

MUTUAL AUGMENTATION OF
SURVEILLANCE PRACTICES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

by

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Abstract

Social media services like Facebook mark the continued domestication of surveillance technology. Facebook has been remarkably successful at establishing a presence within a variety of social settings, including the interpersonal sphere, the academic sector, and the marketplace. As a platform shared by these spheres, Facebook distributes personal information beyond intended contexts. This research will develop a sociological understanding of individual, institutional, and aggregate surveillance through social networking sites. A series of semi-structured face-to-face interviews with students, university administrators and business employees provides a detailed understanding of surveillance practices on Facebook. Three kinds of surveillance are considered. First, lateral – or peer-to-peer – surveillance refers to interpersonal scrutiny between individuals. Second, institutional surveillance is the scrutiny of key populations by universities and other institutions. Third, aggregated surveillance is used primarily by businesses to study relevant markets. I propose that mutual augmentation exists between individual, institutional, and aggregate forms of surveillance on social media. These three models are situated within the same informational platform. By sharing not only the same information, but also the same interface used to access that information, formerly discrete surveillance practices feed off one another. New personal details, criteria, and searching techniques become common knowledge. Marketers and institutions now benefit from ‘user-generated value’ when individuals exchange relevant information amongst themselves. Likewise, university-age users have

adopted new criteria like 'employability' and 'liability' to assess their peers as well as themselves.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

This introductory chapter outlines my research on surveillance and social media. This is accomplished through a review of relevant surveillance, new media, and social network literature. While reviewing this material provides a contextual grounding, it also reveals limitations and gaps of knowledge that this dissertation addresses. From the outset, it should be noted that while Facebook may rightly be viewed as a medium that permits users to express themselves and to ‘share’ information about themselves, this also increases user visibility and facilitates the use of such information for multiple purposes. As we shall see, it is because these media are ‘social’ that surveillance can occur, and that this happens on several levels.

1.1 Overview of social media

Illustration 1: Craig Lynch



YES YES i fuckin made it to Xmas i beat their fuckin system and i love it (Lynch, in Henley 2010).

On December 25th, 2009, Craig Lynch uploaded the above message to his Facebook profile. A recent escapee from Suffolk’s Hollesley Bay prison, Lynch was

able to maintain a precarious balance of visibility and invisibility through the social networking service. He was able to evade the police while remaining in the public gaze. During the holidays Lynch uploaded a series of photos – including the above image (ibid.) - and statements not only indicating that he was still at large, but also going so far as to speculate on future travel plans. Indeed, his profile focused on the more mundane details of his fugitive status, including visiting a shopping centre with his daughter and enjoying Christmas dinner. Through this public engagement, Lynch rapidly generated a following of supporters and detractors. Furthermore, this audience was able to know Lynch through his everyday visibility. This development suggests that even a fugitive evading police scrutiny could live their everyday life online.

Beyond the pursuit of a brazen fugitive, this story is interesting for the changing nature of visibility offered by social networking. Online visibility by way of personal information is a condition of contemporary sociality. Before his capture on January 13th, Lynch was able to maintain control of his visibility to the public. Regardless of the public's sympathies towards escaped convicts, his use of Facebook speaks to the empowering potential of social media for its users. This ordeal resembles a crime-based reality program that asks its audience to locate fugitives, except that the fugitives are now harnessing surveillance technology. Whether or not his presence on the site contributed to his eventual capture, it seems clear that public visibility is rapidly changing through social media. Users are making their private lives visible to others, entrusting them with personal information that would otherwise be shielded from public scrutiny.

The above story received considerable media coverage, yet it is a drop in a sea of journalism on the emergence of social media. Much of this reporting can be attributed to the longstanding practice of hyping new technology. Yet many scholars have conceded that concepts like trust, visibility, and privacy need to be reconsidered – if not recast – in a world held together by social media. Media sharing sites like Youtube and MySpace are having profound impacts on the entertainment industry (Halliday 2010). The microblogging service Twitter is often touted as altering the nature of journalism (Hughes 2009), although it may be safer to say that it is a new venue for public relations. Likewise, Facebook is arguably changing everything from political campaigns (Sweney 2010a), to social protest (Shepherd 2010), to marketing and promotions (Wray 2009). To be sure, a lot of these proclamations are the same kind of hype that has long been linked to technological change (Mosco 2004). Emerging technologies, though themselves socially shaped, do in turn shape social relations, but this process is not always apparent on first sight. Yet even when taking into account journalistic hype, social media's social impact is undeniable.

Facebook's 'press room' service offers some indication of its growing presence in individual lives. The social networking site has gathered over five hundred million users, up from one hundred and fifty million users in 2009. Fifty percent of active users log on to the site every day. Users upload over two and a half billion photos every day, contributing to the largest online stockpile of personal photography. Facebook's importance can also be measured through less quantitative means. The Oxford dictionary selected 'unfriend' (the act of pruning a

contact from a social network) as its word of the year for 2009. A dictionary that includes this verb is indicative of a culture that manages social networks in a deliberate and mediated process. Other words have taken on new meanings in light of Facebook's popularity. 'Tagging' now means forging a link between a photograph and an individual's identity. A 'wall' is now a semi-public and wholly social conversation between acquaintances, rather than a barrier that separates them. 'Friend' has become a verb to denote adding a contact to one's social network, as well as a noun to refer to a staggeringly vast range of peers, co-workers, family members, and genuine friends tied to a social network.

Concepts like private and public are also taking on new meanings, although these are not obvious on first glance. Some users believe that they can remain 'private' when online in 'public.' They construct a prolonged online presence to a vague, unidentified audience, yet they wish to restrict specific information from specific individuals or groups. This suggests that tensions exist between users' values and the way they actually use sites like Facebook. This technology does have a significant cultural impact, but this should not be overestimated. It is simply the most recent means for exchanging information with other people. Facebook modestly describes itself as a way "to share and make the world more open and connected" (FB Fanpage 2010). Likewise, Twitter implores its users to "[s]hare and discover what's happening right now..." (Twitter 2010). YouTube offers to do this with video, Flickr with photographs, Digg and del.ici.ous with news items. Their users now live with the consequences of a series of technologies that are astonishingly successful at sharing information with the general public.

The hardware required for these services is by no means prohibitive. Facebook can be accessed on every commercially available computer and mobile device as well as many that have been deemed obsolete. It is reasonable to suggest that this is a key to its exponential growth. In fact, visions of ubiquitous (Weiser 1993), ambient (Greenfeld 2006), and pervasive (Hansmann et al. 2003) computing are predicated on inexpensive and widely available ICTs. Social media are an emergent feature of a densely connected society.

Of all the kinds of social media, social networking sites (SNSs) are the most germane to the study of the transformation of everyday life. This is because these sites, by embodying the widest set of features and services, are the most easily generalized examples of social media. SNSs are web-based spaces that enable users to disclose personal information to a semi-public audience of peers and strangers (boyd and Ellison 2007). Their primary purpose is to facilitate the spread of personal information across – and beyond – these networks (ibid.; Beer & Burrows 2007). SNSs are immediately distinguished from other web spaces and services because of the detailed identity construction that occurs on the site. While other sites offer the opportunity for users to identify themselves and reveal personal details, this becomes a prerequisite with social networking (but not social media). Here, the profile acts as a repository of personal information, a body of information that stands in for the actual body (boyd and Heer 2006). A sparsely populated profile elicits suspicion in other users as it indicates either an uninvolved or even fraudulent identity.

Another key feature of SNSs is the importance of social connections. Upon creating a personalized presence, users are invited to 'friend' people they know. This typically involves submitting a request to another user – be it friend, family member, acquaintance or stranger – who accepts or denies the request. Users often accumulate hundreds to thousands of friends, and personal networks are thus created. Interestingly, these friendships become a kind of personal information that is displayed on the user's profile.

To friend other users is more than acknowledging that you know – or want to know – them. Friending also involves sharing personal information with those users. This includes biographical details, photographs, interests, and virtually anything the user is willing to share. Sites like Facebook have developed extensive privacy settings so that users can customize how much information they share with friends and strangers alike. Thus it is possible to withhold information from family members while making those same details available to strangers. Indeed, the latter is increasingly becoming a default setting for Facebook.

Upon creating a profile, making friends and sharing with a personal network, users can coordinate social movements through SNSs. Facebook in particular has a few components to facilitate social activity. The 'events' feature allows users to publicize upcoming parties, protests, and public lectures. Likewise, the 'groups' feature enables users to rally around a particular cause or belief. By joining a group and making that membership visible on one's profile, the user can explicitly support anything from Haitian relief post-earthquake to a local coffee shop. This feature has been supplemented by the 'fan' application. While the features are largely the same,

the idea of being a fan instead of a member suggests a commercial rather than organizational structure. If a Facebook user's contact list is composed of people who are socially relevant, it stands to reason that this site becomes a central resource for planning events and social coordination. University students who use the site report that it is an easy way to contact people about formal events, but also for pedestrian social coordination like planning study sessions. Organizations benefit from Facebook through its ability to harness pre-existing 'friend' networks to augment membership. Local businesses are expected to maintain an online presence. Third parties will gladly do this for them.

Social networking, as it is recognized today, began in 1999 with the emergence of LiveJournal. While LiveJournal was a weblog type service, it shared two features with contemporary SNSs: personal profiles and the ability to add other users as friends. Friendster was launched in 2002 as a more prototypical example of a social networking platform. The emphasis shifted from the diary entries to the profile as a site of activity and interest. Despite a rapid rise to popularity, Friendster was restricted to key subcultures and communities in specific locations like San Francisco and Brooklyn. While Friendster eventually garnered one hundred and fifteen million users, its success was eclipsed by MySpace, which took on a more mainstream following. MySpace also saw a pronounced investment by the media industry, was purchased by News Corporation in July 2005 for over a half-billion dollars US. This compromised its success as a standard platform, as it developed a reputation for having more aspiring musicians than conventional users.

When Facebook was launched in 2004, it was only accessible to students at a few Ivy League universities. Facebook is currently the largest social networking site in terms of users and activity, although older services are still used extensively. In addition, other sites have emerged that target at specific populations. Sites like CyWorld, Orkut and StudiViz either explicitly or implicitly target users in specific countries. Sites like LinkedIn and ASmallWorld have a pronounced emphasis on the kinds of professional networking that have previously occurred on golf courses and in cigar lounges.

1.2 Social media introduce three dilemmas

Social media can best be understood as a series of practices revolving around the authoring of personal information, creation of interpersonal networks, and the development of coordinated activities. These practices are largely based on information sharing and perpetual visibility. In order for the site to function, users are expected to routinely submit information. The rapid adoption of social media by individuals, institutions, and corporations suggests that social life is increasingly mediated by these services. A sociological perspective highlights three dilemmas brought on by the rapid adoption of social networking technology. These three dilemmas correspond to three distinct phenomena: individual usage, institutions that attempt to manage these individuals, and marketers that are seeking new ways to harness (or 'monetize') personal information.

The first dilemma is that individuals struggle with changing language, norms, and practices. Users feel a tremendous social pressure to join social media. One

student states: "I just thought Facebook was complicated and stupid, but my friends completely pressured me into it because they all had Facebook, so I got Facebook and it wasn't too bad" (Stu_27). Even those who wilfully join report that their presence is at least partly beyond their control. Users have to manage connections with hundreds of peers. This involves a calculated public image, withholding certain types of information from certain friends, and a heavy degree of self-censorship to cope with a heterogeneous audience. To complicate matters, a user's friends are more than an audience. These peers are actively involved in constructing the user's identity both in obvious and, as we shall see, non-obvious ways. They can offer commentary on any kind of content provided by the user, either endorsing or questioning the user's self-presentation. They can take an even more active stance by posting on a user's wall or tagging the user in a photo or video. It stands to reason that an individual's identity is increasingly a collaborative endeavour. Self-presentation is ultimately beyond the control of the self, and undesirable details may leak out because of friends. The sharp growth of this kind of activity has been accompanied by vast anxiety and debates between users regarding acceptable and unacceptable behaviour on SNSs. But while comparisons to stalking gained prominence during Facebook's initial ascendancy, this has arguably given way to descriptions that take a more casual and accepting approach to sharing personal information.

Similarly, terms like friendship, privacy and visibility need to be reconsidered in light of relations now mediated through Facebook. While users are developing practices and protocols for social networking, they can barely keep up

with features and privacy settings that are routinely introduced. The fact remains that more users are sharing more personal information with a rapidly growing audience of colleagues and strangers. Terms like 'public' and 'private' no longer suffice to describe the information, the users, or the venues. In light of these developments, sociologists must shift their attention to the seemingly contradictory reproach and enthusiasm that is characteristic of social media users.

Second, institutions struggle with risks associated with social media, but also take advantage of the visibility of its user base. Individuals and institutions are made more visible to one another. Individuals increasingly maintain a detailed presence on sites like Facebook. All sorts of socially relevant conversations occur on these spaces. This extends beyond any particular social sphere as it becomes technologically possible and increasingly normative to be 'always on.' Moreover, users can be identified as affiliated to institutions like workplaces, universities and government branches. Individuals on Facebook who are affiliated with these places are a potential liability. A disgruntled employee may publicly denounce her workplace. Likewise, an employer may deem photographs from a user's weekend inappropriate and misaligned with their corporate image.

Individuals also treat social media as a source of knowledge about schools and workplaces. New students may consult their university's homepage to find out about courses and residences, but they will certainly join Facebook groups like 'class of 2015' and 'must knows about courses' to learn from their peers. Potentially undesirable aspects of these institutions such as their reputation for being a 'party school' are publicized. Institutions face a complicated challenge in that their

reputations on social media are in the hands of the user base, and misinformation can potentially go unchecked. Yet there is a student backlash against institutions having a visible presence and involvement on these sites.

To be sure, this is not an appealing prospect for media and communications officers, or any other institutional employee now burdened with social media. But there are tremendous opportunities for institutions that successfully utilize this technology. Institutions are often charged with the task of closely observing populations. Social media offer unprecedented access to their personal details, with users having little to no awareness when this information is being gathered. Institutions are thus chastised if they make a visible presence, but it is increasingly a possibility that they loom in the background and watch over user activity and personal information. Students, it seems, are living their lives online. But employees also have a professional and personal presence on these sites. Infractions and other events of concern are made visible and searchable. Institutions see their jurisdiction extended to sites like Facebook, and thus into their members' personal lives.

Third, social media are a double-edged sword for businesses. Like institutions and individuals, they are changing their practices in response to the exponential increase in visibility of their clients and markets. But they are also made visible to their clients when users upload opinions, reviews, and experiences with their products and services. The ability to know populations and social aggregates is rapidly changing businesses that value knowing their market as well as their own reputation. The claims that any publicity is good publicity need to be revisited as personal details about everyday life are cast into the public eye. Facebook users can

effortlessly share their views about brands and products. They can also create communities based on the shared dislike of a business. The ease with which these groups gather members, coupled with the fact that they are searchable on the site as well as on Google, suggests that this is a growing concern for corporations. More than just a collection of individuals, Facebook makes its user population searchable through attributes. Quantitative data can be cross-referenced, but more qualitative content is also available. Groups and fan pages contain detailed conversations about brands and products. For better or worse, businesses are actively involved, along with a new class of experts, consultants and public speakers. Old work is refitted with social media.

Social media services have an incentive to cash in on this growing body of information. Facebook offer a series of 'business solutions' to companies wanting to utilize the social network. This corresponds to a wealth of social engagements, ranging from creating fan pages to in-depth advertising schemes where information is collated about users. By harvesting personal information, businesses acquire knowledge about users that users themselves may not possess. Amid this discussion, we should not forget that Facebook itself is a business. While it presents itself as a free service to its user base, it seeks to exploit the resource it collects: personal information. Users are left wondering who owns and collects their information, although they are certain that it is of significant value to whoever does use it. One student claims: "you can have some stupid little game or something but it can be run by Nike and you just don't know so you're using some satellite company" (Stu_7).

1.3 Key questions

Compared to celebratory and damning accounts of new media, user interactions with Facebook are astonishingly mundane. The exchange of text and images between users is by no means a new development. Even video exchange is a taken-for-granted feature with the advent of broadband. The mobile component retains some novelty, but builds off the more familiar text messaging. Yet it is the fact that much of the technology involved has been around so long that makes Facebook so interesting. Newer services like Facebook are modelled on earlier ones, often with minor changes. They also undergo perpetual revisions that ensure an immersive user engagement. Likewise, users' own practices change with time. Some users will disable key features on the site like the wall and photo albums. Others will rely on pseudonyms and multiple accounts.

Through their familiarity with social media, users have become accustomed to sharing personal information online. Facebook is an increasingly refined interface for authoring and exchanging social and personal information. New conditions of information exchange, fuelled both by finely tuned technology and a rapidly growing user base create extensive new visibilities and as such demand examination from a Surveillance Studies perspective. More and more personal information is circulating online; what are the new conditions and dynamics of this exchange? Two key questions govern this research.

First, how are sites like Facebook used to exchange personal information? A broad range of social actors is using this technology, which begs scrutiny of the most

appropriate diagrams for conceptualizing information exchange. To assist the analysis that follows, three models are proposed. First, lateral – or peer-to-peer – information exchange refers to a decentralized exchange between individuals through Facebook’s servers. This includes providing personal information to users who make up a ‘friend’ list as well as to strangers who may have access to this information. Thus, lateral surveillance includes the harmless exchange of information between trusted peers as well as stalking and other harmful transgressions. Second, institutional information exchange occurs when institutions monitor key populations. Corporate and government bodies are a prominent feature of the new information landscape. Their reputation is recast in light of the domestication of information technology. But they now have the increased ability to collect information about the individuals whom they serve or govern. Third, aggregated data mining is used primarily by businesses to study key markets. Not only are individuals made more visible to corporate entities, but social media also allow marketers to pinpoint specific fragments of a population. It has never been easier to track college-educated men between the ages of 25 and 34, or politically conservative Yale alumni who reside on the eastern seaboard of the United States. On Facebook personal identities give way to sortable data and aggregated knowledge.

Second, what kind of dynamic exists between these three diagrams? I propose that a kind of ‘mutual augmentation’ exists between individual, institutional, and aggregate forms of surveillance on social media. This dynamic stems from the fact that these three diagrams co-exist within the same

informational platform. By sharing not only the same body of information, but also the same interface used to access that information, formerly discrete surveillance practices feed off one another. New personal details, criteria, and searching techniques become common knowledge. As an example, consider how marketers now benefit from 'user-generated value' when individuals exchange relevant information amongst themselves. Likewise, university-age users have adopted new criteria of 'employability' and 'liability' to assess their peers as well as themselves. This is a logical extension of the assumption that employers, the police, and other typical 'watchers' may access their personal details.

1.4 Literature review

This section looks at recent academic literature on social media. This includes relevant work on new media in general, work on the greater social concerns surrounding social media, and finally literature that considers social media in terms of surveillance.

1.4.1 New media in general

Before reviewing literature on social media, it would help to briefly consider the insights offered by recent literature on new media cultures. This will not only illuminate key features of social life in the digital age, but also illustrate the principal frameworks through which social media surveillance has been made meaningful.

Convergence as a concept is an appropriate starting point for considering the social impact of new media saturation. Its sociological relevance is demonstrated in

the newly formed linkages between formerly distinct practices and contexts (Jenkins 2006). Yet convergence refers to a series of phenomenon that must be considered separately in order to develop a full appreciation of the sociological novelty of new media. Technological convergence is manifest at the level of hardware as well as software. Regarding the former, the recent proliferation of mobile devices demonstrates how formerly distinct functions are now handled by a single device. At the turn of the twenty-first century, a technologically savvy individual would be found carrying any number from a multitude of mobile devices. In addition to a cellular phone, the user might also carry a digital camera, digital music player, and personal digital assistant (PDA). None of these devices would offer the user access to the internet. A few years later, a single device – be it an iPhone, Blackberry, or another kind of ‘smart phone’ – can stand in for all these gadgets, all while connected to the internet. This transition suggests a shift where several functions have converged to a single device. This does not imply that smart phones have achieved a kind of technological hegemony. Digital music players now record video and connect to the internet. Digital cameras offer seamless access to photo and video sharing websites. Tablets and netbooks have been introduced as more portable counterparts to desktops and laptops.

These devices are the platforms upon which users engage with software. But software like Facebook also demonstrates a socially significant kind of convergence. Prior to SNSs, users would visit specific sites to read news items (cbc.ca; bbc.co.uk), to upload photos (flickr.com), watch videos (youtube.com), reconnect with erstwhile colleagues (classmates.com), and pursue romantic interests (lavalife.com).

Facebook markets itself as performing all these functions. This is not to suggest that this social networking site has eclipsed the above sites, although it has long surpassed Flickr as the largest collection of user-submitted photographs. Rather, it operates on an 'either/or' logic that is indicative of software convergence.

In a sense, convergence is a misleading term because it suggests all are collapsed into one (Manovich 2008). It is more appropriate to think about multiple accumulations of functions, or information. Facebook is internally equipped to perform any of the above features. In addition, it offers connections where content from any of the above sites can be accessed. This can be done automatically through third-party applications, or manually if another user brought this content onto Facebook. Multiple devices give way to one, and multiple sites and software also give rise to one. This is sociologically relevant because separate practices now coexist on the same artefact. The fact that Facebook offers a breadth of services suggests that it creeps into numerous social spheres for the average user. With academic, professional, and personal relations being directed through Facebook, we can also speak of a generic social convergence at play (Gates 2006).

The spread and saturation described above resembles what has been dubbed ubiquitous computing. Mark Weiser first envisioned ubiquitous computing while working at the Palo Alto Research Centre in 1988. As a principal scientist at a private research and development company, Weiser was enlisted to envision a new manner in which computers could be successfully deployed into a plurality of realms (and hence, markets). Ubicomp rests on the claim that the minutiae of everyday life are increasingly managed by computing devices. These devices

operate by pervasively collecting information from users, performing tasks and providing services in response to this information.

Weiser considered the hardware requirements for an ambient engagement with computers. Computing hardware is recast as smooth surfaces that were integrated into already mundane things. Computers are thus materially downplayed as either something that easily disappears into pockets and book bags, or are entirely assimilated by kitchen appliances and coffee tables. A disappearing interface is not simply another accomplishment of computing devices, but rather part of the ongoing deployment of technology manifested by users and devices alike. In many respects, this process resembles what Bruno Latour describes as blackboxing, whereby “the scientific and technical work is made invisible by its own success” (1999: 304). So long as the proper functioning of ubiquitous devices is assured, the various acting components which constitute a ubiquitous system may come to be recognized as a single agent. A consequence of this is that attention can be shifted from the sets of devices that are employed within everyday life to the higher-order abstractions. Adam Greenfield (2006), a self-described critical futurist, suggests that ubicomp will act on abstract concepts such as ‘the body,’ ‘the room,’ and ‘the city’ through its ability to put computers into the things that make up these things. Thus, ubicomp not only suggests the embedding of computers in all spheres of social life, but a particular deployment that shifts attention away from these devices back onto the user. Ubicomp is about the disappearance and subsequent invisibility of computing, enabling the totality of everyday life to be made visible and

knowable. Distinctions between online and offline recede as users experience a perpetual engagement with information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Facebook exemplifies a software corollary of ubicomp through its spread onto mobile phones and other portable devices with wireless capabilities. In fact, many of these devices bear a striking resemblance to the pads, tabs, and boards that Weiser (1993) envisions. These mobile interfaces enable users to send and search personal information through a growing range of wearable and 'always-on' devices. This ensures a more pervasive engagement with social networks, with ubiquitous visibility and broadcasting stemming from a ubiquitous proliferation of technology. As well, this development echoes Microsoft developer Dave Stutz's endorsement of software that operates "above the level of the single device" (O'Reilly 2005).

The mobile development marks one path towards social saturation, but ubiquity goes beyond the ubicomp framework. Its ongoing development reflects a calculated attempt to saturate its presence in a variety of social settings, but also to draw attention away from this presence by making the interface as intuitive and responsive as possible. Increasingly robust privacy settings and a customizable interface have the explicit purpose of enhancing the user's experience of – and integration within – Facebook. One developer describes recent developments as "making it easier to get to the information you want to see" (Abram 2007).

Elsewhere on Facebook's weblog, new features are said to reflect the "intention of making the profile cleaner and simpler, and more relevant, while still giving you control over your profile" (Slee 2008). Furthermore, the devices that connect to

Facebook require less user intervention as they assume a greater presence in domestic settings.

By deploying a pervasive, yet unobtrusive platform for the exchange of personal information, social media are located within the ubicomp framework. By facilitating its pervasiveness (increasing the number of users who engage with Facebook through computing devices) as well as its apparent passivity (an invisibly transparent presence that enable users to focus on uses, not devices), Facebook stands to become further embedded in everyday practice if these devices rise exponentially and recede to the periphery of our attention. Recent developments in this direction include a version of the site's interface that is optimized for mobile devices. The growing pervasiveness of wearable computing devices foreshadows an ambient social networking functionality. As such, a watershed moment for the ubiquity of social media would be when the focus shifts from its interface to its content (that is, when it will be possible to use Facebook without talking or thinking about Facebook itself). The trajectory envisioned by Weiser also suggests that technology that is popularized and saturated becomes quite banal (Mosco 2004). Facebook relies on banal technology at level of hardware and software. Ubiquitous computing speaks to a long-term projection of the future of computing. In contrast, Web 2.0 is a more short-term projection of the shape of things to come, and speaks directly to the advent of sites like Facebook.

Web 2.0 describes a variety of online platforms and services that rely on users submitting information. This has led to the prominence of user-generated content as a feature for online presences. Here content refers primarily to text,

images, and video. In addition to providing original content, web users are also invited to provide content in response to content already online. This includes rating and commenting on items on Amazon and eBay, but also offering the same input on news items. Most conventional news sites have made this a standard feature, and TV news programs direct their viewers to these sites. Although some authors have questioned the value of user-generated content (Keen 2007), others have maintained that the 'wisdom of crowds' is a tangible resource through Web 2.0 (Thompson 2008). Likewise, Twitter streams and Facebook profiles, by virtue of being a series of innocuous bits of information authored over a long period of time, eventually add up to represent something more significant. They provide greater insight in terms of who the user is, how they spend their time and what preoccupies them.

O'Reilly (2005) considers other features of Web 2.0. First, the 'perpetual beta' suggests that web-based services are always subject to revision. New features are introduced, and old ones are revised. These changes are often in response to user complaints and requests. While this does not render software testing redundant, much of this process is offloaded – explicitly and implicitly – onto the user. Explicitly because software developers release a beta version of a program, making revisions based on user feedback. But this is also a less obvious process when sites like Facebook and Amazon harness user feedback to revise the services they offer. Second, information is increasingly 'pushed.' RSS feeds on web browsers and news feeds on Facebook seek and display relevant information for the user. Upon identifying a relevant individual, weblog, or topic, these features will present the

user with the latest content from these sources. This has proven to be an effective way to manage the sharp increase of user-generated content, especially when taken in aggregate. Third, software operates above any single device. As software is designed to function seamlessly on multiple devices, it is rendered mobile. This enables an ease-of-use associated with convergence, in anticipation of prolonged and seamless user experience.

Beer and Burrows (2007) recognize new conditions of Web 2.0 for the social sciences, both as a topic of and tool for research. They argue that consumption as conventionally conceived is now bound to a form of production, which necessitates a reconsideration of these concepts. A key dilemma is whether consumption becomes labour if it is a value-adding process. This development is also tied to online platforms having a greater involvement in users' personal lives. Thus, active involvement on these sites is tied to authoring private (or personal) information in the public domain. Web 2.0 services generate a wealth of content for analysis, although ethical concerns are raised. Beer and Burrows advise researchers to take an insider position by joining these services and experiencing them as users. Lately, the term social media has come to replace Web 2.0 as a catchall for the above features.

The features illustrated in a Web 2.0 / social media framework help situate information exchange through new media more broadly. Following public criticisms that weblogs and SNSs mark a 'dumbing down' of information exchange (Keen 2007), recent literature shifts from the content to the exchange itself by underscoring the phatic value of these services (Miller 2008). Instead of dialogic

communication, Miller contends that new media are used to convey social linkages. These exchanges are not communication for information's sake, but rather communication for communication's sake. Consider a series of brief text-messages between long-distance lovers meant to acknowledge affection rather than convey any specific message. A chief scientist at Yahoo claims: "No message is the single-most-important message. It's sort of like when you're sitting with someone and you look over and they smile at you" (Davis, in Thompson 2008: 5). We may speculate that social ties are maintained or kept in idle in case they need to be used. While relevant information can be exchanged on Facebook, the Facebook culture (pokes, status updates, gifts, apps) is more akin to phatic exchange. From this perspective, the information in contemporary information exchange is heavily downplayed. Yet information that is light on content still holds social weight by conveying that the sender is thinking about the receiver (Miller 2008: 395). More importantly, it is disassociated from immediate context, suggesting an ever-present but unobtrusive flow of information between people. Likewise, Grinter and Eldridge (in Miller 2008) attribute the popularity of text messaging among adolescents to the fact that weighty narratives give way to bits of immediately relevant information.

This suggests that contemporary information exchange is based on a rapid production and consumption of content. While a social presence via authored information is tied to use-value, it also creates new conditions of visibility that require further inquiry. The new baseline requires users to maintain co-presence (Zhao and Elesh 2008) by continually submitting social information. It may initially seem devoid of content or meaning, but might carry meaning at a later point. The

rise of 'trending topics' in Twitter demonstrates how a short-term cultural climate is now more visible and searchable. These trends are built from tags that describe any single message, but point towards a zeitgeist when taken in aggregate. For example, Homecoming, Gordon Brown, and Formula 1 racer Fernando Alonso featured prominently among almost two hundred million Twitter users on September 25th 2010.

While earlier literature suggested that computer mediated communication was decontextualized from the material world, the advent of new media services has strengthened the connections between online and offline environments. Thus, authors like Robinson (2007) suggest that a dramaturgical approach based on self-presentation has more purchase than postmodern approaches to online sociality. She suggests that new media technologies are not divorced from user context, but actually refer back to it. Indeed, they are embedded in contemporary social relations. This is a key feature of a networked social morphology that authors like Wellman and Castells have described in great length. Wittel (2001) offers a helpful treatment of networked sociality as shaping contemporary labour through individualization, the blurring of work and play (meant to be social, but always on call, always connected), and the privileging of information over narratives and social ties that oscillate between dormant and intense (and are explicitly maintained and fostered). New media technology makes these developments possible, and these conditions leak from the workplace to everyday life.

The changing nature of information as a kind of social currency suggests that narratives have been displaced as a key imagery. Lev Manovich (2001) offers the

database as a more accurate representation of contemporary information. Whereas narratives frame information as linear and situated, databases are not confined to any single context or framework. The narrative's inherent stability gives way to the perpetual input that feeds the database, which itself is extracted from any local context. Scholars like Knorr-Cetina (1997) describe the post-social features of new media technology. This is not meant to suggest that humans are absent from social engagement, but rather that various layers of software and hardware dehumanize human-to-human relations. While this perspective certainly adds insight, research on emergent media should not shift attention away from the user, especially as they are negotiating with these layers. Even if they do not necessarily initiate interactions, the chain of interactions that follows still reflects on them.

1.4.2 Social media and networked sociality

The above literature offers a broad framework in which social media are rendered meaningful. These sites emerge in a climate that values the ongoing flow of information and explicit social ties. Focusing specifically on social media, recent scholarship has examined how they shape contemporary sociality.

As these are sites where users share personal details in a quasi-public environment, their impact on identity is apparent. Users display a vast range of descriptors, ranging from cultural markers to favourite movies. The rich vocabulary produced on profiles is a standard form of self-expression. Liu and Maes' (2005) work in this area suggests that users are explicitly displaying cultural taste patterns, and that this information can be tied to the larger body of personal information

found on these networks. Not only do social media make users visible and identifiable, but this information can also provide more insight than anticipated by the user. SNS profiles go beyond the immediate identity, offering a predictive insight not unlike the recommendation systems found on sites like Amazon. For now this is primarily used to recommend new friends and upcoming events to users. This suggests that a seemingly autonomous personal identity is an interconnected project on social networks.

A dramaturgical approach to new media suggests that some forms of identity expression are meant to be more public than others. Yet Pearson (2009) reports that the supposed distinction between front and back stages is complicated on social media. Indeed, seemingly intimate moments may occur in plain sight, while public displays goes unnoticed. The abundance of privacy settings and heterogeneous spaces (private inbox messages versus a posting in a public group) suggest that designers and users are actively reconstructing some degree of comfort and appropriateness. The maintenance of private and public displays speaks to the novelty of these sites as locations for identity construction. The active and deliberate construction of one's identity leaves room for playful negotiation. Photographs as identity markers are framed and edited deliberately and often strategically. While this speaks to a playful and empowering potential for identity construction on social media, Sessions (2009) reports that this self-presentation involves specific protocols that are publicly criticized for compromising the users individuality (the 'MySpace angle'). There is a heightened concern about deception on social media, specifically a discrepancy between photographs on a profile and the

user's actual physical appearance. This hints at a normative climate on sites like Facebook, where accurate embodied representation is required and actively policed by other users.

One of the striking features of identities on social networking is that they are invariably a communal process. Personal self-expression is tied to an audience of peers that not only receives this information, but is also involved in its shaping. A lot of scholarly literature on social media has addressed its consequences for community formation and maintenance. Contrary to popular criticisms that sites like Facebook erode social ties, researchers have found that they contribute to their maintenance. Steinfeld et al (2008) consider the maintenance of social capital through sites like Facebook. They find that these online services are especially well suited for the needs of young adults who are struggling with the transition to university life. Not only do these sites facilitate the creation of new, close friendships, but they also enable the maintenance of long-distance ties. This suggests a flexible model of community building where geographic proximity is less important. Their treatment of social capital lends support to the idea that this is becoming an explicitly important resource in that it is increasingly visible and measurable.

If community is important in identity construction, it stands to reason that community building adopts an increasingly egocentric premise. danah boyd (2006) considers how users are centrally located on their list of contacts and speculates about the kind of community that is formed as a result. Rather than speaking of a cohesive community whose parameters are agreed upon, social media resemble a

series of individualized networks built around the user. Communities are based on friendship, and an egocentric view of group formation locates and contextualizes both the individual user and their collective of friends.

The fact that communities now take on increasingly personalized dimensions is a curious development. The tension between networked individualism and community values is especially pronounced in countries that embrace collectivist values. Kim and Yun (2007) report that user activity on the Korean social networking site CyWorld is split between network maintenance and self-reflection. This suggests a longstanding tension between autonomy and connectivity. Furthermore, online relations are a direct extension of offline values. Future research should consider how societies that emphasize greater openness and transparency between citizens would adapt to online services that prioritize the open exchange of personal information.

The fact that personal identities and social ties are made explicit, coupled with the perpetual availability of commentary and conversation suggests that formerly passive communities take on a more active engagement through social networking. Nancy Baym (2007) reports that independent music audiences in Sweden are recast as active communities where opinions and music are openly exchanged between fans. The fact that artists themselves are active members of these communities suggests a shift away from conventional fan communities (Beer 2008). Contrary to the perspective that communities are currently eroding or being replaced by egocentric networks, this research suggests that more types of groups are taking on community features. To be sure, this is not to suggest that we are

seeing a rapid increase of traditional *Gemeinschaft* communities, but rather that specific features like the open exchange of information are a standard feature of online networks. The fact that communities can be distributed along multiple sites often complicates their boundaries.

While the above features can arguably be found across social media, not all sites are homogenous in terms of the kinds of communities they foster. Papacharissi (2009) offers a comparative analysis of several sites – including Facebook – to determine how their respective information structures generate different kinds of communities. By being relatively accessible in membership and in content as well as having a flexible interface, Facebook has a relatively loose set of norms, leaving the construction of community to users. In comparison, sites like the professional LinkedIn and exclusive ASmallWorld provide a more readymade community by having tighter restrictions on access, content and form. While most social media services have the kind of public/private balance found on Facebook, it is important to remember that more exclusive communities remain, and that the kinds of capital that are tied to these communities are tied to longstanding types of disparity.

The rise of social media is tied to changes to identity and community formation. Recent scholarship has also documented how these sites are playing an increased role in a range of social spheres. Although Facebook began as a university tool, since 2006 the site has gradually spread to other populations, as the initial users moved beyond campus and access has been granted to non-students. Its rapid uptake by others suggests that social media are now shaping social milieus that were at least partly sheltered from online activity.

Within the academic sector, the rising presence of faculty users raises some challenges for personal disclosure and professionalism in the classroom. While trade literature suggests an explicitly preventative approach (Young 2009), Mazer et al (2007) report that a degree of openness on teachers' profiles could facilitate learning in the classroom by enabling students to identify with their instructors. While student-teacher relations are a longstanding issue in academia, SNSs introduce a platform where encounters can be accessible and pervasive. The professional boundary between instructors and students remains, but a degree of porousness and transparency requires a reappraisal of old norms.

Within the classroom, social media have arguably become part of professional development. As students make the transition from campus to career, their public image is a substantial concern and can even become a liability. Ferdig et al. (2008) examined the online presence of roughly eight hundred medical students and residents. They conclude that their presence on social media is part of their professional competency, especially when it comes to the public disclosure of private information. It stands to reason that concerns over professionalism and codes of conduct can be extended to other careers. Beyond risk and liability, Agarwal and Mital (2009) report that Indian university students use social media to gather information about career prospects and generally familiarize themselves with the business environment. Their findings suggest that student conduct online is indicative of a new kind of virtual professionalism, and that labour struggles among emerging professionals will be shaped by social networking.

The political sphere has also been shaped by the rise of social media. While the extent to which Twitter and Facebook contributed to the 2008 US elections is debatable, it is difficult to deny that these sites are a new venue for all kinds of political campaigns. Gueorguieva (2008) observes that social media can be framed in a democratizing light due to their minimal costs associated. Yet while more candidates are able to raise awareness with these resources, it remains that most major candidates have a heavy presence on sites like Facebook. As well, the emergence of online strategists for major candidates suggests that the gap separating them from fringe candidates is reproduced on social media.

Beyond particular institutions, social media have drastically shaped the way users conceptualize and navigate through urban environments. Humphreys' (2007) study of the mobile social networking service Dodgeball suggests that its users routinely exchange information about spatial location with their friends. This contributes to an understanding of spatial locations based on social proximity. Although these findings are limited to mobile services like Dodgeball, Facebook's recent introduction of a similar feature suggests that spatial navigation is an emerging feature of social networking.

The scholarly literature described above contributes to a view of social networking as permeating nearly every aspect of social life. Williams and Merten (2009) go further to suggest that it also makes death more social. By examining the content posted on deceased users' profiles, they suggest that social media serve as a venue for grieving, and that this has become more of a collective endeavour as photos, memories and comments are shared among the deceased's friends. While

their study focused on adolescents, the rapid growth of older users suggests that this is an increasingly important aspect of grieving in general. Perhaps more interesting is the impact that this will have on the deceased. Not only is the user's online presence something that may outlive them, but upon passing they also hand over control of their online presence to a network of friends, family and peers.

1.4.3 Surveillance in social media

The advent of social media has caused a sharp increase in the amount of personal information online. The audience for this growing body of information is itself growing rapidly. This speaks to new kinds of exposure and visibility that researchers are ill prepared to understand. What is perplexing about this visibility is that users are actively engaged in generating and distributing personal information about themselves (Beer and Burrows 2007). The routine, taken-for-granted nature of social networking is juxtaposed against a growing, searching and sortable body of information. This suggests a further expansion of the age of what Nigel Thrift calls "knowing capitalism" (Beer and Burrows 2007; Thrift 2005).

Scholars like boyd (2008) have assessed the inherent loss of privacy associated with ubiquitous social networking. Contrary to a binary perspective of the private and the public, she suggests that advances in ICTs wear away at a kind of privacy that is best described in shades of grey. By drawing a link between technological convergence and a convergence of social spheres, she suggests that users have entered conditions of exposure, where the values associated with privacy are rapidly changing. While users could previously assume that personal

information flowed through stable pathways, new media including SNSs require a reconsideration of values. In terms of assessing who was most willing to develop new privacy values, Fogel and Nehmad (2008) reported that those with profiles on SNSs were more likely to have greater risk taking attitudes. As well, men were more likely to espouse these values than women. While the public exposure of personal information is linked to risky cultural values, the mainstreaming of social networking – coupled with ever-changing privacy settings – is reversing this perception. Not being visible on social media is increasingly tied to an atrophy of social capital and a denial of life chances such as employment or meeting a romantic partner.

The task at hand is to reconsider how concepts like the private and public are changing as social networking is woven into everyday life. Barnes (2006) describes a paradoxical understanding of privacy where the connections between everyday use and longstanding consequences are scarcely understood. Because of a perceived lack of awareness of the consequences of prolonged exposure to social media, she suggests a series of social, legal, and technical solutions tied to educating users about these risks. In contrast, Lange (2007) adopts a fractal perspective of the public/private distinction where a seemingly private space may contain varying degrees of public content, and vice versa (see also Nissenbaum 2004).

From this perspective, using social networking involves information that is considered both public and private. Not only do users adopt tactics to publicize some information while obscuring others, but also sites like Facebook perpetually revise their settings to accommodate a more granular understanding of privacy.

Some users go so far as to maintain separate profiles for private and public purposes. Yet even a typically private profile will contain content intended for public consumption, including profile pictures and contact information. Social media complicate a public/private binary, and this is no more evident than when users attempt to bifurcate private from public content.

West et al. (2009) also report that young users have a nuanced understanding of privacy and publicity within Facebook. Contrary to the view that adolescents have no control over the circulation of their personal information, the authors note that they will actively restrict the flow of information to their parents. These users were experienced in maintaining a degree of privacy from parents prior to social media. The question remains whether this concern extends to other kinds of monitoring that occur through sites like Facebook. Tufekci (2008) suggests that young users maintain a trade-off between ensuring privacy and achieving public exposure.

While users do take measures to protect personal details, this often happens through boundary mechanisms like privacy settings rather than the deliberate withholding of information. Sanchez (2009) offers a detailed account of user backlash against Facebook's 2006 decision to publicize interpersonal activity on the site as news feeds and mini feeds. The fact that much of this backlash took place on Facebook itself suggests that users have a significant investment in using the site. They did not simply condemn Facebook as a substandard service and stop using it. In addition to sharing outrage, users are publicizing the kind of social networking

service they want. If these suggestions do not interfere with the site's business model, this protest actually benefits the site's designers.

The public nature of information on social networks is more than a default setting. It is also tied to cultural values that may be deliberately espoused by users. Hearn (2008) employs the concept of the brand to personal identity to suggest that users are actively involved in their public image on social networks and other new media venues. While self-presentation is a longstanding social concern, its current manifestation online suggests a further blurring between "notions of the self and capitalist processes of production and consumption" (Hearn 2008: 198; cf. Beer and Burrows 2007). Thus, publicity is a desirable outcome, albeit one that is increasingly flexible, in part because of the social convergence associated with these sites. Andrejevic (in Roychoudhuri 2007) makes a valuable contribution to the discussion of privacy and publicity in noting that researchers need to consider an emerging kind of privacy: the privatization of public sociality. Issues of control and ownership are a pressing concern as users are increasingly invested in these sites. The relation between networked sociality and the commercial interests of growing databases is scarcely publicized.

The extent to which social networking has augmented the amount and range of personal information made available online clearly has broad legal implications. Grimmelman (2009) offers an in depth review of Facebook's privacy policies in accordance with the practices of its users. He suggests that users routinely harm each other's privacy interests as a result of the peer-to-peer nature of information exchange. Grimmelman proposes a greater resonance between user practices and

safeguards offered by social media to maintain their interests. Even with these recommendations, Facebook poses a challenge to existing legal frameworks. Steeves (2008) recommends that legal approaches recognize the social context in which personal information is handled on sites like Facebook. Given the kinds of social convergence reported in the above literature, this recommendation is as challenging as it is urgent.

By virtue of their networked morphology, services like Facebook pose unique challenges to users wanting to conceal their identity. Even if users hide information like their political affiliations (Wills and Reeves 2009) or sexual orientation (Jernigan 2009) reasonable estimates can be made based on their friends. Even if users never provide this information to their social network, their more public friends reflect on how they are identified. Research in this field needs to further explore the surveillance implications of increasingly public knowledge about social ties.

Users' ties to their peers are also a means for interpersonal forms of surveillance. Andrejevic (2005) notes that lateral forms of surveillance have emerged through a wealth of domestic technologies including search engines, low-cost background reports, and nanny cams. Beyond simply being visible, Albrechtslund (2008) contends that the act of sharing information on sites like Facebook can be a deliberate and empowering process for users. While users often confirm these positive outcomes, the acts of watching and being watched are coupled in a way that also augments conventional surveillance practices. Far from levelling the playing field, it is possible that increased scrutiny and visibility among

Facebook friends renders everyone more visible to institutions like employers and governments (Trottier 2009). Users are deliberate in their decision to go on sites like Facebook. They do receive benefits from their presence. Yet their visibility on these sites has many consequences, and some of these may not be apparent until much later. The complexity of social media, triggered by an increased involvement of social actors from different contexts, is fuelling the mutual augmentation of different kinds of social media surveillance. The research contained in the following chapters looks at this by studying the main groups of people who are involved.

1.5 Chapter outline

As a starting point scholarly work needs to consider the most germane way to frame Facebook. Its emergence in different social spheres suggests that no single perspective is sufficient. In response to the question ‘What makes up Facebook?’ the next chapter examines four theoretical perspectives. Facebook is treated as software that enables the ubiquitous flow of personal information. Secondly, Facebook is treated as several kinds of networks manifest at once. Thirdly, Facebook is treated as a brand upon which other corporate brands circulate, while recasting personal identities and a kind of brand. Fourthly, Facebook is treated as a site of labour and exploitation, signalling an emerging surveillance economy. These perspectives are supplemented by a thorough description of the key features, revisions, and controversies that surround Facebook.

The third chapter addresses the recent trend of treating Facebook as a methodological tool. Facebook offers a lot of sociologically relevant information.

This information is tied to biographical profiles, which are in turn tied to networks. This information is rich and contextual. Some scholars have taken advantage of its offerings, but we need to consider the consequences of relying on sites like Facebook for research, and also situate ourselves as researchers in these networks. This chapter considers key issues stemming from research using social networking data, and proposes a methodology that shifts its focus onto users and the broader social contexts in which they make use of Facebook.

The fourth chapter offers a rich description of the kinds of peer-to-peer surveillance made possible through Facebook. Social media are framed as a kind of public where users balance cross-contextual transparency with a deliberate performance of public exposure. Users make themselves visible to each other, but also to their employers, government, and law enforcement branches. Their ability to cope with these different circuits of visibility is not evident. The material from this chapter stems from a series of interviews with Facebook users. Key themes include the perceived risks associated with the misuse of personal information, measures taken to protect personal information, and how participants shape their engagement with social media using publicity and privacy as conceptual guides. As well, this chapter explores how these practices are made meaningful and even augmented through concurrent forms of surveillance that occur on the site.

Institutions are responding to emergent visibilities offered through social media. While they are better suited to watch over populations on sites like Facebook, the abundance of user activity on these sites leads to uncertainty about how these institutions are represented. In the absence of any policy or 'best

practice', research needs to examine how institutions are coping with their visibility on Facebook. The fifth chapter focuses on a set of organizational surveillance practices that have been facilitated through Facebook. Material from this chapter draws from a series of interviews with university administrators and employees that use Facebook in order to watch over student populations. As Facebook first emerged in an academic context, these findings provide a rich example of how institutions can scrutinize populations using social media.

Whereas 'friendly' surveillance concerns the known acquaintance, and targeted surveillance sets its gaze on the members of a fixed organization, aggregate surveillance is the collection and processing of information on all Facebook users. The ability to target key populations based on demographics is appealing to businesses. Yet the continued growth of social media and the surrounding controversy suggest that the migration of businesses onto Facebook requires an exploratory approach. The sixth chapter offers a rich description of a new kind of visibility that is made available to organizations through social media platforms. A broad set of organizational tasks – including market research, recruitment, and customer service – are augmented through a growing body of searchable personal information. This chapter describes emerging practices by organizations to cope with new relations of information exchange on social media. It offers findings from a series of semi-structured interviews with professionals who use Facebook as a business tool, including market researchers, community builders, and communications officers.

Upon exploring three sets of surveillance practices that occur through Facebook, the seventh and final chapter considers the broader implications of the distribution of personal information through social media coupled with pervasive computing. This serves as an opportunity to fully unpack the notion of mutual augmentation, supported both by theoretical insights as well as research findings. By outlining the key features of surveillance through social media, this chapter also outlines a series of agenda-setting concerns for subsequent research.

Chapter 2 – What is Facebook? Theories, Substance, Histories

This chapter offers a multifaceted and theoretically informed description of Facebook. Much of the existing literature on Facebook is based on a single perspective, such as self-presentation, online communities, or privacy violations. Rather than attempting a definitive account of its emergence, this chapter's structure offers four answers to the question 'What is Facebook?' Facebook is first approached as a kind of software, and some key features of software in contemporary life will be considered to clarify this. Next, Facebook is approached as a social network manifest through networked technologies. The site is also considered as a brand that in turn promotes the branding and publicity of its user base. Finally, Facebook is considered as a source of labour and exploitation.

Each section is rooted in a particular line of scholarly work. The theoretical material presented in these works dovetails with a selective description of Facebook's key features. While this does not produce a single chronological account of Facebook's growth, four complementary accounts leave fewer theoretical and substantive blind spots. All four sections underscore key concerns for surveillance and visibility, and justify the approach described in chapter one. In addition to scholarly material this chapter draws on a series of social media weblogs (including Facebook's developer weblog) and media outlets that have chronicled Facebook's development as well as subsequent protests and concerns.

2.1 Facebook is software

Software is sociologically relevant for a number of reasons. First, it transcends hardware devices, and as such maintains a prolonged engagement with its users. Second, software is embedded in the social world, and can be said to regulate our lives. Third, software – especially social media software – is subject to ongoing revisions by its authors and in response to user feedback. This enables a rich engagement with services like Facebook and Google, but also facilitates function creep and unanticipated consequences when these services assume increasing command over our world. Software is extending its reach into social life, such that we need to consider its structuring effects. Contemporary scholars now treat software as a kind of information architecture. It shapes social encounters and possibilities, yet it easily escapes scrutiny by virtue of being backgrounded. A sociological understanding of software rests on two paradoxes.

First, software is a seemingly immaterial ‘thing’ tied to all tangible relations, yet it has material consequences. Software situates users. Users often forget that it is not only localized, but that it also regulates actual things, such as cargo that have been geotagged. Its current development marks the growth of greater social sorting (for instance, through tagging that augments rather than replacing taxonomies), the rise of knowing capitalism (Thrift 2005), as well as a “new new media ontology” (Lash 2007a). This reflects a postmodern commitment to localized contexts (Van Dijk 1999), particularly when storage and transmission capacities are only augmented by a globalizing time-space compression (Harvey 1990).

Second, software is largely thought of as non-human, yet it is increasingly woven into human relations. Software is often tied to the rise of non-human

sociality, and consequently information exchange in interpersonal relations is increasingly interfaced through software like Facebook. Therefore much of its functionality and valuation rests on perpetual and pervasive human input (Manovich 2008). Users are deemed responsible for the effects and consequences that software produces, even when these users are entirely uninvolved in the process.

Facebook's programming code facilitates information exchange between its users. Its software is what augments the visibility of its user base. As a portable – almost liquid – platform for information exchange, Facebook extends the reach of any surveillance practice. This facilitates the mobility of information. Whereas information leaks (Lyon 2001) were previously thought of as unfortunate incidents, they are a standard feature in social media. The circuits that manage social life are less visible, which contributes to the visibility of social life. Some features of these services automate the submission of personal information. This leads to concerns over causality and responsibility. When damaging information is uploaded, it is not always clear who put it online.

2.1.1 Understanding and coping with ubiquitous software

Perhaps the most central part of Facebook is its software. Facebook is associated with several material objects like laptops and mobile devices, but its software is what is most uniquely 'Facebook.' Even if it has a very negligible physical presence, the code is what enrolls hardware, users, data, and broader social consequences. A conventional view of software frames it as a programming

language that commands a specific hardware. For this reason Lessig frames code as having legislative properties in the way that it governs over social life (2006). This governing effect has been complicated with an ongoing decoupling of software from hardware. Services like Facebook, Twitter and Youtube are designed to function on a range of fixed and mobile devices. Through perpetual revisions and an increased reliance on outside programmers through open source, software is more akin to an ecosystem (Thrift 2005) rather than to a script or a machine. Not only is software dynamic, but programmers and users maintain precarious control over its functioning, especially when coping with unanticipated 'bugs' and 'crashes.'

The shift from command line to graphic user interface (GUI) allows an ease-of-use where it can become a taken-for-granted feature of everyday information exchange. With Facebook, the fact that its users focus on its output rather than on the program itself facilitates its pervasiveness. Thrift (2005) introduces the notion of the technological unconscious to describe software's overlooked presence in – and production of – contemporary society. This concept is helpful to describe the ubiquity of program code in all facets of everyday life. This overlooked presence is also exemplified in Thrift's work on electric animals, likening software to a new companion species. This denotes relations with software that are domestic, pervasive, but often overlooked. The degree of control held over software is called into question as Thrift highlights the possibility of 'feral' beings (ibid.). The sentient imagery here is especially poignant in terms of the unfolding and unanticipated consequences of technology.

Manovich stresses the importance of software in everyday life, referring to it as a “layer that permeates all areas of contemporary society” (2008: 7). For Manovich software has an extensive reach in terms of its impact on contemporary sociality. It organizes and presents information in certain ways, but this enables users to respond and develop their own practices. Manovich also talks about the performative aspect of software. It goes beyond working with fixed content, but rather “dynamic outputs of a real-time computation” (ibid.: 15). Software does not simply retrieve the file, but often compiles and creates it in real time, just in time. The rise of contextually relevant user-generated input suggests that users are increasingly involved with that construction. Because of this, performance software is in a state of ongoing construction and revision. Social media are never a finished product. This also speaks to the indeterminacy of software and producers’ reliance on its user base to shape software. Producers will make software accessible to the public, and see what features become popular with users, and by extension what kind of service the software becomes.

Recent literature on software has underscored the governing logic of the remix. Manovich states that users are able to modify not only content exchanged through software, “but also their fundamental techniques, working methods, and ways of representation and expression” (ibid.: 25). A key example is the Open Office suite of programs, where non-professionals can propose and implement changes to the functioning of the software.

Software’s prolonged engagement and function creep means that techniques used for one medium can be used for others. All kinds of user-generated content

follow the same techniques across different interfaces. Diverse kinds of personal information can easily become content, as the learning curve for users to submit information is quite small. While it has spread to a heterogeneous population, the act of using Facebook is restricted to a narrow set of actions centred on browsing and entering content. This logic is extended when activity outside Facebook is integrated as content on the site. Media are increasingly modular and mobile. These conditions enable the kinds of networking described in the following section, but also explain how software can have such a ubiquitous reach.

Software sorts and orders content based on algorithms whose criteria are opaque to most users. This is seen in Facebook, where new friends and new content are recommended as a purported convenience. These possibilities resonate with Kittler's (1996) distrust of GUI as well as his prescription to seek the 'essence' of computers. For Kittler, the increased focus on software obscures our understanding and awareness of hardware. This resonates with McLuhan's (1994) argument that the relation between content and channel, message and medium are blurred. Focus on the interface enables the invisibility of more fundamental layers, which are then taken for granted. When looking at Facebook, we can add that content provided by other users obscures software, which obscures hardware. Of course awareness quickly returns if any of these layers break down.

2.1.2 Software's material consequences

Software's importance in social life is typically understated. Graham and Marvin (2001) have extensively detailed the structuring effect of software code on

urban life. Likewise, Lash borrows from Luke (1995) to describe the structuring effect software has on connectivity and stability in cities. These effects are not direct governance, but rather a more subtle regulation of the ground-level functionality of streets, neighbourhoods, and buildings based on their access and positioning on networked transportation and information systems.

A growing body of academic literature considers software's impact through social media. Beer (2009a) considers the consequences of software's increasing sorting of social life through Web 2.0, or participatory web cultures. To do this he builds on Scott Lash's new new media ontology, where software increasingly constitutes our lives rather than just mediating it (Burrows 2009). This suggests a blurring between epistemology and ontology. That is, modes of knowing are also modes of being. Facebook stores, searches, and displays information (epistemology), but people experience and describe themselves as being on the site (ontology). This mode of being goes beyond an on/off binary where you remove yourself at will. Indeed, this is an increasingly remote possibility. Rather, users always maintain a presence through software. Software is a way to mediate, or provide a linkage between two 'real' social spheres. The risks here include miscommunication (the right meaning being lost in the pipeline), or being too caught up with the medium (never meeting the people to whom you speak, identifying with spaces that are not actual spaces).

Yet contemporary software goes beyond mere mediation: it is no longer an in-between transfer point. Software is more intimately involved in the 'making up' (Hacking 2002) of lives. Software now refers to ubiquitous flows of information that

are difficult to escape. Their deep presence in social life links them to the classificatory power (ibid; Bowker and Star 1999) that directs our lives. This is a post-hegemonic power that, rather than manifest from above, is immanent and embedded in content. Beer (2009a) uses the example of metadata, or tags. Here, power guides content through its sorting and distribution of personal information.

For Lash (2007b) an increasing reliance on software is tied to the emergence of new rules. But whereas rules for social life have typically been constitutive (determining who is entitled to play) and regulative (determining how the game will unfold), these rules are algorithmic, or generative. The shift to generative rules implies a shift from normative power to a power based on fact. These rules, Lash argues, become the pathways through which capitalist power operates (ibid.). Lash (2006), responding to Paul Taylor's review (2006) of *Critique of Information*, emphasizes a dialectics of information, passing from concrete to abstract, ontology to epistemology. Lash also describes top-down searching taxonomies as displaced by Web 2.0 folksonomies. Yet it is too early to assess what will happen to conventional kinds of classification with the rise of user-led tagging and sorting. A more likely outcome is that the latter will augment the former by infusing categories with contextual relevance. Conventional categories will be more dynamic and responsive to popular input. However, we have no reason to believe that these categories will be any less rigid when it comes to sorting individuals. For this reason Galloway and Thacker (2007) suggest that software obscures new kinds of control, sorting, and organizing and for this reason endorse the study of protocols embedded in software.

2.1.3 Software's human consequences

Software partially obviates the need for human agency. Relational databases in particular (Gane et al. 2007) contribute to the visibility of the social life. Social media underscore these features. Facebook is profoundly about human affairs: people relating to other people who matter to them. Yet most of the interpersonal legwork is subsumed by software. Software is becoming more social, in the sense that it now regulates relationships based on the pervasive submission of personal information.

Steven Graham (2004) refers to the ability of algorithms to sort and stratify people, for example in order to offer them different kinds of services. Facebook's increased presence in users' biographies means it will feature more prominently in the allocation of life chances. Following Manovich: "The new paradigms that emerge in the 2000s are not about new types of media software per se. Instead, they have to do with the exponential expansion of the number of people who now use it – and the web as a new universal platform for non-professional media circulation" (2008: 191). What is remarkable about social media like Facebook is not their functionality, but their user base. The rapid growth of the number of social media users leads to a more granular and situated kind of governance. These users routinely provide information about themselves and their surroundings. This presents a contradiction: this authorship is manifest as a kind of empowerment, but also as exploitation and much worse. This comes up in further detail in the discussion on labour below, but goes beyond labour in that it seems like an opening up of

possibilities (anything can be classified by anybody), but is actually a foreclosure of possibilities (everything is named, and this production of knowledge does not need to be permanent to have permanent consequences).

Humans matter less by offloading the management of social life onto software, but they are still subject to the consequences of this management. Further, old power based on conventional forms of capital is not displaced by ubiquitous software. While classificatory power often operates independently of human intervention, this makes identifying the watchers and watched who are backgrounded by this automation all the more important. In terms of watchers, venture capitalists, software developers, marketers, security agents and many others benefit from social media by exerting control over information flows when deemed necessary or beneficial.

2.1.4 Key features

As a flagship of social software, Facebook is a key example of interpersonal sorting in that it allows users to search, author and otherwise manage their social networks. As such it is indicative of a greater social sorting in social media. Consider this list of some of its key features for navigating through personal information.

Facebook's search feature first emerged to locate users by name. It has since expanded to locate virtually any text-based content on the site. Searching is used primarily to locate other users who have not been added to a friend network. In practice this facilitates online connectivity by making users searchable by name or email address. It is also possible to locate users based on identifiable features such

as schools they attended, movies they enjoy, favourite activities and interests. It is also possible to locate people who are only known based on these criteria, as well as to look for strangers who fit these criteria. Searching is not used simply for navigating outside one's friendship network. The search bar has an auto-complete feature that suggests a user's friends. This facilitates locating friends, a tedious act when a user has hundreds of contacts. Other text-based content – including pages, groups, events, applications, and postings by friends and strangers – are searchable. Searching thus enables multiple points of entry to content on Facebook. Users can be located by who they are, as well as through what they say. Hundreds of millions of users are thus rendered accessible through search algorithms. Users can restrict this access either by changing their name or by electing to be unsearchable in Facebook's privacy controls.

Feeds organize information for public display. User activity is translated into brief news items that are broadcast on prominent locations for the purpose of distributing that information. Much like searching, this is an example of software-enabled visibility. Yet it surpasses searching in that it automates the flow of personal information between users and their friends. This feature was introduced as news feeds and mini feeds in September 2006. Users' activities would be displayed on their own profile's mini feed, and on their friends' news feeds. The news feed became the welcome page for users, meaning that users would know what their friends were doing when they would first log on, and vice versa. This caused some discomfort and protest, and Facebook implemented privacy settings

allowing users to withdraw from this feature. Since then it has been adopted as a standard feature for gathering information.

News feeds have been bifurcated into two features: top news and most recent. Top news sorts information according to popularity whereas most recent sorts news items chronologically. These features are prime examples of Lash's (2002) observation that information is increasingly pushed to the user, that it finds the user rather than vice versa. Facebook's software augments the ability for users to find out about each other through searches, but offers the feeds as a counterpoint that initiates scrutiny and visibility. Feeds make order out of complexity, with the effect of sorting interpersonal sociality. A complex set of information dispersed on different profiles becomes a linear set of events that welcomes users. This also automates 'stalking' on Facebook, as users are by default made visible to their peers when Facebook pushes their information to each other's news feeds. In 2008 Facebook merged the mini feed with the wall. Walls will be discussed later, but suffice to say that this merger directs attention, and subsequent conversation to one key location on the profile.

Third party applications greatly complicate the question 'what does Facebook do?' In its early days Facebook was used to facilitate a contextually specific kind of sociality. Much of this new software – especially social games – lacks any apparent social function, other than collecting user information. In May 2007 Facebook released its Application Programming Interface (API), allowing software developers to build their own applications within the Facebook platform. There are now over five hundred thousand additional applications for Facebook. While online

games are very popular, other applications allow users to submit or solicit additional information about themselves. By enlisting external developers, Facebook opens up its software to unanticipated growth. A software studies perspective frames Facebook as a broad set of services that further automates the visibility of personal information.

2.2 Facebook is a network

Facebook is perpetually revised communication software. Yet its information exchange relies on a vast range of networked hardware. In doing so it also connects individuals to each other, although describing and qualifying these ties is not as obvious. Attempts to qualify friendship ties on Facebook have perplexed scholars as well as users. Other questions emerge in terms of the social morphology made possible through Facebook: What kinds of capital are circulating in Facebook? Does Facebook replace or augment face-to-face connections for users? The network is a polymorphous concept upon which the social sciences increasingly rely. As a web-based service, Facebook users author information about their social networks through networked technology.

Networks, especially decentralized and distributed ones, are often described as complex structures (Urry 2003). Yet networks are also sites of monolithic force, both as bottom-up manifestations of protest and top-down censure or denial of service. Networks – whether they are large groups of individuals or internet architecture – are both pliable and heavily structuring. Facebook is an ICT-managed manifestation of social ties, and these ties structure social morphology. Not only are

user impressions of social networks like Facebook entirely based on the composition of their personal social network, but these networks also contribute to the overall composition of the site in its entirety.

The network is also an increasingly salient diagram for Surveillance Studies. Distributed connections matter more, and are manifest through domestic technology, the popularization of surveillance culture, and individual motivations. But centralized and privileged optics are still feature prominently in networks, and thus retain their sociological relevance. In using social media like Facebook, the interface's focus on peer-to-peer communication means that decentralized nodes are foregrounded, while any awareness of a central hub is typically obscured.

Networking literature extends from earlier sociological material on social ties and social structure, including Simmel's (1955) work on group affiliations and Tonnies' (2002) work on greater social transformations. Key sociological literature on networks can be arranged along three perspectives. The first perspective addresses the co-existence of technological networks and egocentric social networks. This offers foundational insight about the uptake of networked information and transportation technologies in everyday life, and how social networks have been shaped in late modernity. The second set of literature further scrutinizes macro-level consequences of information technology in late modernity, using the network as a key social morphology. Here, the contours of a network society are explored in terms of economic activity, state autonomy, and emergent forms of sovereignty. The third set of readings extends from the second by considering some of the micro-level dynamics of these social shifts. Here, network

sociality is seen as emanating from the workplace, transforming the workplace, and blurring the boundary between labour and leisure.

2.2.1 Technological and egocentric networks

The first set of readings centres heavily on Barry Wellman's longstanding work on social network analysis (SNA), which he describes as "neither a method nor a metaphor, but a fundamental intellectual tool for the study of social structures." (1988: 4) Social structure is quite simply described in terms of nodes (social system members) and ties depicting their interconnections. Because of limitations in 'knowing' social networks, this perspective rests heavily on egocentric – or personal – networks (ibid. 27). Concerns of spatiality and culture are managed by having tangible units as the composition of social life. As Wellman states: "We look for the social essence of community in neither locality nor solidarity, but in the ways in which networks of informal relations fit personas and households into social structures" (ibid. 131). All of this resonates with a user-centred engagement with Facebook. The idea of a personal network of friends presumes that the individual user is located as a central node. The individual – not any kind of cohesive networked community – is the point of departure when logging on Facebook. Social network analysis posits that sociality – including social problems – tend to manifest through networks, according them a key ontological quality. Networks are framed as a kind of sociological canvas (ibid.: 175-176) in that clusters of social ties are treated as a locus of social activity.

This tradition also states that social ties are augmented by emergent technologies. This is a remedy to earlier perspectives that position technology as a radical altering or displacement of social relations. Rather, Wellman and others describe more of a symbiotic relation between network technology and personal networks, with some types of capital (social, fiscal, technical) augmenting others. This literature is helpful for positioning technological networks vis-à-vis social networks. They are not pitted against each other, but rather technology augments and occasionally dampens interpersonal relations.

Information technologies complement – rather than replace – face-to-face exchanges. Along with automobiles they privatize network relationships. Here, privatize refers to the creation of interiorities or enclosures for information exchange, as opposed to public spaces like village squares. This shift offers insight regarding the role of information and transportation technology. It is not just a matter of closing distance gaps, but also offering refuge from public scrutiny. Technology has long been used to create enclosures. The current task for scholarly research is to assess who else beyond immediate users are involved in the construction of these enclosures, as well as the terms under which they are maintained.

The SNA tradition sees the popularization of the internet as furthering the transition from house-to-house sociality to person-to-person sociality (Boase et al. 2006). This is described as the rise of networked individualism, where users' social reach is vastly extended. Networked individualism suggests that no single community sufficiently contains contemporary sociality. Rather, individuals draw

from multiple groups for capital. This speaks to the kind of diversification valued in career literature on 'networking': having many ties in heterogeneous networks means greater social capital.

Scholarly work on social networks describes key structures, with a distinction between densely knit and ramified networks. Whereas densely knit networks contain nodes that are all closely tied to one another, ramified networks are more diffuse, with fewer ties maintaining cohesion within the network. The idea of a 'glocalized' network (Wellman 2004) complicates this binary. A globalized personal network can include a cluster of local ties as well as distant ones, or strong and weak ties. From a viral perspective (Boase and Wellman 2001), clusters of strong ties are where dense and rapid communication can occur, whereas weaker ties allow communication to new clusters. Globalized networks are conceptually difficult, but empirically vindicated. Within Facebook, a personal contact list may include a cluster of close friends in addition to people who are either geographically or otherwise socially distanced.

2.2.2. Macro-level consequences

Wellman's work on social networks is helpful for fusing technology and sociality, specifically using an egocentric perspective. This offers guidance about how communities are complicated and sociality is augmented through social networking sites. But what about broader sociological changes? For more macro-level concerns, we may turn to scholars like Manuel Castells and Darin Barney, who operate from the premise that networks are a key social morphology. Sociologists

increasingly frame state and economic relations in terms of networks. This is tied to a paradigmatic shift from industrial to informational economies. Again, the term network does refer to information technology, but the scope and reach of institutions as well as inter-institutional relations are understood as a product of nodes and ties. With nodes and ties as the building blocks for network relations, they enable social exchanges, which are described in this literature as flows. The flow is a fairly amorphous concept, referring to the circulation of information, capital, and people.

A macro-level networked sociality had a profound impact on spatial and temporal relations. Castells refers to the space of flows to describe the linking of vast locations through information and transportation networks. This is often experienced as an eradication of distance, such that otherwise distant urban nodes are closely linked through features including frequent and inexpensive air travel, satellite offices for large corporations, and dense fibre optic infrastructures. As a result, cosmopolitan areas resemble each other more than their immediate surroundings. Likewise, other spaces – whether suburban neighbourhoods or shantytowns – are increasingly similar. An increased reliance on transportation networks means that being ‘in-between’ spaces is a common experience. While this has initially been described in terms of disconnectedness and a negligible sense of spatiality – the continued domestication of mobile communication and GPS technology suggest a reversal of this experience. Timeless time emerges as a mutation of biological and mechanical time. This involves both the compression and de-sequencing of time, with events like production and consumption cycles being a

lot faster and often disjointed. The advent of new technological affordances is coupled with new expectations, most importantly of labourers by corporations producing goods, services, and content.

When abstracted, the conditions described above contain a vaguely generic 'revolutionary' character, such that any actor or interest group could benefit from an increasingly networked world. Yet in practice the information society is heavily linked to late capitalist development (Castells 1996). Though consumers and activists groups use ubiquitous and networked ICTs, telecommunication companies as well as other sectors of the information economy are increasingly free of regulatory constraint. In addition to its heavy rooting in military history, contemporary ICTs are also linked to the "circulatory system of economic processes" (Barney 2004: 73). Castells notes that corporate entities are less constrained by nation states in the network society. Connections between regional offices may flow regardless of government interventions, while state actors experience an upset in terms of their sovereignty.

2.2.3. Micro-level consequences

Authors like Felix Stalder and Andreas Wittel also describe the consequences of the above shifts. Stalder (2006) describes how network sociality is spreading from key workplaces in the information sector to workplaces more generally. The flow of social capital tied to corporate, 'old-boy' spaces like the golf course and cigar lounge have gone mainstream, with management and creative classes now expected to attend networking events after work hours. These often mark a hybridization of

social and corporate intentions, and mark a furthered attempt to harness social ties for employment and workplace opportunities (Grannovetter 1974)

Wittel in particular counters heavily pessimistic accounts of the network society with a rich description of contemporary workplace conditions, which are said to extend to everyday sociality. In response to the work of authors like Richard Sennett who lament the loss of long-term enduring ties (in Wittel 2001), Wittel suggests that the microdynamics of networking need to be more carefully studied before drawing this conclusion. Indeed, concepts like hierarchy and power also require further inquiry in response to Sennett's claim that the network society is largely the domain of a minute elite. In response to Knorr-Cetina's claims that modernization is tied to a kind of de-socialization, Wittel states that this does not necessarily result in "a retraction of social principles and structures" (2001: 64). Wittel also claims that this perception is tied to a shift from closed to open social systems, where boundaries and identity may not be as apparent.

In describing network sociality, Wittel offers five features that underscore micro-level experiences that stem from the workplace to everyday social life. The first feature is the continued push towards individualization. This refers to an absence of any shared narrative. Much like ubiquitous computing's shift towards many computers per person, this suggests a transition from one narrative for many towards many narratives per individual. While this has prominently been described in terms of a loss of social bonds (Putnam 2001), Wittel remarks that individualization demands a heightened concern with relations with others. For instance, nomadic work patterns oblige a more deliberate maintenance of network

ties among labourers. Second, Wittel claims that social ties are increasingly ephemeral as well as intense. This is evidenced in work projects where strangers are partnered for eighteen hour shifts, as well as speed-dating and other in person social networking events where protocol leads to intense, three minute conversations. This comes off as a kind of strategy to extract the most value/capital from as many network ties as possible.

Third, Wittel describes a shift from narrative to information. This refers to a loss of trust based on mutual fatedness, leading instead to what Giddens (1994) calls 'active trust.' Information also denotes a kind of social literacy, which is also crucial to balancing risk and trust. Fourth, the assimilation of play and work suggests elements of play are creeping into the workplace. This is tied to the rise of creative/information economies. This is often celebrated in terms of foosball tables and beanbag chairs in corporate offices, but is also tied to the further expansion of work: long work hours during peak seasons, and the expectation of being 'always-on' through wireless technology. The blurring between work and play is also tied to the complication of other binaries, such that private ties and spaces are now subject to public (corporate) scrutiny, and peers are increasingly thought of as business colleagues. Finally, Wittel cites the rapid proliferation of technology as an expansion of face-to-face sociality. He highlights the spread of database technologies used to manage social relations as especially important. The business card is used as an example of a predecessor soon facing obsolescence. In terms of future explorations, Wittel cites the furthered complication of the private-public dichotomy, notably in terms of managing strangers within expanded social networks. He also points to the

exchange and circulation of capital within networks. The conversion of one kind of capital into another is especially salient. These two topics will be picked up respectively in the following two sections of this chapter.

These changes suggest an ongoing expansion of networks that mark a furthered coupling of social ties and information technologies. The degree of networked information exchange made possible by this deployment in turn facilitate information flows and structures based on complexity and decentralization, while concurrently augmenting the capacity of surveillance regimes (Lyon 1994: 41). The above developments suggest social structures where nodes/actors operate free from hierarchical constraint. This is most obviously evidenced by the rise of open-source software and web-based services that promote the autonomy and creative capacity of its user base. Yet Galloway and Thacker (2007) observe that these systems are able to house decentralized activity because of protocol that guide and regulate network sociality. These protocols are often obscured and taken-for-granted, thus allowing the co-existence of social control on networks that are shaped by discourses of freedom and open access.

With the expansion of ubiquitous ICTs and networking, Saskia Sassen (2002) states that we need to revise our understanding of digital divide. Access to information networks is less of an issue, as individuals are frequently encouraged to join telecommunication networks. The issue today is bandwidth: "Public space and free content have always required access to specific conditions, even if elementary. What looms ahead is a sharpening division between a slow-moving space for those who lack the resources and a fast-moving space (quick connections, enormous

bandwidth for those who can pay for it)” (2002: 109). Whereas exclusion from information networks was an earlier concern, Sassen points to a potentially worse situation where less privileged users are tied to socio-informational networks, but lack sufficient resources to manoeuvre and exploit these networks. Here, technological capital has a direct impact on social capital, as a disadvantaged position in networks has a direct impact on the allocation of life chances.

2.2.4 Key features

Upon joining Facebook, users are invited to affiliate themselves with specific networks. Although these were first mapped along the academic institutions, its expansion has led to regional and workplace networks. Users were initially presented with a network ‘front page’ that offered basic facts and figures about the networks they joined, but these were eventually removed. These networks determine flows of information. According to default privacy settings, users will be able to access other network members’ information, and have their own personal information accessible to others in their network. Communication within networks is limited in the sense that a user cannot simply send a message to all members of the Toronto regional network. Regional, workplace, and academic networks are a preliminary way of organizing users into clusters, and according each other with varying degrees of access and visibility.

Following Wellman, egocentric networks are a more salient way of understanding how users experience Facebook. Facebook instructs users to make connections with other users, and to think of the accumulation of these connections

as a personal network. Friends do not need to belong to the same institutional or regional networks. Again, following default settings, Facebook friends will be mutually transparent to each other. In its early days Facebook invited friends to qualify how they knew each other through a series of drop-down menus. This feature has since been removed, and the information it contained is no longer accessible by users. This suggests a simplification of ties, with diverse social relations being collapsed into a single category: the friend. Other than privacy settings regulating flow and access, a friendship is a friendship for Facebook. Facebook does enable users to sort their friends into groups, though this is more for the sake of access and privacy as opposed to qualifying how they knew each other.

Friend networks are diagrams where information about connected users can flow to one another. Facebook's privileging of sheer connectivity over the clarification of specific ties suggests that its founders have an interest in having as much information accessible to as many people as possible. This follows Galloway's description of open, decentralized networks where censure and control can still be exerted. These networks also hold a fundamental epistemological and ontological quality in the sense that knowledge of Facebook as well as a user's experience within and without it are directly shaped by the composition of her ego-network as well as other network affiliations. The friends that a user adds on Facebook determine the kind of content she receives and produces. This perspective also sheds some light on our understanding of the term 'friend' in Facebook. Here, the friend is not an actual friend but instead resembles a generic node. The Facebook friend is not an empty signifier, but rather is a base unit, or currency. Indeed, users

speak of accumulating friends as well managing friends as different entities with different risks.

Facebook enables other kinds of networked connectivity beyond affiliate and personal networks. Users can also join groups and communicate with strangers. Groups can be formed on any conceivable basis: pet peeves, political causes, fan clubs, etc... While many users do not engage with groups beyond joining them – and making that membership visible on their profile – groups do represent a clustering of strangers based on a particular interest or cause. Conversations and other exchanges do take place on group pages, and users will make themselves visible to each other either intentionally by adding them as a friend, or unintentionally by sending them a direct message. Facebook has also introduced fan pages, which follow a similar structure. The main difference between fan pages and groups is that fan pages have users take a more audience-like engagement with the page, and also offer the creator of the page with statistics about its user base. Facebook has recently changed its profile structure such that activities, interests, workplaces, schools, and cities that users list will be linked to related fan pages. Facebook events have a similar membership structure as groups and fan pages, although being affiliated with an event ostensibly means being linked to a social event situated at a particular time and location.

The above are examples of structures and spaces within Facebook that contain a networked quality. Yet content on the site is also networked in the sense that tags and other hyperlinked content connect related content to each other. This has the effect of producing a network of content, and has important repercussions

for the visualization of data and social life that will be discussed in the opening of the methods chapter. The act of describing content also has a networked and collaborative quality: one user may tag a second in a photo that a third person uploaded to a fourth user's wall, to which a fifth and sixth user may add commentary. Offering content about yourself or others is often a group endeavour that visibly links users to that content.

On a broader scale, Facebook's API has a networked quality. Programmers otherwise unaffiliated with the site are encouraged to produce content for the service that will then be linked to it. Much like a user's friend network will shape their experience and understanding of the site, the cluster of applications they add to their account will also shape how the activities they engage in on the site, and consequently the kind of user they are. Third party applications also shape Facebook's organizational structure into more of a network. The site benefits from new services stemming from decentralized control, yet still retains ownership over the network, and can deny access to applications that do not meet their criteria.

2.3 Facebook is a device for publicity

Facebook is software, and it is the coexistence of different kinds of networks. But Facebook is also a device for branding and visibility, as well as a brand itself. The relation between its status as a brand and the branding services it offers speaks to the kind of visibility it advances. Facebook wants to be known as the predominant location for networked sociality. In doing so it needs to render user social life visible. Its own visibility rests on the visibility of its user base. The way Facebook

promotes social visibility influences how social life and personal identities are manifest online. The logic of the brand extends to the individual, as Facebook is inseparable from interpersonal content. Facebook seeks recognition through the primacy of profiles, which shapes social presentation.

Facebook serves to publicize personal information, while seeming to offer users control over access. As a site for multiple agendas, desires, and values, Facebook pits privacy against public representation. By soliciting personal information, it promotes visibility by pushing as much information as possible to as many audiences as possible. It appears to offer privacy, but only insofar as this will promote its brand as a safe social space. Indeed, these developments occur along claims by its founder that privacy concerns are “overblown” (Allen 2010).

Several sets of literature illustrate how Facebook brands and publicizes social life. First, key works on contemporary branding strategies describe how corporate identities circulate and gain visibility through information networks. Second, an emerging set of works on personal branding describes how these strategies are spilling from corporate to individual identities, notably through the popularity of online profiles. A third set of readings considers how the ensuing personal visibility pits publicity against privacy, pushing digital media users to reconsider goals and risks associated with online services like Facebook.

2.3.1 Facebook as a brand

Before accumulating a half-billion users, Facebook was a struggling startup alongside many competing services. Its success rested on the visibility and

prominence it garnered. It sought to be a default location for social contacts, social images, social news, and social events. When looking at Facebook and similar services, shifting over time and spreading to new devices, its recognisability as a branded service seems crucial. The changes and revisions it has undergone risk alienating its user base. In order to maintain its prominence, brands are an increasingly important component to social media as well as to capitalism, commoditisation, and symbolic exchange. The brand as an identity is decoupled from any tangible commodity and follows trans-media trajectories, not unlike how social media operate on numerous hardware devices.

Celia Lury invites scholars to treat the brand as an object, specifically as an interface that regulates the interactivity between product and users (2004). Brands may be immaterial, but they also direct feeling and action. Their dependence on consumer input suggests an open-source interface, not unlike open-source software. Further, the brand's near-immateriality resonates with Facebook's near-immaterial information exchange, reliant on near-immaterial labour. This is true when thinking about conventional brands like Nike, Coca-Cola. It becomes all the more explicit when considering a product that collects and distributes information. The Facebook brand is about little else but this interactivity. It is helpful to think of Facebook as a meta-brand: a platform for promotion, which itself is heavily promoted. It is a platform that focuses on other people's publicity, with the implication that their publicity cannot proceed without buying in to Facebook.

Lury treats the brand as a "key locus for the reconfiguration of contemporary processes of production" (2004: 17). Brand activity is centred on generating

information about consumers to configure production. This is especially relevant when describing a company like Facebook that serves to generate information about its users. Marketing is insinuated in social media. This resonates with bringing new services under Facebook enclosure (ibid.: 8) including consumer profiling (Elmer 2004). More recently, Lury and Scott Lash looked at the contemporary culture industry, placing an emphasis on the flow of cultural products (2007). For Lash and Lury culture is heavily entrenched in manufacturing (the thingification of media), and vice versa (the mediation of things). In taking this approach to the study of Facebook, it seems that it is a venue for the circulation of cultural objects, and it is itself a cultural object that circulates. A surveillance-based approach would typically take the first approach, focusing on the personal information (which is infused and embedded with cultural objects) flowing through. Yet it can also focus on the surveillant device itself, which is assembled from so many components/applications that are often cultural objects in new forms, such as trivia programs by *The Washington Post* that ask users to submit political views.

Branded cultural products are tied to everyday sociality and information exchange between peers. Lash and Lury talk of “little presents” (ibid.: 139) that are exchanges between individuals that serve to punctuate everyday life. The most conventional exchange might be the kinds of cultural products that one cannot justify purchasing for themselves. These exchanges are not only ubiquitous, but also obsequious in that they are a kind of deference that maintains social connections. With Facebook, this relates to gift icons that users are invited to purchase for each other, although this can also be extended to the broader range of informational

exchange between users. Users are pressured to give little presents by filling out surveys, responding to wall posts, or playing a third party application in order to maintain their standing in the network, as well as maintain the network itself. The bulk of lateral surveillant relations, an internalized coupling of watcher and watched, is based on this kind of exchange.

The above branding and marketing strategies are a response to a longstanding disconnect between design and use of cultural goods. This shift is tied to buzz words that denote benefits to the customer: democratic, interactive, responsive, and conversational. But this shift is also a way to coerce and shape consumption, to lead and direct it. The heightened concern for and scrutiny of users runs parallel to literature on ubiquitous computing. Indeed, Lury notes that a dominant brand organizes the spatial and temporal activities of a market (10). This struggle seems especially important and rewarding when the market itself is ambiguously defined and delineated.

Given the ambiguities that surround social media's purpose and domain, branding these services is an effective way to confer meaning upon them. Facebook deliberately seeks recognition as the key brand for a service its user base is only coming to recognize, and find the appropriate terms to describe (social networking? social utility? information brokerage?). This effort is necessary and bound to collecting users' personal information on a vast scale.

2.3.2 Facebook as branding individuals

Corporate brands are adopting new strategies because of a perceived loss of consumer trust. Facebook's growth and new features for information exchange were met with user resistance, thus pushing the web service to augment their public relations efforts through effective branding. During the news feed scandal in 2006, Mark Zuckerberg described Facebook as being “about real connections to actual friends, so the stories coming in are of interest to the people receiving them, since they are significant to the person creating them” (Zuckerberg 2006). Thus, Facebook’s founder is shaping its brand in a way that channels users’ desires to see and be seen into the site itself.

The above example describes the precarious relations of trust between corporations and populations. Yet individuals are also struggling with these issues on an interpersonal scale. This becomes an important development in light of the apparent loss of trust through increasingly mediated communication, leading to the desire for a new kind of mediated verification (Lyon 2001; Ball 2002). A contemporary lack or loss of trust triggers a heightened need for verification, and new kinds of public relations.

Face-to-face sociality is complicated by interfaces, most notably the personal profile. But profiles are increasingly built to establish some degree of mediated recognition and trust. Key features do this explicitly, including eBay's feedback, LinkedIn's references, Friendster's testimonials, and Facebook's friends in common. Yet the general idea of a profile is also an attempt to produce trust through visibility. Mariann Hardey (2008) notes that personal profile construction involves an increasingly complex set of socio-technical procedures. This is exemplified by recent

concern over protocols for appropriate conduct on online dating sites. Users build profiles with specific intentions in mind, often negotiating deceit, be it theirs or a potential mate's. Jagger (2005) likens online dating to self-marketing, where undesirable attributes may be smoothed out or obfuscated through deliberate self-presentation. While computer-mediated-courtship is a very specific example, trust and authenticity have a generic presence on most online services.

Following boyd and Heer (2006), social networking sites are ultimately about self-presentation. They describe the profile as a body of information that stands in for the corporeal body. Hearn (2008) reports that through profiles the logic of brands extends to personal identities. The comparison seems apt given the fact that both individuals and corporate brands manage their identities through web-based technologies. Yet this has important repercussions for attributes and boundaries of individual identities. Not only does collapsing individual identities and brands raise a gamut of psychological and existential issues, but the increased branding of personal identities leads to heightened relations between these and corporate brands. On the one hand, individuals are invited to build their profiles using brands, logos, and other corporate content as building blocks. Facebook's activities and interests fields are a clear example of this. Content in these fields link individual identities to branded products and services, bringing the latter to life through the faces and names of their enthusiasts. The quasi-corporate branding of individuals impacts corporations. As profiles and interfaces are embedded in domestic spaces, the types of knowledge accrued grow in depth and in their level of abstractness. In particular, researchers have noted that pervasive social networking

interfaces allow them to make new inferences about cultures, or at least taste patterns (Beer and Burrows 2007). This suggests a symbiotic relation between personal and corporate branding, where the former aligns itself with the later and the later has a heightened ability to know and sort the former.

Building profiles, whether corporate or interpersonal, is a key feature of a contemporary information economy. Lury situates the profile as the intersection of visualizing data and portraiture (2004). Profiles are used to know more about consumers. Facebook's advertising scheme is a testament to this. But profiling visible individuals is a growing process, and it seems an initial sense of comfort with information collection will lead to a more pervasive set of profiling consequences.

Social media users have sound and well-grounded reasons to use these services, and they experience rewards of an intrinsic and extrinsic nature. Yet the growth of these services also reflects a desire in contemporary culture to invoke speech in individuals. Baudrillard (1995) describes the growth of interactive technologies as a recent strategy to harness masses, noting "the interactive mass is still a mass, with all the characteristics of a mass, simply reflecting itself on both sides of the screen" (ibid.: 101). While self-expression is foregrounded and highly lauded in this cultural zeitgeist, some have speculated the increasing value that will come at the expense of "the right to say nothing" (Deleuze 1995: 129). The rising popularity of services like Facebook suggests that online visibility is more of a requirement than a guilty pleasure, and an absence from these platforms is a potential liability.

2.3.3 Facebook publicity as complicating privacy

Facebook invites users to build public profiles using personal information. The advent of this and other web-based services for sharing this information, coupled with mobile and ubiquitously present technology has profound repercussions for values like privacy as well as publicity. This has been largely explored in the introductory chapter, but bears reviewing in light of the above material.

Publicity and privacy are often treated as a kind of zero-sum game, such that a privacy violation is a direct outcome of a public disclosure. boyd (2008) considers the impact of features like the news feed for privacy and exposure. She observes that while users may be comfortable posting this information in a specific location online, the fact that the news feed automatically broadcasts this information leads to unwanted exposure and compromised privacy. This perspective rightly identifies that users do not approach their personal information with a binary public/private framework. They may be comfortable with a modest degree of publicity offered by their personal wall, but not the exposure offered by feeds and other aggregated news services.

Yet privacy and publicity can also be thought of as two separate values that are pitted against each other. A user may value publicity as well as privacy. Indeed, both values may factor prominently in information exchange. Helen Nissenbaum's work on contextual privacy (2009) is helpful here: users may be comfortable with some kind of exposure in one context, and a separate exposure in another context, but compromising the boundary between these contexts would be experienced as a

core violation. Thus, personal information like one's medical history could be willingly offered on a public discussion group online, but this individual may insist on maintaining privacy elsewhere by withholding this information, such as on their Facebook account. This perspective asserts that a flatly totalizing and zero-sum view of privacy and publicity is insufficient. Social convergence on Facebook complicates this. If Facebook's designers want to colonize vast swaths of interpersonal sociality, they have to be able to ensure that information can be public to one audience and private to another.

Contemporary public exposure is augmented by ICTs. As cheap storage, rapid transmission and potentially indefinite retention are heavily promoted features, the exposure offered by Facebook will often bring about a visibility not anticipated or desired by its users. While public exposure and privacy have long remained sociological concerns (Goffman 1963) the spread of this technology coupled with the interface between corporate and personal branding strategies suggests that the public representation of interpersonal identities is a heightened concern, and that the path of least resistance for personal information is that of greater and greater exposure.

2.3.4 Key features

Concerns about publicity are incorporated into the way Facebook is typically used. These concerns are anchored around user profiles. Profiles are an assemblage of information related to the individual user. This typically includes biographical details, cultural taste preferences, photographs, and status updates. However,

profiles may also contain videos, lengthier text, and virtually any other kind of media. By default, both the user and their peers are able to submit information on the profile. This adds a collaborative dimension to public exposure where identity management extends beyond being responsible for the self. Facebook users and their friends can routinely build their public presence by placing content on the user's profile. But tags, which serve as a link between the individual's profile and relevant content elsewhere, also augment this presence. The profile also has an indeterminate quality, such that more content can always be added.

The relation between corporate and interpersonal branding has become more intertwined with recent changes made to the profile structure. The content from key fields on user profiles, including activities, interests, and locations are now automatically linked to fan pages. Thus, if a user lists a fast food restaurant as an activity, their profile will be linked to that restaurant's corporate fan page, and vice-versa. Not only does the user's public persona contain explicitly corporate elements, but individual fans also populate those public brands.

In order to cope with its own public scrutiny, Facebook has long promoted privacy settings. These settings purport to offer users with extensive control over where their public information may circulate. These settings are heavily granular, such that a particular section of a user's profile can be hidden from a specific user or group of users. Yet by default they leave profiles open to a broader public. Initially this public was the regional, academic, and workplace networks to which the user belonged. Yet in 2010 this default became friends of friends. If a user had three hundred friends, and each of those friends also had three hundred friends, by

following the default privacy settings their presence would be accessible to an audience of ninety thousand, most of whom would be strangers. This shift was justified by the claim that original networks were no longer relevant, giving way instead to who the user knew as well as whom those people knew. This shift endorses the view that friends of friends are a trustworthy category of stranger, deemed to be safe by a common social tie.

In 2007 Facebook made user profiles partly available via Google searches. Thus, people who were not signed in as Facebook users were granted partial access to the site. This had the effect of pushing information beyond Facebook's border. Supposedly this is done to draw people searching onto the site, which they will explore and join. As such it is an effective strategy to promote and publicize Facebook as a brand. But the privacy that was afforded to users under a walled garden model has consequently eroded.

The above efforts encapsulate Facebook's longstanding attempts to push personal information further into the public eye. These changes to its interface have occurred alongside public statements by Facebook concerning how its users supposedly perceive privacy. In 2010 Mark Zuckerberg claimed that recent changes to make even more information searchable reflected user demand, stating that "[p]eople have really gotten comfortable not only sharing more information and different kinds, but more openly and with more people. That social norm is just something that has evolved over time" (Kirkpatrick 2010). The relation between cultural values, Facebook's user base, and Facebook itself is complex, but this statement overlooks the way social media push a heavily publicized usage from

individuals. Interestingly, Zuckerberg himself has been the victim of information leaks on Facebook when changes to privacy settings pushed his own private photos into the public (Tate 2009).

2.4 Facebook is a site of labour and exploitation

Previous sections consider Facebook as software, as a network, and as a reconfiguration of publicity and visibility. Yet these perspectives overlook corporate motivation for profit and accumulation of capital through Facebook, and the further growth of a personal information economy. In no uncertain terms, Facebook's developers want to collect as much information as possible and develop as many ways to monetize that information (Oreskovic 2010). Personal information is a kind of raw material that users willingly generate. Facebook's user-base – even those who are disillusioned with social media's offerings – do not frame their engagement with the site as one of labour and exploitation. The business of Facebook speaks to a new kind of surveillance economy that resembles a high-bandwidth information brokerage. The rapid growth of Facebook and other free services – including Google's growing assemblage – warrant critical scrutiny. Of particular concern is that a clear language based on commerce and exploitation is absent from most public discourse on the topic.

Michel de Certeau's work on everyday life speaks to relation between social media owners and users. De Certeau (1988) maintains a distinction between those who own spaces, and those who dwell within them. Ownership is linked with the ability to shape and regulate spaces. While she may be nominally bound to

municipal law, the landowner who purchases a town square has dominion over what is possible and not possible in that space. She can rename it, introduce new services, and terminate less desirable or profitable ones. While she may never set foot on that quasi-public space, it is inhabited and traversed by a multitude of dwellers. The degree to which they depend on that space varies, but they are all in a precarious relation with that space. In terms of their respective arsenal of actions, de Certeau distinguishes between the owner's strategies and the dweller's tactics. The dweller is intimately familiar with the space, and can employ a number of tactics to get by: they may cut through a busy farmer's market as a shortcut, they may seek refuge in a less-visible corner, or they may set up a makeshift kiosk for an unsanctioned event. These tactics are often temporally bound and based on a ground-level knowledge of the space. Yet the owner's strategies, while potentially out-of-touch can very quickly do away with these tactics. The dwellers tactics have empirical value: they describe how the enclosure is actually used. Yet the owner's strategy ultimately determines how the enclosure is known and experienced.

Three issues are particularly salient here. Firstly, social media services emerge from a Silicon Valley culture of deregulation and capitalist expansion. This represents an ongoing expression of a 1960s west coast counterculture, couching entrepreneurship and venture capitalism as being on par with communal living and an activist ethos. This perspective currently celebrates free services and open access, and these buzz words are conveniently left unpacked. Compared to other Fortune 500 companies, the discourse surrounding their emergence gives them a special designation for growth and accumulation. Secondly, these developments are

also the latest manifestation of the information economy, specifically audience exploitation using ICTs. Targeted and prolonged engagements with an increasingly granular user base are the outcome of a knowing capitalism. Finally, the extent to which this reaches domestic everyday life has important repercussions for a rapidly growing surveillance economy. Increasingly, purchase histories, entertainment, and personal disclosure are all contained within a kind of enclosure: the database. These enclosures are presented as sites of interactivity, with the increasingly active, labouring, and visible user heralded as a sign of empowerment. The monetization of personal information within enclosures is part of a greater surveillance economy where watching and being watched are increasingly a kind of work.

2.4.1 Emergence of a Silicon Valley ethos

A lot of scholarly material looks at how key figures in computing have laid out an ideological landscape. These figures treat the computing industry as distinct from other commercial sectors, and therefore exempt from scrutiny and regulation. This is typically accomplished by treating the goods and service they manufacture as transcending current social issues. Popular and academic literature on information technologies often treats them as a kind of rupture from current political economic relations. However, the history of the internet has always been closely linked to capitalist growth (Turner 2005). The fact that information technology is always tied to a kind of revolutionary potential suggests that this is more than a consistent oversight. In looking at the popularization of technology in the past hundred years, Mosco (2004) observes a consistent claim that emergent technologies, ranging from

the telegraph to cable television, would lead to a “technological sublime” where current constraints and social problems would be rendered obsolete. As a consequence, current market regulations are seen as fetters because of this anticipated mass change. The implication is that technological determinism and technological utopianism are used as a point of leverage for new forms of capital accumulation and deregulation. The internet and new media have no shortage of such thinkers. John Perry Barlow and Bill Gates are longstanding figures, but more recent spokespeople like Tim O'Reilly, Don Tapscott and Clay Shirky extol the revolutionary virtues of social media services like Facebook.

The claims made by these thinkers merit further inquiry. Kelemen and Smith (2001) examine recurrent claims of virtual communities emerging from information technology. While a sense of community can be clearly supported by empirical research, these features are typically foregrounded, while business models and other fundamental concerns are tucked away. For all the talk about ubiquitous computing and ubiquitous connectivity, a ubiquitous capitalism is absent from the conversation. Van Dijck and Nieborg (2009) also look at recent technology manifestos as carefully shaping language. The decision to describe the impact of new technology through manifestos is a curious development, suggesting a paradigm shift that is long overdue. Beyond this, the authors also suggest a kind of discursive shaping of the new media economy, as any discussion of monetization or business models are avoided, at least in communications meant for mass audiences. They may appear when addressing the business community more specifically. For Van Dijck and Nieborg, contemporary business models, following Tapscott and

others, are heavily reliant on “mass collaboration” as well as “communal creativity” (2009: 980).

These claims present a consistent account of users as creators. Moreover, all creator-users are portrayed as operating in concert towards common good. But not all users are creators, nor are all creators interested in anything beyond mere distraction or self-involvement (Van Dijck and Nieborg 2009). Further, these manifestos point to Wikipedia as a key example, but the overwhelming majority of sites relying on user input are for-profit. A critical reading of this literature suggests that the personal information economy seeks to enrol common good and community into a low-cost business platform. These developments suggest a reconfiguration of public spaces as for-profit services. Creative work will now take place anywhere, fuelled by intrinsic motivation (Shirky 2008). The exploitative nature of this configuration is obscured by the myth of open-source operations. Industry literature describes open-source and collaborative models as a return to a kind of public commons, yet all that is being shared in most cases is the programming code, and even then ownership is in the hands of very few (Borsook 2002). This shallow version of open-source substantiates industry claims that the new media economy is fundamentally different from other sectors, and as a result does not need the same kind of regulation. This is also tied to the devaluation of authorship, as information is meant to be free to circulate. This approach has profound consequences for content producers and other members of the creative economy. The ideology of free access, coupled with increasingly easy ways to exchange information, contributes to devaluation of the creative class.

2.4.2 Emergence of cyber-capitalism

The perspective outlined above by industry leaders operates in tandem with the continued expansion of the information and information technology sector. Key features of this sector are emblematic of latest shifts and mutations in capitalism. These developments culminate to what can be called cyber-capitalism, which is rapidly expanding into the information sector. This section describes its contours in a general sense, in order to demonstrate that, contrary to the industry literature described above, the internet produces the latest manifestation or mutation (Lazarrato 2004) of capitalism. Political economic conditions are often overlooked amid hype as well as actual developments (Mosco 2004). But issues of ownership, labour and control are as important as ever.

Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) describe the transformation of work in general to be less constrained and more networked, but also less stable. Employers and employees are regarded as more promiscuous, such that rapid turnovers are increasingly common. For corporations this involves an accumulation of capital built on minimal infrastructure. Contrary to claims that an information revolution will neutralize class struggles, Nick Dyer-Witherford (1999) suggests that class antagonism continues through new technology, as seen for example through the heightened concentration of media ownership at the start of the twenty-first century.

In offering a survey of political economic literature of new media, Mosco (2009: 120) notes that many who study the emergence of new media underscore

the continuities that exist with earlier forms of capitalism. Commoditization of media and consolidation of ownership are increasingly salient issues following the 'digital revolution.' An especially troubling issue regarding the growth of cyber-capitalism is the increasing disentangling of labour from labourers. That is, a lot of new media business models rely on the extraction of value from non-paid labour. An example may include a tech support message board for a hardware company where users offer support to each other. While users may experience intrinsic rewards from this kind of participation and collaboration, their labour obviates the need for a full wage-earning support staff.

Understanding this value extraction is facilitated when using Dallas Smythe's work (1977) on audience labour as a point of departure. Audience involvement, by virtue of the value it adds to broadcast media, is regarded as a kind of labour. Even if audiences do not treat their efforts as such, it is labour in its consequences: it adds value to media, and some groups are exploiting this labour. The notion of audiences as commodities is relevant for discussions of audience labour, but also for thinking of relationships between audiences, advertisers, and media companies (Mosco 2009: 137). In the broadcast model, audiences provide their attention in exchange for a service, typically entertainment. Broadcast media sell audiences to advertisers. Audiences work by being trained by advertisers. It can be considered part of the productive cycle by virtue of the risk that it can break down. But with social media, audiences are directly involved in the production of content, and they are also sold to advertisers. The onus of activity is more heavily shifted to audience, with the need for professional/paid content producers heavily diminished.

Cote and Pybus (2007) consider this development in greater detail, referring to this as “immaterial labour 2.0.” They regard the networked subjectivity and affect offered in social media as enabling users that also produce content, with the consequence that production and consumption are increasingly conflated (though it should not be assumed that all consumers are producers, or vice versa). This discussion is also enriched by recent work on the attention economy (Davenport and Beck 2001) as well as the engagement economy (McGonigal 2008). The difference between these two suggests a shift towards an active, rather than merely attentive, user base as one from which value can be extracted. Whereas an attentive audience adds value to content watching it, an engaged audience also adds value by actively contributing to content. This shift also marks the emergence of a domestic surveillance economy, as users are willing to make part of their social life visible for a business platform.

Leisure-labour and workplace-labour may be treated as distinct categories, but they are related to each other. Terranova (2004) uses the Italian Autonomist concept of the social factory where the entirety of social life is integrated into the information economy. This is tied to a kind of disintermediation, whereby the relation between commerce and production is greatly streamlined. Immaterial labour is no longer restricted to knowledge economy. Terranova also emphasizes the fact that these developments are not a matter of capitalism infiltrating a once-pure realm, but rather that it has always been an integral element. She states: "The relative abundance of cultural/technical/affective production on the Net, then, does not exist as a free-floating post-industrial utopia but in full, mutually constituting

interaction with late capitalism" (ibid.: 84). The above is a timely reminder that the supposedly revolutionary character of digital capitalism is merely the latest incarnation of profit seeking and the exploitation of raw material – personal information in this case – and labour.

2.4.3 Reconfiguration and commodification of everyday life

The previous section outlines the continued expansion of business models based on online activity. The rise of social media in particular suggests that everyday sociality is increasingly subsumed into the information economy. Business models attempt to monetize information that would otherwise be classified as personal. That this information is collected without compensation speaks to a growing mass of unpaid labour.

Yet these developments rest on the heightened visibility of users within services, which are increasingly conceived of as surveillant enclosures. A significant subset of the information economy is based on interpersonal surveillance. This unpaid surveillance labour is two-pronged, in the sense that users are willing to both submit personal information as well as watch over other people's content. The relation between visibility and scrutiny has been explored in literature on reality television (Hill 2005). This connection extends to other forms of domestic surveillance, most notably social networking sites.

Understanding this shift at a conceptual and empirical level is greatly facilitated by Andrejevic's work on mass customization. In response to limitations with broadcast media and Fordist production, mass customization relies on users to

engage on a large scale in the development of goods and services. This is often touted as desirable for users due to a kind of interactivity, in response to the homogeneity and inflexibility of mass culture. It's also a powerful resource for market research. When writing about mobile technology, Andrejevic underscores the risk associated with social media: "places associated with leisure and domesticity can become increasingly economically productive insofar as consumers are subjected to comprehensive monitoring in exchange for the promise of customization and individuation" (2003: 132).

Individuals submit information about their consumption in order to individualize it, and by extension, themselves. This leads to a kind of visibility where users are offered a host of personal information within specific spaces, whether an online database or a reality TV set saturated with microphones and cameras. Andrejevic refers to these kinds of spaces as enclosures, in that sociality is increasingly restricted to these spaces. While the enclosure suggests a return to pre-modern sociality, the presence of surveillance technology suggests new kinds of visibility. As Andrejevic suggests: "Interactivity promises not a return to the relative lack of anonymity of village life, but rather to a state of affairs in which producers have more information about consumers than ever before, and consumers have less knowledge about and control over how this information is being used" (2007: 27).

On first pass interactivity on Facebook seems democratizing, as everyone has the potential to watch over each other. But those who manage the enclosure have a privileged view of sociality. As a result, user behaviour can be the basis of revisions to the interface/enclosure. Users may develop their own practices within an

enclosure, and this can be framed as a kind of customization, or even resistance. However, owners of the enclosure can observe and either subsume or eliminate those practices. Manovich (2008) borrows from de Certeau to indicate that user tactics become owner's strategies. This does not preclude other tactics, which are generally centred on disengagement. Yet visible discussions within the enclosure about disengagement from the enclosure can be used to keep users. As Cohen indicates:

Not only is surveillance the method by which Facebook aggregates user information for third-party use and specifically targets demographics for marketing purposes, but surveillance is the main strategy by which the company retains members and keeps them returning to the site. (...) [I]t is the unpaid labour of producer-consumers that facilitates this surveillance (2008: 8).

The increased focus on everyday life is in itself a concerning development. Poster remarks that everyday life was formerly the remainder of institutional action and scrutiny (2004). However, the rapid onset of ICT in the domestic sphere means it is increasingly subject to commoditization and scrutiny.

The extent to which business models rely on online sociality shapes the visibility and knowability of its user base. Users make active contributions to Facebook by providing biographical details that make the site compelling to other users. But this also has consequences for their presence on their site. It's not just a matter of providing content that draws other people in. They are increasingly living their lives through these services, and this has important consequences for their visibility. These developments suggest the emergence of a surveillance economy based on the flow and monetization of personal information. The term surveillance economy encompasses a lot of features, but the one relevant to this study is the

transformation of everyday life into a kind of enclosure where information can be extracted and turned into a brokered raw material.

2.4.4 Key features

Facebook is keenly aware of the market potential of the vast amount of personal information it collects. Indeed, its 2010 valuation of 35 billion dollars U.S. is likely more a factor of all this information rather than the software code. During its growth it has attempted to integrate the submission of personal information into commercial activity, and has repeatedly encountered a backlash.

In the fall of 2007 Facebook unveiled Beacon, through which users would publicize their commercial activity on other sites onto their profile. The intended purpose for Facebook was to "try to help people share information with their friends about things they do on the web" (Zuckerberg 2007). This had the effect of bringing user commerce into the Facebook enclosure, with a kind of viral marketing to follow, as this news would be sent to their personal network. Users had reservations about commercial transactions being made visible to their friends, and this feature was eventually scrapped. A similar feature was introduced in 2008 under the name Facebook Connect. Facebook's claim was that Connect "makes it easier for you to take your online identity with you all over the Web, share what you do online with your friends and stay updated on what they're doing" (Zuckerberg 2008). Connect met a similar backlash.

Integrating outside transactions into personal profiles is one of a set of strategies to make Facebook commerce-friendly. Under Facebook's 'Marketing

Solutions' as well as Facebook Ads, businesses are offered a prolonged engagement with users. Not only are they able to target a very specific audience based on information users submitted for unrelated reasons, but they are also presented with detailed feedback based on user response to this advertising. This suggests an increasingly granular and targeted kind of advertising. As well, it suggests a relation between users and advertisers based on an asymmetrical relation of visibility. Advertisers have a sophisticated knowledge of a target audience, yet that audience is virtually excluded from this endeavour.

While these features have known modest success, it stands to reason that Facebook's potential for monetization rests on a long-term investment. That is, its ability to exploit the productive labour of its user base will become apparent as its user base grows, as it is integrated into everyday sociality, and as it is increasingly treated as a de facto service for sharing personal information. This is leading to a kind of inertia (Nye 2006) whereby moving to another service will be less plausible due to traction.

2.5 Discussion

The four perspectives outlined above each offer a partial account of Facebook's functioning as a social media. All four perspectives raise sociological issues pertaining to the augmented visibility of its users. These accounts underscore the need to consider surveillance practices that are emerging through social media. Taken together, these features all point to a fifth way of framing Facebook: as an enclosure. This concept is central to the study of the continued domestication of

surveillance technologies. Andrejevic refers to the digital enclosure as "the creation of an interactive realm wherein every action, interaction, and transaction generates information about itself" (2009: 53). This definition suggests an infrastructure where personal information is produced but also made meaningful insofar as it generates more information.

Each of the above descriptions infuses some meaning regarding the kind of enclosure made possible by Facebook and other social media. A software studies perspective highlights not only its algorithmic functioning, but also its reliance on a variety of hardware devices. A social network perspective underscores the way its scope is augmented by social ties. Users are not providing information for Facebook's database; they provide this information for friends on their social networks. Moreover, these friends also provide information on their behalf. A publicity perspective underscores the status of visibility in this enclosure. While enclosures are used for corporate and other kinds of knowledge production, its inhabitants use it primarily to stay in touch with one another. A labour studies perspective underscores the fact that while users who routinely operate with the interface provide content, their efforts are part of a business model by the owners of the enclosure itself.

This is the structure that facilitates the practices described in the following chapters. Treating social media as potential or actual enclosures also provides an important balance to perspectives that treat these services as ephemeral in use and consequence. Users do submit information with immediate and localized contexts in mind; their privileging of this context and use does not diminish more long term

consequences made possible by the retention of this information. There is a disjuncture between immediate use and long-term consequences of exposure in social media enclosures. People live their lives through social media, and these enclosures are the interface in relations between individuals, businesses and institutions. The mutual augmentation described in this research is the result of the increased co-existence of these groups. Facebook as an enclosure may contain information about users, but little is known about why and how users – on behalf of themselves, institutions and businesses – have an increased presence on this site. Knowing so much about Facebook’s emergence but so little about its user’s reasons for being on the site is a gap that the following chapters will address.

Chapter 3 – Ways of Knowing Facebook: Methodologies

In response to what is already known about social media and surveillance, this chapter proposes a research strategy that addresses the shortcomings in contemporary research. This chapter considers surveillance practices and social sciences, with a focus on the recent trend of treating Facebook as a methodological tool. Not only does Facebook enable visual representations of social networks, but it also provides unprecedented insight into taste patterns and interpersonal exchanges. But despite Facebook's status as a new kind of sociological optic, this chapter criticizes attempts to know Facebook exclusively from the interface. This approach prioritizes users' digital traces over users themselves, thus producing a social science that furthers the gap between researcher and subject.

In response to these limitations, this chapter proposes a research methodology that prioritizes the contexts in which its use occurs. Most importantly, this chapter emphasizes the need for face-to-face interviews with the individuals who use the site. Describing this methodological approach provides an example of research that strikes a balance of having immanent (Lash 2002) knowledge of social networking without succumbing to the ethical and epistemological concerns associated with a full reliance of the site as a methodological tool.

While current literature using social networking sites makes significant contributions to sociology, they do so by circumventing users and making their data visible, making this data stand in on users' behalf. In contrast, my research places users in the foreground. That which is not visible on the interface itself is instead the focal point: user motivations, perceptions, and a wider range of behaviour and

activity. Moreover, a face-to-face approach allows for a more explicit relationship between these features. The mutual augmentation between different types of users is visible when studying the broader context in which Facebook is used. This approach contributes to Surveillance Studies by not only producing a rich description of practices surrounding social media, but also by producing a counterpoint to the recent trend of focusing exclusively on social networking data.

3.1 Background: Using Facebook as data source

A growing body of scholarship suggests that Facebook is an increasingly relevant topic of academic inquiry (Beer and Burrows 2007; Hogan 2008). Its rapid growth has implications for the social sciences and humanities, legal studies, and policy studies, among other disciplines. Yet in addition to being a topic for inquiry, Facebook already has a significant legacy as a device for scholarly research. That is, Facebook and other social media services are increasingly used as a source of research data. This was inevitable, given the vast amounts of personal information that sites like Facebook collect and host. Yet this development raises significant ethical and methodological issues to be addressed in order to assess this trend appropriately and to temper the push toward turning personal information on social media into research data. Moreover, this is only the latest manifestation of the surveillance practices in the social sciences. This is often – perhaps conveniently – overlooked: the social sciences rely on the visibility of their target population. Empirical sociology has long rested on data collection from its subjects.

Scholarship on the methodological possibilities of social media is tied to the social network analysis tradition. As discussed in the previous chapter, this perspective uses networks as a metaphor to explain social life. Data visualization and analysis of actual network data has been a growing feature of this approach. A key challenge with this research is the difficulty of obtaining usable network data (Hogan 2007). In addition, getting respondents to describe their social ties can be fraught with error, as respondents may not be able to report the full extent of their social ties. The growth of domesticated online reproductions of social networks has been an invaluable asset to social network analysis in particular, as well as sociological research more broadly.

Facebook initially drew academic attention as a rich description of university populations. A lot of early scholarship involving Facebook used it as a window into undergraduate sociality (Ellison et al 2006; Hewitt and Forte 2006). This focus follows a legacy of using students as a sample base in the social and behavioural sciences. As Facebook is wildly popular and spreading throughout an increasingly diffuse population, it is an increasingly de facto choice as a window into contemporary sociality.

Some other features need to be considered to contextualize this shift. Savage and Burrows (2007) report that the social sciences are in trouble. In an age of knowing capitalism, marketers and others are surpassing academics in their use of the tools and techniques once championed by the social sciences. As these groups are unencumbered by ethics and other academic burdens, this development calls into question the role and value that sociologists can claim, as they are increasingly

unable to match the scale of research performed by non-academic agents. In light of these concerns Savage and Burrows call for a 'politics of method' where these techniques are reappraised "not simply as particular techniques, but as themselves an intrinsic feature of contemporary capitalist organization" (2007: 895).

To be sure, social media contain potential for social scientists. Beer and Burrows (2007) assert that social networks can be used to assess taste patterns, and provide insight for the study of the dissemination of culture as well as a better optic for knowing social structure. Social media are part of a growing assemblage of domestic technology that gathers information on consumer behaviour and everyday life. This is 'knowing capitalism' in its clearest manifestation, and marketers and advertisers are the early adopters. Beyond corporations, computer engineers are demonstrating the sociological potential of the data found on Facebook (Thelwall 2010). It would be negligent for academics not to shift their attention to this emergent sociality.

Following Barry Wellman's social network analysis, Bernie Hogan has written on the potential use of social networks in general and social media in particular as a source of research data. As "the most explicit representation of social networks on the internet" (Hogan 2007: 155), accessing sites like Facebook means accessing social networks as they are manifest in everyday life. Ostensibly, capturing a snapshot of a participant's social ties on Facebook is the most direct way to reproduce this data. Hogan considers the methodological possibilities of social media software as a source of social network analysis data. Nicholas Christakis and his colleagues in the department of sociology at Harvard use this data to consider

how health and taste patterns as manifest through social networks. The intersection of culture and social structure is especially relevant and germane in this context.

When describing the potential for sociological insight of sites like Facebook, they state:

SNSs, however, are historically unique in the amount and detail of personal information that users regularly provide; the explicit articulation of relational data as a central part of these sites' functioning; and the staggering rate of their adoption. As such, they constitute a particularly rich and attractive source of network data – one that social scientists have only just begun to explore (Lewis et al 2008: 330).

Sites like Facebook are thus identified as an unprecedented source of relevant sociological information. Yet this does not resolve how this information should be collected. This research team elects to bypass the participant, and instead obtains their personal information directly from the source. A host of methodological reasons are cited as justification.

By downloading data directly from Facebook.com, we avoid interviewer effects (Marsden 2003), imperfections in recall (Brewer and Webster 1999; Brewer 2000), and other sources of measurement error that may accompany survey research (see, e.g. Bernard et al., 1984; Marsden, 1990; Feld and Carter 2002; Butts 2003). At the same time, Facebook provides users with a standardized profile template that facilitates data cleaning, coding, and comparison across respondents (ibid.: 331).

Facebook is treated as a canvas for the study of social networks insofar as users can continue to build their networks as a pervasive activity. Yet the authors acknowledge that users will not build their network with the intention of mirroring their real life network. Consequently “relationships, once established, remain in place until or unless they are actively terminated. Because such termination rarely occurs, datasets such as ours are much better suited for exploring processes of tie formation than dissolution” (ibid.: 332). The authors also identify the shift from

'public' to 'private' profiles as a complication for longitudinal studies. This stands out as a consequence of relying on the covert collection of personal information as a methodological approach. Despite these concerns, the authors endorse using social media as a source of sociological data, stating that they provide "a wealth of new opportunities for social scientific inquiry" (ibid.: 341).

For all the supposed benefits of research using social media, this approach has a number of limitations. First, software like Facebook was not designed for data collection. Taste patterns are not inputted as they would be in a survey, leaving vast discrepancies in the extent that users submit information on social media. The above authors are quick to point out that "students differ tremendously in the extent to which they 'act out their social lives' on Facebook: both the level of SNS participation and the meaning of this activity undoubtedly vary across individuals and settings" (ibid.: 341). In addition to issues of generalizability, we may also consider the assumptions that are being made in terms of operationalizing concepts like friendship and social ties. Researchers need to carefully consider the kinds of actions on Facebook that constitute an act of friendship, or the manifestation of a social tie. Requesting or accepting a friendship connection seem like obvious choices, yet researchers scarcely understand the motivations that underlie these actions. After all, can a user with fifteen hundred Facebook friends claim to have fifteen hundred social ties?

Contemporary research using social media rests on assumptions about their interfaces and practices. Based on the descriptions offered in this research, one would be led to believe that Facebook profiles are a kind of enhanced survey. Yet for

all the scholarship surrounding Facebook, little is known about the epistemological status of the information-as-data. Little is known about the degree of consensus among users regarding the meanings that underlie activity on the site. This is not to exclude the possibility of research using Facebook, but rather a call to develop a better understanding of how its user base interfaces with Facebook.

Perhaps the most pressing concern for research using social media is ethics. By collecting information from social networks, researchers are effectively sidestepping their participants and not obtaining consent. While behavioural research has long collected data using some degree of deceit, social network users submit information for purposes entirely unrelated to scientific research. Some users will object to their personal information being used to study taste patterns or social structure. Informed consent is an important cornerstone for contemporary social scientific research (Moreno et al. 2008). These concerns lead to fundamental questions in terms of the status of personal information uploaded or transferred through ICTs insofar as researchers are only one of several parties that are making use of this information. In the case of this research, the appropriateness of use rests on the perceived intention of participants. Researchers need to ascertain whether or not participants are publishing their content for a global audience. Moreno et al contemplate the extent to which this information can be considered public or private. Users may publish it online, and not consider this content to be private, yet may object to this content being used in scientific research (2008: 158). This objection is central to concerns over privacy and visibility, and need to be explored further before giving carte blanche to this methodological approach. The fact that

this research takes place without user consent furthers concerns about surveillance in the social sciences. Regardless of its empirical value, researchers in the social sciences need a better understanding of the interface from which they are drawing this data. At the very least, the sociological lens should shift its focus on social media users, and not just their digital traces.

Researchers should also consider the kinds of harm that can be committed through this research. Most scholarship on social networking and social media cites privacy concerns as a product of information being difficult to contain. Function creep and information leaks mean that the misuse of information and compromised privacy are constant concerns. Thus, research that directly addresses privacy and visibility should be especially mindful of misusing information that users/participants place online. Even anonymizing identities cannot be guaranteed, as researchers only scarcely understand the potential to re-identify people based on other criteria. For example, a researcher may remove participants' names, but publishing their social ties or location still identifies them to some degree. This is largely an emergent field, and so researchers should act with caution when it comes to using personal data.

3.2 Bringing face-to-face to Facebook

Contemporary scholarship on social media has focused on the kinds of input that Facebook can provide as an interface. There is a pressing need to foreground social media users by having them describe the interface and their position in relation to it, instead of only using the interface to describe users. This will

illuminate surrounding issues that are not visible when focusing exclusively on the interface itself. By placing users and not the interface as the point of departure, this research is able to point to the social effects of social networking technology. In focusing on users and their relation to Facebook, this research foregoes a direct exploration of how users are represented online. Research that focuses on users themselves will compliment the research described above by placing a focus on the moment and context in which where traces are authored. By developing a better understanding of the meanings and values that inform social media use, this research will help operationalize databased work. It also helps researchers situate themselves among other 'watchers' of social media by producing a better understanding of the agents involved in this kind of visibility.

The research proposed below might not uncover how participants appear online, but this would be a fruitless inquiry as their appearance is contingent on the kind of access they accord through dynamic privacy settings. The range and complexity of user visibility is important, but it is a different study altogether. A more pressing issue is to look at what compels users to be on Facebook, how they justify this presence, how they conceptualize their privacy, how they conceptualize social relations like friendship, how they conceive of visibility and how they manage their identity accordingly.

This focus is founded on ethical concerns. One of the central purposes of sociological research is to give a voice to individuals and groups who are otherwise unable to do so in a scholarly forum. For all the talk of self-expression in celebratory discussions of social media, very little is known about how users themselves are

balancing identity management and the interpersonal scrutiny of others. The call to prioritize the person in interpersonal management becomes all the more pressing when approaching this topic from a Surveillance Studies perspective. Considering how people are subject to unanticipated exposure while privileging their online traces reinforces the problematic effects of social media and contemporary surveillance.

Studying Facebook by facing its users in an interview setting is also grounded in practical reasons. The purpose of this research is to study the interaction effects of social media interfaces and their user base. This necessitates not only knowledge of the ongoing development of the social media service, but also – perhaps especially – knowledge of how users are reconfiguring interpersonal exchange. This is best accomplished by approaching users directly.

3.3 Reflexivity: Situating the research(er)

This research describes the process by which conventional and atypical surveillant agents use social media to scrutinize personal information. In doing so it augments the visibility of those who take advantage of the augmented visibility of others. By no means is this the first time that Surveillance Studies has endeavoured to watch over the watchers (Smith 2007). In exposing social media surveillance, the findings presented in the following chapters are an important contribution to the social sciences. But knowing about asymmetrical relations of visibility is the first step towards coping with them, and for this reason this work has purchase in the realm of advocacy and public awareness.

Watching those who watch Facebook does not contribute to a levelling of visibility. As virtually all social actors are invited to engage with Facebook, addressing information flows does not remedy a simple 'watcher/watched' binary. However, raising awareness of relations of visibility is an important component of research on domestic surveillance technologies. With Facebook in particular, the technology and surrounding practices are still in formation, and it is important to cast light on conditions to which users are growing accustomed.

The above section outlines the importance of having knowledge of social media users in addition to the knowledge of the interface. Grounded knowledge of the interface will emerge by speaking with users. A preliminary and situated understanding will also come from the researcher's own use of and presence on Facebook. Social scientific research does not operate distinctly from social processes, and so the call to operate 'outside' of the social (Black 1995) is suspect as a prescription. Being a Facebook user does not compromise critical scrutiny. This engagement offers experiential knowledge, but subsequent research is still largely disinvested from the interface. Existing research on social media is pivoted along experiential knowledge, which is used to fuel critical inquiry (Boon and Sinclair 2009). In accepting one's position within the social, a Surveillance Studies researcher should endeavour to render visible processes by which others – particularly subaltern others – are rendered visible.

I joined Facebook in August 2006, roughly a month before choosing it as a topic of inquiry. I was not a heavy social media user prior to enrolling, but was curious as to the kinds of communities that were built on these sites. After using the

site for a month, I was also struck by the kind of visibility of others that was offered to me as well as the visibility of myself to others. When taking it up as a topic, the news fed controversy of September 2006 offered two perspectives: that Facebook and social media in general are a blatant violation of privacy, and that they offer unprecedented social affordances. These perspectives are not contradictory, but maintaining some distance from both is a sound point of departure.

Having a reasonable familiarity with Facebook as a user provides an initial grounding to understand how the interface operates, but also how its producers have revised its functionality over time. This experiential knowledge does not compromise empirical research, though it is important not to privilege this situated knowledge over how the topic of study is understood and interacted with elsewhere. The researcher's experiential knowledge of terms like 'wall' and 'friend' serve as a point of entry to understanding what others are saying, but the researcher also endeavours to privilege the participant's use of these terms in order to underscore the fuzzy and often contradictory nature of using and understanding Facebook. Inside knowledge is a helpful starting point (Beer and Burrows 2007; Lash 2002), but so is using the inside knowledge of others. Indeed, researchers should be sceptical of their own status as an insider. Using services like Facebook does not mean having some privileged access the surrounding culture, particularly when studying a feature of contemporary youth culture (Beer 2009b). Facebook has grown so much that being 'inside' Facebook has largely lost any significance. But deferring to digital youth is necessary to understanding digital youth culture.

3.4 Methodological account

As explored in the opening chapter, two key questions govern this research. First, how are social networking sites like Facebook being used to exchange personal information? A broad range of social actors uses this technology, and so this research needs to consider the most appropriate diagrams for conceptualizing information exchange. Three models stand out: lateral, institutional, and aggregate. Second, what kind of dynamic exists between these three diagrams? This dissertation proposes that a mutual augmentation exists between individual, institutional, and aggregate forms of surveillance on social networking sites. This dynamic stems from the fact that these three diagrams co-exist within the same informational platform, and work with the same body of information. In order to answer the above questions, my research uses qualitative data collected from selected populations that use Facebook as individuals, on behalf of institutions, and as a business tool.

Key themes for interviews are shaped by what is already known about these activities. These interviews are semi-structured in order to account for emerging practices. Preparing for this research involved a scrutiny of key academic literature on social media as well as surrounding topics. This provided some indication as to broad themes underlying this research, as well as situated understanding of what is currently known about surveillance and social media. This understanding was supplemented by a close reading of industry literature on the emergence of social media. Some business material was an underpinning to the chapter on monetization. In addition, key weblogs – including Facebook’s own developer

weblog – served as a starting point for understanding updates and changes to the service. These sources were crucial towards understanding what Facebook is and the direction it appears to be following.

Reliance on industry and academic literature is a richly informative strategy towards understanding how Facebook shapes the use of its social platform through the configuration of its users. However, it overlooks the degree to which users themselves make up Facebook through local practices augmented by communication and information technology. In order to arrive at a detailed analysis of Facebook's employment within an institutional network, three sets of semi-structured interviews were completed. First, thirty undergraduate students who use Facebook were selected for study. These students were all enrolled at the same mid-sized university in Eastern Ontario at the time of study. The decision to focus on undergraduate students is because universities were the first institution to gain access to Facebook. Many of the students interviewed report being users since it first became available in 2004. Although it has since grown to a more mainstream status, these students make up the population that is the most familiar with the service. As such, they are the most likely to notice changes in the interface, changes in the context surrounding its use, and would have been the first to experience consequences associated with prolonged use. These students are also relevant because of their immediate context. Many students use Facebook to maintain social relations with friends and family elsewhere, as well as foster new relations with other students. Yet they are also entering adulthood as well as the job market or

postgraduate studies. For these reasons they become increasingly concerned with their public exposure.

These students were selected from all faculties at this university through a series of posters on campus as well as by notices sent by email to undergraduate listservs. Of the thirty students interviewed, twenty-three were women and seven were men. Seven were in the first year of their studies, eight were in their second year, five were in their third year, seven were in their fourth year, and three were in their fifth year. Twenty-six students were in the faculty of arts and sciences, three were in health sciences, and one student was in the faculty of education. Twenty-seven students checked their Facebook account at least once a day. The three that did not check it once a day noted that they received email notifications of Facebook activity. The interviews took place between November and December 2008, in a face-to-face setting, either at the participant's place of residence or at an office on campus. Interviews ranged from forty-five to ninety minutes in length. All interviews were documented using a digital audio recorder. Prior to recording, these interviews began by having the participant sign onto their Facebook account and demonstrate how they would typically navigate the site. If using the interviewer's laptop, the respondent would use a browser with cookies and history disabled, such that no personal information would be retained. They would then be asked to browse through the site as they typically would, responding to a few preliminary questions about their use, including how many times a day they visit the site, how much time they spend per visit, and what kind of content do they browse on the site. This activity helped contextualize the interview questions as

well as provide information on the rooted practices surrounding social networking. While participants were asked questions and some notes were taken regarding actions performed on the website, at no point was any personal information recorded.

Institutional surveillance on social media is also a growing concern. A second set of fourteen semi-structured interviews was conducted with university employees who use Facebook as a workplace service. These interviews were conducted between February and June 2009. These employees worked at the same Eastern Ontario university as the first set of interviewees. While some participants had personal experience with Facebook and other social media services, they were all beginning to use these services in a professional setting. Key agents were contacted following meetings with two vice-presidents at the university. Snowball sampling was also used to contact further participants in specific offices. These interviews lasted forty-five to ninety minutes, and were conducted at the participant's office. Once again a digital recorder was used to document the interviews. At no point was any identifiable information recorded. If a participant's job title would render them identifiable, this information was not recorded.

In order to produce a detailed account of Facebook's growing use as a business service, a third set of twelve semi-structured interviews took place with employees and self-employed consultants who use Facebook as a business tool. These participants were contacted using key insiders, including one of the above vice-presidents. In other cases participants were reached via cold calling, notably those who worked as social media consultants. These interviews took place between

July and October 2009, and once again ranged from forty-five minutes to an hour and a half in duration. With the exception of one interview that was conducted in person using a digital recorder, the remainder were conducted online using Skype. The audio feed from these interviews was recorded using AudioHijack, a program that captures audio from computers and converts it into MP3 files. All interview recordings were transferred onto a secure hard drive. Students hired through the work-study program at Queen's University facilitated the transcription process. Hired students signed a confidentiality agreement that ensured that any personal information they encountered would be kept in strict confidence.

The findings contained in these interviews are especially useful in producing information about how different populations are developing strategies and tactics surrounding Facebook. This data offers much-needed insight regarding the ways these populations actually use and make sense of Facebook, in contrast to how the social media service is discursively shaped by its designers as well as other parties. In order to make sense of the vast amounts of data contained in these interviews, the interview questionnaires were used as a point of departure. These questionnaires provided some structure in terms of highlighting key themes. However, heightened attention was placed on topics and themes that were not anticipated prior to interviews. As unanticipated content was likely to arise, accounting for new themes was a central concern when structuring the following results chapters.

3.5 Ethical concerns

The research described above involves human participants. However, the ethical concerns derived from its design are minimal. Upon being contacted, participants were presented with a letter of information as well as a consent form that outlined the full ramifications of their participation, notably with regards to information they would disclose in the interviews. Given the nature of the research question and discursive themes, there was no need to seek sensitive information. Nevertheless, all information provided remained confidential, notably through the employment of pseudonyms for all participants. The single consequence for participants was gaining cognizance of the privacy settings at their disposal on Facebook.

3.6 Limitations of research

The relative lack of scholarship on social media surveillance suggests that a general framework to situate this topic is necessary. While this research does offer grounded insights regarding these practices, it is also limited in that it focuses on key populations. Facebook has spread to a vast range of demographics on a global scale. However, the decision to focus primarily on digital youth is sound given their legacy of involvement on this site. The extension from this population to university employees as well as employees using it as a business tool is also appropriate. Not only does this triumvirate focus provide insight as to how social media are spreading, it illuminates how institutional and market actors are following digital youth's adoption of this service.

This research is also contextualized by temporal limitations. Facebook is a rapidly changing interface. Not only do the concrete services associated with the site change on a monthly basis, but the meanings, values, and protocols surrounding its use are in a state of fluidity. As new features are introduced, new populations enrol, and new devices augment its presence in everyday life, Facebook necessarily changes as a topic of study. Thus, a key objective of this research is to devise ways of understanding social networking sites that by definition are in constant flux, as well as understanding how this trajectory is represented in popular discourse.

Addressing this issue has been greatly facilitated by participants in all three sets of interviews. As Facebook users, nearly all participants were actively struggling with the dynamic properties of this service. Indeed, its dynamic nature emerged as a key theme when attempting to unpack the 'social' in social media.

Finally, this research is limited in that it focuses almost exclusively on Facebook. Facebook is not the only social media service available, nor is it the first social media service to attain a high level of popularity. However, attempting to study the entire social media landscape would be unmanageable. Focusing on one service was a necessary limit in order to develop an empirical understanding of these services in general. Likewise, the decision to select Facebook as a case study is entirely justifiable as it is the flagship social media service, with a six-year tenure and half-billion use base.

3.7 Discussion

This chapter is situated at a juncture: the previous chapters described Facebook by way of existing literature – both mainstream and academic. This has provided a rich and multi-contextual understanding of social media surveillance. This journey culminates to the first section of this chapter, where Facebook and the content generated by its users have become a research tool. Already a body of scholarship is studying sites like Facebook by looking exclusively at its data. This contributes to our understanding of the kinds of knowledge social media offer, but overlooks why users are making themselves visible and watching their peers on social media. Moreover, these studies further the surveillance of social networks by privileging data over people. The focus on users’ digital content at the expense of users themselves is a disservice to sociology. The next three chapters attempt to restore this imbalance by turning our attention onto users themselves.

This chapter proposes a new way of studying social media, and social media surveillance in particular. By shifting our focus back to the people who use this technology, the research detailed in this chapter restores a sociological concern for people’s use of surveillance technology, as opposed to the visibility of technology in society. Both perspectives are important: indeed, they are complimentary. Developing knowledge about users’ online presence is itself an acceptable practice, but only when accompanied by research that focuses on users themselves. With these concerns in mind, the following chapters will focus squarely on different categories of Facebook users. Each chapter will situate and contextualize a key Facebook population: university students, administrators acting on behalf of a university, and professionals turning to Facebook as a business tool. Each

population describes its presence on social media: why it first joined, what it got out of it, how its use has changed over time, and what it anticipates in the future. Their motivations, practices, and concerns are thus foregrounded, which provides a better understanding of how Facebook is used in surveillance practices.

Chapter 4 – ‘Friendly’ Surveillance on Facebook

This chapter describes in detail the kinds of peer-to-peer surveillance made possible through Facebook. The material from this chapter is drawn from a set of thirty interviews with Facebook users. Key themes include the types of personal information users make available to as well as collect from others, motivations for exchanging personal information, and perceptions of surveillant relations on the site. These themes present friendly surveillance as a matter of users being both the subject as well as the agent of peer surveillance. As well, this chapter considers how these practices are made meaningful and even augmented through concurrent forms of surveillance that occur on the site. Knowledge of other kinds of watching, especially familiar and accessible kinds, shapes the way students watch others and themselves. This chapter provides a description of these practices, but also develops an understanding of ‘friendly’ surveillance based on self-visibility and the visibility of other users. The intervisibility (Brighenti 2010) that these individuals exhibit and exploit is an increasing feature of contemporary sociality. Through their prolonged engagement with Facebook as well as their friends’ engagements, users contribute to and are affected by a growing regime of visibility in social media enclosures.

4.1 Introduction

Chapter two provided a multifaceted understanding of Facebook, underscoring the importance of approaching social media from several perspectives. Social media sites are a kind of software, a kind of network, a venue for publicity/ personal branding, and a kind of labour. Each of these perspectives is

supported by information and capital exchange, situated experiences, and meanings that are still quite plastic. These perspectives are complementary in that they all support an understanding of Facebook as a kind of enclosure. Information is increasingly stored in one location which itself is increasingly pervasive and accessible. In response to literature focusing on users' online presence, the previous chapter calls for the study of how people actually use Facebook. This research needs to consider why they get involved in mutual visibility and information exchange on Facebook, as well as the kinds of surveillance practices that use this content. For the students quoted below, surveillance on Facebook directs scrutiny to the personal details that they exchange with other users. Facebook's pervasiveness in everyday life gives this surveillance a systematic, routine and focused quality. Unlike the casual face-to-face exchanges that would otherwise take place, this activity is centred on a distinct site that is easily accessible and searchable. In this sense it resembles conventional surveillance practices that are more familiar to scholars.

Facebook's first users were university students, mainly undergraduates engaging in peer-to-peer relationships. This is where it began, but other agents, and other kinds of watching have joined social media sociality. The interviews discussed below occurred at a time when family, employers, and others were increasingly involved with Facebook. Social media sites are a platform for a new kind of public that scholars and users scarcely understand. Facebook in particular promotes the networked and public dissemination of personal information, all while developing increasingly granular privacy settings. In connecting over half a billion users,

Facebook has grown beyond student populations to a more generic social network that crosscuts contextual barriers.

So what kinds of surveillance are evident here? Not all forms of surveillance are alike. Police investigations are clearly different from an undergraduate student making sure her parents do not upload any embarrassing photographs. But these different kinds of scrutiny are occurring in the same interface, feeding into and drawing from the same body of information. Conventional surveillance practices are augmented by user-generated knowledge. In particular, marketers recognize the 'value-added' aspect of the types of information that are authored and circulated through social media and thus eagerly seek access to those data through Facebook and others. In recognition that several kinds of surveillance occur on Facebook, users will come to watch over themselves as well as their peers, scrutinizing the content of their profiles with yardsticks like 'employability' and 'liability' in mind. Some types of scrutiny are more visible to users than others, and therefore are more influential in shaping their behaviour. Peers and parents shape student visibility and watching in a more immediate sense than employers and marketers, at least at this stage in their lives.

4.2 Interview structure

Interviews were semi-structured to accommodate for themes and events not anticipated in the questionnaire. Questions were organized along six general themes:

The first set of questions examined users' entry into Facebook as well as their motivation for joining. This inquiry would then lead into a discussion as to how their use would develop over time. These questions were important for contextualizing their engagement with the site. The second set examined the types of personal information users make available to others. These questions sought the kinds of personal information that respondents would share on Facebook. These questions also focused on whether users had a particular audience in mind when sharing this information, as well as their motivation for sharing information on Facebook. These questions indicated the degree of transparency that users sought, and sought a description of their reasons for being visible on Facebook. The third set examined the types of personal information users acquire from others. These questions focused on the kinds of personal information that respondents would seek from others on Facebook. This also included the motivations for seeking information through social media. This theme served as a counterpoint to the second them, which together covered the kinds of information exchange that occur on Facebook

The fourth set addressed perceptions of peer surveillance. This theme opened by citing media coverage of Facebook stalking, and asked respondents why this was treated as a concern. Respondents were then asked if they or someone they knew had experienced Facebook stalking, and if they would be willing to describe these experiences. This led to a consideration of terms used to describe surveillance on Facebook, including stalking, creeping, but also values relating to concepts such as private and public. These questions were important to get a sense of the kinds of

interpersonal scrutiny happening on Facebook, and how respondents were situated in these experiences. It also helped to unpack the language used to describe this activity, and how these were a reflection of shifting values and attitudes surrounding personal information made available online.

The fifth set addressed perceptions of institutional surveillance. These questions sought to uncover respondents' attitudes and experiences with other kinds of Facebook-related surveillance. Specifically, these questions looked at university, workplace, and market-based surveillance. Users were asked if they believed each of these kinds of surveillance were appropriate, why they thought each institution would rely on Facebook for this purpose, and how these concerns have affected the way they used Facebook, if at all. This was helpful for getting a sense of how student users perceived and responded to other kinds of Facebook-based surveillance. The sixth set considered measures taken to resist surveillance. These questions considered the measures taken by respondents to manage or limit their exposure on Facebook. These included not uploading particular information on Facebook, managing information that their friends would upload about them, using privacy settings, and other approaches not considered when the questionnaire was constructed. While most of the interview centred on attitudes and experiences, this section looked at deliberate measures taken to counter surveillance on Facebook.

4.3 Genesis, peer pressure, and campus coordination

Users' emergence as Facebook users followed specific patterns. Respondents almost universally cited Facebook's convenience as a platform for information

exchange. Most users join in order to socialize at the start of their first year of university. Others report that their usage spiked upon entering their first year. As well, users were heavily compelled to join the site due to peer pressure. This pressure was felt either from new friends at university or high-school classmates:

All the other cool kids were doing it, so I couldn't help but check it out. And it was very interesting and cutting edge. It was like Web 2.0 for cool people (Stu_11).

I just thought Facebook was complicated and stupid, but my friends like completely pressured me into it because they all had Facebook, so I got Facebook and it wasn't too bad (Stu_27).

Peer pressure went beyond mere recommendation or prescription. Some users were willing to acknowledge Facebook's potential use-value, but added that this potential would only be realized if they were able to find a critical mass of peers on the site. One user joined when American friends from an online community convinced her to try it out. Yet the initial lack of offline friends restricted her enjoyment of the site. This user claimed "if you don't have any friends on it, you can't really do much" (Stu_16). In some cases, peer pressure was manifest as something that the user had to reactively manage. Users reported that their friends would construct profiles for them, and then transfer control of this nascent profile to them.

In more extreme cases, would-be users learned that Facebook contained photos and other content about them, even in the absence of an official profile. This was especially perplexing for people who lacked familiarity with the kinds of visibility in which they were implicated:

I was like 'How can pictures of me be on the internet and how are other people?' They would show me and they'd show a picture of me with other

people and they'd show comments that other people had made and, like, 'How are people making comments on this photo of me and I don't even know it's there? I should be involved in this. I should know what's going on' (Stu_13).

Users had a variety of reasons to explain their continued involvement with the site. These were typically framed in terms Facebook's mundane functions, including receiving notifications about upcoming events on campus. On the basis of this usage, respondents describe Facebook as helpful for everyday attempts to contact other people on campus. One respondent states that they maintain a public and searchable presence on Facebook "for homework and stuff" (Stu_16). Students also use Facebook to maintain ties with high-school friends and other people for whom day-to-day communication would otherwise be too troublesome:

When you are away from home and you have like sixty good friends in a different town, it's way too expensive and way too time consuming to like call every person. Right? So, I find it's just a way of you keeping in contact and it's just like nice to have them as a little part of your day, even if it's on the internet (Stu_27).

Another user (Stu_2) describes the ease with which Facebook distributes content as sociality powered by a kind of engine. As opposed to manually communicating with peers, it allows users to passively upload information and have others find it. The fact that transmitting information happens with less effort to reach a larger audience suggests it greatly augments the visibility of personal information.

Facebook is often used for on-campus coordination, like broadcasting one's presence in the library, or requesting class notes. In other cases, it is used for a more spectacular kind of visibility, such as uploading photographs from a trip. Facebook is a mix of more spectacular events coupled with very mundane kinds of coordination, and is thus recognized as a kind of go-to resource for sociality on campus. The way

that information can be uploaded without being directed at any particular individual or group affords a passive visibility ideal for image construction. Users can be seen without seeming like they want to be seen. Potentially, users can be seen as not wanting to be seen, which is treated as facilitating a valuable social capital for digital youth: “It’s all very calculated to look the coolest and getting the most attention without seeming like you want it” (Stu_11). By allowing users to upload content for no explicit reason, Facebook enables a visibility between users that extends beyond what they would typically know about each other. This suggests a shift from purposive visibility for specific audiences to a seemingly purposeless visibility. For example, a user could share a photo album with all her friends without needing to offer a specific justification for doing so. This provides peers with “a general feeling of how your life is going (...) it might not be things that would like merit a whole email” (Stu_28).

A lot of student users actively dislike Facebook. Many offered detailed diatribes that cast the site in a critical light. Some of them went so far as to deactivate their profiles. These students invariably returned to Facebook, though their absence has only strengthened their admittedly mixed and occasionally contradictory criticism of the site. Their return to a service they dislike is fuelled by the perceived need to stay online. Not being on Facebook is equated with being cut off from their colleagues, especially when it came to events. This is the kind of coercion that occurs on Facebook. People first join at the behest of their friends. Nobody directly prevents them from leaving, but there are clear costs associated

with their departure. One user cites a loss of contact with a specific group of friends as a reason not to leave the site:

Sometimes I wish I could get off, but I can't because I'm stuck. (...) I've got all of these friends and from there I have maybe, like, 15 friends who I maybe talk to on a regular basis. But then, on top of that, I maybe have 30 friends or something that I am friends with but I don't talk to that often, don't have their email, don't have their MSN, so if I get off of Facebook, which I've been thinking about but I can't actually do, then I just have completely lost contact with them (Stu_21).

Even when users question most of their friendships on Facebook, they state that leaving the site would mean losing enough valuable social ties to make them reconsider this decision. Likewise, key social events on campus necessitate a presence on the site:

It's my damn friends, man. Like, there's Homecoming and there's a bunch of people coming up to Homecoming and a lot of my friends, Facebook is the only reliable way to get a hold of them. Which is annoying. It's really annoying. Because I don't really want to be on it and I probably – like, after university's done, I probably won't be. But I don't know, right now it's just – it's almost too convenient not to have it (Stu_23).

Staying on Facebook is seen as too convenient, and leaving it is too costly. On a more granular scale, Facebook friends are treated similarly. As individual units, friendship ties are perceived and handled as something that complicates information exchange between colleagues, but that is still necessary to maintain a good social standing.

The decision to remove a friend from a personal network or deny a friend request is seen as an affront, especially when that person has some bearing in the user's offline sociality:

You know, that you have to keep certain people on Facebook because they're your good friends' friend and you don't want to get rid of them and then not be able to add them back and not be able to contact them. So you have to deal with the fact that some people might see things that could be bad about them and you've got to be careful to keep that in your inbox and off the wall and

monitor posts and that kind of thing when you have rivalling friends, I suppose (Stu_22).

Politics of interpersonal visibility are felt on a granular scale. Even when staying in touch with people is generally desirable, these ties pose risks on an everyday basis and as such require heightened vigilance vis-à-vis offline sociality. As a result, the friendship tie is exchanged for access to information, even when this is not desirable: “I did say yes to their friend request but I didn’t want them to know what was happening in my life” (Stu_21).

When describing their usage, respondents acknowledge that they have become less involved and more conservative with time. Users would often follow a trajectory where they would gradually add content as well as foster more social ties, only to take stock of their augmented visibility and scale back their presence. They would often realize the extent of their visibility when people they didn’t know very well had access to information about them:

On my little personal information section, I recently cut it down so now it basically says nothing. (...) When I first got to school, I would have big lists of my favourite movies, big lists of my favourite singers or whatever, by first I was like, ‘this is so stupid.’ Because, you know it’s really static, and it doesn’t really represent you anymore so I just got rid of it (Stu_28).

Many users were shocked when faced with the effects of their cumulative visibility.

Users report developing greater restraint with time, but they also regard this restraint as insufficient to completely protect their privacy. What little information they upload can possibly migrate elsewhere:

The amount I’ve been sharing has just been going further and further down, with the increasing awareness that, no matter how private I want Facebook to be – it’s still in that grey area so it’s still going to be open to being like... for all I know, my pictures could be printed off by someone, on their bedroom wall like in a big collection of Facebook friends. Whereas that makes me

uncomfortable, I can't do about it, so I just to be careful what I put up there. Even though only my friends can see my pictures, it's not that hard to get into someone else's account, or to go on your friends' account or, to go on your friends account (Stu_28).

Users treat their presence as dynamic. The above respondent anticipates using Facebook like a PO box upon graduation, suggesting a receptacle for content from her colleagues. Maintaining a comfort with a site through information restraint is important for many users. Yet this is not to suggest that their presence becomes diminished. Indeed, this trajectory resembles the kind of taken-for-granted conditions associated with most ubiquitous technologies.

4.4 Different kinds of users

Describing the 'average' Facebook user is difficult for many reasons. Facebook is very egocentric, or at least ego-network-centric. Individual understandings of Facebook are predicated on the people that make up a friend network, and the kind of content they provide. Variance between users is apparent, even when looking at a comparatively homogenous population like undergraduate students primarily living in a student neighbourhood.

Perceptions of phone numbers on profiles point to the kind of engagement users want through the site. When including their phone number on their profile, they typically treat Facebook as a 'go-to' service, used to reach people and little else. It is not treated a space in itself, but rather a tool or resource, like an enhanced phone book:

I do have my phone number on Facebook. I know a lot of people don't, but personal information wise; I have my phone number, I have my address, see if people like to get a hold of me in ways other than Facebook, it's nice to

have that information there and I'm sure you can find it available on the internet, regardless in some way. So, I figure I just might as well put it in one kinda centralized place. (...) If they want to contact me, that's fine. But if they want anything else like, I prefer they get it from myself or someone else, and not just read it off the webpage (Stu_4).

Other users treat Facebook as a space in and of itself to cultivate, and where interaction occurs. In this case it is managed as a space to be populated with content, but also some safeguards, such as the omission of a cell phone number that would extend connectivity beyond the site itself. These users cannot imagine why people would include information like cell phone numbers. Thus, even more outgoing users are concerned with sharing too much information, or sharing the wrong kind of information:

That's the one thing I find is, you know, that's when you cross over from having just Facebook to the real world – a phone number allows someone to contact you, you know, and phone numbers, I think – once you have a phone number or even an address, you can find out a lot about a person (Stu_22).

Especially phone numbers, or addresses; I would never put addresses, things like that. (...) Cause, I don't know them that well, to be like, 'Oh look, here's her phone number, let's call her up' one day (Stu_5).

Despite her objection, the above user states that she would use this information if others posted it on their profile: "I don't think I'd ever put my telephone number. But, if I add somebody and their telephone number is posted, and I need to get a hold of them then I can look on Facebook and see their telephone number and just call them" (Stu_5).

These two perspectives are rooted in concerns for user visibility. The difference is between a telephone number granting potential access elsewhere, and a content-filled profile offering actualized access on the site itself. Different kinds of visibility and profile building indicate that research cannot make assumptions about

how users are producing their visibility. Yet both approaches mark a rise in visibility on social media that is tailored to the user's comfort as well as their conception of sensitive versus public information.

4.5 Facebook as a form of peer surveillance

Users are fully aware of why Facebook would be used for surveillance purposes. Among all respondents the site was cast as a vast resource filled with personal information. This is a key reason why interpersonal monitoring would take place on the site, but a more generic engagement with Facebook was justified along the same lines. Using Facebook for peer surveillance is not far removed from simply using Facebook. Users cite the fact that they can access material in a low-cost, low-risk manner as facilitating peer surveillance:

I think it's the fact that I can do this all in my boxers from my bedroom and it's very easy, there's no hassle. There's no real risk either, I mean, well... risk, that's a bad word to use, but you don't have to invest any energy into calling someone or playing message tag (Stu_11).

As well, Facebook is seen as having unique searching affordances. Instead of looking for an email address or user name, searching is typically based on actual names, facilitating peer monitoring rooted in real life. Augmented search capabilities are coupled with changing conceptions of visibility. Even when users dislike the extent to which they are exposed on Facebook, they speculate that new norms are shifting what it means to be online. One user (Stu_23) cites concerns that new social norms around Facebook and visibility may be emerging that are beyond his awareness. Likewise, another user states that having their personal information accessible to a

network of peers has consequences that they are only beginning to realize and accept:

I've had like a few people phone me and I'd say, 'How'd you get my phone number?' 'Oh, yeah I got it from Facebook, sorry.' 'Okay, yeah, no that's totally fine.' Because I put it up there, right? I put it up there for a reason (Stu_7).

Using Facebook is based on a balance between one's own visibility and the visibility of friends. The fact that users spend more time seeking other people's information instead of broadcasting their own facilitates a sense of comfort with the site. Yet the ratio of hundreds of friends to one single profile means that one can spend the vast majority of one's time taking content instead of providing it, but still maintain a 'reasonable' presence and visibility on the site. Focusing primarily on being an audience member does not diminish the extent to which users make themselves visible on the site.

Facebook's status as an information resource is no secret to its users. But they generally are not concerned with their own visibility on the site. Even when acknowledging risks and horror stories that are common knowledge, very seldom are these risks linked to their own usage. This is based on the fact that users perceive a locus of control when talking about uploading information to the site. That is, if they did not want information to end up on their profile, they would choose not to upload it:

I've never been an enormous personal information-panic person. It's not a big deal to me if someone knows where I am or what I'm doing, for the most part. Especially when you can exercise so much control over what's visible, it's boggling to me, honestly. If I didn't want people to see my profile, I'd make it private, and that would be that (Stu_11).

This locus of control translates to other users being to blame when compromising information about them ends up on the site. Most users agree that maintaining one's reputation online is the responsibility of the individual. Effective use of privacy settings is frequently cited as a necessity, but users also acknowledge that they do not mitigate all risks. On the one hand, privacy settings are seen as crucial to maintaining some control over information on the site, with users claiming that "if you're not smart enough to put your stuff on private, then your information's public. Anyone can see it" (Stu_16). Yet despite these controls, users also acknowledge that simply having information on a profile, whether public or private, leaves users open to considerable risk because of the sheer volume of people who will have access to that information. Users describe the non-friend friend (a Facebook friend but a stranger otherwise) as a potential vulnerability:

Everything that I've put up, I know that somebody's probably looking at it. Like, there's probably somebody on my friends list who I don't really know that well who has actively taken an interest in my life because they think – maybe they think I'm an interesting person or, like, I don't know that they don't like me (Stu_16).

I think just the people who you kind of add, have added maybe two or three years ago, who you've kind of forgotten about – they're still on your friends list but you may not actually be friends with them in real life and you may not see them ever or talk to them ever, but you still have access to their profile and they still have access to yours. So, like, I've never encountered being like 'Oh, I hate Tamara because la la la'. I've never seen that. But I'm sure somebody posts something that's just, like, not intended for me specifically to see it (Stu_21).

In such a case, the sheer volume of seemingly trusted friends makes it almost impossible for one's entire audience to be managed by the user. Even when respondents place the locus of control – and blame – on individual users, they are quick to acknowledge that Facebook is primarily a public domain, and that attempts

to limit exposure are futile. Here, Google is cited as a way to circumvent desires for privacy:

I think that if you have put it on Facebook that as a statement that you are comfortable with people knowing it, and if you weren't comfortable with it then you're an idiot and have it coming. But yeah, I think that it's public domain. It's accessible to basically anyone. It's semi-private in that someone can't, you know, just Google your name – well they could, actually, if they were so inclined and they had Facebook and added you (Stu_11).

Respondents also acknowledge that privacy measures are far from perfect. They do not have full confidence in the site's ability to keep contextual information in that specific context. Users are aware that proper conduct on Facebook is based on a contradiction: that individuals are expected to avoid unnecessary risks, but that this will not offset all potential risk. Safe use is necessary, but not sufficient.

In terms of Facebook's privacy issues, users have a sophisticated understanding of its vulnerabilities. By and large this understanding is based on personal experiences as well as leaks that their friends have experienced. At the time of the interviews, photos that were tagged or commented by a user would experience greater exposure following that user's privacy settings. Whether or not this was intentional on the developers' part, many users treated this as a design flaw. Likewise, responding to a private message sent by a stranger would open a user profile to that stranger, if only partially. Users experienced this as a privacy violation:

Recently through the 'Resignation, not impeachment' group, I messaged someone. I sent a personal message and you can't control how much certain aspects of your profile will be seen when you send someone a private message and you can't control that, so that makes me feel more vulnerable and I took away some of the things I had there before, which were really like not anything important anyways. (...) And that really made me weary of what

it is that I'm sharing with people that I think I have limited privacy settings with (Stu_28).

In considering the risks associated with Facebook, users describe them as a mix of outrage from undue risks coupled with an acceptance of these vulnerabilities based on individual responsibility and agency. Users understand that the complexity of social ties on Facebook means that there will be unexpected and undesirable forms of visibility that arise. For respondents, it all comes down to the idea that users are choosing to be on Facebook, even when this is only in response to peer pressure:

It's designed to do that but at the same time we're not forced to do it, I feel. Yeah so we get desensitized to the fact that how many people can have access to it, but at the same time we're choosing to put it up there (Stu_2).

This provides some indication of how friendly surveillance is manifest on Facebook. Users join at the behest of their friends, and maintain visibility because of these friends. Thus, the kind of visibility required for surveillance from Facebook is borne out of everyday practice, with users maintaining relations with their colleagues. Peer pressure notwithstanding, users willingly supply information about themselves to this platform, making it suitable for other kinds of scrutiny. An ever-growing friendship network means that unanticipated risks come up, but choice and responsibility are placed on users themselves despite this complexity.

4.6 Self-surveillance and watching other individuals

Users are familiar with surveillance-based accounts of Facebook.

Interestingly, these accounts are heavily based on relations with other individuals. Facebook is seen as a form of self-surveillance in the sense that Facebook users volunteer a lot of information about themselves and their activities. It is also heavily

based on relations with knowable others, such that these peers are seen as the primary targets and participants of social media surveillance. When users talk about surveillance and Facebook they typically focus on what they do to their reputation or what others do to themselves.

Risks are perceived in terms of individuals, be they family, former lovers, or strangers. Social media attract a vast audience of individual and institutional users. Yet students were quick to describe surveillance in terms of people they knew and interacted with outside of social media. It stands to reason that these most tangible examples would be the ones to come to mind. As a result, surveillance on Facebook was primarily thought of in terms of known risks. Romantic acquaintances, past and present, as well as family were key examples. One user describes his frustration with maintaining a relationship where his partner has access to all his content on Facebook:

A lot of like, things she, like that girl would go on and she'd look at my profile, and she'd question me a lot – everything. 'Why is this girl saying this on your wall? Why is this? Who is this? Why? Why you talking to this person?' (Stu_2).

Likewise, users were quick to admit that they would use Facebook to find out more about people who were of interest to their romantic lives, like a partner's former partner. In addition to former and current romantic partners, users were concerned with parental scrutiny. Having parents have access to profiles led to a convergence between social contexts that users typically wanted to avoid:

I kind of feel weird with my parents knowing certain things about me. I'm not very open to them. So that's the only reason that I filtered it. It wasn't because, like, I'm doing anything wrong. It's not that I wouldn't want them to know about, like I wouldn't be embarrassed if they were able to read my status, so that's why I leave it open, but it's just that I prefer that they not see

it. Like, there's a pretty distinct difference, to me, between what I choose to not bring to the attention to my parents and what I would actively not want them to know (Stu_16).

Interestingly, the decision to deny information to parents was not an admission of guilt. Rather, it was because letting this information flow to parents would lead to a social convergence that was uncomfortable for users. Another troubling aspect of maintaining a friendship tie with family is that Facebook provides a distorted representation of the person. One user describes how Facebook misrepresents him to his father:

My dad is on Facebook. He knows what I'm up to. He knows the shenanigans that happen. But at the same time, he doesn't see that I put in like 20 hours a week at the library along with 15 hours a week of classes. He doesn't see that I'm working every weekend on essays and stuff. He sees the guy holding the red plastic beer cup (Stu_4).

Other users control parental access because they cannot control what their friends say. Because controlling a network of potentially hundreds of friends would be too complicated, one respondent (Stu_18) decided to restrict her parents' access to her profile wall. Problematic content may still end up on her wall, but she is seemingly able to prevent one negative outcome.

In a notable example, one user expressed shock and frustration with having her mother offer commentary on her profile. Interestingly, this user was not even aware that her mother was part of her social network, despite acknowledging that she must have consciously added her as a friend at some point:

I had no idea she had Facebook first of all (...) And I was like, 'That is so creepy!' Like, I had no idea I had my mom as a friend and I have no idea how long she has been creeping my Facebook! (...) And it turned out she'd been like looking at my Facebook almost every day for like five months. (...) And I was like, 'Mom, you are such a creep.' And she was like, 'I thought you knew, I just want to see what you are up to because we can't talk everyday and I

want to know that you are okay.' And I was like, 'That is no excuse.' Mom and friends are two totally different worlds. (Stu_27).

This respondent was surprised to find out how she could lose track of who was visiting her profile, even though she was ostensibly in control of this access. As a result of this experience, she vowed to be more vigilant about her friendship ties, especially with people she did not know.

In addition to friendship ties, users would realize the impact of their publicized personal information as a result of uncomfortable encounters. One user describes a series of awkward interactions with friends as a result of her relationship status:

When I came to [the university], I had a boyfriend and of course it said, 'in a relationship'. And I was out with a bunch of people and one of guy came over to me and was like, 'I really think that you should break up with your boyfriend...blah, blah blah'. And I didn't really have any conversations with this person before hand, like little conversations. I knew him. I just looked at him and I said, "How do you know that I have a boyfriend?" And it's because I added him on Facebook and that's one of the first things he looked for. And, as soon as my relationship status changed, one of the girls (...) came up to me and said 'Yeah, so I'm sorry to hear about you and Frank.' And she said 'Yeah, I guess everyone knows about it by now.' (...) I was okay with it because, in a sense, I wanted people to know that I was now single. So, if a guy wanted to come up and say, 'Hey let's go out for dinner.' Like, he would know that I was single and, I didn't have a boyfriend. So, he would be able to do that, so I kind of wanted that. I wanted people to know that I was now single and now, on the market I guess (Stu_5).

The public status of this information is initially experienced as uncomfortable, but the respondent comes to acknowledge that she provided this information online in order to facilitate communication about her relationship status. Following their own experiences as well as their friends' accounts, student users approach Facebook through relations with peers: other students, lovers, friends, and family. Because of how immediate and tangible they are, these concerns are usually the ones that

prompt people to take proactive measures. Yet student users in this context were typically early adopters living in a relatively isolated environment. Most of these users joined when the site was exclusive to university students. More sceptical users, including mature students, would likely see the site as more risk-laden, and these risks would be multi-faceted and not always evident.

Given the relative novelty of Facebook as well as the act of using Facebook, the language used in association with surveillance warrants exploration. Not only is it telling in terms of how social media are being shaped, but it also frames contemporary information exchange and visibility. Two terms were predominant in these discussions: stalking and creeping. Both terms were used to describe unhealthy and otherwise problematic ways of seeking information on Facebook. These terms facilitate discussions of surveillance of personal information for Facebook users. While users would not readily use the term surveillance, stalking and creeping referred to how personal information was used in unanticipated ways, as well as the sense of unease that followed. While these could almost be used interchangeably, users were typically in agreement with how these terms were positioned vis-à-vis one another. Creeping was seen as a milder version of stalking, which in turn is meant to reflect more negatively on the user:

It's all a matter of degree. I mean, you'd have to – if you were looking to assign either Facebook stalking or Facebook creeping to one person's activities, I'd think you would have to do it on a case by case basis (Stu_11).

These terms suggest a continuum between uninvolved and heavily involved usage. On one end of the continuum is the uninvolved user. This user is criticized for not disclosing enough information or for not responding to what others upload. This

user is seen as not putting in enough effort or uploading false content in order to deceive other users. Next is the 'normal' user who has a responsive – if somewhat detached – involvement with the site. This user would comment on other users' content, support others' image construction, respond to event invites in expedient manner. This user checks the site often, but never spends much time on it.

Creeping is a more involved and targeted way of using Facebook, though respondents treat this as a matter of circumstance. Creeping involves perusing somewhat extensively through another user's content: a few pages of wall posts, or a photo album or two. Because of tags and other hyperlinks, searching one individual may lead to a scrutiny of multiple people. This will happen for a several reasons. One is out of purpose: users may wish to see what events and news they have missed. It may be to see what content a particular person has recently uploaded:

If there is like a definition of Facebook creeping it means looking at someone's profile a lot – then I've done it for sure to like, probably... well, what is creeping? I look at people's profiles every now and again, but like what is the creep aspect of it (Stu_27)?

The above respondent treats creeping as a function of using Facebook, as using the site in the way it was intended leads to the prolonged scrutiny of others' information. Creeping can also be brought on due to boredom, or simply because content on the user's news feed – the content that first greets people when they sign on – caught their attention:

I guess most people would define the stalking one as more, like, actively searching, but I guess creeping would be if you're just bored and you're just looking at people's profiles and you don't have an active interest or motive to look at it, you're just bored (Stu_16).

Stalking resembles creeping, although it is a more pronounced way of collecting information. If a user consistently returned to a particular user's profile, this would be framed in terms of stalking. Stalking refers to all behaviour that could potentially be or has become conventional stalking. As Facebook stalking is not restricted to actual stalkers, respondents suggest that the site facilitates this kind of behaviour from its users. Much as Shirky (2008) suggests that emergent media lowers the threshold on group activity, Facebook appears to have the same effect on interpersonal stalking. While stalking is treated as problematic, respondents also acknowledge that it is an extreme version of creeping, which is bound to the manner in which Facebook is designed:

I think creeping, from what I've heard, is more of a friendly way of being like 'I was so bored that I was just kind of clicking on people's profiles and looking at what was going up'. I think stalking is a little bit more aggressive, maybe? And a little bit more – like, it might be somebody who you haven't added as a friend who keeps requesting being a friend? Or somebody who keeps posting messages on your wall? That might be stalking. But I think creeping is kind of a bit more friendly (Stu_22).

Asynchronous information exchange leads to conditions of creeping and stalking. Facebook does have a real-time chat feature, but the majority of content is uploaded at a particular time and viewed at a later time. For this reason creeping and stalking are not always cast as something that 'bad' users do. Most respondents admit to creeping and stalking in order to find out about romantic interests. This is justified by the availability of relevant information on the average profile, including sexual orientation, relationship status, the kind of relation the user wishes to pursue, and material for small talk.

Stalking is treated as a reciprocal kind of risk, in the sense that users will talk about themselves being stalkers as much as they will describe themselves as being the victim of stalking. Being stalked and stalking are both characterized by a kind of invisibility. On the one hand, users are unable to confirm on the site that they have been stalked, yet they are able to covertly stalk other users. Many users speculate that if stalking were a more visible activity their use would change dramatically. Respondents treat stalking as problematic, but any judgement is tempered by the perception that users are responsible for their own visibility. As a result they justify their stalking by citing the other user's decision to upload this information, or their failure to use more stringent privacy settings:

And if I'm looking at it, I feel like if she has it public, then I can just look at it and I don't feel bad (Stu_16).

But I think if they provided the information to the public to see it then there's no reason you shouldn't be able to peek through it. As long as you don't make life difficult for them (Stu_11).

However, this asymmetrical relation of visibility does make some users uncomfortable. One user felt like a hypocrite because she was "violating their privacy but guarding my own" (Stu_26). This kind of scrutiny was typical when adding a new friend. Respondents would most often gravitate towards photographs to learn about new people, typically in order to discover "a little more what this person's about" (Stu_4). A distinction was made between profile pictures and tagged photos, with the latter seen as a more accurate description of the individual. Whereas profile pictures were a deliberate representation managed by the individual, tagged photos came from a multitude of users, and usually were not as carefully managed as profile photos. Yet even when looking at tagged photos users

are aware that these can be managed through untagging or removing all tagged photos from a profile. This comes off as a mix of candid insight and deliberate construction:

The profile picture, they chose that as their profile whereas tagged pictures, they didn't necessarily choose to be tagged. But they did choose not to untag themselves (Stu_23).

I'd probably go for tagged photos first. Just because those are the uncensored ones, unless they untag themselves. But profile pictures are carefully chosen – like, it's interesting to see that contrast but I think tagged photos are a little bit more real (Stu_21).

Respondents note that the representation gap between profile pictures and tagged pictures also apply to themselves:

That's kind of appealing but then, there is a gap between that profile picture I present and the actual tagged photos of myself. And I like having that distance. I don't want the first thing people to see when they come to my profile is me, drunk holding a bottle of whiskey (Stu_4).

Their discussion of creeping and stalking on Facebook suggests a kind of mutual transparency where watching is blended with being watched. Users are partly concerned with the covert scrutiny of their own personal information. Yet they also watch over their peers in this exact manner.

Creeping and stalking are not necessarily seen as negative, simply because users do it themselves. The risk of others watching also augments self-scrutiny as well as the scrutiny of vulnerable others, including younger siblings and other less experienced family members. One user describes her experience watching over her younger sister's profile, feeling compelled to do so because of her sister's visibility to others:

I am her big sister and, like, I understand that she's 14 and she's going to get into some trouble, so – I'll be like 'So, I noticed on Facebook that you have

some pictures of you and your friends and they're called Peach Schnapps!' [laughs] 'What's that all about? And I noticed that some of your friends are smoking pot in the pictures.' [laughs] And I'm like 'Do you really think that's such a good idea to have on your profile that everyone can see that and, like, I understand that you're going to drink and you're probably going to smoke pot and I don't care if you do that but just do it responsibly' (Stu_16).

Surveillance between users ranges from casually discovering what a close friend did over the weekend, to the targeted and prolonged monitoring of strangers. The stakes involved range from everyday identity maintenance to criminal harassment. This range of surveillance practices is unique in that they emerge seamlessly from the everyday use of social media. For this reason many users suspect that Facebook was designed specifically for activities like 'stalking' and 'creeping,' verbs that have since become synonymous with the site.

4.7 Facebook and university monitoring

Student respondents had some awareness of the kinds of surveillance issues raised by student users. In almost every interview these issues were framed by a controversial event that was unfolding at the time of the interviews. The president of an undergraduate student society had made a racially charged comment on a friend's photo on Facebook. Because of his prominence on campus, news of this comment spread quickly. Someone took a screen capture of the comment before it could be removed, spreading it beyond its original privacy settings. While respondents framed this incident in terms of university-led surveillance, it bears noting that the university only responded to content brought to their attention by students. Debate ensued over whether or not the president should resign from his duties. This story was relevant for two reasons. First, it was only the latest of a

series of racially charged incidents on campus. The university has long struggled with its reputation as unwelcoming. The fact this behaviour was now taking place on a quasi-public medium, and by a public figure added to the embarrassment. This leads us to the second source of controversy: comments that would otherwise remain private and bound to a particular context now transcend contexts as well as any privacy barrier.

There was no consensus about whether the blowback that the student felt was appropriate. Some respondents, while condemning the comment itself, felt that the president should not be held accountable to what they said in a non-professional setting: "If it wasn't on Facebook, and he just said that to his friend in passing and somebody's walking by, they wouldn't be like 'Oh my God, I demand your resignation!'" (Stu_23). Others felt that Facebook was an extension of the president's public image, and that similar standards would apply online as on campus:

[H]e posted it on someone else's wall and anyone who is his friend can see this wall. It wasn't like a private message that we managed to steal (Stu_28). If your profile's public and you make a public comment that is inappropriate like that then by all means. If you've chosen to put yourself out there and become a public figure – like, I wouldn't be so keen on a university just checking out what students are doing who aren't in public positions like that. But I guess, like, you just kind of have to be conscious of what you're doing and you shouldn't be making comments like that anyway (Stu_16).

The lack of clarity on this issue suggests that concepts like private, public, personal, and professional are routinely used to describe Facebook. The site, as well as appropriate conduct and retaliation, is contested terrain. Regardless of what respondents felt was appropriate, they generally agreed that university-led monitoring was a possibility, especially for students who held some kind of

prominence. Consequently, students felt that they were not likely to be targeted by university staff or administration:

He's been targeted because he's in that position of power and he is representing everybody else whereas, like, if I said something like that, which I wouldn't, to one of my friends, it probably wouldn't be picked up – and people might see it, but it wouldn't be made into such a big deal (Stu_21).

I guess the only reason I can think of is like, [the university] wanting to make sure there is no negative image of themselves being portrayed somewhere on the internet (Stu_27).

Respondents struggled to imagine a situation where content they uploaded on Facebook would be of interest to the university. This is partly because they considered their lives to be less interesting than that of a racially insensitive student president. Yet it also seemed that the tangibility of peer-led monitoring eclipsed less overt forms of scrutiny. One exception to this perception occurred when students would organize house parties. The university also struggled with a reputation as a 'party school', which damaged relations with alumni as well as non-university residents. Students recognized this issue as motivation for the university to watch over student activity on Facebook:

The institution might want to bust up crazy sounding events before they happen. Stuff like massive parties that might get the police involved and [the university] doesn't want any more of that exposure I know, so that's probably a good motivation why they would want to know that information (Stu_27).

Other students believed that parties were targets of university as well as police intervention:

And I'm sure, like, the [municipality] police and [the university] have some kind of alliance together so, in that sense, the police could find out who's having a pancake kegger and who's going to be on [street name] even though it's not Homecoming (Stu_21).

Regarding these risks, students would take precautionary measures like removing an event posting in the days leading up to a party. This was treated as a compromise between generating publicity for the event and maintaining some privacy from unwanted visitors. Given the media exposure that homecoming and similar events received, it stands to reason that these parties would be subject to university surveillance. Generally students believed that the university actively searched Facebook for evidence of these events.

When asked why the university would collect information on Facebook, students generally cited the school's reputation as motivation. This presents a novel development in terms of surveillance and social media: that the post-secondary institution was also subject to heightened visibility and scrutiny. Some respondents suggested that the university was in a more precarious position than any of its students:

It reflects pretty negatively, I think, and it makes sense to me that they're interested about knowing more, at the very least. I don't know what they plan to do with that information, but I don't blame them at all for being interested (Stu_11).

The perception of university-based surveillance adds another dimension to the friendly strain of surveillance described in this chapter. While users are generally not concerned with being visible to administrators, this risk pushes them to scrutinize their presence as well as their peers. These findings occurred when the university was increasingly present on social media. This illustrates why there are grey areas for appropriate conduct by universities. As university administrations continue to migrate to social media, student users are only beginning to develop a language to describe this use. It is reasonable to expect a shift from students not

seeing themselves as targets of university monitoring to one that takes this kind of scrutiny for granted. These interviews document a turning point in terms of university presence on social media, which is followed up in the next chapter.

Students felt that the university has legitimate reasons to watch over them. Based on this knowledge they would assess whether or not they fit their perceived criteria for targeting, namely if they were public figures or hosting a student party. Knowledge of these criteria extends from offline sociality in the university setting. The migration of these criteria onto Facebook is a key feature of the convergence that fuels the mutual augmentation of surveillance on social media. Because academics and sociality overlap on Facebook, students feel obliged to consider the former when using the site for the latter.

4.8 Workplace surveillance and market surveillance

Respondents were less accepting of surveillance led by employers and potential employers than they were of university surveillance. While post-secondary institutions had a reputation seemingly tied to students' private lives, respondents cited a personal-professional barrier that was ruptured by employer-led scrutiny on social media. Curiously, almost all respondents acknowledged that workplace-based scrutiny occurs. Regardless of respondents' views on the matter, it seemed reasonable to them that an employer would access the social media service to find information about their employees. Here, ethical concerns are trumped by the sheer ease-of-access associated with sites like Facebook:

I guess to see if they have personal habits that don't fit your employer's mandate, a lot of them I feel are superfluous or not that relevant. I don't think

your employment should be denied because of something which happens completely outside the workplace. That seems a bit ridiculous, like you drink on the weekends so you are not longer fit to like, type (Stu_28).

Not only is it a matter of Facebook information not fitting in a workplace context, but passing judgement based on the site augments the legitimacy and authority given to information on Facebook, which one user (Stu_23) feels is problematic. This is an important dynamic for mutual augmentation: that the increased use of Facebook by different agents only augments the legitimacy of the information the site hosts. While acknowledging moral as well as practical issues with employers using Facebook data, students are inclined to believe that this is increasingly used as criteria for employees. Student users also report a struggle between a contextual sense of privacy and privileging sheer access. Users have the right to treat Facebook as a context separate from the workplace, but employers can often access it and form judgements about users:

They put it up there – but it’s not necessarily for the employer. Um, but the employer might have access to it (Stu_13).

I don’t think that there’s really any measure of appropriateness. There’s not really any etiquette when it comes to the internet, because it’s so new and there aren’t any real privacy laws when it comes to that. So it’s kind of just information that’s floating around, so employers and institutions have kind of taken this as like ‘Well, if they’re putting this out there, then it’s for your information, you can just access it and it just is another tool that lets us judge people’s integrity’ (Stu_16).

One user speculates that employers would know that information on Facebook would not determine workplace performance, but go on to use it as criteria simply to thin out a candidate pool, stating that “they’ve got to start somewhere” (Stu_11). The sheer ease-of-access offered by Facebook makes it an obvious starting point. Some users justify Facebook scrutiny based on the nature of work, which may ask

for more of a personal engagement. For instance, one respondent (Stu_28) suggests that an employee at a queer positive workplace may be scrutinized for homophobic content on their profile.

As with earlier instances, users are accorded with a degree of control, and thus held accountable for negative outcomes:

I don't quite understand how potential employers get access to people's profiles unless they have privacy settings that are incredibly minimal and open to everybody. And, in that sense, it's, I think, the person's fault for having it like that if they're denied a job (Stu_21).

Employers have every right to sort of type in your name and if they see fit and see if you're there and see if there's anything incriminating on first glance because you have the ability to make it more private and because you have the ability to completely control what people see. And if you were smart enough, I guess you wouldn't put up photographs that are incriminating or make posts that are incriminating (Stu_22).

As the majority of respondents had little experience with full time work, their attitudes towards workplace surveillance and Facebook were usually not based on their own ordeals. Some respondents did experience these kinds of concerns, and described an attempt to maintain boundaries between their workplace life and their Facebook/personal life. Here, the issue of 'friending' a co-worker or employer was seen as a dilemma: establishing a friendship connection would rupture a barrier between personal and professional contexts, yet refusing that offer would be seen as an affront or even an admission of guilt. This situation was further complicated in cases where respondents worked for the same company as a parent. Respondents would want to hide information from both parents and employers, and also did not want to be responsible for having information about their personal life 'leak' into

the workplace and reflect poorly on their entire family. One respondent cited his mother's reputation as potentially compromised by such a leak:

I don't want them going through pictures of me you know, drinking, playing flip cup at university and make certain judgments against her. Eventually (...) it happened in that I had a number of people add me on Facebook. One of which concerned me the most is my mother's direct subordinate. In that, she has access to this information and she is next in line for my mother's position – which is understood, but if there is any conflict... I don't know. Could that information have been used in any way? There's always that information in the back of my mind. And it did worry me (Stu_30).

Among respondents lacking workplace experience, many anticipated that social media scrutiny would be a concern later on. This was especially true when applying for jobs and when attending interviews:

Because now most of my friends are in fourth year and they're going to graduate and get jobs and that kind of thing, they're learning the hard way that, you know, everyone looks at Facebook and there's a necessity to defend yourself or prevent people from really seeing problematic behaviours such as drinking or, you know, embarrassing photos that have a tendency to get up on Facebook even when you don't want them to (Stu_22).

In these cases, respondents stated that they would deactivate their profile while searching for a job. Others anticipate opening a more public profile. By this they mean that this profile would have fewer privacy restrictions, but also content that would be more suitable to a general public, including potential employers:

I have one friend, she's twenty-four and out of high school she went to become a realtor and so she has two Facebook pages – one that's of her as a realtor and one that's her, like, with her friends, which is interesting, you know what I mean? Kind of living a dual life on Facebook (Stu_23).

While these discussions were typically framed in terms of potential actions, many users report already doing this when applying for summer jobs. This typically involved the removal of problematic content, and increased self-censorship:

During the lead up to the end of the school year, I remove things like 'Gears of War 2' as my religious views and Favourite Movies... it's just stuff like that, you know. I remove all my... basically, all my information that isn't my profile picture or contact. Or I change it to something that's very palatable. My political views are now moderate and I have no religious views, or whatever (Stu_11).

When compared to peer-based-scrutiny, student respondents have little experience or awareness with workplace surveillance. This trend is furthered when speaking about market surveillance. At the time of interviews, respondents were generally not concerned with the possibility that marketers, advertisers, or third-party developers could access their personal information. When prompted on the issue, many respondents acknowledged that Facebook would use their content in order to generate feedback regarding the site's services. When discussing third-party application, respondents were not aware of the access these had to profiles. Rather, they based their criticism on the claim that these applications were a waste of time and cluttered up profiles and news feeds.

In terms of Facebook itself, some users speculate that Facebook is not taking a unique approach to personal information when compared to other web services. One user states that if anything, Facebook would be apathetic about all this data. Here the interpersonal use and value of the site is seen as taking precedent over any viable business strategy:

You always put your personal information on there because it's just like fun to fill out, first of all. And it is for your friends and you to interact. I don't know if like the Facebook guy really cares about the billions of billions of people, like he might just be doing that because that's the standard personal website info (Stu_27).

Many users speculated that Facebook was adopting a business model based on selling personal information to businesses, as well as through targeted advertising and profiling users:

They're selling it to advertisers. Advertisers will know what people at [the university] are interested in or what a certain age group is doing. Basically I don't think that they have any sinister motives – they're not personally collecting my information and looking at it, they're just interested in money. Like, what they can do, selling it to advertisers, selling it to interested parties (Stu_16).

One respondent takes a perspective based on indeterminacy of use. While they speculate that it is being sold to interested parties, they also suspect that key uses – and related business models – have yet to be established. This speaks to the potential value of the service:

Sell it to the highest bidder, I guess, maybe? Because, yeah, I don't know, you can use – I mean, we've barely even scratched the surface with how much you can determine from, like, so little information. And whether you determine things that are real or not, you're still drawing conclusions, right? I don't know. I can see corporations loving that shit, right (Stu_23)?

One user focuses on feedback mechanisms in Facebook's advertising services as using personal information for gain. This particular user treats this as a lesser of two evils (the more evil option being untargeted advertising), but borrows some Orwellian imagery to describe the platform:

And, if you can target your advertising – you know, they even have your little 'More ads', 'Did you like this?' ad. They're making a very deliberate effort to make more money off you, which is fine, I mean, this is free and I don't have to look at the ads if I don't feel like it. It seems like a trade to me. Totally, the idea is to maximize their output from advertising. (...). I approve of the fact that I'm seeing an ad for something that might interest me rather than something that has nothing to do with me. There's a certain 'Big Brother' aspect to it, which is kind of uncomfortable, but, uh, honestly, I prefer targeted advertising rather than having to sit through some dumb ad about a coffee machine on TV, for instance (Stu_11).

Interestingly, the same respondent goes on to position a heavily surveillant approach to Facebook as detrimental to its business model:

And I can't see Facebook being used as a Big Brother tool just because that would limit its potential for profit, and it's so profitable. So yeah, anything you do to decrease the audience limits the amount of capital you can generate from it (Stu_11).

In terms of surveillant perceptions, this suggests that targeted advertising is seen as a relatively mild form of scrutiny when compared to police or government surveillance. The consequences of targeted advertising for this user are relatively benign, especially when juxtaposed against more popular surveillance imagery. Other users, while acknowledging that their information is being used for these purposes, treat it as a reasonable price to pay for a service they use quite extensively:

It doesn't bother me about that. That's just part of using the free service. It's a free service that I wholeheartedly take advantage of, and that's something they ask me for and I don't mind that they see that I'm using... I'm browsing pictures a lot. That's fine with me, I don't mind (Stu_2).

Student perceptions of market-based surveillance are linked to their use of Facebook. As a free service, many students willingly consent to Facebook led scrutiny in exchange for this service. While students do not explicitly describe these practices in terms of surveillance, the idea that they consent to being monitored by the site in order to watch over each other suggests that monitoring is fundamental to using the site.

4.9 Making sense of the private / public distinction

Terms like private and public came up frequently when discussing Facebook with student respondents. Although these interviews uncovered much debate over the status of information on Facebook, individual respondents expressed uncertainty about whether it should be considered public or private. It was clear that not only was a public/private binary insufficient to describe Facebook, but it seemed that Facebook was a catalyst to reconsider these values.

As a starting point, Facebook represents a kind of blurring of private and public, at least as generally understood in North America prior to the advent of social media. In addition, the term 'personal' typically crosscuts this discussion, such that personal information appears in public spaces, private spaces, or both. One can speak of Facebook as a public presence in that users report an ostensible comfort with sharing personal details with an extended audience of 'friends.' Here, public seems to be synonymous with an audience-based exposure. Users share their information with a public. Typically this is a public that they have wilfully shaped by choosing their friends. Some users, especially those in their first year of studies, drew parallels between their exposure on Facebook and the kind of publicity sought by reality TV stars. Clearly one of the key motivations for using Facebook was to share specific information with a somewhat amorphous (though occasionally specific) audience:

It's pretty much all about attention, as far as pictures; taking pictures, things like that – because everyone can see that. 'Oh, let's see what A— did this weekend. Oh, she had a fun weekend. She went to Toronto or, she went to Europe. Wow I'm really jealous.' or 'That's really cool.' Things like that. It's almost as if we're in a world where we watch a lot of reality TV and there's TV shows like *The Hills* and things like that, Facebook is our own little form of entertainment where we can get a glimpse of everyone's life (Stu_5).

Some users approach the kind of publicity offered by Facebook with a degree of trepidation. Often they would make comparisons to real-life exposure in order to underscore its novelty, and the difficulty of adjusting to the service. One user likened the circulation of photos on Facebook as if “I had a photo album at my house and somebody came and, like, copied it and then, like, put it in their photo album” (Stu_23). Another (Stu_28) claimed that the wall was modelled after the whiteboard on students’ doors in residence, thus making it a kind of public space. Students made comparisons between putting content on Facebook and being visible outside. However, the implications from this imagery were not unanimous. While some believed being outside led to legitimate scrutiny by the public, others using this imagery believed that users still had reasonable expectations against monitoring and harassment, especially in the form of creeping and stalking. Privacy also matters to respondents, especially when personal information leaks in unanticipated or undesirable ways. One user who describes Facebook as private refers to its extensive privacy controls, yet also acknowledges a public element insofar as the site itself is open to all:

I’d say it’s private in the sense that like your own profile is like, your own profile and you can control what’s on it because even if somebody writes on your wall, you can make it invisible kind of thing. So, it’s totally private because you can have as much information as you want or as little information as you want, but then it’s public in the sense that anyone can use it (Stu_27).

Users take particular measures to preserve their privacy, either as a general effort to keep specific information away from specific people. The following section will describe these efforts in further detail. Although some users, especially those nearing graduation, value privacy more than others, users commonly managed

these two values simultaneously. One user referred to Facebook as “a completely public expression of private and personal matters” (Stu_22). This statement suggests not only that competing values coexist on the site, but also that using Facebook is contradictory. It suggests that by default users are taking information and putting it in a context that is more public than desired or necessary. The fact that this is typically a deliberate and wilful act is especially perplexing for users:

It’s supposed to be personal information but Facebook makes it very public and you’re supposed to be, I guess, with every post you make, keeping in mind the fact that everyone can see this and that this is a public sphere for, I guess, private communication (Stu_22).

Student users also make distinctions between private and public presences, noting that their friends often make their profiles public: “I think that my profile is private space, but a lot of people’s profiles, they treat them like public spaces” (Stu_16).

Other users treat privacy as something that has long gone, especially online:

I’m pretty sure all my private information is already long gone. There’s no sense of privacy in this modern world and everything. Because everything I do is basically online these days. I feel like there’s little or no safety and, therefore, I don’t need to curb what I’m doing on Facebook (Stu_22).

While conversations about public and private on Facebook are messy, it is clearly not a matter of simply having a boundary that separates private from public, even though some spaces are designated as more private than others. Private information may become public in consequence later. Respondents treat social media as a kind of public where users balance cross-contextual transparency with a deliberate performance of public exposure:

It’s the rat race for popularity, clashing with privacy, and people try and balance that and they find somewhere along that continuum to adjust their settings. But, yeah, you know, that governs basically how I operate on Facebook, like am I worried about this person or my parents or whatever

seeing this, because I know they check my brother's Facebook. Sometimes not so excellent things wind up on my profile. But on the other hand, I do want my information to be there, I do want everyone to see my photos and, you know, I want to be visible. Facebook is a tool to remind people you're there (Stu_11).

4.10 Managing online presences

Although social media like Facebook offer new opportunities for public exposure, users report having a range of tactics at their disposal to manage their presence. These typically involve restricting information flows, and exceed the range of privacy features offered by Facebook. In general student users make extensive use of privacy settings. They do this to restrict information from the general public, but also for more targeted purposes like hiding a particular photo album from specific individuals. One user describes their use of privacy settings as "keeping my cards close to my chest" (Stu_23). The majority of users express a familiarity with privacy settings, so much so that they claim that they return to adjust them every few months. Others find them confusing, but maintain a commitment to mastering these settings:

I'm quite familiar with their privacy settings. I'm using quite a few of them at the moment. The interface for privacy settings is not very good. It's opaque unless you spend a while learning about it (Stu_11).

Based on prior experiences, users will often return to their settings to ensure that they are still in order. Upon joining their school's academic network, one user noticed that his personal information had gone public to a degree that had not been anticipated. After this incident, privacy settings were appraised "every so often [and] make sure that I check it, to make sure that only my friends can see my

profile” (Stu_5). One user set her privacy controls such that other users cannot seek him out. In effect, this user has to initiate contact with others:

So now no one can add me unless I find them and if you search my name on Facebook I don't come up, even if – I think in the [the university] community my name comes up, but no picture. But if you're outside the [the university] community, nothing will come up so I have to search for people (Stu_22).

Another tactic employed by users was to maintain dynamic and contextual privacy settings. Users would often augment their privacy during job interviews, such that potential employers could not locate their personal content. One user (Stu_7) reports keeping his profile fairly private by default, but lowering it on his birthday. Another user went so far as to cancel his Facebook account temporarily in recognition of how his position as a political leader could be compromised by his online presence:

I mentioned I cancelled Facebook for a little while; it was for quite a long period of time. It was because I was vice-president of [youth political group]. And, that was for all of Ontario and there was something like six to eight thousand people who were under me. (...) I had that leadership position too and, that's when I realized that you know, this is my personal life but, it's publicly... like my public personal life, that could reflect negatively on the [youth political group] (Stu_2).

Other users would log onto their friends' accounts in order to see the extent to which they were exposing themselves. By looking at their presence from another user's perspective, they were able to get a better sense of how their online presence was perceived. Interestingly, this is a feature that Facebook later integrated into their privacy offerings. During the interview many users stated their intention to revise their settings, with one user doing this mid-interview. When asked what she was doing, she responded:

I guess I'm changing it to just friends now. Like, I don't know (...) I had it on the second highest privacy setting, like 'friends of friends' can't see my profile but [the university] could. Like, people at [the university]. But I just realized that I didn't really – I'm not sure, actually, if it's just the settings have changed since I last updated. Like, I'm not quite sure, but I thought I had it as only friends (Stu_16).

The dynamic nature of Facebook's privacy interface coupled with complex views about privacy and overlapping social contexts usually led to a heightened vigilance when users reflected on these issues. Another user states:

It definitely makes me reflect on my Facebook and I think I'm going to go check my privacy settings again because I keep forgetting how important it is to people and how many people are on Facebook (Stu_22).

Users also manage their online presence by deliberately choosing not to upload certain information. This self-censorship is described along very common-sense lines. Users describe a process where they simply do not share photos and thoughts that do not reflect well on their reputation, or are otherwise discomfoting:

I've always been aware of the abilities that the internet has of locating you and being bad for you. So anything I put out there on the internet – if I'm afraid of it ever coming back to haunt me, I won't put it out there. And I consciously make that decision for every piece of information that I put out. So I'm not really worried about stalking or creeping because anything out there on me is kind of what I've already put out (Stu_18).

Anything that you wouldn't want your parents to know isn't something that should be on the internet (Stu_16).

Everyone just has to act as their own little censorship bureau and deny information, delete information, post false information (Stu_4).

The above suggests that users act in a way where they retain control over their online reputation by virtue of their ability to omit or remove damaging content. Parents and creepers are employed to justify this degree of self-censorship. Self-

copyright goes beyond uploading information, but also doing things that could be photographed or otherwise documented:

For me to be caught on photo doing something stupid, I had to be doing something stupid in the first place. And if I avoid that, which I have been hit or miss about in the past, then it's a non-issue. They can't post photos of me that didn't happen (Stu_11).

In person, when I talk to people 'this doesn't go on Facebook.' That's a way of managing my personal information online (Stu_2).

Because of this perceived agency, the idea of other users encountering trouble with their online presence is met with little sympathy, as respondents feel these users should simply know better. In particular, students claim that by uploading information onto their profiles, users are "inviting people to look into their life" (Stu_5). Here users are seen as deliberately uploading information about themselves in a public setting, and then complaining about consequences that they clearly should have anticipated. Interestingly, these discussions often give way to the fact that the sheer volume of information as well as social ties means that managing an online presence is challenging:

I guess we all tend to forget is that what we put on Facebook isn't personal or private in any means because of the hundreds and sometimes thousands of people that you allow to see your profile (Stu_22).

This user compares this unexpected exposure to the 'reply all' button on email interfaces, where users will accidentally send a message meant for one person to an entire community. Facebook's opportunities for public exposure are experienced by users as overwhelming, and as a reason to not be diligent:

I'm pretty sure all my private information is already long gone. There's no sense of privacy in this modern world and everything – because everything I do is basically online these days, I feel like there's little or no safety and, therefore, I don't need to curb what I'm doing on Facebook (Stu_22).

However, some users state that they also monitor the kind of content that their friends will post about them. These users have taken exception to some wall posts and photos authored by their friends. These posts have been deleted, and the culprits are now under increased scrutiny. Here we see respondents watching over their more problematic friends, recognizing that others are watching the kind of content that is exchanged with these friends. Yet some users also suggest that they might not know all that is out there about them, acknowledging that their efforts to manage their reputation may be insufficient. In some cases users will also prune their social network by removing people from their friend lists. This is done as a last resort when these friends are deemed to be a liability, but also occurs when a user feels they accumulated too many friends. In the latter case respondents will target friends with whom they maintain weak ties:

It's kind of like a monitoring process also, when you go on friends' pages. Like, when they upload a new photo album that you were there for, you go in and you're just like 'Oh, these are such terrible pictures!' and you're like 'I need this one removed, and this one removed...' So it's kind of like, you have a Facebook to control what your friends are putting on Facebook about you (Stu_18).

Am I supposed to police my friends now? You know what I mean? Like, I don't know, that's why, like, the only thing I can come down to is, like, just getting off Facebook. But even then, Facebook is a force to be reckoned with. I'll always be on Facebook even if I'm not on Facebook (Stu_23).

In general users will attempt to manage their personal network of friends by appraising each friendship tie. These users draw parallels to common-sense assessments of friends beyond social media. That is, they will hesitate to become Facebook friends with someone who lacks discretion in face-to-face settings.

Beyond this scrutiny users develop more general guidelines to determine whether or not they will add someone as a Facebook friend:

Most of my friends are pretty smart. Like, they are mostly like me – they're not going to be like 'Sell me drugs'. Like, that's something that you should send in a message. (...) Because I make friends – I'm very discerning when it comes to making friends, that's why I don't have very many friends at [the university] [laughs] who go to [the university]. So, yeah, most of the people I make friends with have to be at the same level intellectually as me and most of them are interested in the same things as me (Stu_16).

I had to consciously come up with this rule because who are all these Facebook friends, I don't know anybody. Like, I'm not going to Facebook friend someone after the first meeting, unless someone expressly jokes about Facebook. And is like 'oh, I'll add you', I've decided that I'm not going to Facebook friend someone until the second or the third meeting because; otherwise you get a lot of like excessive friends, who you'll never see again (Stu_28).

Users will also remove entire sets of people whose Facebook friendship is no longer valued. This tactic is similar to cleansing/purging unwanted photos or other content on Facebook. One respondent (Stu_22) revises the term paper trail to speak of a Facebook trail of personal information that they are able to manage. However, some users believe that with so much information about them online, a few incriminating photographs will be lost in a sea of less objectionable content:

I wouldn't post any pictures like that so, sometimes I'm just like, have the urge to just de-tag them or whatever, but... 'meh.' I try not to let it bother me too much, because I do have like 888 pictures up there, so if one picture is ugly, who cares (Stu_27)?

Users rely on several tactics to manage their presence on Facebook. Yet these measures are typically used to mitigate risks against other individuals: family members, exes, and strangers. Concern over institutional scrutiny is curiously absent from discussion. Many users cannot fathom being the object of scrutiny by their university, employer, or marketers. This is partly fuelled by the perception that

no damaging information about them is online; in effect, they have 'nothing to hide.' Beyond this, most users do not see themselves as a target of institutional surveillance simply because they do not believe they warrant interest or suspicion. The fact that university surveillance was framed by the student president scandal augments this sentiment.

Attempts to manage privacy are often case-based; that is, to stop specific information at a specific point in time. Many users acknowledge that information will still 'leak' beyond an intended audience. This suggests an acknowledgement of partial futility: if information is uploaded it will most likely travel. This leaking is attributed to other users as well as faulty software:

No one is very meticulous about what they put up on Facebook and what you think you might have control with your camera, you couldn't know if you had 20 other people possibly taking pictures with cell phones, with Blackberries, with – do iPhones take photos? I don't know. Anything can take a photo these days and they could have anything that would possibly incriminate you (Stu_22).

The fact that you have no control of what other people do in regards to you over Facebook. You have no control over what image they present of you. So even if you try your best to control this, there is nothing you can do if someone posts a nice big note about how much of an asshole you are. There is just nothing you can do about it. They can tag you, and sure you can un-tag yourself, but the fact is on their page there still exists this note or a photo essay if they felt like it (Stu_4).

Information can also leak for a variety of mundane reasons, such as users downloading photos onto their computer and distributing them later, keeping photos dormant on a digital camera for later exposure, or uploading those photos and not tagging people in them. One user expresses concerns over very private secrets, using leak metaphor to describe an accumulation of small indiscretions that lead to eventual exposure:

People like to have to have privacy. And, you know, there are secrets within a person that's like, for example, I myself even have secrets that nobody else knows. Like, for example I don't even tell my parents, I don't tell my friends, but you know, you leak out your secrets in like, droplets. And, if people can collect enough droplets, they could actually make a picture a general fragment of what your secret might be. So, you know, you don't want people to know that (Stu_7).

Facebook surveillance is a product of information convergence, simply because so many people are using it. The challenges for visibility and exposure posed by Facebook are augmented as more people join it, and as it takes on a greater presence in different social contexts:

Like, Facebook is so new, like, we don't know what kind of social implications it's going to have. And it's becoming such a – like, a momentous force that I don't think – like, it's like people jumped on board before they knew where it was going in a way (Stu_23).

Much as friendly surveillance is rooted in the everyday use of social media, mitigating the risks of unwanted exposure is embedded in mundane practices like un-tagging photos and choosing not to upload damaging content. As these risks are tied to information flows between previously distinct contexts, students use privacy settings extensively to ensure that these 'leaks' are kept to a minimum.

4.11 Discussion

Student use of social media follows a general trajectory: initially enthusiastic users come to learn the consequences of their visibility, namely that information that is constructive among friends has socially destructive consequences in other spheres. While Facebook endeavours to make everyone's information accessible to everyone else, students learn that this leads to humiliation, harassment, and further sanctions from parents, employers and other watchers. As a result, students become

cautious and many anticipate cleaning up or shutting down their Facebook account upon graduation. Young users get more conservative with age, especially in the transition from the first to the fourth year of their undergraduate degree:

I don't really have a strictly professional life that's why my profile is, I believe it's completely open. I don't think I've set limits or anything but yeah, in the future once I do move on from being an undergraduate I am gonna start locking down stuff right away. Like if I'm going to apply to do a masters or a PhD, I don't want people browsing my page to see if I'm a worthy candidate, it should be based on academics. Same thing in a professional world, I'm not going to allow it to prevent me (Stu_4).

Students recognize that what is desirable in their current context will not be desirable upon graduation, and anticipate a shift from publicity to privacy-based concerns:

I think it might be because I'm eighteen and I never look at the big picture. I never look at consequences, so as of right now it's not a concern. I think as like later on (...) I would never post wedding photos, I would never post baby photos. (...) I think as far as university goes, it's fun and it's functional but, I wouldn't want – as soon and I'm done university, I wouldn't want people knowing anything else about my life. I wouldn't want them to know my grandkids and things like that (Stu_5).

The same respondent describes her Facebook use as a gradual accumulation of information. The vast amount of photographs she would have in a ten years is justification for an eventual rupture:

I mean if I were to continue to have Facebook for the next ten years, I'd probably have over a thousand photos albums. So, I don't know if I could go into... say I was a high school teacher, and then once some of my students graduated they added me on Facebook, I don't know if I'd want them to see pictures of me all the way back from my high school days. Like, I don't think that's appropriate (Stu_5).

The above concern is emblematic of friendly surveillance on Facebook: an online presence is built from small contributions users and their friends. No single act seems malicious, but when taken together over time they can have damaging

consequences. This is especially true at a time when Facebook's user population is sharply increasing, with a consequential increase of contributors to any user's visibility, audiences of that visibility, and social contexts in which that visibility will have consequences.

In this chapter, three issues emerge that are relevant to a discussion of social media surveillance among university-aged users. The first issue is users' relations to other kinds of surveillance. Surveillance concerns for student-users are primarily individualistic. They report and anticipate surveillant relations with family, friends, romantic interests and classmates. They are generally concerned with situated and immediate forms of surveillance. Users do not want parents to find out about their social life, nor do they want ex-boyfriends to know the details of their friendship network. They want to maintain boundaries that separate different social contexts. Potential consequences range from social embarrassment to foregoing life plans, notably careers and further education. From their perspective these concerns eclipse government, institutional, and market-led scrutiny conducted through Facebook. Yet peer-based surveillance does not follow a specific diagram. Users will attempt to keep in touch and maintain visibility with one audience while hiding from others. Users typically make use of increasingly granular privacy settings, but also go beyond Facebook's privacy offerings by providing a false name, manage multiple profiles for different audiences, or temporarily deactivate their profile.

In general users do not believe that state or institution led surveillance will occur to them. Yet upon some reflection, they will acknowledge specific concerns. One respondent (Stu_28), while downplaying the general threat of government-

based surveillance, concedes that she could be subject to complications entering China as a result of politically-themed content on her profile. These risks are less tangible, but clearly still present when users consider their visibility on Facebook.

Second, interpersonal surveillance is mutual, as watching and being watched are interchangeable. Users were able to describe their own exposure as a distinct concern from watching their peers. They typically hold different standards between what they want to expose about themselves and what they want to find out about others. Yet when discussing concepts like privacy, stalking, and personal information, they easily switch from one to another. When considering their own visibility, their ability to access their peers' personal information is the most accessible yardstick:

I find it kind of weird that I have such insight into her life and I can, like, basically judge her, like I don't know, it's really weird to me. That's why I don't really use it that much, because I feel like all these people can do the same thing (Stu_16).

From this perspective, surveillance on Facebook is treated as a mixed engagement where watching and being watched are traded off against each other. This applies to more extreme cases of Facebook scrutiny like creeping and stalking, but respondents also understand their own visibility by way of others. While the logic that 'everyone is doing it' appears to put users at ease, the above quote suggests that peer visibility often triggers vigilance among users to guard their own information. This adds an important dimension to mutual augmentation: that peer visibility triggers greater self-scrutiny.

The third issue pertains to users' perceptions of agency and responsibility. Users cite Facebook's extensive privacy controls, and even novice users have some

familiarity with them. As a result users feel responsible for the outcome of their social media experience, and extend this responsibility to others. In the event of privacy violations or other unwanted consequences, respondents report that users only have themselves to blame. Yet users also acknowledge that managing an online identity is complex and laborious. This is because managing a presence on Facebook means managing an extensive set of peers, an ever-changing interface, and a variety of ways in which seemingly guarded information can 'leak.' This apparent lack of control pushed one user to contemplate quitting for a second time. The user is quick to acknowledge that he will not regain control by deactivating his profile. Even if he leaves, he will still be there. Facebook retains his information, and other users can still post information about him:

I don't want anybody to have anything on me, you know what I mean? So, once again, like, it will, like – I mean, it just gives me another reason to even get off Facebook. Deactivate, sorry – you can't leave Facebook (Stu_23).

Taken together these three features offer insight into the main features of friendly surveillance on Facebook. Students are aware that different kinds of audiences and social contexts intersect on the site, but still construct a visible profile for close friends. Their understanding of their own visibility is based on knowledge that other agents are watching them, but is also based on the visibility of their friends. They perceive online reputation as being a personal responsibility even while acknowledging that vigilant self-scrutiny is not enough. These features suggest a tension between complex, multi-contextual information flows and usage based on simple peer-to-peer visibility. Moreover, the continued growth of Facebook – in terms of audience, contexts and features – continues to add

importance to the content on the site. A photograph that was uploaded when there were a million Facebook users becomes all the more important when its potential audience jumps to five hundred million.

As a partial study of the mutual augmentation that exists on Facebook, this chapter indicates that this surveillance ranges from interpersonal scrutiny to an awareness of other kinds of watching. Some kinds of surveillance – like that which comes from peers – are pervasive and pedestrian, and will have minor and specific bearings on profile scrutiny. Surveillance by the university may be occasional and target specific content, and lead to more deliberate self-scrutiny by students. Hiding information about parties and watching over friends for incriminating content are an immediate response to parents and university administrators. Finally, students may be vaguely aware of future employers or marketers having access to their information. They may not encounter any concrete instance where this happens, but the notion itself is enough for users to self-monitor – however vaguely – for content that could be a liability. The following chapter further considers these dynamics by shifting focus towards university watchers.

Chapter 5 – Institutional Surveillance on Facebook

This chapter explores how institutions like universities are adopting social media. Institutions refer to organizations that are charged with the task of providing services to or otherwise managing a specific population. Their involvement in Facebook is a distinct type of surveillance that focuses on a set of individuals. This is the latest attempt by institutions, including schools and universities (Monahan and Torres 2010), to watch over and control their population. Social media foster a rapidly increasing visibility of personal information, some important implications of which are explored here. As we have seen, the term social media refers to a set of web-based services that facilitate the authorship and distribution of media between users. The most popular social media site is Facebook with over half a billion users worldwide. Despite its rapid adoption in contemporary social life, it is also a fairly mundane service, and users have developed an ongoing engagement with it that is increasingly complacent.

As earlier chapters have indicated, Facebook began as a social networking service for college-aged peers at select universities in the United States and Canada. Yet as a much broader demographic from different social spheres sought membership its growth has brought about a social convergence within the medium. As a result user activity is made visible to a much larger population, and many users have expressed concerns about the consequences of this transparency. This relates to what danah boyd (2007) identifies as invisible audiences in social networking, such that users do not know who can access their personal information.

5.1 Introduction

Facebook and other social media are increasingly interlaced with other institutional functions. This is a by-product of its popularity among users, but institutional activity is now a prevalent aspect of social media. A cursory search of news media suggests that nearly all aspects of contemporary social life are affected by the rise of social media (Roper 2010; Sweney 2010a; Sweney 2010b; Dodd 2010). A rapidly growing user base is volunteering information about themselves, their peers, and their social world. Corporate bodies treat this content as a valuable commodity, but its designers and businesses are struggling to find the best ways to exploit this goldmine. This inquiry helps clarify Facebook's status for institutions. The fact that it offers unprecedented access to personal information suggests that it is a resource. Yet it is also a liability to universities and other institutions in that it augments their own visibility in ways that are difficult to manage. Institutions are making the most out of new kinds of information exchange by developing practices to manage risks while exploiting opportunities.

At the time of writing no real guidelines exist at a university level to shape appropriate conduct, with protocols and best practices still in negotiation. Surveillance Studies benefit from seeing how institutional policies emerge, with user-initiated, ground-up practices becoming the basis for formal mandates. The following research highlights specific dilemmas and turning points that detail how academic institutions use social media. Given the novelty of this topic, these findings will serve as an exploratory introduction to social media surveillance in the academic setting. The relation between institutional and friendly surveillance is

complex. The first employees to use Facebook for the university were themselves Facebook users. They had experience using the site in a peer-to-peer fashion, and their institutional usage reflected this. This is an example of interpersonal surveillance directly shaping and augmenting institutional surveillance. Yet these practices are dynamic, and the research discussed below pinpoints instances where institutional scrutiny takes on a more categorical approach, namely in targeting student parties that tarnish the school's reputation. Facebook's recently enhanced search feature makes it easier for the university to target relevant content. Thus, while institutional surveillance emerged out of individual scrutiny, it develops its own practices based not only on the institution's mandate, but also on Facebook features that follow this mandate.

Social media have an increasing impact on institutions, and the nature of that impact requires clarification. Facebook describes its service with terms like 'sharing', 'conversations', suggesting a sense of familiarity and a high comfort level among users. Yet like so many electronic media, Facebook is a "leaky container" (Lyon 2001) and both seeping and stronger outflows are common occurrences with social media. In particular, individuals making themselves visible to one another unwittingly and unintentionally augment institutional surveillance. While institutions benefit from this, they are also drawn into the light as they are made increasingly visible when users speak about them. Facebook offers risky opportunities: institutions have access to more information about target populations, but those populations are also a liability to these institutions. Users will openly criticize schools, workplaces, and corporations, especially in themed groups,

and these criticisms are often retained indefinitely and easily accessible through the site's search function as well as through external search engines like Google.

The domestication of information technology is a well-documented topic in Surveillance Studies. Lyon (2001) rightly observes that the rapid uptake of mobile devices marks a progressive creeping of surveillance into everyday life by enabling users to be located in a pervasive manner. Although it is fair to assert that there is an expansion of new forms of surveillance and visibility in a wireless world, the effects of this visibility are far from obvious. Webcams (Koskela 2006) and social media (Albrectslund 2008) enable an empowered kind of visibility, such that their users can exert some control over how they present themselves. Yet the voluntary use of these technologies augment surveillance enclosures where the totality of everyday life is visible to businesses and governments (Andrejevic 2007). Both perspectives seem reasonable and hold some empirical purchase. But the domestication of surveillance has grown too vast, and so this research will focus on a specific sector: post-secondary education.

Institutional surveillance on Facebook fits in a greater history of keeping order in schools. Surveillance and discipline has been attempted through a variety of architectural, pedagogical and technological approaches. Most recently, tags with RFID chips seek control by restricting, but also tracking access of movement (Lyon 2010). Other technical solutions for managing and monitoring students include x-rays at entrances and drug testing for athletes. At universities smart cards are pervasive, tracking and regulating the movement of students on campuses. These technologies exert control over students by focusing on their physical presence.

Social media complicate this focus by offering an entirely new terrain for disorder to occur. Yet universities are discovering that it is not only easy to watch over this new terrain, but that social media provide insight by making social life between students more visible.

Information technology has long been a crucial aspect of institutional surveillance (Dandeker 1990). But what is unique with social media and universities is that an institution is utilizing a domestic technology. Social media first emerged as services for individuals – students in this case – before being adopted as tools for institutional functions. Beer and Burrows (2007) offer an early account of the consequences of social media in the university. The main effect is the heightened visibility of faculty and teaching staff online in a searchable and editable format.

This is typically experienced as an upset to staff and faculty under scrutiny, yet the full consequences remain to be seen. Students are increasingly making themselves visible; all while other watchers are taking an increased interest in sites like Facebook. When Beer and Burrows published their article, Facebook was only recently established at most universities, namely those not belonging to the Ivy League network. While their study uncovers how universities are subject to exposure, these institutions are responding by turning to social media themselves. Universities are still scrutinized by students using social media, but they are increasingly able to manage their own visibility as well as to take advantage of the visibility of students.

5.2 Interview structure

The findings below draw on a series of fourteen semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with employees at a mid-sized university in Eastern Ontario, Canada. Of the fourteen participants, two respondents worked for campus security, four were employed by residence life, two for marketing and communications, two were tenure-track professors, two were human rights advisors, and two worked for the registrar's office. The university in question maintains strong relations with alumni and other donors. However, recent incidents have raised concerns about its reputation as a 'party school', which the administration is struggling to manage. This coincides with a rapid uptake of social media like Facebook by undergraduates. The university is currently coming to terms with how to manage its own involvement on this site.

Interviews with participants addressed four themes. The first theme considered relevant policies at the time of Facebook's emergence. This clarified how the university first framed social media as well as the gaps and challenges posed by this approach. The second theme considered practices, notably how social media are currently being used in a professional setting. As social media are not conventional institutional services, it is appropriate to focus on how employees first approached them and in what capacity they were used as part of their work. The third theme examined the perceived validity of information found on social media as well as the perceived appropriateness of obtaining information in this manner. Again, because Facebook was rooted in interpersonal exchange, respondents negotiated their position among themselves but also with students. The fourth theme considered experiences using social media, both in a personal and professional setting. The

novelty of the phenomenon being studied means that respondents raised additional issues and dilemmas during interviews. As much as possible respondents were able to address these issues.

5.3 Genesis of Facebook as a professional tool

Given Facebook's origins as an interpersonal service, its emergence as an institutional service warrants exploration. Here, Facebook emerged in an organic manner. Rather than a mandate from above, respondents reported a ground-level realization among employees that relevant information could be retrieved on the site. Many key operators were already Facebook users, or worked with somebody who used the service. In the majority of cases personal accounts were used to access information. One exception is the case of a human rights advisor who previously abstained from Facebook and created an account strictly for professional duties. In addition to harnessing a pre-existing familiarity with the site, these employees blurred the line between professional and personal presence by using the latter to augment the former.

As there were no guidelines or mandates in terms of using Facebook, professional practices first emerged to facilitate minor tasks. This generally involved identifying students by putting a name to a face. A member of campus security reports:

Facebook in the past has allowed us to confirm identities of people. It has allowed us to – and when I say confirm identities, I really do mean simply in an anecdotal way, more along the lines of confirming for the people in the office that we're talk about the same person, not so much as institutionally identifying someone (Sec_2).

The respondent describes an innocuous entry point for the professionalization of Facebook by noting the moment where it is used in a quasi-official way, simply to confirm an identity during a conversation. Using Facebook in a professional setting does not mark a rupture from personal usage. Rather, it resembles personal usage quite extensively, as employees are using personal accounts as well as navigation skills gained from personal usage. While it was used to identify persons of interest, the consequences and appropriateness of that identification are not obvious to respondents, and for that reason it was initially used in a casual manner.

These findings suggest a diagram of institutional surveillance that fuses user-initiated, practices into a larger structure. Institutions take advantage of what individuals – students in this case – are placing in plain sight online. In this case they do not initiate, but rather exploit the heightened scrutiny afforded by social media. Moreover, the university's ability to watch over students on Facebook is facilitated by employees' familiarity with the site in an interpersonal context. Many of these employees were Facebook users first, and this experience is leveraged to monitor students on behalf of the university. The employees who usher social media like Facebook into the institution are a hybrid category. They operate on behalf of the academic institution, acting as its eyes and ears. Yet this is only possible through their presence on Facebook as individual users. In addition to developing the necessary skills to retrieve information, much of Facebook's content is only accessible to its members. Not only is this the easiest way for the university to gain access, but their experience as users also allows them to navigate the site. This is a key feature of the mutual augmentation of institutional surveillance by the

interpersonal use of social media. The skills gained by users watching over users directly translate to the university being better suited to the scrutiny of its students.

At the time of the interviews nobody had the specific task of managing social media on behalf of the university. Instead, employees already working for the university were put in charge of social media because of their knowledge and enthusiasm for these services. Respondents were generally passionate about this topic. People who are familiar and enthusiastic about the site are the vanguard for the university. A coordinator from communications and marketing states:

I sort of do this in addition to my regular job because I have a love for it. And so, a lot of the time, most of the stuff that I do is outside of work hours because I'm on these places anyways and I like researching them, it's just a passion of mine (Mktg_2).

The decision to put enthusiasts in charge of social media is sound, although it also has important labour implications. Because of their passion for social media, these employees end up taking on added responsibility with no financial compensation. This echoes what authors like Clay Shirky (2008) have said about decentralized organizing: that corporations will benefit from input provided by individuals who engage with social media for intrinsic rewards. From a labour studies perspective this suggests that new development for ICTs will be used as a way to augment what is already expected of workers (Dyer-Witherford 1999).

The majority of interviewees report that social media have greatly complicated their duties. This counters the perception that social media facilitate the management of student populations. Indeed, the sheer volume of information now accessible is staggering. A marketing and communication employee states:

It's almost impossible to find out what everybody is doing at [the university]. (...) It's very explosive, this use of social media that it's pretty hard to keep on top of, there's no one person that can control or audit everything that's happening (Mktg_1).

Not only does Facebook grant access to a vast body of personal information, but the absence of explicit guidelines from the site and from the university greatly complicate what can be done with this information. A residence employee reports that instead of witnessing events as they unfold, information on Facebook often refer to incidents occurring at an undisclosed point in time. Likewise, a security officer reports on its mainstream status, noting that Facebook is a burden because of the vast access to information that it offers:

It's so widely used and has become such an accepted staple in people's daily routines that if there is harassment that is going to take place, there is a good chance that it will find its way onto Facebook as well. (...) It's more of a bone of contention for most people in our service and I mean that along, broadly speaking. Generally speaking, we will all tell you that it has created more work for us than it has ever solved (Sec_2).

Facebook offers universities an augmented visibility of social life, such that their employees struggle to make use of all that is made visible. This suggests a kind of institutional growing pain in regards to Facebook. While it is currently treated as a burden, this is a factor of the institution not yet developing proper strategies to cope with social media.

5.4 Attitudes regarding appropriateness of using Facebook

Facebook offers universities unprecedented access to student information with no guidelines for appropriate usage. This has led to uncertainty and debate among university officials. Facebook is recognized as a source of invaluable

information, and is accessed by universities for this reason. But both employees and student users are ambivalent about whether or not this information should be used for institutional purposes. Respondents report that a lot of content found on the site has been uploaded in an interpersonal context, and that they felt a sense of moral uncertainty about using it for other purposes. This uncertainty is also exemplified in situations where the university has the option to intervene in a conversation among students. An admissions coordinator offers that she doesn't "feel comfortable in us jumping in. I don't think it's our place, they don't think it's our place" (Reg_1). Employees and students both regard the idea of the university making a visible presence to be problematic. A residence employee conducted a survey to screen student attitudes, finding that they were overwhelmingly opposed to the university's presence on the site. In particular the act of actively seeking out information on Facebook was deemed to be inappropriate. Not only did the survey confirm the admissions coordinator's suggestion that the university should not visibly intervene in Facebook activity, but also that they should not patrol the site for objectionable content.

Most respondents were quick to point out that they did not actively scour the site. They provided both ethical and logistical reasons to explain this approach. From an ethical standpoint they did not consider actively monitoring the site to be appropriate, which is compounded on top of the uncertainty about whether they could even act on information that they found. However, logistical reasons carried more weight. Respondents claim that navigating the site to find information was incredibly time consuming, especially if users are perpetually coping with a

changing interface. A communications officer states: “on a really basic level, now that I’m thinking about morals and ethics, we just don’t have the manpower at the time” (Reg_1). Other employees in security and residences echo this claim, citing time and workload as reasons not to patrol Facebook for relevant content. Despite acknowledging these constraints, many of the respondents felt entirely justified having a professional presence on Facebook. This was partly based on the accessibility of Facebook’s content. One security coordinator privileged logistical reasons over ethical ones, citing the semi-public nature of information on Facebook as justification to act:

I definitely don’t have enough hours in the day to spend surfing. And ethics... I don’t know so much that it’s really ever been questioned if we do visit a Facebook site, I don’t think we have ever found ourselves in a position where someone says that it’s unethical for you to visit that website. (...) If my ten year old can see it at home, then I don’t see any problem with me pulling it up on my computer at work (Sec_2).

In terms of student reactions, this is framed as a clash between a contextual approach to privacy (Nissenbaum 2009) and one based on mere access. Employees acknowledge that contextual boundaries are a concern, but also that having access to personal information means that it will likely transcend these boundaries. While students may want others to disregard information found on Facebook, one residence coordinator asserts that students themselves are disregarding the ease with which this information is accessible and the extent to which it is made public:

I think it’s funny when people feel like it’s private, but again I feel like it’s only when it’s convenient for them they’ll call that and they’ll say ‘that’s private, don’t comment on that,’ or ‘that’s none of your business,’ or ‘don’t use that against me.’ Well, this is the image, this is the story you are telling about yourself without you being there to explain yourself (Res_3).

Another residence employee comments on the fact that students are complicit in their own visibility, citing that students are uploading content that is made accessible through its association with Facebook's university network:

If you're part of the [university] network, you basically have access to pictures of anyone. It's like a database that people have helped create. I can find pictures of anyone on campus, anyone who goes to [the university]. So of course, that's useful. If that's a tool that's available to help keep the community safe, we'll exploit it (Res_1).

As well, the idea of disregarding information found on the site is seen by employees as nearly impossible, and this is framed as something that is hard-wired into all users:

And everybody knows this, we're creatures of judgement and we survive by making judgments and if all I have to form a judgment of you is one quick look at your Facebook page then that's going to stay with me (Sec_2).

The issues raised by these employees closely resemble those discussed by individuals engaged in friendly surveillance. Facebook makes personal information accessible, but whether or not it is appropriate to access and act on this information is a concern. The act of deliberately looking over individuals is especially problematic for employees. Debates over what is public and what is private on Facebook – as well as the meanings held by these terms – spread from interpersonal concerns to relations between institutions and individuals. Despite this uncertainty it is clear that Facebook is a new location for institutional problems. Conversely, it is also a tool to identify and manage these issues.

5.5 Complaint-driven activity versus patrolling Facebook

Campus security, human rights, and residence employees in particular were quick to point out that they took a complaints-driven approach to Facebook. That is, if an incident were brought to their attention from a complainant, they would investigate the site. But they claimed that they generally would not actively search for objectionable material, and certainly would not wander aimlessly looking for suspicious content. The idea of an investigative approach was frequently cited as a counterpoint to the complaints-driven approach, and was criticized for the ethical as well as practical reasons listed above:

We're not looking at it as an investigative tool. You've probably noticed the whole time we've been talking, that's the first time that I've ever used the term investigative. We don't investigate, we follow up (Sec_1).

This is partly informed by practices and protocols that pre-date Facebook, as another security employee reports an avoidance of a "quasi-investigative role at the best of times" (Sec_2). The idea of following up, instead of investigating, suggests a reactive rather than proactive approach. Given the vast amount of information that could warrant investigation it stands to reason that employees would start with material that were brought to them by others. A residence employee echoes this sentiment:

If there's a complaint or something and then it comes up in the information that we've gathered that there's actually pictures on, or it's a harassment issue and someone comes to us and says it's happening on Facebook then part of the information gathering will then be going to Facebook to see if that is. But it's reactive, it's not a proactive 'go and scour Facebook for information, ever (Res_2).

By focusing on outside complaints, these employees are relying on non-employees – typically students and local residents – to direct them to persons and incidents of interest. With Facebook this facilitates their duties as external agents are informally

enlisted to scrutinize the site. Their own ability to monitor student activity is augmented by the connectivity they maintain with the greater community. A residence employee claims that they “don’t ever go seek out things on Facebook but if it’s brought to my attention we don’t ignore it” (Res_3). The university’s ability to watch over its student population is augmented by relying on other users to watch over each other online. Not only is this an effective labour-saving strategy, but it also enables a more penetrating gaze. Having friends watching over friends on Facebook enables the university to side-step privacy settings employed by users.

Despite ascribing to a reactive, complaints-driven approach, respondents conceded that they would proactively search and scrutinize Facebook in particular situations. Leading up to key events like the annual homecoming celebration, they would search and monitor related events and groups:

When homecoming, the debate happened, yes, there were people in my office who sort of went in and sort of printed or took an inventory of the kinds of things that were being said (Mktg_2).

A coordinator from admissions states that senior members of the university’s administration have employed this proactive scrutiny:

It was the Dean of Student Affairs monitoring Facebook and let the police know about all these keggers that were going on. (...) And the police contacted these people beforehand and said, ‘nope, not happening. Good luck’ (Reg_1).

Employees generally describe their Facebook monitoring in terms of responding to complaints about specific individuals. Yet categorical suspicion is emerging based on homecoming events and the student party culture. This suspicion emerged in the interest of the school’s reputation, a point that is further explored below. Proactive searching on Facebook accompanies this suspicion. This is a contradiction of

employees' own perceived best practices. Despite claims that patrolling is not the adopted practice, it proves to be logistically sound when searching for information about homecoming. The ethical implications remain to be sorted out. This development also marks a shift from the surveillance of individuals to something distinctly categorical. In other words, Facebook is now used to watch over abstract problems, not just student biographies. Yet the focus on categories still implicates students and their personal information.

The balance between reactive and proactive approaches to social media warrant further exploration, especially as different branches of academic and other institutions connect with sites like Facebook. Likewise, Facebook's changing features and privacy settings suggest that new conditions of visibility will arise. The site's search function has recently augmented in scope (Wable 2009), which affects the kinds of information that can be quickly accessed as well as what is made visible to non-users.

5.6 University reputation and mutual transparency

Although the principal focus of this study was students' heightened visibility in the wake of social media, administration and staff were also concerned with the way their university was made visible through social media. The marketing and communications department is especially concerned with virtually everybody shaping the university's reputation in a public forum. These concerns amplify longstanding practices where incoming students learn about the school from upper-year students. Often these students will post harmful or inaccurate descriptions of

the university through Facebook. This is especially concerning when high-school students and their parents are weighing their options for post-secondary education. In other instances students hosting a party or making inflammatory comments will reflect poorly on the university by publically confirming its reputation as a party school, or one that struggles with racial insensitivity. Employees in the registrar's office confirm that students on Facebook publicize the school's reputation. This is used as a justification for an institutional effort to monitor the site. A marketing coordinator likens Facebook to a kind of feedback mechanism that ought to be harnessed by the university, stating that "Unless you sort of gauge what's going on, you can't just adjust what's going on in your real presence" (Mktg_2). The above concerns are fuelled by a wealth of consultants and public speakers that stress the importance of managing an institution's reputation online. The marketing and communications department is no stranger to these services:

There are a whole new bunch of businesses that are now saying, 'for a fee, we will tell you what is going on in all these different social media platforms.' There's one called [business name] and I've got a free account. And so you can put in search terms (...) and they'll churn this report and they'll search blogs, social networking sites, for what is being said (Mktg_2).

A communications officer was struck by a consultant's recommendation that "you basically have to go there because you're already there" (Mktg_1). These services rest on the claim that universities are already present and visible on social media regardless of their actual involvement. This supports Beer and Burrows' (2007) work on social media surveillance. The multi-contextual nature of social media conversations coupled with a growing user population means that the university is subject to unprecedented exposure.

In light of these concerns, the marketing and communications department would monitor university-themed groups for discussion. Respondents claimed that they would not conspire to monitor individuals, but simply seek out false information. While they felt tempted to intervene on these spaces, they did not think that this was appropriate or would be well received by students. Posting a response in a student-led discussion would make their presence visible, and be subject to pushback by student users. Instead, they would rely on the university's own website to provide accurate information. Yet this was regarded as futile since students would typically not migrate to official sites for information. They may attempt to create their own Facebook group, but these would remain nearly indistinguishable from other content on Facebook. This issue raises a key dilemma that became central to subsequent policy recommendations: should universities establish an institutional presence on these sites, converse with students in student-led spaces, or covertly watch over students? These different strategies reflect differing degrees of visibility to the university, which is seen by marketing and communications as a liability due to student perceptions that the university should not have a presence on Facebook.

This dilemma also gets at the heart of privacy issues on Facebook. Students are clearly comfortable sharing information with one another in a public forum. Yet they regard university administrators' presence as a violation of privacy. This reaction supports a contextual view of privacy (Nissenbaum 2009), as the content they are sharing was meant for other students, and not a broader audience.

Moreover, this is a barrier that university users are only encountering now that their involvement on the site is directly linked to their service to the school.

5.7 Emergence of a social media task force

In response to the above concerns the university created a task force that attempted to make sense of social media's function in the academic sector. Led by the department of marketing and communications, the task force drafted a set of guidelines for staff, faculty and students who use social media to act on behalf of the university. These guidelines resemble the early stages of more official policy vis-à-vis social media. This task force emerged in a climate where little knowledge or consensus exists concerning appropriate conduct for universities on Facebook. Respondents note that existing guidelines were drafted prior to social media and are insufficient to cope with emerging risks and challenges. As stated above, social media strategies have long been left to employee discretion and have led to conflicting views and approaches.

While using Facebook for institutional monitoring began as a series of individual employees' practices, the fact that it remained up to their discretion is troubling respondents. Discretionary measures, coupled with its sheer growth of social media within and beyond the academic sector, led to growing pressure for the university to provide some kind of policy response. A residence employee suggests the university is reaching a tipping point:

It's become more pervasive. It must change. The university cannot ignore its bearing on university life now. From the type of groups people can have, all that stuff. It's only a matter of time before some kind of policy comes out, or something to do with online usage (Res_1).

Employees in other departments agreed with this statement, and stated that they were waiting to operate within proposed guidelines. At the time of the interviews the task force drafted a report that included a description of social media for academic purposes, a description of the task force, details concerning current social media usage in general and at the university, as well as a series of recommendations for using social media within the university. Regarding student-led discussions, the report recommends that employees “[m]onitor, but not attempt to control what’s being said in social media” and also to “not become involved in the dialogues in student-administered groups, pages” (Social Media Report 2009). This recommendation was in alignment with an admissions coordinator’s usage, stating that they are “monitoring Facebook” and that they “never jump in” (Reg_1).

Social media can potentially foster conditions of mutual transparency. It does this by allowing any user to view as well as speak on behalf of any other user, brand, or institution. Yet the task force’s report recommends scrutinizing how the university is made visible through social media, as well as not augmenting this visibility through any further engagement on social media. Thus, it attempts to restore an asymmetrical relation of visibility between students and institutions by watching over what is being said without acknowledging its presence or involvement on sites like Facebook.

One of the challenges for this task force is having a full understanding of the university’s social media presence. Different branches of the university will use sites like Facebook for varying purposes, and many do so independently of school administration. The fact that new social media services are emerging while

longstanding ones adopt new features only complicates any attempt to speak authoritatively about social media. The task force accounts for these challenges:

The guidelines had to be such that you couldn't get that specific and we're talking about something so big and something that's still not totally understood that we wanted to make it enough for people when they phone and say, 'I want to set up a blog, what can you tell me,' we'll give them these guidelines (Mktg_1).

The university wants to pre-emptively catch up with the shifting technology and practices by drafting an open-ended set of guidelines. This suggests that policy follows technology, and relations with students follow suit. Social media extend new possibilities for the university to watch over students, and policies relating to this technology are intentionally vague to include these possibilities. Given that these services primarily emerge from everyday use, anticipating innovations is a complex task. A respondent from admissions echoes this approach:

That's one of the challenges we discussed, is that it's got to be, even though it's a policy, it's got to be open ended enough to deal with the challenge of a media that's ever-changing (Reg_1).

5.8 Other possibilities: Community and conversations

Although Facebook and other social media were first received by the university as a vast source of information about students and university issues, some departments have contemplated using them for other purposes. For instance, campus security considered using Facebook and microblogging service Twitter as a way to communicate to students and staff:

The one thing that we're taking a look at in our job currently with Facebook is using it in the future as platform for disseminating information. (...) I feel that the social networking sites are an excellent opportunity to disseminate information but we have to ensure that information that's getting disseminated through a third party is trusted, is going to be used

appropriately, because the type of platform that we would be looking at is how we disseminate personal safety tips, personal safety information, possibly even campus security alerts during a critical incident (Sec_1).

While these services would be used primarily to advance knowledge about safety, the respondent presents another important surveillance implication. By broadcasting security alerts during critical incidents campus security is able to exponentially augment their scope when it comes to tracking suspects. Social media's coupling with mobile technology means that students and staff receive notifications about ongoing incidents as well as observe and report on behalf of campus security. Here social media are treated as means to amplify pre-existing social networks. In particular, word of mouth dissemination of information is seen as a quick and effective way to communicate security-based issues. The decision to enrol the community in maintaining a safe and secure campus is framed as antithetical to an Orwellian diagram of information collection:

I always find it very interesting that when people talk about Facebook and then the next word is security, automatically they have the George Orwell kind of 1984, Big Brother's watching. In our department, it's the exact opposite, right? We're all about sharing information. Our philosophy here is security is everybody's responsibility. Our philosophy here is giving you all the information that you need to make informed decisions about your own safety. So the first thing that when we look at Facebook is getting that information to our community. So letting them know what's occurring on their campus and how to react (Sec_1).

By providing information about incidents, campus security claims that it provides an invaluable service to the university community. Yet student and staff will return the favour by using social media to receive, disseminate, and author information about ongoing incidents on campus. Students not only make themselves visible in a way that augments institutional surveillance, but also directly contribute to this

watching on behalf of the university. Social media offer multiple avenues for individuals to augment institutional scrutiny.

5.9 Looking to the future: Uncertainty and commitment

The task force and other initiatives described above suggest that universities are paying more attention to social media. When asked about their ongoing involvement in the future, a residence employee suggested that hate speech would be an obvious and appropriate entry point for regulating student content on Facebook:

I guess something I would want the administration to take into consideration when they're making a new policy of whatever, if they choose to, is the fact that you can join any kind of group on Facebook. It can be racist. It can be anything. That's something the university should take into consideration. That if they were to try and attempt to control people's usage, like regular students' usage, that's probably where they would have to start (Res_1).

The above suggestion furthers the use of social media for categorical suspicion. Monitoring hate speech on campus is a relatively uncontroversial issue to justify this kind of scrutiny. In that this is an issue that already concerns the university, it stands to reason they will search for this content.

In general, respondents were reluctant to speculate about what Facebook would look like in the immediate future, nor were they willing to comment about how their engagement with social media would evolve. Despite this uncertainty, everyone was confident that they would have an ongoing presence on the site:

I think it's going to continue to grow. I can't really say (...) who can predict that unless you're in there? Yeah, I really can't predict. I really don't know, but I do know we're going to continue to be part of it, whatever it is. (...) And we can't not use social media, we have to be there, we have to be involved, because that's where our target audience is (Mktg_1).

Their certainty about being involved with Facebook is based on its predominance. With so many social spheres migrating to social media, the amount of information generated on these sites will continue to be of interest to the university. A residence employee claims that “everything is happening” (Res_1) on Facebook, from students signing leases to selling off furniture, and that it was only a “matter of time before the university sees the need to have some sort of control” over relevant content. In anticipation of student protest against this development, a communications employee suggests that they have a mistaken understanding of Facebook’s privacy affordances:

You’d think that they would know these things but it’s... I think they’re under this perception that Facebook is hidden from the internet. Like, for some reason, it’s their own little community and no adults are going to come in here, they’re not going to look at this (Mktg_2).

Facebook’s continued growth means that the information it hosts becomes increasingly accessible to the university, and this will have an impact on students’ values and expectations. It was more private before, but only because fewer people had access to it. As more users access information on Facebook, respondents suggest that students will need to scale back their expectations of privacy.

5.10 Discussion

This chapter considers Facebook’s growth as a tool for institution-led surveillance. Social media in general and Facebook in particular have gained an unprecedented user base. These users, many of whom are students or employees in the academic sector, generate an ever-growing body of information that has become

accessible and easily searchable. Universities and other institutions are aware of this and are using the site as another tool for administrative duties. This began with employees bridging pre-existing knowledge about Facebook with institutional tasks, yet their involvement with sites like Facebook is becoming more formal with time.

This is a recent emergence, but even at this stage key features are observable. Facebook's origin as an interpersonal technology is a unique development for Surveillance Studies. Individual users were initially more familiar with social media, and thus able to use it to the detriment of the academy (Beer and Burrows 2007). Yet individual users employed by post-secondary institutions also enable institutional surveillance through social media. This suggests that universities and other institutions are increasingly harnessing the complexity of everyday interpersonal relations. In particular, they are using the site to identify relevant categories, such as student parties and hate speech.

This growth impacts users' understandings of what is public and what is private online. Spaces as well as content on Facebook that were previously considered confidential are now subject to greater exposure. Employees are of the belief that students can no longer consider the site to be private. Insofar as its reputation is implicated in student activity, the university sees Facebook as part of its jurisdiction. Yet recommendations to avoid detection on the site mitigate student opposition. With new features added on a monthly basis, Facebook is an ever-shifting mediascape. Increased scrutiny as well as privacy concerns means that relations between individuals and institutions are also shifting. It stands to reason that these developments are occurring in other institutions, including workplaces,

law enforcement agencies and government branches. Subsequent research should focus on this growth and its consequences for institutional surveillance. Yet at this stage it remains that a surveillance of social media is a necessary topic of study (Trottier and Lyon 2011).

The university's adoption of Facebook provides further insight about mutual augmentation. Individual scrutiny and sociality amplify the kinds of watching that institutions can perform. The people doing this watching often have dual citizenship on Facebook: they started as individual users, and their knowledge of friendly surveillance helped them watch over students on behalf of the university. Students also actively contribute to institutional surveillance when they submit complaints involving Facebook and when they respond to security bulletins. Facebook allows institutions to take advantage of individual use to watch over those individuals. Institutional surveillance on Facebook combines friendly features of everyday scrutiny with emerging categories that are easily searched. It is a hybrid of friendly surveillance and aggregate surveillance. The following chapter will expand on the latter half of this hybrid.

Chapter 6 – Market Surveillance on Facebook

This chapter describes in detail a new kind of visibility that is made available to organizations through social media platforms. A broad set of organizational tasks – including market research, recruitment, and customer service – are augmented through a growing body of searchable personal information. Sites like Facebook have undergone a tremendous diffusion into the business world, the effects of which are only now becoming apparent. These developments extend from marketplace surveillance of consumers' personal information. The large scale of information offered by Facebook, as well as its rapid spread to different social spheres, suggests new possibilities for market surveillance, including monitoring social relations as well as a broad range of transactional data.

By mapping key sites through which a personal information economy emerges on Facebook, this chapter illustrates how organizations utilize new relations of information exchange. It offers findings from a series of twelve semi-structured interviews with professionals who use Facebook as a business tool, including marketers, brand managers, community builders, and communications officers. As the growth of business strategies for Facebook is an ongoing development, a key task will be to move from industry literature on these practices towards a rich description of how these services are actually being used. In particular, this chapter will supplement terms like 'listening' and 'conversations' that are meant to describe the way businesses collect personal information from a growing user base and deliver targeted content to those users.

6.1 Introduction

Whereas individual surveillance concerns the known acquaintance, and targeted surveillance sets its gaze on the members of a fixed organization, aggregate surveillance is the collection and processing of information of all Facebook users. This chapter will consider the unique properties of the third type of practice. This chapter also considers the emergence of a political economy of personal information (Gandy 1993; cf. Gandy 2009) through social media. It does so by exploring key developments in a variety of sectors that are adopting social media services like Facebook and Twitter as part of their business platform. The research involved is aligned with the study of audience labour (Smythe 1977), political economic concerns in the age of new media (Dyer-Witherford 1999), as well as social media in particular (Andrejevic 2007; Fuchs 2010).

Popular literature highlights the revolutionary potential of new media. By treating the range of online services and mobile devices as a landscape of information exchange, authors like Shirky (2008) claim that they are enable 'organizing without organizations'. Yet instead of redundancy, organizations face new opportunities by taking advantage of social media platforms. The rise of social media means an exponential increase in visibility for both individuals and organizations. Disgruntled clients and co-workers may broadcast compromising information on Facebook and Twitter, yet their own personal lives are also made transparent through their prolonged engagement with these sites. The risks and opportunities associated with social media cannot be decoupled. This resembles the

university sector where student activity exposes themselves as well as their host institution to public scrutiny.

Organizations are taking proactive measures to exploit these sites. In recognition of the heightened visibility of their brands, many companies are actively searching social media for conversations between users about their brand and its products. They are especially concerned about complaints and other damaging statements. Beyond this strategy, companies are also using these services to gain new insights about their market. The open-ended nature of sites like Facebook also allows for other possibilities for use and engagement, which are considered below.

By looking at these issues and responses, this chapter foregrounds the intersection of labour and visibility in social media. Labour refers to two distinct contexts: the labour of those hired by businesses to manage their online engagement, and the labour of social media users whose personal information is the raw material for social media business strategies. Both cases benefit from employee as well as user comfort and familiarity with social media services. Employees are typically passionate about the work they do, and would use these services in their free time. Likewise, social media users are unlikely to think of their engagement as labour, but rather in terms of interpersonal activity.

These developments are not unrelated to the previous chapter on institutional surveillance. Both cases look at how organizations relate to a key population using social media. Yet market surveillance marks a further shift toward categorical searching from scrutinizing individual profiles. This is a shift from a key institution that has a longstanding involvement with social media to a loosely

organized group of institutions that are incorporating these services into their functioning. But this also marks a more subtle shift from one institution coping with and managing its online presence to a range of consultants and industries deliberately engaging with social media for purposes of growth and revenue.

Market surveillance on Facebook extends from previous attempts by businesses to gather data on a large scale (Elmer 2004). This area has grown through a number of initiatives, including the use of geodemographic information to locate markets (Burrows and Gane 2006). Market surveillance on social media intersects purchase habits with personal information, but also with relational information. These sites are spaces where users socialize with others, yet they are privately owned and subject to market led scrutiny, searching and sorting. This kind of surveillance is important when considering surveillance through markets more generally. In this light social media go hand-in-hand with market power. They allow businesses that own or purchase this data to know their market at a greater resolution, extract value from it, and manage their own publicity (Winseck 2003). The growth of market scrutiny is facilitated by Facebook's push towards relational searching. In contrast to conventional, 'Google-style' analytics, Facebook search scours what users are saying and doing (Vogelstein 2009). This approach pulls categorical content out of social media information. Brands are visible, but this data is always bound to individual profiles. Relational searching scours personal information to yield insight about brands, markets, and categories that are relevant to businesses.

This chapter begins by describing how people employed in this field began working with social media. It then focuses on how respondents describe their own professional relation with Facebook. The following three sections then focus on three business strategies involving social media: radical transparency, listening and watching, and finally conversations. Based on respondent accounts and popular literature, these strategies are positioned from least to most effective in terms of exploiting social media. This chapter concludes by re-appraising the term social in social media in light of these findings.

6.2 Interview structure

Businesses were rapidly adopting social media at the time this research was completed. What started as a small group of readily identifiable workers has now spread to the extent that social media are establishing a ubiquity in the corporate world. For this reason, these interviews were arranged and conducted in an exploratory manner. While the participants below come from diffuse backgrounds and perform different duties, roughly half of them do consulting work for clients while the others are fully employed by a corporation.

Susan (Cons_1) is employed at a digital marketing agency, where she develops marketing strategies for clients. She assesses whether social media services will be a useful addition to these campaigns, and offers clients guidance in terms of how to exploit services. Wade (Cons_2) is employed at a venture capital firm where he is developing a web-based application that relies on the labour of online communities. He is also a digital strategist that consults with organizations to

help them connect with stakeholder groups through Facebook. Ben (Cons_3) is a co-founding partner at a search engine optimization (SEO) company. This involves managing the way in which clients are being represented online, notably through social media services. Daryl (Cons_4) is the president of a software development company that specializes in cloud computing for businesses. This involves developing software for managing web content on sites like Facebook, and also uses these services to promote this company. Liane (Cons_5) is a self-employed consultant who focuses primarily on organizational development. As she frames a lot of her consulting in terms of adoption to change, she consults with clients to develop appropriate social media strategies. Corey (Cons_6) is the president of a new media marketing agency, where works with large and mid-sized companies to develop marketing and public relations strategies using social media.

Matthew (Corp_1) manages the technical support network for a transnational consumer electronics company. This involves scrutinizing social media like Facebook to identify consumer feedback, but also to recruit employees. Martin (Corp_2) works for an independent gaming company that produces third-party applications for Facebook. This not only involves developing code that is configured to an ever-growing social media software, but also managing and communicating with a growing community of their own users on Facebook. Janine (Corp_3) is a brand manager for a major food producer. This involves promoting new products on Facebook, scrutinizing the site for user feedback, and recruiting Facebook users for viral marketing campaigns. Jared (Corp_4) is the director of new media at a radio station in a mid-sized city. His major responsibility with Facebook

is to manage a fan page by promoting the station while interacting with the station's online fan base. Joana (Corp_5) is a marketing and communications manager for a major paint producer. This involves advertising and public relations, and at the time of the interview Jennifer was only beginning to utilize Facebook for these purposes. Matt (Corp_6) is a sales representative for a software company that focuses on game-based learning for the academic market. He uses Facebook primarily to contact prospective clients and use their personal information to leverage a connection with them. Jeremy (Corp_7) is a communications officer with a public health organization that is funded by provincial and municipal governments. He uses Facebook to coordinate advertising and public relation strategies.

Given the divergence of affiliations and experiences, there is some misalignment in terms of attitudes among respondents. Paying attention to commonalities as well as differences among respondents provides a preliminary understanding of this growing sector. Understanding these nuances is important, as subsequent research will examine diverging strategies regarding social media as professional tools, especially as they pertain to surveillance and visibility. Not all of the above participants are doing the same work, but all are directly involved in business development. Even if they are not situated in the information sector, their actual duties intersect with the personal information economy.

The context in which these interviews took place is similar to the previous chapter. Businesses were partly concerned with managing their reputation, but they were also eager to find new sources of relevant information. Respondents experience some degree of precariousness on Facebook as they do not have full

control over their online reputation, nor the platforms that augment the visibility of that reputation. Yet they are also taking advantage of user activity on Facebook and other social networking sites. Overall they described their engagement with social media as a kind of personal information frontier. These interviews were semi-structured in order to account for variance among respondents' line of work. Yet all interviews were broadly structured along the following three themes:

First, respondents were asked to describe the work they perform as well as when and how Facebook and other social media impact their work. Related topics included the kinds of skills associated with working with social media, whether they used social media in a personal context, and how that might have shaped their professional use. This provides a base understanding of how social media has crept into the business world, as well as how this is potentially located at the intersection of personal and professional engagements.

The second theme considered how respondents approach and make use of personal information found on Facebook. This included describing the kinds of information they seek out on Facebook, the perceived advantages of collecting information in this manner, and what Facebook can tell respondents about their clients or market. Given the lack of protocols and best practices surrounding this activity, these questions sought a rich description of how these services are currently used on a case-by-case basis.

The third theme considered respondents' perceptions and uses of other social media offerings. Social media augment the visibility of its user base, but are dynamic enough to produce other effects. This theme considered how a

decentralized social network like Facebook affords other possibilities for businesses. This included advertising and viral marketing within Facebook, but also mitigating against risks associated with personal networks.

6.3 What kind of workers and work are involved?

Facebook's genesis as a business tool is one of many examples of the shifting conditions of contemporary labour. This is a product of the rise of the information economy as well as the digitization of other forms of labour. As Facebook emerged as a multi-purpose service, its exact function for businesses is not clear. Not only does the interface consist of numerous applications, but each individual feature can also be used for different purposes. One respondent cites the wall feature on fan pages as a site for "customer service, research and development, and product management interaction" (Cons_6). As this feature is increasingly a means for businesses to interface with their market, businesses are finding multiple ways to exploit it. Others refer to the fan page feature as a multipurpose space, depending on the intentions of the business. One respondent states:

For some brands, its pretty much market research. For some organizations it's the ability to have another channel to push offerings through. For some companies it's the ability to build more long lasting relationships with their stakeholder groups, with their audiences. All the same reasons that any company might market in any particular way, be it conversational or transactional, but just depending on the goals of the organization (Cons_2).

Considering that business practices surrounding Facebook are still in formation, the above suggests that the service, and its pages feature in particular, offer a range of opportunities to businesses that revolve around the exchange and collection of information from its user base.

The increased presence of businesses on Facebook marks a disjuncture from earlier chapters, in that Facebook exceeds university culture. This shift is tied to Facebook's increased popularity among older users. Several respondents cited that its fastest growing demographic were forty to fifty year olds. One respondent (Corp_6) saw this growth as evidence that Facebook was entering financial maturity. Another respondent supported this view, stating that this kind of demographic shift was found with other commercially viable media:

So you see the same thing happens with, movies and video games and iPods and those sorts of things, so I think it's natural that if a product is very successful in the way that Facebook has been in that demographic, it's likely that it's going to move out into other demographics if it's well suited to that as well (Cons_2).

Facebook's appeal to businesses goes beyond exploiting the university-age demographic. Yet Facebook still allows businesses to target this population in ways that were previously not possible. The above respondent elaborates on how the biographical information on Facebook allows for more precise market analysis:

If you're looking to sell Coke to more college students, which college campuses are the most receptive? Does messaging X or Y work better for boys or girls? Or freshmen or seniors? Or undergrads or graduate students (Cons_2)?

Much like university employees in the previous chapter, respondents cited that Facebook was more likely to create work than it was to resolve any longstanding issues. This was partly attributed to the lack of clear guidelines in terms of how to use it. Not only does Facebook offer a variety of application and 'business solutions' but it is only one of a host of social media services currently used by companies. Determining the most appropriate tools is itself a time consuming process. As well, Facebook's origin as an interpersonal service means

that it is also a potential threat to productivity, and many traditional businesses are reluctant to adopt it for this reason. Maintaining a corporate presence on the site is also regarded as a time-consuming process, as businesses are expected to provide new content on a regular basis. This underscores the complexity of being visible on social media, and that a more effective strategy is simply to take advantage of the visibility of others.

The above points suggest new possibilities as well as severe challenges for businesses that want to utilize social media. Many respondents believe businesses should not automatically rush into social media, but instead first determine what, if anything, they seek to get out of their engagement. One respondent working as a consultant asks her clients: "why are they using Facebook because that's not always clear. Are they actually looking for business, are they looking for another place to channel a blog or a website through? Are they looking just to raise awareness?" (Cons_5). Many clients approach social media out of a perceived sense of obligation, and as a result do not know what they want to get out of it, nor do they know how they would achieve those goals.

For this reason there are a wealth of social media consultants. One respondent (Corp_5) who was beginning to work with social media suggested that they were actively looking outside their organization for help. Not only was her organization looking for an outside expert to manage their social media presence, but they were also looking for an additional outside expert to provide content for the space that the first expert created. Another respondent cites the reliance on outside labour to provide content in a public health context, noting that former

smokers can provide invaluable experience to current smokers through social media (Corp_7).

As this is an emerging field, there are not yet any clear criteria for who is eligible and capable to work as a social media professional. While respondents acknowledge that there are a lot of people claiming expertise with social media, they are reluctant to endorse these credentials. One respondent described their own professional engagement with social media as a very tentative, trial-and-error process, and for that reason stated: "I can't tell you that this is all based on hard science, I think anybody who thinks they are an expert in this is a bit flaky at the moment – I think people are still trying to figure it out" (Cons_4). This suggests that enthusiasm and prior experience are prerequisites for social media expertise, but are by no means sufficient criteria. Interestingly, some users also felt that their expertise was questioned on the basis of their age. While acknowledging that people of his age were historically less willing to adopt social media, one respondent notes "I'm 53 shortly. So, when I go to see people and I talk about social media, they look at me like I'm off my rocker" (Cons_3). Opting for younger people as social media experts is based on assumptions about their experience with online sociality. While they may not have the same organizational experience as their elders, they are assumed to be familiar with living their lives online.

Other respondents endorse a perceived generational shift, stating that young people are "expecting a work environment where it's free and open and it's an open exchange of information and ideas" (Cons_1). This respondent suggests that recent graduates are prepared for work conditions that optimize a free flow of information.

Although a changing work environment can be attributed to generation-based expectations, it also involves increased demands placed on workers in terms of the depth of their engagement with work, as well as how this shapes their personal and professional boundaries.

Many respondents describe that their involvement with social media work emerged from their experience as university students. One software developer (Corp_2) first started developing applications on Facebook as a result of a student co-op project. Given their familiarity with social media, it stands to reason that businesses would turn to students to do this work. Other respondents echo earlier statements about Facebook being a liability for students applying for work.

However, respondents who were familiar with this hiring process added that Facebook could also benefit prospective candidates:

I've had a really good first-hand knowledge on what companies are looking for when they're recruiting. And one thing I can honestly say that is they are going online, and they are looking at your Facebook, they're Googling you as well, and they're going to see what comes up, because they're looking for something that's going to, obviously, turn them off or turn them on (Corp_6).

This respondent went on to add that Facebook, in comparison to more professional social media like LinkedIn, enables users to make their personal lives visible. Their ability to manage a visible personal life was seen as a potential asset to those working in social media.

Businesses' emphasis on younger employees suggests a reliance on people who are familiar with student culture. As these students are well represented on services like Facebook, having younger people doing this work connects them not only to these sites, but also to a university-age demographic. Not only are these

employees expected to leverage their experience with these sites to make themselves and their business visible, but they are also expected to watch over participants described in the previous chapter. Thus social media users augment market-based surveillance on social media, whether or not these users are employed by the business in question.

6.4 Relations with Facebook

While Facebook explicitly offers 'business solutions' for advertisers and marketers, it frequently makes changes to the interface that benefits its own growth at the expense of others engaged with the site. Users may assume that Facebook and businesses are engaged in a kind of partnership, yet businesses describe their relation to Facebook in terms of them coping with decisions that Facebook makes unilaterally. Third party application developers are required by Facebook to comply with its terms of service, which some respondents describe as a struggle. Their relation to Facebook resembles de Certeau's (1988) distinction between tactics and strategies. Developers and other businesses dwell in the space that Facebook owns. They grow familiar with the features offered by the site, and develop unanticipated ways to exploit them. Yet their status as renters – and not owners – of this site is made apparent when Facebook alters its interface without regard to consequences for businesses. Following one respondent: "We're in it just like the user. We have access to using the space but for how long? That's up to Facebook. They create the rules so they can make the decisions to box us out or let us continue at any point."

(Corp_2) This struggle is especially salient for businesses that develop applications for Facebook's application programming interface (API):

Facebook is constantly changing how applications interact with Facebook itself from a technical standpoint and without informing us so that they change it to shut our games down, and then we have to go in to figure out what happened to bring them live again. There's not a really amazing conversation that's going on between developers from medium and small gaming houses to Facebook proper (Corp_2).

Facebook makes changes to which developers have to adapt, although this respondent adds that some larger companies have closer relations to Facebook and are better suited to cope with these revisions. Employing tactics to take advantage of being on Facebook is difficult, as business activity is rendered completely visible to Facebook. This respondent was willing to operate within terms of service because others have been shut down for similar infractions. He stated that being shut down "would be enormously bad, painful and if you lose your customer's attention span for even a day or two, they'll move on to another game and never return. Any sort of outage whatsoever is a big fear for us" (Corp_2). This respondent goes on to justify Facebook's restrictive approach. Given that these changes are typically not well received by users, Facebook chooses to prioritize its own interests, often to the detriment of businesses that will invest in their presence on the site:

Facebook has not figured out how to perfectly monetize what they have. The goal is to build their customer base still and the figure that out later, again, trying to keep in mind the lessons they've learned by watching other social networking platforms starting to tank, you know (Corp_2).

Respondents who are not directly involved in creating applications for Facebook also describe their engagement as being uncertain. One respondent cites the shift from groups to pages and from the API to Facebook Connect as rendering one

option redundant in comparison to the other, at the expense to those who invest in older services:

Facebook has made major changes several times to their offering to business without notice and significant changes that largely nullify the investments that businesses have made to date. Facebook put a lot of emphasis on groups and was charging for groups and all of a sudden, pages are more important. And then they open up an API so a lot of companies welcome Facebook applications, and then the focus moves from the API to Facebook Connect, which is about bring Facebook into the site, into your own web application, your own technology (Cons_2).

Once again, respondents position Facebook's long-term interests against those of businesses and others who may invest in a presence on the site. Despite being treated as a low-cost service for businesses, this respondent regards this volatility as a risk that is often overlooked when migrating to social media platforms. In terms of surveillance, businesses have to manage their visibility online just like individuals and institutions. Yet application developers are also visible in the sense that their software is subject to Facebook's scrutiny to ensure compliance. These developers are watching over users as Facebook is watching over them.

6.5 Self-presentation of company alongside self-branding

Many businesses feel compelled to maintain some kind of visibility on social media. This involves not only the visibility of products and services, but also the visibility of people representing an organization. Often an interpersonal, Goffmanian (1959) style of self-presentation is adopted as a corporate strategy for social media. This makes sense given that these companies are promoting their brands and products on a platform that was first tailored for interpersonal exchanges. At the same time, many individuals who are working in these organizations are adopting

branding strategies to promote themselves individually within this sector. These developments suggest a growing conflation between individual and corporate visibility on social media, leading to a selective visibility of key representatives on behalf of corporations. Being visible is a form of labour performed by people formally hired by companies as well as by people enrolled informally through social media.

Visibility is key to marketing and public relations, especially with the advent of social media. Recent literature in the industry calls for 'radical transparency' on the part of corporations (Tapscott and Ticoll 2003; Li and Bernoff 2008). This material overstates privacy's irrelevance by treating transparency as a best practice:

Secrecy is dying. It's probably already dead. In a world where Eli Lilly's internal drug-development memos, Paris Hilton's phonecam images, Enron's emails, and even the governor of California's private conversations can be instantly forwarded across the planet, trying to hide something illicit – trying to hide anything, really – is an unwise gamble (Thompson 2007).

Underlying this literature is the belief that the executive class will gain a competitive advantage by baring their insecurities and dirty laundry to the world. Augmenting a brand's visibility through social media requires the involvement of employees and consultants. Individuals who are already good at making themselves visible are predisposed to this labour. While most industry literature calls for top brass to make themselves visible, respondents suggest that a comfort with visibility among workers is also highly valued.

Individuals use personal branding to secure employment in social media. In terms of navigating one's career, personal advancement was seen as a result of effective branding strategies. Parallels are drawn between corporate branding and

personal branding within a corporation. This implies a broad range of identity management tactics, ranging from managing information online to dressing appropriately. One respondent is quick to point out that the deliberate management of a personal identity brand should not come at the expense of authenticity:

You can create your image the same way you would create your company's brand. You are a brand, you're potato chips basically. And you know, you can make sure that you have a strategy in terms of what you post, and you know how you present yourself online, the same way that you would have a strategy in terms of what you wear when you get up in the morning and how you present yourself offline (Cons_1).

This respondent went on to say that the self-presentation involved in these branding strategies is a concern that pervades every personal and corporate engagement. She claims that this strategy is not meant to compromise authenticity, but rather that "telling [a] consistent story" (Cons_1) as a strategy should be prioritized. Some businesses see the combined desire for effective branding and personal authenticity as a product of the heightened visibility created by social media. As a result, networking and building relationships is seen as a factor of a kind of passive communication via one's online presence:

You have to communicate your brand, your self brand, and you have to be aware of what's out there about you because information is becoming more public and public, privacy is becoming less and less, (...) that's going to create channels of success and failure for you. Whether it's making sales, or creating relationships on the business side, or even just trying to get a job, right? It's all about communicating the right message (Corp_6).

Coping with this visibility is treated as a requirement to ascend in a career, in terms of self-promotion and building key ties with others. But in a more general sense, people who work with social media cope with a pervasive visibility to their market. This is because Facebook obliges businesses to have a personal identity tethered to

a corporate presence. The conflation of personal and professional is especially concerning for smaller organizations:

That's just the nature of the space. Facebook itself, you are you; you're not anonymous, for one, in general. And when you're dealing with people, we're also ourselves. Facebook doesn't allow you to create fake accounts as a corporation. I'm me on the account that I'm responding to players, for instance. And our relationship, and this us, this is not every company, there's sharks out there and there are medium to small sized fish like us who decide to do things in a certain way (Corp_2).

Business users are able to cope with these conditions by using privacy settings to restrict what details are publicly available. Despite this, the connection between their personal presence and corporate endeavours is seen as obligatory and overwhelming. The above respondent changed his setting to prevent strangers from adding him as a friend, stating that he "just got overwhelmed by people I didn't know in Louisiana wanting to be my friend on Facebook" (Corp_2). Other respondents have enabled limited profiles for similar reasons. Managing a fan page also leads to the visibility of one's profile such that those fans can choose to add the respondent as a friend:

Because the fan pages are actually linked through my profile, a lot of the people (...) who are within those fan pages also end up seeing my name, associating my name and invite me as a friend. Most of them I have as a limited profile so it still allows me to see what they're saying without them knowing that I just got married or my daughter just turned two, or any of that personal stuff that I don't necessarily want to share with the general public (Corp_4).

Using personal branding and self-presentation online is regarded as an effective strategy, though one that is not appropriate for all businesses. Some small businesses benefit more from a personal engagement of social media than others. One consultant offers a comparison between a divorce counsellor and a debt

counsellor, stating that the former is better suited to render their personal life transparent:

Because divorces are very personal and coaching is very personal, it's a great point of entry to join a group and say, 'I am also divorced, I've been divorced for however many years and as part of my healing process from that divorce which was very acrimonious, I decided to become a coach and help other people and so, let me tell you a little bit about my journey and I'm always willing to talk with other people.' That's a very nice point of entry. If you have someone who is running a debt counselling service (...) if they have been in debt it might not be something that they really want to disclose. So, I'm not sure if it works for all business (Cons_5).

The above suggests that certain professions will be associated with particular personal details that may or may not be fit for public consumption. This suggests an emerging politics of career visibility, where personal disclosure can be an asset or liability. Returning to the recommendation for CEOs to bare their souls to the world, many suggest that this is not an easy or likely outcome. One respondent suggests that transparency requires a particular skill-set, and that a CEO who is otherwise shielded from public scrutiny is not going to benefit from this approach:

If you're the CEO of a start-up company and you've always largely been a transparent person and that's your general nature, these tools are probably going to help you facilitate that. If you are an old school CEO of a Fortune 500, global company, and you're not used to a world of a great degree of transparency, it may not help you become more personally transparent. (...) Aside from the entertainment value, largely customers don't care if the CEO of the company just bought a computer, what he had for lunch today, or that he's suffering from depression. The investors might want to know that. But on average, the average consumer does not (Cons_2).

In the case of the executive class of a large corporation, the above respondent also suggests that the audience to this transparency may be quite specific. To be sure, a CEO living transparently to investors is a different relationship. Other respondents

suggest that while transparency is a valuable approach, the executive class can avoid this whereas smaller businesses are not exempt from calls to transparency.

Many companies are moving towards 'radical transparency' whether or not it is an effective strategy. Respondents cite success stories like Dell's attempt to publicize complaints about its products. Yet many respondents are sceptical of the outcome of this approach:

A lot of what I've heard about has been just more of a success story with this transparent visibility, you know, than a negative. But I can foresee how that can be a problem, especially if you don't have solutions to the problem, right? It's a risky business with that, it's very risky to post things public, but what's funny, and you'll find this with a lot of businesses, their culture is moving towards that direction. Their culture is moving towards a transparent visibility that allows everyone to see what they're doing, when they're doing it, because they want to seem like they have nothing to hide (Corp_6).

The above suggests that the appearance of transparency is much more important than actual transparency. For this reason, having workers bare their lives on behalf of the company, or work to construct a visible, responsible brand like Dell is a more viable approach. As with most social media strategies, this relies on user-generated content, complaints in this case. Again, like most social media, this enables corporations to take advantage of decentralized content, all while exercising censure if deemed necessary. The above respondent cites Research In Motion's approach as an example:

Even with the Crackberry website, I think I heard some examples where some things were kind of filtered, because they still have complete control over the website, of course, right? It's user-generated, but at the same time they can control what user generates and if they want, delete them when they can. And I think there were a few instances I heard in the past where they did eliminate things, maybe because they didn't have solutions to the problem or maybe because it was just too negative a comment that may have turned off a few users (Corp_6).

Certain corporations may combine the appearance of transparency with a selective presentation of the self, omitting negative information or emphasizing positive features. Nevertheless, respondents suggest that those not involved in large corporations cannot do this as easily. One person uses a disgraced social media consultant as an example of personal branding gone wrong. At the time this consultant had an audience of over one hundred and fifty thousand followers on Twitter. At a public event he claimed that these followers pressured entertainer P. Diddy to agree to meet with him. Yet this was entirely false:

By Monday there was such a backlash, because the story he told wasn't true. He made it up. So, I guess out of fifteen hundred people in the audience, there must have been a few of them who didn't believe him and tried to find out if it was true or not. And they did and it wasn't true. He had to apologize online to everybody that it wasn't true. That's how fast people can find you out if you're not 100% out there (Cons_3).

This cost the consultant his career, and was a product of his exposure to a large audience and its scrutiny. This suggests that independent and smaller businesses may not be as predisposed to undergo a strategic transparency, and that personal and professional claims that they make will be subject to a scrutiny they will be less capable of managing. This comes back to the idea of the personal and professional image being conflated through branding. One respondent treats this as an ongoing endeavour that is shaped by all visible aspects of one's career and life:

The personal brand and the corporate brand, the fact of the matter is, every time you open your mouth or every time you publish a photo or a video or whatever, some kind of connection to you, you are creating your brand. I think the challenge that we are going to learn from all of these tools – any technological advances have always been abused on the way. (...) I think with these social media pieces, we all need to understand that every time we open our mouths, we are creating a personal brand (Cons_4).

Transparency – through social media in particular – is touted as a best practice. Yet this overlooks those that benefit from a low profile:

I hear reports of, you know, companies that are more transparent that are doing better than their competitors, but at the same time, you know, Blackwater doesn't seem to be going bankrupt any time soon (Cons_2).

Self-presentation implicates businesses as they increasingly build a presence on social media. This is either done proactively, or reactively when responding to already being made visible by their customers. Their self-directed visibility is augmented in reaction to information provided by individuals. As individual use is the template for engaging with social media, businesses' own visibility is modelled in terms of personal information, profiling, and routine updates.

6.6 Watching and listening to users

While maintaining transparency on social media is seen as an effective strategy, it is also an approach that must be performed tactfully for the sake of maintaining a good reputation. Another key strategy for social media – one with fewer opportunities for downfalls – is to watch over users. As Facebook and other social media are a vast and easily accessible source of personal information, a lot of industry literature recommends that businesses pay attention to this. Following Li and Bernoff: “Consumers in the groundswell are leaving clues about their opinions, positive and negative, on a daily or hourly basis” (2008: 81). These authors go on to describe six reasons for businesses to ‘listen’ to social media: finding out how customers interpret their brands, obtaining a high-resolution and constantly updated understanding of the market, investing less capital in order to receive

better feedback, identifying key influencers in social media, effectively identifying and managing public relation crises, and generating new product and marketing ideas (ibid.: 93-95).

Depending on user privacy settings, businesses can access user content like anybody else. They may also choose to develop a page that not only centralizes relevant content, but also provides additional analytics. They may also rely on detailed feedback offered by Facebook's advertising services. Finally, they may also rely on external social media services like Radian6. Based on the access that any of these entry points offers to over half a billion users, one respondent goes so far as to describe Facebook as a source of "unlimited information" (Corp_6).

Returning to the idea of strategies and tactics, many respondents described their engagement on Facebook as if they were dwelling in these spaces rather than owning them. This makes sense as business users do not have more claim to much of Facebook than individual users. Yet this is not to suggest that businesses are identical to de Certeau's tacticians, who dwell precariously in borrowed spaces and have only marginal control over these spaces. One consultant suggests that Facebook should be used as a site for tactics rather than strategies. When asked to elaborate on her definitions of these terms, she offers the following: "The strategy is the overall plan, what are you trying to do. And the tactic is how are you going to go about doing it" (Cons_1). While businesses may experience some precariousness by not having complete control and ownership on social media, their presence on these spaces is used to augment brands and products that they do own and control. The lack of immediate control over Facebook is offset by the ability to have a more

pointed engagement with the site. Businesses may employ tactics based on watching and listening to users without any responsibility towards this group.

When asked why they chose to collect information through Facebook, respondents cite its methodological advantages. A respondent working at a radio station cited the fact that their audience would provide personal information online that would not come up in the context of other demographic services, for instance if they were coping with a death in the family (Corp_4). While the immediate market value of this information is difficult to ascertain, it supplements a conventional way of understanding their audience in a risk-free manner.

Other respondents cite the fact that collecting information through Facebook is a lot cheaper than its alternatives. Market research in particular is seen as prohibitive and lengthy compared to social media:

Market research is very very expensive so for us to get an Ipsos study done costs a lot of money and involves a lot of lengthy phone calls and interviews and a lot of compilation of data and this would be just another avenue of hearing consumers' comments and, you know, first hand really (Corp_5).

Not only is market research riddled with logistical issues of cost and time, but the above quote also describes that process as one that is fairly encumbered in comparison to first hand accounts. This respondent went on to suggest that Facebook leads to more authentic information, as it does not rely on leading questions. This is a fair assessment when considering that its users do not conceive of Facebook itself as a questionnaire. The fact that it is not an explicit site of inquiry is cited by another respondent, who complains that human subjects are poor at self-reporting:

What I think even more important than where the criticism happens is being able to observe the actual behaviour. So, you know, it's often true that people will tell you that they want one thing, or they do something one way but they do it another. As subjects, humans are actually poor at self-reporting. (...) I think if you own the social network, or the social application, and you have good measures and analytics on the back end, you've really got this amazing tool set because you can look at not just what people say but what they do and where the delta is between those two things (Cons_2).

This suggests that while Facebook provides invaluable information, the real value lies in emerging analytics to process it. Facebook's potential for behavioural assessment is unclear. However, this has been a key ambition for market surveillance (Elmer 2004). Behavioural scrutiny profiles users based on their engagement with brands, purchase histories, and other transactional data. By generating data about social ties as well as operating in a prolonged engagement with users, Facebook is seen as offering better insight into consumer behaviour. The above respondent also echoes Winseck's (2003) emphasis on the ownership of new media, including social media databases more recently. Facebook expands on this tradition by not only collecting information about behaviour in a wide range of social contexts, but also through a series of interactive gestures (including adding friends, tagging photos, liking products and brands) that are treated as behaviour.

For respondents developing applications for Facebook, their software enables a rich set of opportunities to watch over users. On the one hand, they are able to monitor user activity within the application. This allows developers to see what features are popular as well as manage vulnerabilities and potential exploits. But they also benefit from discussion groups elsewhere on the site. This suggests that developers not only have access to opinions voiced by users, but also to their behaviour on these services:

If we watch them play our game and we know they're spending, you know, on a certain stage, we're like, 'Ok, Stage 5 seems to be where a higher percentage of people spend. Why is that?' And then we'll look into their behaviour on the game itself but that's not, that has nothing to do with their Facebook accounts. That just has to do with how they're playing our game as a player (Corp_2).

The reliance on user-generated content is also regarded as a way to side-step methodological tools in order to reach user perspectives. One respondent working at a radio station described how Facebook enabled them to access photos their listeners would take at events that the radio station would host. These photos allowed the respondent to "understand what they're looking at" and "allows us to see it from their eyes too" (Corp_4). While Facebook is clearly a mediating link between businesses and users, the fact that it is not an explicit service for this end suggests that it can provide a more intimate connection to a user base. The fact that businesses can collect information before engaging with users suggests that it provides the former with a tactical advantage over the later. One respondent involved in sales describes this in terms of gaining leverage over potential clients:

The more information you have, the more leverage you have when it comes to making your pitch. That's one thing I've realized. And that's what I like about the social networks, its because it's a gateway for me to, kind of, look into their lives and figure out what they like and we have in common, you know, things I can bring up to build rapport when it comes to our phone conversation (Corp_6).

Here data is valued for its ability to understand markets and generate sales. This is not a new feature of marketplace surveillance, yet Facebook's ability to effortlessly locate a broad range of biographical and relational details about any single person is noteworthy. Indeed, it marks a more precise resolution, where marketers and sales staff can search both abstract categories and key individuals. This also suggests that

Facebook can be used to establish trust with clients in a way that may be perceived as a violation of personal boundaries. This is not surprising, given the fact that the violation of such boundaries remains a pressing concern for social media users.

While the above suggests that polling and market research services are being made redundant by Facebook, one respondent believes that it's more likely that the two would enter into a partnership that would enhance the scope of former while providing a way for the later to monetize their content. On the heels of an announcement that Facebook developed analytics that track moods and emotions online, he states:

Maybe this is a better way of monetizing Facebook is to go out, speak and share your research with research organizations. I'm sure Gallup would enter into an interesting partnership and Gallup sure figured out how to get money out of research (Cons_5).

One respondent ponders how social media's growth can extend to the recording of psychological information, and describes this in terms of how they can benefit users:

We're not a self-aware species, you know. We spend most of our lives largely asleep and sleepwalking through the motions of our lives. So tools that could help us be more self aware and tools that could change the nature of how we get offered products and services from being at the time that could be most valuable to the, or just whenever they can get shot at us, two at a time, when they're most valuable to us, really could change the whole game (Cons_2).

Listening, or collecting personal information on Facebook is a growing sphere.

Concerns over privacy are valid and frequently raised, yet little consensus exists over these concerns. Privacy as a concept is very unclear in this context.

Respondents suggest that user values and best practices are currently being shaped, in no small part influenced by key industry literature.

The strategy described above allows businesses to easily collect information about their clients through their online presence. User visibility in this context is often motivated by reasons external to the business, such as peer-to-peer sociality. Yet businesses gain from interpersonal scrutiny by covertly accessing that information. While users may be aware that this is going on, they are never aware what information is being collected, leading to what is regarded as more authentic information. Respondents suggest that users benefit from this visibility, in that it helps people voice their opinion (Corp_4). Yet they also acknowledge the purposive nature of their own engagement on Facebook, citing that it helps them grow, online and offline. While users may enjoy intrinsic rewards through social media, it is increasingly apparent that businesses are enjoying extrinsic rewards. Even in the absence of a multitude of ways to monetize Facebook, the costs associated are so low that listening on social media seems like a low-risk strategy.

6.7 Conversations with users

The previous two sections examined how Facebook is used by businesses to augment their own visibility as well as take advantage of the visibility of users. A third approach fuses these two in a way that facilitates a long-term engagement with the site's user base. Some businesses dovetail their own visibility with that of users as part of a larger social media strategy. Industry literature touts this approach as a paradigm shift in terms of market relations. Internet business guru Don Tapscott suggests to businesses: "Don't focus on your customers – engage them. Turn them into prosumers of your goods and services. Young people want to co-

innovate with you. Let them customize your value” (2009: 217). As social media have historically not been used to this end, research on this topic needs to examine the kinds of relations businesses are seeking with clients/users as well as how personal information on social networking sites contributes to this.

Both industry literature and respondents emphasize two-way communication and engagement as opposed to shouting and broadcasting. This resonates with Andrejevic's (2007) description of mass-customization, where user input is presented as empowering consumers, but clearly benefiting telecoms and other businesses. Yet the kinds of engagements imagined and attempted through social media are numerous and diffuse. These developments could bring a levelling of visibility. But they could also bring about a kind of one-two punch for businesses based on listening and promoting. Popular literature describes this as empowering for individuals in their relation to businesses. Authors like Shirky (2008) claim that these tools allow users to voice their complaints, make suggestions, and be less removed from production process. These features are not inherently problematic, but they can be configured by businesses to maintain an exploitative relation vis-à-vis their user base. In particular, it enables the extension of labour process to unpaid labour by extracting further value from users.

A conversation-based engagement presupposes that users want to directly engage with businesses on Facebook. Sometimes users welcome a corporate presence on Facebook. In other instances their presence is seen as a violation of privacy. One respondent who is developing a Facebook presence for a brand she represents is concerned with whether or not she should announce herself as

officially tied to that brand (Corp_5). For these reasons, some businesses prefer to remain covert on Facebook. Yet sometimes being visible and able to converse is highly sought after by users. This strategy is deemed effective when coping with negative feedback about a brand or product:

I think people just want to be heard and if you are prepared to listen to people and if again (...) [m]ost people will stop at that point. At that point, people will be like 'You know what, okay. At least they are trying' (Cons_3).

Activity on social media often has multiple benefits. One respondent who was planning out a significant presence on Facebook describes the returns she was experiencing:

We're getting really marketplace information, like we're getting consumer feedback pretty much first hand if we can see those comments and also it becomes really word of mouth marketing at some point when people are reading each others' comments and commenting on each other (Corp_5).

This suggests that an optimized social media space combines the collection of market information as well as disseminating advertising in a viral manner.

Respondents note that Facebook in particular is optimized towards maintaining connections with users, which means taking a careful approach towards promoting business content. One consultant (Cons_6) favours a conversation-based approach to Facebook, noting that those who bombard their social ties with content will suffer by losing network connections. Instead, this respondent suggests that businesses need to learn about their market by watching and strategically engaging with it online. Another respondent echoes the idea that Facebook is best used to foster long-term relations, stating that users will find that kind of mutual visibility to be less intrusive, thus leading to a richer engagement on their part (Corp_6).

The conversational approach resonates with the way application developers follow an "always in beta" approach to their products (Corp_2). Developers make perpetual revisions to their products based on in-game and external feedback garnered by their users. They watch over and listen to users, and respond to this information by adding value to their product. Likewise, businesses are revising their strategies and approaches based on information garnered from users. In terms of how Facebook shapes the production process, several respondents cited that it allows for the integration of user labour. By targeting key populations and maintaining a lasting engagement with them, Facebook allows businesses to channel user input at an early stage, and frequently return to these users. One respondent cites that user activity in public discussions is directly exploited to add value when developing and revising products (Cons_4). This approach harnesses user input to the benefit of the company. Another respondent states:

We often launch an application before it's completely perfect, and then fix it as it goes. We have an "always in beta" kind of mindset. Again, spending two years developing an application and then releasing it, it's better to just get something out there, watch your customers, talk to them about how to make the game more fun, and then bring those changes in as it goes. It's pretty interesting and fun that way. Sort of a ready-fire-aim approach (Corp_2).

This suggests a development cycle modelled after Facebook's own way of operating, notably in the sense that ongoing revisions are based on user visibility.

Both Facebook and developers are able to closely watch user behaviour on the site, as well as complaints and recommendations that they broadcast. They are able to modify their services based on what they know about users. These respondents suggest that the optimal way to use social media for some businesses is to selectively target a group or population, gather information that they broadcast,

and eventually converse with them in a strategic manner. In particular respondents will encourage users to think of social media spaces like pages and groups as belonging to users themselves. In the case of application developers, maintaining close relations with users enables them to receive feedback to improve their products, all while giving the impression that they are committed to keeping users satisfied:

But players have really helped us to develop the games. They're saying, 'oh my god, wouldn't it be cool if you did this?' And we're like, 'wow, that would be really cool.' And then we do it and players like it. So they are actually helping to design the games themselves and what better way to get people' interest and potentially to get them to spend than have them as a co-designer (Corp_2)?

Businesses on Facebook are able to exploit users by collecting feedback from them. This relates to the idea that Facebook is more like an enclosure than a conventional database, and that it is able to gather a wider range of input, including suggestions to make products and services more valuable. This is a feature of users increasingly living their lives in these enclosures. Respondents favour the visibility of users, citing that identifying and locating them leads to a more disciplined user and more useful information. One respondent states that this is “the flip side of getting rid of the anonymity: the quality of conversation goes up” (Cons_4).

A conversational approach to market surveillance is informed by users' familiarity with friendly surveillance. It is based on many of the same tenets explored in previous chapters, especially a sense of mutual transparency. Users are more comfortable making their lives public to businesses if they feel a sense of reciprocation. The corporate presence on Facebook is typically managed by actual Facebook users who use that peer-to-peer sociality to foster these ties.

Based on the descriptions offered above this approach resembles Smythe's understanding of audience labour (1977). As some authors describe a shift from an attention economy to an engagement economy (McGonigal 2008), audience labour increasingly involves a more active shaping of goods and services by nonpaid labourers. This suggests that a personal information economy goes beyond surveillance in taking advantage of this connection to enrol users into the production process. When it works this resembles a contemporary version of rampant Taylorism. Users are providing free immaterial labour. Not only is their labour rendered entirely visible, but their social lives and personal information on Facebook remains visible as well, especially when on application or fan pages.

6.8 Discussion

Businesses are turning to social media to scrutinize personal information as well as provide targeted content to users. An emerging personal information economy relies not only on personal details submitted by users, but also on a prolonged engagement with these users in social networks. Social ties are increasingly valued as part of emerging monetization strategies on social media. These developments suggest two possibilities, or two visions that are not mutually exclusive. On the one hand, industry literature emphasizes the importance of community building online (Li and Bernoff 2008; Tapscott 2009). This implies the creation of an enduring space that prioritizes ongoing relations between brand enthusiasts and representatives. This kind of space is deliberately themed by the brand, but this does not exclude other opportunities for monetization. Yet all that is

being described here resonates with Andrejevic's work on digital enclosures. Social media services present themselves in terms of sharing free content. Yet ownership of this content is crucial (Wineseck 2003), especially because these enclosures are used for a broad range of scrutiny and social sorting. Following the discussion in chapter two, the enclosure is a space, but also a process where "a variety of strategies for privatizing, controlling, and commodifying information and intellectual property" (Andrejevic 2009: 54). This suggests an ongoing development where practices are fluid and emerging, and where users may grow accustomed to living under pervasive scrutiny.

While respondents and industry literature offer a more positive description, they are advocating for a situation where users have a prolonged engagement with businesses, giving up personal information in exchange for targeted content. The extent to which these two perspectives overlap remains an ongoing topic of inquiry, and insight can be obtained by looking at how the term social is knitted into these configurations. To be sure, the term social is notoriously difficult to isolate in sociological research. The question "what's the meaning of social in social media?" underlies this research. Based on chapter four, it might mean convergence of social contexts. Users cannot keep personal information in one frame. Based on chapter five, it might mean something similar. In terms of liability and domain, both are extended beyond the university campus. The social in social media denotes a reconfiguration of information flows. One respondent claims that they become socialized insofar as "now these streams are about the people who you know or the people you care about, friends, family, people who you follow for professional

reasons as thought leaders.” (Cons_2) Here, social refers to social ties. This chapter suggests that social ties are growing from the basis of an emergent media to a vital component in emergent business models. Another respondent highlights the social value of social media, claiming that:

Technology is finally beginning to deliver social value from the standpoint of allowing you to control your destiny, your voice, the way you are published, who you interact with, how things are protected or not, as you conduct those interactions (Cons_4).

This respondent describes Facebook’s social functionality in terms of affordances to users, but also businesses that engage with the site. The respondent goes on to describe a conflation of the two:

Social media users are increasingly becoming developers because your ability to go into Facebook, add new applications to it you know, create a fan page and connect with many other people in your customer eco-system. All of those things used to required software developers, they are now things that you are I can do ourselves. So, when we talk about power – not only the tool and the user gets more powerful, the ability to manipulate that tool and connect it to other platforms and tools is now becoming... in the hand of you and I, as opposed to in the hands of developers (Cons_4).

This is described as a kind of empowerment where users can operate while unfettered by corporations, but this also benefits businesses by taking advantage of the labour and feedback of users. In either case, these are being treated as spaces for long-term engagement. While it may be too soon to ascertain, social media are positioned at the intersection of interpersonal sociality and corporate monetization.

The above interviews highlight the complexity of market-based surveillance on social media. Businesses are taking several approaches with social media, and using sites like Facebook for different ends. Various kinds of work are now situated on social media, including brand management, market research, and customer

service. Yet at this stage some patterns are emerging. Through Facebook businesses have access to a host of personal information pertaining to their brands, products, and markets. Much of this information is generated from people making themselves visible to each other. Sharing the same interface and information that is used for interpersonal exchanges augments their scope. In addition, respondents describe mimicking interpersonal surveillance in order to engage with users. Here, a conversational approach with users is deemed to be effective to maintain these relations. Businesses are employing friendly surveillance tactics to augment market surveillance. The final chapter returns to concept of mutual augmentation and considers key patterns. This launches into a consideration of key features of social media surveillance.

Chapter 7 – Key Features of Social Media Surveillance

This chapter offers a concluding overview of social media surveillance. It does this by first returning to the notion of mutual augmentation in order to fully consider its properties as manifest in the previous three chapters. Exploring these features provides insight regarding the spread of social media into various social contexts, with the consequence that managing visibility for those involved becomes a much more complex task. This chapter examines this complexity by focusing on five key features of social media surveillance. These draw on our understanding of mutual augmentation, but also provide direction for subsequent research.

7.1 Introduction

The first chapter in this dissertation proposed a diagram of social media surveillance based on mutual augmentation. While the first two chapters underscore scholarly work being conducted on social media, they also overlook the context in which users are immersed. This includes their motivations for making themselves visible on social media, their perception of surveillance on social media, and the measures they take to manage their own visibility as well as to take advantage of the visibility of others. Chapters four through six address these concerns by exploring research with three sets of Facebook users: university students, employees working on behalf of a university, and employees and consultants using Facebook as a professional resource.

These interviews provide an in-depth exploration of how different kinds of surveillance on Facebook not only co-exist, but also amplify one another. This

chapter returns to the concept of mutual augmentation in order to consider how it is manifest by these different groups on Facebook. This will involve Facebook's technical features, but also its ubiquity in social life. In unpacking the way that mutual augmentation is manifest between the various actors involved in Facebook, key features of social media surveillance emerge. Five features are considered in this chapter. First, users participate in a collaborative identity construction with other users. Second, friendships provide unique surveillance opportunities as users often engage with a particular audience in mind. Third, the construction of a personal social network means social ties become visible, measurable, and searchable. Fourth, an ever-changing interface and privacy controls alter users' visibility through the site. Fifth, social media content is easily re-contextualized. Information leaks are now a common outcome. The first three features illustrate interpersonal aspects of social media with an emphasis on social ties. The final two highlight its growth into social life, institutions, and culture.

7.2 Mutual augmentation of social media surveillance

This research considers three kinds of surveillance: individuals watching over one another, institutions watching over a key population, and businesses watching over their market. Chapter one refers to mutual augmentation as a diagram where formerly discrete surveillance practices feed off each other through their prolonged engagement with Facebook. Based on the findings discussed in the previous three chapters, mutual augmentation is a product of the social features of social media.

As a starting point, consider the features shared by these three surveillance practices. Individual, institutional, and market scrutiny all rely on the same interface. Thus, familiarity with the site as an interpersonal user facilitates other uses. In addition to relying on the same interface, these practices also rely on the same body of information. This means that personal information that has been uploaded for any particular purpose will potentially be used for several kinds of surveillance. These practices are all tied to the authorship of specific information, yet each practice can use all information involved.

All three populations also share the potential of being watched. They may be visible as a result of information they uploaded, or because of content uploaded by others. Mutual augmentation results in shared risk and visibility as well as shared tools and features to watch over others. All three populations report that their own visibility on the site is a primary motivation to watch over the site. The potential of being watched by others contextualizes their own surveillance. Not only does this suggest that surveillance is rampant on the site, but it also dampens users' ethical concerns about covertly watching over others. The consultant's recommendation in chapter five that users have to be on Facebook because they are already on Facebook encapsulates this point. Individuals, institutions, and businesses cannot afford the luxury of contemplating the public and private aspects of Facebook. They believe that their reputation is on the line. Out of necessity they need to scrutinize what others are saying.

All three practices are augmented by Facebook's exponential growth. The social media service has quickly climbed to over a half-billion users. Thus, more

users are joining the site to watch over peers, customers, markets, and brands. With every additional set of eyes affixed to Facebook, any content already on the site has a larger audience. Moreover, that increased audience is situated in a greater variety of social contexts, starting with Facebook's growth out of the postsecondary sector. In addition these users all augment each other's visibility by uploading content that implicates each other. The three kinds of surveillance range from individuals watching over other individuals, to institutions engaged in partly-categorical forms of scrutiny to businesses engaged in fully categorical scrutiny. How is each of these practices augmented by the others?

Individual users, especially students, were the first to join the site. However, they became aware that other populations were signing up. These users are more aware of tangible and visible forms of surveillance. They are more likely to be concerned with their parents watching over them than marketers, but they are increasingly aware of both, as well as universities and employers. They have a good idea of what kind of criteria these watchers are employing, and will self-scrutinize based on these criteria. Moreover, they will watch over others, including friends and family, with an eye for harmful content. Interpersonal scrutiny becomes professionalized in recognition that others are watching. Institutional surveillance on social media is a direct product of interpersonal scrutiny. Employees use their knowledge as personal Facebook users to watch over students on behalf of the university. Moreover, they were able to see content that was uploaded as a result of individual users wanting to remain visible to one another. This kind of interpersonal reciprocation augments institutional scrutiny. Businesses also draw on individual

scrutiny by employing early adopters of social media to do this work. Not only do businesses take advantage of interpersonal scrutiny by watching over these conversations and exchanges, but a conversational approach is adopted as a best strategy for watching over markets.

Mutual augmentation on Facebook illustrates some features about social media surveillance that warrant further inquiry. First, visibility on Facebook is an inherently collaborative act. Authoring information, commenting on other users' content, and adding friends to a social network are all actions that involve and implicate other people. This is evident, but it complicates the watcher-watched dyad in ways that are explored below. Second, social media platforms themselves are dynamic. This is a product of the two-pronged invisibility of services like Facebook. While these sites serve to make their users visible to the social world, their own inner-workings remain opaque. As a result its users do not know what to expect from a site that hosts so much of their online presence. But Facebook is also invisible in the sense that it is ubiquitous. It is pervasive to an extent that it hardly evokes our attention. Its expansion into various social spheres elicits little concern or controversy. As a result, information contained on the site can easily migrate to new contexts. The follow section considers these points in greater detail.

7.3 Key features

Five key features of social media highlight a shift in the collection of personal information on the internet and illustrate the growing liquidity (Lyon 2010) of surveillance. New forms of visibility and transparency afforded by social media are

coupled with user practices to manage these possibilities.

7.3.1 Collaborative identity construction

Users increasingly participate in a collaborative identity construction with their peers. Facebook allows users to share information about their friends with those friends. Profiles are composed of fields where both users and their friends can add personal information about that user. By default this information is shared with both users' networks of friends. Thus, speaking to a colleague also means speaking about that colleague to an extended audience of users. This occurs in four principal locations: walls, photos, tags, and comments.

Walls are a prominent feature on user profiles where friends can post messages and other content as a series of chronologically ordered entries. This serves a dual purpose: content is used to communicate with friends, but also offer a kind of public testimony about that person to their network of friends. Students acknowledge that the kind of postings a user will receive from friends is treated as a reflection on their personality and character:

I guess the type of wall posts they get also kind of reflects who they are as well and, again someone who has a lot of really nasty wall posts from the people added on Facebook as friends might not exactly seem the most appealing person in the world (Stu_24).

With this reflection in mind, users are tactical about the content that they post on their friends' walls. They are careful how they portray their friends, relegating sensitive or compromising content to the private message feature:

I love the walls and I post on people's walls all the time – but at the same time I'm very careful about what I post on other people's walls and I also send a lot of messages because it's like "This is wall appropriate, this is

message appropriate.' And (...) it's just a fact of life that people are going to read my conversations. (...) We all know what we're saying to each other (Stu_19).

The above respondent suggests that scrutinizing other user's conversations is a taken-for-granted feature of social media. Likewise, users report having to scrutinize their own wall for problematic postings from their friends:

Especially people have a tendency to throw things on your wall and you're like 'Uh, you forget that I've got a dozen friends who are still friends with this person and they could see this and could see this on their News Feed' and that kind of thing (Stu_22).

Users will not only monitor what other users will say about each other, but also actively monitor what is being said about themselves. In employing these tactics, users increasingly frame the wall as featuring content that is entirely public and visible to others:

Like, when you write like you know, hilarious comment on one of your friends' walls, it's not necessarily to communicate with that person, but to show everyone who comes and visits their page that you are communicating with that person. So, it's intended to be viewed by others, in its very nature (Stu_28).

Users can also upload photographs of their friends. With over three billion photos uploaded to Facebook every month (FB Statistics 2010) it stands to reason that they are a central feature for interpersonal assessments. Indeed, most users report that when adding a new contact to their network they will immediately scrutinize the photos on their profile: "You can get to know someone by looking at their information (...) you can see all the comments people have made on their photos and all the photos of them and all the photos that they've posted" (Stu_19).

Friends can further augment a user's visibility by tagging them in a photo. By creating a link between the photo and the user's profile, tags facilitate browsing

often hundreds or thousands of photos featuring any single user from dozens of sources. As an added feature, the act of tagging someone is itself content to be distributed. Following default privacy controls, if one friend tags a second friend in a photo – which may belong to a third friend – this will be featured on both walls as well as both user’s friends news feeds. The politics of tagging has become a sticking point for some users, especially those who have struggled with incriminating material about them being publicized:

There’s a picture of me someone took randomly in an awkward position. It looks like I’m doing something bad to the teacher, but I was actually not. That was like a hundred comments on it. That took a week to get it off (Stu_7).

Through this experience, the above respondent developed a series of tactics to cope with incriminating photos:

First of all, especially people who are taking photos of you doing something destructive at parties, if I know they’ve taken it, I will go tell them like the next day after the party: ‘Do not upload these. Please delete them.’ And if they do upload, I would tell them again. And, first of all un-tag myself. And then, I would report to Facebook (Stu_7).

As this is a growing concern, campus security is increasingly involved in cases where students have been defamed through social media. An employee from campus security reports that:

Within Facebook itself, if someone comes to us and says ‘subject A is slandering my name and has several entries on their Facebook sites about me that are grossly injurious to me,’ then we will check that out (Sec_2).

Through tagging users are publicly identified by their friends. This feature has been extended to text-based content like notes as well as status updates. When a user is tagged in someone else’s note or status update, this content will then appear on both users’ profiles as well as both friendship networks’ news feeds. This feature

has also raised concern for the tagged person's reputation. Many students are concerned with how their friends' opinions will reflect on them:

You can make a note on Facebook (...) and you can mention people in the note. I find that a little bit difficult just because a lot of the time the views they'll sometimes post aren't something that you agree with (Stu_22).

Comments are another way users can be made visible by their friends. This involves adding a text-based response to content like photographs, status updates, notes as well as actions like adding a friend or joining a group. Comments add a conversational feature to activity on Facebook, such that users can comment indefinitely about any content or activity on the site. This feature ensures that users do not have exclusive claims over how they present themselves on social media.

Upon receiving an accusatory comment on a note she posted, one student used the comment feature herself to manage her online presence:

But like an acquaintance of mine (...) flamed my post and in the comments he accused me of being like tacitly supporting the murder of all these civilians and posted a pictures, a link to a picture of someone who I had participated in the murder of. I was just like what the hell is this? I didn't delete it. I instead wrote my response underneath it hoping that anyone who came across it was like 'so he is a whacko' (Stu_28).

Users rely on what others say about their friends to make inferences about them. Given the difficulty involved in managing what potentially hundreds of friends are saying about a user, this is seen as a more authentic representation of who that person is. This is not to suggest that users are devoid of any tactics. They can choose to remove wall posts, photo tags, or comments, and can report inappropriate content. They can also disable their wall and hide all tagged photos as a means to minimize their friend's influence. But the absence of a wall or photos on a profile is

often read as an admission of guilt in that the user is attempting to conceal something.

7.3.2 Lateral ties provide unique surveillance opportunities

Marketers, employers, and other institutional watchers access a rich knowledge of users when those individuals are bound to a network of colleagues to whom they wish to remain transparent and trustworthy. Users have a particular audience in mind when uploading and sharing personal details. Yet that audience makes up only a small portion of the people who have access to their information.

Institutional surveillance typically occurs in fixed and readily identifiable settings, including the border crossing, the interrogation room, and the census form. These allow for a degree of deceit and subterfuge on the part of the person under scrutiny. In contrast, Facebook is a site of social convergence, with other users belonging to several social spheres. Personal information is not authored with all potential audiences in mind. Thus, other watchers can intervene in ties between a Facebook user and that user's intended audience. The majority of respondents claimed that they upload information for their closest friends and occasionally their relatives. There is some variance in terms of ideal audiences, as some use Facebook for geographically proximate ties while others use it mostly for long distance ones. With these kinds of friendship ties shaping the way users understand Facebook, they will provide information meant for a personal audience. As one student notes:

That's the best way to get a measure of someone (...) when they think they're in their own space. The things people post on Facebook can be very telling. Right or wrong, if you want to know about someone, look on Facebook because that's sort of where they bare their souls to the world (Stu_19).

These social ties are experienced as a kind of soft coercion, with pressure from a network of friends pushing users to engage with the site. The majority of respondents report joining Facebook at the behest of their friends, and then being expected to submit biographical content. These friendship ties regulate the kind of information provided through a passive yet ongoing scrutiny. When uploading information, users only identify a portion of their audience. This suggests a self-presentation geared towards friends, ensuring a degree of comfort with sharing otherwise sensitive personal information. For example, users are routinely asked by friends to post their phone number on Facebook. Given the site's quasi-public status, this troubles some student users:

I've seen a lot of people being like 'I've lost my cell phone, please give me your phone number' and you'll just have walls full of people's phone numbers with their name attached and I think that's really stupid (Stu_21).

The user's social ties with their friend network compel them to share personal information. What's more, the information they share is expected to be consistent with how they would otherwise present themselves to those peers. This is not to suggest that deception and identity play are absent from Facebook. Rather, this becomes the kind of deception that would normally exist between friends and colleagues. Instead of actively resisting online surveillance, these tactics are akin to a Goffmanian form of self-presentation (1959) based on the use of explicit and implicit cues to maintain a favourable public image.

7.3.3 Social ties are a kind of content

Sites like Facebook turn social connections into visible, measurable and searchable content. This adds a dimension of visibility to the study of social ties and social capital, which indicates that 'who you are' has always been a reflection of 'who you know.' With social media this has become a standard feature for profiling individuals. Not only are a user's social ties visible, but others can also make inferences about private information on the basis of friends' publically accessible information.

The notion that social ties are a form of personal information often escapes users' scrutiny simply because they do not submit it in the same way they submit photographs and other content. As a result, friends and friends in common are visible on user profiles, even when most content is kept private. Following the default settings, everybody would be aware of the company that everyone else keeps. This information is used internally by Facebook to recommend new friends based on existing ones. Respondents look at other users' friends not only to confirm their identity, but also to make inferences about users. Too few friends and too many friends are both seen as cause for concern. Several assumptions are made: too few friends suggests either the user is too socially withdrawn, or employing a false identity. Too many friends suggest social promiscuity, a lack of privacy concerns, or lack of knowledge about privacy controls. As one student reports:

You can't have that many friends. (...) There were people on the site being like 'Add me!' like, 'I'll add anybody.' And it's just like you're going to have way too many friends and way too many people who you actually don't know (Stu_21).

Another respondent suggests that the kind of scrutiny cast on friends also applies to the self: “There are people who have over 1000 [friends]. And, okay, you can know a lot of people, but I have too many right now” (Stu_19).

Beyond this immediate unease, there is a growing realization among users that friends, when taken in aggregate, can be used as a window into a user’s innermost thoughts and intentions. Social ties are descriptive in and of themselves, but they also allow one user’s personal details reflect on their peers. Users may choose not to disclose their sexual orientation or political affiliations, either by omitting these details or hiding them with privacy controls. Yet a portion of their friends will openly share these details about themselves. By monitoring this information in aggregate, researchers claim that it can be used to make assessments about users. (Wills and Reeves 2009; Jernigan and Mistree 2009). If the average user has one hundred and thirty friends, and one fifth of those friends have partially transparent profiles, those users provide a substantial sample of information that may reflect on the individual. Current privacy settings are not able to prevent these exploits, as the user in question is essentially bypassed. The inferences made through users’ friends may not be accurate, although that is hardly the point. Through social sorting this information shapes social outcomes.

The fact that a user’s friends reflect them presents some unique challenges to self-presentation on social media. Many are clearly ambivalent about this kind of exposure, as evidenced by the number of users who hide this information. Yet, by default, users are sharing this information with the public. Users are beginning to realize the extent to which their friends reflect their identity, and many have

expressed discomfort with this. Yet this discomfort is mixed with fascination about the insight these features provide. One student states: “I don’t think everyone should be able to view who my friends are. Interestingly enough I do go look at other people’s friends” (Stu_26).

7.3.4 Interface and its contents are always changing

Social media platforms are dynamic. Not only do they perpetually solicit new input from users, but they also forge new avenues for that information. Likewise, user engagement is shifting in response to changes to the interface. This illuminates a broader vision of how Facebook operates, the culture in which it is situated, and the way its users position themselves in it.

Users report that Facebook itself is continuously changing. Revisions to the interface push some information to the foreground while hiding other details. New features and third party applications require further personal details from users. Facebook’s front page prominently invites users to make new friendship connections and send new content to existing ties. Each revision to Facebook’s interface is accompanied by new privacy settings, which by default are left open to a broad public. These changes indicate a tension where Facebook’s developers purport to offer users greater control over their information while promoting open and unrestricted access to their personal information. The 2007 decision to make this content searchable through Google indicates that Facebook is increasingly linked to additional settings.

These changes to the interface and privacy settings are met with a degree of distrust among users, who link them to attempts to monetize personal information:

I really don't trust Facebook at all because, they're there to make money, obviously, and it's like 'Oh, we don't sell your personal information' and then it's like 'Oh, headline story: Facebook selling your personal information' (Stu_19).

In addition to these features, research on the topic should consider the complexity of the users themselves, who may transpose this information to separate contexts. They may save a photograph to their hard drive and email it or upload it to a separate site, repost it in their own photo album, or simply tag or comment on it. In all these cases that photo leaks from its original setting to another, and is thus made more public. Yet the latter methods require less user intervention, suggesting that these kinds of leaks are increasingly a built-in feature of the social media.

As users continually catch up with a changing interface, it stands to reason that information they post about themselves or others will be more widely distributed than anticipated. This suggests an ongoing learning curve for using Facebook that leads users to perceive each other as potential liabilities. Photos of a mature student's children were leaked when a day-care employee posted them online:

Now I think she had intended to put them up privately and that was just the mistake. However still, she made those pictures available to everybody that goes to the day-care, all the other parents that were there and it was done without my consent and I was actually very upset by that. That's a violation of my privacy and my child's privacy (Stu_26).

Recognizing these shifts, users themselves treat their engagement with Facebook as an ongoing project. Many users report revise their personal content, either modifying or removing content as well as pruning ties with their peers. These

measures are framed as a way to cope with the emerging risks associated with Facebook's changes. As one student states: "I go through my privacy settings every couple months and just make sure that everyone is still how I want it to be" (Stu_19).

While very few respondents are willing to predict how Facebook would change in the immediate future, they anticipate that its content will become more and more public with time. As for how they would use Facebook in the future, student respondents treat the job market as a catalyst for major revisions to their engagement: "I will probably start locking down profiles and stuff, un-tagging myself from scandalous photos" (Stu_4). Another student claims: "When I'm applying for jobs and stuff I think I'm going to turn off my Facebook" (Stu_20).

Despite uncertainties about new features and issues, respondents who approach Facebook from an institutional perspective regard it as a growing aspect of their responsibilities. A university web coordinator comments on the sudden emergence of a new set of responsibilities, citing "an explosion in the last few months especially in the area of higher education" (Com_2). This rapid growth in the university sector is only part of a progressive creeping by Facebook into numerous social spheres.

7.3.5 Social media content is easily re-contextualized

The conditions described in the above section suggest that information on Facebook circulates to an ever-increasing amount of social spheres. Information is increasingly free from its initial context when uploaded to Facebook, augmenting

the scope of any single act of surveillance. This speaks to some of the key features of most contemporary surveillance: where information is gathered in a particular setting and context, is scrutinized elsewhere, and the consequences of this scrutiny may occur in yet another context. This in turn is why simplistic notions of privacy, including those relating to privacy settings found on social media sites, are inadequate to contemporary conditions. Context is crucial (Nissenbaum 2009).

This is an acceleration of the leaks previously considered in information databases (Lyon 2001). It's no novelty that information tied to a particular context may migrate elsewhere. This can be caused by technological error or the deliberate and often malicious intention of a particular operator. Yet social media platforms privilege the open distribution of personal information through 'sharing' and 'publishing.' As a result, the leak becomes a standard feature for information exchange in social networks.

Facebook is especially susceptible to re-contextualization. Personal information is appraised in a distinct context, typically one that differs from the context in which it was authored. A profile may be treated as a personal – if collaborative – diary. Yet its contents are generally handled as a public broadcast. As Facebook gains prominence as a de facto location for self-representation, information found on user profiles will be assessed in several contexts. These features illustrate an interpretation of the social in social media: these services endeavour to bridge as many social contexts as possible.

Social networks first emerged as a service used exclusively by trusted colleagues. When it was limited to a number of American universities users were

under the impression that they were sharing information with their fellow students. As a result Facebook emerged in a climate where university students were relatively comfortable sharing personal information with known peers. Starting in September 2006, their siblings, parents, and non-university colleagues began to join the site. While this provoked some discomfort, they were more likely to use their privacy settings rather than remove personal information. As employers, politicians, and other institutional representatives joined the site, users had grown accustomed to the degree of authenticity they offered. Facebook is now a hub of social convergence. A student's friend list still contains university colleagues, but they are situated alongside family, friends, co-workers, and strangers.

Students author a wealth of information about themselves in a particular context. Many participants report either joining or augmenting their Facebook presence during the first few weeks of school. This activity is tied to a specific agenda: to create a publicized identity, make new friends and socialize in a context linked to recreational drinking and casual romantic encounters. The 'party photo' is a kind of interpersonal currency in this context, yet it is treated as a liability during job applications. In light of these possibilities, researchers should explore the principal trajectories by which information leaks. Conversations and photographs from this context are perceived as potentially leaking into a post-graduate context, whether that involves graduate school, law school, or job applications. In a more general sense, respondents describe consistent leaks between personal and professional contexts:

Obviously at work you have your professional self and at how you have your private self and your private life, but that's the part of you that gets reflected

on Facebook. So, whereas before Facebook, there was this definite distinction between walking through the doors of the office and once you're out of there (...) with Facebook and with the internet, your private life can follow you around 24/7 (Stu_19).

One student offers a scenario where a childcare employee's photos are leaked into the public and the dilemma this presents for parents who are evaluating their professional image:

And I'm thinking, you put that information on your page, that you happily work at a child care facility A and here you are in a drunken state – and that's not to suggest that I believe that people who work at child care facilities should live cloistered lives and not party and have a great time, but am I left with that one snapshot of this person and is that the person that I want to hand my child over to? (Stu_27).

While the above respondent acknowledges that Facebook users have the right to their private lives, they also concede that they will act on information about this lifestyle if made public. The kinds of leaks that are possible are difficult to anticipate, but it stands to reason that they will threaten interpersonal boundaries that users would prefer to maintain. A human rights advisor offers such a scenario:

Let's say you're a person of a particular religious background that isn't particularly supportive of intimate relationships before marriage. Right? And somebody sends that out. Imagine how your family in Egypt is going to feel seeing those kinds of things. I mean, there are huge ways to devastate people in very fast terms by using that technology (Hum_1).

Unlike more tangible kinds of surveillance regimes it is the indeterminate nature of later scrutiny that evokes some anxiety. Users do anticipate this, but admit to not knowing the outcome, or being fully capable of preventing this. Even if the user adopts some tactics to avoid the worst consequences, it is difficult to anticipate all the outcomes of publishing information. Different populations are engaging with the user's profile, different kinds of institutions are taking an interest in personal

information, Facebook introduces new features, and users adopt new practices. Past activity is coupled with future conditions in a way that poses unique challenges for its users.

7.4. Discussion and directions for subsequent research

Craig Lynch, mentioned in the introduction to this work, returned to prison, but the mundane visibility he maintained as a fugitive speaks to conditions increasingly adopted by social media users. He had an active presence for a vaguely defined audience, who began to contribute to his presence. Eventually (and probably intentionally) his mundane visibility impacted his life chances. To be sure, most social media users will not be imprisoned, and most fugitives will avoid social media, but Lynch's everyday presence on Facebook is part of a mainstreaming of everyday visibility through social media. Moreover, this everyday visibility is increasingly tied to the allocation of life chances, as institutions and businesses have an increased engagement with the social media.

Facebook's growth makes it a pressing concern for Surveillance Studies. A key tension underlies research on this topic: while managing personal information on social media is largely a user-initiated task, a lot of activity on these sites is beyond the control of users themselves, and may further the increased liquidity of surveillance. Recent scholarship has considered the surveillance consequences of social media. While some (Albrechtslund 2008) highlight the voluntary and empowering potential of managing online visibility, others (Andrejevic 2007; Fuchs 2010) warn that these services augment institutional surveillance while enabling

new ways of exploiting everyday sociality. By exploring the key features of information exchange on Facebook, this research offers an understanding of the 'social' in social media based on the increased visibility of its user base. While the consequences that Andrejevic and Fuchs describe are a reality for users, many are aware of these consequences and are adopting tactics to prevent or at least manage the risks associated with living through social media.

Surveillance Studies research on sites like Facebook needs to consider the rapid mainstreaming of social networking services, particularly the exponential rise in membership and institutional involvement. The way it is perceived and utilized by businesses and other non-user actors is an underdeveloped field. As well, a nuanced understanding of ownership ought to balance perspectives that treat social networking services as either the users or designers exclusive domain. While users have invested time, energy, and personal details into the collective act of 'Facebooking', they maintain a tenuous grasp over the future of the service. All of this will shed light on the new politics and dynamics of information exchange through social networks. Changes to the interface, coupled with emerging practices, complicate users' attempts to manage their online presence, although they are developing new tactics in response to these challenges. Despite this apparent growth, a director of campus security comments on how social media are still at an early formative stage of their development, claiming that "it's like a toddler. It's not a newborn anymore, it's a toddler, it still needs some direction, some guidance" (Sec_1). How such direction, such guidance, will emerge, and where from, remains to be seen. It is unlikely that those charged with responsibilities for campus security

will be able to offer such tutelage for “toddlers” without extensive collaboration with a number of other stakeholders. But this is an area beyond the scope of this research.

To conclude: this research considers social media surveillance as three distinct practices. By looking at how these practices share the same interface, this research locates the mutual augmentation of interpersonal, institutional and market scrutiny. Converging technologies, but also collaborative identity construction and vast social data are driving forces for contemporary social sorting. This research contributes to sociological knowledge by looking at the continued domestication of surveillance technology. Of vital importance is its focus on the effects of everyday visibility and self-presentation. This will pose significant challenges to Surveillance Studies and related fields, as this technology is not only evolving, but is also being shaped through new approaches by individual, institutional and market users. This will also be an issue for policy and legal sectors, as issues of privacy and liability have to be reconsidered in light of these developments. Finally, through everyday practice users need to convey their priorities in terms managing their identity as well as the composition of their social network.

This research is limited to one particular social media platform and illustrates from a user perspective some of the novel dimensions and directions of today’s liquid surveillance. Although Facebook’s sharply growing population and emerging features justify the decision to focus on Facebook, subsequent research will expand this scope by contributing empirical findings from other platforms. Future research should also consider the increasingly taken-for-granted presence of

social media, as this growth affects boundaries between social spheres. While the above focuses on peer-to-peer, institutional, and commercial surveillance, it overlooks policing and national intelligence uses of social media. These are important studies in their own right, and are likely already being pursued by scholars. The growth of Surveillance Studies requires increased specialization, especially in the field of emerging 'social' technologies. While scholars scarcely understand the full consequences and potential of these technologies, they are rapidly accumulating a significant user population. As sites like Facebook become a mainstay in everyday life, indefinite retention becomes the de facto outcome for personal information, which has clear and consequential implications for surveillance. How many of these implications are also a cause for concern will be shown by subsequent research.

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Appendix A – Supplementary Definitions

The growth of SNSs like Facebook spawned a series of terms that generate much conversation but little consensus. Likewise, longstanding sociological concepts should be reappraised in light of these new developments. This section offers working definitions of the most relevant terms. These definitions are not meant to preclude dialogue in response to the question ‘what is a social network’, but rather offer some stability and consistency – however fleeting – in order to sustain in-depth sociological scrutiny.

Social Network: A cluster of individuals who know one another. A diagram of interpersonal relations and acknowledgements. Conduits through which capital (primarily social) can be exchanged. These have traditionally been managed through geographic proximity, but have recently been augmented by the rise of information technology.

Social Media: Software that enables user authorship. This includes a range of web-based services where individual users can upload information to share with others. As well, these services also enable users to offer commentary on this content.

Social Networking Site: A type of social media that focuses on the exchange of biographical information. Not all social media are SNSs, but all SNSs are social media. Personal identity takes precedent over other kinds of content. Not all social media are used for personal information, even if they say something about users’ tastes, interests and preferences.

ICT Device: Electronic devices that enable information exchange. Social media and SNSs operate on these platforms. Desktop computers are the

predominant kind of ICT device used. However, recent developments have seen a sharp increase in laptops as well as other mobile devices that greatly increase the scope and engagement of this technology by users.

Information: Any data or detail that is exchanged between individuals. Note the emphasis on the transitory aspect of information. Information is necessarily in a state of flux. Contemporary theorists have noted that information follows trajectories that are unanticipated by those sending it. Information includes the sender's personal details like age, date of birth, social security number, but it is not restricted to these details.

Knowledge: Information in a fixed setting, context, restricted, and monetized. If information is the raw material, knowledge is the commodity that is yielded. Knowledge is information that has been stored in a secure database, sorted according to relevant criteria, and made accessible through algorithms.

Surveillance: the practices of collecting and making use of personal, social, and environmental information. These practices are systematic, routine, and focused. This may be overt or covert, hierarchical or lateral, for caring or control, face-to-face or through devices that mediate this gathering. The process of refining information into knowledge is often accomplished through surveillance.