The Role of Surveyor-Perceived Anonymity within Social Network Sites

Master’s Thesis

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By

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Abstract

Within social network sites (SNSs) like Facebook, many users examine others’ profile pages without posting on them. Research has demonstrated that this act, known as social surveillance, is prevalent. Users are able to check up on friends, acquaintances, and strangers within the network. The commonality of this practice may be a result of the anonymity afforded to profile surveyors. This study investigates how the perception of anonymity may impact a user’s social surveillance behaviors. While anonymously surveying, one maintains a positive self-presentation, as the profile owner is unaware of the surveillance activity that if identified, would likely be negatively perceived by the profile owner. This study employed a two (anonymity vs. identifiability) by two (instrumental objective vs. relational objective) between subjects experiment to assess how the degree of identifiability as well as the degree of involvement with a task impacts how a user interacts with a Facebook profile. It is hypothesized that identifiability will result in less exploration of a profile, particularly when paired with an instrumental (low-task) objective. This study enhanced disparities of the attractiveness of the profile owner to serve as a dependent variable. Results yielded partial support for the hypotheses, which indicate that both identifiability and objective may significantly impact the surveillance process. It is also hypothesized that the number of pages viewed will mediate this relationship. Results indicate significance for the mediator on a profile owner’s perceived social attractiveness.
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# Table of Contents

Abstract.................................................................................................................................................. ii

Acknowledgements................................................................................................................................... iii

Vita........................................................................................................................................................... iv

List of Tables........................................................................................................................................ vi

List of Figures......................................................................................................................................... vii

Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review...................................................................................... 01

Chapter 2: Method.................................................................................................................................... 21

Chapter 3: Results...................................................................................................................................... 28

Chapter 4: Discussion............................................................................................................................... 33

References.............................................................................................................................................. 40

Appendix A: Post-Test Questionnaire...................................................................................................... 45

Appendix B: Stimuli.................................................................................................................................... 49
List of Tables

Table 1. Means and standard deviations of self-reported social and physical attractiveness ratings .......................................................................................................................... 30

Table 2 Correlations between experimental conditions, number of screenshots viewed, and attractiveness ratings ........................................................................................................ 32
List of Figures

Figure 1 Screenshot of info tab 1 ................................................................. 49
Figure 2 Screenshot of info tab 2 ................................................................. 50
Figure 3 Screenshot of info tab 3 ................................................................. 50
Figure 4 Screenshot of profile picture 1 ........................................................ 51
Figure 5 Screenshot of profile picture 2 ........................................................ 51
Figure 6 Screenshot of profile picture 3 ........................................................ 52
Figure 7 Screenshot of profile picture 4 ........................................................ 52
Figure 8 Screenshot of profile picture 5 ........................................................ 53
Figure 9 Screenshot of profile picture 6 ........................................................ 53
Figure 10 Screenshot of profile picture album ............................................... 54
Figure 11 Screenshot of wall tab 1 ................................................................. 54
Figure 12 Screenshot of wall tab 2 ................................................................. 55
Figure 13 Screenshot of wall tab 3 ................................................................. 55
Figure 14 Screenshot of wall tab 4 ................................................................. 56
Figure 15 Screenshot of wall tab 5 ................................................................. 56
Figure 16 Screenshot of photos tab .............................................................. 57
Figure 17 Screenshot of photo 1 ................................................................. 57
Figure 18 Screenshot of photo 2 ................................................................. 58
Figure 19 Screenshot of photo 3 ................................................................. 58
Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review

The use of social network sites (SNSs) has grown substantially since their initial conception. On the SNS Facebook, there are 901 million active users and counting (Facebook, 2012). One activity that individuals partake in on SNSs is social surveillance. Social surveillance within SNSs is the monitoring of other individuals within the network (Marx, 2004; Steinfeld, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008). Within the SNS Facebook, social surveillance may manifest itself through browsing individuals’ status updates, viewing content on an individuals’ profiles, or perusing photo albums attached to profiles. Research illustrates that SNS users often lurk or employ social surveillance on others within the network (Joinson, 2008; Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfeld, 2006; Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009).

This social surveillance may be a result of the anonymity afforded to a user within computer-mediated communication (CMC). While research has shed light on the commonality of social surveillance, it has not addressed how surveyor-perceived anonymity affects social surveillance. On a SNS like Facebook, users do not need to question their ability to survey anonymously, as it is a part of the platform, but not all networks follow this protocol. OkCupid, a free, popular online dating site takes a different approach. When users visit each other’s profiles, the profile owners are made aware of the identity of visitors and the time of each visit (OkCupid, 2011a). Additionally, a user’s home page displays a list of those users that visited their profile. A
user can choose to anonymously survey other profiles, but he or she is unable to discover which users viewed their own profile. Because these networks differ in their approach towards anonymity, it may be that the practice of surveillance also differs.

Within the current examination, anonymity is considered a function of selective self-presentation. Selective self-presentation, as described within the hyperpersonal model of CMC (Walther, 1996), is the ability for an individual to carefully create and manage one’s identity due to the reduced cues available within the medium. The profile author has been of primary concern when studying selective self-presentation within SNSs (Hancock & Toma, 2009; Strano, 2008; Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008). Instead, this study seeks to examine anonymity as a form of a profile surveyor’s selective self-presentation.

In order to better understand the role of anonymity within a SNS, this study includes differing interpersonal surveillance goals, or objectives and how these objectives may impact the extent to which the user socially surveys. Philips and Spitzberg’s (2010) SNS affordance dimension model acknowledges that users have varying objectives when using a SNS. One’s objective may be to affect their relationships to others or their objective may be instrumental, in which a particular discrete outcome is desired.

Thus, this paper will examine how anonymity may affect social surveillance as a function of selective self-presentation and how one’s interpersonal objective may affect this process. This paper offers a review of work that has addressed anonymity and social surveillance within CMC, details the experiment conducted for examining the effects of
surveyor-perceived anonymity on social surveillance and SNS uses, and offers the results and a discussion on the study.

*Social Surveillance*

CMC offers individuals methods of gathering information that are not feasible within face-to-face communication (Ramirez, Walther, Burgoon, & Sunnafrank, 2002). SNSs like Facebook exemplify the ease of gathering information on other users (Tokunaga, 2011), and the use of Facebook for such activities has become a common practice of social surveillance (Joinson, 2008; Lampe et al., 2006; Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009).

Social surveillance is tracking the activities of users to which an individual is connected. (Marx, 2004; Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008). Within a SNS like Facebook, the activities tracked through social surveillance can include examining others’ pictures, “wall” postings from “friends”, status updates, and responses to comments. Social surveillance has also been referred to as interpersonal electronic surveillance (Tokunaga, 2011), social browsing (Lampe et al., 2006), participatory surveillance (Albrechtslund, 2008), and peer-to-peer surveillance (Andrejevic, 2005). In addition, social surveillance has colloquially been referred to as “Facebook stalking” (Lewis & West, 2009). Rather than depicting social surveillance as close observation of someone that is suspect, it is the process of gaining information about others (Marx, 2004).

The precursor to social surveillance activities within SNSs is the practice of lurking within online discussion boards and similar online communities. Before the
popularity of SNSs, Nonnecke and Preece (2000) found that readers of email-based
discussion lists often lurked. Results indicated that lurkers made up 45.5% of health
support discussion lists and 82% of software support discussion lists.

Though trends of lurking and social surveillance are similar, online communities
and discussion boards differ from SNSs. Discussion boards are often made up of
individuals that do not have a connection prior to the discussion board. Interpersonal
relationships often develop out of these online discussion boards (Parks & Floyd, 1996).
SNSs like Facebook are typically made up of existing interpersonal connections (boyd &
Ellison, 2008). This difference affects the nature of lurking. While one may lurk on a
discussion board to gain insight on a particular topic, the information acquired when an
individual lurks on a SNS is about a specific person or persons.

Social surveillance may serve several functions. Individuals use surveillance
everyday to “monitor the world around us” (Shoemaker, 1996 pp. 32). Individuals survey
for anything that may be out of the ordinary, as it may pose a potential threat
(Shoemaker, 1996). Aside from everyday surveillance, when meeting new people or
beginning a new interpersonal relationship, individuals use social surveillance strategies
to learn more about others (Antheunis, Valkenburg, & Peter, 2010; Gibbs, Ellison, & Lai,
2011). Heightened emotional states such as jealousy can also increase social surveillance
practices (Muise, Christofides, & Desmarais, 2009). Surveillance can also become
routine. When individuals incorporate SNSs into their daily routine, they are more likely
to survey their romantic partner (Tokunaga, 2011).
Strategies for surveying within CMC may differ given the relationship and context. Ramirez and colleagues (2002) proposed a conceptual model for examining how individuals seek social information using CMC. This model describes four types of information seeking strategies within CMC: active (conversing with a third party), passive (observing), interactive (conversing with a target), and extractive (Internet searching). Most directly related to social surveillance are passive strategies. Passive strategies require unobtrusive observation of a target (Berger & Bradac, 1982). Antheunis et al. (2010) found that when meeting new people, active, passive, and interactive strategies were all utilized within SNSs, but passive strategies were used most often. Research has also addressed information seeking strategies used by online daters to gain information about potential matches (Gibbs et al., 2011). This study found that interactive strategies were utilized most often, but passive strategies were also used at a similar rate.

Interviews into “Facebook stalking” revealed that users were hesitant to admit to the practice, especially those who indicated that they had spent long hours doing so (Lewis & West, 2009). Some respondents indicated that when using Facebook to “stalk”, “it was not ‘cool’ to admit to being a heavy user” (Lewis & West, 2009, pp. 1215). Even though this negative perception of social surveillance exists, research has illustrated the clear existence of these trends. One of the most common uses of Facebook is for social surveillance, second only to keeping in touch with friends (Joinson, 2008). Similarly, Pempek et al. (2009) found that almost 70% of college student participants reported looking at or reading others’ profiles five to seven days per week, yet only 25% of respondents reported posting on others’ Facebook walls this often.
Users report that they employ social surveillance, and in turn, these users expect similar actions by other users. It has been found that individuals do anticipate that peers will view their profile (Lampe et al. 2006). Lampe and colleagues concluded that 69% of respondents expected that total strangers that were also students at their large university, would view their profiles.

To date, research into the process of social surveillance, and the factors that affect it, has received little attention from researchers. Rao, Gau, and Ding (2008) examined differences in levels of verbal and affective intimacy in surveyors and posters on the Microsoft SNS, Wallop. Affective intimacy refers to the readily expression of emotions, whereas verbal intimacy refers to self-disclosure. They found that surveyors have significantly lower levels of both affective and verbal intimacy. The authors concluded that these results suggest that SNS surveyors do not believe that their socio-emotional needs will be met even if they post to the site, thus they only observe.

To date, research on social surveillance has demonstrated its trends and examined factors that impact its use, but it has failed to examine what factors within SNSs facilitate the employment of social surveillance. Surveyor-perceived anonymity may be the facilitator for these trends. Examining the hyperpersonal model of CMC, particularly its suggestion of selective self-presentation, researching and theorizing on anonymity, and interpersonal goals associated with using an SNS can help to explain the role of anonymity in social surveillance within SNSs.

*Hyperpersonal model*
The hyperpersonal model of CMC (Walther, 1996) explains that such communication affords four unique functions: a receiver’s idealized perception, a sender’s selective self-presentation, strategic selection of channels, and feedback between the sender and receiver (Walther, 1996). These elements of CMC are also present within SNSs. For the purposes of the current investigation, the affordance of selective self-presentation will be thoroughly examined.

According to the hyperpersonal model, the reduced cues available within CMC allow individuals to selectively present their identity to others. This aspect of the hyperpersonal model extends Goffman’s (1959) notion of presenting a socially desirable self into CMC. The absence of the physical “self” affords malleability to the “self” that one chooses to present. Walther (2007) revisited selective self-presentation and outlined the specific affordances offered by CMC that enhance selective self-presentation. CMC is editable, meaning that one can carefully construct messages. Individuals can spend as much time as they desire constructing and editing their messages. Additionally, individuals do not need to worry about physical nonverbal communication or involuntary nonverbal cues within CMC and can devote more effort to the self they choose to present.

Sender selective self-presentation is often examined within the context of a SNS profile owner because one can carefully construct their self-presentation by editing and structuring the information posted to the site. Analyzing Facebook profiles, Zhao, Grasmuck, and Martin (2008) found that individuals do selectively self-present using Facebook. In their analysis, the authors focused on the amount of photos, friends, and “interests” a user had, as well as analyzing the narrative “about you” section of a user’s
Facebook profile. From this examination, they concluded that users tend to display more socially desirable “self” through their Facebook profiles. The socially desirable themes noted by the authors were popularity (number of friends, groups joined, and wall posts), well roundedness (variety of interests), and thoughtfulness (“about you” statements).

Research into self-presentation and online dating profiles illustrates that individuals often enhance their profiles (Hancock & Toma, 2009). By examining photographs, Hancock and Toma extended selective self-presentation to more than just the alterations available to text-based CMC such as editing. The analysis revealed significant inaccuracies between profile photographs and an individual’s current appearance, thus concluding that individuals tend to self-enhance profile photos.

As illustrated, research has generally investigated the sender as the profile owner, but for the purposes of the current examination, selective self-presentation is applied to the profile surveyor. To date, there is little research that approaches selective self-presentation in this way, but prior research on the affordance of selective self-presentation has manipulated the context of the examination (e.g. photographs; Hancock & Toma, 2009). The reduced cue environment of CMC is what allows an individual to choose the information he or she would like to present (Walther, 1996). Given that SNSs like Facebook affords a user the ability to view others’ profiles without identification, the complete elimination of cues on the part of the sender can function as a form of surveyor-selective self-presentation. Because individuals place importance on maintaining positive self-presentation (Goffman, 1959), there is no threat to one’s self-presentation when
anonymously socially surveying, because the target of the surveillance is unaware of the action. This elimination of cues, or anonymity, allows one to maintain a positive self-presentation because the “self” is essentially not presented. Conversely, if one was identified while surveying, this may negatively affect one’s self-presentation, as a profile owner may consider the surveillance as an invasion of privacy or “creepy” behavior.

*Anonymity*

The relationship between the hyperpersonal model’s explanation of selective self-presentation and anonymity has yet to be examined. In order to better understand the importance of this association, theory on anonymity within CMC, examples of anonymity in SNSs, and research on the concept is beneficial.

In his seminal piece on theorizing anonymity, Scott (1998) offers several propositions. This theory, like much of the research on anonymity, focuses on the transmitted message, which is not present within the act of social surveillance, as a surveyor only observes. Even so, three of this theory’s propositions are of importance to the current examination. First, a source is more likely to attempt anonymity when anonymity can be achieved with relative ease. In the case of a SNS, if one is aware of the platform’s capabilities in regards to anonymity, he or she will understand the simplicity or difficulty of surveying anonymously. In addition, anonymity can be effectively maintained if the channel used limits the ability of being detected. This is also achieved through knowledge of the particular SNS platform. Finally, when an individual’s method of communicating anonymously is successful, an individual is likely to utilize the same
method again. Thus, as trends illustrate, individuals are often repeat offenders of social surveillance within SNSs (Pempek et al., 2009).

Prior to the popularity of SNSs, Scott (1998) stated that full anonymity within day-to-day life is quite rare. Today, the frequency of this type of interaction has changed. Social surveillance on Facebook is constantly conducted through anonymity. Within the free online dating network OkCupid, anonymity is an option. If a free-of-charge user wants to know who has visited their profile, he or she must browse others’ profiles “anonymously”, or identified. A user may browse anonymously, but that user gives up their ability to view their list of visitors (OkCupid, 2011a). In 2009, OkCupid added the “A-List” feature, which costs users a monthly fee (OkCupid, 2011b). The feature allows a user to browse anonymously and still be provided a list of the individuals that visit their profile (Evans, 2009). Even further, in 2011, OkCupid added an additional feature that removed the “A-Lister” title from a user’s profile, providing such users undetectable anonymity privileges (Evans, 2011). As a result, OkCupid is profiting by offering “anonymous anonymity”. “A-Listers” have benefited from anonymity as well, as it serves as a useful function on this website. Given that the nature of online dating sites is to meet potential mates, there is a strong concern for positive self-presentation. A user would not want to be labeled an “OkCupid stalker”. OkCupid’s optional anonymity changes the nature of surveillance within this network.

Research indicates that anonymity within CMC may serve a unique function. Participants that anonymously answered questionnaires through the Internet responded with significantly less socially desirable answers than participants who responded
anonymously on pen and paper questionnaires (Joinson, 1999). These results illustrate that anonymity offline and anonymity online differ, in that online anonymity may have stronger effects than its offline counterpart. Overall, research on anonymity has examined its effects, but it has not examined the unique role it may play in facilitating social surveillance.

Anonymity is likely to affect the thoroughness of socially surveying. One aspect of this thoroughness is the amount of time a viewer or surveyor will spend on a profile. The more time one spends examining a profile, the more information that surveyor will inevitably glean about the profile owner. It is likely that both the profile surveyor and profile owner are aware of this basic understanding. Thus, a profile owner may find lengthy investigations of their profile by others as questionable or suspect, which will in turn give them a negative impression of a profile surveyor. In an attempt to maintain a positive self-presentation, a profile surveyor would not want to spend an extended period of time on the owner’s profile. The following hypothesis is offered,

H1: When identified, a profile surveyor will spend less time examining a profile than when a surveyor is anonymous.

While selective self-presentation and anonymity help to explain the act of social surveillance, objectives for using a SNS may further explain this relationship. Phillips and Spitzberg (2010) examined the affordances of SNSs and forwarded a model of SNS
affordance dimensions. Objective, which is one of the dimensions, addresses the interpersonal goals of SNS users.

For the purposes of the current investigation, two objectives, instrumental and relational of the objective dimension of the SNS affordance dimension model will be considered. Clark and Delia (1979) explained that relational communication contains activity that pertains to goals. A goal, or objective may fit into three dimensions: instrumental, relational, and identity management. The initial conception of these goals was based on actual interaction between two individuals, rather than virtual interaction with the selected-self displayed within a SNS profile and another individual. Phillips and Spitzberg (2011) forwarded theses goals into SNS such that an objective refers to the purpose the SNS serves for the user, no matter if the user is a viewer or an author of a profile.

As explained by Clark and Delia (1979), an instrumental goal is one that requires another individual to provide a response related to a specific goal. Within an SNS, an instrumental objective is the use of a SNS for a specific task or purpose to achieve a particular and distinct outcome such as discovering a user’s favorite movie or wishing another user of the SNS “happy birthday” (Phillips & Spitzberg, 2011).

A relational goal is any communicative act between two people that involves maintaining or establishing a relationship (Clark & Delia, 1979). Within a SNS, a relational objective occurs when one attempts to alter the relationship between the profile author and the profile viewer (Phillips & Spitzberg, 2011). For example, an individual
may be romantically interested in another user and attempt to convey their feelings using a SNS, or an individual may use a SNS to search for a potential mate.

In addition to the use of a SNS for the purposes of accomplishing an interpersonal goal, anonymity or the loss of anonymity is expected to be an important and significant factor when socially surveying to achieve an interpersonal goal. Given that anonymity serves as a very reduced-cue form of selective self-presentation, it may function as a facilitator of social surveillance within SNSs. Expanding upon the hyperpersonal model, if the function of anonymity was removed from a SNS, the act of social surveillance may change, and thus it is an important consideration when examining the use of SNSs for purpose of social surveillance.

When socially surveying, the content that appears on a profile page is both the authorship of the profile owner and the profile owner’s SNS “friends”. Both types of content impact the impressions gleaned from a profile. To better understand the complex interplay between the types of content, the authors of the content, and the impressions formed from the content, additional literature on the topic is offered.

When creating a SNS profile, individuals carefully choose the images and content that appears on this page in order to maintain a well-manicured presentation of the self (Zhao et al., 2008; Hancock & Toma, 2009). Strano (2008) found that the two most popular considerations when selecting a profile picture were an individual’s perception that he or she was eliciting physical attractiveness or social attractiveness. Both of these reasons are attempts to offer positively valenced information. Additionally, research on SNSs has found that positively valenced information affects impression formation. The
attractiveness of one’s profile photo was found to impact a profile viewer’s willingness to initiate a friendship with the profile owner (Wang, Moon, Kwon, Evans, & Stefanone, 2009). Wang and colleagues (2009) found that both male and female participants were more willing to initiate friendships with profile owners of the opposite sex that displayed an attractive picture.

User profiles also contain photos beyond those used as profile pictures. The profile owner may post these photos, or the owner may be “tagged” by someone else in photo. Users struggle with identity and impression management with these photos as well (Besmer & Lipford, 2010). Users may “untag” a photo because it is unattractive or depicts them doing socially unattractive activities (Besmer & Lipford, 2010). While a user can “untag” a photo and remove the connection to their profile, he or she cannot remove it from the SNS entirely, as it still exists in the photo poster’s album.

While some may “untag” these photos, one study found that college students’ Facebook photos and textual content often reference drinking and “partying” (Kolek & Saunders, 2008). This study found that over 38% of participants’ profiles have textual content that positively referenced drinking, and over 53% of participants’ profiles contained a photo of someone drinking. Thus, one profile owner may think that photos of he or she drinking and text related to drinking are negatively valenced and socially unattractive, while another profile owner may view this content as positively valenced and socially attractive. The perceived audience is what differs between these two perspectives. Drinking may be perceived as socially attractive to other college students, whereas, it may be perceived as socially unattractive to potential employers.
Content on a user’s Facebook page that is generated by other users can have a significant effect on a profile surveyor’s perception of a user. Users cannot control all information posted by others within the network. Other users can post damaging and slanderous content on users’ Facebook walls (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007). On Facebook, when commenting on a user’s wall, the commenter’s profile picture is shown next to their comment. The physical attractiveness of a profile commenter was found to have a significant effect on the perceived physical attractiveness of the profile owner (Walther, Van Der Heide, Kim, & Westerman, 2008).

This other-generated content cannot be as carefully managed as the content that appears on a user’s information page within their profile. When a user surveys another user’s page, he or she is first shown the manicured information page of a profile, but the additional information attached the profile houses the majority of the other-generated and lesser-maintained content of a profile. The profile information page, which contains a user’s work, education, interests, likes, and contact information, can be carefully manicured by the profile owner. The additional information linked to the profile may not be as thoughtfully cared for. Though a user can delete others’ comments and “untag” photos in which the user is identified, users rarely remove comments (Walther et al., 2008) or “untag” photos (Tokunaga, 2011).

Studying information seeking strategies, Antheunis, Valkenburg, and Peter (2010) examined social attraction in initial interactions on the SNS Hyves, a popular SNS in the Netherlands. The Hyves’ platform is similar to that of OkCupid and Facebook. Like OkCupid, when sharing information on this site, it is visible to everyone unless a privacy
filter is set up. If one sets their privacy settings to be visible to only friends, this user can only see friends’ profiles and information. Like Facebook, social surveillance of those within one’s network is anonymous. Results from this study indicate that it is not the amount of information a user obtains from a profile owner that increases the profile owner’s social attraction; it is the valence (positive vs. negative) of the information. That is, when information was perceived to have a positive valence, social attraction increased. When information seeking, positively valenced information leads to more social attraction, but if anonymity was taken away, the degree of information seeking would likely be affected, and in turn, the effects of the valenced information may differ.

Depending on a user’s objective, the extent of information seeking may differ. If one is utilizing a SNS to tackle what Phillips and Spitzberg (2010) refer to as a relational objective such as finding a potential mate, he or she will be more concerned with reducing uncertainty about that user than if the user’s objective is instrumental, such as discovering another user’s favorite movie. Even so, it is predicted that anonymity or the loss of anonymity is likely to further corrupt the information seeking process for both instrumental and relational objectives.

Because an objective may change the nature of uncertainty reduction and information seeking, two objectives, relational and instrumental, will be examined. The degree of identifiability is predicted to affect both objectives, but identifiability will prevent extended surveillance of a profile. The main Facebook profile is carefully manicured by the owner and depicts a socially desirable self (Zhao et al., 2008). As a
result, an identified surveyor may base their impressions on a profile owner from this carefully presented material.

The methodological choices of the current examination will enhance the disparity between the profile content that an author may carefully construct (the information page) and the content that is less prudently managed and created by other users (the “wall” and “photos” pages). Given that profile authors are less apt to manicure the content present on their wall (Walther et al., 2008) and photos pages (Tokunaga, 2011), this content will be portrayed as physically and socially unattractive, whereas the content that appears on an author’s information page is deliberately presented as socially appealing (Zhao et al., 2008) and photographically attractive (Strano, 2008), this content will be portrayed as physically and socially attractive.

If an objective, such as an instrumental objective does not require extended surveillance, it is hypothesized that substantial investigation beyond the main profile page will not take place. Identifiability is also predicted to impact the extent of profile exploration. Because identifiability may deter a surveyor from thoroughly examining a profile for concern that their behavior may be perceived as socially undesirable, identified surveyor’s whose objective is instrumental are predicted to be the least likely thoroughly explore the profile.

When an objective does require additional investigation, such as a relational objective, which for the purposes of this study is to get to know the profile owner, in-depth investigation of a profile is more likely, but identifiability is predicted to corrupt this exploration. If a surveyor perceives that the profile owner knows their on-screen
behavior, and this may impact a future interaction with the profile owner, the surveyor will be less apt to continue to thoroughly explore the profile. Thus, it is predicted that when identified and given a relational objective, surveyors will explore the profile more than those who are identified and given an instrumental task, but less than those that survey the profile anonymously.

When a profile surveyor perceives anonymity, he or she may survey more extensively. When an objective is instrumental it may require less thorough exploration than when an objective is relational. It is predicted that the third least thorough exploration of a profile will occur when a surveyor perceives that their behavior is anonymous and their objective is instrumental. When an individual perceives anonymity and has a relational objective, he or she is able to browse a profile and achieve their relational objective without any threat to their self-presentation, thus it is predicted that individuals under this condition will most thoroughly explore a profile.

The information attached to a profile that may be uncovered through lengthier surveillance such as “wall” postings and additional photos may not be maintained as carefully as a user’s main profile page, as other users can make negative comments that may alter a surveyor’s impressions (Mazer et al., 2007). Therefore using attractiveness to measure these conditional differences it is hypothesized that,

H2: The objective of a profile surveyor and the attractiveness ratings of a profile owner will differ such that a) social and b) physical attractiveness ratings will be the most positive when the objective is instrumental and the profile surveyor
perceives identifiability, the second most positive attractiveness ratings will occur when the objective is relational and the profile surveyor perceives identifiability, the third most positive attractiveness rating will occur when the objective is instrumental and the profile surveyor perceives anonymity, and the least positive attractiveness rating will occur when the objective is relational and the profile surveyor perceives anonymity.

Finally, because attractiveness ratings should differ as a result of the depth of exploration into the profile, the number of pages that one views should mediate the relationship between the level of identifiability and objective given and the attractiveness ratings of the profile owner. The more pages one looks at will result in additional information about the profile owner. Walther and colleagues (2009) found that other-generated content pertaining to the attractiveness of a Facebook profile owner such as “wall” post, which is not easily manipulated by the profile owner, is perceived to be more credible than the profile owner’s description of their attractiveness. Further exploration into a profile would result in more opportunities to read other-generated statements and view other-generated photos. Additionally, for the purposes of the study, other-generated content and the content that exists beyond the information page and profile pictures is negatively valenced. Given Antheunis et al.’s (2008) findings that the valance of the information alters the perceived attractiveness of the profile owner, additional negatively valenced content should further induce unattractiveness ratings. Thus, the depth of exploration into a profile, or the number of pages that one surveys is an important
mediator on the surveyor’s perception of the profile owner’s attractiveness. It is hypothesized that,

H3: The relationship between a) social and b) physical attractiveness ratings and the identifiability and objective conditions are mediated by the number of screenshots examined.
Chapter 2: Method

Participants and design

Participants ($N = 104$) were undergraduates at Ohio State University. Participants received course credit for participating in this study. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of four conditions. In each of these conditions, stimuli were altered by the objective, that is, whether it is instrumental or relational objective, and whether the stimuli were viewed anonymously or identified. The instrumental objective of the experiment will be for the participant to find out the favorite movie of another participant that he or she expects to be interacting with, whereas the relational objective will be to get to know the “other participant” using their Facebook profile. The experiment was a 2 (instrumental objective or relational objective) x 2 (anonymous viewing or identified viewing).

Stimuli

The experimental stimuli consisted of screenshots of a Facebook profile of a female individual who presumably attended the same university as the participants. This study used screenshots of a Facebook profile, which existed prior the recent Facebook formatting change, known as “Timeline”. Each participant viewed the screenshots of the individual and anticipated interacting with the individual during the experiment. The gender of the profile owner was kept constant as a female. The screenshots of the profile contained profile pictures that elicited attractiveness. Attractive profile pictures were used
because users select pictures in which they perceive themselves as socially and physically attractive (Strano, 2008). Based on the same logic, the content of the Facebook information page elicited social and physical attractiveness. The content on a user’s information page includes, education, a brief narrative section, favorite TV shows, movies, and books.

Photographs and content connected to the profile will be altered to elicit unattractiveness based on methods similar to Walther and associates (2008) and Walther, Van Der Heide, Hamel, and Shulman (2009). In order to view additional photographs, a participant would click on the photos section of the profile. In order to view additional textual content, the participant would click on the “wall” tab of the profile. The textual cues on the Facebook “wall” page include “friends,” comments from other users, and the profile owner’s recent activity on other pages. The textual cues will be altered to elicit unattractiveness.

The content on the Facebook profile screenshots differed in levels of social and physical attractiveness. The content used within the profile was greatly enhanced to ensure that attractiveness differences would be as successful as possible. The “info” tab functions as the main profile page for a user when the profile surveyor is not “friends” with the user on the Facebook network. A Facebook user can carefully construct this page. Additionally, through this information page, Facebook users attempt to create socially desirable depictions of their selves (Zhao et al., 2008). Thus, to accurately represent this behavior, the content featured on the Facebook profile used within this study featured socially desirable content, specifically geared to elicit physical and social
attractiveness. The content that appeared on this page contained popular TV shows and a popular movie. Additionally, the profile acknowledged the profile owner’s interests in “working out” and “going out” to depict physical and social attractiveness. The favorite quotations section featured, “Don’t worry, be happy”. Finally, the “about you” section stated, “I love to go out and have a good time with my friends, but I also try to devote a lot of my time to studying. My friends are my life. We always have a great time partying, working out, and hanging out!”

The “wall” tab of a Facebook profile contains posts from other users as well as recent activity related to the profile owner and is less managed by the profile owner. The content featured on this page was in the form of “wall” posts from the profile owner’s “friends” as well as status updates from the profile owner. Often other users will respond to a profile owner’s status updates. This content featured socially and physically unattractive content. Appendix A provides a sampling of the content that appeared on this page as well as the unattractive photos that appeared on the “photo” tab of the profile.

Tasks

Two tasks were used to operationalize the instrumental and relational objectives outlined in Phillips and Spitzberg (2010). Phillips and Spitzberg (2010) state that, “instrumental objectives ask whether the communication is functioning to achieve a particular, objective, discrete outcome” (p. 349). In this study, the instrumental objective was thus operationalized through the task of uncovering the perceived other participant’s favorite movie. This information is located on the “info” tab, which serves as the main page of a Facebook profile. While many tasks may qualify as an instrumental objective,
this task was chosen because the information would be readily available on most profiles. One study found that favorite movies were the type of information most likely to be filled in on a Facebook profile, with over 70% of participant’s listing their favorite movie (Pempek et al., 2009). It is a task that may regularly be conducted by SNS users, and thus offers more generalizability.

With relational objectives, “the function is to alter the relationship between author and viewers” (Phillips & Spitzberg, 2010, p. 349). The examples offered by the authors of the model include using SNS to search for potential romantic partners and efforts to increase intimacy with a particular user of the SNS. In this study, the task that will be used to operationalize relational objectives is to get to know the “profile owner” through screenshots of their Facebook profile. Getting to know the “profile owner” using screenshots of their Facebook profile for the purpose of preparing for an upcoming interaction with the individual can function as a relational objective because the participant will seek to change the relationship between the profile owner and their self, who is the profile viewer. This task serves as a way to increase platonic relational closeness and familiarly with the “other participant”, and thus satisfies the definition of a relational objective. To complete this task participants may view various aspects of the Facebook profile screenshots.

*Experimental Stimuli and procedure*

There will be four conditions: anonymous or identified viewing, as well as instrumental or relational tasks. After randomly assigning participants to conditions, a research assistant prompted the participants. All participants received the following
information from a research assistant. The participant were informed that during the first step of the experiment he or she should prepare to interact with the owner of a Facebook profile of which he or she will be viewing. The participant is told to prepare for this interaction in order to induce anticipation of future interaction, though no interaction will actually occur. Additionally, the participant was informed that he or she was to complete one of the two tasks described above. Continuing, the research assistant explained how to navigate through the screenshots of the Facebook profile, which were placed in file folders similar to that of Facebook. Participants were told to exit out of the files folders once they felt that they had completed their task.

Before continuing to the Facebook profile page, participants in the experimental condition of identified Facebook viewing received additional information from the research assistant. The participant were told that there was a computer in another room that displays a real-time feed of exactly what the participant is examining on their computer. To further induce the plausibility of identified viewing, the participant was shown the room and the computer with real-time feed.

After the participants completed their task, they were asked to complete a questionnaire. Participants were then debriefed.

**Dependent measures**

The dependent variables used in this study physical and social attractiveness, as the experiment altered the levels of attractiveness of the content depicted within the screenshots of the Facebook profile. McCroskey and McCain’s (1974) Interpersonal Attraction Scale (IAS) was used to measure these variables. The IAS has been used
across a variety of contexts and has strong face validity (McCroskey, McCroskey, & Richmond, 2006). Many researchers have reported high levels of reliability with the IAS (Ayres, 1989; Brandt; 1979; McCroskey & McCain, 1974) including within CMC (Walther et al., 2008). Two dimensions of the scale, physical attractiveness and social attractiveness were used. These dimensions of the scale are each made up of six questions measured on a five-point scale that ranged from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (5). The social attractiveness (α = .83) dimension of the scale contains items that gauge a respondent’s interest in friendship with the subject, whereas the physical attractiveness (α = .80) dimension of the scale includes items focused on the physical appearance of the subject. After viewing the Facebook profile screenshots, participants self-reported the attractiveness of the profile owner. For the purpose of this study, the attractiveness ratings serve as a way to delineate the content that a participant examined.

The number of screenshots that a participant examined was also recorded (M = 26.21; SD = 16.85). This variable was calculated by counting each time a participant opened a screenshot. The amount of seconds a participant spent examining the profile screenshots was documented (M = 204.77, SD = 112.89). To calculate this variable, the moment a participant first moved the mouse to begin surveying to when the participant stopped moving the mouse or closed the screenshots was recorded.

Demographic variables

Demographic variables including sex, age, and ethnicity were also measured through the post-test questionnaire. The sample consisted of 45.2% males and 54.8% females. The age of participants ranged from 18-34, with 85.6% of participants being
between 18-22 years old. The majority of participants reported their ethnicity as “Caucasian/European/White” (74%). The remaining of participants reported their ethnicity as “African/African-American/Black” (7.7%), “Asian/Asian-American” (2.5%), “Latino/Hispanic” (1.9%), “Other” (2.9%), and “Pacific Islander” (1%).

*Stimulus material check*

The accuracy of the attractiveness content of the Facebook profile screenshots was pretested using a separate sample made up of 25 undergraduates. The sample included 12 males and 13 females. In order to examine the effectiveness of the stimulus, 13 respondents were given screenshots of the Facebook profile that contained socially and physically attractive content while 12 respondents were given the screenshots that contained socially and physically unattractive content. Respondents self-reported the attractiveness of the individual depicted in the screenshots using the social attractiveness ($\alpha = .91$) dimension of the IAS and the physical attractiveness ($\alpha = .92$) dimension of the IAS. Results indicated that the socially attractive content was significantly more socially attractive, ($M = 3.64, SD = 0.45$) than the socially unattractive ($M = 2.42, SD = 0.79$) content, $t(23) = 4.84, p < .01, \eta^2 = 0.50$.

Additionally, the more physically attractive ($M = 3.76, SD = 0.46$) content was significantly more attractive than the physically unattractive ($M = 2.46, SD = 0.73$) content, $t(23) = 5.36, p < .01, \eta^2 = 0.56$. 
Chapter 3: Results

Hypothesis 1 predicted that participants that surveyed the profile screenshots identified would spend less time with the screenshots than participants who surveyed the profile screenshots anonymously. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the amount of time spent with the profile screenshots when viewed identified and anonymously. Results indicate that when identified ($M = 180.37; SD = 93.81$), surveyors spend significantly less time with a profile than when surveyors are anonymous ($M = 228.25; SD = 125.03; t(102) = 2.20, p = .03$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that a) social and b) physical attractiveness ratings would differ based on conditions of identifiability or anonymity and instrumental objective or relational objective such that, attractiveness ratings would be the most positive when the objective is instrumental and the profile surveyor perceives identifiability, the second most positive attractiveness ratings would occur when the objective is relational and the profile surveyor perceives identifiability, the third most positive attractiveness rating would occur when the objective is instrumental and the profile surveyor perceives anonymity, and the least positive attractiveness rating would occur when the objective is relational and the profile surveyor perceives anonymity. A planned-contrast analysis was used to test for the means pattern that was predicted. This pattern was as follows: the condition in which participants were given an instrumental objective and informed of
identifiability were given a contrast weight of +2, the condition in which participants were given a relational objective and informed of identifiability received a contrast weight of +1, the condition in which participants were given an instrumental objective and were to assume anonymity was assigned a contrast weight of -1, and the condition in which participants were given a relational objective and were to assume anonymity was given a contrast weight of -2.

For H2a, social attractiveness, the results indicated that the predicted pattern was approaching significance but inconsistent with the data $t(100) = 1.64, p = .05$, (one-tailed; see table 1 for means and standard deviations of self-reported attractiveness ratings). Although the data were consistent with predicted pattern, an analysis of residual variance indicated that there was substantial error left, $F(2,100) = 3.63, p = .04$, therefore the data were not completely consistent with H2a. The predicted direct effect was not found.

Results of H2b, which predicted the physical attractiveness ratings pattern indicated that the predicted pattern was significant $t(100) = 2.13, p = .02$, one tailed. To confirm the pattern, an analysis of residual variance was conducted and consistent with hypothetical expectations, results indicated that the residual variance was not large, $F(2,100) = .89, p = .41$, thus the predicted direct effect was found and the data were consistent with hypothesis 2b.
Table 1: Means and standard deviations of self-reported social and physical attractiveness ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Contrast Weight</th>
<th>Social Attractiveness</th>
<th>Physical Attractiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifiable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifiable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To address Hypothesis 3, which predicted that the relationship between attractiveness ratings and the identifiability and objective conditions is mediated by the number of screenshots examined, an assessment of the mediating role of the number of screenshots examined was conducted using the Hunter and Hamilton (1992) statistical program Path. This method requires three steps to assess whether the data fit a simple mediation model, wherein the conditions predict number of pages viewed and the number of pages viewed predicts impressions of attractiveness. First, each predicted path within the mediation must be statistically significant. Thus, the correlation between the experimental conditions and number of pages viewed as well as the correlation between the number of pages viewed and impressions of attractiveness must be significant. Second, the missing linkages between the variables in the mediation must only contain small errors. Third, the overall model must not contain much error.
Hypothesis 3a, which predicted that the association between social attractiveness ratings and the conditions derived from the instrumental and relational objectives and the degree of identifiability would be mediated by the number of screenshots examined, was tested using the method described above. The correlations used to test the simple mediation model were derived from the contrasts used in hypothesis 2, as the rationale for the contrasts used also applies to the mediation. Using the statistical computer program Plan (Hunter & Hamilton, 1992) the simple mediation model was tested. The test met the requirements of all three steps of the method, as the correlations in the model were significant from zero, the missing linkages contained minimal error, and the overall model contained minimal error (See Table 2 for correlations). The association between the experimental conditions and social attractiveness ratings is mediated by the number of screenshots examined, as the simple mediation model is significant, $X^2(1, N = 100) = 0.43, p = .51$. Hypothesis 3a is supported. The data were consistent with predicted indirect effect.

Following the same analysis conducted for hypothesis 3a, hypothesis 3b predicted that the relationship between physical attractiveness ratings and the objective and identifiability conditions would be mediated by the number of screenshots examined. The test failed at step one of the Hunter and Hamilton (1992) method, as the association between the number of screenshots viewed and the physical attractiveness ratings was not significant. Results indicate that the meditational model that predicted that the relationship between the experimental conditions and physical attractiveness ratings is not significantly mediated by the number of screenshots viewed $X^2(1, N = 100) =$
1.82, \( p = .18 \). Thus, hypothesis 3b is not supported. The data were inconsistent with the predicted indirect effect.

Table 2 Correlations between experimental conditions, number of screenshots viewed, and attractiveness ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables correlated</th>
<th>Social attractiveness</th>
<th>Physical attractiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Condition-Number of screenshots viewed</td>
<td>-.36**</td>
<td>-.36**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition-Attractiveness ratings</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of screenshots viewed-Attractiveness ratings</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One-tailed: * \( p \leq .05 \). ** \( p \leq .01 \)
Chapter 4: Discussion

The current study tested the role that perceived anonymity plays in accomplishing an objective that is reliant on social surveillance on a SNS. Using stimuli that sought to differentiate high and low attractiveness, the experiment yielded results that support and partially support the hypotheses.

The first hypothesis predicted that surveyors that viewed the profile screenshots with the perception that their on-screen behavior was identified would spend less time examining the profile screenshots than surveyors who perceived that their behavior was anonymous. The results confirm that surveyors will spend less time with the profile if their activity is identifiable to the profile owner.

The second hypothesis predicted that social and physical attractiveness ratings would differ depending on the degree of identifiability and the involvement of a task. It was predicted that participants that were told that their on-screen behavior was visible to the profile owner would rate the profile owner as more socially and physically attractive than participants who viewed the profile screenshots anonymously. More specifically, it was predicted that participants subject to identifiability and whose objective required minimal interaction with the profile screenshots would have the highest ratings followed by those that were given a more involved task and were identifiable. For those participants that viewed the page anonymously, it was predicted that participants with the
low-involvement task would report the third highest ratings of attractiveness, and participants with the more involved task would report the lowest levels of attractiveness.

Results indicated that the predicted pattern was significant for physical attractiveness, but was not significant for social attractiveness. Interestingly, a different pattern emerged for social attractiveness from the data, which suggests that the amount of involvement with a task may be more important than the level of anonymity. Social attractiveness ratings were most negative when a surveyor was given the relational objective. The task used to operationalize the relational objective was to get to know the profile owner. Thus, a pattern driven by a surveyor’s objective rather than their level of identifiability could better explain the results.

Additionally, the third hypothesis predicted that the number of pages a profile surveyor examined would mediate the relationship between attractiveness ratings and the conditions of the experiment. Overall, this hypothesis received partial support. Results indicated that the number of screenshots examined did significantly mediate the association between the experimental conditions and social attractiveness ratings, but the number of screenshots did not significantly mediate the association between these conditions and physical attractiveness ratings.

**Theoretical Implications**

This study has offered new understandings of the role of anonymity within SNSs. The degree of identifiability both directly and indirectly affects the way in which SNS users interact with SNS content. These results indicate that the process of social
surveillance, which is a common use of SNSs (Pempek et al. 2009), will change based on one’s identifiability while surveying other users’ profiles.

Extending the hyperpersonal model (Walther, 1996), this study has argued that the degree of identifiability can be considered a form of surveyor selective self-presentation. By remaining anonymous, a user presents no self when surveying another’s SNS profile, but identifiability while surveying a user’s profile can result in displaying a less socially desirable self, as the profile owner may perceive such behavior as an intrusion. This study’s results illustrate that identifiability while surveying will result in less interaction with the profile, thus it can be forwarded that profile surveyors are aware of the potentially negative impression left by more extensive SNS profile exploration. These findings provide the first initial support for the extension of anonymity as a form of selective self-presentation as explained by the hyperpersonal model.

Additionally, this study may be the first to consider selective-self presentation from the perspective of the profile viewer. Hancock and Toma (2009) extended selective self-presentation, which has mainly focused on text-based content, into photographic content. Together, these studies work to extend the boundaries and explanatory power of selective self-presentation and the hyperpersonal model as a whole.

One’s objective or task was also found to have an important impact on SNS profile surveillance. These findings confirm that individuals’ goals will impact SNS viewing. Phillips and Spitzberg’s (2010) SNS affordance dimension model was not tested during its original conception. This study was able to test each aspect of the model. The model contains three dimensions: objective, surveillance, and valence. Two objectives,
instrumental and relational were tested in this study. The *surveillance* dimension examines the degree to which an author of a profile or a viewer of the profile uses the profile to reduce uncertainty and “check up” on the author. When examining any profile without posting, one participates in social surveillance. The *valence* dimension refers to a user’s perceived positive or negative intent of an action. Valence, is apparent in all interactions (Leary, 1957). Overall this model explains that users employ SNSs to achieve a goal, to “check up” on others, and to maintain a positive online identity,

Given that objective served as a condition of which two objectives instrumental and relational were tested, valence was implicit through the differences in physical and social attractiveness, and surveillance was the nature of the profile examination, there is some support that aspects of the model are present within SNSs. This study can partially confirm that the instrumental and relational objectives of the model, as well as surveillance and valence are relevant and important considerations when using a SNS.

It is important to note that both the level of identifiably and one’s objective play unique and important roles within this relationship. Given that only physical attractiveness significantly followed the predicted pattern, and the means of social attractiveness suggest that the objective may play more of an important role than initially predicted, these results indicate that there is a complex interplay between one’s objective and their level of identifiability while surveying another user’s profile on a SNS.

Finally, the results of the meditational hypothesis offer important insights into both social surveillance and CMC theory. The data suggests that the more screenshots, or aspects of a profile that are examined by a profile surveyor, affects the surveyor’s
perceived social attractiveness of the profile owner. In this study, social unattractiveness was manipulated to increase as a surveyor delved deeper into the profile. Thus, the results logically indicate that the more pages that are examined, the more information a surveyor will gain in regards to the perceived compatibility of the profile owner as a friend.

**Limitations and future research**

One limitation of this study is that the results only partially support the projected pattern of the second hypothesis, which predicted that the experimental condition would affect attractiveness ratings. While the results did conclude that the projected pattern, which hypothesized that the level of identifiability is more important than the surveyor’s objective, accurately and significantly predicted physical attractiveness, the pattern did not significantly predict social attractiveness. Because attractiveness was manipulated within the profile page screenshots to measure the differences between the involvement of a task and the degree of identifiability, it is possible that the Facebook screenshots did not accurately capture social attractiveness and unattractiveness. Kolek and Saunders (2008) found that college student’s Facebook profiles often display positive references to drinking through both photos and textual content. The current study’s results may be due to participants perceiving the socially unattractive cues such as heavy drinking and lack of class attendance as typical or relatable college student behavior and thus self-reporting the social attractiveness ratings differently from the physical attractiveness ratings. Future research should consider manipulating variables other than attractiveness to measure the degree of profile page exploration surveyors’ use in specific situations.
Another limitation of this study is that the self-reported outcome variables of social and physical attractiveness do not give insight into how identifiability specifically affected surveillance. While the results indicate that identifiability did affect the surveillance, what content a participant focused on, as well as how much time a participant spent looking at a specific piece of content, was not examined. Future research should consider using eye-tracking software to hone in on what aspects of a profile an individual will view when subject to identifiability. This technology may allow researchers to better understand how surveillance may differ given a specific task and level of identifiability.

Delineating between objectives and accurately operationalizing objectives is another limitation of this research. The instrumental and relational objectives used in this experiment were operationalized using two tasks. As explained by Phillips and Spitzberg (2010), an objective may take many forms as a task. The instrumental task used in this study, which was to discover the profile owner’s favorite movie, is much different than a task in which one seeks to find the most attractive photo of a profile owner. Both tasks are instrumental in nature, but both tasks uniquely require a different level of interaction and a different type of interaction with a profile. Thus the results of this study could be limited to the specific tasks used in the study, rather than the type of objective as a whole. Future research should operationalize each objective in a variety of ways.

Further research into the role that anonymity plays within SNSs and other types of online communication should be conducted. While this study has illustrated that anonymity can be an important affordance of the SNSs, future research should examine
the strength of its role and additional factors that may impact its role such as individual
traits like the Big Five Inventory (John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008). Situational factors that
may impact surveillance like the type of online network may also benefit from future
research. Anonymity’s role within online networks such as an online dating website, a
business’s employee website, and special interest website should be considered.

Overall the current investigation serves as one of the initial investigations into
anonymity’s role within a SNS. The findings indicate that one’s degree of identifiability
and their interpersonal goal impact how he or she may interact with a profile. Future
research should be conducted to help further identify and understand anonymity’s role
within a SNS.
References


Tokunaga, R. S. (2011). Social networking site or social surveillance site? Understanding the use of interpersonal electronic surveillance in romantic relationships. Computers in Human Behavior, 27(2) 705-713.


Appendix A: Post-test Questionnaire

Instructions: Please answer the following questions

1. Sex (circle): Male Female

2. Age: _____

3. Year in School _______

4. Race/Ethnicity (Check all that apply)
   _____ African/African-American/Black
   _____ American Indian
   _____ Asian/Asian-American
   _____ Caucasian/European/White
   _____ Latino/a
   _____ Pacific Islander
   _____ Other

Instructions: Please consider the Facebook profile screenshots that you just examined.

Please indicate your perceptions of the attractiveness of the owner of the Facebook Profile. On the scale below, please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling the whether you 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, or 5= strongly agree.

1. I think she could be a friend of mine. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I would like to have a friendly chat with her. 1 2 3 4 5
3. It would be difficult to meet and talk with her. 1 2 3 4 5
4. She just wouldn't fit into my circle of friends. 1 2 3 4 5
5. We could never establish a personal friendship with each other. 1 2 3 4 5
6. She would be pleasant to be with. 1 2 3 4 5
7. I think she is quite pretty. 1 2 3 4 5
8. She is somewhat ugly. 1 2 3 4 5
9. She is very sexy looking. 1 2 3 4 5
10. I find her very attractive physically. 1 2 3 4 5
11. I don't like the way she looks. 1 2 3 4 5
12. She is not very good looking. 1 2 3 4 5
13. She is a typical goof off when assigned a job to do. 1 2 3 4 5
14. You could count on her getting the job done. 1 2 3 4 5
15. I have confidence in her ability to get the job done. 1 2 3 4 5
16. If I wanted to get things done I could probably depend on her. 1 2 3 4 5
17. I couldn't get anything accomplished with her. 1 2 3 4 5
18. She would not be good to work with. 1 2 3 4 5

Instructions: Please consider the owner of the Facebook profile screenshots that you just examined. On the scales below, please indicate your feelings about the profile owner.
Please circle a number closer to the word best describing your impression of the individual pictured. The number closer to the word indicates a stronger feeling. For example, the number closest to "Phony" means that you strongly feel this individual is phony, whereas the second number in that row indicates an impression of being phony, but not as strongly. On the other end, the final number closest to "Genuine" indicates strong feelings that this is a genuine person, whereas the second to last number indicates an impression of this individual as genuine, but not as strongly. The middle number indicates no feelings either way.

1) \(\) Intelligent 1 2 3 4 5 Unintelligent

2) \(\) Untrained 1 2 3 4 5 Trained

3) \(\) Cares about me 1 2 3 4 5 Doesn't care about me

4) \(\) Honest 1 2 3 4 5 Dishonest

5) Has my interests at heart 1 2 3 4 5 Doesn't have my interests at heart

6) \(\) Untrustworthy 1 2 3 4 5 Trustworthy

7) \(\) Inexpert 1 2 3 4 5 Expert

8) \(\) Self-centered 1 2 3 4 5 Not self-centered

9) \(\) Concerned with me 1 2 3 4 5 Not concerned with me
10) Honorable 1 2 3 4 5 Dishonorable
11) Informed 1 2 3 4 5 Uninformed
12) Moral 1 2 3 4 5 Immoral
13) Incompetent 1 2 3 4 5 Competent
14) Unethical 1 2 3 4 5 Ethical
15) Insensitive 1 2 3 4 5 Sensitive
16) Bright 1 2 3 4 5 Stupid
17) Phony 1 2 3 4 5 Genuine
18) Not understanding 1 2 3 4 5 Understanding
Appendix B: Stimuli

Figure 1 Screenshot of info tab 1
Figure 2 Screenshot of info tab 2

Figure 3 Screenshot of info tab 3
Figure 4 Screenshot of profile picture 1

Figure 5 Screenshot of profile picture 2
Figure 8 Screenshot of profile picture 5

Figure 9 Screenshot of profile picture 6
Figure 10 Screenshot of profile picture album

Figure 11 Screenshot of wall tab 1
Figure 12 Screenshot of wall tab 2

Figure 13 Screenshot of wall tab 3
Figure 14 Screenshot of wall tab 4

Figure 15 Screenshot of wall tab 5
Figure 16 Screenshot of photos tab

![Screenshot of photos tab](image)

Figure 17 Screenshot of photo 1

![Screenshot of photo 1](image)
Figure 18 Screenshot of photo 2

Figure 19 Screenshot of photo 3
Figure 20 Screenshot of photo 4

Figure 21 Screenshot of photo 5
Figure 22 Screenshot of photo 6

Figure 23 Screenshot of photo 7
Figure 24 Screenshot of photo 8

Figure 25 Screenshot of photo 9
Figure 26 Screenshot of photos album