ABSTRACT

WELCOME TO FACEBOOK:
CHANGING THE BOUNDARIES OF
IDENTITY, COMMUNITY AND DISCLOSURE

This paper examines the online social networks, and the negative implications that have surfaced as a result of misunderstanding the purpose of the website. Using the concepts of identity, community, and disclosure, three real-life Facebook situations are described, discussed, and analyzed. The film, *The Net* is incorporated as a foundational template in discussing the similarities and warnings about the potential risks of online social networks. In addition, this paper examines how Facebook is redefining the areas of communication, identity and community.

WELCOME TO FACEBOOK:

CHANGING BOUNDARIES OF IDENTITY,

COMMUNITY AND INTIMACY

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CHAPTER ONE
ELECTRONIC MEDIA, SOCIAL NETWORKS, *THE NET* AND *FACEBOOK*

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1.1 Introduction

The following analysis about the motion picture *The Net (1995)* can be read as a "cautionary tale" regarding the potential problems that can occur as a result of disclosing too much information about oneself within a social network or the Internet. In *The Net,* Angela Bennett (Sandra Bullock), who lives out her life in a virtual community, has her whole world turned completely upside down when her identity and any evidence proving who she is disappears. Angela is a freelance computer software analyst who does all of her occupational work on her home computers. Aside from work, Angela spends most of her remaining time on the computer. She does everything including shopping, billing and even purchasing food. Her social life is also a part of the computer and the Internet world. In fact, the online communities she belongs to define who she is; they are her identity. Members of the chat rooms she frequents affirm her connections by telling her, "We accept you as one of us. You are one of us." With the exception of her net world contacts, she has completely isolated herself from the rest of the world. The only person she physically communicates with is her mother who lives in an assisted living community due to the onset of Alzheimer's disease. At the beginning of the film, Angela is content with her work and reclusive lifestyle in an electronic domain, believing her virtual existence to be the perfect hiding place.

The day before she goes on her "first vacation in five years," her friend/supervisor, Dale Chessman, whom she only has talked to on the telephone or through her computer, sends her a disk with a program that contains a glitch that he could not figure out. The glitch turns out to contain secret information and a computer virus that immediately enters Angela's computer the moment she inserts the disk. Hessman, who was supposed to meet Angela in person to work out the computer problem, is killed on his way to meet her. Because of the secret disk and the information it contains, her life completely changes. Her once isolated life that she led primarily on the Internet no longer exists. The people who created the secret disk accessed all of her personal and professional information. The disk allowed individuals outside her community to have full access of her life including information available through the online communities,

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chat rooms, and other websites she visited. They in turn deleted everything, leaving absolutely no trace of her true identity. Instead, a new identity, (complete with a large criminal history) is created for her. She goes from being Angela Bennett to being Ruth Meyers. Once her identity is erased and replaced, she spends the rest of the movie fighting to prove who she actually is and reclaiming her identity.

According to Meyrowitz (1985), physical presence was a prerequisite for first-hand experience. But, the evolution of the media has decreased the significance of physical presence in the experience of people and events. In a sense, this is what has occurred with Angela in *The Net*. Her interactions on the Internet and the virtual communities she frequents as broken down the need or necessity for "direct human contact" or the idea of physical presence. With a click of a button, she can communicate with people through virtual communities. This is also the case for Facebook. Through this website, users can interact with one another without the necessity of meeting face-to-face. Meyrowitz argues that one can now be an audience to a social performance without being physically present; one can communicate "directly" with others without meeting in the same place (1). Traditionally, neighborhoods, buildings and rooms have confined people not only physically, but also emotionally and psychologically as well. Now, physically bounded spaces are less significant as information is able to flow through walls and rush across great distances. As a result, where one is has less to do with what one knows and experiences. Electronic media have altered the significance of time and space for social interaction (3). Although Meyrowitz was referring to electronic media such as television and radio it is clearly applicable to the concerns that Facebook users face. Facebook has allowed users the opportunity to interact with one another without ever getting together physically. With the addition of video feeds [messages and images], users no longer have to see one another in person to hold a conversation. In addition, the worldwide accessibility allows users to communicate without even being on the same planet.

The Net and Facebook, which is a system of social networks, share a connection. Angela operates in a world where she believes that her access and activities on the Internet are secure and confidential. Like Angela, many contemporary Facebook users,

operate with a similar mindset that their online activities are confidential and secure. For the majority of Facebook users, their lives (or identities) are defined, developed, and contained within this community. Consistently, users put information that is normally kept private onto the website. When Angela is in Mexico, she meets in person one of the men from her virtual world who ends up being one of the people working to destroy her life. Everything that she had revealed to him about herself (both personal and non-personal), he knew about, and he used it against her. In one scene when Angela is trying to figure out what happened to her, she says:

> Why me? I'm nobody. They know everything about me. They know what I ate, drank, movies I watched. They know where I'm from, what cigarettes I used to smoke. And everything I did, they must have gotten it all from the Internet (*The Net)*.

While the narrative in *The Net* is fictional, it illustrates similar real-world concerns that go along with Facebook. Identity, disclosure, intimacy and community were catalysts for the problems Angela had to deal with as a result of her affiliation with online social networks.

Currently, Facebook is one of the most well known, most talked about, and probably one of the most controversial websites in America. Facebook integrates aspects of (both) online social networks as well as virtual community characteristics into a full-functioning website. While there are a number of definitions that describe online social networks, Ellison and boyd's definition (2007) best fits the purpose of this analysis. In defining the term social network websites, they state:

> [We] define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system; articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection; and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site (2).

Social networks can grow rapidly, and some, such as Facebook, can achieve mass-market penetration a few months after inception (Acquisti and Gross 1). In an online social network, an initial set of members sends out messages inviting other members of their own personal networks to join online. New members repeat the process, increasing the total number of members and links in the network. Sites then offer features such as

automatic address book updates, viewable profiles, the ability to form new links through "introduction services," and other forms of online social connections. Social network websites can also double as blog[1] hosting services.[2] A blog is a user generated website where journal-style entries are created and displayed. Blogs provide a space for users to comment on topics such as news, politics, and social issues. Blog users, or "bloggers" as they are often called, can treat their blog as a personal online journal.[3] A typical blog incorporates text, images, and it can also provide links to other blogs, web pages and other media related to its theme.

1.2 Statement of Problem

In order to get a better understanding of Facebook's purpose, it is important to understand its mission statement:

> Facebook is a social utility that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them. People use Facebook to keep up with friends, upload an unlimited number of photos, share links and videos, and learn more about the people they meet. All that's needed to join Facebook is a valid email address. To connect with coworkers or classmates, use your school or work email address to register. Once you register, join a regional network to connect with the people in your area. Facebook is made up of many networks, each based around a company, region, or school. Facebook's Platform enables anyone, anywhere, to build complete applications that you can choose to use. Join the networks that reflect your real-lie communities to learn more about the people who work, live, or study around you ("About Facebook" Facebook.com).

In spite of what is discussed in Facebook's mission statement, critics (those who study online social networks) have begun to raise concerns about the actual use of Facebook in terms of the ways in which users are interpreting and using its features. The number of incidents on Facebook has raised questions about the way users are redefining communication among users and nonusers alike. Critics such as Tracy Vittone argue that in some ways users are losing the basic social skills of communication. Technology in

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[1] "Blog" is short for Weblog.
[2] Facebook does not currently offer blogging features. Instead, there is a feature called "Notes," which acts as a blog. If a user utilizes this feature, it is usually found on their profile page.
[3] Popular blogs or online journals include Livejournal, Word Press and Blogspot.

general, although in positive ways has allowed us to seek out and present information better, while at the same time, communication is losing it human needs (Studinski 2). Other issues Facebook raises are related to the credibility of information provided on the website. Facebook has been at the source of many school-related incidents such as users posting false or negative information about another user. Finally, there have been criminal and violent acts plotted and even carried out on Facebook. The Secret Service has even gotten involved, questioning a student at Oklahoma University after he posted a satricial plot to assasinate George W. Bush on a Facebook group titled "Bush Sucks."

Users have done just about everything that can be considered problematic, including posting explicit and possibily illegal photos of both themselves and others. Information has been posted that normally is private (i.e. not open or accessible to the general public) and that could potentially backfired through the workplace, social settings, or educational communities. In some instances, Facebook members have been victims of violent crimes because of personal details such as their address, phone numbers, and other personal information that is readily available on their profile page. The "group" application on Facebook has been used as a source of attack or retaliation on other users and non-users. One example comes out of the Virginia Tech school shootings. There have been several groups created in response to this incident. The two most popular[4] were "I Hope Cho Seung-Hui rots in hell for the pain he caused Virginia Tech" and "When I heard the VT massacre shooter was Asian, I knew it was a KOREAN." The racial slur[5] with which radio talk show host Don Imus ignited controversy also triggered the creation of a number of Facebook groups both in support and opposition. These types of groups are going up as fast as Facebook takes them down; though it is not possible to take down or to keep track of every single offensive or derogatory group on the website. Instead, Facebook expects that users have read and will abide by the regulations set forth

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[4] Due to Facebook's policy about "Appropriate Content," both of these groups are no longer accessible.
[5] On April 4, 2007, Don Imus characterized Rutgers University women's basketball team as "rough girls" and referred to them as "nappy-headed hoes."

in the Facebook Code of Conduct.[6] Furthermore, it is still possible to create groups, include photos, or express offensive (obscene language would not be constitutionally protected) language on Facebook. Users bypass the code of conduct by blurring out photos or using symbols to replace letters in derogatory words.

Employers as well as schools have begun to use the information on Facebook as a way of determining whether they will admit students or hire potential employees. In addition, Facebook also is used as a took to track and contact students on college campuses. At colleges such as Syracuse University, and at many high schools across the country, administrators are reprimanding students for postings that are critical of professors, teachers, and principals. There have also been concerns raised about the use of Facebook as a means of surveillance and data mining. There is one area of the privacy statement that has some up in arms about the website. A section of Facebook's privacy statement says:

> Facebook may use information in your profile without identifying you as an individual to third parties. We do this for purposes such as aggregating how many people in a network like a band or movie and personalizing advertisements and promotions so that we can provide you Facebook. We may use information about you that we collect from other sources including but not limited to newspapers and Internet sources such as blogs, instant messenging services and other users of Facebook, to supplement your profile. We may share your information with third parties, including responsible companies with which we have a relationship (Facebook.com).

Facebook creators and developers maintain that although this is their privacy statement, they have never provided users' information to third party compaines, nor do they intend to do so (Facebook.com). Moreover, Facebook has assured users that they would drop the first part of the privacy statement in regard to AIM (America Online Instant Messenger) harvesting and campus newspaper monitoring and promised that the new privacy

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[6] Facebook's *Inappropriate Content* clause states: "[We] believe users should be able to express themselves and their point of view, however certain kinds of speech simply do not belong in a community like Facebook. Therefore, [you] may not post or share content that is obscene, pornographic or sexually explicit; depicts graphic or gratuitous violence; makes threats of any kind or that intimidates, harasses, or bullies anyone in a derogatory, demeaning, malicious, defamatory, abusive, offensive or hateful.

statement would not include the clause about information collection. They also maintain that no type of data mining has taken place. However, the possibility of data mining actually occuring has still remained an option due to the fact that in 2005, two Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) students using an automated script (a program) were able to download over 70,000 Facebook profiles from four schools-MIT, New York University, University of Okalahoma and Harvard University-as a part of a research project on Facebook privacy (Jones and Soltren 33).

1.3 Research Question

One of the primary concerns of this analysis lies in the fact that Facebook users are often more than willing to disclose information about themselves without knowing and understanding the ramifications of their actions. This critical analysis seeks to answer the following central question: How are individuals' lives potentially compromised through the information they disclose using Facebook? In addition, the sub-question this analysis seeks to answer is:

- What are the consequences of user's misunderstanding the operation of Facebook?

1.4 Literature Review

The review of Dissertation Abstracts and Standard Academic sites has revealed no recent scholarly analysis about the implications of Facebook or about the misuse of the website. One of the biggest reasons may be that Facebook and online social networks are fairly new areas in terms of research and also because they are constantly evolving. And like most new techonological innovations, critical evaluation often lags behind the implementation and use. The available research focuses primarily on privacy concerns, development and behavior, identity theory, and the structure of Facebook services.

Intimacy, Privacy and the Internet

Although privacy itself as an issue is nothing new, the rise of the Internet has increased the ability to compile, store, search, mix, match, copy, distribute, or otherwise

manipulate, change, or exchange personal information on increasingly large networks of databases (Starke-Meyerring 276). Once personal information is submitted to a recipient who turns out to be untrustworthy, individuals have no way of tracking it, let alone knowing what happens to their information (276). In face-to-face relationships, becoming closer to each other enables one to be aware of the more intimate aspects of the other person's character and life, including those aspects considered private (Ben-Ze'ev 456). Becoming closer opens more doors through which one can see the other person. In online relationships, becoming closer also means having more information, and this information may include those aspects one would like to keep private. Moreover, since vulnerability is significantly lessened in cyberspace, revealing private information is less harmful than in actual space (457). Ben-Ze'ev argues that as long as the relationship is limited to cyberspace, emotional closeness can be increased without risking one's privacy (457). However, when the relationship begins to involve revealing real names and addresses, exchange of pictures, writing letters, and face-to-face meetings, the conflict between emotional closeness and privacy emerges once again (458).

Livingstone (2008), argues that privacy is not tied to the disclosure of certain types of information. Instead, it is centered on having control over who knows what about you. In a case study examining intimacy among teenagers within social networks, Livingstone argues that teenagers must disclose personal information in order to sustain intimacy, but they wish to be in control of how they manage the disclosure (405). Livingstone quotes Giddens (1991) who states that intimacy is the other face of privacy (405). While privacy may be considered conducive to and necessary for intimacy, trust may decrease within an online social network (Acquisti and Gross 3). It is then that a new form of intimacy develops and becomes widespread: the sharing of personal information with large and potentially unknown numbers of friends and strangers (3). Acquisti and Gross (2005) conducted a case study looking at patterns of information exchanged in online social networks and their privacy implications. They analyzed the behaviors of 4,000+ students at Carnegie Mellon University who belonged to popular online networks that were directed at students. Acquisti and Gross evaluated the information students disclosed on Facebook and their usage of the site's privacy settings. The authors discovered that Carnegie Mellon Facebook users provided a wide array of information on

the website. Specifically, they found that 90.8% of Facebook profiles contain an image, 87% reveal birthdates, 30% list phone numbers and 50% list the current addresses of users (6). In addition, the authors found that the majority of users also disclose their dating preferences, current relationship stauts, political views, and various extracurricular interests. They also discovered that the groups of users they studied were oblivious to their personal privacy. They were not concerned about what they disclosed about themselves, nor were they concerned about who could access their information.

Users indicated that they provided personal data and that the preferences assigned to enhance privacy were sparingly used (8). While the boundaries are blurred, most online networking sites share a core of features: through the site, an individual offers a "profile" (a representation of himself/herself) for others to peruse with the intention of contacting or being contacted by others to meet new friends or dates receive or provide recommendations (2). The relationship between privacy and a person's social network is multi-faceted. Acquisti and Gross conclude that on certain occaisions we want information about ourselves to be known by only a small circle of close friends, and not by strangers. In other instances, we are willing to reveal personal information to anonymous strangers, but not to those who know us better (2). Concerns about Facebook center on its being public even though it feels like a private forum. There is also little assurance that the people behind the profiles are who they represent themselves to be (EDUCAUSE Learning Initative 5).

Howard and Jones (2004) argue that once personal information is submitted to a recipient who turns out be untrustworthy, individuals have no way of tracking, let alone knowing, what happens to their information. This is significant not only in regards to Facebook and the idea that users don't always know who is looking at their information but Internet use in general. Anytime a person visits a website and he/she provides information, he/she is leaving "footprints" or himself/herself behind. This is because of Internet cookies. A cookie is a short amount of text that a website can store on a user's machine (Bick 42). Cookies enable a website to recognize returning visitors and it allows users to avoid having to enter user names and passwords each time they visit that particular website (42). Internet users often unknowingly pick up cookies from

advertising companies and companies that sell demographic information. Facebook allows users to take advantage of this option. When members log onto Facebook, after entering their email address and password (which is required), they are given the option to allow Facebook to "remember the information on this computer." Users can check this option and as long as they stay on the same computer; they can leave Facebook for other sites, but they will be able to get back onto the Facebook website without having to log in again.[7]

Identity

The role of identity on the web is a conundrum. Once they are able to access and manipulate tools of web interaction, individuals and groups can begin to extend and redefine their identity in this sphere (Ginger 1). Turkle (1995) argues that the Internet has become a significant social laboratory for experimenting with the constructions and reconstructions of self that characterize postmodern life. Life on the screen makes it very easy to present onself as other than one is in reality (228). What makes the Internet so attractive to so many is the perception that they are in more control of their identity online (Ginger 1). When we step through the screen into virtual communities, we reconstruct our identities on the other side of the looking glass (Turkle 177). Ginger (2007) argues that profiles representing participant interactions and identities populate the social graph of Facebook. They reflect a mediated form of identity when compared to offline equivalents (1).

Donath (1996) argues that identity plays a key role in virutal communites. In communication, which is the primary activity, knowing the identity of those with whom one communicates is essential for understanding and evaluating an interaction. Yet in the disembodied world of the virtual community, identity is also ambiguous. Many of the basic cues about personality and social roles we are accustomed to in the physical world are absent (1). In the physical world there is an inherent unity to the self, for the body provides a compelling and convenient definition of identity. The norm is "one body, one

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[7] However, if a user closes their Internet browser, in order to re-enter Facebook, they only have to enter their password and not their email address.

identity." Though the self may be complex and mutable over time and circumstance, the body provides a stabilizing anchor (Donath 1). The virtual world is different. It is composed of information rather than matter. Information spreads and diffuses; there is no law of conservation of information. The inhabitants of this impalpable space are also diffuse, free from the body's unifying anchor. One can have, some claim, as many electronic personas as one has time and energy to create. Identity cues are sparse in the virtual world, but not non-existent. People become attuned to the nuances of email addresses and signature styles. New phrases evolve that mark their users as members of a chosen subculture (Donath 2).

Stern (2007) states that scholars have sought to explore the sociological and cultural underpinnings of online identity formation. Furthermore, much of the work has taken a cultural studies approach to investigating communication and culture within virtual communities and digital culture (184). In the disembodied world of the Internet, identity is complicated through the notion of representation (182). Although many studies have discussed online representation in terms of falsehood based on people intentionally misleading one another (regarding race, gender, class, and other markers of identity), others have discussed identity in terms of "play" and experimentation through behavior, conversation and textual manipulation (182).

Virtual Communities and Electronic Media

Rheingold (1993) defines virtual communies as social aggregations that emerged from the Internet. Harvey and Jones (2004) quote Bainbridge (1992), who argues that the continued increase in communication devices such as pagers, cellular phones, and the Internet will reduce personal contacts. Furthermore, Bainbridge also argues that people will spend more time on the computer and less time going out to socialize with friends and neighbors and electronic communication will increasingly isolate people from direct human contact (322). Turkle (1995) argues that many institutions that used to bring people together, such as a main street, a union hall or a town meeting, no longer work as they did in the past (178). Many users spend most of their day alone at the screen of their television or the computer and their computer is playing a central role in their social-political interactions (178). According to Turkle, individuals now correspond with each

other through electronic mail and contribute to electronic bulletin boards and mailing lists, join interest groups whose participants include people from all over the world, and as a consequence, their rootedness to a place has been attenuated (178). The same is true of Facebook users. Similarly, Rheingold (1993) says that people in virtual communities do just about everything people in real life do, but they leave their bodies behind. Based on the available quanitative research, users of Facebook are likely to spend a significant amount of time on this one application. Like other computer tools such as email and other online communities, Facebook provides users with electronic mail, discussion boards (known as the "Wall"), and internet-based groups. Since Facebook extended its membership options globally, users have the option to be in contact with people throughout the world. They do not have to leave their computers or Facebook's website to take part in the activities that Turkle talks about.

Wright (2007) aruges that with social networks, there's a fascination with intimacy because it stimulates face-to-face communication. Wright further suggests that there is a fundamental distance that makes it safe for people to connect through weak ties that have the appearance of a connection because it's safe (2). The growth of social networks and the Internet as a whole stems from an outpouring of expression that feels more like "talking" than writing: blog posts, comments, homemade videos, and lately epigrammatic one-liners broadcast using services like Facebook status updates (1). Kosik (2006) argues that communication through online applications like Facebook can be attractive to students because it provides a platform for communication with others without the pressures associated with face-to-face interaction. Students are also more likely to seek out others who are like them instead of people who are different from themselves (3). Facebook makes it possible for students to pick and choose who they communicate with based on information listed on their profiles. It also allows students to make friends through "groups" of people with common interests. While these features do encourage students to meet and communicate with other people, it also makes it easy to circumnavigate communicating with people who are different from them (3).

Jones and Soltren (2005) conducted a study analyzing how privacy issues affect Facebook. They argue that privacy on Facebook is undermined by three principal factors:

users disclose too much information, Facebook does not take adequate steps to protect users privacy, and finally, third parties are actively seeking out end-user information using Facebook. Their conclusions and research are based on series of surveys given to students at MIT, NYU, Harvard University, and University of Oklahoma. The fact students have so readily begun involving Facebook in their daily lives raises questions about how it is affecting their behavior and development. Kosik (2006) released results of a pilot study (intended for future research) aimed at answering this very question.[8] Kosik designed the case study to evaluate the effects Facebook had on students' behavior and development. In the first part of the study, Kosik interviewed Facebook members who were a part of a Facebook group called "Addicted to Facebook," to get a better understanding of the demographics of the population and their use of Facebook. In the second part of the study, Kosik took a more qualitative route, asking more open-ended questions about Facebook users and their overall impressions of the website.

Since Facebook has risen to popularity, there have been a number of news articles published about the website. Bugeja (2006) published an article based on an ongoing national debate about social networks and the impact they are having on American schools. Bugeja argues that classroom networks are being used to entertain the "Facebook generation." This is a generation that text-messages during class, talks on cell phones during labs, and listens to iPods rather than guest speakers in the wireless lecture halls (1). Bugeja quotes Christina Rosen, who argues that today's Facebook users are "egocasters."[9] Rose argues that Facebook encourages egocasting even though it claims to further "social networking" and build communities (2). Rosen further argues that people who use social networks like Facebook have a tendency to define themseleves in terms of products (2). Rosen's statement is not far from the truth. Facebook has catered to both outside advertisers and Facebook users. Facebook has contracted with a number of third-

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[8] Kosik's study is one of the first quantitative case studies that is rather open-ended. Kosik purposely left it open and makes several suggestions to imporve future studies of Faebook, so that her research and findings, as well as other ideas can be further explored.

[9] Rosen defines egocasting as thoroughly personalized and extremely narrow pursuit of one's personal taste (Bugeja).

party marketers and advertisers to post ads on individual Facebook pages based on the interests they have posted on their profiles and the types of Facebook groups they are a part of. Based on the information available, advertisers post ads for everything from apparel to food to adverstisements for credit reports and apartment listings.[10]

In 2006, Facebook officially opened up its once "college email address only" membership to high school students. Almost overnight, Facebook took on a new demographic, and it also saw a surge in the use of the website because of the new members. Barrett (2006) argues that Facebook has attracted the attention of high school students for several reasons. First, because the concept of Facebook originated at Harvard University, students have developed the idea that if it's "good enough for Harvard, it's good enough for [our] students too." Second, Barrett argues that Facebook gives the perception that it is a completely safe place to be online. And unlike other social networks, this website required a school-based email account to create a profile. In addition, because of the school email address prerequisite, students believe that it is accessible only to those they considered "friends" and those they have authorized access to their Facebook page. What students didn't anticipate, Barrett argues, is that friends of friends also would have access and soon their private information was becoming public. The third and final aspect of Facebook, as well as other social networking sites is that it has the ability for members to join groups, or set up clubs around specific interests. The intention behind the Facebook group feature was to be a way for members to exhibit their personalities. However, Barrett argues that despite the good intentions behind this feature, it has backfired and mushroomed into a source of cyber-bullying and harrassment. Groups are now being created for the sole reason of being hurtful and abusive to others.

1.5 Methodology and Scope of Study

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[10] The advertisements are usually displayed in a banner, which can be found on the left side of a Facebook profile. More recently, third-party advertisements are now being displayed in the News Feed on a user's homepage. *See Appendix A.*

This analysis will give a detailed analysis of Facebook, exploring all of the options that it provides for users. Facebook's mission statement will be further analyzed, looking closely at what it says and how it might be interpreted by the intended user of Facebook and the Internet. Using the concepts of identity, disclosure and community, three Facebook-related situations (which fit into one of the three areas), will be analyzed. While there are a number of Facebook situations that might work for this analysis, these situations have been chosen because they are more extreme and because they have received a significant amount of public attention. In addition, the examples will again be references in sections discussing the "downside" of Facebook. The three sub-headings identity, disclosure, and community were chosen because they are the three areas that are associated with discussions of computer-mediated communication and online social netoworks like Facebook. Many of the situations that have occurred as well as those that are discussed in this analysis fit into all three areas of identity, disclosure, and community. Finally, using the film *The Net* as a foundational template, a discussion about the similarities in terms of the discussions/warnings about the risks of online networks will conclude each section.

The first case will address mistaken identity in the Wayne Chiang and Cho Seung-Hu case. Wayne Chiang is a former Virginia Tech student who was mistakenly identified as the person responsible for the shootings at Virginia Tech, Cho Seung-Hu. After photos of Chiang surfaced from his Livejournal blog and his Facebook profile, rumors that he was the person responsible for the shootings quickly spread throughout Facebook and the Internet before they made their way to the media. This case of mistaken identity occurred because of photos, personal journal entries, and other information Chiang had posted on his Facebook page. Although this particular example could fit into all three sections for this analysis it will be examined within the section of identity.

Under the next subheading, "Disclosure," the situation involving Miss New Jersey winner Amy Polumbo will be examined. In July 2007, she became a media target because of some "suggestive" photos found on her Facebook profile. These photos were leaked to the media in an attempt to coerce Polumbo into resigning her crown. The final section, "Community," will include two examples of the ways in which Facebook has influenced

the concept of community as well as how it is understood and demonstrated within the website. Once again, Virginia Tech will be the topic of discussion. This section will examine how Virginia Tech students utilized Facebook's features as a way of maintaining communication during the April 2007 school shooting. There have been a large number of Facebook groups created in response to the school shootings that took place on the campus. Themes range from positive--such as public memorials--to hostile (those targeting the shooter). When information about the shootings was made public, students flocked to Facebook and used it as a tool to alert their friends and families about their whereabouts. The final community example involves a Facebook group called *30 Reasons Why Girls Should Call It a Night*. This group has received a lot of media attention because of the binge drinking content (including over 5,000 photos and text); and because of the seeming advocacy of alcohol.

1.6 Chapter Organization

In each of the subsequent chapters, this thesis will examine the negative consequences that have surfaced as a result of information users have posted on Facebook. The present chapter provides a brief introduction about Facebook, *The Net*, and its relation to this analysis. This chapter also discusses the intent of this research and features a literature review that includes works concerning virtual communities, privacy, intimacy, identity, and Facebook. Chapter two will provide a historical background and the context of the Internet, virtual communities, and online social networks. Chapter two will conclude by giving a detailed introduction to Facebook describing the website and many of the features it offers. Chapter three will include an analysis of the three situations in relation to identity, disclosure and community. Each case study will provide a detailed description of the situation followed by a discussion as to why the particular situation is potentially problematic. The fourth and final chapter includes the conclusion of this thesis as well as a discussion of potential furture research about this topic.

1.7 Conclusion

Facebook presents itself as a harmless online social network created for people to bond with their peers. It enables and, arguably, forces current members to enhance their online personas. However, what Facebook does not disclose is that there are potential dangers in merging (or converting) a user's real-life into virtual communities. The goal of this study is to show how the willingness of users who disclose personal information on Facebook can lead to potential threats to their identity and privacy. The other goal is to explore the negative consequences. For these reasons, this is an important area to study. There has not been any type of research that has critically examined the negative brought by Facebook to its users. Most of the research available has generally examined the effect Facebook has on privacy. While privacy is an important issue to examine, there are other areas of study such as disclosure, identity, and community that also need to be analyzed. Moreover, much of the work available has been conducted quantitatively. Finally, if Facebook is going to continue to expand, then it is important that Facebook users and non-users become more educated about the website and the potential consequences that can arise from misuse and misunderstandings.

CHAPTER TWO
THE INTERNET, VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES AND FACEBOOK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will address the historical context of the Internet in relation to Facebook. In order to accomplish this task, it is important to review the origins and the purpose of the Internet. In addition, it is also important to discuss the historical context of social networks and virtual communities as well as the Six Degrees Theory, since it is a concept from which Facebook derives. To conclude, this chapter will list and describe the history of Facebook and its features.

2.2 A Brief History of the Internet

Leiner (2003) describes the Internet as a worldwide broadcasting system with the capability, for information dissemination and a medium for collaboration and interaction between individuals and their computers without regard for geographic location. The Internet is a publicly accessible network of interconnected computer networks that transmit data by packet switching using standard Internet Protocol (IP)[11]. It is a "network of networks" that consists of millions of smaller domestic, academic, business, and government networks that together carry various information and services, such as electronic mail, online chat, file transfer, and the interlinked web pages and other documents of the World Wide Web.

No one set out to build the Internet. Nor was the Internet purposefully developed (Okin 87). The Internet was a response to a strategic problem posed to the American think tank The Rand Corporation during the Cold War. Up until the development of the Internet, the question that the Rand Corporation struggled with was how the government could keep citizens informed and maintain order in the United States after a nuclear war, if conventional communication technologies were destroyed. The solution was to create a networked system with no central control something that was so abundant, it would not

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[11] Internet Protocol (IP) is a network-layer protocol that contains address information that enables packets to be routed.

matter if part of it were destroyed (Gackenbach and Ellerman 5). The original intention of the Internet was to provide links between computers rather than people (Joinson 3). Okin (2005), argues that the Internet represents no individual or any one organization's master plan for a global network. This is partly why no person, group, organization, or country can claim ownership of the Internet (87). In addition, Okin also argues that this is the reason why no single, all-powerful controlling body governs the Internet's operation, determines what services it will provide, or decides who can and cannot use its resources (87). With the advent of the World Wide Web in 1991, and with the commercial release of web browsers in 1993 and 1994, the Internet began to expand rapidly, attracting numbers of commercial organizations and private users (Joinson 4). The arrival of the World Wide Web helped to hasten the effects of commercialization of the Internet. The Internet was designed to be a network-based document sharing and publication tool, something that would allow researchers and others to make their work more readily available over a private network or across the Internet (Okin 109).

As of March 2007, 1.14 billion people were using the Internet (Internet World Stats). Individuals use the Internet to do everything from electronic mail to file sharing. Electronic mail (e-mail) has been around longer than the Internet and networking itself and was adapted to work with networking only a few years after the ARPANET[12] started transmitting its first commonly used network service (Okin 207). Unlike the Internet, e-mail was developed relatively early by the users of ARPANET as a means of person-to-person (as opposed to computer-to-computer) communication (Joinson 4). Facebook has option called "Inbox," which acts as a user's own personal e-mail. Instead of logging out of Facebook and going to an e-mail-based program such as *Yahoo Mail* or *Gmail* to send a message, Facebook users can remain where they are and send electronic mail via Facebook. If a user wanted to send a message that he or she does not want displayed in the News Feed on his or her homepage, he or she has the option of sending the message "discreetly" through the "Inbox."

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[12] Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET), was developed by the United States Department of Defense. It was the predecessor to the global Internet.

Online chat allows two or more individuals to exchange text-based messages in real time (Okin 254). The exchange of information takes place in a chat room, which appears as a window on each participating individual's terminal and embodies a virtual meeting place where individuals can gather and effectively talk through exchange of messages entered through their keyboards (254). Since the late 1980s, there have been several types of chat communities created. The two most common are Internet Relay Chat (IRC), a multi-user chat system where people convene on "channels" (a virtual place, usually with a topic of conversation) to talk in groups or privately, and Instant Messenger, which allows users to send and receive short messages instantly. Facebook acts as one enormous chat room where users are constantly chatting and exchanging information either one-on-one (through the Inbox feature) or communally on the "Wall."

The Internet and the World Wide Web have allowed people to utilize both services in a variety of ways. One of those services is the ability to market oneself. Personalized marketing is a recent trend made possible because of the Internet. It allows a company to market a product to a specific person or group of people more so than any other advertising medium. Social networking sites such as *Facebook, Myspace, Friendster*, *Livejournal* and others allow personalized marketing. Internet users join many of these sites to advertise themselves and make friends online. In turn when they advertise themselves, they are also advertising their interests and hobbies—information online marketing companies can use in an attempt to determine what users will purchase online and advertise their own companies' products via the online communities to which users belong.

Like Facebook, the Internet is not without its own controversy and problems. Privacy (or lack thereof) and cookies are two of the negative aspects that have plagued the Internet. Interestingly, the negatives of the Internet are also negatives of Facebook. Experts within the field of Internet privacy share a consensus that Internet privacy does not actually exist, while privacy advocates believe that it should. This naturally leads to a discussion of Internet regulation and policy. As noted in chapter one, while this analysis will not focus on Internet privacy, it is impossible to completely ignore it. Therefore, it is important to briefly summarize the information and conclusions regarding these two

topics. Despite the importance of public attitudes to privacy, a unified set of privacy rights has yet to emerge (Bick 27). When Supreme Court justices initially began deliberating the right to privacy, they defined it simply as the "right to be left alone," which when first established in 1890, translated into restrictions on the freedom of press (28). On the other hand, privacy was recognized in a protected interest under state common law. Bick states:

> When using the Internet for communication, one had to remember that the Internet was built in such a way as to allow recipients of Internet communications to access the sender's computer without special permission. The built-in lack of privacy is reflected by the fact that at least one popular Internet browser contains a notice on its web page warning users that the Internet is an unsecured medium that can "pose a security problem" (41).

As Bick argues, because the Internet is based on the idea of sharing and disclosing information through networks, it is almost impossible to regulate it.

An Internet cookie is simply a customer ID or a user number that can be used to retrieve user preferences and other information from a database (Ivey). As previously mentioned, a cookie is a mechanism that allows a website to record a user's comings and goings, usually without the knowledge or consent (E.P.I.C. 2006). When a user logs onto a website or posts his or her information, if he/she does not clear his/her name from the Internet search history or saved passwords, then that information is automatically stored on the website visited, as well as in the web browser. Although many users choose to disable cookies in their web browsers and eliminate potential privacy risks, in doing so, they can severely limit or prevent the functionality of many websites that require cookies to browse. According to Ivey (2007), one of the major concerns Internet users have with cookies is related to third party companies and websites that use cookies as a means of tracking web visitors. Ivey argues that companies track visitors by exploiting a loophole in the way cookies work. Banner graphics for online advertisers are hosted on servers different from that host the pages the advertisements appear on, but the site cookies are passed through the browser along with the graphics. Therefore, by getting other sites to host pages containing their banners, marketers can track people who haven't actually visited marketers' own websites (Ivey). As of May 2007, Facebook was introducing its own form of tracking or, as they refer to it, "Marketing" with third party companies.

On May 24, 2007, Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg announced that more than 65 parties including *Amazon.com, Microsoft, Obama for America Campaign*, and *Warner Bros Records* were developing applications for Facebook's Application Platform Interface (API). Essentially, these companies would embed pieces of their applications, such as book reviews from *Amazon* and photo slideshows from *Slide.com*, into Facebook services. Currently, Facebook users can add applications integrated with their existing Facebook services. The idea is to make Facebook even more of a utility for everything people want to do online that has a social component (Hoff 1). Recently, Facebook has opened up parts of its system to allow anyone to write an application (Newitz 1). A number of programs allow people in various social networks to go through their friend lists and automatically send requests to join groups, take quizzes, post music, and much more (1). The interesting part about APIs is that if a user chooses to respond to the "request," he/she is required to sign up for something, give some information about himself/herself, and download another piece of software (Newitz 2). That application then attaches itself to that user's profile page and it also sends out requests to the people on his/her friends list causing the cycle to start again. Prior to the addition of the API, Facebook already had included banner advertisements and they already had established relationships included on Facebook, but also they partnered with Apple and created a promotion that gave free music downloads to users who were a part of the Apple Students group on Facebook. The promotion allowed members to receive a (preselected) free 25-song sampler each week from various music genres. Facebook has since expanded the types of banner advertisements that are found on the website. There are advertisements for apparel, television shows, upcoming films and music, and many others.

2.3 Virtual [online] Communities and Social Networks

While some have attempted to offer concrete definitions of "community," there appears to be little agreement as to what this concept is supposed to describe in terms of defining social networks (Koth). Wellman (2001) defines community as "networks of interpersonal ties that provide sociability, support, information, a sense of belonging, and social identity." Rheingold (1993) defines communities as "social aggregations that

emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feelings, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace." Joinson (2003) quotes Stone (1991), who states that virtual communities are "incontrovertibly social spaces in which people still meet face-to-face, but under new definitions of both 'meet' and 'face-to-face.'" (85).

This history of virtual communities is similar to that of Internet, in that it was also developed as a means for the government to protect itself against the possibility of a nuclear war. The term "virtual community," however, was first cited as commonplace by Howard Rheingold to define the online cultures of those engaging in computer-mediated communication (CMC), establishing "alternative planetary information networks" (Flew 62). This was made possible due to the three interrelated components of CMC: the construction of social networks and social capital, the sharing of knowledge and information, and the facilitation of new forms of democratic participation in society (Flew 62). Traditionally, "community" was bound by a geographic locality where relationships were generally mediated through the face-to-face communication of its members (Grossberg 38). However, these boundaries have been abolished with the development of computer-mediated communication. Users are now able to utilize virtual communities not only as a discussion forum, but also as a means to exchange media files such as music, videos, and images with one another and to participate in online gaming and e-commerce. Such interaction is no longer limited to personal computers, since new personal communication devices such as mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDA) are able to access these networks.

Virtual communities ranging from Multi-User Dungeons (MUDs)[13] to computer boards allow people to generate experiences, relationships, identities, and living spaces that arise only through interaction with technology (Turkle 20). Today people are embracing the notion that computers may extend their physical presence via real time

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[13] Multi-User Dungeon, Domain or Dimension (MUDs) is a multi-player computer game that combines elements of role playing games and social chat rooms. It runs on an Internet server or a bulletin board system that is text driven. Players read descriptions of rooms, objects, events, other characters, and computer-controlled characters. Players interact with one another by typing commands that resemble the English language.

video links and shared virtual conference rooms (20). Facebook is a virtual community in which users extend and arguably eliminate their "physical presence" through the available features it offers. Essentially, Facebook is a virtual conference room where community members put to use features such as the "Wall," which acts as a public message board, or leave "Notes," which is Facebook's version of a blog, or send messages using the "Inbox" feature. In addition to messaging features, Facebook allows users to "conference" or share their life through an unlimited amount of photo uploads that are available.

2.4 Social Networks: History

Ellison and boyd (2007) argue that social networks serve different functions and contain various features. Some have photo sharing or video sharing capabilities; others offer built-in blogging and instant messaging technologies. Many social networks are designed with specific ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, political, or other identity-driven categories in mind. Some target people from specific geographical regions or linguistic groups. There are even social networks for dogs (*Dogster)* and cats (*Caster),* where their owners manage their pets' profiles (3). In general, social networks allow users to create a profile for themselves. Ellison and boyd (2007) quote Haythornthwaite (2005) who argues that the uniqueness of social networks is not that they allow users to meet strangers, but rather they enable users to articulate and make visible their own social networks (2). This can result in connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and the meetings are frequently between "latent ties" who share some offline connection (2).

After joining a social network, an individual is asked to fill out forms containing a series of questions. A profile is then generated using answers to questions, which usually include descriptors such as age, location, interests, and an "about me" section (3). Users are then prompted to identify others in the system with whom they have a relationship. Users can upload a picture of themselves and can be "friends" with other users, which allows them to view their pages and their friends' pages. Facebook is a prime example of one Internet program that was designed specifically to be a social network for communication between college students (Kosik 4). Facebook users create profile

containing a picture and as much personal contact information as the user desires. They are then free to search for friends possessing similar interests, the friends they have in common, and even academic pursuits. With these friends, students can form groups, send messages, and post comments visible to all other users. This allows students to create their own social network not only with their own school but also with many schools across the country (5). By default, Facebook allows users who are a part of the same "network" to view each other's profiles, unless a profile owner has decided to deny permission to those in their network. Structural variations around visibility and access are one of the primary ways that social networks differentiate themselves from each other (Ellison and boyd 3).

The basis for Facebook is the idea of social networking with friends and others. Facebook describes itself as a place to "connect people with friends and others who work, study and live around them" (Facebook.com). The term "friends" however can be misleading, because the connection does not necessarily mean friendship in the everyday vernacular sense, and the reasons people connect are varied (boyd 2006). Nevertheless, there's no limit on the number of friends a user can have on Facebook. Although the site does not explicitly say so, arguably one goal of some Facebook users is to see how many friends a user can garner. The goal is to network with as many people as possible. Facebook's use of "friends" and networking can be tracked to the Six Degrees or "small world problem." Six Degrees is based on an idea that a person is one step away from each person he or she knows, and two steps away from each person who is known by one of the people he or she knows. Therefore, the theory hypothesizes that everyone is no more than six steps away from any other person on earth. The Six Degrees idea has expanded into popular culture as well as academic research. Within popular culture, the Six Degrees theory can be found in everything from plays, cinema, games, television, and more recently the Internet.[14] SixDegrees.com was the first recognizable social network.

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[14] *Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon (1994)*. American playwright, John Guare wrote the stage production of *Six Degrees of Separation (1990)*. The play was later adapted into a film in 1993. *Six Degrees (2006)* was a short-lived television series on ABC. Facebook Platform called *Six Degrees* was developed by Karl Bunyan in the UK, which calculates the degrees of separation between different people on Facebook.

Launched in May 1997, SixDegrees.com was a special interest community and chat room that allowed users to create profiles, list their friends and surf the friends list (Ellison and boyd 4). The site allowed users to search for people whom their friends knew, their friends' friends, and so on. In other words, it represented six degrees of separation (Brown 1). SixDegrees promoted itself as a tool to help people send messages to others (2). The way the website worked was that users would post their biographical information, including favorite website, hobbies, and (oddly) any random celebrity encounters they may have had (1). Users then listed as many friends, acquaintances, family members, fellow alums, co-workers, life partners, and other people they were able to recall. Once the website received email verifications from the contacts, SixDegrees.com then graphed a web of contacts between the people registered on the site, the commonalities shared between people in a user's circle of friends, who their friends know, and who their friends' friends know (Brown 3).[15]

The "friend" feature on Facebook allows users to network with as many people as possible. On the "Friends" page, Facebook provides users the option of categorizing their friends. The options include arranging them according to school, location, hobby, and relationship. Friends cannot add to an individual's profile and, unless the password and email address are available, no one other than the user or Facebook operators has access to an individual's profile. The only things that can be altered are the messages that are written on a person's wall. "Friends" can write, edit, and delete messages. However, they only can change what they have written. They cannot change anyone else's messages.

Ryze.com was the next wave of social network websites. It was launched in 2001 to help people leverage their business networks (Ellison and boyd 4). Creator Adrian Scott collaborated with creators of other social network websites, Tribe.net, LinkedIn, and Friendster, to run Ryze.com. They believed that by working together, they could eliminate competition from other social network websites. While it seemed to be a good idea, in the end it did not work out. Ryze.com didn't garner the amount of popularity its developers hoped for. Meanwhile other networks, including LinkedIn and Tribe.net, grew

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[15] *See Appendix B.*

to attract a large membership base. Friendster became extremely popular; however it was short-lived. As fast as it soared to popularity, it also diminished. Friendster, according to experts, is considered "the biggest disappointment in Internet history" (Chafkin 1).

Friendster was created in 2002 as a social complement to Ryze.com (boyd 6). It was designed to compete with successful online dating websites such as Match.com. However, unlike Match.com, where the focus was paring strangers with similar interests, Friendster took the friend-to-friend approach. Friendster creators believed that friends-of-friends made better romantic relationships than stranger-to-stranger. Within a few months of the initial launch, Friendster had soared to popularity with millions of subscribers. The majority of its membership included gay men, bloggers, and college graduates (6). Unlike other social networks such as SixDegrees.com, Friendster prevented its users from viewing profiles of people who were more than four degrees away (friends-of-friends-of-friends-of-friends) (Ellison and boyd 7). In order to get around this, users began adding acquaintances and interesting-looking strangers to expand their Friend list (boyd 6). Some members began massively collecting friends, an activity that was implicitly encouraged through a website feature called "Most Popular" (6). Fake profiles or "Fakesters" representing iconic fictional characters such as celebrities, politicians, concepts, and entities began to pop-up on the Friend lists of Friendster users. In response, Friendster began banishing the Fakesters and they eliminated the "Most Popular" feature on the website. In response to the elimination of features, banishing of members, website technical difficulties, and rumors of an impending fee-based system, early adopters of Friendster slowly began to leave the social network in search of something else. By 2003, the fall of Friendster was very obvious. While Friendster popularity began to diminish in the United States, it increased in other parts of the world. In various Asian countries for example, Friendster is one of the more popular social networks (boyd 7).

Friendster's demise has often been blamed on the 2003 launch of Myspace. There were rumors that Myspace was created to give Friendster a run for its money. Co-founder Tom Anderson says he created the website to compete with other social networks such as Friendster and Xanga. Using the Friendster message board, Friendster members began telling users to leave Friendster and join Myspace (boyd 6). Myspace benefited a great

deal from the viral advertisements of Friendster members. One of the reasons Myspace was more popular among Friendster members and non-members is because it did not contain the amount of restrictions that Friendster had. Myspace allows for the personalization of profile pages and the ability to alter them as many times as users see fit. Myspace also does not place a limit on the number of friends users can have. In fact, it encourages members to get as many friends as possible. Myspace allows teens to join the network, which was not allowed on Friendster. Myspace was seen as the "anti-Friendster" or the alternative. Initially, Myspace members included only those who were looking for an alternative to Friendster. They also included musicians and their fans. Myspace still is considered a popular social network for musicians to keep in contact with their fan base. Membership expanded even more after News Corp purchased Myspace for $580 million dollars in 2005. With all of the media attention, Myspace's popularity increased dramatically. Today, the majority of its members are teens and the post college urban demographic (boyd 6).

2.5 Welcome to Facebook!

In the beginning, social networks typically were created for specific audiences before they expanded to include a broader audience. Facebook originally catered to the college community. As a social network, Facebook stands out for two reasons: its success both in terms of membership and quality of information available on it, and the fact that unlike other networks catering to young users, the information is uniquely and personally identified (Acquisti and Gross 3). At the end of 2007, Facebook expected membership to include more than 50 million people. It gets more than 60 billion page views per month and 50 pages per users everyday. It is considered to be the 6th most trafficked website in the United States and at any given time, there are one to two million people on Facebook (Trendcatching.com 2007). In addition to its modifications and innovations, Facebook has many of the problems inherent with the Internet and virtual communities. It raises issues of privacy, it uses and maintains Internet cookies, and it is a combination of a virtual community and a social network.

Facebook is an English-language social network website that gained its popularity through college students and universities. The name of the site refers to the paper face

books that colleges and preparatory schools give to incoming students, faculty, and staff depicting members of the campus community. People can elect to join one or more participating networks, such as a high school, place of employment, or geographic region. Facebook began as a site used primarily in the United States, however, by 2005 it had expanded its availability globally. Facebook was created by two Harvard students in 2004 because they "wanted to animate the black-and-white thumbnail photos of freshman directories" (Hodge 96). Originally called "thefacebook," Zuckerberg ran the site as a hobby. With a $500,000 investment from Peter Thiel, "thefacebook" went from being a small side project to an actual website. Prior to becoming a website, Facebook was nothing more than a webpage containing student and faculty contact information. Facebook and its core idea began to spread across Harvard's campus and soon made its way to Yale and Stanford University. By the end of its initial launch, Zuckerberg was joined by Dustin Moskowitz and Chris Hughes, who also were students at Harvard. By the end of 2004, the number of registered users had exceeded one million.

One year after the initial launch of "thefacebook," its creators announced on the website that "the" would be dropped from the site name and would officially become a domain website. With a $200,000 domain name purchase from Aboutface Corporation "thefacebook" officially became Facebook.com. Facebook also expanded its membership by adding more American and then Canadian universities. In September 2005, Facebook went one step further and launched a high school version, which was initially kept separate from the college version. By the end of the year, Facebook expanded even further by adding more international universities.

Facebook is free to users and generates revenue from advertising, including banner advertisements and sponsored groups. By 2006, revenue was rumored to be over $1.5 million per week. Users create profiles that often contain photos and lists of personal interests, exchange private or public messages, and join groups of friends. The viewing of detailed profile data is restricted to users from the same network or confirmed friends. According to TechCrunch, about 85% of students in supported colleges have a profile on the site. Of those who enrolled, 60% log in daily. About 85% log in at least once a week, and 93% log in at least once a month (Tech crunch 2007). Chris Hughes, a spokesperson

for Facebook, says that on average, people spend 19 minutes per day or more on Facebook (Jesdanun 3).

Initially, Facebook required all users to have an ".edu" or valid university email address domain to become a member. That however has changed. Once verified, a single user is free to access a variety of options Facebook has to offer, including profiles, friends, personal status, photo albums, notes, groups, events, and messages. On September 11, 2006, Facebook officially eliminated the school email address requirement for membership. Facebook became an open network site, much like other social networking websites, such as Myspace. Today, anyone with a valid email address can join Facebook. Validation is via either mobile phone or a security test, which asks a question about the person attempting to log in. The question is usually related to their birthday, name, or school. Facebook still has an inherent limitation on profile viewing, grouping users into networks based on affiliations with a university, high school, region of the country, or company, and only allowing other users within a network to view each others' profiles (Hodge 98).

The opening of Facebook was not without controversy. Similar to the reaction it received when it expanded its membership beyond colleges to high schools, early Facebook adopters were upset that now absolutely anyone could join Facebook. Many argued that because of the expansion to all Internet users, Facebook was risking loosing its exclusivity and its sense of community in exchange for open access to information. Some expressed concerns about the ability of unknown people to create accounts on the high school version, (since university addresses are not required) and use them to access the college version (by default, strangers can message and view users' friends through a simple global search). As a response, Facebook staff responded by releasing "Limited Profile Privacy Settings," which enable users to "control" who sees what on their profile page. Essentially, Facebook is asking its users to organize their list of "friends" into different groups and assign different privacy levels or settings for each list (Sridharan 2008).

A user's profile[16]is the central and most significant feature of Facebook. The profile acts as mini-biography that includes detailed information. Users can decide the amount of information they want to disclose on their profile page based on options Facebook provides. Without a profile page, users do not exist. The profile is the first page that comes up when a user logs onto Facebook, or if someone is searching for that person. Included in the profile is the profile picture. While Facebook encourages members to use picutres of themselves, the profile picture can be of anyone or anything. If there is no picture provided, a question mark appears in its place. The profile section is also divided into three categories. The first category is titled "Basic." In this section, users post background information about themselves, including but not limited to their gender, birthdates, relationship status, sexual preference, geographic location, and political and religious views. Again, users are not required to fill in all of this information, but the majority do. Each option contains a drop box, that allows users to choose from assorted answers. For example, under "Religious Views," users can select Atheist, Agnostic, Spiritual, Protestant, and Jewish. Immediately following the first category is the "Contact" section. Here, users can fill in information such as email, instant messaging screen name(s), their personal or favorite website(s), mobile and land phone numbers, campus residence room numbers, home address, city, state, and zip codes. The final sub-category is called "Personal." This section allows users to list their favorite activities, interests, music, television shows, books, and quotes. In addition, other options allow users to list their education background and describe their employment information.

Just about every aspect of Facebook has stirred up controversy at one time or another. But, one of the most controversial events to take place was the creation of Facebook's versions of an RSS Feed[17], the "News Feed" and "Mini Feed.[18]" On September 5, 2006, Facebook introduced both features. The News Feed appears on every Facebook member's homepage, displaying the recent Facebook activities of their "friends." The Mini Feed keeps a log of similar events on each member's profile page.

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[16] *See Appendix C*.

[17] RSS Feeds are web feed formats that are used to publish frequently updated digital content, such as blogs, news feeds or podcasts.

[18] See News Feed and Mini Feed Appendices D and E.

Members can manually delete items from the feeds if they wish to do so. Prior to these features, a user's profile details, including contact information, relationship status and hobbies were generally hidden from others unless they were already a part of that particular user's network of friends. Now, users who log onto Facebook might instantly find out that someone they know has joined a new social group, posted more photos, or begun dating their best friend.

Facebook users responded negatively to the new additions. Immediately after the launch, users created Facebook groups such as "Students Against Facebook News Feed[19]," which included a petition signed by 600,000 Facebook members. One of the main reasons users disliked the feature was they felt it was an invasion of privacy. However, the information on the News Feed has always been available; the feeds just made the information more accessible. For example, if someone within a users' network wanted to know the status of that user's relationship they could just go to the profile page and find out. But the feeds make the information much more accessible, eliminating the "chore" or having to search for information. While Facebook has offered many ways to minimize what information is displayed on both the News and Mini Feeds, it still has not prevented critical commentary regarding the implementation of the features. In the dozens of news articles that surfaced after Facebook announced the features, users were quoted as saying that the feeds had gone too far. They used terms like "Big Brother," "Orwellian," and "Stalkerish." Facebook creators responded by apologizing and offering additional privacy options to coincide with the News Feeds. For example, users can go into their Facebook preferences and change the amount of information displayed on the feeds page. Another problem with the feeds is that users may be under the impression that deleting something from one's Mini Feed automatically deletes it from the News Feed as well. But, it does not. Technically, there is no way to prevent some forms of updates to one's profile from being broadcast over the News Feed, since Facebook offers a limited opt-out list. Therefore, users' information may even be send over the News Feed without the knowledge of the user.

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[19] See Students Against News Feed Appendix F.

Other notable Facebook features include "Groups," "Account and Privacy," and the "Marketplace." Facebook "Groups" allow users to create groups or participate in existing ones. There are two types of groups: general and private. With general groups, anyone is free to join and contribute to the discussion boards and posting photos. Private groups are restrictive, and the only way can join is if they are invited, or if they get permission from the creator of the group. Groups can be used for anything from collaborating on university projects to "closed" discussions. The majority of the groups are "fun-related." For example, there are hundreds of groups dedicated to television shows, musicians, and films. "Events" lets users take part in and plan events. It allows them to recommend and invite other members from their network. The "Account and Privacy" section enables users to log into their Facebook preferences, and to setup and alter information pertaining to privacy. In the account section, users can change contact information, such as their email address, password, and their password security question The privacy feature also lets users "control" all aspects of their Facebook identity, meaning that they can change settings that would either limit the amount of information they want their friends to see.

Every day, Facebook seems to create new applications and features for the website. As a result, it has become difficult to keep track of everything available. One of the latest creations is called the "Marketplace.[20]" The idea behind it is to establish free classified advertisements on the website, making it a competitor with established online companies such as Craigslist. Through the Marketplace, users can post advertisements and browse the free classifieds arranged in categorizes such as "Sale," "Housing," "Employment," and "Miscellaneous." The creation of the Marketplace was made possible through the creation of the Facebook Platform (API), launched on May 24, 2007. Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg said that the platform is a software environment where others can create their own services, much as anyone can write programs for Microsoft's Windows operating system on PCs (Kirkpatrick 2007). In addition, Facebook also launched Facebook markup language, which is used to customize the "look and feel" of applications that developers created. This enables Facebook to launch applications

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[20] See Appendix G

such as "Gifts," which allows users to send virtual gifts and "Video," an application that allows users to share homemade videos with each other.

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CHAPTER THREE

AN ANALYSIS OF THREE FACEBOOK-RELATED SITUATIONS

</div>

3.1 Introduction

> *Nobody is literally forced to join an online social network, and most networks we know about encourage, but do not force users to reveal--for instance--their dates of birth, their cell phone numbers, or where they currently live. And yet, one cannot help but marvel at the amount, detail, and nature of the personal information some users provide, and ponder how informed this information sharing can be. Changing cultural trends, familiarity and confidence in technology, lack of exposure or memory of the misuses of personal data by others can all play a role in this unprecedented information revelation (Acquisti and Gross 2).*

In *The Net*, as a consequence of Angela's lifestyle, she willingly allows her social and professional information and her personal relationships to be placed within the "net" or the Internet. What's interesting about the quote above is that it articulates the ongoing problems and issues with Facebook as well as other online social network websites. Users within these sites are not forced to reveal the types of information that can be found on the majority of their profile pages. Although most users do not routinely reveal everything about themselves, the majority of Facebook users do. A cursory examination of the information users post on their Facebook profiles reveals that users include their land and mobile phone numbers, place of residence, email addresses, and other types of information that would not normally be provided outside of knowing and interacting with someone physically. This shows how communication is shifting from direct to indirect-- where virtual reality and online rules are tossed. Facebook should be thought of as the equivalent of a graffiti wall, accessible to anyone passing by. The only difference is that instead of users physically providing information, they are doing it virtually. By including this type and amount of personal information about oneself on Facebook and any type of virtual community, users disclose information that is usually confined to face-to-face interactions.

As mentioned in chapter one, Facebook users are so immersed in this virtual community that they are reconstructing their identities through the "looking glass," which

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is Facebook. Turkle (1995) argues that when we step through the screen into virtual communities, we reconstruct our identities on the other side of the looking glass (177). Turkle further suggests that the Internet is another element of computer culture that has contributed to thinking about identity as a multiplicity. On it, people are able to build a self by cycling through many selves (178). Through Facebook, more specifically on a user's profile page others have the opportunity to take an identity used in the physical world and either reinvent themselves or they can decide not to go through the process of creating and including information.

For those who do decide to reveal themselves through this website, it is often that a user may start out posting information that they may have shared only with people in the physical world. And either that information continues to expand due to users' becoming more comfortable with the website or they see their "friends" or the people they are networked with add more of their own information to their profile. Alternatively, and more recently since Facebook has been making headlines in the media, users are also decreasing the amount of information that they provide on Facebook. For example, on any given day, one could visit Facebook and discover via News Feed that someone has updated his or her profile by adding his/her political or religious views. However, five minutes later, or even less time that that same person may have deleted information or photos that were once available on their profile. When an individual makes a change on his/her profile page or anywhere else on Facebook, the people within that person's network are all notified.

Facebook has been the source of disclosure, formations of identity, and community. The instances in which Facebook has been affected by individuals or groups of people continually is expanding. This presentation will describe and analyze the conflicts that have occurred due to the misunderstandings and misuse of Facebook. Each situation will be listed under subheadings including identity, community, and disclosure.

3.2 Identity, Disclosure and Community on Facebook

Identity on Facebook

On April 16 2007, what has been described as the "single deadliest school shooting in United States' history," took place on Virginia Tech University's campus. The shooting comprised two separate attacks that took place two hours a part. Cho Seung-Hui killed 32 people and wounded 25 others before committing suicide. The shooting sparked a number of intense debates regarding gun laws, journalism ethics and, interestingly, communication on the Internet. Immediately after word got out about what had occurred at Virginia Tech, students as well as the rest of the world were anxious to find out who was responsible. Speculation as to who the shooter or shooters were flooded newscasts, blogs, the Internet and individual conversations. Anyone scouring the Facebook profiles of the nearly 40,000 Virginia Tech students past and present could have come across Wayne Chiang's profile. His profile picture featured him, smiling, with nearly a dozen rifles hanging around his neck. Several more photos of Chiang with guns were on his page, added days before the shootings. A quick Internet search revealed his other online profiles and his Livejournal page, each showing several more photos demonstrating his love of guns. There also was an entry about a recent breakup with a girl named Janice, and a reprinted letter of acceptance to Virginia Tech's graduate school, where Chiang wrote he was "going back for more hell" (MTV Online News 2007).

Soon after the discovery of Chiang's online profiles, two bloggers[21] independently posted links to Chiang's profiles and fingered him as he suspect. One wrote on his Facebook profile, "I'd add him to see his whole profile, but he's dead in disgrace, along with [32] others" (MTV Online News). Within an hour, hundreds of people were leaving comments on Chiang's online profiles. Comments ranged from angry and hostile to saddened and puzzled. Several other blogs shared the link to his profiles, and within an hour, an angry online mob had formed. His Facebook "Friends" request had exceeded 80,000. It was true that both Chiang and Cho resembled one another both physically and ethnically[22]. In addition, the fact that they both had photos in which they posed with weapons supported the rumors that were circulating around on the Internet. While both

[21] The bloggers have remained anonymous.
[22] See Appendix H.

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men were of Asian descent, Wayne Chiang is Chinese and Cho Seung-Hui was Korean. Chiang admitted that were many similarities. In an interview, he stated:

> I was five for five. I'm Asian; I went to [Virginia] Tech. I used to live in the dorm where the shootings first occurred. And there are the infamous pictures of me with my guns. It sure sounds like me (MTV.com).

Initially, Chiang had no intention of commenting or even correcting speculation that he was the shooter. It was not until after all of the information was revealed and the number of hits on his webpage had reached astronomical numbers that he even made a statement. According to an ABC News interview, Chiang said he did not speak out because he wanted to see how much money he could make from a web tool called *AdSense*, which allows webmasters to place advertisements on their site and earn a portion of the revenue. He said the goal was to see how many hits he could get and that any profits, he insisted, would go to charity. Hours after the story broke that Chiang was the suspected shooter, and speculation traveled through the Internet and the media, Chiang finally stepped forward and released a statement saying that he was not the killer. In addition to the public statement, he also sent Facebook a letter responding to the temporary suspension of his account. Facebook stepped in, not because of circulating rumors, but because of the photos in which Chiang was posed with his guns was not considered to be in a "sporting context." In other words, they were not appropriate to be placed on Facebook. Aside from being known as the person thought to be responsible for the shootings, Chiang also became the poster boy for gun rights. He is quoted saying that if everyone were able to carry concealed weapons, the death toll [at Virginia Tech] would have been much smaller (ABC News.com).

Even though Chiang released his statements, the damage had already been done. Media outlets such as CNN and Fox News had already posted Chiang's photo on television and their websites. Fox News reporter Geraldo Rivera went one step further and posted Chiang's Facebook profile (excluding his name) and said, "people might suspect that this might have been the perpetrator." Another news correspondent, Megan Clark, explained how upon discovery of the Wayne Chiang's profile, Fox News began searching for him. It was not until NBC received the media package from the actual shooter, Cho Seung-Hui, that the idea of Wayne Chiang being the shooter began to

diminish. However, it did not change the fact that Chiang would forever be the person responsible for what occurred at Virginia Tech. His life has changed forever. In interviews he conducted during and after the situation, he was continually asked if he would take down his Facebook and Livejournal profiles. He said that he would change his main Facebook profile picture, which showed him posing with his collections of guns. However, at the time of this analysis, Chiang's (Facebook) profile is no longer available on Facebook.

Considering the issues of identity their stories raise, it is hard not to immediately think about the film, *The Net*, discussed in chapter one, in which a similar situation occurred. First, Angela Bennett disclosed her entire life on the Internet, and then as a result of a thief wanting a stolen disk, she had her identity completely erased and replaced with a new one. She lived for an entire week as a fugitive. The fictional version of events provides a real world lesson (or warning) about the ability of identity to be confused when individuals willingly disclose personal information on websites such as Facebook It also demonstrates how both lost control of their own identity; how they chose to represent and portray themselves and how easy others can take control and alter or misconstrue identities. Whereas *The Net* was a fictional story, Wayne Chiang's was not. His identity was mistaken and would probably have been taken away because so much of his information was readily available on the Internet. Although Chiang's situation was resolved rather quickly and was not taken as far as Angela's, (it was fairly close-and the) damage had already been done. More importantly, it points out how easily one's identity or personal information can be accessed and negatively characterized. It also shows how the context of situations can shift. The photo of Wayne Chiang pre-Virginia Tech shootings was nothing more than just his showing off his hobby. But, post-shootings, the photo became a symbol of danger as well as what destroyed many lives at Virginia Tech.

Both Wayne Chiang and Angela Bennett lived their lives through the Internet. Angela lived her entire life through her computer. She had completely isolated herself from the rest of the world. The only person she was in contact with was her mother, whom she rarely saw. The rest of the time, Angela remained in her home communicating with people through her computer. Similar to Angela, Chiang also worked with

computers. He worked for a computer firm in Virginia. He also spent a significant amount of time on the Internet. He belonged to Livejournal and Facebook, where he posted many blogs, photos, and other information regarding his personal life. In fact, one of the factors that contributed to his mistaken identity was that, like Cho Seung-Hui, Chiang had also broken up with his girlfriend and he had made note of it on Livejournal blog. He also posted details of the breakup, including a poem and assorted quotes. Similar to those who do not worry about access to their personal information, Chiang was not concerned about his reputation when rumors began circulating regarding the resemblance between himself and Cho Seung-Hui. According to Music Television News (MTV) (2007), initially, Chiang did not take the situation seriously. He said, "I joked about it with a friend online. I didn't think it would go anywhere, but obviously it did." However, once the situation began to progress, he began to talk about the power of the Internet and of the impact the media. The instant and rapid spread of information means one's identity is fluid and changeable at any given time. Once everything was cleared up, and after Chiang released his statement clarifying that he was not the shooter, again he was asked if this incident would encourage him to cancel his membership or alter the information he placed on his blogs and Facebook. Chiang responded that because he had been a part of these communities for such a long period of time, this one incident would not force him to completely abandon these websites. Unlike Angela Bennett in *The Net,* who ended up changing her Internet communication and socialization behavior, Chiang did not. He, like many other real life users, has failed to realize that his use and penetration of the network has not changed. Instead, perceptions of him by those who use online social networks have been changed.

On this scale, incidents such as his are rare. But, the daily character attacks are more common and problematic. Once a person's image has been redefined, it is difficult to restore. Normally when one hears of identity theft, he/she tends to think about credit card or Internet fraud. Hardly anyone who is part of online communities gives a second thought to the types of distortion or misrepresentation that have the potential to occur. While incidents such as the one Wayne Chiang experienced are slowly becoming more common, there are still Facebook and Internet users who do not believe that something such as mistaken identity is a possibility. This lack of concern can lead to real-life

incidents similar to that of Wayne Chiang. And if it does occur, responses would probably mirror those responses Chiang and Angela gave: "I really did not think this could happen to me" (Music Television News, 2007 & *The Net)*.

Within minutes of the Virginia Tech shooting, based on the photos and personal information found on Wayne Chiang's Livejournal and Facebook pages, people on the Internet whose agenda was to search for the killer drew the conclusion that Chiang was the person responsible for what had happened. Although Chiang does not regret having posted his personal information on Facebook or Livejournal and because situations like his are few and far between, the fact that something bad did occur means that the likelihood of a similar reoccurrence is feasible. There could be other situations similar to Chiang's; however, they may either not be as dramatic or as sensationalized as his. Moreover, the smallest amount of information found on Facebook is accessible even to those who are not members of the website. Chiang is the perfect example of that. Not only was his Facebook page accessible, but if one were to do a general Internet search using his names, a link to his Facebook and Livejournal pages would have appeared in the search results.[23] In turn, he became the target of bad publicity, hate, and ridicule and became a suspected criminal in less than one day.

(Self) Disclosure through Facebook

Acquisti and Gross (2005) argue that Facebook offers users the ability to disclose a large and varied amount of personal information. They concluded their 2005 study examining the privacy implications if Facebook, noting that Facebook users generally are oblivious, unconcerned, or just pragmatic when it comes to their personal privacy. They argue that personal data is generously provided and setting preferences to limit privacy is sparingly used. Users may put themselves at risk for a variety of attacks on their physical and online personas. Acquisti and Gross stress that college students in particular, even if they currently are not concerned about the visibility of their personal information, may become so as they enter sensitive and delicate jobs in a few years-when the data currently mined could still be available. Moreover, perspective employers and schools (including

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[23] Because of this incident, this may no longer be applicable to Wayne Chiang.

student affairs and admission offices) are taking the information available on students and using it to determine various factors about an individual. Organizations troll social network websites like Facebook looking for information about people because they know the chances of finding perspective employees or students on it are very high. In addition, the probability of their having what would be photos or other content considered embarrassing if they were to become public outside of Facebook is also very high. People who are on Facebook and include information about themselves are being judged based on those criteria even if it may not be factual.

Some users believe that the photos, comments, or whatever they post online will always belong to them. Many do not consider that what they disclose online has the potential to come back to haunt them. For example, there have been a series of incidents involving underage students who've posted pictures of themselves with alcohol and other illegal substances, prompting attention from school administrations (Cornell IT Policy 2). Most Facebook members who disclose information on their pages are either completely unaware of the consequences or they believe that "privacy precautions" prevent anything negative happening. In other words, Facebook users assume that the privacy features that Facebook offers, such as blocking profile access from those outside of a network the "limited profile" viewing option will protect their information. Even if they have heard about some of the situations that have occurred as a result of too much disclosure on Facebook, they are not aware that if they put something onto Facebook and then they take it down a day or two later, or if they alter it in any way, it still has the possibility of remaining available to the rest of the world[24]. They fail to consider who has viewed posted materials regardless of whether or not the material is still online.

Another way of looking at disclosure is as the loss of inhibitions. In the last few years, since studies have begun examining online communities, social networks, and the behaviors that exist within them, the term "disinhibitions" has begun to be tossed around (Joinson 41). Joinson (1998) cites Prentice-Dunn and Rogers (1982), who state that

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[24] When a user adds photos to their album, they have the option of entering captions next to each photo and "tagging" the people the photos. When a user tags a friend in a photo, that photo will appear in their profile.

"disinhibition" is a product of reduced self-awareness, which leads to less concern about the judgment of others (41). "Disinhibition" on the Internet is not defined as flaming or hostile communication, but rather is seen as any behavior that is characterized by an apparent reduction in concerns for self-presentation (44). There is a growing acceptance that the Internet somehow leads people to behave in ways they do not in "real life." Within the online community, the differences in behavior are recognized through the development of terms such as "flaming", "flame on/off" and "flame-war"[25] (44). However, Rheingold (1993) argues "the medium [Internet] by its nature will be a place where people often end up revealing themselves far more intimately than they would be inclined to do without the intermediation of screens and pseudonyms (27). In a study examining "disinhibition" on the Internet and computer-mediated communication, Joinson (1998) argues that there is an apparent willingness of people to make available on their homepage personal, normally protected information (age, family, curriculum vitae); therefore behaviors on the Internet differ from behaviors of real life (48). This illustrates the second issue of disclosure in this analysis.

On July 15, 2007, Miss New Jersey winner Amy Polumbo, made headlines due to some photos posted on her Facebook page. Described as "less-than-ladylike-photos, Polumbos' pictures[26]as well as her Facebook profile, were set to "private," meaning no one other than those who were within her network should have had access to them. The pictures made their way to the media soon after she was crowned Miss New Jersey. Although the leak was a rumored attempt to blackmail Polumbo into giving up her crown, it also sparked controversy and an increase in awareness that even though Facebook users may have their pages set to "private," the profile is still very much accessible. Polumbo ultimately released a dozen of her photographs to show that there was nothing wrong. Regardless of how graphic or explicit the photos were, they did call

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[25] Flaming is the sending of messages that include bad language or repeat messaging-especially of undesirable or obscene text. Flaming, (also known as flame wars) occurs in un-moderated chat rooms. Flame-war is any type of online discussion that turns into hostile exchange or insults and angry remarks. Flame on/off occurs when an online discussion goes back and forth using non-hostile and hostile language.
[26] See Appendix I.

into question the damage they could do to her "Beauty Queen" public image. Polumbo has talked to several media sources in an effort to defend her photos. In an interview with *The Today Show*, she stated:

> They're [photos] [sic] are not bad, but they were meant to be private. And it's making me feel very vulnerable that the entire country has to see them now because of this situation (2007).

According to Facebook's policy, setting a profile to "private" means that other than Facebook staff, no one can access a profile unless they are a part of a user's social network. Therefore, in Polumbo's situation, no one was supposed to have access to her photos except for those within her network. In a *New York Post* interview, Polumbo stated:

> These pictures were meant to be between my friends and myself. I never could imagine that someone would want to do this to another person. Between my friends and I, there pictures were innocuous (2007).

Contrary to what the majority of users seem to believe, privacy does not exist on the Internet. Therefore, whatever is placed onto the Internet *is* accessible. With the right tools, information can also be cached[27] or accessed on Facebook. Moreover, just because something is set as private on Facebook or because access is technically restricted does not mean that there are not other ways of accessing information, in this case photos. Furthermore, Facebook's "private" setting is not foolproof either. It may be a good idea to market to Facebook users, but there is no question that the information that they choose to disclose on Facebook or any other website has the potential to be accessed.

Amy Polumbo and Angela Bennett's situations are similar because they were both subjected to public sanction or their actions on the Internet. Angela was criminalized because of information she did not know she possessed. Because of a disk and what she placed on the Internet, she was set up as a criminal. Her false criminalization almost cost her life. Amy Polumbo knew about her photos and she knew what the content of the photos were. However, she assumed that there was nothing wrong with them. Amy was scorned in the media as well as the pageant world because of the pictures. While they

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[27] A cache stores copies of web pages on a computer's hard disk.

were both able to overcome their situations, there's no question that they both occurred because of their association with the Internet and their individual virtual communities.

Whether or not Amy Polumbo made a mistake, (or was) set up is not really the point. The problem at hand is that she divulged what she herself described as "private and innocent photos," which were meant only to be viewed by the people within her social circle. She assumed that "private" meant that it would not be disclosed. While it is unknown whether the person who tried blackmailing her came from her friends network, the point is that someone was able to gain access to these photos and use them against her. Her being a public figure in an industry that prides itself on morals made the situation much worse. The point is that there have been photos posted and accessed on Facebook. The assumption that no one is looking or will not care is wrong. And the potential to incriminate oneself is a strong possibility. Although Polumbo's photos were not as bad as some photos that have surfaced, they still affected her. Polumbo went through the last weeks of July 2007 being scrutinized by the media. The pageant world had considered forcing her to relinquish her crown and barring her from competing for Miss America. While she was able to keep her crown and move on to the Miss America pageant, the situation illustrates how posting personal and arguably controversial photos or text on a public website can be problematic.

Facebook as a Community

Facebook often is described as both an online social network and a virtual community. As noted in chapter two, the term "virtual community" wasn't used to describe online social networks such as Facebook until the early 1990s, when Howard Rheingold coined the term to describe what he believed was occurring on online social networks. Rheingold (1993) defined virtual communities as "social aggregations that emerged from the 'Net when enough people carried on those public discussions [using the Internet] long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace" (23). The term "virtual community" seems to trump online social networking what Facebook is and what it provides users. On the surface, Facebook does not seem to contain all of the amenities that a community has, nor does it seem that it can have effects on the ways in which users socialize and communicate with one

another. But it does. Facebook is redefining what it means to be a part of a community. Based on the conventional definition, a community is a group of people with a common background or with shared interests within a society. Eliminating the physical aspect of community and replacing it with virtual involvement would be the way to describe the community that makes up Facebook.

Community is a central aspect of Facebook in terms of how the website it orchestrated. Every aspect of a user's profile, friends, applications, and more make up the community. For example, the "friends" within a users network are in themselves a mini-community. When users create an account and add their friends, preferences, and interests, they are in a sense creating their own communities inside of Facebook's larger community. At the user's discretion that can range from open to restrictive. It is all based on the "privacy preferences" and other limitations a user may apply to their profiles. From there, users create their own communities using their circle of friends and the applications Facebook provides to "decorate" and improve the community they created for themselves. One of Facebook's features that illustrates the notion of community is the group option. Through these groups, Facebook users can come together and form even smaller and possibly much more exclusive communities. The types and numbers of groups are infinite. There are groups for everyone. If there is not a group that fits a certain preference, then Facebook provides the resources to create one that suits the need. From here, users can decide if they want the group to remain open, which means that anyone on Facebook can join. Groups can be created exclusively for the creator and whomever he/she wants to include in the group (also known as a "closed group"). In this case, the creators send out invitations to their selected choices. Those invited would receive a Facebook message with the invitation. They would then accept or decline the invitation. If a non-invited member user wants to join a "closed group," they would have to a "ask permission." When this occurs, a message is sent to the creator asking permission to join. Within the group, users talk about anything and everything. It's like an advanced chat room, except it does not take place in real-time as most chat rooms do. Users communicate with one another by writing on the "wall" of the groups' page. Photos, external website links, video links, and just about anything else can be added to the group page. So, while Facebook is described as a virtual community, the groups

within Facebook can be described as communities within a community. Users can join interest groups on Facebook or post topics for enlisting users in their own groups or causes (DeBrosse 2007). While many of the groups are for recreational and frivolous purposes, some are the exact opposite.

The groups created on Facebook are places where people sharing a common interest can get together, have discussions, or to keep in contact with one another without having to send out individual messages. Groups are also another way to meet and add to a user's friends list. Oftentimes, there are people that are a part of a group who are also friends with the creator or another affiliate and they have the opportunity to network and add to their own community of friends. Some of the groups are also created as a way for users t express themselves positively or negatively. A good example of this would Facebook's becoming an online bulletin board for Virginia Tech University students to post their whereabouts and conditions after the campus shootings (Pelofsky 2007). The Facebook group, "I'm OK at VT,"[28] was possibly the largest group created during the time of the shootings. Originally, it was created as a way for Facebook members and Virginia Tech students to keep their friends and families updated about their whereabouts. It then became a group for those not affiliated with the school to receive updated information about the events that were taking place. The group since has become an ongoing memorial for those killed, including links to You Tube tributes and other forums where students can leave their condolences. Massive group tribute pages mushroomed to honor those who were involved. One group surpassed 116,329 members by midday on April 18, 2007. It featured hundreds of college logos, edited to adopt the Virginia Tech nickname: "Today we are all Hokies" (USA Today Newspaper 2007). When asked why there was a sudden increase in using Facebook's group option as a means of gathering and communicating, many responses from students and non-students were similar: everyone they know is on Facebook.

Not all of the groups created on Facebook are positive and inviting. In fact many of the groups created have become forums for Facebook users to express themselves in

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[28] See Appendix J.

ways that they would not ordinarily do in their public (physical) lives. In this case, Facebook provides the platform and the resources that allow users to present a different self through the website and the group option. With the availability of groups and communities come the implications. It may seem like a good idea to be able to create a place to express ideas no matter how offensive and possibly illegal they may be; however, that does not necessarily mean that the groups will remain discreet from those that are rejected for membership or who lack access to Facebook. It used to be assumed that the only way to have knowledge about the types of groups (open or closed) was to have a valid password to log onto Facebook or somehow know someone who could get access, but that is not the case anymore. With the advent of Google searches, as well as some of the widespread media attention brought to some of the Facebook groups, it is a lot easier to find out about what was meant to be a "private community."

One Facebook group that has declared itself an "open group" is called *30 Reasons Girls Should Call It a Night*.[29] This group currently has over 170,000 members, most of whom are female. In addition to the large number of members, there are also over 5,000 photos of college-aged women and their friends posed various stages of drunkenness The group is centered on the 30 reasons (created by the members) why girls should call it a night. For example, reason number eight says:

> "Your [sic] slurring your words so bad, that nobody can understand what your [sic] saying and then when they say what, you can't even remember what you were talking about" (Facebook.com).

There are discussion board topics such as "What is Your Hangover Cure" and "What is the stupidest thing you [sic] ever said drunk?" The pictures[30] are accompanied by full names as well as the names of the schools or locations where members reside. All of this information is readily available, without any concern (or regard as to) who may access the group on Facebook's website. The group has received a lot of attention through the media. The UK's *Daily Mail* website is thought to be the first outlet to bring this Facebook group to the public. *The Daily Mail* published some of the photos found on the

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[29] See Appendix L.
[30] See Appendix M.

group page. Eventually, other news outlets, including Fox News, Reuters, CNN, MSNBC, and web blogs such as Feministing.com. followed suit. CNN has published an in-depth report about the group. It talks about the content and the glamorization of binge drinking that is displayed, not just in the groups, but also on Facebook The moderator of the group (who chose not to have her name published) says that she doesn't find anything wrong with the group. She has said:

> It's just something fun to do. You need to be able to laugh at yourself sometimes. [They think we're] sloppy, unladylike, low class. [But] I've noticed when college boys do stupid things when they're drunk, they're just being boys (Cohen 2007).

While her statement may be insightful the problem is that the pictures that are available on this group include possible illegal activity (if the women in the pictures are underage). Furthermore, they are placing themselves in compromising and potentially dangerous situations. The pictures also suggest a moral problem. They are putting their academic and professional lives in jeopardy based on the fact that employers and schools use Facebook to keep track of applicants. Interestingly, this is one area in which the moderator has expressed concern. She said she does worry that future employers could see the photos when she applies for a job. "I know an employer won't realize I know how to separate work and personal time, and I have no intentions of being wrapped around a toilet at a job" (Cohen 2007). Nevertheless, there are two photos of her posed drinking out of two beer bottles as well as one where she is passed out next to a toilet.[31]

This group and the plot of *The Net* are completely different. However, Angela Bennett basically did the same thing as the women depicted in the group. She disclosed everything about her life through the web communities of which she was a part with no regard for her personal safety. Her affiliation with the communities made her an easy target. The company and the agents that were after her used the information from her communities to track her and to track, monitor her friends, and in some cases to kill her friends. This is not to suggest that literal murders or situations of that magnitude will occur, but figurative ones can and, in this film, they did occur. It is not known if this Facebook group has negatively impacted its members; however, it is a possibility,

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[31] See Appendix N.

especially since it has been in the press. Schools and employers are aware. In addition, the photos found on the website are not digitally pixilated or blurred to prevent facial identification. So, the ability to identify the women in the pictures will be extremely easy. Furthermore, the group includes a "spin-off" website[32] with the same title as the Facebook group. This website contains even more photos. It also provides a link to the Facebook group and the future *30 Reasons Guys Should Call It Night* website and Facebook group.

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[32] Website URL: http://www.30reasonsagirlshouldcallitanight.com/

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE STUDIES

4.1 Introduction

This thesis has focused on the negative consequences that have surfaced as a result of the nature of users with both Facebook and the Internet. Using the three concepts of identity, disclosure, and community, three real-life Facebook-related situations were detailed and analyzed. The film *The Net* is incorporated in this analysis as a "cautionary tale" of what can happen when too much of a person's life is brought into cyberspace. Throughout this paper, *The Net* became the model more so than a fictional story. All three of the situations discussed the character Angela Bennett faced in the film. This thesis also highlighted background information about virtual communities and social networks, both of which are major parts of Facebook. A discussion of current and past research regarding privacy, intimacy, virtual communities, social networks, the Internet, and Facebook is also provided in chapter one. However, the research examining the negative aspects of Facebook is scarce. There have been a number of quantitative studies examining some negative aspects of the website, but there has not been any research that critically discusses it. This is one of the primary reasons this topic was chosen to be discussed and analyzed.

4.2 Facebook Past, Present and Future

It seems that the original idea of Facebook is no longer valid. In the beginning, Facebook was described as an online yearbook or student directory. It was a place for students to come together and interact with one another or to catch up with classmates. Much of the information that was available on Facebook was expected to remain within the website. More specifically, details that users disclosed were supposed to stay within the circle of friends. Facebook had a sense of exclusiveness meaning only certain people (i.e., college students with a valid school email address) could belong. This was also seen as a security measure. It was also what was so appealing to its users. Today it is virtually impossible to assume that what is disclosed on Facebook within an individual's network will remain there. Facebook is no longer restrictive in terms of who can and cannot join

the community. Facebook is now available to anyone with a verifiable email address. There is no way that users could have predicted that what they say or what they do on this website would have the potential to emerge as something controversial and external to the community. Moreover, most users probably never considered Facebook as a part of the public domain. Everyday there are new features or applications added to Facebook. Because of this, it is difficult to keep up with the upgrades, additions, and situations. Facebook is continually providing users the tools to expose (and detail) more about themselves.

In September 2007, Facebook announced that it would begin making the names and profiles of its members available to non-members and they would eventually be accessible through search engine listings. The "Public Search" feature will allow people who are not on Facebook to search for friends or others by typing their names into a search box on Facebook's homepage.[33] In time, Facebook will make available the member information through search engines such as Yahoo, Google, and MSN. Facebook engineers and others behind the scenes argue that the public listing search actually contains less information than someone could find right after signing up; therefore, there isn't a risk of exposing any new information, and users have complete control over the public search listings (Facebook.com 2007). Furthermore, Facebook also contends that users who do not want their listings to become public can opt out by changing their privacy settings within Facebook. By doing so, search listings will only appear in outside searches if a users search settings are set to "Everyone" on Facebook (Facebook 2007). The Public Search feature runs the risk of being utilized for purposes other than curiosity or as a determining factor for joining Facebook. Negative comments regarding this new feature have come mostly from social network critics who argue that Facebook is more concerned with membership than protecting its member's privacy. Many feel that Facebook is slowly eroding the privacy of its members. Privacy was one of the features Facebook proudly displayed as a major component of its popularity and success. Users gravitated towards these features and statements. Some still trust that the illusion of privacy still exists within this website.

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[33] Public Search Appendix O.

Critic Om Malik argues that every time a non-Facebook user finds someone on Facebook after a "search," he/she might feel compelled to sign up and get more information (Malik 2007). This is a problem, since the majority of Facebook profiles contain not only photos, but users often provide other details deemed personal, such as phone numbers, and employment histories. These can be used to steal a user's identity (Blakely 2007). This is not to say that this was not a concern prior to the announcement of the Public Search feature, because it was. Facebook profiles that are linked from outside Facebook have always been accessible through search engines. Google currently lists 25,000 Facebook profiles (Claburn 2007).

People behind the scenes at Facebook want the website to become the "go-to" place for its users and for those who are not yet members. Mark Zuckerberg and his associates have huge aspirations for the future of Facebook. In a *Newsweek* cover story, Zuckerberg says that he wants to keep "you--student, graduate or graybeard logged onto Facebook, organizing virtually everything you do via the social graphs" (Levy 2007). So far, Facebook seems to be living up to their goal. Every month or so, Facebook introduces new tools and applications that allow Zuckerberg to accomplish his goal of creating a virtual place for people to live their lives. To accomplish this task, Facebook has begun expanding their target demographic beyond college students. More people over the age of 25 are beginning to infiltrate Facebook. Facebook's people claim that more than half of its 35 million active users are not college students, and that by the end of 2007, less than 30 percent of Facebook users will sport college IDs (Levy 2007). The idea behind expanding membership is that as more people join, bringing their friends, there will be a mass movement to access the world through interest in the people they know personally (Levy 2007). However, not all of the original demographic (college students) are excited about Facebook's opening up even more than it already has, welcoming swarms of those whose absence was previously appreciated: older people (Levy 2007).

In addition to demographic expansion, Facebook is looking to expand globally. Currently, Facebook is available only in English. However, Facebook versions in other

languages are in development.[34] Still, if Facebook's goal is to include everyone from every culture and age group, there are some concerns and potential obstacles that can become problematic if not addressed sooner rather than later. Facebook was designed for college students and it still is. College students continue to be the largest demographic that utilizes Facebook on a daily basis. Since Facebook has begun expanding beyond their original demographic, questions have arisen, such as whether or not Facebook can sustain the popularity that it has with young, English-speaking members. Question about the format and the grammar used on Facebook have also been raised. The majority of Facebook's features and applications were designed and worded specifically for the demographic that currently dominates the website. Much of what is on the site tilts towards students. If Facebook wants to expand globally to include international membership, it will have to reprogram and possibly redesign the website in order to cater to a broader clientele. If the goal of Facebook is to get everyone to become members of the website, how will these changes affect its use?

4.3 Implications for Future Scholarship

In the future, Facebook is going to encounter a lot more issues aside from figuring out how to cater to everyone. Since Facebook has made it abundantly clear that it is here to stay, more research needs to be conducted about the website and the impact that it is having on users. Some of the issues that need to be addressed happen to be some of the themes from the three situations discussed in this paper. The first story about Wayne Chiang's involvement with the Virginia Tech school shootings brings up the issue of celebrity. Chiang's reputation and life were nearly destroyed because of shared similarities between himself and Cho Seung-Hui. Owing to photos, blog entries, and other details, for a whole day, Chiang had an entire country believing that he was responsible for a massacre. Initially, he didn't correct the rumors about his involvement. Instead, he joked about the story and he even created a website that monitored the amount of website visits he received. This situation turned him into an instant celebrity. And for a while, it seemed that he was basking in the limelight. He was getting attention from

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[34] Facebook is currently the top website in Canada, and the geographic network with the most Facebook members is London, UK (Levy 2007).

everyone and everywhere. Of course, by the time he decided that he wanted to clear his name, it was too late. Hammock (2008) argues that the Internet is setting a new standard for celebrity. Fame is no longer about getting "15 minutes," it's about becoming famous to 15 people. And Chiang has done exactly that. He is forever associated with what occurred at Virginia Tech. Websites such as YouTube and Myspace have become havens for those looking to get into the spotlight. YouTube has even created an awards ceremony for its "celebrities." The problem isn't that people want to become celebrities; the problem is that once they decide that they do not want the attention, it's often too late to get out. What is not understood is that anything posted will always be available. Currently, there is no available research as to how celebrity status impacts Facebook users. Nor is there any information discussing what role Facebook plays in creating or even encouraging a celebrity mentality. As Facebook continues, and as more users end up in the spotlight because of "leaked" information, this issue will become important.

Gender double standards are also issues that will need to be further researched. In the case of Miss USA, Amy Polumbo, as well as the hundreds of young women on the Facebook group *30 Reasons Why A Girl Should Call It a Night*, the topic of gender was difficult not to ignore. Interestingly, there is a male version Facebook group, *30 Reasons*, that is also available on the website. But, only the female group made it into the media. And it received harsh criticism. Amy Polumbo was judged callously for the photos posted in her Facebook photo album. It could be argued that the negative scrutiny occurred because she was competing in an industry that enforces a certain morality code for its contestants. However, there are probably hundreds of photos of young men with similar photos. What does this say about gender role expectations on Facebook? Are there gender expectations on the Internet and other social networking sites? If so, how will this affect the website and its users?

One question that continued to come up as this analysis was being written was how Facebook is redefining the ways in which users communicate. Again, since Facebook is branching out and including additional age groups, how will this influence the communication between older users and younger users? Stutzman (2006) says, "[Facebook] is a void that we never knew existed; we wanted to know everything about

everyone around us, but we never could before. It has totally changed the way we view socialization. It makes us socialize more." Critics argue that social networking sites are redefining the very essence of communication, identity and community (Stutzman 2006). There is a lot of research available that micro-analyzes each of these areas; however there is little work that has been published. There is a lot of research that examines the psychological affects of compulsive Internet use. There is also research examining Internet addictions. It would be interesting to see research that examines whether or not there are psychological effects of social networks or Facebook addictions.

In this analysis, a number of examples were used that dealt with regulation, the misunderstandings of what is considered private versus public, use of Facebook and social networks in schools and the workplace, and arguments that regulation is not necessary for either the Internet or Facebook. Will Facebook become the catalyst that forces the conversation and possibly the implementation of Internet regulation? If so, how will it redefine the Internet's purpose? A lot of schools and workplaces already have begun creating Facebook guides that detail the positive and negative aspects of the website. A few schools, both universities and high schools, have even gone so far as to ban the use of Facebook on campus.[35] A number of workplaces have conducted Internet etiquette workshops that include entire sections on using Facebook during work hours. Like universities and high schools, a lot of employees are not allowed to use Facebook at all on company computers. All of these issues and others will need to be further examined.

4.4 Final Thoughts

This analysis does not intentionally point the blame at Facebook for the incidents that have occurred. However, that does not mean that it has not played a significant role in the situations described in this analysis. For many of the applications and features Facebook offers, particularly those that have been involved in controversial situations,

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[35] University of New Mexico had banned the use of Facebook on their campus in 2006. Some athletic departments at high schools and colleges also ban the use of Facebook. Or they have strict rules regarding its use.

Facebook still maintains that users have control over their preferences and they always have the ability to change or alter the information they post through Facebook's settings. While this is true, it's obvious that not all users take Facebook's advice. Otherwise, all of the situations discussed in this paper would not have occurred. If Facebook does make changes, it still does not place users in a better place in terms of protection. Furthermore, it has taken users' outcries and negative publicity for Facebook to improve the content on their website. Facebook's News Feed and Mini Feed are perfect examples. Initially, Facebook had no intention of changing anything about the new features. In fact, in the beginning, they thought the complaints from Facebook members were unnecessary. Most users still assume that what they put onto the website will be okay. This is evident in the situations in this analysis.

The goal of this analysis is not to create a negative impression of Facebook. Overall, Facebook has lived up to what it set out to accomplish. It has brought people together, allowing them to interact with one another. Facebook provides a large amount of tools and features that enables users to have fun and share with their "friends." On the other hand, the options that Facebook offers are also used to reveal a large amount of personal information; information that at one time would have been considered " too much." Boyd (2006) argues that social networking sites are adding transparency to students' lives. Facebook's attraction is the blending of private information in a public space. It's a weird mix between a yearbook and a bathroom wall. The examples used in this thesis suggest that people are indeed blending personal information on a public site without taking the time to think about what could happen if it gets into the wrong hands. Most users don't seem to comprehend that Facebook is a public website. And contrary to the idea that it is a harmless and secure place, it is a part of the Internet. It's public and it is accessible.

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APPENDIX A

FACEBOOK BANNER ADVERTISEMENT

Facebook | Janie Henderson

Prof

Search

Applications   edit

Photos

Groups

Events

Marketplace

Latest PHD Comics

more

Snorg To The Tees

Assistant to the Regional
Manager T–Shirt is
pictured. Hilarious
designs on the best
quality shirts in town.
Check us out!

More Ads | Advertise

APPENDIX B

SIX DEGREES GRAPH

FACEBOOK PROFILE

Janie Henderson
What are you doing right now?

Networks: Ohio Grad Student '12
                   Miami University Alum

Mini-Feed

Import | See All

You have no recent activity.
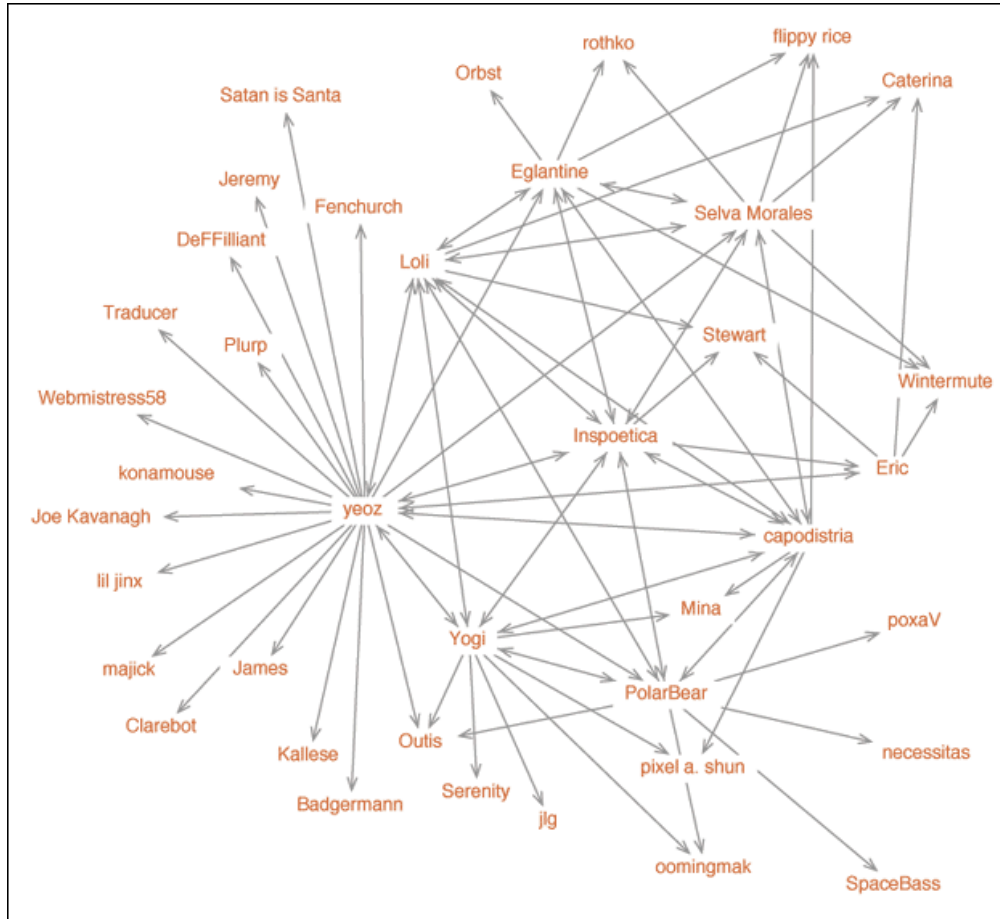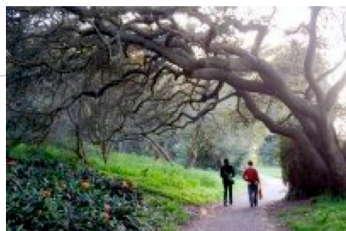
View My Friends (370)

Edit My Profile

Ohio Friends

My Pages

Friends in Other Networks

Networks with the most friends

St. Louis, MO (93)
Miami University (82)
Webster (79)
Chicago, IL (18)
New York, NY (12)
Missouri (12)
Cincinnati, OH (10)

Networks you belong to

Ohio (2)
Miami University (82)

Show All Networks | View All Friends

Information

Contact Info
Emails: henderj4@muohio.edu
                   jdh583@gmail.com
                   jh499108@ohio.edu

Website: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1248895/full...
                   http://www.myspace.com/affinitymovie
                   http://mytracs.slpl.org
                   http://frugaltraveler.blogs.nytimes.com/

Education

Education Info
Grad Schools: Ohio University '12
                   PhD
                   Miami University '07
                   M.A.
Colleges: Webster University '05
                   Webster University-Leiden, NL '04
High School: Clayton High '01

APPENDIX D

FACEBOOK MINI FEED

Birthday: May 25

Mini-Feed

Displaying 3 stories.   See All

Today

Janie joined the group Apple Students.

Janie became a fan of Chromatics.

Chromatics
Musician
115 fans

Janie became a fan of Netflix.

NETFLIX

Netflix
Consumer Product
2,509 fans

Information

APPENDIX E

FACEBOOK NEWS FEED

APPENDIX F

"STUDENTS AGAINST NEWS FEED" FACEBOOK GROUP

Facebook Marketplace

APPENDIX H

WAYNE CHIANG AND CHO SEUNG-HUI

Wayne Chiang

Cho Seung-Hui

APPENDIX I

AMY POLUMBO PHOTOS

APPENDIX J

"I'm Ok at VT"

home account privacy logout

Search

Applications   edit

    Photos

    Groups

    Events

    Marketplace

    Latest PHD Comics

more

I'm ok at VT

Virginia Tech

Information

Group Info

Name: I'm ok at VT
Type: Common Interest – Current Events
Description: Let all your friends know you are ok today.

Recent News

Let your friends know that you are ok and are safe after the shooting on Monday at Virginia Tech. Pray for the students who are injured and for the families of the students that were killed.

If you want to donate money to the families then United Way has a fund for VT and Virginia Tech has set up a fund also.
Donations to the Hokie Spirit Memorial Fund may be made by visiting http://www.vt.edu/tragedy/memorial_fund.php, or by calling 800-533-1144.

If everyone could continue to say a prayer for the families of the victims!

Members

This group has 1,933 members at Virginia Tech.   See All

Danielle   Jessie   Brandon   Kristan   Anne   Charlie
Rodgers   Bowery   Session   Hypolite   Swartzwelder   Meyer

Report Group

Share

Group Type

This is a closed group. Members must be invited or approved by an admin.

Admins

▪ Katie Olson (Virginia Tech) (creator)

APPENDIX K

VIRGINIA TECH MEMORIAL RIBBON ICONS

APPENDIX L

"30 Reasons Girls Should Call It a Night"

Profile   edit   Friends   Inbox   home   account   privacy   logout

30 Reasons Girls Should Call It A Night   Global

Information

Group Info
Name: *30 Reasons Girls Should Call It A Night*
Type: Just for Fun – Facebook Classics
Description: *30 Reasons Girls Should Call It A Night*
             If you can relate to any of these.. you must join
             the club!!!

1. You have absolutely no idea where your friends are.

2. You have absolutely no idea where your car is... wait did you bring your car??

3. You've become convinced that dancing with your arms overhead, shaking your ass, and yelling WOO HOO is truly the sexiest dance move EVER.

4. You've suddenly decided you want to kick someone's ass and honestly believe you can do it (bitch...i ain't playin...).

5. You start singing 80's songs at the top of your lungs and showing off your dance skills to the car next to you.

6. Your bladder becomes amazingly full every 10 minutes.

7. You sit down and the room and people around you start spinning profusely.

8. Your slurring your words so bad, that nobody can understand what your saying and then when they say what, you can't even remember what you were talking about.

9. You've come up with the brilliant idea that you can create less hassle on your friends by just "sleeping over" at a your guy friend's house.

View Discussion Board
Join this Group

Share

Officers

Daniel Wallberg (Sweden)
Supermod

Jasmine Kalimullah (SUNY Oneonta)
mod

Hannah Simmons (Wales)
mod

Group Type

This is an open group. Anyone can join and invite others to join.

Admins

- Jasmine Kalimullah (SUNY Oneonta)
- Daniel Wallberg (Sweden)

APPENDIX M

"30 REASONS" Photos
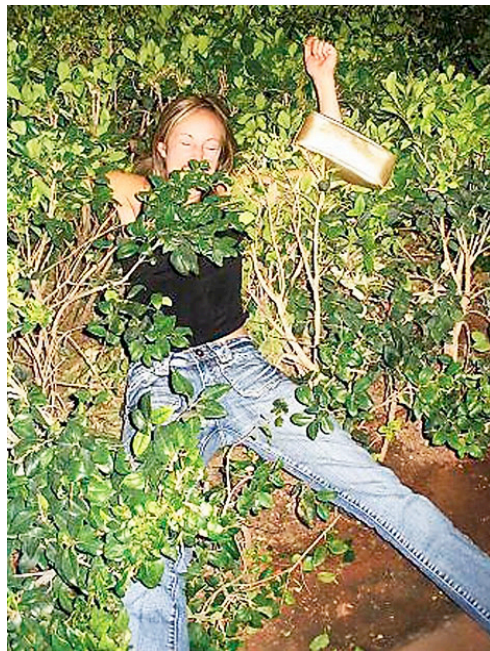
APPENDIX N.

"30 Reasons" Moderator

**FACEBOOK PUBLIC
SEARCH**

Check out your Public Search Listing   Close

Now people can search for this listing from Facebook's Welcome page. In a few weeks, it may also be found through search engines like Google.

Name: **Janie Henderson**

Message
Poke
View Friends
Add to Friends

You can control whether you have a public search listing, and where it appears, from your Search Privacy page.

Since your search privacy settings are set to "Everyone," you now have a public search listing. This means that friends who aren't yet on Facebook will be able to search for you by name from our Welcome page. **Public Search Listings may only include names and profile pictures**.

In a few weeks, these public search listings can be found by search engines like Google. No privacy rules are changing; anyone who discovers your public search listing must register and log in to contact you via Facebook. Learn More.