Youth Culture and Social Media

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Employer and employee relations on social media (to be continued…)

Pros and cons

Background checks on social media:

- Background checks on social media have become an everyday tool for human resources departments.
- CareerBuilder (2012):
- 29 percent of US employers hired an applicant due to the background information received from social media,
- 34 percent of the employers admitted not hiring an applicant due to detrimental information found on SNS

- Abril, Levin's and Riego's (2012) findings indicate that 56 percent of US employees participating in the survey considered it "somewhat" or "very inappropriate" for employers to seek information about candidates using SNS.

Monitoring employee's activities

- My Job Group's survey: 26 percent of the respondents admitted that they have been negative about their workplace on social media.

- Employees in the States strongly disapprove of employer monitoring or accessing their SNS profiles:
- 75 percent of the respondents found this practice to be "somewhat" or "very inappropriate" (Abril, Levin & Riego, 2012).

Ideal audience vs. nightmare readers

"Ever since I signed up for Twitter, I get the feeling that people are following me!"

© Randy Glasbergen / glasbergen.com

- Direct authority figures (teachers, parents, coaches, the police) are perceived as typical "nightmare readers" (Marwick & boyd 2010) by the youth.

- "Nothing to hide" argument = a person is protesting against the publication of information only if they have something to hide (Solove 2007)

- Young people believe the benefits of public participation outweigh the potential consequences of disclosing personal information (Debatin et al 2010).

Discover the artist in you ☺ sketches of FB users

In groups make drawings of user types you have perceived to be active on Facebook (be ready to describe and explain your drawings!)

Perceptions about the audience

- The young, who often tend to consider social media, and SNS in particular, as *their* **space** (boyd 2007, Livingstone 2007), i.e. young people tend to act in such environments as if it were bounded (boyd & Marwick 2010).

- Previous studies (Murumaa & Siibak 2011; Jensen 2010) indicate that young people are not only often unaware of the **omnopticon** of social media, but many of the teens have not yet grasped the idea that our interactions on online platforms tend to be **public-by-default and private-through-effort** (boyd & Marwick 2011).

- General public hence often falsely believes that today's youth do not care about privacy (boyd & Hargittai 2010) .
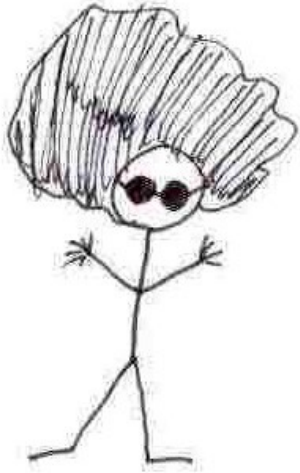
Social media as a washing machine (Murumaa & Siibak 2012)

- The youth perceive FB as *a washing machine* where people with different personalities, backgrounds, motives communicate

- When discussing and sketching different Facebook user types, strongly negative stereotypes emerged, with whom young people did not identify and whose behavioral patterns were ridiculed and tarnished.

The Main User Types: **Very Active User** (Wannabe, Freak, Entertainer, I-Add-Everyone-To-Friends

LISAN-KÕIKI-SÕBRAKS
TÜÜP.

- Uses all kinds of FB applications very actively

- Motivated by the need to be liked by others (sketch: hands are spread in order to hug others)

M2: " competing who has the most friends in a certain amount of time"

- Sketch: does not have a mouth = does not have anything important to say

Subtype – the Geek

"One who is just there and is looking at everyone and then playing one's games and does not do anything"

- Geeks are characterized as active users of tests and different online games, but other forms of communication are rare *("does not have friends)*

- Sketches: always with glasses and a large head

Bragger (Megababe, Poser, Chick, Pretty Boy)

Pouser
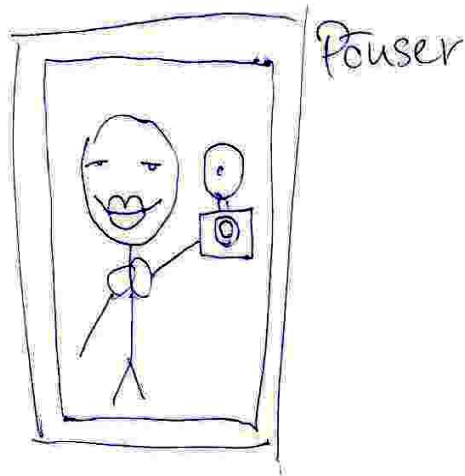
M5: "They go home only to make photos of themselves and add at least 10 new photos every day".
M2: In order to boost one's self-esteem, so that people would come and say that "yeah, you're so beautiful"

- Is uncontrollably uploading images *("more than the server can accommodate")*

- Joined FB because friends were already there and "*it was cool*"

- Sketches: prevailingly female, smiling invitingly. Physical appearance emphasized - large breasts, a sexy mini skirt and long legs with high-heels.

Subtype: Via iPhone Dude

M7: iPhone Dudes write scraps like "took a crap just now" or "just had a meal at grandma's and I'm full now"

- Has the "right kind of technology"

- Famous for continuous reporting of everyday trivial activities (Sketches: the user AS a smart-phone with eyes and a nose but without a mouth)

- The youth refer to such behaviour as a sort of abnormality or disease

Businessman (Biznesman, Company PR)
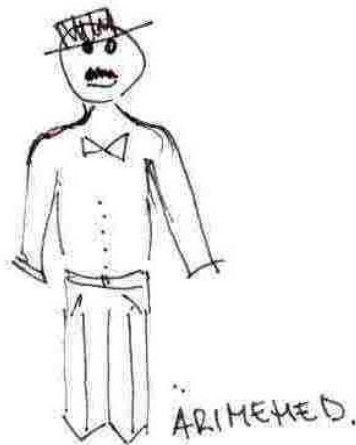
- Adults and companies using FB for work-related activities and professional purposes, to promote one's company and earn profit *"These are the users who always promote themselves"*

- Sketches: Very gendered – always men, almost always depicted in a suit, hat, bow tie, and a suitcase ("*they put up pictures of themselves that are like: "Here I am with my suitcase, trading*")

Pervert (Nerd-Perv, Hairy Foreigner, Eastern Dude)
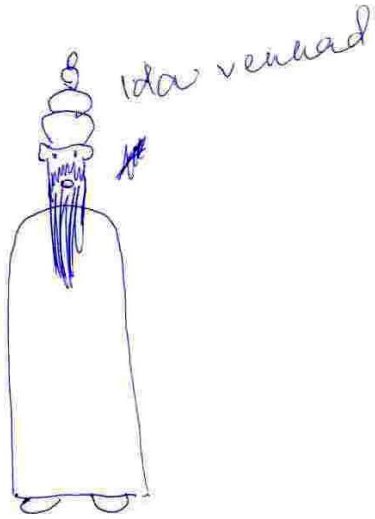
M4: "Some Ahmeds or some things try to add you as a friend"
N1: "All those niggers and South Americans add oneselves immediately to the friend list"

- Uses social media primarily to look up small children (also described to "*look for Estonian women"),* to check through their photos and harass them.

- Usually an older male from abroad (Turkish, Brazilian, of Middle Eastern origin) who presents oneself much younger. Typical candy-man.

- Different communication culture seems often aggressive or intrusive to Estonians - *harassing* versus *smooth talking*

Hateful User

"Hate your every move, attack and criticize without a reason".

- Two types : **Haters** and **Oldsters**
- Both are mean to other users – write mean comments

- Such malevolent attitude is thought to occur rarely in SNS, as SNS is usually a place where politeness and flattery is prevalent.

- Oldsters are perceived as "*extra old*" (70-80 years old) users of FB, might know the younger users through their grandchildren

The Ordinary User (Communicator, Chiller, Cool Guy)
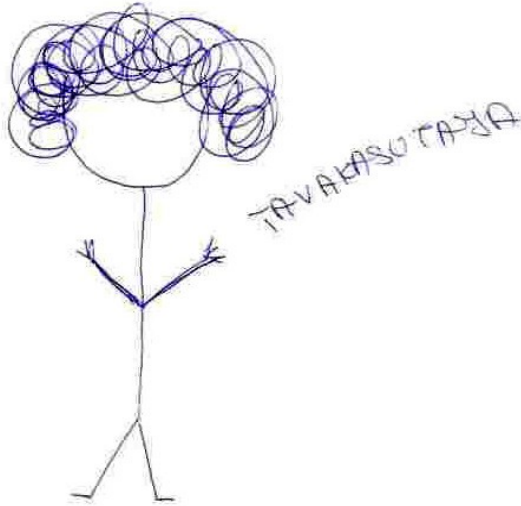
M4: playing games, and...
M5: looks around, likes a couple of things and....
M2: does not really stand out over there [in FB]

- Does not hang around online constantly to pass the time, but logs on only from time to time. Hence, is active enough, but does not disclose too much personal information, uses FB to stay in touch with real friends and „*is just cool*".

- Sketches: mostly depicted smiling, sexless. Could also have an object as a profile photo

- The group of users with whom the young identify themselves

Types of messages

Think about the types of messages you post on SNS – what are these messages usually about?

Main types of Facebook messages: humorous messages

Humourous messages

- Contain pieces of harebrained news, messages with sexual innuendo or word play

- Offensive compliments ("offentliments") are often taken as a joke for the sake of ego protection

M6: No, but when you say honestly to some girl that „you have a disgusting mug" and she comes back at you, thinking it was a joke.
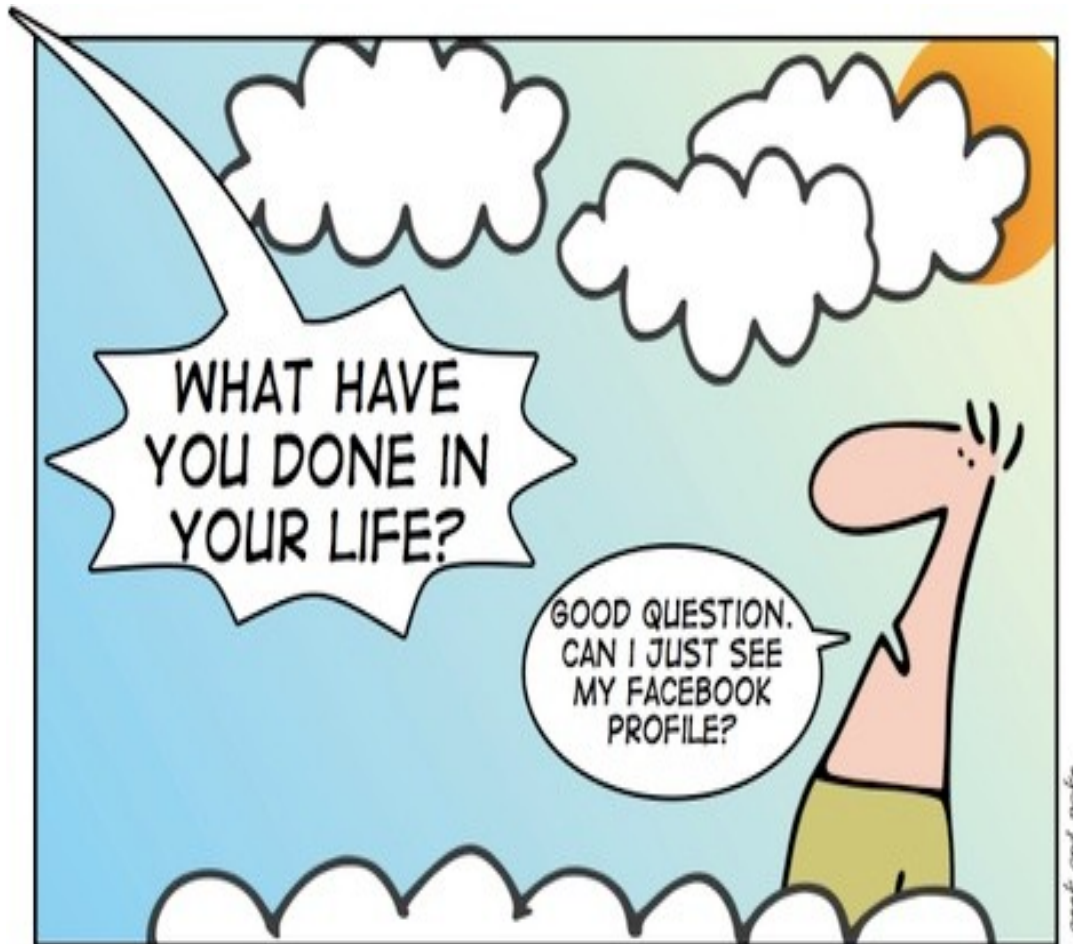
M3: yes, even when you have meant it seriously, she doesn't get it.

2) Hidden messages - contain song lyrics, quotes from the classics, inside jokes and emotional issues meant for the very few selected people, who have the interpretive lens (boyd, 2010) needed to understand the context of the post

- *"I think we have to kill and chop him up now"*

3) Utilitarian messages - usually are based on

- share-and-win advertisements
- Real-life problems *("lost my phone, send me your numbers!")*
- Planning various activities ("So what's going on tonight?"

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE IN YOUR LIFE?

GOOD QUESTION. CAN I JUST SEE MY FACEBOOK PROFILE?

http://itmanagement.earthweb.com

4) Informative links and messages

- Contain interesting news articles, music videos etc. shared with a presumption that one's contacts like the content as well

- micro-blog to oneself („*to look at it later and see what have I been up to*")

5) Emotional messages – are posted to get supportive comments and reactions, praise from one's friends

- A very negative attitude was expressed about users who express strong feelings (love or anger) and over-expose close relationships in their status updates

M8: well, some people are fed up with it [expressing heartache on Facebook], you know, there is so much of it

N5: yeah, really, why are you wailing like that

M8: you can see it everywhere

N6: and lots of people don't comment it, just are thinking, like, jeeesh…

Various privacy strategies (Oolo & Siibak 2013)

- **Selective information sharing-** tightening their privacy settings, i.e decreasing profile visibility through restricting access to "friends only" = being "publicly private" (Lange 2008)

- *F3: Facebook is more "official". Actually, it is a very public place and you can't really post there any kind of trash that's on your mind. That's what MSN is for - chatting one on one to someone and if you feel really safe with someone, you could lose control and start blithering about stuff you're not supposed to. You wouldn't post that kind of stuff on Facebook.../.../ There, I'm keeping myself pretty much under control.*

- **Self-censoring information-** posting things one believes their broadest group of acquaintances will find non-offensive (the principle of 'the lowest common denominator').
- posts about one's everyday life, small talk and phatic communication are considered to be safe to be uploaded online (Sorensen & Jensen 2010)
- posts about dating, sexuality, relationships, serious illness, death, bodily functions or criticism tend to be avoided (Marwick & boyd 2010; Sorensen & Jensen 2010).

F8: If I'm talking to my friend in MSN, it doesn't matter how I express myself. But on FB, I think of the fact that it's full of adult relatives.

Interviewer: And how do you form messages when keeping these adult relatives in mind?

F8: I don't talk about dirty stuff and all the topics I would discuss with people my own age... I don't write about what my aunts and uncles shouldn't hear.

- **Multiple identities on multiple platforms-** adopt to using multiple accounts, pseudonyms, nicknames and fake accounts (Marwick & boyd 2010) or intensely insert false information on one's profiles (Lenhart & Madden 2007).

- **Social steganography -** hiding information in plain sight. Social steganographic messages are communicated to different audiences simultaneously but are meaningless to the audience at large as unlocking the meaning of that multi-layered message or post requires both recognizing multiple referents (boyd & Marwick 2011) and specific cultural awareness to provide the right interpretive lens (boyd 2010).

- In the context where privacy has been viewed as "an instrument for achieving individual goals of self-realization" (Westin 1967: 39), when implementing social steganography as a privacy tactic the young exercise their knowledge of peer and pop culture so as to leave "the nightmare readers" (see Marwick & boyd 2010) and unwanted followers in the dark.

- *F3: Once I posted rhymes, this is a paragraph of it: "The wind comes, I don't know where from, don't know where heading – /.../ I don't understand, just feel alone." The wind reminds me of a person who was in my life and was suddenly gone. I posted that poem on my blog about the same period. /.../ This other time, after an incident happened, I posted on Twitter: "This is all that I can take. Now I don't care about you at all any more. Screw you!" Then, a reply appeared from the right person: "Don't know if I am the one it's written about..." and I didn't even deny it.*

- Social steganography is practiced not so much as to avoid the "nightmare readers" lurking around on the site, but so as to add extra mysteriousness to one's posts and to increase trust (Marwick & Palfrey 2010) between "my people"

Reasons for disclosing private information

Cathy Thorne © www.everyday people cartoons.com

YOU KNOW IT'S TIME TO GO TO SLEEP WHEN YOU'RE CREEPING YOUR EX-BOYFRIEND'S WIFE'S COUSIN'S SISTER'S FRIEND'S WALL.

1) Underestimating the size of the imagined audience

- When sending out messages, only a very small part of the (potential) audience is kept in mind.

N5: not in a lifetime would I think about how many people actually really see that [my posts].

- The youth believed that no sanctions are possible

M9: firstly, it is private information and the court can not.. It won't hold, no way

2) **Lack of skills and knowledge**

- Most of the youth had not made any changes in the privacy settings
- Besides deleting info and blocking users they were unable to name any other such possibilities

N5: I hate this chat feature, because there are some Swedes there all the time and I don't know what language are they speaking but they are trying to come up and talk to me, like all the time

M9: why do you have Swedes on your friends' list?

N5: well, it doesn't mean that they belong to my friends' list or does it?

M9: yes, they couldn't come and talk to you otherwise

N5: (laughing) No way! I didn't know that! Some Lindströms and I don't know who else...

Cathy Thorne @ www.everyday people cartoons.com

LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'VE BEEN UP TO THIS HOUR.

IF IT WASN'T FOR FACEBOOK'S ANONYMITY, I'D BE ARRESTED FOR STALKING.

3) **Seeking popularity**

- Making incorrect jokes, posting about outrageous events, posting questionable images are shared in the hopes of receiving reactions.
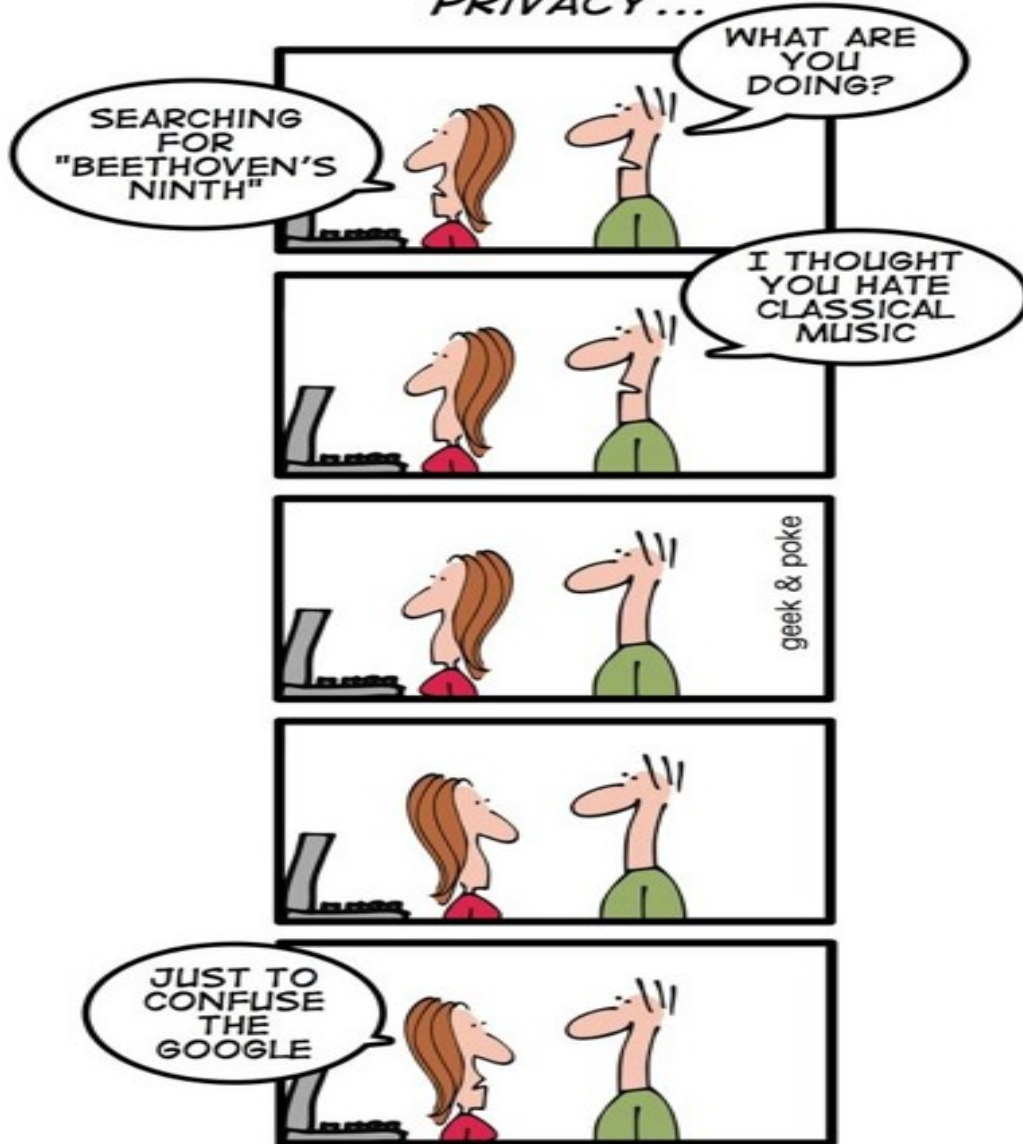- Any comment is considered like a social pat on the head

4) **Carelessness**

- Illusion of anonymity

N6: it doesn't matter, I think that nobody cares where I belong to.

Privacy vs publicity

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMo2B4ILzik

http://itmanagement.earthweb.com

Google as the all-seeing eye?

- **What is going on here?**

- "undetectable poisons", "state gun laws", instant poison", "gun laws in Pennsylvania", "toxic insulin levels", "how to commit murder", "how to purchase hunting rifles in NJ", "neuromuscular blocking agents", etc. (Andrews 2011)

Six thinking hats

Panoticon and the present day society:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVTKHI5ovyc

Small home-assignment

Short-term social media diary

Keeping an eye on myself

- **During the weekend please take note of your own social media practices keeping the following questions in mind:**

- How much time do I spend on various social media environments each day? (for instance, am I constantly logged into some of these sites?)

- What is the main reason why I use these sites? What motivates me to keep coming back on these sites?

- Who are the main people with whom I socialize on these sites? How big and varied is the circle of "friends" whose posts I comment/like and who do the same for me?

- What are the main themes/topics for my content creation on social media? (entertainment, international/national news, educational, etc) What are the main themes/topics of the content that I comment upon/like?