

# Transcription 4

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J: so I guess to begin I'd like to know a little bit about how computers and cell phones and other information communication devices have played a role in your life in the past, so like if you grew up with a computer, when you got a cell phone, stuff like that.

I: Um, I remember being 4 or 5 and I think that's when my family got our first computer. And um back then it was just pretty much I drew pictures on paint and used things like Encarta, which people don't even know like what that is anymore because of things like Wikipedia online.

J: I actually do remember, but yes.

I: But um, yeah I used a computer when I was pretty young and it's probably because of my dad because he works with computers in his job. He's an engineer. So he's, he was all about me getting into computers young, and fourth grade I wanna say, yeah when I was in fourth grade, AOL like was getting really big so, only a couple people that I knew had AOL so even if I did get online, I only had 1 or 2 friends to talk to, so the internet wasn't really important to me until proolly middle school. And we just I don't know I guess in middle school it started to be, get bigger because then people used it for research projects and that kind of thing in school.

J: so when did the process of your technology of connection, like, did you start out with modem and then go to DSL line?

I: oh yeah, definitely. We had a modem for, I wanna say up until high school so like 5 years or so. It was it was pretty horrible. I think that's what turned me off to the internet in the first place.

J: really? That's because you had to dial up and deal with all the...

I: it was, it was more of a hassle than a convenience, so uh, yeah but once we got wireless internet, I never looked back, I guess its just now that its easy its something that I always want to use.

J: ok. So what about um cell phone then, did you get one at a young age, or still don't have one, or where do you fall in that?

I: Oh, um in middle school, we had an extra cell phone, I think my brother was in high school when I was in middle school so, um, somehow, we had this extra cell phone that either my dad use it or my dad has a company owned cell phone, so if I went somewhere like, to, like a dance or something that was gonna end late, my parents would give me the community cell phone to take with me, and eventually, probably when I was a freshman in high school, I got my own and have had my own since then.

J: ok, um, so let's see here, would you say that these things were important, then, growing up, I know you kinda described them but...

I: um, na, not really I don't think anything would, I don't think the internet or cell phones got important for what my school wanted, um it became more important for school, so it wasn't really, I wasn't big on talking on the phone or talking online or anything like that.

J: ok, so moving on then, I guess would be the question of how you got involved in facebook.

I: ha, ok,

J: so, how did that happen.

I: I got a Facebook before my freshman year of college, I remember not wanting to get a high school Facebook because people in college thought it was like really lame just like, it was something you had to, like you had to be in college to get one. High school Facebook was pretty new, I think it was the first or second year when I was a senior in high school so it kinda looked down upon me I guess. you just kinda waited, you had a MySpace in high school, and then

J: Yeah I was gonna say, did you have MySpace before it then?

I: yeah I had a MySpace in high school and I didn't have either senior year, but I wanted to wait until I left high school so my Facebook would say Illinois, not, ya know, the high school one. And I remember getting it like the day or 2 days after I graduated because I really wanted one, but, I just didn't wanna have a high school one.

J: haha, well you could've, I mean, you can do it as soon as you get the email for your college, right?

I: yeah, I guess so.

J: which in theory came, if it was U of I came before your graduation day you just didn't you wanted to think about it as the cut off or something?

I: I really don't know, I guess when I was still in high school, I felt like I wasn't ready to meet people. I wanted, I wanted to keep 'em separate.

J: Ok, so was it a rite of passage thing?

I: yeah.

J: So you didn't have a friend to get you to sign on. And then what time period did you sign on during, was during the period that high schoolers could join but was it during the global period when anybody could join.

I: uh, no it was before the global period.

J: ok

I: so you either had a highschool Facebook or a college Facebook and I didn't I really didn't want to have a high school Facebook so

J: When you talk about growing up with communications technology and stuff, were, did you grow up in a rural area or a suburban type area or urban?

I: I grew up in the suburbs.

J: how technology savvy do you feel the town overall was.

I: I would say pretty savvy, um it was a Chicago suburb, it was fairly small, but I went to high school in a big town, like, I had to drive pretty far to get to school, actually, but, um, yeah, the Chicago suburbs I would say are pretty with the times, er.

J: Ok, cool.

I: as far as technology goes.

J: So alright um thinking about the uh time when you first signed on to Facebook, think back to that time and what I know this might have only been a little over a year ago or something, but what differences can you remember about the system then, what was it like back then?

I: um, I remember being a lot more simple definitely because people spent more time on like their default picture was and what their interests were and now it seems like people are just adding more and more applications and things are just getting like confusing or complicated, but before it was pretty much just your picture, like, you information, and like, tell the people what you're about instead of like having games and I don't know, you'd have a hundred friends

J: Ok uh, so alright then moving on the current day, which I know is a little bit more on your mind now that you think about it, but what uh, how does Facebook enter into your everyday life on an average day?

I: uh, its funny that um it seems to pop up in conversation a lot more, and its an activity like oh what do you do. Oh, I Facebooked. like so people talk about it. Like, for example, if you're in a relationship with someone, it's not serious until you're in, ya know, in the relationship on Facebook so it's like, oh Facebook told me they were in a relationship, so it must be serious. Just things like that.

J: This idea of Facebook confirming something or becoming official once it's on Facebook does that, are they more than just relationships that it happens with? Would it be all relationships? Like say if a couple high schoolers were engaged or married, like how does that?

I: oh no, there are plenty of fake relationships on Facebook, so um I don't know, sometimes its kinda hard to tell cuz it used to be like just be made up if you're in a relationship with someone, and less and less is it confirming, I guess you need to know people, I guess in like real life, and then match it up with your Facebook, but you can just assume that it says on Facebook then its true because it changes that much, often, I think its just so easy.

J: eh so but are there any other statuses that might be confirmed on Facebook?

I: uh, I've seen a couple people's sexual orientations be ya know like that's the way they announce it to their friends or

J: ok.

J: ok so you also talk about how it's spoken about um in person so like how is Facebook characterized when people talk about it? How does it appear in conversations?

I: I dunno, its only certain people I know, so its some people, pretty much everyone I know has Facebook, but not everyone goes on it, and not everyone is proud of spending a lot of time on it, some people are very open with like oh, I Facebook stalked so and so. um but yeah like I know a handful of people that will bring up something like, oh I just found out something on Facebook like it's, ya know, like a newsfeed like its like a big deal, instead of watching a real news, like, they watch the newsfeed ,ya know, they broke up and Facebook told me that they're in a relationship.

J: You were relating in terms of the newsfeed as a source of news. How would you characterize the other ways people talk about it, is it a medium, is it a place, how do you think people talk about it?

I: Um, it might just be a thing and they don't think about it in any of those ways, but I don't think its so much a place, if anything it'd be a medium.

J: Ok, ok so bouncing back, we kinda jumped around. Do you have like a routine, like every day, you get up at 6 am and log on to Facebook and get your coffee and go to class?

I: Uh, no not really. I have kinda a love-hate relationship with Facebook. Uh like, just recently, because I haven't much to do because of finals, and I've been going on Facebook a lot more than I normally would and also because of this new chat feature. It's like

J: yeah so what this has come out in the midst of all the interviews so I don't have an official question about it but what do you think about it?

I: uh, sometimes if like 30 of my Facebook friends'll be on and I'll find a handful of people that I haven't talked to in a while and will wanna just say something, and its, I don't have AIM or I don't instant message on my computer I gave up on that kind of a long time ago and I think it's a cross between AIM and a Facebook message 'cause It's not quite as personal as AIM because you don't have to have somebody on your buddy list or like watch for them, but it's not a message where you have to wait for them to reply to you, like, you can just say, ask them a question you'll get on and so I think its kinda cool 'cause I've talked to some of my friends that I haven't talked to in a while, but it didn't ya know we aren't close enough where id go out of my way to send them an email or an instant message but like there's something there's still something to talk about worthwhile.

J: Ok so then you mentioned that you don't use AIM, so then how would Facebook communication in general seem to be a topic, how would that compare to other things like email or say texting on a cell phone.

I: uh, I think Facebook is somewhere in between texting and emailing because emailing you have to find peoples email addresses and keep them in your address book and things like that, and texting you kind of just, it's like less formal, I'd say, than a Facebook message because you send probably a shorter message, bad grammar and I don't know a Facebook message I always thought was a little more personal than a text but less personal than an email because

J: ok, so what about in Facebook, I should have been more specific there's a few ways to communicate on Facebook, so you're thinking specifically about messages right now?

I: I'm not big on writing on people's walls because I, I don't really like when people write on my wall because I think that anything that can be said on a wall can be said in a message or a phone call or text or email for that matter, but um if I have something to tell someone I tell them and just them and not all of their friends so I don't know

J: and then what about say your status updating your status, that could be a way of communicating less directly. how does that work?

I: I never have one, I've actually set my privacy preferences to not show my status and I've just never completed it because I think it just gets out of hand, my sister has a Facebook, and she loves communicating through her status, and like my brother always jokes, oh [name] always like ya know she always changes her status and it's like [name] is brushing, [name] is flossing.

J: so it's like little arbitrary moments.

I: yeah like I think that if I started updating it, then I would feel compelled to keep updating it, and I don't want to get into that so.

J: Ok would you say that Facebook is an efficient way of communicating? I don't know how you define efficient.

I: I think with certain, in certain relationships, I definitely wouldn't talk to my professors or I think it takes a certain kind of friendship to communicate through Facebook, because if I'm really close to someone no matter where they are, like no matter if I see them on a regular basis, ill talk to them on the phone. But there are people that I talk to on Facebook that live around me so I guess its, I don't know yeah like, it takes a certain kind of friendship to only communicate on Facebook.

J: ok cool we kinda jumped around to the communication topic, so going back to this everyday routine thing, would you be sorry if Facebook was shut down? You mentioned that you're on it a lot during finals but...

I: uh, I think it would be trouble for a lot of people and cause a lot of drama, but overall I think it would probably be a good thing for me because I can go months without needing it, and then I can go, I can go on it multiple times in a day, and it's kind of like, oh its there so I might as well check it, but if it wasn't there I wouldn't miss it.

J: ok so you wouldn't be all that sorry if it were shut down. Ok would you feel out of touch if you weren't able to log on?

I: I think the more I go on it, the more I feel like its addictive, like the more I go on it the more I feel like in need to be checking it, but I uh I'll give it up, I gave it up for lent, and even after lent was over I just didn't really go on it because pretty much if you stop talking to people then they stop talking to you so its like nobody is really missing me there, and I'm not missing many parts of it so there's really no point in going on.

J: Ok. Who are, we haven't touched on the who, the people who stop talking to you, the people you might message that you wouldn't normally message, who is that in your community? How do you see community on Facebook as reflective of the face to face world? Are there new ones on Facebook? Is it one big community or do you think community doesn't exist on Facebook?

I: in general or like of my friends?

J: both

I: id say of my friends I have people that I, the people that I was friends with that I was talking about, the certain kind of friendship that you can talk on Facebook and not in other places. uh, and then just so many friends that I'll probably never ever talk to and might've never talked to in the first place, but just kinda like the riff raff, the extra-extra friends that you like never think about.

J: describe riff raff for me here.

I: just like people in high school pretty much, people I never really had a connection with in high school and I don't think that I'll be able to make a connection ever in life, especially through Facebook because, uh if I had known them in real life we didn't become friends I don't think you can ever be like over a connection with a computer and then I guess the other group would be, the people I'm actually close to like family and people that I'm that I would stay close to in life. But in general I don't really know how to characterize uh...

J: What then do you do on Facebook typically? You've already talked about the chat thing and you're not a fan of wall posting and indicated messaging. There might be some other things on there, what about events or applications?

I: I don't have I have one application and its not interactive it's the calendar its just one tiny strip on my profile and I don't plan on adding any other ones. Um like I said, the Facebook chat thing has been keeping me occupied just lately because its new and just trying it out get some friends um usually on Facebook, just recently because my sister lives in texas, so I don't get to see her so I went through all her pictures. She's pregnant, she's actually like 8 months pregnant so she posts a lot of pictures and shows that and uh just to update family and friends that are around her.

J: ok uh, so what about groups and events?

I: ok, I've never posted um an event, and I don't typically join a lot of groups, but I do find out about a lot of stuff. I get events sent to me, and I've never, I don't think I've ever gone to an event that I first heard about on Facebook. It was like, oh yeah I'm having a party, I'll send you an like ya know an event thingamajigger for Facebook, and if I get an invite that I haven't already heard about in real life, I kind of disregard it because its like

J: does it matter who that invite comes from?

I: um, not really, like if I don't know the person or haven't talked to them, well I guess it does matter cuz I don't like getting groups or event invites from people that don't talk to me in real life I know you just sent it to your whole all of your friends. Uh...

J: ok so have you ever created a group?

I: no

J: no, ok. Um and then on the note of the groups thing, are you very careful about like pruning groups that you don't belong to or like listing the history of the groups?

I: I'm only in a couple and I think at most I was in 10 and then for some reason I thought 10 was too much so I left 5 of them so now I'm in 5 and I don't know it kind of annoys me when people add every group and are in like 100 groups that they're in because I don't know I don't want people reading through mine to try to figure out who I am, oh she's in this ya know, pro-life whatever or just some something that sounds like archery but means pro-life

J: so you're worried about the impressions a person might get based on your groups.

I: I guess so there's so many groups and so many invites that I get. One day some person from high school will ask me to be part of like just another something that sounds like archery but means pro-life group like pro-life, and then ya know a week later, I'll get a pro-choice one. So like, I can't, instead of picking and choosing, I'll just reject all of them.

J: You mentioned that you don't want people getting the wrong impression from that. If somebody was gonna come visit your profile, if there was one thing that you wanted them to look at first, what would it be?

I: I don't know, my profile is so, not bare, I guess that's not the word I'd use to describe it, just I don't list out a lot of things on it, and I don't I know that people look at your profile, and I have that in mind, like, and I want everyone to see this, I mean, when the come, but I never constantly follow what people think when they read my information.

J: ok well you did at least anticipate for the group stuff.

I: yeah, I guess so.

J: going back, what do you learn from Facebook? Is there anything that you specifically learn? I guess I'll just ask broadly, what do you learn from Facebook?

I: I well the first thing that comes to mind are events in peoples lives like new relationships or relationships ending and things like that people that are talking to each other that you know that are friends like things like that and then a lot of, now, a lot more people are using Facebook to support their causes so you find about a news event that you want to uh if you don't watch the news very often so more often they'll be like, oh sign this petition for this injustice or so and so.

J: do you get a lot of connections to real world groups or events?

I: uh yeah, I, not a lot but I think...

J: supporting organizations I guess would be

I: um not necessarily organizations, I'd say real world efforts like fight cancer or no like join a group that to fight cancer or like free groups that war, things like that, so like stop world hunger sign this petition I get a lot of those groups.

J: on the note of what you're learning, do you generally like I need to look up Susie's phone number or is it more like log on and passively go about the place, "oh this person is friends with this person?"

I: mostly the second one I think I just kind of I don't ever get home so like I know, I have to see what's going on, it's kind of like a boredom thing, like, it's kind of sad that before oh like I'm kind of bored I should go like play baseball or something, but now it's like I'm bored let's watch TV and go on Facebook so if anything its because I'm bored and I cant figure like find anything else to do so it's more passive like oh she put new pictures up and I'll go check that out and then I'll see some other friend tagged in it so like oh I wonder what she's up to. But I do use it find people email addresses or phone numbers.

J: You mentioned that you only use one application

I: yeah, I've been sent invitations to so many applications, and I always reject them just because I get frustrated looking at people's pages that just go on and on because they have like 100 bumper stickers or something like that, and I just don't really see the point to the bumper stickers so much because its like oh somebody sent it to you so its funny between the two of you but its not funny for everyone else like I don't need to see it when I go to your page. I only have one, and it's pretty small, and its not like flashing or you don't play games on it and it doesn't I don't know I think its its more of a picture like than a real interactive application so in my mind I think that's its ok.

J: Okay, say for instance you might see on Facebook that I like soccer and you like soccer and the way we met in person you don't know that each of us loves soccer, but through Facebook you might have found that out. Does stuff on Facebook ever influence how you act with another person.

I: I guess so I can't think of many I cant think of any concrete examples but I'm sure that it has, just learning things about people like oh they support this cause I mean really caring, er I don't know just like



J: so it might indicate more about their personality?

I: yeah and that's why I don't um I don't know I guess like what I said about groups, I don't want to add a group if just like oh that sounds kinda cool, I'll add it and support it because if someone sees that and they're like oh they don't agree with me, I don't want them to think that I'm like, if they didn't already know something about me in real life, then I don't think its something I need to tell them, like tell people on Facebook because if I actually support a cause or feel strongly about something then people that know me in real life will probably already know it and can think, that that's just what I think.

J: You joined after the newsfeed was in place?

I: No, before

J: oh you came in before it, so what was your experience when the newsfeed was added?

I: everybody freaked out like its an invasion of privacy and like all I ya know deeper secrets are being

J: revealed but how did you take it?

I: I just thought it was annoying. I don't even remember what the home page looked like before it was here anymore and there are all these groups that are like don't let Facebook take your privacy away and Facebook is creepy. Facebook has always been creepy, like nothing is ever a secret. If you did something on your page then if somebody went to your page they'd see it, so what's the difference if they see it like on their homepage, pretty much? I thought it was kind of annoying but I mean, get used to it and get over it, pretty much. Cuz either it would change it can stay.

J: Ok, so this notion of Facebook being creepy, there seems to be a line, some actions on Facebook are considered creepy while others are considered normal, how do you draw the line?

I: well, I, well, it's different for everyone because, I have friends that think it's totally normal to just click on a person and then see that they're friends with someone and then oh they're cute ill see what they're about I'll look through all their pictures and see what people and be like no that's totally weird like if I haven't met them in real life then I don't want to know all that stuff about them on Facebook. So I guess it depends on from person to person. For me like I don't know I just think about it like the internet is public and like anything you put on your profile, everyone will see it is free game, whether you do it or not cuz its your real self. I try not to, mostly because it's a waste of time and not because it's weird uh..i don't know I don't judge, if people want to do that then...

J: so you feel like the general populous has a different line than you might have?

I: well no, I think there are a lot of people that agree with er I guess its personal for everyone but people don't there isn't a definite line that you can cross on Facebook because like everybody has a line but it's different for everyone I guess.

J: how does intent factor into the picture? Do you think that matters at all in terms of your intention behind whether you look at every single picture of a person?

I: yeah I guess so uh I guess that that's why its different for people because some people are just bored and looking at random people's pictures but then other people are scheming, it happens, I know people like oh I saw this cute guy and I saw that he was friends with one of my friends on Facebook so now and like he ya know we both like running and so ya know and I looked through all his pictures and he's really cute and his Facebook says he's single so and that's er ya know like

J: does the system ever seem to have a life of it's own? Like does any part of Facebook ever seem to do something that was unintended or that you wouldn't expect?

I: I think every now and then it kind of like Facebook kind of throws everyone off, like the newsfeed and Facebook chat thing, they just kind of introduce these er the applications they just kind of introduce this new thing and I know that I was never like asked if I wanted it. Its just like, everyone is gonna get this new feature that we think is really great that a lot of people will be really annoyed with so... Do you if know you can remove the chat function?

J: I know you can list yourself as not online

I: and then kind of like minimize the box but I don't think you can actually get rid of it, which is kind of strange cuz you think that it would just be like another application

J: more about the chat... There's this notion of the invisible audience, any given time somebody could be looking at your profile, you don't know who though, depending on your privacy settings, unless they leave a message, and even they do you don't know what they were looking at or for how long. So if you were going to guess who your invisible audience is, who would you guess they are?

I: Honestly, I don't think that that many people look at my profile because like I don't have anything not enough interesting, but probably what I've shown on my profile doesn't make me worth, not not not worth I guess, I don't know not in any like fake relationships, I don't have a bunch of applications, and there's nothing I guess scandalous or...

J: so those are the types of things that would make you interesting?

I: not necessarily interesting but just if somebody was surfing through their friends and I was on the list and somebody else was in a new relationship or just added a bunch of pictures I don't add many pictures ever so I don't know there just isn't a lot of activity so if they've seen it in the like the last 6 months, its probably the same that it was 6 months ago.

J: so minimal changes. Ok, so you don't think you have a very large audience, so you wouldn't expect then that strangers, I shouldn't say strangers, people that you don't know that well would be looking at your profile.

I: well my profile isn't public, it's just my friends and I like I said I wouldn't think that people I don't know very well would be looking at it just because if they've ever seen it before it's probably the same it just isn't very interesting something that people would spend you cant really look at a profile with 8 pictures

on it and minimal information about me for very long, without getting bored and moving on to someone else.

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

I: I think it depends. If it's someone that if I know the friends of that person then sometimes the things on their wall the friends if I know who wrote it or I'll wander through their pictures, but if I only know them then I'm not really interested in just random people um mostly pictures I guess. I like that you can share pictures on Facebook I think that's probably one of my favorite things because I like looking at other people's pictures that they otherwise probably wouldn't send in an email or anything

J: have you ever untagged yourself in pictures?

I: yeah

J: have you ever tagged yourself?

I: no I don't think so

J: so it's only gone one way

I: yeah I don't know I um like only having a couple pictures and usually they're pretty bad so like new pictures that are tagged of me are pretty bad so I don't really like having them tagged so I'll untag them and then oh this happens a lot, someone will tag you in like a really embarrassing picture and you'll untag yourself and then someone else will tag you in it and they'll be like no like this is a really good picture, I'm taggin you and you'll be like no I don't want sort of like go back and forth and ridiculous. I'll always win.

J: because what you have final say or you're just more tenacious?

I: because you find out when you're tagged but you don't find out when someone untags you.

J: How do you see power working in Facebook? What makes a person powerful on Facebook? Or is it even possible for a person to be powerful on Facebook?

I: I don't know

J: I know you're like envisioning a superhero or something, right?

I: Uh, power on Facebook. uh, I guess with power I think like status so I guess if they're someone could be more powerful if they are in like a serious relationship and they tell you that on Facebook or they have this many friends like ok I have so many friends and I have this many wall posts.

J: so popularity seems them to determine power?

I: yeah I guess so

J: how does a person or a thing, maybe an application become popular on Facebook?

I: um how does a person become popular? They have the most friends or like

J: Well do they just materialize? Where do they come from?

I: I don't know where all these people come from but some people have over 1000 pictures and I cant even get over 10 cuz I untag many but I think wall posts was a big deal last year I remember people being like, write on my wall until I get 1000 I want over 1000 posts

J: I wonder how many I have, actually.

I: how does an application get popular I don't know what popular applications are because I don't have any but I know that there are some that are

J: fluff friends, bumper sticker...etc

I: I know, ok, bumper sticker is crazy, I've gotten a lot of bumper stickers sent to me, but you have to have the application to see it and then so I've done that just to see what it was, but I've never added it. So I think people just see it somehow through the just think it looks cool and really want it or something...

J: so would it have more to do with how cool the application looks or the person that's toting the application

I: uh I think more how it looks because so many people can have an application and It'll look the same so it's I don't ever think oh she's really cool so I'm gonna add the applications she has.

J: that's bad news for the Facebook Corporation. So we gotta wrap but thank you