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# Display and Control in Online Social Spaces: Toward a Typology of Users

Jacquelyn A. Burkell

*Faculty of Information and Media Studies, Western University, jburkell@uwo.ca*

Alexandre Fortier

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# DISPLAY AND CONTROL IN ONLINE SOCIAL SPACES: TOWARD A TYPOLOGY OF USERS<sup>1 2</sup>

Alexandre Fortier, McGill University

Jacquelyn Burkell, The University of Western Ontario

## INTRODUCTION

Online social networks are spaces of social *display* where an astronomical amount of personal information, which would once have been characterized as private, is shared with a loose community of friends or followers. This broad sharing does not preclude participant interest in *control*, both over the content of the social network profile and over the audience that has access to that profile. Thus, issues of display and control are in tension in the context of online social networking.

Earlier research using qualitative techniques (Burkell et al., 2014) suggests that the default conception of online social networks is as public spaces with little or no expectation of control over content or distribution of profile information. This conception, however, is articulated with respect to information posted by *others*, and some results suggest that participants may frame their own participation in different ways, and may hold different expectations with respect to the display of and control over their own social network profiles.

The goal of this research is to articulate the different subjective perspectives that characterize Facebook users with respect to the control that they exert over content that they share and audience with whom they share it. We employ a methodology particularly suited to this endeavour—Q methodology—in order to achieve this goal. We select Facebook as the context for our research because it remains the most widely used among social networking sites (Statistica, 2016); given the basic similarity of most social media sites in both purpose and function (boyd, 2006; Van Dijck, 2013), we anticipate that our results will be applicable beyond this specific application.

## BACKGROUND

Online social networks are sites of social display, variously conceived as exhibition spaces (Hogan, 2010), online ‘scrapbooks’ (Good, 2013), and (most commonly) ‘stages’ for ‘performing’ the self (boyd, 2007; Van Dijck, 2013). Research suggests a positive relationship between intensity of Facebook participation and positive personal outcomes including life satisfaction, social trust, and social capital (Ellison et al., 2007; Valenzuela et al., 2009). In their meta-analysis of research on the factors contributing to Facebook use, Nadkarni and Hoffman (2012) conclude that Facebook use is motivated by dual needs: the need to belong, and the drive for self-presentation. In fact, online social networks have been heralded as providing space for psychologically valuable self-exploration (McKenna et al., 2002; Valkenburg, 2005), and the very act of viewing and editing social profiles can have a positive impact on self-esteem

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(Gonzales and Hancock, 2011). Tamir and Mitchell (2012) demonstrate that self-disclosure is intrinsically rewarding. Huang (2016) concludes that online self-disclosure has beneficial effects for social support and social well-being; this is supported by other research demonstrating that the effect is particularly strong for *accurate* self-disclosure (Kim and Lee, 2011). This impact may well result from positive feedback received by participants in social networks. Participants in online social networks experience peer support and affirmation (Lim et al., 2013), often in the form of ‘likes’ attached by others in the social network to particular posts or images (Scissors et al., 2016). Thus, there is overwhelming evidence that personal display in online social networks is both ubiquitous and psychologically valuable, and participants in these spaces engage in the practice because they gain benefit from it.

At the same time, participants in social media environments experience risks and costs stemming from self-revelation online, including privacy risks. As a result, users are interested in *control*—control over the content that represents them online, and control over the audience that has access to that content. Participants in online social networks are concerned about their privacy, and although the practice is far from universal, many utilize privacy settings to limit the visibility of their online social profiles (Tufekci, 2008). Users discuss the challenges associated with separating different spheres of social life (e.g., employers, parents, friends), concerned that information appropriate for one audience does not ‘leak’ to another audience (Stutzman and Hartzog, 2012), a situation termed ‘context collapse’ (Marwick, 2011). In other cases, the focus of concern is the content of the social network profile, with discussions about what content is appropriate to include in a social media profile (Bailey et al., 2013), and consideration of issues such as photograph ‘tagging’ and posts to publicly visible ‘walls’ in the social media profile (Madden et al., 2013). In these latter two cases, *other* participants contribute to or even control the content of the social media profile, leading to concerns that this profile might not reflect the best or preferred version of the self.

Thus, it is evident that display and control are in tension in online social spaces—and it is therefore no surprise that participants express preferences and indeed exhibit behaviours with respect to online social preferences that are mutually inconsistent, and that differ over time, across platforms, and between ‘posts’. Litt and Hargittai (2016), for example, demonstrate that users of social media sites have different ‘imagined audiences’ for their social media disclosures: in approximately half of the cases they examined, the imagined audience was ‘abstract’ and thus unspecified, while in the other half of cases the users had a specific audience in mind. Ayalon and Toch (2013) explored ‘willingness to share’ social media postings, and noted that willingness to share dropped with increasing time since posting. Papacharissi (2009) identifies cross-platform differences in norms regarding self-presentation on social media sites.

There is also good reason to believe that participants in social media spaces differ from each other with respect to their perspectives on display of and control over social media profiles. Online social media are generally characterized as ‘public’ spaces, and the information posted in them is typically (and by default) identified as ‘public’ information (see, e.g. Burkell et al., 2014; see also the literature on discoverability of social network profiles in legal proceedings; e.g., Allen and Orheim, 2012). Indeed, there is good evidence that social media participants share this ‘default’ perspective. Our own qualitative research suggests that in general participants in social networks recognize the extended and not strictly bounded audience for online social profiles, and even those who actively limit access to their own information tend to treat the profiles of others as if those profiles are intended for the larger public (Burkell et al., 2014). Thus, it would be easy

to conclude that while they remain concerned about information display and control, most social media participants are resigned to the reality that online social spaces are public spaces.

There are, however, subtle cues that suggest Facebook users do not simply adopt the default view of Facebook as a public space, but instead hold different perspectives with respect to their own participation in the social space. These different subjective perspectives appear to coexist with the default 'public' view. Some participants in online social networks appear to use the platform in ways that are substantially different from what they perceive as being the default or 'standard' practice. Burkell et al., (2014), for example, noted that while some participants treated their own profiles as they saw those of others (that is, as produced exhibitions of the self meant for widespread public consumption) others appeared to treat their own Facebook profiles as loci of highly personal communication directed to a select audience of close friends and family members. This variation in individual or personal practice exists within a common perspective of the 'typical' Facebook member as someone who uses the platform for public self-promotion. These results suggest that Facebook users may not form a homogeneous group with respect to their perspectives on display of and control over personal information. Instead, it appears that the community of Facebook users might instead include a number of subgroups holding different perspectives on the issue.

Other research has identified sub-groups of social media users with respect to particular aspects of participation including the integration of social media in the workplace (Anandarajan, Paravastu and Simmers, 2006), uses and gratifications of social media (Orchard et al., 2014), and perspectives on cyberbullying (Wint, 2013). In some cases, the focus of research has been to identify different privacy 'types'. Most of this research divides users into groups that vary along a continuum of privacy concern (see Lee, 2000; Sheehan, 2002); among these, Westin's (Harris and Westin, 1995) three categories of High/fundamentalist, Medium/Pragmatist, and Low/Unconcerned are the best known. Very few studies have undertaken a more nuanced exploration of privacy expectations. Dupree et al. (2016) represents one exception. Their results extend Westin's typology by splitting the 'pragmatist' group (typically by far the largest of the three categories as suggested by Westin) into three new groups: lazy experts, self-educated technicians, and amateurs, and situating the resulting five groups along two dimensions: technical knowledge and protection motivation. Morton and Sasse (2014) identified five distinct subjective perspectives on privacy behaviour: information controllers, security concerned, benefits seekers, crowd followers, and organizational assurance seekers. The results of Morton and Sasse are particularly relevant to the current research, as theirs is the only study to address issues of information and access control; their work, however, focuses on the collection and use of personal information by technology services, while we examine these issues in the context of social media. This research extends earlier examinations of privacy typologies (i.e., those related to Westin's work) by considering different aspects of privacy and control, including control over content and control over audience. Thus, our research does not assume a single dimension of 'privacy concern' along which users differ; instead, we allow for the possibility that users hold different values with respect to the content displayed on their social media sites and the audiences to whom that content is available.

The goal of this research is to articulate the different subjective perspectives that characterize Facebook users with respect to the control that they exert over content that they share and audience with whom they share it. We employ a methodology particularly suited to this

endeavour—Q methodology—in order to achieve this goal. Based on earlier interview and focus group results (Burkell et al., 2014), we anticipate that social network participants will vary along two dimensions: first, whether they consider Facebook (or other online social networks) to be a venue for personal communication or social display; second, whether they view content of and audience for Facebook profiles as something to be tightly controlled or left relatively open. The combination of these two dimensions can be considered to produce four ‘types’ of social network users that fit a two-dimensional model: personal communication/controlled users who see Facebook as a space for personal communication with a controlled audience of family and friends; social display/controlled users who see Facebook as a site for the social display of a carefully crafted and controlled image to a designated audience; social display/open users who view Facebook as a place for unrestricted social connection that facilitates the display, to a large and relatively undefined social group, of profiles that are only loosely controlled; and personal communication/open users who view Facebook as a place to disclose highly personal information to a broad and undefined audience (this last group we assume will be difficult to find, since this constitutes a somewhat deviant mode of interaction). In order to test whether these different profiles can be identified in a group of typical Facebook users, we asked users to examine a set of statements about Facebook, based on interviews and focus groups, and to identify the degree to which they agreed with each statement. The resulting ‘sorts’ were subjected to q-sort analysis (described below), which identifies distinct sorting patterns shared by multiple participants; the ‘factors’ constitute different subjective perspectives on display and control of personal information in Facebook represented within our participant sample.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Q methodology, which combines qualitative and quantitative aspects, provides a complete and systematic approach for the analysis of human subjectivity. It preserves the respondents’ frame of reference by enabling them to model their own viewpoints through the rank-ordering (Q sort) of a sample of statements (Q sample) along a continuum defined by the researcher (McKeown and Thomas, 1988). This methodology, therefore, is appropriate to frame various user perspectives that may arise on a given issue. In that respect, it has been effectively applied, in studies of online environments, to explore different perspectives on privacy protection on the web (Lee, 2000), personal web usage in the workplace (Anandarajan, Paravastu and Simmers, 2006), cyber-bullying on Facebook (Wint, 2013), online news consumption (Zeller et al., 2013) and gratification in the use of social networking sites (Orchard et al., 2014). In the current study, we use this methodology to examine perspectives on display of and control over personal information in social media spaces.

### **Statements (Q sample)**

The first phase of any study using Q methodology involves the development of the *concourse*, or the set of statements that respondents will sort. For this study, candidate statements were drawn from qualitative research about perceptions of privacy in social media previously conducted by the authors (Burkell et al., 2014). Analysis of the results of that earlier study suggested that participants discussed Facebook in two ways: as a space for public social connection and as a space for the sharing of personal information. In that same study, in their discussions of privacy and information management in online social networks, participants reflected about the control of access (use of privacy settings, management of friends, re-sharing of content, unauthorized access to accounts) and the control of content (personal rules and social norms). Based on these

categorizations, a concourse of 60 items was developed for the current study. These items were drawn from the focus group and interview discussions, and reflected the various combinations of the two general orientations (public social connection and sharing of personal information) and the two issues (control of access and control of content. Table 4 includes the list of the statements.

### **Participants (P sample)**

Sample sizes in Q methodology are typically small, usually 30-50 participants, and the focus of the methodology is to uncover and articulate the different subjective positions, rather than to make any claims about their relative frequency (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). In this study, 48 participants completed the ranking exercise. Participants were recruited through posters disseminated across the campus of a large Canadian university.

In addition to the Q-sort, participants completed a questionnaire soliciting information regarding their gender, age, frequency of Facebook use and number of Facebook friends. Over three quarters of the participants (74%) were female ( $n = 35$ ) and 26 per cent were male ( $n = 12$ ). They ranged in age from 18 to 51 years ( $Mdn = 21$ ). Participants reported being Facebook users for 7 months to 7 years ( $M = 5$  years,  $SD = 1.28$ ). Use of Facebook was reflected in two additional items, in which participants also indicated their frequency of Facebook use (see Table 1) and their number of Facebook friends (see Table 2). The majority of participants used Facebook more than once per day (59.5% responded ‘multiple times per day’ or ‘I’m almost always online’), and over half (55.3%) reported having more than 300 Facebook friends.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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Insert Table 2 about here

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### **Data collection**

The 48 participants were given the set of 60 statements on individual cards. They were first asked to separate the statements into three piles: unlike their point of view, neutral and like their point of view. They were then asked to order the statements in a roughly normal distribution by sorting them on an 11-point scale ranging from  $-5$  (most unlike my point of view) to  $+5$  (most like my point of view), using a sorting diagram that indicated the number of items to be placed in each category. Participants started by choosing the three statements that were most unlike their point of view and the three statements that were most like their point of view. Then, from the remaining unsorted statements, they chose the four statements that were most unlike their point of view and the four statements that were most like their point of view. The exercise continued until

ten statements were remaining: these were placed in the '0' category. Table 3 indicates the number of items that were placed at each ranking value in the forced-choice frequency distribution.

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Insert Table 3 about here

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After the completion of the q-sort exercise, participants were invited to comment on their choice of statements for the extremities of the distribution (-5, -4, +4 and +5). In the results section, responses from these interviews are used to complement the data collected using Q methodology, thereby offering greater insight into the interpretation of the profiles.

### **Data analysis**

A total of 48 Q sorts were intercorrelated and subjected to a by-person factor analysis using *PQMethod* (Schmolck 2014), a dedicated computer package for Q-methodology analysis. Using a centroid factor analysis and a Varimax rotation (as recommended by Watts and Stenner, 2012: 99–100). The three-factor solution, which explains 50 per cent of the variance, was deemed the most interpretable and was retained. The three-factor solution also represents the highest-dimension solution for which all the factors satisfied Humphrey's rule, which states that: "a factor is significant if the cross-product of its two highest loadings (ignoring the sign) exceeds twice the standard error" (Brown 1980: 223). Forty-two of the 48 Q sorts loaded significantly on one of these three factors. A Q sort was deemed to load significantly on one factor when the square loading on that factor was higher than the sum of square loadings of the same Q-sort in all other factors.

In Q-sort analysis, sorts that load significantly on a particular factor exhibit a similar sorting pattern, which suggests a shared viewpoint on the issue in question. These factor exemplars are merged to form a single typical Q sort for each factor called a factor array, which is calculated according to a procedure of weighted averaging. Each factor array (one for each factor) looks like a single complete Q sort. Interpretation is principally based on the factor arrays; in this study, we have added comments gathered from participants in interviews conducted after the ranking activity. In each factor array, items with the highest rankings (representing those *most* like the participants' point of view, +4, +5) and those with the lowest rankings (representing those *least* like the participants' point of view, -4, -5), as well as items loading higher or lower on that specific factor than on any of the other study factors, are used for the interpretation (Watts and Stenner, 2012: 153). In these results, the numbers in brackets represent factor item rankings: for example, (1: +5) indicates that item 1 is ranked in the +5 position in the factor array. Table 4 presents the factor arrays for the three factors.

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Insert Table 4 about here

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## Factor 1: Image Control

Factor 1 has an eigenvalue of 18.68 and explains 39 per cent of the variance. Twenty-three participants are significantly associated with this factor.

This view acknowledges that although content posted on Facebook is meant to be shared, it is critical not to share beyond the intended audience; moreover, participants sharing this perspective feel strongly that individuals should control the content that is posted to their social media profiles.

Participants who load on this factor consider that, when it comes to what is posted on their own profile, they should be in control (29: +5; 34 -5). Essie, for instance, commented: "If someone shares a message on my wall and I don't agree with it, I'll just take it down." Essie also has limits who can see the content that others post on her 'wall': "Currently ... I'm the only one who can see what other people post on my wall." Control need not be accompanied by stringent restrictions: for Leonard, it is simply a question of respecting the image he wants to project. When he asks that content that about him should be removed: "it is not a suggestion, it's more like a request or even a command, if you want, because that content is about me." Their view that the profile owner should be in control appears to extend to the profile of others (33: -2; 44: +2), especially with respect to photographs (1: +3; 11: +2). Essie only posts content on the walls of her friends "if they're OK with it". Before posting something on a friend's wall, she thinks about how that friend would react, and also how the friends of that friend could react. Leonard mentions that it is wrong to automatically assume that everyone in a picture wants that picture being shared on Facebook and also, perhaps more importantly, that all of them know that they are in the picture, especially if the picture was taken at a party or in a bar where "everything is busy and loud".

These notions of control also relate to profile access: members of this group tend to respond negatively to any statement concerning 'unauthorized' profile access (e.g., 'friend of friend' access to profiles), suggesting that they may feel more strongly than participants who load on other factors that the 'friends' list should be an access control mechanism (9: -2; 19: 1). That also applies to their own practices: they try to view profiles they cannot access (42: -4; 51: 0) or look at photo albums of people they do not know (17: -3; 52: -1). Leonard is aware that there might be "a good reason" if someone does not grant access to his or her profile, and he feels that profiles should be shared only by "mutual agreement" between the two parties.

Participants who share this view appear in general less likely than members of other groups to share information posted on Facebook beyond the original group to which it was posted (4: 0; 8: +1; 15: -1). Essie, for instance, mentioned that she does not talk about the content she sees on Facebook: "If they want to make it public, it's their call, but I shouldn't really talk about it. It doesn't involve me. I feel, like, if I gossip, I might interpret it wrong, 'cause, like, other people can hear it differently than I do." These participants feel that it is their job to find out how widely they can share information (13: 0). They also think that they *cannot* use information they find on Facebook in any way they want, especially in a malicious way (27: -4; 41: 4).

For participants who share this view, control also means not sharing their Facebook password (7: -4; 54: +5). They may allow friends or family to interact with their account in their presence, but are adamant that they would not let them do it in their absence. As Essie mentions: "No. Well, like, if I'm sitting right beside them, then sure. But it's a lot harder to clean up afterwards then—



it's easier just to prevent whatever stupid things can happen. Sometimes, things can get out of hand, too.”

Although they do not express strong opinions on the issue (i.e., they tend to provide neutral ratings of these items), they are less likely than members of other groups to use Facebook to ‘lurk’ profiles to learn about other people (14: 2; 30: -2; 45: 0).

Members of this opinion group feel most strongly about content control, providing the most extreme (positive or negative) ratings of statements that reflect this issue. Specifically, they feel that the profile owner should control *what* is posted to a profile. Although they also endorse profile owner control of information dissemination, their feelings on this issue are less strong, and content control is definitely their focus.

## **Factor 2. Relaxed display**

Factor 2 has an eigenvalue of 2.96 and explains 6 per cent of the variance. Eight participants are significantly associated with this factor.

In contrast to the perspective expressed in Factor 1, participants who characterize Factor 2 have a more laissez-faire attitude toward audience and content control, relying more heavily than other participants on social norms to ensure appropriate limits.

These participants have a more relaxed attitude than people defining other factors regarding content posted about them (34: 0; 43: +4). Diana, for instance, believes that “people can post, like, whatever they want about me on Facebook”. She does not “care so much” about the specific content that others upload about her, and would “untag [herself] if anything”. This view is shared by Kim, who indicates that the nature of the content posted about her “doesn’t really matter that much”. This should not be taken to mean that *anything* goes. Kim, for instance, mentioned that “if it was a very offending picture, [she] might [ask to have it taken down]”. To a greater extent than participants characterizing other factors, these participants view Facebook as a space in which participants present an *unreal* or *produced* version of the self (10: -5). Their comfort with a co-constructed online presence may arise, therefore, from a belief that online profiles are more performances than they are representations of the ‘true’ self.

More than participants from any other groups, participants who endorse this view agree that it is OK to post any ‘cool or fun’ content about their friends on Facebook (21: 1). This is accompanied by a trust in social norms to regulate the content that people post about *others*. Instead of focusing on profile owner control of content, they tend to endorse statements that reflect community standards or norms for Facebook content (12: 3; 33: 3). In contrast to members of other groups, they have relatively neutral (as opposed to more strongly negative) opinions regarding profile owner control of content (1: -2; 11: -1; 44: 0): in other words, they appear to entertain a ‘joint ownership’ perspective on profile content. Diana exemplifies this perspective in her comment: “It’s like a two-way street: like, they trust me to not post pictures of them up that would offend them and I trust them to not do the same for me.”

Participants who define this group exert a looser control over who they accept as Facebook friends, and they seem to value having a large online social network. They focus more on the quantity than on the quality of online friendships (32: +1) and do not limit their Facebook friends to people who are close to them in real life (18: 0; 40: -1). As Kim mentions: “Facebook friends don’t, like, really mean anything.” She also adds, later: “If someone adds me, and I don’t know them, if I have, like, enough mutual friends with them, then maybe I’ll add them. [...] I don’t

need to know them well in real life.” More than participants of any other groups, they *disagree* that they need a good reason to refuse a friend request (28: -3).

Although they do not feel strongly on the issue, participants who share this view are more likely than members of other groups to acknowledge Facebook as a place where lurking is expected and appropriate (14: -2; 17: 0; 30: 1). That extends to the profiles of people who are not their friends (45: +4; 51: -2; 52: -4). When they post something on Facebook, it is *not* necessarily intended to their friends list only (8: -3; 13: -2; 60: 0). Instead, they believe that the content posted by others can be shared widely (20: +1) and that is OK to do so (15: +2; 19: -1). For Kim: “Well, if it’s on Facebook, it’s meant to be shared. Like, it’s a social network. If someone sees what you posted, then, like, by all means, they can go and talk about it. You’re the one who chose to put it on Facebook.” Diana echoes this comment: “[...] you can’t expect people not to tell their friends about it. You can’t expect it not to get to other people if it’s out on Facebook.”

As with Factor 1, members of this group are focused on profile content. However, rather than suggesting that owners should be in control of the content that is posted about them, individuals who define Factor 2 appear to view profiles as appropriately co-constructed by members of the extended online social network, and they tend to rely on social norms to limit posted content.

### **Factor 3. Personal use**

Factor 3 has an eigenvalue of 1.93 and explains 4 per cent of the variance. Eleven participants are significantly associated with this factor.

For participants who share this view, in contrast to participants from the two previous groups, Facebook is used primarily to keep in touch with close friends and relatives (18: +4; 58: +4), and the goal is *not* to have a large number of friends (32: 4; 56: -5). For these individuals, the content on Facebook profiles is intended for a restricted online social network that reflects the *real-world* ties (i.e., ties reflected in non-virtual relationships) that exist between members. Members of this opinion group appear focused on the nature of the online social network, and they, more than members of other groups, tend to restrict their online social network to people who are close to them (40: 1) and they disagree less strongly with the idea that they need a good reason to refuse of friend request (28: -1). Their online social network fluctuates as relationships change, and Facebook friends are definitely not permanent (22: -5; 59: +3). Christina, for example, likes to share content on Facebook with “with the people [she] already knows” and “[doesn’t] want to share it with strangers”. Christina sums it when she says that “Facebook is really the best way to keep in touch with my friends and family”.

The close social network maintained by these participants could explain why they are less reluctant than others to share identifying information (3: 0; 39: -2). Moreover, members of this group indicate, more than members of other groups, that Facebook profiles are likely to represent their ‘true’ selves (10: 0). Bethany, for instance, indicates that, “Facebook is place where people can share any information”, positive or negative. In the same way, members of this opinion group think that, to some extent, the profiles of others also represent their (perhaps most positive) ‘true’ selves. Christina, for instance, explains that she uses Facebook: “to put [her] thoughts, and every moment in [her] life”, and she believes that “what [she] sees on Facebook reflects what’s going on in real life.” This perspective that Facebook profiles are ‘real’ leads naturally to the idea that they look at someone’s profile when they ‘want to get to know him or her better’ (16: +4).

Participants who share this view tend to respond most *negatively* to statements that suggest that posting on Facebook is essentially a public announcement (48: 0), and they are most likely to

view Facebook information as something that is *not* to be shared widely (20: -3). When they post something on Facebook, it is only intended for their Facebook friends and “not for strangers”, as mentions Christina. (60: +5). The close ties they have with their Facebook friends, however, allows them to disseminate information they find on Facebook if they feel it is alright with their friend to so (4: -2). For Bettany, “real friends can share things about you”, a comment echoed by Christina who believes it is “OK to share with your real friends”.

For members of this group, the ties that exist between people on Facebook mirror *real-world* (as opposed to online-only) relationships. Facebook, for them, is a venue for sharing with other people and learning things about them, and their online social networks consist of people with whom they have multi-faceted relationships that are *not* restricted to the online environment.

## DISCUSSION

Based on an earlier study (Burkell et al., 2014), we anticipated that this investigation of subjective perspectives on Facebook would identify different perspectives that varied along two dimensions: first, whether Facebook is a venue for personal communication or social display; second, whether the content of and audience for Facebook profiles is something to be tightly controlled or left relatively open. Our results are largely consistent with this expectation, in that we identified three factors, or opinion clusters, that fit into three of the four quadrants anticipated by the interaction of these two dimensions.

It is important to note that, consistent with the interview and focus group results, *none* of the groups identify Facebook as a locus of deeply personal exposure. Thus, while this investigation of different subjective positions *vis-à-vis* Facebook reveals a variety of ‘opinion profiles’ that are distinguished by expectations of who should control the online profile and the audience to which it is revealed, none of the groups suggest that social network disclosures are of the sort that would threaten personal dignity were they to be revealed.

The results suggest three different types users who have different attitudes with respect to the content posted on Facebook. Those who load on the *Image Control* factor (Factor 1) view content posted on Facebook as something that is meant to be shared, but only within the limits intended by of the person who posted it. For them, individuals should control the content that is posted to their profiles. Those who load on the *Relaxed Display* factor (Factor 2) believe that content posted on Facebook and access to this content are an open game regulated by social norms. Those who load on the *Personal use* factor (Factor 3) restrict their online social network to people with whom they have close ties, and the content they post is intended only for these individuals. These three different types of users have different privacy needs and expectations.

*Personal Users* express relatively strong privacy expectations with respect to the information they post. They restrict their online social network to people with whom they have close ties, and the content they post is intended only for these individuals. They do not widely share Facebook information, yet do not keep Facebook information ‘to themselves’. Future research is needed to provide insight into the nature of this information sharing, but it seems likely that individuals who endorse this perspective are likely to discuss information shared online with other members of their close social network. This view seems consistent with the perspective of some interview and focus group participants who identified themselves as having small and close-knit online social networks consisting of family and friends.

*Image Controllers* also have strong privacy expectations, but not as strong as those shared by *Personal Users*, as they acknowledge that content posted on Facebook is meant to be shared

beyond one's network of close friends and family. They believe, however, that the owner of a Facebook profile should control who has access to his or her profile; they also express relatively strong beliefs that the profile owner should control the content that is posted.

Lastly, *Relaxed Displayers* express the lowest privacy expectations of all participants. They believe that content posted is meant to be shared and strongly disagree that Facebook is a place for content of private nature. For them, the purpose of Facebook is to offer a staged display of themselves precisely for the purposes of broad social display—their Facebook profile is a place where people are allowed, if not expected, to lurk. This opinion profile appears to closely match the default view of social network participants identified in the earlier study based on interviews and focus groups, suggesting that this default view is an accurate construction of some but not all social network participants.

## CONCLUSION

Further research is needed to determine whether these opinion profiles are applicable to other social networking platforms, or restricted to Facebook. Furthermore, while this study demonstrates the *existence* of this variety of opinion profiles, it does not address questions of relative frequency, nor does it address the question of whether these perspectives are stable over time. In-depth interviews with individuals who define each of the profiles will provide a more nuanced understanding of these perspectives, providing insight into the genesis and implications of these social networking 'types'. Large-scale surveys of social network users would provide insight into the relative frequency of participants fitting these different profiles among social network users.

Facebook users agree to share photos, thoughts, and more in an environment where, according to Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg, the default view is that "people no longer have an expectation of privacy" (Johnson, 2010). This default view, not unlike that shared by *Relaxed displayers*, does not, however, preclude individual social media users from holding different personal perspectives on display and control of personal information in these environments. The results of this research indicate that Facebook users are, to various degrees, interested in tailoring or controlling their image and limiting access to particular audiences. These choices imply that users with different privacy expectations coexist within a common environment that is assumed by default to be public in nature. This is not a new problem in the realm of privacy; after all, we have negotiated conflicting privacy expectations in the face to face realm for centuries. What *is* new, however, is the lack of established privacy markers or socially acknowledged codes that signal privacy preferences (Petronio, 2002). The challenge facing online social communities, and those who would access and use the personal information posted within these communities (e.g., businesses, law enforcement, government, employers), is to negotiate privacy norms and practices that respect the views of the diversity of participants in these spaces. These results also have implications for privacy control on social network sites. The different profiles identified in this research suggest decidedly different privacy expectations and practices. Participants in social network spaces would be well served by default privacy settings that reflect their particular 'type' or orientation. Perhaps in the future social network profiles could be modified to include a profile 'flag' that prominently displayed the users' orientation toward display and control, thus helping to ensure that their profiles are treated in the way they expect and desire.

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**Table 1: Frequency of Facebook use**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Percent (number)</i>
I'm almost always online	10.6 ( 5)
Multiple times per day	48.9 ( 23)
At least once day	14.9 ( 7)
Multiple times during the week, but less than once a day	10.6 ( 5)
About once a week	4.3 ( 2)
Once every few weeks	2.1 ( 1)
Once a month	0 ( 0)
Almost never	8.5 ( 4)



**Table 2: Number of Facebook Friends**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Percent (number)</i>
Less than 100 friends	14.9 ( 7)
Between 100 and 300 friends	29.8 ( 14)
Between 301 and 500	38.3 ( 18)
Between 501 and 999	14.9 ( 7)
1000 friends or more	2.1 ( 1)

**Table 3: Forced-choice frequency distribution**

Ranking value	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
Number of items	3	4	4	7	7	10	7	7	4	4	3

**Table 4: Factor arrays for the three factors**

<i>Items</i>		<i>Factor arrays</i>		
		<i>F1</i>	<i>F2</i>	<i>F3</i>
1	Before posting photos on Facebook, people should get permission from anyone who appears in them.	3**	-2	0
2	Facebook is a good place to post everyday details about life.	-3	-1**	-4
3	I am fine with posting identifying information such as addresses, phone numbers and birthdays on Facebook.	-5	-4	-2**
4	I keep information I find on Facebook to myself.	0**	-2**	-3**
5	I post pictures and information on Facebook that make me look good.	0*	-1	2*
6	I use Facebook friendships as a way to get to know new people.	-1	-1*	0
7	I would share my Facebook password with people I trust.	-4**	-2	-3
8	Information posted on Facebook is meant only for that person's friends.	1**	-3	-2
9	It's ok to let my real world friends look at profiles through my Facebook account.	-2**	2	2
10	My Facebook profile represents my true self.	-2**	-5**	1**
11	People should check with others before tagging them in photos or posts.	2*	-1**	0*
12	There are rules about what is ok (and what is not ok) to put on Facebook.	1**	3	-1**
13	Before talking about information posted by someone on Facebook, it is my job to find out how widely they want it shared.	0**	-2	-1
14	Facebook is for connecting with people, not for lurking.	2**	-2**	0**
15	I can share information I find on Facebook with friends and acquaintances.	-1**	2	1
16	I look at someone's profile when I want to get to know him or her better.	0	0	4**
17	I regularly look at Facebook photo albums of people I don't know.	-3**	0**	-2**
18	I use Facebook mainly to keep in touch with friends and family.	1	0	4**
19	I wouldn't share information by letting others look at profiles through my Facebook account.	1**	-1	-2
20	Information posted on Facebook is meant to be shared widely.	-2*	1**	-3*

21	It's ok to post any cool, fun content about friends on Facebook.	-1*	1**	-2**
22	Once someone is a Facebook friend, he or she is a Facebook for life.	-3	-4	-5**
23	People should consider what their friends would want before posting content about them on Facebook.	4	2	3
24	What I see on Facebook isn't necessarily representative of real life.	4	5	4
25	Content posted on Facebook should be positive.	0**	-1	0
26	Facebook is only one of many ways to find out more about someone.	1	2	5**
27	I can use information I find on Facebook in any way I want.	-4	-3	-2
28	I need a good reason to refuse a friend request on Facebook.	-2**	-3**	-1
29	I should be the one to decide what is posted about me on Facebook.	5**	0*	1*
30	I use Facebook to lurk friend's profiles.	-2**	1	0
31	If I ask for content about me posted on Facebook to be removed, it should be done.	5	5	5
32	It is the quality not the quantity of Facebook friends that matters.	2	1	4**
33	It's ok to tag others in photos or posts without checking with them first—they can always "untag" themselves.	-2**	3**	0**
34	Other people can post the content they want about me on Facebook.	-5	0**	-4
35	Privacy settings are a good tool to manage personal information.	3	5**	3
36	What I see on Facebook reflects what's going on in real life.	-3	-5	-4
37	Content posted on Facebook shouldn't be boring.	-1	-2	-1
38	For me, Facebook is a place to post private thoughts and moments.	-5	-5*	-5
39	I don't post identifying information such as addresses, phone numbers and birthdays on Facebook.	4	4	-2**
40	I only accept people who are close to me in real life to be my Facebook friends.	-0	-1**	1
41	I shouldn't use information I find on Facebook in a malicious way.	4	4	2*
42	I would ask others to help me view profiles I can't access.	-4**	0	-1

43	If I'm uncomfortable with it, I can always "untag" myself from content posted by others.	2	4*	2
44	It's important to have agreements with friends about the type of information that can be posted on Facebook.	2**	0	1*
45	Just because I look at others' profiles doesn't mean I want to friend them.	0**	4	2
46	People can post good and bad stuff about themselves on Facebook.	0	1	1
47	Privacy settings limit people's ability to find out about each other.	-1	0	0
48	When I post something on Facebook, I am making a public announcement.	1	2	0**
49	Everyone should know that at a social event, photos will be taken and posted on Facebook.	0**	1	2
50	For me, Facebook is all about parties and having a good time with other people.	-2	-3	-4**
51	I don't try to look at profiles that are closed to me.	0**	-2*	-1*
52	I only look at Facebook photos of people I know well.	-1**	-4	-3**
53	I use Facebook as a way to connect with lots of new people outside my close circle of friends and family.	-1	1**	0
54	I would never share my Facebook password.	5**	3	2
55	If someone wants to keep something on Facebook "private", he or she should make sure people know to keep it private.	3	2	-1**
56	It's important to me to have a large number of Facebook friends.	-4	-4	-5
57	Lurking outside of Facebook is creepy.	2	0	1
58	People I friend on Facebook are people I already know.	2*	3	4
59	Relationships change and sometimes a Facebook friend needs to be deleted.	1	2	3
60	When I post something on Facebook, it is only intended for my "friends" list.	3**	0**	5**

\*\* Distinguishing item, significant at  $p < .01$

\* Distinguishing item, significant at  $p < .05$