# How Do You Facebook? The Gendered Characteristics of Online Interaction

**Nathalie N. Delise**

## Introduction

Many social networking sites lost and gained popularity over the past decade, although Facebook continues to thrive. Facebook is a part of everyday discourse and highly salient to many people's social interactions and presentations of self. Due to its popularity, Facebook is an important place to study interaction especially since to date it is fairly under-explored within the social sciences. The purpose of this study is to examine how presentation and interaction on Facebook differs from face-to-face interaction and presentation. Specifically, the chapter will address gender similarities and differences.

Facebook has strong implications for our lives and livelihood. For example, admissions offices, hiring personnel, and lawyers use information that they find on individuals' Facebook profiles to either benefit or discredit them (Hamilton and Akbar 2010). Facebook is also a practical way for individuals to network and share job related information. Facebook is a common medium for socialization in general. People are able to keep in touch with one another (and the rest of their friends) through Facebook. This simple feature has major outcomes that are addressed in the background and findings. All of these highlight the importance of the presentation of self and the perception of one's identity on Facebook.

Facebook's popularity began when it swept across college campuses after creator Mark Zuckerberg first introduced the site in 2004. The distinctiveness that Facebook originally held was that users had to have a '.edu' email address; this college only appeal was what set Facebook apart from other major social networking sites at the time such as Myspace and Friendster. Facebook grew rapidly after repealing

N. N. Delise (✉)
Department of Sociology, Gender & Popular Culture,
University of New Orleans, New Orleans, USA
e-mail: nndelise@gmail.com

the condition of requiring a '.edu' email address. The site first opened to high school students in September 2005, and then to the general public in September of 2006.

Today there are over 800 million active Facebook accounts worldwide; and over 50 % of these users log in each day (Facebook 2011). Every single one of these accounts may not represent an "actual" person, but this is still an important feature in regards to this research (i.e. difference in interaction, and control over presentation). For example, pets, Santa Claus, and deceased Presidents have Facebook profiles; some individuals maintain multiple personal profiles as well. There are more than 350 million active users currently accessing Facebook through their mobile devices; more than 475 mobile operators globally working to deploy and promote Facebook mobile products; and more than 7 million apps and websites are integrated with Facebook. More than 2 billion posts are liked and commented on per day, and on average, more than 250 million photos are uploaded per day (Facebook 2011). These numbers show how prevalent presenting ourselves on Facebook is in society today.

At this stage in the research social networking sites are defined as "web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (Papacharissi 2009, p. 201). The definition of Facebook according to Facebook (2011) is:

> Facebook, the product, is made up of core site functions and applications. Fundamental features to the experience on Facebook are a person's Home page and Profile. The Home page includes News Feed, a personalized feed of his or her friends updates. The Profile displays information about the individual he or she has chosen to share, including interests, education and work background and contact information. Facebook also includes core applications—Photos, Events, Videos, Groups, and Pages—that let people connect and share in rich and engaging ways. Additionally, people can communicate with one another through Chat, personal messages, Wall posts, Pokes, or Status Updates. (http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics)

Facebook is designed to connect people through a virtual network of "friends". In doing so, each member participates in the presentation of self virtually—through profile creation, maintenance, and exchanges of content.

## Background

This study takes a Symbolic Interactionist approach and primarily draws on Self and Identity theories, including Dramaturgical theory, Identity theory, and Social Identity theory. Context and reflexivity are fundamental features of these theories. Context refers to the time, location, and audience (i.e. who, what, when, where). Reflexivity is simply a back and forth process that occurs during social interactions—an actor projects an impression for an audience, the audience interprets that projection and responds accordingly, the actor interprets the feedback and then internalizes it. Hence, the actor is both the subject and object of his or her interactions.

The virtual setting of presentation and identity projection on Facebook is similar yet distinct from face-to-face interactions. According to Paik and Zerilli (2003), face-to-face interaction is the medium through which people physically enact their social roles, therefore the authority offered by a person's role only exists when it is applied in the presence of others. For example, male/female are not only identities, but sex role categories that must be enacted through physical interaction to become real and legitimate (Paik and Zerilli 2003). The lack of face-to-face interaction through social networking sites, however, challenges this view point. Therefore, such media initiates a new playing field for analyzing behavior and the presentation of self.

## Facebook as Location

Goffman (1959) noted that sometimes the presentation of self, or performance, is directed at the location rather than the audience alone. For instance, when one goes to court there are certain guidelines that one follows because s/he is in a courtroom; the main factor guiding behavior is the location or setting. Similarly, Facebook is a location for presentation which guides behavior; users may be acting in certain ways for Facebook 'appropriateness', not necessarily for specific audience members.

According to Papacharissi (2009, p. 215), Facebook is "the architectural equivalent of a glass house, with a publicly open structure which may be manipulated (relatively, at this point) from within to create more or less private spaces". The merging of private and public boundaries on Facebook brings about behavioral consequences for those who must adjust their behavior to make it appropriate for a variety of different situations and audiences (Papacharissi 2009). Thus, people must adjust their behavior for Facebook specifically.

The setting of online interaction is a distanced front stage performance in comparison to interacting in person or face-to-face. Currently there are two primary trends in the research: Facebook enables the creation of an ideal or enhanced self (Bargh et al. 2002; Christofides et al. 2009; Farrell 2006; Gonzales and Hancock 2011; Marshall 2010; Mehdizadeh 2010; Papacharissi 2002, 2009; Subrahmanyam and Greenfield 2008; Wise et al. 2010) and people enact greater levels of disclosure on Facebook (Papacharissi 2009; Christofides et al. 2009; Subrahmanyam and Greenfield 2008; Mazer et al. 2007). In addition, Hinduja and Patchin (2007) found that it is easier to share information online compared to face-to-face interactions.

## Usage

Prior research shows that there are differences in the way men and women use social networking sites such as Facebook. First, Armentor-Cota (2011) claims that men and women communicate using different language styles online. Pascoe (2011)

noted that young men like using social networking sites to interact with prospective dates because it is easier to talk to them there. Some researchers claim that the majority of people use Facebook to keep in touch with those whom they already know (Kujath 2011; Papacharissi 2009); although Tufekci (2008) found that men are more likely to branch out and meet new people through Facebook, while women are more inclined to interact with those whom they already know. Despite these differences, there are control facets that similarly affect men and women.

## Control

On Facebook, individuals show rather than tell others about themselves, indirectly defining themselves through content (Christofides et al. 2009; Desmarais et al. 2009; Mehdizadeh 2010). Facebook users may manipulate identities depending on information that they decide to post or put forward. This includes: profile pictures, album pictures, status updates, wall posts, comments, and personal information such as name, birthday, school, relationship status, email address, favorite movies, favorite bands, favorite quotes, interests and the like. Users also have the ability to "tag" or "untag" themselves in others' content; tagging refers to attaching a link from the information to one's personal page. Thus, identities emerge via front stage projections as a result of selective self presentation (Gonzales and Hancock 2011).

While both men and women selectively self present information online, they do it in different ways. Women are more likely than men to use a nickname, pseudonym, or false name online (Armentor-Cota 2011). Men are associated with self promoting descriptions in the "about me" section and women self promote through pictures (Mehdizadeh 2010). This is not surprising considering gender stereotypes; women's looks are associated with being their most salient identity characteristic, and status through education, career, humor, and the like are salient identity characteristics of men. Remember that roles influence one's identity and behavior (i.e. gender roles).

According to Armentor-Cota (2011) gender identity is neutralized in some co-ed online settings, yet traditional gender norms are also reproduced online. This is blatant through pictures, posts, and comments where males enter a masculine discourse framing women as sexual objects on profiles (Pascoe 2011). The males display certain items to project a masculine image that they know will be viewed by others.

Although the individual is central on Facebook, people still expect to interact with others. Exchanges create content as well as individuals (Dalsgaard 2008; Marshall 2010; Papacharissi 2009; Wise et al. 2010; Mazer et al. 2007). According to Papacharissi (2009), inferences about one's tastes, social habits and character can be made based on the company one keeps. Thus, what your friends post on your page reflects back on you. Who one's friends are, as well how many friends one has, is tied to identity projection on Facebook. The display of friends on Facebook can also be seen as a public display of connection (Tufekci 2008).

## *Display of Identity*

Social identities are displayed through taste in clothing, music, literature, sports and the like; each are associated with certain forms of cultural capital that distinguish identities (Bettie 2003; Pierre Bourdieu 1978; Dalsgaard 2008). Educational attainment, occupation, class and prestige compile one's socioeconomic status, which is also displayed through impression management. One cultural difference in class is signified by the use of nonstandard grammar or speech (Bettie 2003; Bourdieu 1978). Gender and class identity intersect through style, fashion, and make-up; these features are perceived to be central to a girl's identity, but all girls do not have the same access to trendy/expensive products (Bettie 2003). This speaks to both what it means to be feminine and of a particular class.

Femininity is marked by wearing make-up, dresses, tight clothing, and being non-athletic with the exception of cheerleading; where as masculinity is marked by athleticism, rowdiness, leadership, and heterosexuality (Pascoe 2007). Masculinity was also projected through attire: athletic shorts, ties, and men's button down shirts (Pascoe 2007). Pascoe's (2007) work also points to the intersection of performing gender and sexuality when she discusses teenaged girls that "act like boys"; these girls are athletic, outspoken, and predominantly lesbian.

Bettie (2003) discusses how race, class and masculinity intersect. She mentions a magazine chapter about white boys performing "black" identities because they were wearing hip-hop styled clothing, as well as a group of young black boys that were performing a "white" identity because they appeared as though they "walked out of Eddie Bauer" (Bettie 2003, p. 47). In this scenario one's racial identity is being interpreted through clothing, just one aspect of performance. However, this is actually a sign of class, not only race; Eddie Bauer signifies middle-class whiteness, not working-class. The students who/were identified as the rockers and smokers were white, working class kids who wore mainly dark clothing (Bettie 2003). This reference to displaying a certain image through clothing speaks to the relationship between projection and perception.

## Methods

As part of a larger study that sought to explore the congruencies and incongruences in presentational behavior, in person compared to on Facebook, this chapter focuses on gendered aspects of interaction in relation to identity maintenance and perception. The particular questions of interest reflect how the research is primarily exploratory. One, how does interaction differ on Facebook compared to face-to-face? Is there a difference between identity projection in person and identity projection on Facebook? Which identities are most salient on Facebook compared to saliency during a face-to-face interaction? Finally, what features are similar or different among the genders?

    The data was gained through content analyses of personal Facebook profiles, followed by semi-structured face-to-face interviews, observations, and a Twenty Statements Test (ASANET.org 2008). Content on Facebook profiles reflect front stage behavior (e.g. comments, posts, and the like), and the emergent identities can be viewed as the outcome of presentational behavior. Face-to-face interviews were conducted to gain backstage access to participant's Facebook self. The non-virtual self is backstage of Facebook but is still a front stage presentation, or a face-to-face front. Theoretically, the Twenty Statements Test responses are the best reflection of backstage information.

    Participants were twenty (20) individuals, in the New Orleans area, who have a personal Facebook page. Participants were not chosen if they belonged to my personal "friends" list. There are fifteen (15) females and five (5) males from various racial backgrounds. Their ages range from 18 to 42 years with the average being 25.2 years of age. The average number of years spent on Facebook is 4.1 years; the average is slightly higher for females compared to males, 4.3 years versus 3.6 years. The following themes discussed reflect how the emergent data overlaps and connects.

## Findings and Discussion

### Comparison of Salient Identities: Twenty Statements Test Cross-Comparisons

In general, less than a third of the TST identities aligned with the participant's front stage and backstage projections combined across gender. This displays how people reserve a portion of themselves and only share/project certain information. Women and men project some congruent qualities across the board, but also project different identities according to context (i.e. only on Facebook, only in person, neither). Some participants displayed more of their TST identities on Facebook, where as others project more of their TST identities (or salient identities) in person. This mixed finding is consistent across gender.

### Identity Projection

Participants are more eclectic and project a more diverse collection of identities on Facebook compared to their non-virtual selves. Many women and men display their employment and religious affiliations on Facebook but did not mention either backstage. Individual talents were also represented on Facebook over and again, while these same identities were not made apparent in person; for example, singer, drummer, cook, seamstress, actor, writer and the like. This assortment of identities reflects the postmodern self, where you can pick and choose a variety of identities

to project in different contexts. This finding aligns with current research in that the postmodern identity is fluid, especially during online interactions (Armentor-Cota 2011).

Overall, participants' racial identities were congruent while their gender identities were slightly different. All males identified themselves as men during the interview, which aligned with their appearance on Facebook. One participant identified as queer during the interview, but appeared more womanly than androgynous on Facebook. The remaining females identified themselves as women, and their Facebook data was synonymous. Gender was also measured by recording masculine, feminine, or gender neutral identities. Collectively, males were more gender neutral on Facebook when compared to their backstage, face-to-face selves/identities. It is notable that female participants appeared more feminine on Facebook compared to their non-virtual self. Armentor-Cota (2011) also found that one's gender identity online doesn't necessarily reflect one's offline identity/self.

Additionally, multiple women projected a difference in their name via front stage. Married women tended to use only their married last name in person, while including their maiden name on Facebook. It is possibly easier to retain the connection with one's maiden name via Facebook, or easier to state only one name in person. Identifying and displaying both the maiden name and married name may be necessary for Facebook in particular. For instance, people that do not know one's married last name can still search for her through the maiden name (if listed of course). Other women displayed different first and/or last names. This could represent a different identity online or it could signify private and extra cautious characteristics. Either way, women are more likely than men to present a difference in their name online.

More than half of participants did not list their birth year on Facebook; although only one male contributed to this category. In turn, one's identity attached to their age is not displayed. It is not surprising that this is mainly a feature among women where age can be stigmatic. Due to retaining this information backstage, many women seemed younger and more youthful on Facebook. This is not only reflected through physical appearances in pictures but through other content as well, such as the "Lion King" listed as a favorite movie signifies a youthful identity for example. Past research also shows that men and women frequently lie about age and body image online (Agger 2012).

When it comes to physical appearance, there were numerous incongruences in display. Some participants appeared taller, some shorter, some heavier, or slimmer on Facebook compared to their backstage appearance (in person). Despite gender, multiple participants displayed "prettier" or "better looking" versions of themselves on Facebook versus in person. Some were more "put together" on Facebook compared to a messy, sloppy, or frumpy appearance face-to-face; with the exception of one individual who seemed more sophisticated in person. One way to look at this would be a consistently 'good' version of the self is on Facebook, and inconsistencies reside backstage.

Moreover, women do not want unflattering photos of themselves on Facebook. Only women outright admitted to controlling their body image on Facebook through

pictures. Meaning the front stage impression is maintained by keeping (existing) unflattering pictures backstage. For example, only posting pictures "from the chest up" or "no uglies"; these females expressed not posting ugly pictures of themselves, and concerns over others' posting this sort of image of them as well.

me      "ok. um, what are your concerns with Facebook, if any?"
P8      "um, [pause] I think the only one is that people occasionally post really ugly pictures of me, [light chuckle] I think that's just about it."

If others do post "ugly" or unflattering pictures, the solution is simple according to P3, "I would delete it or untag it" and P12, "I would delete it or untag it, unless it's *really* funny". Ugly pictures are seen and discussed in a negative light because society both admires and rewards physical beauty. Ugly pictures threaten this avenue for a positive, approval worthy front stage image on Facebook for women. In the case of the funny picture, no matter how ugly, it still reflects a happy, likable, approachable and socially positive identity.

Furthermore, it is not such a surprise that this is a female response/behavior. Physical appearance is held at a higher standard for women, thus both the maintenance and perception of beauty is usually more important to women. Due to this, the disturbance of a positive beauty image is more destructive to women's impressions and social value compared to men. On the most basic level women did not want ugly pictures of themselves on Facebook because they want to put forward their best face possible. On a more abstract level, ugly pictures threaten perceived femininity and may interfere with a possible source of power or status, or an identity standard at the least.

The projection of class status was also slightly incongruent, in that men and women displayed more elevated status symbols via front stage (on Facebook) compared to backstage (face-to-face). Many participants expressed a difference in their educational status in person compared to on Facebook. The majority of this group tended to be men with no educational information listed on Facebook, and they admitted to having little or no college education during the face-to-face interview. This means that their educational status is not important to them, or that it does not function to bolster one's image on Facebook. One woman increased her level of educational attainment on Facebook (e.g. college senior in person and graduate student on Facebook), and another woman de-emphasized her level of prestige in person (e.g. did not project Ivy League affiliation in person, but was listed on Facebook). This is putting forward the "best" face front stage by displaying socially valuable qualities that may not be easily expressed in person.

Another theme that emerged from the data is maintaining an interesting impression front stage (i.e. not boring). Similarly, men and women stated that they try to post their own interests or "things" that others might find interesting such as humor, music, art and the like.

me      "What do you try to post about?"
P14     "… or um if there's a quote or a lyric something sometimes that I like an I wanna share or like a video ya know just stuff that I wanna share, pretty much."

P17     "um mostly I, I try an keep it as non-cliché as possible because the cliché posts kinda make me nauseated…"

P6      "Um, [slight pause] I think it's just stuff that kinda goes on through the day that I think other people might find interestin' or might find humorous."

Being funny or humorous was the most exaggerated front stage identity characteristic. The majority of men and women displayed humorous, funny, comical, silly, or witty content on their Facebook profiles. While backstage, most participants spoke about being witty or displaying humorous material as well, but they were not funny or witty. The funniest participant in person happened to appear more bland on Facebook in comparison. This shows how humor and wit are easier to portray on Facebook for most men and women. This is also evidence that wit and humor are valued identities on Facebook among the genders. Being funny is entertaining, i.e. not boring.

Many participants, despite gender, seemed happy on Facebook while this was incongruent with their face-to-face (backstage) projections/presentation. In addition, those who were happy in person still provided signs of emphasizing happiness on Facebook. For instance, P5 directly states "do[ing] happy things" while avoiding "negative things"; and P2 stated not posting about his/her personal life "cuz um I don't need anyone to {ta} see how depressing that is." Descriptions of what participants do not post, i.e. descriptions of backstage behavior, contribute to the identities that are projected on Facebook.

The majority of men and women were identified as sociable, outgoing, fun loving, supportive, helpful, thankful, giving, family oriented and friendly based on their front stage impression. This finding aligns with past research on "likable" personality traits. Wortman and Wood (2011) found that people who identify with communal, or other oriented, traits are highly liked by their peers. This is not surprising that these characteristics are emphasized on Facebook, being that Facebook is a *social* networking site. What is interesting is that most men and women expressed these identities on Facebook but were not identified as so in person (backstage). Those who are friendly face-to-face are even friendlier on Facebook, and the same goes for family recognition (discussed below). This means that these identities are characteristic of the expected norm on Facebook.

## *Facebook as Location (for Front Stage Projections)*

For most people, Facebook is a location where various groups of acquaintances, friends, family, and/or strangers come together to view an individual's presentation of selfat all times. Due to this users tailor their behavior to accommodate any possible audience member; this behavior is specific to Facebook because this is the only place where all of these people will be "together" at once (viewing and interpreting one's identity projection).

The average number of Facebook friends is 388 within a range of 86 to 1098. Women have a slightly higher number of friends on average compared to men;

404 for women and 339 for men. The number of Facebook friends signifies public displays of connection and a mass audience.


## *Connectivity and Belonging*

Multiple women expressed that they are active members of one or more Facebook groups. This is not very shocking because Facebook is supposed to facilitate networking and information exchange for groups of people. However, it is interesting that this was solely a female feature; possibly because women are socialized to maintain interdependence through groups. Belonging to a Facebook group, or page, directly signifies a sense connectivity and belonging; and this in-group association is an important identity for said individuals.

Friends and family were featured in a mass amount of content on Facebook profiles, as well as mentioned throughout the interviews in different contexts. Overall, there are more direct references to family on Facebook than in person across gender. This not only highlights how family ties are important, but also how the display of relations is linked to connectivity and belonging via Facebook. Both men and women had posts about friends and family on their profiles, yet mainly women discussed posting about their family during interviews. Women referred to posting about their children/grandchildren in particular. Depending on context, this can reflect an adult, parent/grandparent, proud, responsible, caring, loving, family oriented, and/or youthful identity (among others). In this respect posting about family is not seen as too personal or private, it is framed as approvable information to share.

me      "and um, What do you post about the most?"
P10     "ooh haha about how my kids doin, generally things like that, oh Randy did this and Randy did that ya know."

Posting about one's friends displays that one is a friend, friendly, social, sociable, likable, and/or popular which are all socially positive characteristics. Although men and women compose posts for and about their friends, only women discussed the necessity to wish others happy birthdays regularly. Men and women are equally likely to claim that they comment on others' pages rather than their own, although this was a minority among the rest. More evidence of connections the better, especially because Facebook is a social networking site.

In general, participants mostly interact with their close friends, best friends, or family on Facebook. P10 explained the logic behind it best "…it's langiappe…it's like an extension of who I see anyway…" Langiappe is a local New Orleans term that means just a little extra, like a bonus. Once again this aligns with previous findings that people use Facebook to keep in touch with those whom they already know (Kujath 2011; Papacharissi 2009). Of the exception, men are more likely than women to mainly interact with acquaintances; for example, "acquaintances… because I can always call my best friends…" and "whoever's on my newsfeed".

## *Difference in Interaction*

The following results provide further evidence that there *is* a difference in interaction on Facebook compared to face-to-face interactions. First, there is also a difference in the medium of interaction for men and women on Facebook. Men are more likely to access Facebook via computers and women are more likely to access Facebook via smart phones. This may account for the difference in frequency of Facebook use; one's phone may always be with her/him while a laptop or desktop may have limitations to usage. On average, participants log in to Facebook at least once per day and up to five times per day. Although, women use Facebook more often than men. Some women reported checking their Facebook pages constantly, while no men reported checking their Facebook page more than a few times per day. This is not surprising because of the community aspect of Facebook; girls are socialized to be more communal while boys are geared toward independence and individuality. The more often one checks Facebook reflects a need for social connection.

Multiple men and women stated that the frequency their Facebook use depends on notifications (that others have reached out to them in one way or another) and/or is to keep in touch with others. Using Facebook as a way to keep in touch was a running theme throughout, but mostly mentioned in conjunction with frequency of interaction. It is a way to contact or inform friends (and family) that are near for social events; and it enables people to keep in touch with friends and family that are far away. P9—"…I do use it to stay in touch with people that I would never see." P20—"Guess it's good because you can interact on a daily basis."

People keep in touch through Facebook, but not necessarily face-to-face. When asked if they interact face-to-face with those whom they interact with the most on Facebook, overall responses were split between yes, no, and sometimes. However, women are more likely than men to answer "yes". Kujath (2011) also had split findings when it comes to communicating face-to-face with Facebook friends. This is important because if someone never sees their "friends" there are no repercussions for presenting oneself differently on Facebook compared to face-to-face (because there is no way to compare). Even more so, subtle differences (exaggerating/minimizing) are easier to attain and maintain with less frequent interactions.

## *Control*

Due to its features, Facebook fosters a different mode of interaction which enables people to project different identities at will. For instance, one-fourth of participants report maintaining more than one account that they personally created. Men are more likely to have multiple accounts on Facebook comparatively (only their most current personal profile was analyzed). In addition, one woman expressed creating new profiles every now and then to start fresh, and currently does not use her (real) first name on Facebook.

me      "so, why do you have multiple accounts?"
P17     "um kinda got bored with one account so you feel like takin on a new person-
        ality [chuckle]."

Facebook fosters expressive control over identity projection and control over one's audience to an extent. Privacy controls allow people to restrict who can and can-not view one's page and/or specific information on their page. Men's settings were equally dispersed across a range from completely open to completely private. It is notable that most women claim to be private or completely private. When asked why those privacy settings are set, more women stated that they do not want strang-ers to see their information. For example, P1 stated: "just don't like the idea of strangers being able to see my page…" While men are more likely to respond with 'no reason', 'not worried', or concern for hackers.

What is interesting is that men and women expressed that they must know some-one before that person is allowed to view their information, but then they later mention not "really" knowing one's Facebook friends or simply not knowing who is looking at their profile. For instance:

P5      "I don't really like to post extra things just 'cuz it's really unnessecary 'cuz
        alota friends that you have on Facebook you really don't talk to 'em, they're
        just Facebook friends air quote,…"
me      "Do you have personal rules for your Facebook use?"
P15     "um, I don't post too personal, and I only put certain pictures up like, select
        pictures mostly from like the chest up, an I watch what I post of my {mah}
        niece and nephews uh you don't know who's looking even though it's pri-
        vate, still [chuckle]."

The idea that you do not know who is looking is a reason for caution and reserved identity projection for men and women. This is a simple defense mechanism to pro-tect one's image. This also shows that even though people post vast amounts of con-tent on Facebook, they are skeptical, suspicious, aware, and/or precautious as well.

In general, women and men have concerns over various privacy issues relating to everyday Facebook use. There are direct statements of dissatisfaction toward changes and updates to privacy controls taken on Facebook (Facebook does not inform users when updates are made, therefore this leaves one at risk or under pro-tected compared to privacy levels set before the update). In turn this puts the indi-vidual's identity at risk.

Similarly, women and men reported concerns over the information that Face-book stores, and the accessibility of that information. Current and future employers, hackers, and Facebook employees are a few given reasons for concern. Some men and women mentioned that other people post too much information; some noted that other people may regret certain things on Facebook in the future. Facebook is the epitome of the surveillant society; the possibility that one is being monitored, at any or all times, leads to acts of self surveillance (i.e. controlled behavior).

P6      "um, for me, I guess is don't put anything on there that I would later regret
        or feel different about or have someone think differently of me because I

actually even though Facebook I think should be like a personal like ya know like little box that you have, people like professional people especially look at that so it may skew like their perception of you even though it is really just for that ya know personal space I think that is like one of the {tha} factors."

P4        "…um, but that's kind of the {tha} things that bother me that they can they can have access to that sort of information and that Facebook stores that information [-slight country twang here] and that's why they're in trouble now they're always tryin to negotiate with that, um, like google will like gmail n things will store for a certain amount of years and that's their legal limit and then it'll all wash away but Facebook doesn't have that yet so theoretically they could have that stuff forever, anything an everything that you have on there [country twang] [pause]"

me        "and I thought it was just a couple years"

P4        "it's supposed to be, but I think that they keep statistics that, most people do keep statistics, but the the way they're doing it is more detailed than than other agencies so, yea yea the rules are supposed to be two years but, I don't think they're wiping it as as cleanly as alot of other people are."

## *Personal Rules and Guidelines*

One definitive example of self-surveillance is following personal rules of guidelines while using Facebook. The majority of participants, men and women, have rules which guide behavior specific to Facebook; although some said that they do not have rules, they still described particular guidelines for use. Take P2 for example, "I wouldn't say rules, I just I, really the only rule I have is that I'm not gonna post too much about my personal life. That's really it." Men were more likely than women to respond "no" or "not really".

Controlling pictures is important for men and women, albeit different reasons. As noted earlier only women proposed guidelines for photos to control their body image on Facebook (e.g. "no uglies"). Most notably, men and women discuss not wanting pictures portraying deviant acts or anything "inappropriate" on Facebook. People hold themselves accountable for their own image by not posting particular pictures of themselves. For some participants their friends even know not to post/ tag them in inappropriate pictures. In general, most described not wanting to have pictures of partying, drinking alcohol, doing drugs, and/or nudity on Facebook. Women and men make a conscious effort to keep these images off of Facebook. Controlling such pictures is one way of avoiding a deviant identity, while putting forward a socially acceptable front.

P1        "…like my friends and {an} stuff know not to post like certain pictures if they take pictures out, like if we're out drinkin n stuff like that they know certain pictures they can't post."

P20        um, [pause] not really, I guess like, [slight pause] pictures of {uh} me smokin weed I wouldn't want that on Facebook.

P8      "I think it's just only friends can see pictures n stuff but [pause]"
me      "and why is that?"
P8      "um cuz there's pictures of me smoking and being gay, [lowers voice-] like
        literally being gay not like gay as in stupid like hanging out at queer clubs
        {pubs?} n stuff."

One major similarity among men and women, is the awareness and disapproval of
negative posts on Facebook. Backstage, participants explicitly stated that Facebook
is not a place for negativity, and expressed discontent for those who do post nega-
tive information. They claimed to avoid posting anything that could be considered
offensive, controversial, mean or regrettable. Complaining, sadness, negative feel-
ings, personal problems, and posting about being sick were also redundantly men-
tioned as "no-no's". Furthermore, men and women specifically described avoiding
"drama" on Facebook, while expressing opinions/feelings towards those who do
post about others in a negative fashion.

P7      "I try not to post negative stuff on there like I don't think I don't think people
        should put their negative business out like oh I'm fighting with a friend um
        I might post how I'm feeling I might say I'm aggrivated but not necessarily
        say why I'm aggrivated cuz I don't think that's everybody's business why
        I'm aggrivated."
P12     "…it's like not a place for {fer}, just being like uuuuuuhh I don't know how
        you're gonna transcribe uuuuh but, mmeh just being like mopey n like peo-
        ple aren't attracted to mopey I guess is where I'm goin with that like nobody
        wants to fuckin hear you uuuuuuh {sad sounds} oh my God my life sucks [in
        a sad voice] like after a while my life sucks, it's like pssh I don't wanna hear
        that anymore,…"
P1      "I guess I don't really complain, like, and I don't curse on there cuz my
        {mah} lil sisters are all like all of em are on there. Nothin about drinkin."
me      "What do you post about the least?"
P11     "uh drama [slight pause] really."
P12     "it's like talking behind someone's back in front of everyone…it's awful…
        it's trashy".
P19     "I hate when people post mean things on there, I never do that!"

Of course there is always an exception to the rule. One woman did admit to talking
about others in a negative fashion through status updates and posting about feel-
ing down or sad at times. However, this woman also mentioned not having local
friends. It is possible that this seemingly negative behavior is because Facebook is
the only outlet/avenue for this individual to vent to friends. In addition to expressing
how they avoid negativity, participants indirectly display how a positive image is a
goal to maintain on Facebook via front stage presentation/impressions.

   Another backstage feature that emerged is being cautious and somewhat suspi-
cious of possible audience members (viewers). Besides having activated privacy
controls, many men and women take extra steps not to inform others about their

location. Throughout the interview responses, across participants and questions, the topic of location was repeated over and again. This included general everyday information such as one's address, where one is presently located, and where one is going or plans to go. Men and women alike expressed a concern for people being able to track them via Facebook posts that include their location. Multiple participants mentioned "Big Brother" and the possibility of "Big Brother" knowing the respondent's location. Not surprisingly, only women discussed not posting their location due to stranger danger, traveling, and being socially aware/mindful. [ex.] Suspicion and precaution guides action and projection on Facebook, which protects identity as a result.

　　Not posting about one's private or personal life was an important regulation to highlight for the majority of men and women. However, what is considered private and personal to some may not be to another. Participants generally defined this in terms of importance, closeness, or things that only a few people would know about. Some participants categorized "feelings", personal thoughts, and opinions in this manner as well. These men and women noted that this type of information does not need to be shared with the entire Facebook community, which was also a recurring theme on its own.

　　Relationships in particular are a private/personal matter that people do not post about, or try not to post about because it is too close/important to them. There was no projected evidence of partner monitoring. However, both men and women projected their partner affiliation directly through their relationship status and various posts. Even though relationships are too personal to discuss on Facebook, affiliations are projected in minor (general) ways.

Me　　"Do you have personal rules for your Facebook use?"

P2　　-slight pause—"I wouldn't say rules, I just I, really the only rule I have is that I'm not gonna post too much about my personal life. That's really it."

P18　　"my personal stuff [laughs] [slight pause] definitely not relationship stuff or anything personal."

P14　　"…I don't like to {ta} ya know like oh I love you so much like I don't post all that stuff."

P20　　"I try not to post about relationship stuff" "cuz I just {jus} don't feel the need to {ta} share that kinda stuff people, don't care well I guess some people care but people need-ta ya know read that it's not important, to share with the {tha} Facebook world."

Moreover, participants also stated avoiding posting general, day-to-day information. Participants expressed that they do not like it when other people post about general everyday tasks. The majority of participants displayed this sort of discontent, while only a small minority claimed to actually post general, day-to-day information. Men and women also expressed that they do not post "too much information" which can relate to personal or private information. Too much information is invasive while general information is boring. There must be a balance between "too personal" and

"too general". Ben Agger (2012) claims that content on Facebook is bland and not "deep" because it's entertainment. "Facebook entertains us because it *is* us—our minute descriptions of our days, our sensibility, our opinions" (Agger 2012, p. 21).

Furthermore, tailoring one's behavior to the expectations of Facebook friends, signifies how women and men find connection and belonging on Facebook. P4 explicitly stated, "I kind of tailor it to an audience I think that that's there in my friend group." When asked, "do you post certain things for specific people?" nineteen (19) of twenty (20) participants responded yes. This means that their actions are generated toward a particular audience. More than half of these participants described "tagging" others in their status updates or personal comments; in affect the post connects the individuals and manifests belonging among friends. These actions also reflect attention seeking and social approval through Facebook. For instance:

me    "ok. Do you post certain things for specific people?"
P2    "if it is intended for a specific person, there's a thing you can do on there like type their name down and it'll tag them in your comments."
me    Do you post certain things for specific people?
P9    um I mean I'll occasionally tag people but usually I post usually I'll do that um as like a comment or a message on their wall I don't usually use my status update to call out other people


## *Importance to Users and Social Approval*

Participants were asked how important Facebook is to their social lives on a one to ten scale (ten being the most important). The average was 5.0 for men and 5.06 for women; but participants followed this by claiming that they would not want Facebook to "go away". It is surprising that Facebook is equally important to men and women, yet women use Facebook more often.

Actually, Facebook may not be that important to one's social life but it may be important for effects associated with identity maintenance via social approval (e.g. self esteem). The perception of our identity is important to the overall presentation of self in that we need to know how our presentation is being perceived by others and whether or not this supports our identities. Feedback mechanisms, such as comments and the 'like' button on Facebook, mark a need for social approval (Papacharissi 2002). At the same time, the 'like' button works to verify one's identity. The 'like' button on Facebook is not necessarily about the item/content posted, it is more about the person needing to be approved of, publicly, on Facebook. Being interpersonally liked is important to one's well being even through adulthood for men and women (Wortman and Wood 2011). Sheldon et al. (2011) found that Facebook use is driven by rewards from and for connectivity. This displays a backstage need for social approval through checking one's Facebook page for front stage feedback from "friends".

## Conclusion

Overall, women and men use Facebook in both similar and different ways. The output content reflects various identities, even oppositional identities concurrently. Projecting masculine and feminine characteristics for instance: appears to be wearing make-up in the profile picture (feminine), yet a computer science major (masculine). There is more fluidity, yet identities still have meaning and matter to both men and women. Feminist theorists highlight how we hold various identities (i.e. race, gender, class, sexuality) at once and these identities cannot be separated. This also means that one affects the other and vice versa (e.g. intersectionality). The current results are no exception.

Facebook is a constant billboard for the qualities, characteristics, and identities that people want to be associated with. The majority of women and men have personal rules or guidelines that they follow while using Facebook. Following rules and guidelines reflect increased levels of backstage control while using Facebook. This shows that despite the collection of fears or concerns, people continue to use Facebook consistently. To counter this worry (to an extent) these individuals control their Facebook use and will not post certain information. Thus, guidelines contribute to individual identity maintenance (via control), and highlight how people tailor their front stage behavior specifically to Facebook. Both genders expressed that they do not post inappropriate material on their Facebook page and women expressed that they do not allow others to tag them in this sort of content. Avoiding inappropriate posts coincides with avoiding negativity. Inappropriate or deviant actions are associated with negative identities (i.e. stigma).

Collectively the findings imply that women and men create norms for behavior for any social setting and Facebook is not exempt. It is interesting that even though drinking and partying is widely acceptable in New Orleans, it was still avoided on Facebook. This means that Facebook norms override local norms when participants engage in presentational behavior on Facebook.

The results show discontent with certain behavior on Facebook (e.g. negativity, drama, general information or personal opinions). Breaking the norm by posting information that "should not" be shared with the Facebook world, has real effects. Ostracism occurs through "hiding" or "unfriending" friends. Past studies found that ostracism occurs through mediated communication despite the lack of physical proximity (Smith and Williams 2004). The individual does not have to be physically ostracized to experience the effect. The backstage evidence that participants cater to their friends list reiterates this aspect of reflexivity and the need for social approval. Presentation through Facebook is founded on reflexivity, no matter how distant the reaction.

If the norm is being funnier, happier, consistently good-looking and the like on Facebook, the underlying implication is that participants expect this of others and assume that there is some "missing" information. Therefore, the Facebook face is expected to be the "best" face. Men and women claiming to not post anything that they will later regret shows that they are not perfect (backstage) and that they do

make mistakes. However, these participants rarely publish their mistakes publically—in the front stage. In doing so, they preserve their ideal presentation of their self. Their profile—a face without blemishes.

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