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J: Okay, so starting it off what was your experience with computers, technology, cell phones, TV, and stuff growing up?

I: Umb, in my family, technology is not really a huge thing at all. I still don't have cable at home, I just have regular TV with 9 channels or whatever. It took my parents forever to get a DVD player. We just got whatever you call it, DSL, last year. I didn't even get a Facebook until this past summer when I started college, and I figured it would be a good way to keep in touch with my old friends and get to know some new people in college.

J: Okay, let's not get too ahead yet. We're thinking back mostly to your childhood and how you grew up. You mentioned you guys didn't have cable, did you have a family computer?

I: Not for a while, it wasn't until probably 4th grade that we actually got a computer. My dad always had computers for work, because he had a laptop, and that was always nice because with my three sisters we could write papers all at the same time and everything. There wasn't a whole lot about technology. I never had videogames, I never had a playstation or xBox or any of those things.

J: What was it like in school, did you have computer classes?

I: We learned some. We had a computer lab in my elementary school. We did do some stuff on there. That was where I think I first learned everything. We didn't have computers in the classroom it was just that one spot. In junior high we actually had a typing class. That was the first time I actually became good at typing.

J: So then growing up with all of this stuff, you mentioned you got a computer in 4th grade, did that have a modem, where did the internet enter in to the picture?

I: We started off with dial-up, I remember, and that was always really annoying, because it was really slow, but I didn't really realize it was really slow until I tried other people's internets and they had other things and it was just—a lot faster and I realized. We didn't get internet until I wanna say—7th grade, because there was no real need for it. We used the phone instead.

J: Did you guys ever get broadband at home?

I: It went from AOL to DSL, I think.

J: Okay, so I think I didn't mention this, but another information communication technology is cell phones, when did you got a cell phone?

I: Me and my sisters are triplets, so when we got into high school we got one cell phone, because we usually went together everywhere anyway, and so if it was ever really an issue we used my mom's cell

phone or something. We didn't get individual cell phones until this year when we all went to different colleges.

J: Did that ever make texting or calling hard because they might call phone and get the other and not know it?

I: Yeah but most people didn't want a specific one anyway, because we all have the same friends.

J: Would you say that these things, like the cell phones, the computers, were they important growing up?

I: Umb, they became more important as I got older and people used them more. But as I was growing up I didn't really have a need for them all. It was fine just watching TV or playing games or something, because with my sisters we had like friends built in, so, we didn't need to use them that much.

J: Alright so to get an idea of where you grew up, was it more of a rural area, or city or suburb?

I: It was a suburb.

J: Okay, so how would you characterize the sort of technological norms of savvy-ness in your town?

I: I would say it's pretty middle class. The town next to us is pretty upper class, they have TV's in their hallways to their school, we didn't have anything like that, but we had lots of computers in our school, we had access to it all of the time. I would say it was pretty technologically savvy.

J: Alright, so now the Facebook thing. How did you get into it? When did it come up?

I: It was right before I got into college, so I could stay in contact with my friends from high school and get to know people in college through like all of the groups and everything.

J: Were you a member of MySpace before?

I: No.

J: Okay, so you got your University ID and jumped in. Was that at the time that high schoolers and university students could join or when it was a global anyone can join time?

I: Umb, it was high school and University.

J: Okay, so there was no specific person who tried to push you into it?

I: No.

J: Alright, so how was Facebook different back then? What do you remember about it?

I: Well when I first joined, those were my reasons. There weren't any of the applications or anything, I didn't get into any of those, it was simply to have contact with my friends. Whereas now it's like "I can add this application" I can send bumpers stickers to all of my friends and I can waste time. [laughs]

J: Okay, so going on to everyday life. On an average day, what do you do on Facebook?

I: I talk a lot with my sisters, because it's easier than texting, it's faster for me to type. I would say consistently it's just talking to them. Every once in a while I'll instant message—or not instant message—but write on the walls of my friends from high school, especially if it's someone's birthday, because Facebook can tell you it's someone's birthday, it's a good way to remember all of them. I sometimes talk to my friends here actually at U of I at Facebook. I know there's this Facebook chat, but I'm not really getting into that.

J: Yeah that's really a new one, we'll get to that. It's happened in the midst of the interviews so I'm trying to account for it. On an average day you catch up with groups of friends, is there a routine to it? Is there like a get coffee, get Facebook, or is it just random?

I: It's check my email, check Facebook.

J: So you check your email often then too?

I: Yeah, I check it once in the morning, probably a couple of times during the day, and then probably once a night.

J: Okay, so you mentioned you talk to a lot of people on Facebook, like your sisters and stuff, if you don't or didn't have access to Facebook, would you feel out of touch?

I: Umb, maybe, I think at least like with my sisters, you know we're close enough that I could like call them and everything. Facebook is a way that it's not that personal, you know, so you can just pretty much have contact with them but not actually have to call them or anything.

J: So you might feel out of touch, but would you miss it if it were gone?

I: I think I would, because it's a lot easier. Umb, I don't have to remember things. It like keeps track of all of the events, like people create events like birthdays and everything and you have your newsfeed, which updates you on stuff, and it just helps me feel more in touch outside of U of I.

J: How does that relate to community then? How do you see community on Facebook?

I: I'm not sure. I have a lot of different groups on Facebook, because I have a lot of different groups in life, I think of them as like my high school friends or my family, or some of my cousins are on Facebook, and then my U of I friends, I guess Facebook kind of combines them all, but they're still separate.

J: What then do you typically do on Facebook? Do you use the status update feature, for instance?

I: Umb, I don't use the status ones that much, every now and then I will but I think it's kind of stupid, Umb, I do upload photos sometimes, you know, all the [inaudible], I write on people's walls, I do use the bumper sticker application.

J: Okay, so slow this down for a sec. When you do use the status feature, is it literal like I'm waiting for a bus or more like I'm feeling happy today?

I: It's more like a feeling, usually, or like, if I'm going home or something I'll say like "Is going home for winter break" or "Is happy finals are over" I don't really use it on a day-to-day basis.

J: You mentioned putting up pictures, what type of pictures would you put online?

I: From like formals, and stuff, so I would put up pictures from that, some of just like get-togethers at home or anything.

J: So social events?

I: Yeah.

J: You mentioned the wall- there are a bunch of different ways to communicate on Facebook, like the wall, messaging, adjusting status, stuff like that – how do you communicate on Facebook?

I: I only use the wall, I don't do any of the others.

J: When you set your status you might be communicating. Are you ever thinking about which group is reading it?

I: It's pretty much to anybody, if I was actually worried about what people were gonna think of what I wrote then I wouldn't put it up there.

J: What about the wall then, how do you use the wall?

I: Actually—I should have said I use the messaging one. That's the one I use with my sisters, because that way it's a little more hidden and everything. Umb, but the walls I do just like "Happy birthday," or like "Hey I had a great time last night" or even just like "Do you want to go to lunch?"

J: Is there a benefit—so the "Hey you want to go to lunch?" might be on that person's wall, but someone else might see it and join you. Is that intentional or do you just quickly post things without thinking about that?

I: It's pretty much just a quick fast place to post something, now that you mention it you know, it seems, you know, it is a public type thing, but if I was actually worried about it I wouldn't post it on the wall anyway.

J: So you've mentioned a couple of times of "If you were actually worry about it" –what would bring something to a point when you might worry about it?

I: Just because it's the internet, you don't know who exactly is going to be on it at all times. I put all of the privacy restrictions on Facebook and everything, so it's supposed to be only my friends can see it anyway, but just in case someone else gets on, I don't want information that I don't want other people to see to be on there anyway. I only put information that I don't really care who sees it on Facebook.

J: You mentioned you don't know who's going to see your stuff. Even of your friends who can see your profile you don't know which ones are looking at your profile, or even if they leave a note you might

know, but not know for how long or what they were looking at. So you kind of have to anticipate who this invisible audience is. If you were to guess who they are, who would you figure they'd be?

I: I would say that they're probably my closest friends, because if they're anything like me I don't really look at the profiles of people I don't actually talk to—we call it Facebook stalking—even if people from my high school who I'm kind of friends with, but not really, but just in case you want to stay friends with them, so I think maybe some of them might be looking at my profile.

J: Within your last explanation you mentioned Facebook stalking. There seem to be different levels of interaction and looking around on Facebook – some things might be considered normal and other things might be considered creepy. There's a giant in between though – where do you draw the line – how do you determine what's normal and what's creepy?

I: Umb, I think there's a point when—normally I just—if there's something new on my newsfeed or if I know someone will post pictures from an event that I actually went to then I'll look at that, but if it gets to the point that you're on Facebook just because you're bored and you look at friends of friends of friends, and I think that's kind of crossing the line, you know, because you don't really care about them, you're just looking at all of their stuff. Also if you repeatedly go on someone's Facebook like day, after day, just to see if anything has changed, I think that's kind of creepy.

J: How do you think intent factors into it?

I: Yeah, it kind of depends on the person. I think it depending on your intent – like if you're looking at their Facebook just to find out stuff about them so you can use it against them or so you can get something out of it, then I think that's not a good idea.

J: Okay, so what do you learn from Facebook?

I: I learn what kind of stuff you don't want to put for everyone's eyes to see.

J: Well, besides all of the privacy stuff, what about social life, friends, stuff like that.

I: I don't really take a lot out of Facebook. I learn what all of my friends do and everything. Umb, I like look at pictures so I guess I can learn about them through the pictures and everything, other than that Facebook is just communication.

J: What about say events, do you ever learn about events going on? What are those like?

I: It's usually like an organization, like someone's having a birthday party or a big event, not just hanging out.

J: Have you ever created an event?

I: No, I actually haven't. My sisters always did.

J: So if you were to look at a person's profile and see what groups they're in, what might you learn from that?

I: You can learn their interests, you can see—lots of high schools have groups or something, yeah.

J: Okay, so then in terms of your groups, your group membership – are you a person who collects them, joins over time and then keeps them even if you're not in them anymore or don't care, or the type of person who prunes and gets rid of groups you don't want to have to do with anymore. Which one illustrates you better?

I: Pruning I guess, the only ones I've been in for a while are like the ones from my high school, like my music department which I was heavily involved in and everything. But I'm other than that it's mostly just U of I class of 2011 or whatever or one of the groups my friend started, stuff like that.

J: Do you ever check those groups?

I: Not really.

J: Okay, then in terms of the learning stuff. Do you usually visit Facebook looking for a specific piece of information or do you just randomly go in and look around without a specific purpose or aim?

I: Like I said I usually check my email first and I get the notifications from Facebook, so if you see like you know, I got a message from so and so then I'll go look at the message with the intent of writing them back, but it's mostly random.

J: Does anything ever become official on Facebook? Like when a relationship is listed online people sometimes consider it to be more official – how does verification work on Facebook?

I: Well the relationship statuses have a lot of different ones. Like "It's complicated" or in an "Open relationship", so like usually if it's in a relationship you can consider it something true, but if it's like an open relationship, like with, usually it's with another girl or someone who you know it's their close friend or something, then it's usually pushed to the side and I don't believe it, but other than that I don't think anything becomes official on Facebook.

J: Okay, so going back to the impression management thing, what you want people to see and everything. So say you meet someone in Spanish class, say you want to study together and you go look at their Facebook profile and see they like something you do, would that ever influence how you'd act towards that person?

I: Umb, I think it could help create a friendship or something, but usually my intent is only if I'm going to do something like that I only talk to them and ask if they want to study Spanish or something, I don't really look at all of the about-me type stuff. Every now and then I'll be like "Hey you like a movie that I like." But I don't really do anything about it.

J: Do you ever look up people who you might like to see if they're single? Would that influence how you might act?

I: I guess that might kind of affect it. If you know someone is in a relationship you kind of back off and stuff, it's what you do, it's the right thing, but umb, I mean according to interests not so much, but I guess something like that it might affect the way I act around them.

J: Do you ever avoid talking about things based on what you learn? Like say religious or political issues?

I: I might actually avoid talking about religion or politics in general. I don't think I'd necessarily avoid something consciously, but subconsciously I might think in the back of my mind like "they don't like Grey's Anatomy, we just won't talk about Grey's Anatomy" but if it comes up in a conversation, like if one of my other friends brings it up, I'm not going to shy away from a subject just because they don't like it, or whatever.

J: So how does then, Facebook come up in conversation?

I: You can talk about, like "oh this person talked to me about this" like "they sent me a message on Facebook saying this" umb, start threads with some people if we have a specific thing we want to talk about. Like I'm involved in a freshman retreat for next year and all of the team members have a thread and everything and then we can say "Oh on the thread someone said this, have you checked Facebook yet?" And we say "Oh no what did they say?" type things, umb, pictures of so and so are on Facebook.

J: Do you ever literally say "Facebook me" to someone?

I: Not usually, usually it's like text-me or something.

J: So going back to the profile thing. If someone were to look at your profile, what would be the first thing you'd want them to look at?

I: Maybe the about me section, because if they're on my profile hopefully they actually care... like about me. But the first thing they probably would see is my profile picture.

J: Do you think the picture part is important?

I: I think it is, because if you're actually looking for a person on Facebook, you can tell that that is really the person or whatever, you can confirm it, there are probably like 5 [name] on the U of I Facebook, or probably more.

J: So when looking at another person's profile, where does your attention usually go?

I: Usually to their wall.

J: So you'd look at who's posting and what they're saying?

I: Yeah.

J: What about after that?

I: After that... either pictures or maybe bumper stickers.

J: How would you describe your own profile—not component by component but overall?

I: I'd like to say simple, but with all of the new applications coming out, sometimes I just like to add some of them. Umb, but in the past couple of months or whatever I have been trying to cut back on adding applications or whatever, just because they end up wasting my time. I would say it's not as detailed as other people's profiles. Like some people have like 20 photos albums or something, I have like 3 or something.

J: What applications have you been using lately?

I: Currently I have like bumper stickers, and then I have my horoscope on there. I think those are like the only ones that are shown or whatever, you know you can do the show more profile boxes or whatever, and then there are those quizzes you can take, like which sex and the city character are you. I used to have speed racer or whatever, but that took up ton of my time, so I would just play that instead of studying or something, just trying to get the next car, but then I've been trying to cut down on all of the ones that waste my time.

J: Have you ever created a group or an application?

I: No, I haven't created either ever.

J: Okay, I have a weird question, but answer it as you can. Do elements of the system ever seem to act on their own? Does Facebook ever seem to do something unexpected or unintended?

I: Umb, it has errors a lot, if that's what you mean?

J: Sure.

I: Especially with bumper stickers, you try to send them to your friends or whatever, and it just says "Bumper Sticker and Facebook are working together to fix this problem" but it happens every time, so it's hard to send bumper stickers or stuff like that. It sometimes happens with applications too, but it doesn't ever happen with the wall or anything.

J: Okay, so another weird question. How do you see power operating on Facebook? Could a person be powerful on Facebook? And if so how would they be powerful on Facebook?

I: I don't really see power as a part of Facebook. I guess if you thought about it, they say now companies look at people that are interviewing, so I guess in there, what you put on Facebook could diminish your power because you could not get the job or do get the job.

J: Would popularity matter, like if a person had a lot of friends?

I: I don't think the number of friends they have especially because they could be like "Oh I met them once so I better friend them" just to add another number, or whatever, but if you can see they have a lot of wall posts on them for a short amount of time, and it's not their birthday or something, you can

see oh they know a lot of people, oh they're really friendly they must be someone that you'd really like to talk to.

J: So explain more about how a person gets popular on Facebook. How would a person do that?

I: I guess on Facebook the easiest way to become popular is to be on Facebook all of the time. So you actually contact all of your friends all of the time, so you stay in touch with them rather than just once a month contact your friends from high school or once a month contact your friends from this group or whatever.

J: How might an application get popular on Facebook, like Bumper Sticker?

I: I think Bumper Sticker is popular mostly because it has like the humorous bumper stickers and the actual deep ones and everything. It's—I can't explain it—like some of them I just look at them and just think of one of my friends or something so I just send it to them and then I'll be like "Hey maybe they have some funny ones or something" and so I'll come back because they'll have some funny bumper stickers.

J: What about applications in general though, if you were to design an application and get it to be popular on Facebook how would you do it?

I: I'm not sure, you could say like send it to a lot of your friends or whatever, but lots of people ignore a lot of applications now just because there are so many of them out there. If you wanted to get one really popular you'd have to have one that appeals to everybody, that like everybody wants, or just that everybody would just find interesting, rather than just trying to target a specific group of people.

J: Okay, we're out of time – thank you!