a sandwich now’: Intent and Foresight in the Twitter Age. Presented at Media Ethics Colloquium, April 19, 2010; St. Louis, Missouri. Accepted by Journal of Mass Media Ethics, publishing date to be determined.


United States v. Greenbaum 138 F. 2d. 437 (1943).

