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J: So, I'd like to start from the top. I'd like to know what your experience with technology has been growing up. If you can remember back to your childhood, if you grew up with computers in the household, if you had a cell phone, what technology has been like for you?

I: I think I used my first computer in 4th grade? At that time I didn't know anything about it; that much. And now it's really easy for me, I was really interested – I don't know how I learned it, it just came to me.

J: So there was no specific class or training or anything?

I: No, and I didn't have any cell phones until 8th grade I think. I watched a lot of TV. TV was my primary technology.

J: Did you use the phone much?

I: No, I just called my friends sometimes. Now I use it a lot more often.

J: Would you say it was an important –not just the phone, all of these technologies, where all of them important to you growing up?

I: I think the TV was a lot. Not so much as now. It's not like I can't live without it. If I didn't have it then I would have gone outside and played.

J: Think back to the computer thing, did you have one at home or at school?

I: I had a home computer because my dad had to use the computer, but I didn't use that one a lot because my dad wouldn't let me touch it unless I really needed to use it. So I used the computer from the public library a lot. I first used a computer because I had to do a research paper. That was the first time using the internet—I got so much lost, I had to ask the librarian about how to use it.

J: About how old where you?

I: That was 4th grade.

J: So did you grow up in a rural area, or a suburban area or urban?

I:Well, actually I grew up in [small central IL city].

J: That still could go either way, because if you live in downtown [small central IL city] that's pretty urban, vs. if you go 10 miles out of the town that's pretty rural.

I: I lived in [area outside of small city]

J: Okay, so that's almost like a suburb of [small city]. Alright, so then within all of this, what got you to sign on to Facebook? Was there any specific person or event? And was there a Myspace of Xanga before that?

I: I didn't know anything about MySpace or Xanga or whatever. I first learned about it from Facebook from my high school friends. They were first on it after getting into colleges. And I was like what is that? And they told me about it. So I thought it was a really good chance to meet people before going to school. And so that's when I first, like signed up for Facebook, after I got into U of I.

J: Okay, so there wasn't a specific person who invited you in? It was sort of once you got into college you made a profile?

I: mhm [yes]

J: So when you joined was it before they had open global membership? Or was it before? It went in phases. For a while there was university students only, then it was an invite-only like Gmail, and then finally it was opened to anyone who wished to join, when did you join?

I: I think universities

J: Okay, so earlier on. So back when this did happen, what do you remember about Facebook? What was it like?

I: It was much simpler, like now you have all of those applications, and all that different stuff. Then there was profiles, some groups, there weren't that much interaction. Now there's like everything, on your page, there's everything like even like personality tests, horoscopes, and presents or whatever.

J: So there were fewer applications and less interaction?

I: Yes

J: So do you remember anything about the population, do you remember who was on it?

I: then it seemed like college students, now it's like even middle school students. My sister's on it, and she doesn't go here.

J: Okay, so moving on from that, if you were to envision your everyday life, how does Facebook play a role?

I: I think it's pretty big. Umb, I go on Facebook every day. It's how you keep in touch with everybody, especially in a big campus like this, you can't really meet people all of the time. You kinda go like 'hey what's up, let's go out sometime.' Or something like that, and I think it plays a role like a cell phone.

J: Explain that a little further, when you say it's like a cell phone?

I: There's a contact list, because you have all of the friends added to your friends list, and that's a lot bigger than your cell phone list, and even if you don't have the number of that person you can go on Facebook you can go on their wall and write 'call me at' or 'meet me at'

J: So do you feel out of touch when you haven't logged on. You mention you log on daily.

I: Sometimes there are a lot of these wall post things. And I would have to get back to them, but sometimes I'm too late, especially if it's invitations from friends to go to parties, and I've already missed it, and that might be too late.

J: So would you say then that you'd miss it if it were shut down?

I: Yeah. A lot, I think [laugh]. It's fun, like creeping up on friends, Facebook stalking them and looking on their albums and seeing what they're doing. I think a lot of people do it too.

J: Okay I'll get to that in a minute, but I have to ask. There's this notion of browsing vs. stalking, right? You can take a look at people's profiles and see what's going on—where does the line fall between when you're just browsing and interacting in a normal way, and it turns into stalking and something bad. How do you determine what's creepy and what's browsing?

I: First of all, I think umb, the term browsing is just like Facebook stalking now. Facebook stalking is not like real creeping stalking, it's that new term. Browsing would be like going through friend's albums and like reading their profiles maybe. But stalking like would be like if you don't know that person and they add you because you're cute and stuff and they like messaging you all of the time—that's stalking.

J: So if you don't know the person very well.

I: Yes

J: Does it have anything to do with intent?

I: I think so, especially if it it's like a guy girl thing.

J: So what do you mean by that?

I: Sometimes I would get these random messages saying like, 'oh I want to meet you'?

J: Do you have any examples or anything? You don't have to give real names.

I: Well like I used to have an open profile, and people would just read it going through my friends I guess, and people would read it and be like "oh we have similar interests, so I want to meet you' and that was like really weird.

J: So that was creepy.

I: So now I closed it, yeah.

J: So that kinda begs the question of how you see community on Facebook. Do you see many communities you interact with on a day to day basis on Facebook? Is it one big Facebook community?

I: I think small communities like make up this huge Facebook community. And uh, by small community I mean by region and school, and even interest.

J: So like by—what do you mean by interest exactly?

I: Maybe like the Facebook groups.

J: Okay, so what then do you use Facebook for?

I: I use Facebook for a lot of communication usually. It's a good way of keeping track of who you know because it's such a big campus and usually you meet people once or twice and then you don't see them anymore. And then you tend to forget that person, so sometimes I go through my list and see who's there and keep track of who I know.

J: So you said communication, there's the wall communication, and message and other ways, which ways do you use Facebook to communicate?

I: Umb, I use wall and messaging a lot. Wall is usually is like for things that I can open up to other people, and messaging is more private I think because like you don't want other people to see it. Those two are the main ones.

J: [distracted for a moment] Okay. So how does status work, do you use status?

I: Yeah, it actually lets people know about like how I am, for example if I write "I'm sick" people would write on my wall for me to get better.

J: Do you ever use it explicitly to communicate, or is it more inside jokes, or does it come into multiple forms?

I: I think it comes in multiple forms, but usually it's like my feelings a lot. 'Oh I'm not feeling good because of blah blah blah' or 'I'm feeling happy because of blah blah blah' or something like that.

J: So how does it then, you already talked about how Facebook compares to a cell phone, how does it compare to other communication mediums? Would you choose Facebook over one or the other?

I: They're similar in the sense of chatting or something. It's different in the sense that like AIM or MSN those are like instant messaging so you go back and forth constantly, where as Facebook is like you post it and then you wait for that person to reply. So it takes a longer time.

J: So does that adjust the type of message you send? Do you carry on conversations on Facebook or is more like notifications?

I: It's more like notifications, sometimes communication I guess, but there's like limitations.

J: So would you ever choose to use a Facebook message or a wall post over an email?

I: I think Facebook is more informal and email is more formal. So people don't usually send emails to friends, just to communicate. Email is like, you feel like you should write a lot more, but Facebook you could write just a sentence and it would be okay. And umb but I choose email over Facebook when I need to send something, like I want that person to read it quickly, because Facebook people usually people don't log in that much.

J: Okay, so in terms of your use of Facebook, going back, do you use applications?

I: I'm really into horoscopes so that's the application I use, and I use the best friends list or something, which like if you click on the person's photo it just goes into that friend's profile, and that's easier, because then you don't have to go look them up or something.

J: Okay, so what about groups or events?

I: I have a lot of groups on my Facebook. I just added to my Facebook profile, I don't really go into it all the time. I think it's the same for a lot of people, they just do it because—like example you're in this organization and they make this Facebook, you add it on, you don't really go to it.

J: So is the group listing more of a track-record of all of the things you've done?

I: That, and it's also it's like it relates to you, you've had this experience or the same interest maybe?

J: So there's a lot of representations of your identity in your groups?

I: Yes

I: Do you think there are more of those like inside jokes or something about who you are or those that are like ones where you belong to an organization?

I: I think it's both, about equal.

J: So then there's a bunch of groups that connect to offline organizations. Do you ever see those organizations send messages through those groups?

I: Yeah, I get a lot of messages from the groups I've just added. They're just doing publicity for events. Sometimes I just get invites from those groups, too.

J: So do you think that's a good thing?

I: It depends, like sometimes, if it sounds interesting, I want to do it, so I like the invite. But then sometimes it's just kinda like spam mail.

J: Is there anything you ignore in particular, think beyond just groups too.

I: When people add applications they have to send invites to 10 people I think, and that's a lot.

J: I don't know if that's required anymore.

I: It still is, and sometimes I want to add an application but then I have to send it to 10 people and I don't want to; those are really like spam mail.

J: Do you feel bad when you try to add one and end up sending it to a lot of people?

I: Yeah I usually don't.

J: Alright, so moving on a bit—what do you learn from Facebook? When you log on, you're confronted by the newsfeed. Actually when you first joined there was no newsfeed, so when they added it what was your reaction?

I: I was kinda scared at first, because everybody knows what I'm doing now, it's like open Facebook stalking.

J: What do you mean exactly when you say everybody?

I: The newsfeed goes on to that main page, of like what your friends are doing. So even if you change one thing or add or move something it's all up there, usually.

J: All things or just some things?

I: Just some things.

J: Did you start using the newfeed?

I: I usually, when the newsfeed comes up you can't erase the newsfeed but you can erase some aspects of the newsfeed. Like if I write something on some person's wall I can go delete that so they can't see what I've been doing.

J: So you hide your own activities then, but do you use the newsfeed to sort of guide your behavior on Facebook?

I: Not really.

J: So how do you learn things from Facebook? Do you go to your best friends?

I: I go to the main page and see what my friends are doing. I go through albums and see what people are doing. I kinda also learn about what's going on around campus. I tend to miss what's going on, and then like if something big happens, then everybody is on Facebook groups on that issue and I tend to learn about it.

J: So in general do you think you pick up information more passively, like noticing things here and there on the newsfeed and then looking at them randomly, or more actively, like you might log on looking for a specific piece of information like this person's phone number and then go find that and log off?

I: I think more passively.

J: Okay, so have you ever created a group?

I: Yes.

J: Okay, what was it about?

I: My friends and I we made the like, Lettuce and Tomato group. My friends and I get together at late night and get lettuce and tomatoes and talk about stuff, like girl talk kinda thing. The lettuce and tomatoes are free and they are not fattening, so it's good. It's consisted of really best friends, and using that Facebook group we make plans and stuff sometimes. We even went to Jamaica for Spring break and used that Facebook group.

J: Were there face to face follow ups to that? Or was it all conducted online?

I: It was both.

J: So have you ever created an application of any kind?

I: No, I don't know how to.

J: So you made an event for the Spring break trip – so you've made events before?

I: I've made events for like my birthday party and some other parties too.

J: So some of your best friends are on Facebook, but who all do you keep up with on Facebook? Which people or groups or communities are on Facebook?

I: I think it's pretty much everybody, but people who've I've just met usually. Best friends you talk to them all of the time because you see them every day anyway. Family I usually talk to on the phone more, but like my sisters use Facebook. And umb, I do use it for friends from high school, but I went to high school in Korea, and people in Korea don't really know about Facebook, so not many of my friends are on Facebook. So I usually use it for people I just met, say hey, glad to meet you, lets meet again kinda thing.

J: So a connection thing.

I: Right.

J: Alright, so you were talking about browsing activity on profiles and such. So when you look at another person's profile, you might notice something about them, like say seeing that they like soccer, and then you might invite them to play soccer sometime. How often do things you learn about people online, possibly without them knowing, end up coming up in person?

I: I think definitely. I would just even mention some things in conversations, mention it [Facebook] in conversation and you can relate to that person more.

J: Is there ever a time you notice something that you might not talk about, like say you didn't like their type of music or something?

I: Yeah maybe sometimes. This one guy he's my, uh, coach, and he wrote like stuff on his Facebook, about sexual stuff, and I was kinda really creeped out, and I don't think I've talked to him that much since.

J: So it tipped you off, is he a coach for sports?

I: Yeah.

J: How then does Facebook come up in everyday conversation? Say tomato lettuce night, the soccer thing, how else does Facebook come up in conversation?

I: First of all it's about creating networks, as soon as you meet a person you ask, do you have Facebook? It also brings up in conversations, like oh I saw on Facebook. For example I went to Jamaica, people were like oh how was Jamaica, it looked like a lot of fun. I didn't even have to tell people how I spent my Spring break, cause it was all out there already, so people would just talk about it first and that kind of thing.

J: So it sounds like mostly to initiate connections and then it turns up as a sort of medium?

I: Yeah.

J: Okay, so say somebody sees you in Jamaica, but you don't necessarily know who they are, unless they tell you. In general you don't know who's looking at your profile or tracking your actions, so in a sense it's an invisible audience. If you were to guess who your invisible audience is, who would you think they are?

I: People I haven't talked to in a long time. It's sometimes fun, because they might write on my wall and say like 'heys it's been a while' and that might be fun.

J: Would you want certain people looking at your profile instead of others?

I: I don't mind people looking at my profile unless it's someone I don't know. It's not—in my case—my friend who went to Jamaica with me, had pictures of herself in her bikini and these random guys were sending her messages everyday like 'hey you're hot do you want to come out with me sometime?' kinda pickup lines.

J: Do you think that's a common thing, that women receive that kind of harassment?

I: I think so, it doesn't happen to me much, but my friend is really pretty so I think she gets it more.

J: Do you think guys run into that sort of thing too? Like a really attractive guy?

I: Sure, I guess so. Not as much because it's easier for guys to approach girls, but I think good looking guys would have the same problem.

J: So easier to approach—how do you think Facebook changes how easy or hard it is to approach someone? Is it easier on Facebook than in person?

I: Yeah, some people like I meet them and I run into them on the street and we kind of ignore each other, it's awkward, we stare at each other but we don't say hi, but on Facebook we're still friends. It's weird.

J: Do you think it's because one of you is afraid to talk to the other or it would be awkward?

I: I don't know, it depends on that kind of person, I think it's more about the other person being awkward, because I'm really open. I think those people are shy and build a new identity online.

J: Alright, so if you meet a person playing soccer, you know they like soccer, but that's really the extent of their identity that you know. But then you can Facebook them and really see all the things they do, who they're friends with, and stuff. So is that picture painted of them on Facebook a pretty good picture of who they are?

I: Sort of, because you get to know what that person is interested in and involved in, but you don't get to know the deep inside of that person, so like more stuff on the outside is more revealed I guess.

J: Has that changed how people meet each other?

I: I don't think it's changed all that much, because even if that person adds you on Facebook, the next time you meet, unless you had a connection the first time it's still awkward. So you might ignore or forget about that person anyway, but you still might have that person as a friend.

J: Is there a reason to keep them on your friends list then?

I: Not really, people add me anyway, and I accept them. I wouldn't reject them—that's rude—unless that person is really creepy.

J: So it's a lot easier to say yes than it is to say no?

I: I usually say yes to anybody who goes to U of I, but if they're random then I might reject them.

J: So it's an expectation of reputation then?

I: Yeah.

J: Okay, so shifting topics a bit to something I missed before. Back when we were talking about events— if you get an event invite from someone you know, does that impact the likelihood of you going to that event?

I: It impacts a little bit, but it's more based on your interest. Like say a good friend of yours invited you to this event but you're totally not interested—for example I get invites for business speakers and those are not my interest and so I don't even look at them even if a good friend sends them. But then if somebody that I don't really know sent me a really good invite, like oh there's this party going on or

something informative that I can get something out of, I pretty much go, if there aren't any time conflicts.

J: So it's largely about the content of the event?

I: Yes.

J: Have you ever had any connections with authority figures, like parents or teachers or a boss at work or something like that?

I: My coaches.

J: So the same guy you mentioned before?

I: Yes, but they're students at U of I so it doesn't really count as authority figures.

J: So I would be a graduate student at U of I, would I be an authority figure?

I: Umb, yes.

J: So this all leads into another question. How do you think power works on Facebook – what makes a person powerful there? Is it possible to be powerful there?

I: Umb, I guess so, if you have a lot of friends on Facebook you're seen as like popular, so that kind of builds up your popularity which leads to power. I think.

J: What would be the benefits of having a lot of connections be?

I: Networking really. Which is like what they call social…

J: Social networking?

I: No… from class

J: Social capital?

I: Yeah!

J: Okay, so yeah there might be more social capital there. How does a person get to be popular there?

I: Well you have to go out a lot and meet people, which will build your…

J: So you think it's reflective of face to face relationships?

I: A little, but sometimes you have like fake friends who are like acquaintances who've you've met just once and that kind of like – those morph popularity but it's not really true.

J: Do things like age or gender or if a person has more money, do you think those things influence if a person is popular or powerful?

I: I don't think so, those aspects are more hidden. I think it's more like how much you're logged in to Facebook and maybe appearance a little bit.

J: That's an interesting question – your friend who gets messages all the time because she's good looking—how does the picture element work on Facebook? Every time you post there's a little picture attached to it, do you think that influences things?

I: I think so. Like if that person looks, like 'oh I don't want to be close with that person' I don't think I'd be interacting with that person on Facebook that much.

J: So if there was a really ugly scary lookin' person you'd be less likely to interact with them?

I: Unless I'm really close to that person in real life.

J: So there's a first impression of the visual, the same way if you were to meet the person on the street?

I: Yeah, but sometimes the Facebook pictures are kind of like fake. They're kind of…

J: Well right people pick the best pictures – but isn't there a way around that with tagging? Like their friend might tag pictures of them. They could untag themselves, but they still might not have complete control.

I: Yes, but people look at your Facebook profile pictures a lot rather than going into their picture albums. You'd have to be interested in that person to go into their albums, like I wouldn't go into a person's photos if I wasn't interested in them.

J: So what do you look at when you visit another person's page?

I: Sometimes their photos and… yeah.

J: What about wall or status, what else do you look at?

I: I ignore applications most of all, I don't read people's walls, I think that's kinda private, I read people's profiles a lot.

J: So like their interests and hobbies?

I: Yeah, especially if I've just met them.

J: Okay, last question, might seem a little weird, we're almost out of time. Does Facebook ever seem to act on its own? Does it ever seem to do things that you don't think were specifically intended, that might be surprising?

I: The only surprising factor is like when Facebook changes, like for example when the newsfeed thing came out at first. That kind of thing surprises me, but other than that I don't think it, but otherwise I don't think it does anything else.

J: Well we're just about out of time and I'm missing my new interview question sheet, so do you have any stories or other things you'd like to add?

I: Well… umb… well I think it's really funny when I upload pictures from my camera, and these people will be like 'un-tag me, un-tag me, un-tag me' and I think you can remove yourself now but not before and they'd be like calling me and like 'un-tag' me, and a girl would be like "I can't get a guy if you upload this photo."

J: Ah, so another off-shoot question – does Facebook ever verify statuses? Like when you put up your relationship status sometimes people consider it official. What about stuff like that?

I: Umb… especially the relationship status, yes and no actually. If it's a true relationship and you post it as a relationship, then that says you're dating—you're going out with that person. But then the opposite case is if you're actually dating this person and you put single on it, people would be like 'why are you still single' and umb some people choose to be funny and put their best friend as engaged.

J: Do you think that changes when people get to around my age?

I: Yeah, I think adults are more serious, but we're in college so we can joke around. I think it's still pretty stupid actually.

J: Indicating you're married to a best friend you mean?

I: Yeah.

J: I think it's most common between two female friends as a joke. But then there might also be same-sex relationships on Facebook. How do you think this all works?

I: Well first of all, there are a lot of same-sex engagement and marriage because if it were the opposite sex people would take it as serious, but if it's same-sex people would take you as joking. I think girls do it more because they like to make more close relationships and intimate relationships. I think guys think it's more gay-ish.

J: So like homophobia and stuff?

I: Yeah.

J: Alright, well we're actually out of time, so thanks!