Transcription 10

J: So, go ahead and tell me a little bit about yourself in terms of your history of technology, if you've grown up with computers or cell phones.

I: Well the first time my family got a computer, internet or anything, I think I was in 3rd or 4th grade, and by 5th grade the biggest thing to do online was instant messaging and it was really slow and we had dial-up.

J: Which dial-up company?

I: AOL, but I don't know, it was boring, I never really went on a computer when I was little unless I was at school.

J: Was it exciting talking on chat on AIM?

I: Yeah that was fun, before that I would just play computer games. And then once instant messaging came I was able to talk to my friends and that was really cool, so, I think progressively I started using the computer more.

J: How did internet enter into the picture? Did your family computer always have internet?

I: Not at first, I think for about 6 months we didn't have internet and then we got it.

J: How about cell phones?

I: First time I got a cell phone I was a freshman in high school. Ever since then…

J: Was it a big deal?

I: Kind of, everyone always wanted a cell phone because everyone started getting them when I was in 8th grade, and I just wanted one so bad so, I made my mom get me one, and she didn't want to give me one until I was 16, because that's when she gave my sister one. I told her all my friends had one so she got one for me.

J: Alright, so moving on from that, how did you get into Facebook?

I: Well I first heard about Facebook when I was a sophomore in high school, because my sister had it. And at that time I had a MySpace, and I always wondered what's Facebook, and my sister said it's so much better than MySpace but you can't have one because it's just for college people. And then the beginning of my senior year, summer of my senior year, one of my friends was like, "oh yeah if you get an invite from Facebook from someone who goes to your high school you can be on it." Like you couldn't just join it, you had to get an invitation from someone.

J: Yeah that was stage two, when they opened up to high school.

I: Yeah so I got the invitation and then I went on it but I didn't really do anything on it because I was still into MySpace, and then more and more I liked it better and deleted my MySpace.

J: Did you have a specific friend who invited you?

I: Yeah I had a specific friend and she invited me into Facebook.

J: What was it like then as compared to now?

I: Yeah I mean, just back then I feel like people weren't putting up pictures as much as they do now. Or Wall posts or whatever, I would get one every week, and now it's like three a day.

J: Was your use less intensive or you think the entire system was less intensive?

I: I think in general it wasn't, but it gained popularity and usage really fast. I remember when I first joined it not a lot of my friends even had it and then I told them "Oh you should get a Facebook, it's really easy, it's not like MySpace, there are no creepy people on it," and then my whole high school had Facebook it, everyone had one.

J: What were the differences between MySpace and Facebook?

I: Okay, well, MySpace, I think the reason why some people like MySpace better is because you can be more creative with it, like you can make different backgrounds and wall papers and stuff like that. And MySpace, since it was easier to log on to MySpace than Facebook at that time there'd be more creepy people and you know, like sexual predators I guess. And then Facebook you don't really hear about that, I guess.

J: Did you hear more about MySpace sexual predators back during the beginning or now?

I: I think still now there's not really issues—I've never heard of anyone having a sexual predator on Facebook, I guess they could now, anyone can join.

J: Do you use MySpace still?

I: I use MySpace still, when I got the Facebook, and eventually no one really went on MySpace from my town.

J: So people went off to college and stopped?

I: Yeah, it kind of just lost its splendor, I guess. So I deleted my MySpace I think last summer because every time I went on it nothing new happened.

J: Alright, so on an everyday basis what do you use Facebook for?

I: I got on it a lot, because I mean there's a lot of downtime here, so it's just like there, on my laptop, I'm always logged on. I just use it to talk to my friends at other schools, from here too, posting pictures, looking at other people's pictures.

J: Is it part of a routine at all?

I: Yeah kinda, I mean—yeah there are like certain—I always sign on after class, and like at night while doing my homework as a distraction.

J: When you say it's a distraction and you have down time what do you mean?

I: Well I mean when you're at your laptop typing a paper you can click one button and you're on Facebook and I always just click on it to see if anything new happened, if anyone posted on my wall since 5:00 or whatever, I dunno just to see if anyone posted new pictures.

J: Do you feel out of touch when you haven't been on Facebook lately?

I: Yeah, cause I went to Florida over spring break and we were gone for 4 days and we didn't have a computer or anything to go on Facebook, and by the end of the trip I was so excited to sign on because I knew I had a lot of stuff built up from the last 4 days, I dunno, it's not like an obsession where I have to be on Facebook or else I'll crazy but it definitely crosses my mind.

J: How do you envision community when you think about Facebook?

I: Well, when I'm on Facebook the only people I really communicate with are friends from here and friends from home. Never really family.

J: I assume you're not working full-time yet.

I: No.

J: Is it linked into any work or resumes or networking or anything?

I: No…

J: How about the bigger community, who do you envision is seeing you and interacting with you on Facebook?

I: Well I mean, I have a lot of friends of people on Facebook and they're just random people—like some I maybe met once and then never really talked to again, so when I'm on Facebook I sometimes think, "I wonder if someone is looking at my profile" because sometimes I click on some random person's face and see who is this person, I and then I'll remember, oh yeah.

J: Have you ever not known how you know a person?

I: Yeah, I had like an issue with this girl who was using my Facebook for like 7 months. I have a story, I'll just tell it now. The weekend of unofficial I woke up on Sunday morning—I live in a sorority house—and I go downstairs and there's this box that has my name on it. And I open it up and there's all these love letters from this girl and like stuffed animals and presents and pictures of me from my Facebook that I posted. I was really confused and I thought it was a really cruel joke and they took everything and investigated everything and they found out eventually—2 days later—that there was a girl who I was

friends with who was from the U of I network who I never met before, but she requested my friendship last summer before I ever even came here and I accepted it thinking—Oh you know, it would be really cool to get friends from U of I and stuff so I remember accepting her request. Apparently for the past 7 months she's been using my Facebook, like with all of my pictures—my profile pictures—all my picture albums, she uses friends from home what they write on my wall, my whole about me section, my interests, my favorite movies, my favorite books. And she made a fake MySpace of my identity, and had lesbian relationships with, like, I think several girls over the internet.

J: Remember when you said there weren't any sexual predators on Facebook?

I: Oh, yeah, well I mean, it wasn't like 40 year old creepy man. It really, really opened my eyes. I never thought that someone would do that.

J: Did they figure out motives?

I: Well yeah, campus security talked to her, she said she didn't feel like her appearance was good enough, so she hid behind mine. She said the first time she used my pictures was to create this fake MySpace to stalk her x boy friend because he deleted her friendship and she wanted to check up on what he was doing on MySpace so she used my pictures and made a fake one and requested him and so he thought it wasn't her and then some girl commented on one of her pictures and she went along with it and eventually developed a relationship with this girl—and she would talk to her on the phone. That's how they found out who she was, cause the girl that I had the 'relationship' with or whatever gave them the number.

J: Why did she send things to you? The box that showed up?

I: One of the girls that she had a relationship with, I guess they broke up, and she drove 7 hours form Ohio to drop off this stuff at my house, because she knew my address because I put on Facebook that I live in this house, yeah. And she knew my home address too, because when you go on the UIUC website you can find your home address and home number. So she knew all of that stuff too.

J: So she'd have to be pretty clever to make up lies. You would change things that would be unaccountable…

I: I talked to the girl that she had the relationship with, and she was like "I'm so sorry, like I'm really embarrassed you got all that stuff" because she found out it wasn't the real person, and I was like "No it's okay, I understand, I feel more bad for you because you had to deal with this for the past 6 months or whatever and I had no idea." And she told me that this girl would literally tell her—my sister goes to [non-UIUC public university] she's a senior there, and it says where you go to school next to your name. So she would make up lies, like she would say "Oh my sister is so upset about the [tragic event that happened] I'm going home this weekend," and you know like status updates? I would have something stupid, like [interviewee name] is excited for going to [nearby Midwest state] this weekend, because my boy friend goes to [nearby Midwest state university] and I visit him a lot. And she would take that into consideration and wait for me to add pictures from [nearby Midwest state] and she would just make up

all of these stories, from my pictures, from what people write on my wall, my status updates, like this girl completely stalked my Facebook.

J: It's a weird perverse…

I: I know it's so weird, and I was so scared, it was really disturbing for me. I can't believe I was so closely watched. Like all through the internet I couldn't believe that would ever happen. So I went through all of my friends and just deleted people I didn't know.

J: So out of this, I would expect most people to be inspired to delete everything and be like "I'm done with this" but it doesn't sound like you didn't react that extremely.

I: Yeah I know, I mean I'm not gonna cut my Facebook usage just because one person stalked me. I mean for a few days afterwards I was so scared of Facebook, I deleted my wall, like I dunno, there were certain things I did, but I just mainly went through all of my friends and deleted half of them. And a lot of my friends did too because they were freaked out by my story.

J: Did the amount of time you spend increase or decrease?

I: Maybe for a week after it happened I was kinda less.

J: How much time do you spend in general?

I: Well every time I log on it's like for 20 minutes and I probably log on about like 4 or 5 times a day. Yeah I mean I keep it logged on my computer and I'll be like doing homework and just like quickly go back to it—I don't really have set times. I don't really go on on the weekend because I'm doing things or I'm home or something.

J: So you would still miss Facebook if it were gone?

I: Yeah I would never want to delete my Facebook… maybe when I'm older.

J: How would that work? The same way MySpace worked?

I: Yeah I'm sure Facebook will just fade out, I mean after college, or whatever when I start a family I'm not going to be going on Facebook.

J: Do you think you'll just change how you use the service when you get older?

I: Yeah maybe I would—cause I know my sister, she's a senior and she's going into education and she had to student teach a 6th grade class and she noticed—this is for MySpace, not Facebook, and she noticed a couple of her students requested her friendship on MySpace so she was like "oh know" and so she deleted it and kind of cut down on a lot of stuff on her Facebook, just deleted pictures of alcohol and stuff just because she didn't want to be put in a negative light. And I know a lot of my high school teachers have Facebooks, and after graduation they requested my friendship and it was no big deal.

J: Do you ever intentionally look things up? Like people, or things?

I: Yeah, there are certain people I visit their Facebook page more than others. My boy friend, my best friend, you know, like my other close girl friends, just to—I don't know why.

J: SO you actively get information about someone else?

I: Yeah and you can find out other stuff too.

J: Do you more often seek out information specifically or are you more often just informed by participating randomly in Facebook?

I: I think just participating—I think in general—you just—and it's easier because you can just go on Facebook and you can click write on my friend's wall and write "Oh come over" and you don't have to call her on the phone. In a sense I like it because it's quick and easy, but then in another way I don't think it's as good because then you don't talk to them in person.

J: That leads into another question. How does communication with Facebook differ with face-to-face?

I: Well Facebook you don't, you don't have to be—like you can be shy and you can just go on Facebook and talk to people there, if you're a shy person and don't want to talk to them in person.

J: You mentioned it would be worse to use Facebook than to talk to friends face to face.

I: Sometimes, I mean, I remember last semester me and my best friend from home got in a big fight about something and it was really stupid, but she would just fight with me over Facebook messages, because she didn't want to talk to me on the phone, because she wanted to write it all out so she got everything that she wanted to say, and I wrote back "This is stupid, let's just talk on the phone, I mean why can't we just do that?" And she was just like "Because then I can't say everything that I was going to say to you." So it's easier to write it rather than say it face-to-face.

J: But that same thing could happen over email or texting. How does Facebook compare to email?

I: I think they're the same, basically, because Facebook basically is kind of like an email because you do have private messages.

J: What about the wall though?

I: The wall—that's just for quicker comments, just like "Oh I had so much fun last night, we gotta do it again." You know, see you later. Messages are more "I need to talk to you about this" or "This is what I want you to know but I don't want other people to know about it, like parties."

J: How does it compare to texting on your cell phone?

I: Texting—uh—it's just like okay. Texting, I just use to be like, "Oh hey meet me at the Union at 3." You know, it's not really… you can take your phone with you everywhere, you can't really take Facebook with you unless you have your laptop.

J: What about going to Facebook on your phone?

I: Yeah I haven't tried that but I've seen people do that and I think that's going too far. I really do, I think why do you need to go to Facebook on your phone? I've seen it before—I saw a girl go to Facebook on her phone and I was looking at it, and it looked really confusing, just what's the point? I don't think I have internet on my phone though, so even if I wanted to go on to it.

J: Would you say communicating with Facebook is efficient?

I: Umb, yeah, I guess. What do you mean?

J: Well efficient could be defined in a lot of ways – maybe lots of messages to many people, leave messages for people… but it also might not effectively communicate, like you couldn't convey the tone over the phone.

I: I think it's efficient because you can send a message to many people. Like all of my friends from home, we're all in one message, like we just talk and, I dunno, talk about our lives or whatever, what we're up to, and it's good, because I don't think I'd be as close to them still, if it wasn't for Facebook, to be honest.

J: You keep up ties with it?

I: I think Facebook is great, because you can keep in touch with, you know, people from high school, or your cousins that live in another state, I dunno.

J: Do you use it for people who are close to you and people who are not, both in terms of distance and intensity of relationship?

I: It's pretty equal. I mean, I keep up—I've been keeping up with a lot of my friends from high school through Facebook alone. Just by seeing their pictures and commenting on them and stuff.

J: Do you usually let them know?

I: Usually if I visit a page I'll leave a comment or something. If I don't it's just like I don't have time or something.

J: Do you ever look up specific groups or events or organizations?

I: Yeah if I'm in a group—I'm not really big into the Facebook groups. I just kind of look at them, I don't really join them. I'm trying to think of a group. I know my cheer leading squad had a group.

J: What about events?

I: Events are cool. You get the update on you know, when the party starts, when the event is, what's going on, what you need to wear, what you need to bring. People talk about it, people RSVP, you know who's going to it.

J: So it's helpful?

I: Yeah, it's kind of cool like that.

J: Alright, well while we're on this track – what do you think about applications?

I: Applications… yeah…those… I had when I go to someone's page and you like scroll down 10 minutes and they have like all of this stuff. I like some of the applications… which ones do I have? I have Jetman, it's a pretty addictive, I don't know if you know what that is.

J: I have no idea what that is.

I: It's just this game where you press the space bar and it's this little jet man flying and if he hits the wall he dies. That's just like—I dunno, I like playing online games so it's fun. I have big photo, which is like you take some of your pictures you really like and they're big on your profile. And I have bumper stickers and that's it.

J: You mentioned having to scroll a lot – why does that bother you?

I: It's just annoying, I like when Facebooks look really simple and neat and I don't have to scroll down ten times to get to their wall to write on it.

J: What type of people do you think use a lot of applications?

I: Actually you wouldn't think it, but a lot of the people that I know that have the applications are the people who don't really care about Facebook and they just go on and they accept all of those requests for those applications, they just sign on accept them and then sign off. Like I know my friend from home, she never goes on Facebook, and whenever she does she's so confused she never knows what she's doing. So she just adds what people send to her, and now her page is just filled with a bunch of crap, and she's like "I don't know, I don't care, I don't really care about Facebook."

J: Does it take management to keep things up?

I: Yeah, yeah it really does. If you add an application it will go on your profile, but if you don't want it on your profile you have to 'x' it out and delete it.

J: What about the profile in general?

I: Eh, it's simple, simpler than MySpace I think. Because I know MySpace people had to like make codes and different things.

J: Most MySpace pages use templates, they can be downloaded.

I: And someone told me that MySpace now has—like has you can create your own, on MySpace. I never had that but.

J: MySpace now has applications and the customization has changed.

I: Yeah that's cool, but I like Facebook because everyone's Facebook looks pretty much the same, unless they have applications.

J: So you like the uniformity and think it makes it easier to figure out?

I: Yes.

J: Alright, so you also mentioned you joined before the newsfeed. How did you feel about it when they added it?

I: I hated it at first, because I was like "I don't want people to see what I did" like whose wall I wrote on. I think the very first time they put on the newsfeed you couldn't like delete it off your minified or whatever.

J: Well when they first released it you had little control over what it tracked and announces.

I: Yeah, now you can control completely what goes on. I don't think I did any of those controls—like what goes on the main newsfeed, but I always delete everything I do.

J: Did that change as a result of the incident with the girl you talked about before or did you do that before then?

I: No I've always done that from the beginning. I didn't want people to see what I was doing exactly.

J: Can you think of good things or bad things that have come out of the newsfeed?

I: I don't have any specific stories, but—it's interesting, if I go to a friend's page and I saw that she wrote on so-and-so's page and I know what they're talking about or something I'll go to theirs and then comment on both of theirs.

J: So it helps to guide you?

I: Yeah, kind of, it's a little creepy.

J: What do you mean by creepy exactly? What makes something more creepy or less creepy on Facebook?

I: I don't know—it's just a general term that everyone uses. Like you feel kind of creepy that you know what everyone is up to on Facebook.

J: Some people call it browsing vs. stalking. Do you see those two as different?

I: I think browsing is just signing on, looking at your notifications, you know, looking at a few people's pages and signing off. Stalking is like going on, seeing what people are doing, going to that, and see what they did—reading other people's like their walls. I don't consider looking at their photos stalking, that's just—you know you put it up there.

J: What do you mean about photos?

I: People always kind of just take pictures of wherever they go to, like their parties or their dances or you know when they're home for winter break and then they add them. Like pretty much—the trend I always notice with a lot of my friends is that they'll go out Thursday, Friday, and Saturday and then they'll make their album on Sunday. And some people do it more than others.

J: So that actually reminds me of something. Do you clean up your profile at all? Like do you remove groups or information and keep it up to date?

I: Yeah, yeah, every once in a while I'll go through all of the pictures I've been tagged in and I'll remove the tag, because I'm like eww I don't like that picture anymore or something. Or that doesn't look good.

J: Is any part of your profile like a history of you, a track record? Like some people join a lot of groups and leave them as a way of showing what they have done or what they used to be involved in.

I: Yeah, I know what you mean, I'll join a group if it's like, the people that I work with—they make a group, like I worked at [upscale clothing store] and we made an [upscale clothing store] group but I removed myself because I don't work there anymore.

J: Okay, so moving on, how does Facebook come up with conversation?

I: It's funny. Like me and my good friend here, I'll like say something like "Oh I talked to so and so today" and one of us will respond "oh I already saw that on Facebook, been there, creeped that." We have certain phrases.

J: What are some of those?

I: Me and my friend we made up "Been there stalked that" like we already saw that, duh, it was on the newsfeed. Or "you better tag me on that picture" like when you're out and someone takes a picture of you—sometimes people will be like "you better tag me" or "don't put that picture on Facebook"

J: Is it a critical news source in a sense? Like a newspaper almost?

I: Yeah, yeah it's like you get a lot of information from it, just in general.

J: How is it characterized in conversation, like about Facebook or things related to it?

I: Just things related to it, people are like "oh yeah on Facebook…"

J: Just mentioning where you saw or find something?

I: Yeah, we never really have discussions about like Facebook.

J: So it's a very common thing though?

I: Yeah.

J: Does Facebook ever seem to have a life of its own? Do things seem to act outside of your control?

I: I guess, if you really go into it. Like Facebook is really a part of every college student's life, they always go on it and talk about it and find out things from it.

J: Does the newsfeed ever say anything you don't want to see?

I: Yeah, there's sometimes like, it'll just say stupid things on the newsfeed, like "this person wrote on this person's wall at 10:11 AM." It's just like a really big medium to do things.

J: What do you mean, like a big society or institution?

I: It is kind of like a society, yeah it is.

J: Do you feel like you help to create the system – like do you ever make groups?

I: I've never made a group—but I did make an even for my friend's birthday, so yeah that's like contributing to it and informing people. I add pictures to it.

J: Have you ever made an application?

I: No, I haven't done that.

J: Who do you think makes the applications? Who shapes that side of Facebook?

I: I have no idea who makes those applications. Like I think it's just people who have Facebooks and know how to do the codes or whatever to make stuff, but… I don't know anyone that's ever…

Can you think of any other things that aren't clear who makes or controls them?

Well one example I can think of is the status updates, like originally you could pick from a list, like "at a library" or "doing homework" and then they let you type in your own stuff.

J: Well they even removed the 'is' part of status.

I: Right! Now you can put like "wants" or "needs" and sometimes it doesn't make sense, and some people will just type "is" and it'll be like [interviewee name] is and it's creepy. Or like some people put quotes or inside jokes from last night—they don't really talk about what they're doing that moment, they usually talk about what they're going to do next week.

J: So you think it's more often a prediction then what's currently happening?

I: Yeah, it's usually not like "going out to eat" it's usually like "oh I can't wait for Florida next week"

J: What's the character of the status usually?

I: They have a lot of variety, depends on who you are. Some people who really like to put their emotions out there will put like "I'm so pissed that this happened." Or other people will put like "blah blah blah is out" Like they don't really put anything.

J: Do people use it in ways you don't expect them to? Like their name and then a quote.

I: Yeah I'll do that too, I'll write [interviewee name] is… and then I'll put like something that my friend said that was really funny.

J: Okay, moving to new questions, what do ignore on the system, anything specifically?

I: A lot of applications. I ignore the gifts, people give you gifts, on Facebook, I ignore that.

J: If you get a gift, or even an invitation to something does it matter who makes the invite?

I: Yeah, if it's someone I don't even know and they say like "Oh they want you to slay them in the vampire game" I'll hit ignore, but if it's a legit group that I want to join that one of my friends made I'll join it.

J: So on that note, how did friending people work before the incident with the identity theft and after the incident?

I: Well before I would see like, I'd click on their profile and I'd go like "do I know this person" and if it was someone from U of I I'd be like okay, but now if I do not know them, never heard their name, then I hit ignore, especially if someone—because now you can see how many friends you have in common, like if I have no friends in common I'm like no, I'm not gonna be your friend. If someone requests you now you have actual small pictures of mutual friends and you can just click on and see their friends, it didn't used to do that.

J: Have you noticed any other big changes to Facebook that altered how you used it? I've observed you notice a lot of little changes that other people might not pick up on.

I: Not really. I just notice because like I—do a lot of things on Facebook and if something looks different then I'm like "oh that's different, look at that."

J: So it's not an active effort.

I: No, plus like, the change with the 'is' in the status or whatever, I know there were a lot of groups that were like "petition to get rid of the 'is' on Facebook"

J: Can you think of any political movements that have taken place on Facebook?

I: Yeah, I think it's a good forum for expressing your political viewpoints. There are a lot of groups that thousands of people are in, some are funny, some are like—there are ones for like Darfur and world events and just a cause for… and then there are just like funny ones, I remember seeing one that was called "stop wearing crocks you look like a dumbass" or something. It like comments on fashion or what's popular in society or why it's stupid.

J: SO like social norms and regulation?

I: Yeah and other basic things that a lot of people have similar viewpoints on, like "if I see a crunchy leaf I will step on it." Or something.

J: yeah that one is pretty popular, can you think of other popular groups?

I: What every guy should know about girls [interruption someone coming into the room]

J: Umb, okay, sorry we got side-tracked. What do you notice about that group?

I: Well just people write like common things that they think about things, so they'll join it, and they'll think "Oh I totally agree with that" or "that's so funny" so they'll join it. And people will add their own. And there's other groups that a lot of people join, like "University of Illinois class of 2011." The Chief groups, those are really popular too.

J: Okay, well we're just about out of time. Do you have any final comments?

I: I think most people I talk to love it [Facebook]

J: What about like, teachers?

I: Well I know there's a lot of controversy in my high school because our athletic director was going on to Facebook and MySpace and trying to look for pictures of alcohol so everyone freaked out and deleted all of their pictures. It's kind of a way for authority to check up on what kids are doing and they can get in trouble.

J: Well I know we're out of time, but on that note – anyone, an authority or whoever could be looking at your profile at a given time, who do you think most of the people who look at your profile are?

I: Probably just mostly like my close friends, people in my sorority, and just like random people. You never know—I didn't know that person who I never met before would do that. You kind of just have to censor what you do, you don't want to put anything too embarrassing on there.

J: Alright, well we're out of time. Thank you.