Transcription 1

J: So how long have technologies, like say computers or cell phones been an important part of your life?

I: Umb, well, I got my first cell phone when I was a... sophomore. And then I entered like the online database thing like this—like Facebook—just this past summer.

J: Okay, well let's go back to that – when you first –when you were four you said? *[I misheard sophomore as four]*

I: What?

J: When you got your first computer

I: Oooh, when I got my first computer. Well okay, we had our personal computer for as long as I can remember, so... but we got internet when I was maybe... six I think? And that was cable... I don't think it matters...we never had dail-up

J: So you guys actually –that does matter a little bit—you guys went straight to cable?

I: Yeah

J: What was your experience growing up with it? Was it an important thing?

I: Well, I didn't think, I didn't really see it as anything that other people didn't have or anything or a special thing, I just... took it as it was. Everyone I knew had it and so I was okay.

J: So was it a little different because you had cable instead of having dail-up?

I: Umb, I remember people complaining about it being slow and stuff like that. I did download a lot of music.

J: Okay

I: [laughs] that was very quick. For some people it would take a day to download a song, it would take me 6 seconds. [laugh] So... that was...

J: Kinda like bragging rights? Do you think it shaped how you used the web at all?

I: No, I mean that's all I was used to. I never used really dial-up, and my school and stuff like that, they never, I don't think they had dial-up. It was something faster.

J: Yeah, okay. Then what about, the whole—do you remember getting a cell phone?

I: Okay sophomore year, I begged my parents for it, umb... everyone else had a cell phone... and I also begged for texting, that was a big thing, I think kinda. Umb... yeah I think it really, really helped my

social life I guess. I mean I never really hung out with people outside the school before that year, so…
there was a better connection, otherwise I'd have to talk on my house phone, and that woulda—my
parents woulda been like "get off the house phone" or something like that…

J: You guys didn't have to deal with the modem taking up the phone line

I: Yeah, exactly, that's, oh yeah, that's what I [meant before]

J: So you would say, internet communication technologies, er I mean information communication
technologies like these generally, historically, played a big role in your life?

I: Umb, I think so yeah, definitely for my social life, that's probably the biggest effect. I mean I used AIM
and stuff on the internet, umb… what else did I use – emails, stuff like that. My first email address was
5th grade, that's probably when I got AIM.

J: Okay, so now moving on to the Facebook stuff, did – I guess first question—was there a MySpace
before it?

I: No, I did not have a MySpace page, people tried to get me into it, actually I had a friend make me one
and I did not use it, so I don't know if it's still there, but [laugh] so yeah I was never in to that stuff.

J: okay, so and then what got you to join on, was it like a friend or…

I: yeah actually I have a Facebook, I had no idea how to make it either, so right before school started,
maybe a week or two before school started, they convinced me that it was a good idea to have it, I don't
know if I was against it or anything like that, or if I just was standing up to a social norm, I don't know I'm
not sure. Umb… umb… but they actually made it for me but I quickly started to like it and used it a lot
and now I have… fifteen hundred pictures and [laugh]

J: Are those all your pictures personally or just does it include ones you were tagged in? That's a lot for
just one person to put up.

I: Yes, exactly. Yeah no I don't…

J: So this was how long ago, approximately then? It was like…

I: August 2007, like August… 10th?

J: Okay so this was earlier this year, this academic year.

I: Yes

J: Okay, umb, so how does Facebook come up within your normal, everyday routine, or everyday life? Is
it a routine?

I: Okay, well, I do check it daily, at least once, probably more than that. I use it kinda for procrastination, I bum around on it, check other people's Facebook's, see if they uploaded stuff, it's just to kill time, I've noticed, and it's distracted me plenty [laugh] so…

J: So it is kind of a daily use, you mention it's more of a distraction…

I: And it may be open on my web browser, even if I'm not using it, even if I'm writing and essay,

J: okay

I: or something, it's open there and then maybe I'll check it

J: Okay, so you do this fairly often, do you feel like you're outa touch when you haven't been able to drop online, on Facebook?

I: I feel like if I haven't checked it for a while it's a burden because maybe there will be a bunch of messages or something like that, that I should respond to.

J: So it's almost a burden, explain that?

I: Okay, so…

J: What's this about a burden?

I: You know, like I find it, like if there's 20 emails stacked up I have to check them all and I have to respond if necessary. So… same with Facebook. If I don't check it for a while then there will be like 50 requests or something I'll have to go through those.

J: So it feels kind of like an obligation then? So would you be sad if it were shut down then?

I: Umb… I think it would probably cut off some communication that I have with other friends from [laugh]

J: The burden would be gone [laugh]

I: Yeah I guess that's true, the burden is outweighed by the communication with friends that I normally can't talk to on the phone, so I guess I wouldn't be upset… it would just be an inconvenience I guess, I guess it's more of a convenience than a burden.

J: So who are—you mentioned talking to different friends on it—the different kind of communities that you interact with?

I: Well maybe it's someone I met one night—maybe a weekend like a month ago—I normally wouldn't ever talk to them again but I friended them on Facebook. So I have some type of connection with them and maybe that will open doors to more times we're gonna hang out or something like that.

J: So it might be weak ties.

I: Sure.

J: So what about friends from high school and stuff like that? Say maybe they went to another college or did something else instead of college?

I: okay

J: Do you connect to those kind of people?

I: Well in the past, well actually not the past, for a while now, I've been trying to connect with older high school friends, because I wasn't on Facebook during high school, umb… I never friended that many people in my high school, so I kinda went back, I looked through the network, my high school network

J: So you traced through and tracked them down and

I: and I… actually found my old neighbor, the other day, which is kinda neat. So umb… he offered to give me a call when I get back from school… he still lives close, but we never really talked anyway… umb and then with other people that I am closer with, that I do talk to on the phone. Talk on the phone, I think it takes more attention. If I talk on Facebook, like I can go away from it and something like that and I've used it almost like an instant message type deal. Like she'll respond to me and then I'll write back it'll be a series of quotes, it's not like a prolonged letter where it ends or something like that.

J: would you say it's more like email or more like instant messenger?

I: Umb…

J: If so, which part, cause like you know there's the wall, status, and the kinda different ways you…

I: I think it's close to instant message for the wall, but then you got the message system, which is more like email, but I think it's more accessible. I can login – I have it set to login whenever I go to the page – and uh I don't have to log in on my college email and stuff like that.

J: So we probably only have time for one more question, so I'm gonna ask the controversial one. This came up –this was not originally on the list, it kinda came up out of discourse in interviews. People talk about the sort of expected behaviors online, there's this notion of browsing, like finding your neighbors you mentioned that was sorta cool. And then there's this notion of stalking, and that might be like you know downloading a person's picture to your desktop, and that might be considered stalking and creepy. How do you negotiate between the two? Like what defines something as stalking, vs. browsing?

I: Yeah so that's probably blurry. I guess some people would consider me finding my neighbor kinda strange [laugh]. Because I was writing on another friend's wall and I noticed friends on my network and there was my neighbor. So Umb… but I don't know if that's stalking, because other people have searched through their network, network friends before, I don't know if you can consider that stalking. Stalking –stalking could be taking a picture and maybe forming someone else a Facebook without them knowing or something like that.

J: Okay, so things you do that without that person's…

I: Consent I guess, but…

J: Yeah but you could look at another person's pictures without their consent and I don't know if…

I: Yeah see that's the blurry.

J: How much does intent have to do with it?

I: Well… a big deal, if they wanna be friends with this person, and the other person's not gonna have a problem with them stalking then… oooh…

J: Well you don't have to… I was just trying to get your take on how you would negotiate them yourself.

I: Umb, okay, so umb, I have a story, I have a friend, I'll use [another] name, Dan, he's my friend

J: The names are all gonna be changed anyway, so

I: Okay, and he umb, we were friends on Facebook but he rarely uses his, and we were at a football game together, and a person behind us say him, Dan, and thought that he was good-looking, and the person who saw them remembered my face, and maybe heard my name, I have no idea, but friended me on Facebook and I friended them without knowing… that was probably a bad idea… and…

J: Okay so why did that happen?

I: I don't know, they friended me on Facebook and gave me a message asking me if I was dating my friend Dan. Who was a boy, by the way. So I was like… uh no. Umb no, but the person ended up saying that they thought the person was really good looking and "I tried to friend him but he didn't answer back or answer my message." So I was like a middle man and I told my friend Dan and it was a little strange. It was a pretty strange situation.

J: So that would qualify as the stalking-creepy thing?

I: Yeah.

J: Alright so what do you think would be another good example of… does the extent to which you know a person affect whether or not browsing up and down their profile is creepy? If you're doing it with your best friend or your sister or something like that?

I: Yeah if you're browsing on someone's page who you haven't seen for… six months if that's stalking… umb… see it's hard because if you're trying to figure out what's going on in their life… it's how deep you're going but how deep can you go? If they're putting that stuff up there, that's probably pretty personal then it's gonna get seen, you know I'm not sure. It should be questioned.

J: That almost leads into another… people have that invisible audience right, because they're not sure who's looking at their profile, but everybody has a conception of who their invisible audience is.

I: And there are controls for Facebook, right?

J: Yes, more so now, you can custom-tailor who that audience is, but previously it was you know, just could be anybody from your school. Any one of your six hundred friends or whatever it is. So who would you—oh we're outa of time—if you were to guestimate, who would your invisible audience typically be?

I: Well, I have not utilized those new controls, so [laugh], so umb…

J: So you haven't forced it down, you really do have to guess

I: Ah well, and if I get tagged in a compromising picture I'm gonna untag it. So umb, and if there's something obnoxious on my wall I'm not gonna keep it there either, I don't think it's necessary, I don't like to look at it either. I mean I try to keep an image of myself that I would like to be portrayed as, so I'm not gonna have stuff on there that's gonna get me in trouble.

J: So it may not matter that much as to who looks at it and who doesn't?

I: Yeah, cause I guess, yeah it can't matter because everyone can look at it on my network I guess,

J: Well unfortunately we're out of time…