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J: So, starting from the top, how long have information technologies, say, TV, cell phones, and computers, been an important part of your life?

I: Umb, well TV and stuff has probably been important since elementary school. I, yeah my parents were always pretty careful in the beginning, limiting TV. I didn't get a cell phone until later than most kids these days, I don't know when that is.

J: I'm honestly not sure either, even little kids get toy cell phones now.

I: I think even later than most kids my generation, maybe high school or something. My parents didn't want me to have videogames until I got an N64, which was later than a lot of people, which was a good idea I guess, looking back. Let's see. I've always done a lot of computer stuff once I had one. Like I learned to read through reading on Reader Rabbit and I did math on this dos game.

J: Reader Rabbit was a computer program then?

I: Yeah. It was actually Reader Rabbit 2, and I played Treasure Mountain and Treasure Master and all that stuff. I actually found a cheat on Treasure Mountain, where if you go in the big cave, there are big rocks and if you go to the third one and you press up you get into a secret room and there's 5 ducks on a wall and you get 5 coins. I think it was the first cheat in a video game ever.

J: What about computers in your household then? Did you have a family computer?

I: For most of my life we just had one family computer... well actually maybe not. I think the main one was in my parent's room and then when I was little I remember having a computer in my room, a little MS DOS computer, it was awhile ago. You just typed a number and it would go to it.

J: So it was before high school?

I: yeah it was in Jr. High, I remember I'd get up really early to use it, and I wrote papers on it too. So I guess I've had a computer in my room for a long time. My parents had a computer and then the kids had a computer that they could use.

J: So what about internet, did you guys have internet?

I: Yeah, we had 56k.

J: Oh, first, did you grow up in an urban area, suburban, or rural area?

I: Suburban. But yeah we had a 56K and AOL and logging on and everything. So we had AOL Instant Messenger with that. But only on the main computer, so my parents could monitor.

J: Alright, so what then got you into Facebook? Was there any MySpace before it?

I: No, I had a Xanga for a little bit, I was way too lazy to update it. I eventually got Facebook because I realized everyone uses it for college. So I got it somewhere around the middle of my senior year, so I could prepare for it.

J: So was that back during when high school and college students could join?

I: High school students could join, before everyone could join.

J: Think back to that time, what do you remember about Facebook back then? What was it like?

I: You know, I haven't really thought about how it's different. You mean like the Facebook itself?

J: Yeah, the system, the type of people on it, what it was like for you...

I: I think most of it was just like joining groups, for me at least. There weren't any applications or anything. Writing on people's walls, people friending you, it wasn't really that completely useful, and it didn't feel, for me as much of a time waster.

J: So it wasn't anything useful, but wasn't as much of a time waster, what do you mean by that?

I: Useful as in, when you're in high school and all of your friends in high school are on Facebook, there's no purpose in really communicating with them when you see them every day. Compared to now when you can talk to people who are going to other colleges and stuff. So from that perspective it's not useful, but there's also so much more to do now that it's more of a time waster.

J: So was there a specific person who got you to sign on? Or did it just happen?

I: I don't think it was a specific person, just some of my friends. One of my friends didn't do it until a lot later—like freshman year of college, and everyone was really surprised. We were like "well he finally got Facebook."

J: So he was a bit of an outlier then?

I: Yeah.

J: Did he have any specific reasons or issues for it?

I: I think just cause everyone else was doing it, and he didn't want to do it because everyone else was doing it.

J: Alright. How do you think Facebook enters into your daily life? If it does, that is.

I: Today?

J: Uh, well in general on a day to day basis, like do you get up, get coffee, and then check your Facebook or something like that?

I: The only reasons I go to Facebook, usually—like if there are groups that have to do with clubs or meetings I'll check those every once in a while, just to see if anything new is happening. But otherwise, I get emails when stuff happens on Facebook, so if it says like someone sent you a message on Facebook, pictures and posters, someone wrote on your wall, I'll go to it then, but otherwise I don't ever specifically go to Facebook.

J: So it's mostly in response to emails you get?

I: Yeah, so in other words, it's people initiating things concerning me, not the other way around.

J: So there's no specific time you'd go check things?

I: Nah.

J: Alright, so on that note then, it sounds like you're connected to different things there, would you feel out of touch if you were not on Facebook?

I: Yeah, even so I think I would. I know that doesn't make sense because I don't do too much with it. But at least you're there, and not out of it. Hypothetically if something happened—

J: Sounds like you're receiving information, whether or not you're there that much.

I: So yeah people do invite you to events. You're still there even if you're not there.

J: Would you be sad if it were shut down?

I: Would I be sad? It would be a lot of waste of time for a lot of people. I don't think I'd be depressed or anything. I'd be surprised.

J: Well then you also mentioned you get information from groups you're part of, right?

I: mhmm

J: What kinds of communities are those from? Do they connect to communities of any kind?

I: I think it really depends, for me personally. It really depends on the time, sometimes it will be for—like when I first joined the informatics minor, I checked that relatively often, and it was something new and exciting and so I looked to see if anything was happening. I check the AAF group on it, because there's sometimes interesting discussions on.

J: AAF?

I: Atheist Agnostics Free Thinkers. There's also the American Advertising Federation, which I'm also in, which gets kinda confusing.

J: Ha, have you ever gotten an event invite for one and thought it was for the other?

I: Yeah.

J: Alright, getting back, so what kinds of friends group communities do you have on there?

I: Well there's certain groups that have been made specifically as inside jokes. But they never really develop, you just join them, and then you never leave them because it would be weird if you left it.

J: Well do you think most of your groups are reflective of organization stuff or more inside jokes and identity traits?

I: It's definitely more inside jokes and identity traits, I guess I'm not very active on campus. And every once in a while I'll go through these groups and find the ones that I never look at and get rid of them.

J: So you group prune, it's not really a history of you and what you've done but more like what you're in immediately, who you are now.

I: Most of the groups I join are more like a knee-jerk reaction, I'll be like "oh, yeah, I'll join it." I just did that today for something. There was some petition against an artist, who called it art, having dogs starve chained up, or something, and I was like "that's bad" and I joined that group. And I know a year from now I'll go look back at it and be like "what is this?"

J: Okay, so how much time—and I know this is hard to estimate—do you spend on an average day. Feel free to say "a lot" or "a little" instead of just minutes or a measurement.

I: Maybe like... 5 minutes? I mean some days I don't even check—so.

J: So it's an infrequent thing and you're just there for a little bit?

I: Yeah, but except, it's either I just check and I look and I'm done or sometimes I get caught up, you know? I start looking at other things, and then it's like an hour or so.

J: Ah, okay, so there's the question of what you learn from Facebook. It seems like there are a few ways to explore it, like going in for a specific piece of information or action, like to see an event invite, or then you could also login to following the newsfeed, floating with what grabs you—one thing leads to another, no active mission or orientation. Which way do you think you follow more often?

I: Usually I just check quickly. I don't usually spend a lot of time on Facebook. Especially now that they have video links, though, and news article links that are pretty easy to set up, you'll slowly move from Facebook to YouTube—so you'll spend some time on Facebook, and then some on YouTube, and then there you see all of the videos that are related. You get caught up.

J: Okay, so going back then to what we were talking about in everyday use. What different functions do you use? You already mentioned groups, but what about events or applications?

I: Usually with the events, I don't make any, but if someone asks me to join one, if I'm gonna do it I'll join it—it's nice, before I don't think you could ignore an event, you had to say something, but now you can just say ignore and it doesn't show up. As for applications, I used to use Scrabulous a lot, but now I've stopped using that, so now I don't really use any applications. There might be some applications on my

profile, like a picture or something. I might have something like that—are those considered applications?

J: Oh, well some of the original Facebook features are now applications, like posted items, but pictures of yourself aren't.

I: Oh, no not that, it's like a separate thing that's on your Facebook page.

J: There are applications that might let you put in HTML code or pictures of best friends.

I: Oh I might have something like that. I don't have anything like super poke or with vampires or super wall. I really hate it when I go to a Facebook page and you don't know where the wall is.

J: So what about the little status bar at the top, though?

I: Oh, not often, sometimes I do, but then I realize probably nobody looks at it anyway, so I get depressed and clear it.

J: Well they do show up in the newsfeed, people might be looking.

I: I guess they might see it, but not usually. It was a big deal when they got rid of the "is" though. Like somebody IM'd me and said "Guess what! They got rid of the 'is'!" I'm like what are you talking about, and she was like "look" and even then I didn't get it until she explained further.

J: What do you normally indicate with status? More about where you are or inside jokes or something?

I: Usually it is just "is bored" or "has a lot of school work," or is purposely grammatically incorrect.

J: Okay, so describing occurrences.

I: Yeah, or sometimes it's a clever pun or something.

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

I: Yeah, I created it with someone, does that count?

J: Yes.

I: It's my last name is a real name spelled backwards. It was me and [name omitted] So my last name backwards is [omitted] and his is [omitted]. So we made that and we just ended up getting a lot of "Lee's" mostly Asian, it was mostly silly.

J: that's kinda funny. So that was just an inside joke with no other purpose?

I: Yeah we were just like "lets make a Facebook group." Cause you know, Facebook groups are really either hit or really miss. Because if it catches everyone goes to it and you have like 200 thousand people.

J: Cool, okay we'll get to that later. Going back to what you learn on Facebook. I never really asked straight up – what do you learn on Facebook?

I: There's nothing really specific. I just use it to learn what's happening with people or events. I guess that's the closest I could say, I don't really get much useful information out of it, just to see what people are thinking or feeling.

J: Do you ignore or avoid anything specifically?

I: I don't really look at a person's relationship status or anything, that's just not the type of person I am. Unless maybe if it's someone I'm interested in I might check. I avoid looking through people's photos, because I just personally think that's a little weird. I don't know why, I guess I'm not against people who do it, because it's there to use, and they put it up there for people to see it, and they can untag when they want, but I just feel weird doing it.

J: Okay, another one I missed, if you get an invite to an event, does it matter who it comes from?

I: If it's from a good friend, I might be more likely to join it, verses if it's someone I don't know

J: Okay, so you're a little more likely to ignore it if it's someone you don't know.

I: Yeah.

J: Okay, so did you join before the newsfeed?

I: Yeah.

J: What was your take when that came?

I: I thought it was—made life kinda easier. Like—or because you could just...easier maybe easier isn't the right word, it's a nice feature is what I'm trying to say. Because you can just go to the main page and see what's happening to people. It's also easier to get distracted if you see something.

J: So it became a little bit easier... so think about Facebook in terms of communication. How does it compare to say, you mentioned growing up with AIM. How does it compare to AIM, email, texting or cell phones? What are the different ways you can communicate with Facebook and how would that compare to other communication mediums?

I: Well I think they're all pretty unique the specific ways you communicate. Obviously. I guess Facebook is a better way to communicate more with people you don't know as well. Like if you haven't seen someone a lot, you might write on their wall "Hey I haven't seen you in a long time." If they don't respond it's not that of a big deal, there's no really real pressure to keep up the conversation. I don't really know what the difference would be. I feel like messaging someone inbox –mail on Facebook, is less personal then sending it to their UIUC account or something. Cause you get mail all of the time—mass mail for events and stuff. So yeah it's kind of like a step down as a form of impersonality.

J: So which is more impersonal?

I: Facebook is.

J: So how does it differ then from texting on a cell phone?

I: You mean like mail on Facebook vs. texting?

J: Yes, messaging on Facebook.

I: I think that texting is for immediate things. Usually it's like "Hey, we're meeting up now." Or something like that. That's what I use it for. I don't text that much because I don't have texting on my plan, so I kind of avoid it all together.

J: So how about the wall? How does that work as a communication thing?

I: That's what I was kind of talking about before, when you just ask "hey what's up" I think you'd write that on a wall more than an inbox. Maybe it's also different because it's also public.

J: So what do you mean when you say public?

I: Yeah, public as in everyone can see it.

J: Who is everyone, exactly?

I: Everyone in the community, I guess, or the group of friends. Or I guess it could be everyone, depending on your settings, right?

J: So there's this notion of the invisible audience. You could put something out there on Facebook, and there's a whole bunch of people who could see it, but you don't know who they are, so they're sort of invisible unless they make a comment or say that they saw something. So if you were to guess who your typical invisible audience is, who would that be?

I: I never thought about it. I wouldn't really think someone would look at me on Facebook, what reason would they have, you know? I'm just some guy...

J: I don't know, I think you'd know better than me.

I: [laughs] Maybe the only invisible audience I don't know would be people who see me through groups that aren't necessarily personal groups, people who are bored and are looking at random people.

J: Well it could be people you know, too. You might have a sibling for instance, and you know that they're looking at your profile too, but you don't know when or how long, and so you're not really sure, they're still part of the invisible audience.

I: I imagine that people who maybe I'm friends with on Facebook but I'm not that great friends with, or people who go on Facebook a lot, just to surf Facebook. I could see them looking at my page and wall and everything. The classic example of wall is your birthday, and thirty people write happy birthday all at the same time. It kinda makes you feel good.

J: Do you pay attention to the birthday notifications that much?

I: No, it's not like I check consistently to see if it's anybody's birthday and then write on their wall. But like, I guess it's one of the things I'll do if it's my friend. I'll write on their wall.

J: On that note, would you say Facebook is an efficient way to communicate?

I: I think for the way Facebook is now, in terms of—it's not as efficient as calling someone of course, but in terms of not calling someone, or not immediate communication or actually talking to them, I think it is pretty efficient, because most people do check Facebook often. And if you get emails and stuff, it's as efficient as email.

J: So efficiency as how quickly you get through to someone?

I: Not in terms of form of communication, quality, like obviously if you're talking to someone face-to-face the communication will be a lot better, than say email, even if you're saying the same thing.

J: Okay, cool. So you already mentioned this. You might check out on a person's profile to see if they're single, right. It might be a little easier than asking them in person, or if you were to it would send all of these connotations. How often do you think you pick up information online on Facebook that informs behavior in your everyday face-to-face life?

I: I would think it's not very common. Maybe it's more common than I think. No I don't really check Facebook enough, or consciously look at it. If I just meet someone, it won't be my gut reaction to look them up on Facebook or look on their Facebook page. But if they friend me I might go look and see what kind of person they are. I usually won't friend people first, I usually don't initiate.

J: Have you ever seen something there that makes you more drawn to a person or more adverse?

I: Yeah maybe, like, if I see their religious status is atheist, I might be able to connect to that and be like "oh, cool" I know that maybe doesn't make sense.

J: No it's fine, it's things in common that you might not find out in person. Alright, so moving on a bit, within all of this, it's hard to define this line of what is stalking and what is browsing. There are acceptable behaviors and then creepy ones. How do you figure out what's okay? How do you negotiate—determine between the okay and not?

I: I think it's more like—obviously if the information is up there, they know that it's public. I think it more depends more on how you use the information, vs. just looking at it. It's like that XKCD comic from class.

J: So depending on how you act on the information...

I: Like if you read it, you're like cool that's their interests?

J: So how does intent work in all of this?

I: Yeah, that definitely matters. I assume intent is similar to what you do with it.

J: Well you might have intent, say you like someone, but then you don't act on it, so there might be varying levels of intent and follow-up action, intending things to be one way and them turning out another. What would be an example of something creepy, something that you can think of that you've done or someone else has done?

I: I don't know if I can think of anything right now.

J: Okay, so what would be considered normal browsing?

I: I think normal browsing could be looking at anyone, even if you start looking at people you don't know. Maybe something kind of stalkerish, is looking at someone, and see what events they go to and then purposely go to those events. That could kind of... that's close, it's getting closer.

J: You mentioned it feels creepy to you to look at pictures, explain that one.

I: Yeah I don't know—it's like, I know they're up there for people to see, right, but just going through pictures of them, of what they're doing all the way back to high school, just seems like a lot of time and information for something... it just gives me a creepy vibe.

J: So you're not sure why it's creepy, it just gives you too much information about their life?

I: It's like, why am I doing this?

J: So how then, say when people talk about Facebook, how does it come up in normal conversation?

I: It usually comes up in direct relation to like... oh we're talking about someone and they're like "oh I'm Facebook friends with them." Or someone who looks at Facebook often is like "Oh did you see that this person changed their relationship status on Facebook? They're single now" or whatever.

J: So it's about the activities that have happened on it?

I: Yeah, I think so. Or say like, someone will be like "Did you hear, are you going to this event?" and I'll be like "what event" and they'll be like "oh you didn't get the Facebook invitation?" Stuff like that.

J: So what about this notion of something becoming official when it's listed on Facebook. Like when a relationship status is listed on Facebook?

I: Yeah I think it's kind of official because it's for the public. Official and not-secret are kind of the same thing.

J: Okay, so what if somebody did something that wasn't truthful?

I: Yeah I'm married right now.

J: Yeah right, okay. So how does that work with the system?

I: As long as it's pretty obviously you're not actually married to them. Well—it goes back to the invisible audience, they might not know, but I don't really care what people I don't know see, and I know that people who do see me, when they see I'm married to this girl, they see and know it's a joke. But at first it said I was dating her, and people really did get confused and I had to tell them "oh it's just a joke" and so we changed it.

J: So if they were to see a relationship they'd believe it—if it matches the expectations of the person, you'd be okay with it. So if you saw a professor who was married, you'd believe it?

I: Yeah.

J: Okay, so moving around, running out of time and questions. How do you think Facbeook compares to other social network services, like say Xanga?

I: To be honest I just saw Xanga as people writing down their feelings in entries and people would look if they want—they could even get the newsfeeds, journals, through email. I guess those were really the only two I ever had, and I really only had a brief time with Xanga, and I didn't really use it very much, so I'm not really sure how fully I can answer that question.

J: That's okay. It's based on what you know, so...

I: I think there's a lot more information available on Facebook vs. things like Xanga, last time I checked.

J: Okay, I've got a little bit of a weird sounding question, so it's okay if you don't get it. But do parts of the Facebook system, say like the newsfeed or the little pictures that appear under your picture, seem to act in a random or intentioned non-human self-acting form. Do they ever act in ways you don't expect?

I: I can't really think of anything.

J: So most of the time things about the system seem pretty predictable?

I: Yeah.

J: Okay so I already asked about groups, but you haven't created any applications, right?

I: Right.

J: So my last question is, what makes something powerful on Facbeook and then also what makes something popular on Facebook? And I know those two may or may not be linked, but what do you think?

I: I think often something popular, is something that's either something funny that can attract a large audience because it's type of humor, or something that people can attach to and be like "oh that sounds like me." Even though it might—there are certain groups that people will be like "I totally do that" – people who when they see a dry leaf they totally step on it to make a crackling noise or whatever. People are like "oh yeah that's totally awesome" even though everyone does it. That's one of the

groups that gets hundreds of thousands of people—that's really clever and I think it's cool, I want to think of something like that and start a group.

J: Oregon Trail or something like that, shared culture?

I: Yeah, something like that, something that everyone can relate to, that sort of thing that is popular, something more powerful, some sort of deeper meaning or call to purpose.

J: Okay, so would that be necessarily attached to a real world organization? So say Illini Pride is on Facebook would they be more powerful than the atheist groups on Facebook?

I: Yeah, I think so.

J: Okay, so what about people? What makes a person more able to influence or control on Facebook?

I: I would think it's more... the amount of friends you have, because the more friends you have the more quickly you could spread things on Facebook.

J: Well strength of ties might vary by person and their friends. Some people might know all of their Facebook friends better than others. Does that matter?

I: Yeah, so I guess it's definitely connected to your real-life. There's probably a correlation there.

J: Alright, well time-wise we're just about out -