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The Unintended Consequences of Social Media on Media-raised Generation

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THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON “MEDIA-RAISED”
GENERATION

by

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A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Masters of Science

College of Mass Communication and Media Arts
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON “MEDIA-RAISED”
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A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Masters of Science

in the field of Professional Media & Media Management

Approved by:

Aaron Veenstra, PhD, Chair

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

ELIJAH N. ODUNDO, for the Master of Science degree in PROFESSIONAL MEDIA & MEDIA MANAGEMENT, presented on MARCH 22, 2012, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON “MEDIA-RAISED” GENERATION

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Aaron Veenstra

While there are promising benefits to using social media as a tool of productivity and expression, “media-raised” generation needs to understand the truths of social media in order to avoid the unintended consequences that are inherent in its use. One of the first truths about social media is the ability to conveniently enable conversations and sharing of information among targeted audience. However, when social media gets to know its users so well then there should be some cautionary measures that needs to be taken to avoid the unintended consequences. Some teens describe becoming so hooked on online social networking that they check their sites many times a day and spend much of their free time at their computers or on mobile devices initiating relationships with strangers as part of daily practice, interest and simply hanging-out. While introverted teens are typically at risk for Internet obsessions, extroverted teens may be more at risk for a social networking compulsion.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this Masters Research paper to my wife, family, friends and peers in the same program. It was out of their moral support and continued encouragement that made me to successfully complete this process.

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First and foremost, my acknowledgement goes to the Almighty Father-Mother God for everything. May the glory, honor, power and strength go back to Him? The battle was the LORD's but the victory is now mine. There is no doubt in my mind that without God's continued grace, guidance and counsel I could not have completed this process.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century digital divide separates too many clueless parents from their Internet-savvy children. 97 percent of teens play video games; 81 percent go to websites about movies, TV shows, music groups or sports stars they are interested in; 65 percent use an online social networking site; 63 percent go online to get news or information about current events or politics; 57 percent have watched a video on video-sharing site like YouTube; 55 percent go online to get information about a college or university; 38 percent buy things online like books, clothing or music; 28 percent look online for information; 27 percent keep a blog or online journal; 19 percent have downloaded a podcast; 18 percent have visited a chat room; 11 percent have a website (Lenhart, 2009).

Thus, social networks, once considered a niche activity for teenagers, now absorbs tens of millions of Internet users - people of all ages, races, and ethnic backgrounds interact on social networks by logging on to profiles, chatting online with friends, and uploading their latest vacation pictures (Mooney, 2009). Society and the norms are rapidly changing as confidentiality is being replaced by openness. Joining *YouTube*, *Loopt*, *Facebook*, *FriendFeed*, *Flickr*, *Twitter* and other social media sites, is tantamount to giving up some privacy. However, millions of people voluntarily and willingly embrace such milestone just to be a part of the disruptive social media phenomenon. According to McCullagh (2010), nearly 40 percent of people with an online profile have disabled privacy settings for public viewing, according to a Pew Internet survey. 65 percent of online teens have a profile online. Girls, particularly older girls, more likely to use SNS than boys - 86 percent of girls 15-17 have profile online, compared

to 69 percent of boys 15-17. In essence, to better understand the ramifications of the unintended consequences of social media on “media-raised” generation, age should play a major factor. For instance, according to Pew and Internet Research survey, 38% of 12-14 year-olds compared to 77% of 15-17 year-olds have an online profile. Other demographic factors like income, race or ethnicity are not significant (Lenhart, 2009). This should point to the potential vulnerability of the “media-raised” generation as the darker side of social networks deals with safety and security concerns amongst other unintended consequences like encountering dangers such as predators, drugs, and pornography that lurk online. Mooney (2009) argued that another concern is the erosion of personal privacy, risking reputation and futures as more information lands online.

“The existing literature and evidence from earlier periods of media change suggest that audience members can produce two major responses to new offerings: rejection and/or some type of adaptation and integration of the new offerings into the existing order” (Becker & Schoenbach, 1989, p. 9). However, adaptation and integration responses are particularly significant for this paper since it brings about change in allocation of resources – attention, time, money, and space (Becker & Schoenbach, 1989). Given the nature of overall virtual environment experience as shaped by contemporary peer culture and social networking site affordances, along with implications for online opportunities and risks, it brings to the fore the concept of self-actualization in regards to choices, motivations and literacies shaping the participant’s own profile, the voluntary interaction with “strangers”, social and personal meanings of the contacts sustained online and their relation to offline friends in everyday life. In that regard, self-actualization could be understood in terms of a balance between opportunity and risk (Giddens, 1991).

Thus, according to Livingstone (2008), “Both the opportunities and the risks arise

because self-actualization is a social process and selves are constituted through interaction with others and, for today's teenagers, self-actualization increasingly includes a careful negotiation between the opportunities (for identity, intimacy, sociability) and risks (regarding privacy, misunderstanding, abuse) afforded by internet-mediated communication" (p. 393). This paper will examine the unintended consequences of social media on "media-raised generation" considering them not only as the customer or consumer but the product too - the perfect, powerless, captive audience exploited without their knowledge.

Definition of Terms

Based on existing scholarly work, social media, media-raised generations and consequence are defined in the context to which they befit this paper. Drawing parallels from Livingstone (2003), "media-raised" generation could be defined as the Internet age generation or consumers (media-raised) who have no sense of privacy, shame, or risk feeding into the media content because of their ubiquity as background features of everyday life. In fact, in this study, media technologies is preferred to social networks or social media because the former is all-encompassing while the latter excludes the shifting paradigm and disruptive innovation of mobile and other hand-held technologies.

Livingstone (2002) argued that media are always embedded in a social landscape, which precedes or shapes, contextualizes and continues after any specific technological innovation. It is imperative to put new media into context, to locate them within the social landscape, and to map the changing media environment in relation to the human activities, which, in turn, structure that environment. In this paper, a consequence is viewed in regards to "uses and gratifications" on media audience behavior, leisure research perspective, critical theory approach and Putnam's model of social capital. Also, social network is defined as web-based services that allow users to

freely and voluntarily construct, articulate, share, view and traverse connection profiles within and beyond the system. For the purposes of scope and emphasis of this paper, social media is defined as a website or a social network that provides information as well as interacts with the user at the same time. Thus, this paper will not only use social media and social network interchangeably but also emphasize relationship initiation aspect for the purposes of this study.

Problem Statement

While social networks possess different functionalities and tools to build support for a cause, most users are not really aware of privacy controversy, compromised control of personal information posted on such online networks, exposure to content, predatory behavior and exposure to strangers that they should never have been exposed to. Interestingly, since Internet provide low-barriers to communication, most target audience constantly pull into sustained engagement in such social communities which shines a light into their world without knowing who they allow into that world.

Although social networking sites have been rapidly adopted by children and, especially, teenagers and young people globally, enabling new opportunities for the presentation of the self, learning, construction of a wide circle of relationships, and the management of privacy and intimacy (Livingstone & Brake, 2010), media panics amplify the public anxieties associated with social networking (Livingstone, 2008). In essence, Livingstone (2008) posited that the complex relation between opportunity and risk is not distinctive to the Internet but is, rather, a feature of adolescence, or better still, Internet age generation (media-raised) who have no sense of privacy, shame, or risk. According to Pew and Internet Survey, 83 percent of social network users have added comments to a friend's picture; 77 percent post messages to friend's page or wall; 71 percent send private messages to friends within the SNS; 66 percent post comments on a friends

blog; 54 percent send bulletins or group messages to all their friends; 54 percent send IMs or text messages to friends through the SNS (Lenhart, 2009). Thus, there are rising concerns that social networking increases the likelihood of new risks to the self, these centering on loss of privacy, bullying, harmful contacts and more luring pacts online.

As new opportunities for self-expression, sociability, community engagement, creativity and new literacies emerge via recombinant, networked, ubiquitous and interactive mediated communication, “the immediacy, responsiveness, and social presence of interaction via new media channels constitute a qualitatively and substantively different experience than what was possible via mass media channels” (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006, p. 8). Becker and Schoenbach (1989) observed that new delivery technologies or new uses of old technologies have altered the media landscape, as the thrust toward content diversification becomes the common denominator in the western societies. For example, Trayvon Martin’s death is case in point – Trayvon Martin, 17, of Miami gardens, was visiting family in Sanford when he was shot and killed by a neighborhood watch captain, who said he was acting in self-defense (miamiherald.com). The intended consequence of social media has catapulted the case of Martin, the Miami gardens teenager shot to death in Sanford to the world. The case has not only invoked historical injustices but also sparked debate nationwide drawing partisan battle lines and even forcing Sanford’s police chief to resign to pave way for investigations.

Media-raised generation voluntarily makes itself a target as the consequence gear towards unintended discourse - sucked into an online world of slights, complaints and soul-bearing, and seemingly engage in meaningless actions that not only tarnish their image but ripple through their personal and business life. Since social networks are supposedly private online forum, the target audience needlessly spends too much time on it while neglecting vital stuff. It's not only an

addiction but dependency as well. The danger is that a lot of power is accorded to constructing identities and connections via community formations online that have no accountability to the users served. In essence, the user is not only the customer but the product too - the perfect, powerless, captive audience exploited without their knowledge. According to Mooney (2009), social networking has become a commonplace for absorbing tens of millions of Internet users interacting without boundaries or barriers.

Mooney (2009) attributes it to factors such as cost as no longer a barrier to social network use as well as computers, portable devices and Internet access being more affordable than ever. The explosive growth of social media is attributed to the shift in attitudes about social networking. Suddenly, anyone can become someone online, as users no longer see these sites as just online bulletin boards but actual places, somewhere to meet and hang out. While past generations met friends and socialized at the mall or movie theater, more of this behavior is moving online (Mooney, 2009). In addition, the introduction of multimedia capabilities to social networks has enthralled users especially with new tools for expressing themselves like never before enabling them to upload pictures, music, and video to Web pages with ease. Such popularity of social media sites such as Facebook has altered the way people connect and communicate with each other.

This paper argues that social connectedness is on the incline but it's geared more toward a solitary experience as opposed to communal or group activity. The concern or question is whether young people will develop adequate face-to-face communication skills amidst the strong wave of social media that is purely a virtual experience. It is this notion that drives the assertion that social are about how we can help one another. While underscoring that social networking sites, e-mail, instant messaging, video- and photo-sharing sites, and comment posting

are all tools that help people communicate and socialize with each other, Mooney (2009) holds the same argument by recognizing that it's not about the people's experiences with social networking that corroborates the connectedness or the consequences but the choices made online. Given that SNSs enable individuals to connect with one another, it is not surprising that they have become deeply embedded in user's lives. Facebook enable U.S. youth to socialize with their friends even when they are unable to gather in unmediated situations; she argues that SNSs are "networked publics" that support sociability, just as unmediated public spaces do (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Acquisti and Gross (2006) analyzed 4,000 Carnegie Mellon University Facebook profiles and outlined the potential threats to privacy contained in the personal information included on the site by students, such as the potential ability to reconstruct users' social security numbers using information often found in profiles, such as hometown and date of birth. Acquisti and Gross (2006) argue that there is often a disconnect between students' desire to protect privacy and their behaviors, a theme that is also explored in Stutzman's (2006) survey of Facebook users and Barnes's (2006) description of the "privacy paradox" that occurs when teens are not aware of the public nature of the Internet.

While teens may view social networks as "their space," it has quickly become "our space" for the world (Mooney, 2009). Since online social networking is less inhibited behind a computer screen, media-raised generation may be more likely to participate in cyber bullying or profanity diatribes. The profanity-laced diatribe of a viral video entitled "Facebook Parenting: For the troubled teen" on YouTube of a father firing his .45 at his daughter's laptop after she blasted him on her Facebook page exemplifies the extent to which "media-raised" generation are willing to do anything just to garnish needless attention whether positive or negative. Moreover, increased

online sexualization of media-raised generation especially girls through posting of increasingly sexual pictures of themselves as well as adding graphic sexual comments to their profiles could potentially extend promiscuous behavior offline and attract dangerous attention from predators.

Mooney (2009) established that countless cases of young people being lured by dangers such as predators, drugs, and pornography lurk online. The ease with which media-raised generation run into trouble online and the relentless youthful bravado that accompanies it is a concern that should be addressed. More so, the abandonment of personal control of privacy and online exposure trigger risks by default, design and by disclosure jeopardizes their reputations and futures in securing college admission or job opportunities. However, Mooney (2009) maintained that despite the inherent risks or unintended consequences initiated by mostly users, the benefits of social media as an interactive technology far outweigh the risks. Thus, this mixed method study examined the underlying unintended consequences of social media on “media-raised generation”.

Purpose of the Study

Livingstone (2003) argued that:

Despite the popular anxieties over media content and regulation that flare up sporadically, it is easy to take the media for granted precisely because of their ubiquity as background features of everyday life. Yet it is through this continual engagement with the media that people are positioned in relation to a flood of images and information both about worlds distant in space or time and about the world close to home, and this has implications for our domestic practices, our social relationships, and our very identity (p. 1).

Livingstone (2002) argued that media are always embedded in a social landscape, which precedes or shapes, contextualizes and continues after any specific technological innovation. It is imperative to put new media into context, to locate them within the social landscape, and to map the changing media environment in relation to the human activities, which, in turn, structure that environment. Such an analysis, through its stress on a multiplicity of contextualizing processes, is intended effectively to undermine any simple account of the supposed impacts of technology on individual and society. This paper strives to identify implications for future research and public policy in building safety considerations into the design and management of social networking sites.

Research Questions

The teen tradition of capturing private thoughts and feelings in a diary has given way to disruptive social media trend in the digital age. Many, however, choose to allow open access, inviting the world to read. Most of the clueless “media-raised” generation is either learning how to use or rather, wallowing in social networks by interacting more with strangers than their friends or family. Thus, since social media is unique to internet, the paper endeavor to address the following research questions: 1) does the blurred line between private and public or personal and professional lives affect decision-making process of a social network user? 2) Is the quest for identity, expression and exhibitionism by the ‘media-raised’ generation construed as conquest of the social media world? 3) How is the online culture blurring the intersections of individual unintended consequences and ubiquitous expressions?

Theoretical framework

The theoretical concepts or approaches exploited in this paper for the purpose of studying audience responses to social media through media technologies helped integrate and

make sense of the literature review assembled from other studies. This paper relied on various theoretical perspectives on audience behavior to help in examining users' adaptation and integration of media technologies in the contemporary lifestyle. Moreover, the underlying theoretical perspectives acted as springboard in analyzing audience allocation of resources, modification of behaviors associated with such allocations, or changes in audience perspectives and attitudes as a result of interacting with media technology.

In essence, the theoretical frameworks strive to understand as well as predict the unintended consequences or implied behavioral shifts of media-raised generation as they interact on the virtual online environment. In fact, in order to determine such audience behavior and its relationship to media technology offerings, this paper focused on several lines of thought that include but not limited to: "uses and gratifications" on media audience behavior, leisure research perspective, critical theory approach and Putnam's model of social capital.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media is all about answering the basic human question on how we can help one another (Wright, Khanfar, Harrington, & Kizer, 2010). Such basic notion of communication will prosper and should remain the focus as Wesch (2007) observed there's a fascination with intimacy regarding social networks because it simulates face-to-face communication. But there's also the fundamental distance that makes it safe for people to connect through weak ties where they can have the appearance of a connection because it's safe.

In schematic terms, Dahlgren (2005) viewed it from the perspective of a functioning public sphere in society that permit the circulation of information, ideas, and debates—Ideally in an unfettered manner—and also the formation of public opinion. Certainly, the Internet is having impact on the public sphere but the attribute of such impacts is a question that needs further research. However, the assumption that the Internet has positively succeeded in alleviating the ills and character of democracy is cynical but not a milestone. For instance, news consumption both online and offline is related positively to interpersonal discussion, political involvement and political engagement. However, little consideration has been given to the role that new sources of information may exert on different forms of political engagement (Hwang, Schmierbach, Paek, Gil de Zúñiga & Shah, 2006).

While underscoring the emergence of the Internet and blogs as platforms for individuals either to explore a variety of views on a topic or to examine only those that support their viewpoint, only a handful of studies have examined selective exposure among Internet users.

Johnson and Zhang (2009) contend that because of the strong ideological perspectives of blogs,

they are creating communication ghettos where people go to support their own opinions and attack opposing ones, leading to increased polarization of political views. The increasing popularity of social network sites (SNSs) has raised questions about the role of social network media in the democratic process – heightening further the paradox. Online political messaging also has a direct effect on exposure to dissimilar viewpoints, and it mediates the association between SNSs and exposure to crosscutting political views (Yonghwan, 2011).

Although Putnam (2000) asserted that this relationship bore externalities of bridging or bonding, however, I think the conceptual connotation is neither a dichotomy nor continuum but a divergence if viewed from individual user activity or participation online. The point of view is based, in part, as a reaction to the assumptions that online users are active only as clusters of “inclusive networks”, “aggregated institutions”, “fragmented pluralists” among others. Moreover, explicit anonymity on the Internet subverts any linkage of online users to a designate community of identity but rather depicts an isolated lone-ranger engaged in baseless hate campaigns in the name of exercising democratic liberties.

Yonghwan (2011) observed that Congress as an institution uses the Internet to disseminate information to the public and how individual members of Congress use the Internet and e-mail to interact with constituents. Thus, congressional response to these technologies has been mixed and that, to the extent that members have embraced the new technologies in order to facilitate interactivity with constituents as well as an extension of their strategies of advertising themselves to constituents. Unlike geographically bound networks, the Internet provides a means for individuals from various locations, beliefs, backgrounds, political ideologies, etc. to occupy a shared space. In this way, the structure of individual social networks is not as constrained as they were prior to the Internet. In essence, Internet is reshaping the political sphere and the trend is

expected to continue intensely over the coming years. First, Internet technology provides significant democratizing opportunities. The Internet offers great possibilities for disseminating information and facilitating contact between members of the Congress and the public.

As a matter of fact, computer networks serve to revitalize democratic values by empowering active political participation and debate between citizens and leaders by eradicating the gap between the led and leaders. More so, the use of internet is an extension of the growing sophistication of politicians in the area of public relations where members can use e-mail, blogs and social networks to advertise themselves and their accomplishments – as part of self-political portfolio for damage-control as well as “permanent campaign” to remain in office. Thus, Congress is making use of information technologies to interact inside and outside of institutional boundaries. The role of Internet is to enhance interactions in both external and internal congressional communication.

With so much content and the average Facebook user having 120 friends on the site, the potential for networking, content sharing, dialog, and interaction is incredibly high – especially considering the ways in which the structure of Facebook – both as a website and as a social network – contribute to individuals’ exposure to news and political information, as well as the ways in which the site contributes to political and ideological discussions both online and offline (Vickery, 2009). In fact, the News Feed has become an integral aspect of Facebook and has arguably contributed to Facebook’s continued success with a potential of political participation. By drawing individuals’ attention to the various activities within their networks users no longer have to seek out information, but rather the information is presented to them every time they log on to the site. Such additional feature would increase opportunities for networking, communicating as well as gathering information about individuals’ respective networks that

could be exploited for political gains.

The Internet, as a technology and as a form of communication, the Internet slightly expands the heterogeneity of political discussion and exposure to difference. In light of contemporary Internet advancements – particularly the advent of Web 2.0 technologies - countering such a position is to consider how individuals might actually use spaces not necessarily designated as “political” in a variety political ways. In her consideration of online structures and spaces with specific focus to Facebook, Vickery (2009) distinguishes one sector of the online public sphere, a space not explicitly political but which always holds the potential for politics to emerge due to the fact that individuals with common interests and collective identities are occupying a shared space. These spaces are particularly important when intersected with Brundidge’s “inadvertency thesis” because the para-political domain not only has the potential for political discussion, but also holds potential for inadvertent exposure to political difference.

Even though exposure to political difference is not as prevalent as initially hoped, difference among likeminded individuals is still considered a productive aspect of deliberative discussions and democracy which proves to be an important variable in exposure to political dispensation fostered through the internet. Facebook as a major source of news and political information enable its users/participants to discover new sources of news and information via the links their friends post on Facebook. Thus, mere exposure to a different viewpoint can increase tolerance and understanding while also serving to solidify and justify one’s own political perspective.

Lüders (2008) argued that the implementation of digital media technologies has important consequences for social networks in regards to the post-traditional self –especially since technical and social dimensions of personal media revises the distinction between mass media and

personal media. Thus, the digitalization and personal use of media technologies to create and share personal expressions through digital networks have destabilized the traditional distinction between mass communication and interpersonal communication, and therefore between mass media and personal media (e.g. mobile phones, email, instant messenger, blogs and photo-sharing services).

In a sense, the recent technologies not only foster the intersection of virtual communities and mass messages through open source applications but also offer specific salience to information from anonymous peers hence the technologies simultaneously present multiple types of influence sources—mass, peer, and/or interpersonal—in a manner that redefines or re-orders influence processes. For instance, Valkenburg & Peter (2007) held the view that online communication was positively related to the closeness of friendships. This is consistent with the rich-get-richer hypothesis where socially anxious respondents communicated online less often than did non-socially anxious respondents. However, socially anxious respondents perceived the Internet as more valuable for intimate self-disclosure than did non-socially anxious respondents, and this perception in turn led to more online communication (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007).

In the same token, Papacharissi (2002) presented an exploratory look, at self-presentation through personal home pages with the objective of identifying, describing, and analyzing the characteristics of personal home pages geared towards examining the role of the Internet as a revitalizer of social relations. Beyond providing an avenue for identity expression, personal home pages set up a virtual meeting point through which family members and friends can stay in touch. These pages also provide a virtual home base for online communities and help connect their members since hosting a personal home page is more convenient and relatively affordable.

More so, it allows people to present a more multi-mediated self, using audio-visual components, together with text, to communicate to potential mass audiences. In that regard, personal home pages present the audience as producers of media content rather than as consumers. In essence, the identity expression opportunities provided through personal Web pages could have positive effects on our lives, or they could expand our cyber-circles while alienating us from our off-line social circles (Papacharissi, 2002).

Evidently, social interaction online persists either at the expense of or as a complement to offline interaction especially in regards to online identity and language use in terms of the disclosure of personal information, sexual identity, emotive features, and semantic themes (Huffaker, & Calvert, 2005). In lieu of computer-mediated communication, Tidwell and Walther (2002) observed that interpersonal motivations are critical in regards to exchange of personal information in initial interactions, focusing on the effects of communication channels on self-disclosure, question-asking, and uncertainty reduction. Thus, computer-mediated communication (CMC) penetration impacts into so many people's lives since online impressions and relationships are developmental, different, temporal and subject to the effects of salient group identities (Spears & Lea, 1992; Walther, 1997 quoted in Tidwell and Walther, 2002).

The social reception and transformation of mobile communication and the Internet are closely linked to the use of these media by youth and to youth popular cultures - in terms of its social shaping as a medium and a consumer item. As Bijker and Law (1992) have suggested, "Technologies and technological practices are built in a process of social construction and negotiation, a process often seen as driven by the social interests of participants" (p. 13). Fischer (1992) extended this approach more radically in examining the domain of telecommunications.

In his study of the spread of the telephone and its establishment as a new media form in the United States, Fischer successfully mobilized a social constructivist approach but argued that most social constructivism had concentrated on the producers, marketers, or experts of a technological system. This is the context in which the media-raised generation is viewed as tending towards being product themselves as opposed to being consumers. Fischer (1992) stressed the role of consumption in the belief that in order to understand the social shaping of technology it is crucial to include consumers in the analysis. In concurrence, Okada (2005) stresses the critical role of the consumer in regards to technological context and the reception by users.

Convergence has become part of burgeoning mobile media as the mobile media has become a vehicle for multimedia excellence courtesy of contemporary technological applications and multimedia possibilities (Hjorth, 2008). The study established that mobile phone practices are also marked by divergence especially in light of the increasingly tenacious role of the local in informing and adapting the global. Thus, mobile phone and other hand-held communication device inflect the localized practices of mobile multimedia, fusing communication with new media discourses. In fact, the mobile phone or better still, mobile devices, dissolve the boundaries that separate work and home, extending the reach of work. Rather than being primarily a tool of work extension, or even a tool that facilitates greater work-family balance, the readings depicted that mobile devices maintain continuing connections with family and friends (Hampton & Gupta, 2008).

According to Humphreys (2008), a mobile social network system (MSNS) allows groups of friends to be accessed and engaged with from one's mobile phone - seeks to facilitate social connection and coordination among friends in urban public spaces. In essence, MSNS can

influence the way that informants experience public space and social relations therein. In the same token, wireless Internet use in public and semi-public may influence social relationships and the structure of community. In this regard, therefore, mobile phones create families without borders by connecting work-home divisions in one convenient medium. Consequently, the emerging social trends signal the formation of a mobile communication society as a key component of the broader social structure that characterizes our world, the network society.

Evidently, according to Okada (2005), the trends that seem to be most significant in transforming communicative practices have been observed primarily among the young users of wireless communication. Younger generation express easier acceptance and greater capacity to adopt, adapt, use, and innovate new communication technologies. Thus, because they use more, better, and faster, these technologies, they reveal more rapidly their potential uses. Furthermore, because the young generation in all societies shape the future, it is highly likely that today's youth will carry on the practices and habits into their later life. Thus, the young contemporary generation could be considered as the shapers and trendsetters of the mobile communication society.

In regards to mobile telephony, there's more intimate role of the image in interpersonal relationships as it relates to the development of the self and the identification process (Papacharissi, 2002). Roland Barthes assertion in "La chambre claire" was very critical part of the readings because it underpinned the essence of perception, pleasure and personality as they relate to image construction in the mobile communication spheres - "what characterizes so-called advanced societies is the fact that society consumes images now instead of beliefs...Pleasure is experienced via the image: this is the great difference" (Barthes, 1980). Considering the transition from modernism to post-modernism, society's saturation by images and their

increasing impact on relationships between people, things, knowledge, imagination, events and information is essential to understanding cultural and social changes.

The changing presence of the Internet from a medium for elites to one in common use in our everyday lives raises important questions about its impact on access to resources, social interaction, and commitment to local community. Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Qiu and Sey (2004) depicted the Internet as a complex landscape of applications, purposes and users. The Internet population, networks and its activities help define and articulate the nature of the disruptive digital revolution in regards to consideration of the social consequences of adding Internet activity to our daily lives, exploring how use of the Internet affects traditional social and communal behaviors such as communication with local family and commitment to geographical communities. The integration of the Internet in our everyday lives portends a shift to a personalized, wireless world affords networked individualism, with each person switching between ties and networks. People remain connected, but as individuals rather than being rooted in the home bases of work unit and household.

It is the general contention that the Internet has paved way to a new paradigm: that of connection. Seemingly, individuals proactively online have thus become like switchboard, between ties and networks, as they remain connected for whatever reasons. In essence, the Internet has become indispensable as a medium of connection and engagement. Aside from the notable concerns posited by various texts in the week's readings, the internet media, although it fractures the familial social cohesion to an extent, it nevertheless serve to connect friends, family or work colleagues and even in most circumstances, 'strangers', in the crowded cyberspace.

Despite the concerns, the desire for connections seems to override the presumed social etiquette as individuals appear to be fulfilling a completely different purpose as well as achieving

different selfish ends driven by constant and conscious desire to be connected to a bigger world. To this end therefore, perhaps it would be plausible to assert that the focus for Internet craze or maintaining active online presence is imperceptibly changing, as connectivity becomes the centerpiece of Internet revolution.

In an increasingly, electronically networked world we may occupy different social groups, networks or communities at different times in our daily life, working, learning, and socializing regardless of geographical location. Thus, online groups have the ability to connect with their community of interest to conveniently and freely share information, solicit help, call for actions. Apparently, the dynamic and rapid upsurge of online communication has facilitated one-to-one intimacy or interaction in social spaces in the virtual environment – especially in regards to human companionship or connection with people or ‘strangers’ who are joined by common purpose or interest.

Thus, the Internet is registering an initial impact on everyday life of individuals as Internet users go online to conduct some of their ordinary day-to-day activities, from mundane tasks to social arrangements to personal recreation. Tidwell and Walther (2002) asserted that people both admire and use the Internet as a tool for conducting their everyday activities. In regards to the contemporary trends, vast majority of online users view Internet as a place to conduct the everyday tasks and pursue the everyday pleasures of life, such as checking the weather, doing their banking, communicating with friends and family, and playing games among others.

The Internet indeed shows signs of fundamentally changing or significantly improving users experience in their everyday lives - It brings them more information, improves social contacts, and helps them act more efficiently. In fact, the readings delved deeper into highlighting

how the Internet has made users better informed, bringing a lot more news and information into their lives. Consequently, the Internet has made users more connected to more people, as they can keep in better and more frequent touch with more family and friends, whether old friends or new ones made on the Internet. More so, the Internet has made users more efficient as they are presented with number of choices and activities (Marcus, Machilek & Schütz, 2006).

As a result, it seems likely that as the Internet becomes more ingrained in our daily lives, its impact becomes more defined and dramatic. By and large, most research showed that the Internet is not largely driving the engines of everyday life of users, but it is empowering and catalyzing their actions to different causes. As the internet evolves, its users and uses grow and diversify globally especially when it becomes embedded in community life – the extent to which it is transforming or enhancing community – it is actually reinforcing the pre-existing turn to societies especially in the developed worlds that are organized around networked individualism rather group or local solidarities. Thus, Internet use is adding on to other forms of communication, rather than replacing them and that's has vital implications for civic engagement as well. The turn towards networked individualism and e-citizenship is a significant impact of the Internet on the change in society away from groups.

Such change as not only occur at the interpersonal level but at the organizational and even the global levels, which profoundly impacts social capital especially in democracies. Although Internet is a disruptive technology, potential further research question needs to be pursued to unravel whether traditional offline habits can still dominate? Moreover, since Internet is influencing interpersonal relationships and organization involvement in various social networks, it would be more useful to understand the consequences of the extensive diffusion and intensive use of the Internet in people's lives.

In lieu of anticipating audience behaviors, Becker indicated that “audience members can produce two major responses to new offerings: rejection and some type of adaptation and integration of the new offerings into the existing order” (Becker and Schoenbach, 1989, p.9).

Livingstone (2003) concurred that “modern media and communication technologies possess a hitherto unprecedented power to encode and circulate symbolic representations” (p.1) that necessitates continual engagement with the media in various spaces and time. Although Livingston (2003) focused on ‘the audience’ in industrialized countries, the paradigm could be argued to be a global commonplace in the contemporary of the technologically savvy virtual world. In essence, the convergence of technologies reflect a promised satisfaction and response to pressure to fulfill the consumer demands of more intelligent, customized, user-friendly, flexible information and communication technologies that would vastly increase the global experience into the domestic space. In fact, the trend towards attempting to fully cater for audience’s individualistic tastes and egocentric desires could possibly be driven by the “satisfying shift from passive observes to active participant in a virtual world” (Livingstone, 2003, p. 2).

Apparently, there seemed to be tension, however, between such visions of radical technological change and the conscious knowledge of the slow-to-change conditions that underpin identity, civility, sociality and community. Thus, in order to understand such underpinnings, it is imperative to put media, especially new media, into context and perspective, so as to scrutinize them within the social landscape and the changing media environment (Tidwell & Walther, 2002). The underlying multiplicity and complexities of collective processes overrides the real impacts of technology on society that circulates in popular discourses.

However, the fabrics of everyday lifestyle and the inherent practices cannot be so quickly overturned by technological change except by choice or fashion. For example, trends in media

and technology in the context of the family do not replace the family ties or bonds but changes the solitary experience of disposable leisure time and working practices in ways that profoundly shape the manner in which new information and communication technologies is diffused or shared in our daily lives. Furthermore, given what's already known from today's technology and innovation, the above outlined scenario necessitates compelling and critical questions. How does that affect the family social cohesion and other social institutional structures in regards to social capital as an instrument of empowerment and strength?

Neuendorf (2001) examined how audiences made sense of new diversity as well as conceptualization of viewer patronage of cable from the perspective channel repertoires - specifically, by assessing the extent of changing or rather altering media landscape particularly in the diverse cosmopolitan populace environment. Such expectation is based on the assumption that audience's knowledge of the content matter being consumed will increase relative to the time spent on it (Neuendorf, 2001). Although audience media environment could be a constant in regards to specific experience goods while focusing on media as institutional outputs, diffusion theory makes it a possibility to assess audience assimilation into various spaces.

While recognizing the fact that the rise of new media has exacerbated audience fragmentation and selective exposure to more egocentric tastes, Prior (2005) sustained the same argument that greater media choice makes it easier for people to find their preferred content and therefore media content preference indeed becomes a better trigger of political discourse and participation. Webster (2005) asserted that audience fragmentation is more advanced than is generally recognized as polarization becomes more evident even in the new emerging spheres contrary to the "law of double jeopardy" of both small-but-loyal and small-but-disloyal audiences. Thus, loyalty and audience fragmentation affect network profitability and have social

consequences. Consequently, when media content diversifies, it's anticipated that audience behaviors would be triggered somehow. Ubiquitous social media present very severe and often overlooked unintended consequences to the "media-raised" generation.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This paper relies entirely on secondary research by bringing together a unique collection of articles that analyze a wide spectrum of social network sites, computer-mediated communication, and ubiquitous expressions of social media using various methodological techniques, theoretical traditions, and analytic approaches regarding the topic of research under discussion. In order to better understand the context of this paper, the study draws a parallel of consequences of social media and effects of television on sociability both inside and outside the home (Putnam, 1995; Robinson & Godbey, 1997). Yet television is fundamentally different from Internet use in that television can easily retreat from the foreground of attention to just background noise in an isolated and perhaps, fixed location.

The Internet, however, is an interactive device and is therefore a somewhat more demanding activity. As opposed to television, the Internet must be user-driven and is not reliant on geographical location. Although interruptions can certainly still occur, it is much more difficult for the Internet to become background noise since it is located in more private and virtual spaces with less or no interruptions at all. Also, it is much less likely that Internet use can be a group activity, whereas television, at the very least, may have a number of family members watching together. Thus, by and large, Internet has a much more isolating potential than television in lieu of the social cohesion of the family. In addition, social media, as will be discussed throughout this paper, complicates, annihilates, and reinforces varied consequences in relation to Internet use and the web.

Thus, building on the qualitative research by Vickery (2009), Lüders (2008) and Rose (2011), a mixed methodology best addressed the research questions. In her consideration of online structures and spaces with specific focus to Facebook, Vickery (2009) distinguishes one sector of the online public sphere, a space not explicitly political but which always holds the potential for politics to emerge due to the fact that individuals with common interests and collective identities are occupying a shared space. Lüders (2008) argued that the implementation of digital media technologies has important consequences for social networks in regards to the post-traditional self –especially since technical and social dimensions of personal media revises the distinction between mass media and personal media.

Rose (2011) argued that the easy transfer of information between different social media sites opens the users to serious security risks. In addition, the massive over-sharing of information by the users of these sites, combined with the increased availability of location-based information, which can be aggregated causing unacceptable risks and unintended consequences for users.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The digital revolution has changed the way everyday tasks are carried out. Society is changing, norms are changing, confidentiality is being replaced by openness but privacy advocates say that convenience has come at the cost of privacy. According to Pew and Internet Survey, 83 percent of social network users have added comments to a friend's picture; 77 percent post messages to friend's page or wall; 71 percent send private messages to friends within the SNS; 66 percent post comments on a friends blog; 54 percent send bulletins or group messages to all their friends; 54 percent send IMs or text messages to friends through the SNS (Lenhart, 2009).

Almost everything that is done in today's society leaves a track, some sort of digital footprint that can put your personal information at a higher risk. In fact, according to an annual survey released by Javelin Strategy and Research, in 2009 more than 11 million U.S. consumers were victims of identity theft (Oppmann, 2010) . "Facebook is, by its nature, a social experience. But as the undisputed king of social networking expands ways for its users to interact, it's raising more questions about how much of their information is made available to people they don't know. In some cases, users may not even realize it's happening" (Gross, 2010).

The US National School Boards Association (2007) research findings of an exploration into the online behaviors of US 9 to 17 year olds revealed that nine-to-seventeen year olds reported spending almost as much time on social networking and web sites as they do watching television – around 9 hours online, compared to 10 hours of TV. Ninety-six percent of the young people surveyed reported using some form of social networking technology. Accordingly,

educators, parents and carers are increasingly recognizing the importance of understanding the appeal and use of social networking service amongst young people. This may be in order to prevent or respond to a negative incident – cyber bullying, or other inappropriate content or activities - but should also be in order to realize the benefits of young people’s use of technology: to support their media literacy skills and their social participation, and also to explore the potential educational benefits of social networking services (National School Boards Association, 2007).

Moreover, according to the 2007 Pew Internet & Instant message screen name—American Life Project study Teens, Privacy 40 percent & Online Social Networks, teens post a streamed audio—40 percent; variety of personal information on their so- Links to their blog—39 percent social network profiles. E-mail address—29 percent; Last name—29 percent; First name—82 percent; Videos—29 percent; Photos of themselves—79 percent; Cell phone number—2 percent; Photos of friends—66 percent (Lenhart & Madden, 2007).

The social networking website, Facebook, has had phenomenal growth and has overtaken Google's popularity among US Internet users. Facebook’s membership has more than doubled in the past year, passing the 200 million mark last April and 400 million in February. Industry data shows it has scored more visits on its home page than Google. "In a sign that the web is becoming more sociable than searchable, research firm Hitwise said that Facebook and Google accounted for 14% of all US Internet traffic. Facebook's home page recorded 7.07% of traffic and Google's 7.03%.

220M internet users in US (72.4%) 94% of teens are online - Average person: 14 hours per week online Teens spend over 20 hours per week online (equal to average TV watching time) The Wayback Machine Archiving 85B web pages since 1996 “ Walled garden” vs. “Open by

default". Internet users worldwide spent more than 5.5 hours a month on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter in December 2009, an 82% increase over the previous year, according to the Nielsen Company research firm" (Nuttall & Gelles, 2010).

Therefore as long as social media sites can share information with other social media sites and location sharing is allowed (and people are becoming comfortable with disclosing such information), then persons who should not know certain information will readily be able to get that information. Combine this with overly enthusiastic users, who intentionally or not, share too much personal information and developers who can access private information, then ubiquitous social media will present a very severe and often overlooked security risk.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Societal Backdrop

Much of the unintended consequence of social media is closely related to the progressive individualization of society and the dissolution of community and family connections – the social support that linked individuals to one another and to their communities. Nie (2001) argued that the decline in social connectedness has been the unintended consequence of technological change.

Why Social Media

Social media is all about answering the basic human question on how we can help one another (Wright, Khanfar, Harrington, & Kizer, 2010). Such basic notion of communication will prosper and should remain the focus. Gladwell (2000) suggested that big trends are started by small groups of people that have the power to communicate with, inform and influence one another in society. “Media-raised” generation has this kind of energy levels to advance different causes but the problem is that they incline towards the unintended consequences of the social media.

Taking the perspective of personal media, social media like Facebook becomes a productivity tool for connecting with friends, finding old friends from school, work, church; Joining groups with common interests; Planning events, parties or get-togethers, civic engagements or campaigns for various causes; wishing friends a happy birthday; Trying out applications for fun; Posting photos, articles and videos and sharing with friends about life or interests in general. In this regard, engagement becomes the intended consequence since it reaps

on the social capital and collaboration of advancing a societal, group or familial concern or worthy cause within and without defined network.

Although engagement and exposure are both elements of intended consequences in this paper, however, if the latter doesn't lead to the desired call for action then it becomes unintended consequence to the very cause it purported to address. For instance, Kony 2012 viral video was meant to tentatively serve both purposes of exposure and engagement. The producer of the video wanted to "make Kony famous" through social media's disruptive and rippling effect and thereafter direct the attention of concerned authorities or stakeholders to take action of hunting and arresting Kony by the end of December 2012 to answer charges on crimes against humanity involving children soldiers. However, if the social media users simply see and forward the video without pushing for immediate action by the relevant establishments or authorities, then it becomes unintended consequence by the users. In essence, in line with Putnam's model of social capital and media use, there should be a precursory relationship. For example, Trayvon Martin's death is a case in point – Trayvon Martin, 17, of Miami gardens, was visiting family in Sanford when he was shot and killed by a neighborhood watch captain, who said he was acting in self-defense (miamiherald.com).

The intended consequence of social media has catapulted the case of Martin, the Miami gardens teenager shot to death in Sanford to the world. Thus, the case has not only invoked historical injustices but also sparked debate nationwide drawing partisan battle lines and even forcing Sanford's police chief to resign to pave way for investigations. to illustrate the intended consequence of social media, let's take an overview of the presidential election in 2008. With a comprehensive Facebook site and twitter account, president Barack Obama launched a very aggressive and successful social networking campaign that raised money and energized the

electorate. YouTube was also used optimally and successfully. Learmonth (2008) reported that Obama and McCain videos drew 1.45 billion views on YouTube during the presidential campaign.

According to *Comscore*, “youtube became the biggest search engine after Google with 59 percent more visitors than in the previous year” (Learmonth, para.14). The profound impact and success of social media on the presidential election for 2008 is proof that conversation, participation, collaboration and sharing are the building blocks for an intended consequence of social media in relation to social capital strategy. Social media are dominating the world especially as the use of mobile devices like smartphones, iPod, iPad, and computer tablets allow users to be connected to their favorite social media outlets 24 hours a day while telecommuting. Facebook currently boasts over 400 million users and is steadily on the incline at an astounding rate (Crunchbase, 2009). Twitter also exploded in 2009 attracting “more than seven million unique visitors” (Armano, 2009, Para. 1). Impressively, twitter reached its 10 billionth tweet on March 4, 2010 (Patterson, 2010).

Limitation of the Study

The limitation of the study is that it purely relied on secondary research that had their assumptions and limitations as well.

Delimitation of the Study

The delimitation of the study is that it exhaustively considered a mixed method as a way of validating the research conducted for a more succinct paper.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION

This paper strive to establish the unintended consequence of social media on “media-raised” generation through interaction with media technologies as well as social networking practices in order to identify implications for future research and public policy in building safety considerations into the design and management of social networking sites.

In summary, it should be noted that the concern over new technology is not new to society. In essence, social media has become a disruption since most users (media-raised generation) have integrated these sites into their daily practices and interests. Moreover, it evolves and adapts to users on a regular basis. Although some people might fear this change, others welcome it. By and large, people of all ages and backgrounds are now embracing social networks, as they swiftly become an integral part of daily life. New users, new uses, and even new forms of online social networking are all changes that continue to shift the paradigm of the future of social media as the world engulfs in a web of boundless communications. It is important to realize that media-raised generation uses social media not as a productivity tool but as a more convenient way to find and share information. Thus, understanding the technology and what they are doing online will help adults recognize and reward their creative, secure and safe ways to use social networks.

In conclusion, the “media-raised” generation, teachers and parents need to work together to stay safe online beyond the “digital divide” in the family and society. The recommendation would include setting the standard as to how the “media-raised” generation represent themselves as well as tell them to strictly follow age requirements. Periodically follow up with them and

remind them not to post anything that could embarrass them or expose them to danger since the Internet is a public space.

Although engagement and exposure are both elements of intended consequences in this paper, however, if the latter doesn't lead to the desired call for action then it becomes unintended consequence to the very cause it purported to address. This paper argues that social connectedness is on the incline but it's geared more toward a solitary experience as opposed to communal or group. It's this notion that drives the assertion that social are about how we can help one another. While underscoring that social networking sites, e-mail, instant messaging, video- and photo-sharing sites, and comment posting are all tools that help people communicate and socialize with each other, Mooney (2009) holds the same argument by recognizing that it's not about the people's experiences with social networking that corroborates the connectedness or the consequences but the choices they make online.

The ease with which media-raised generation run into trouble online and their relentless bravado that accompanies it is a concern that should be addressed as they interact with social media especially regarding the abandonment of personal privacy that trigger risks by default, design and by disclosure jeopardizes their reputations and futures in securing college admission or job opportunities. However, Mooney (2009) maintained that despite the inherent risks or unintended consequences initiated by mostly users, the benefits of social media as an interactive technology far outweigh the risks. While there are promising benefits to using social media as a tool of productivity and expression, media-raised needs to understand the truths of social media in order to avoid the unintended consequences that are inherent in its use.

One of the first truths about social media is the ability to conveniently enable conversations and sharing of information among targeted audience. However, when social media

gets to know its users so well then there should be some cautionary measures that needs to be taken to avoid the aforementioned unintended consequences.

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