

Transcription 2

This interview was in bad shape. I had to artificially increase the volume on the quiet parts, apply hiss reduction and play with the EQ's to make it audible... and even then I had trouble understanding second hand because I had some trouble understanding the moderate AAVE accent. My apologies on the poor transcription but a lot of the material is really good!

J: So, any questions before we begin? [they shake their head] No, okay. Two things to note first, I wish this could be more conversational but it can't be. I don't want to bias your answers or anything like that. If you're not sure what to say telling stories is an easy way to reconcile that. I'm gonna be scribbling down notes but a lot of these are reminders—it's a lot of things, most of my information is going to come from the recording, so if I write something down in response to what you're saying. Don't be like "Oh my god what he said is important." And I think that's about it. Okay, so opening it up, how have computers, kinda historically, played a role in your life, like when you were growing up?

I: Well, I was in 5th grade when my mom got the first computer for the house, after that I thought maybe... [recording too quiet, even after boosting and cleaning out hiss] and looking up stuff, just cause I had... like my cousin would play games on the computer...

J: So you said about 5th grade, did you get a computer with internet?

I: Yeah

J: So was it like a modem, or was it broadband, or do you remember?

I: Oh, well, I don't remember if it was connected to the phone line, but we could talk on the phone while we was on the computer... cause we had two lines.

J: And then did you guys ever switch over to broadband or are you still...?

I: We still have that phone line... but my mom was actually doing something with the phone she was telling me about but I don't know what she did

J: So maybe you've switched over to broadband now, obviously you go to college it's a little different. So what was it like when you were growing up, was it an important thing?

I: Yeah at school we had lab like lab or whatever, once a week, we used to go and do things on the computers for like, an hour, and that kinda time at school. I got a computer at home, and it wasn't a big deal anymore, you know the computer wasn't exciting at school, cause I had one at home, but after I got one at home I was on it every day, all day, for the first year.

J: Did you begin to associate it with work a little bit?

I: I started to want to type everything, it was like not mandatory in school, but like I still had to learn how to type earlier, because I wanted to type everything that I write because my hand writing sucks.
[laugh]

J: Okay, so when, what about cell phones, where have those fallen?

I: Umb... cell phones – uh, I was kinda jealous of all of my friends because they – first they had pagers then they had cell phones

J: Pagers, okay that's a little unusual

I: Yeah, like, a long time ago, so I think it was around the same time in 5th grade when we got a cell phone, cause my mom, I guess, my mom wanted to get one and wouldn't leave home without it, but not that long after that I paid my own cell phone, and I finally got my own PDA now

J: Yeah I know you were talking about that, you got me excited – I send out these emails and you're the first one to respond

I: Yeah I know that's why I like it, I can be goin to class and there can be an email like 'class is canceled' and I can go back home and let everybody else figure it out [laughter]

J: Cool, so the quick connection thing, so, you don't have to tell me where exactly you grew up, but was it like an urban area, a suburban area, more rural, or...?

I: Urban

J: Urban, okay, so what would you say the town's technology level and savviness was like? In general.

I: Well, I can say that in my neighborhood it's not—I think I was probably one of the only people around the block that had a computer... [too garbled to understand]

J: So bring it, then, fast-forwarding to today, this whole Facebook thing, what gotcha on Facebook? How did that end up in your life?

I: Well, I think I got a profile my freshman year of high school [this was probably misspoken], because it was after the high school thing or whatever, there was tag and all that, a lot of people, in high school and grammar school was on tag, so I wanted to be on Facebook, you had to be invited, then, so by somebody in the network, so I got on Facebook then. It just became like, something else, it was like I wanna check my Facebook, and I got Facebook my phone, too, so I'd be all in a rush and check all my messages and my wall posts, and I want picture comments and everything coming on my phone, and I was on Facebook for like a week and I was like what am I supposed to do, I'm bored. I'd be going to work, and I'd have Facebook minimized at work.

J: And this was back during high school?

I: mmhmm, and now.

J: So you joined during the period back when you had to get the invite?

I: mmhmm

J: So was it a certain person that invited you then?

I: Umb, my friend, my friend, she went to my church, she went to the high school I went to.

J: Did she get invited in by somebody she knew in college? Or do you know how she got in?

I: I don't know how she got on.

J: Do you remember the differences back then? Do you remember it being different?

I: It was pretty plain. I used to compare it to MySpace, I guess, cause I know a lot of people on MySpace, and I know MySpace has got the blog and you put the music on it, but Facebook was kinda plain, you look at someone's wall and their pictures, there weren't those applications, like making the babies.

J: I've never heard of the making the babies application, there's a making babies application?

I: Yeah you can make a baby, have a baby.

J: Is it like one of those digital pet things that little kids used to get?

I: It's like a little kid, sitting there, and like if you want it to be a boy, you can make it a boy, you design your child, basically.

J: Do you pick out a picture or something?

I: No it's just a cartoon or something. See I don't even know, I just see it on people's pages, you can see the people's names, who gave it attention, the aunties, uncles, and dads. You have to have a child on Facebook, you have to have a child on your profile, to play with the child.

J: I had heard of the Fluff friends, but this is news to me. So thinking about Facebook, how does it come in to your average everyday life?

I: Umb, it wakes me up, all throughout the night, cause it's on my phone

J: So your phone sends you messages and stuff?

I: I feel like it kinda can take messages for me, so people who don't have phones readily available, or don't have free text messages... [too garbled]

J: So you do a lot of texting and stuff on the phone, do you ever log on to it on a computer?

I: Yeah, to tell my friends happy birthday, and some stuff I feel like reading, I use the phone for just messages, and wall posts, but I use the actual website on the computer for like looking at stuff.

J: So say your phone ran out of batteries or something, and you were out of touch with Facebook for a while , would you feel really out of touch in general?

I: Yeah, the time that I was off Facebook from Wednesday to I think about, Tuesday, there was a lot of stuff going on, you know when you got all the exams coming up

J: Was this then, before the interview you mentioned to me you temporarily closed your profile?

I: Yeah, that's like, you know how you hear about events and stuff, and I wouldn't hear about events. There were like three things over the weekend that I was supposed to go to, and I'm like, somebody comes and like "You gonna come?" and I was like no... and I had to rush and get ready for that stuff... I see like how much Facebook has.

J: So it actually sounds like you were almost held accountable for it, you were talking about you were missing an event because the only way you'd be contacted about that event was on Facebook.

I: Right

J: So it's sort of become like expected of you, almost like a dependency.

I: Right, what would we do without Facebook?

J: Well we go back to the olden days when we call somebody

I: yeah a mass text message or something

J: When you visit Facebook—so do you have a routine to it? Or is it just any given time randomly?

I: Well the last couple of weeks I bring my laptop with me, so I was—well I shouldn't say this, but I'd bring my laptop to Soc and bring it to lecture and check my Facebook. I just check it up and then after I go home from class I go home and do work and log on Facebook. I go back and forth, click on the minimize button.

J: So it's up all of the time. How much time do you think you spend on it?

I: Yeah I was uh, thinking about that. So there's 24 hours in the day... I sleep about 4 hours [I laugh], I'm in class about 8... so other than that I'm on the computer doing work and studying while I'm on Facebook. So about... 12 hours a day? SO a lot of time.

J: Wow so a lot of time on Facebook.

I: That's half my day, that's terrible.

J: It sounds like it's multitasking though, right? You're on, but you're also doin... whatever else you're doing. Some people log on and that's their activity. So who is your Facebook community? Who would you see as community in there? Is it people from everyday life, is it a separate thing?

I: Umb, well, I have like my college community of friends, that I can keep in touch with regularly, on there. And then I have people from high school and I've been looking for people from grammar school... and oh my god it's like a reunion, like we just got this guy who went to both my high school and my grammar school and he left around 7th grade, and everybody was like where's [name] where is he, somebody found him on Facebook.

J: So his existence was verified by Facebook, just like the events you can only find out about them on Facebook.

I: Yeah. We're gonna have an elementary school reunion when I get back home, it's been a while. It's like old pictures from elementary school, like [garbled]

J: So then what do you do on Facebook, you've already talked a little bit about this, but think about each item. Do you use the status updates, for instance, up at the top?

I: I change my status, every day, most every day.

J: When you're updating your status, is it like how I'm feeling today or like literally I'm at the intersection between Goodwin and Green and I'm looking for a bus, what's it like?

I: Most of the time it's like what's going on, so like oh I'm having trouble... [garbled] but like when I got back on Facebook my status was like [interviewee name] is back by popular demand, I know you guys missed me, I'm sorry. Yeah. Today is gonna be [interviewee] is gonna hit the books, ready for finals, like it's just whatever is going on

J: So in a general way?

I: Yeah

J: So what about the wall?

I: Yeah, I write on—I really don't write on people's walls unless it's their birthday, to send them a message, but if somebody writes on my wall I write back on theirs. Facebook is so like, public, everybody is on your wall, "who you talking to, talking about..." but you can't [garbled] Facebook like the real world.

I know people that took their walls off their page.

J: Really?

I: Yes, so people won't know who's writing on their wall, so somebody has to send them a message.

J: So what do you use messaging for then?

I: For what, I don't anybody who has access to my page to read, or like if somebody messaged me I'd respond to that, but if I like wanted to ask somebody a question... [garbled]

J: So what all does this stuff involve? So you got email, you got Facebook, you got phone texting, you might have AIM or some other IM...?

I: No I don't have AIM, I have enough ways to message people, that's the one thing I don't do, makes my life easier.

J: So how do you do each one for different stuff. Is email for official stuff, is Facebook for event planning and stuff?

I: Email is mostly like if I need to talk to a professor or a TA or something, or from an organization or something. I still have conversations in email sometimes, but they're not as inconvenient, but they're not readily available or whatever. I guess that's where AIM comes in, but I'm not gonna mess with that. Texting, I text recreation, when I want to talk to people I really care about. Facebook is because it's more people on Facebook, you have more people you can talk to, like if you don't have their number, you can just shoot them a message on Facebook, that's how I can get away with don't have any numbers... [garbled]

J: What about that chat thing, in the lower right?

I: Yeah just started popping up? Yeah I don't really know how to use it, I like clicked on it and people started talking to me on it, it's like Facebook AIM, right?

J: It's as far as I can understand, it's somewhere in between AIM and Facebook messaging, because it interlaces the updates you get, if someone posts to your wall, it'll tell you down there.

I: Yeah it'll say 9, and I click on the thing and it pops up and gives a message

J: I think it's supposed to get you thinking about whatever that little notification is about, if they posted on your wall, you can talk about whatever they said. But have you been using it?

I: Yeah when people use it, send it to me, I talk back, but I don't know how to initiate it. I'll figure it out before I go home, I got a friend who's a real Facebook junky, they'll let me know before I get back.

J: Okay, so the applications thing. Do you use any applications?

I: The poking thing...

J: Well poking isn't an application, but there's super poke.

I: yeah like you can give hugs?

J: Yeah

I: Yeah I don't use that. But like is the top friends application?

J: Yeah

I: I use the top friends application, a couple of my friends have the my girls application, so I added those applications, I had a lot of applications that I just accepted, and a couple of weeks ago I took all of em off, because they were coming to my phone, like I'm tired of fun wall coming to my phone. I don't even have a fun wall anymore, but it's [garbled]

J: Who are the people who use a lot of applications?

I: I'd have to say the people who don't have a social life. People who have very large social lives and academically, they don't have time to use all of these applications. It's a game, or something, the old game, about a buggy and a horse, trails or somethin.

J: Oregon Trail is what you're thinking of

I: Oh and my friend and she's an MCB major and she has like a 3.8 and she just sits there and plays Oregon Trail and that's on her phone and I don't know, I just don't have time for that stuff.

J: Okay, so let's see. Groups and events? Obviously you get invited to events, you mentioned, do you have a bunch of groups on there?

I: Yeah I have a whole bunch of groups like I'm trying to erase some of them like, there's this thing where you can only have so many groups, I think I have to have less than a hundred groups to have more. So I don't need that - so I leave groups alone, and now a lot of people, a lot of people don't like the groups you have, because it's a limit on the groups you can have.

J: News to me, actually, I didn't know they made a limit.

I: Instead of making groups now people are making just everything events.

J: If you started joining groups right when you joined Facebook if you kept all of your group since then you'd have a track record of groups, but some people don't do that—they look over their groups and prune them, they'll see something and be like "oh this is stupid" and delete it and keep it to just stuff they're really in or about. Which are you, more of a history person or a group pruner?

I: I was one of the just the – in all of them, and then I went down and I was like "what am I really in this?" What is this, crazy stuff, what was I thinking when I joined this group? So I started going down on that only because one of my mentors on this campus, she said, she has a new thing, that I am now my profile, and umb, she said because stuff like Facebook and MySpace you can get on there, and people get to see all of the things you're part of and all of the things you're acting on another's profile, and then they think they can see, I know, who this person is even before I meet this person. So like thinking about that, so what if one of my church members gets on my page and they're like... what? Know what I'm sayin? If I don't even know I'm in this group, I didn't click on it, and I'm just in it because... all doin' they're readin' it.

J: So you just like excepted it without reading it and then it ends up on your thing and it might not really be who you are?

I: Exactly

J: So how does that influence though – you're talking about how people get impressions of each other, so if you're looking at another person's profile and say they like Basketball or something, and say you really like Basketball too, would you ever go like hey we should get together and play Basketball or something, without ever having talked about it in person before?

I: Yeah, like, status and stuff like that, I read people's status sometimes, I have this thing about knowing how they're doing. I'll write on their wall and say that I'm really feeling their status, like I can connect with it. And people do that to me too – send me messages about my status and stuff, sympathize and relate.

J: Do you ever find something out and then not act on it? Like some people might look up and see if someone's single, but you wouldn't want to actually ask them in person, that would be creepy. Is there anything like that going on?

I: Well I have this speculation with a couple of my friends, if a guy doesn't have his relationship status on there, if he doesn't say single and doesn't say 'in a relationship' we always make the assumption that he's in a relationship and he's cheating on his girl friend.

J: So say that again for me, I know the recording got it but I want to hear it again.

I: Yeah if he doesn't have relationship status on his page period, like he took it off, he doesn't have single, married, engaged, and all that crap, yeah if he doesn't have anything yet then that means he has a girl friend and he's cheating on them.

J: Okay

I: Because he's not saying in a relationship.

J: Have you confirmed this in person?

I: Yeah with my friends.

J: [laughs] That's interesting. So I think that's all I've got on Facebook features. I think we already talked about groups, you said you sometimes join them without looking.

I: I don't mess with the groups, I write on invite walls.

J: So you might be like if you can't come...

I: Yeah before I turned 19 a lot of my friends had a lot of barcrawls. I was like "You guys I'm too young to crawl, catch me after Spring break" and stuff like that. And then the first barcrawl I was able to go to I was like "Yeah I'm old enough to crawl!"

J: Do those groups correspond to organizations a lot of the time, like I think you mentioned being in a church group or something. Do a lot of the Facebook groups reflect a real world organization?

I: Yeah like I'm in this group for my church, and one for NAACP for campus, and in a [garbled, sounds like O-gartmen O-H], and some others that I can't remember.

J: So, umb, do you get, is it important that those groups inform you of what they're doing? Like if there's an event, do the groups send out events or do you hear about it mostly from friends around on Facebook?

I: Uh no, I'm pretty different I guess, I have a lot of older friends, and so upper classmen throw stuff and I might get invited, and you know how you can add friends to this event, so I end up sending it to other people.

J: We'll get to that in a sec actually – but what do you learn from Facebook? When you log on are you looking for an event like this or a phone number or something, or most of the time are you erratically bouncing around from one thing to another?

I: Yeah most of the time I go on there and if I don't see anything then I just type in my friend's names and start looking at their pictures, and then see another friend in their pictures and go to their page. And I just end up all over.

J: Okay so less like a mission and more like wherever.

I: Yeah this day, but when I had a boy friend it was different, but now I don't care, but it used to be if they knew there'd be problems... [garbled story about girl friend who's boy friend watched her too much. I can't hear it well enough to transcribe it but I remember the respondent talking about it, she spoke quietly]

J: So like gossip and stuff. So does anything then ever become official once it's on Facebook?

I: Oh it used to but it doesn't, that's another thing that changed in college. Because like in high school people used to get upset with their boyfriends and girlfriends for not putting up their relationship status on Facebook but now in college it's like a lot of people don't want it on there, because once it's on Facebook it's drama attachment – everybody is gonna be on your page and be like 'Is he with you or is she with you' you know and 'why where they here' and people want to keep their business as private as they can, and it's hard because the black community population here is so small so everybody don't put it on Facebook.

J: So there's privacy functions right? How do those work in to this? You can run it right down to the individual person right?

I: Right, yeah, limited profile. Like my best friend he umb broke up with his girlfriend when it got to college, and she was all on his page, and a lot of the girls he talks to were on his page, like any girl he talked to you would friend, and he got a girlfriend, and they had status and everything, but nobody could see though on limited profile, so he had to remove all of these girls he talks to and take them off his page and add them again on limited profile.

J: I think now you can actually do that smoothly, make custom groups and then adjust privacy for just those groups, but yeah it definitely used to be more of a pain in the butt. Okay so on that note, that browsing and stalking thing. And I've been giving this an example – you run around on Facebook and look at a lot of things, and there's creepy stuff you can do, and normal stuff you can do. Like if you friend puts up pictures from a party you're at and you look at those pictures it's totally normal and fine, but say you've got a guy and a girl at a bar, and he gets her name from a friend and looks her up on his phone and then starts talking to her about all of her interests and knows she's single and stuff like that. A lot of people would think that's creepy. So where's your line on Facebook? What's creepy and what's just normal?

I: Well I don't know, I get a lot of messages from guys that I don't know at all and they're like my friends on Facebook, and I don't know how they found me and they send me messages and I don't know and I take them off my friends list but they can still send me messages, so it's like "okay... I don't know you..." I don't want to say I don't know you so leave me alone. Because that is kinda creepy to me and my page it says my high school and the college I go to, if they know people that I know then they know my circles, and then it's like, I know people who meet people on Facebook a lot and they don't think it's creepy. It's okay to meet somebody on Facebook, it's when you try to talk to me on Facebook to start a relationship with me on Facebook then that's creepy.

J: So you think some things need to happen in the face-to-face.

I: Yeah.

J: How does Facebook come up in the face-to-face?

I: Every time we take cameras out, everybody knows it goes on Facebook [laugh]

J: So computer-internet, camera-Facebook, that's good.

I: So people pose and say "Don't put this on Facebook" or they might be like "Put this one on Facebook!" And people at parties – like I went to bomb night last night and they were taking pictures and my friend he was like he knew people were taking a picture that was gonna go up on Facebook so he went up next to them. Stuff like that. I try to make sure that – like I had a cup of water – and I don't want people to get ideas. And at CO's they have clear drinks and stuff and they put a straw in it like the rest of the drinks, and people see that and say "She's got a drink" and I gotta be like "it's still water." I'm still conscious, like Facebook is a big phenomenon, and I know that. I know people who's parents and stuff are on Facebook, so I like never want anybody to tag any perceptions of me, I know Facebook can just be face value and people might look you up.

J: Alright, we're running a little short on time, so, I'll jump to the next question set. So if there were one thing you'd like people to see on your profile first, what would it be?

I: My religious views.

J: Okay, so what would you want that to indicate then?

I: I don't know, I think that just, that's one of the most important things to me, my religion and my race, so I would want them to see it, I try to give the right impression. I try to really live the right way.

J: So when you're looking at somebody else's profile, where does your attention go?

I: Umb, to their religious view, that's the first thing I looked at when I met my suitemate on Facebook, and she's agnostic, she saw my page and said something like you must be rich because [garbled, sounds like "standin' on ikea"], and I said no I'm just blessed, and she was like yeah I saw that on your Facebook page, we're gonna have to talk about that. And I was like okay yeah I'm ready for you.

J: So what came out of that?

I: Well we talked and since I've been there and she knows not to try to put her religious views on me, because she doesn't have any really, and I don't try to put mine on her because that's how war starts. She's open to listening, like she asks questions, I don't know, I just...

J: So it was a random assignment then?

I: Yeah, she's not my roommate.

J: Alright, so nobody is here yet so I'm gonna keep going. You already said 'I'm pretty popular on this Facebook thing' so how do you get popular on Facebook?

I: well you have to be like, well I'm a people person, and I meet people and I get their name and they find me or I find them and sometimes I'll be like "I'll look you up." It's like I speak to people and see how they're doin' - If I've seen you in person and I said something to you and I have you on Facebook, I ask you online. [Garbled section] Like my roommate, she all this "we gonna go on your Facebook and find some friends"

J: So here's the question though, you know a lot of people, right, and you can maybe connect up with a lot of people, do you think that makes you more powerful on Facebook?

I: Kinda, but it's usually it's like I have to be more conscious of what I put on Facebook, so I gotta be careful about what they can see me do.

J: So it's a little more responsibility then.

I: Right, I never want somebody to see me at a place that I look bad, it kinda keeps me in check, and I'll think I'm not gonna do this because it might show up on Facebook.

J: Have you ever pushed an event and used all the connections you've got?

I: Yeah my friends have this party and I always make fliers and make it my profile pic and stuff and you gotta get tickets, I got mine, what you gonna do?

J: Alright, I've got more questions but we're outa time and I should go check downstairs if the next person downstairs is lost... Thank you!