Negotiating Privacy and Intimacy on Social Media: Review and Recommendations

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Abstract

Social media pose a privacy paradox: most users indicate they are concerned about their privacy, yet they share personal information widely on social media platforms. The affordances of social media (connectivity, visibility, social feedback, persistence, and accessibility) and their ability to enhance social communication and interpersonal relationships help to explain their attraction for users. At the same time, the risks to privacy are real and serious. We review privacy issues in a variety of domains of social media use including friendships, romantic relationships, parental, workplace/professional and therapist/client. To resolve the privacy paradox and fully protect privacy will likely require changes in laws, technology, and individual and social practices. These changes are worth pursuing so that people can reap the benefits of social media use without losing the many benefits of privacy.

Keywords: Privacy; Internet; social media; social networking sites; Facebook; social policy

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Social media are digital platforms for networking and interaction between people, where users generate and comment on content. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat are incredibly popular; for example, Facebook reported 1.44 billion active users in March 2015 (Facebook, 2015). Social media provide many benefits to users, including connecting with friends and family and building personal and professional networks. However, there are also many privacy concerns that have not been adequately considered, let alone addressed. These questions are of concern to policy makers, therapists and health care professionals, parents, educators, technology companies, and the general public.

Social media pose a privacy paradox (Barnes, 2006). On the one hand they are increasingly prominent in users' lives and are the repositories of an extensive trove of personal information freely shared by those users. They also provide some privacy advantages over face-to-face communication, including the ability to edit one's words before sharing them and the ability to hide emotions that might otherwise be communicated non-verbally (Trepte & Reinecke, 2011). On the other hand, research suggests that most users have concerns about their privacy, even as they share more and more information on social media (Fogel & Nehmad, 2009; Mihailidis, 2014). This concern for privacy appears to have increased over time (Wilson, Gosling, & Graham, 2012).

Some technology leaders have aimed to resolve this paradox by arguing that privacy is a thing of the past and that sharing personal information is now the norm (Bradbury, 2015). However, social science research suggests that privacy is essential for human functions such as autonomy, development, and creativity (Livingstone, 2008). In this paper we will juxtapose different privacy needs that arise from people's relational practices with an examination of affordances provided by social media. We first provide an overview of social media and of

privacy theories. We then examine their connections, focusing on different types of interpersonal relationships, including friendships, romantic relationships, parental and professional relationships as well as the therapist/client relationship. By examining common tensions between privacy needs and social media affordances we hope to point to spaces where interventions are needed. We conclude with suggestions for resolution of these tensions through individual, interpersonal, and policy channels.

Social Media

The use of social media has been escalating in the past decade, with about two-thirds of Internet users a member of one or more social networking sites (Pew Research Center, 2015). Facebook is the top social networking site with 71% of Internet users as members (Pew, 2015). Other popular social media sites include LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram, and Twitter, with approximately one-quarter to one-third of Internet users logging in to each of these four sites (Pew, 2015). All social media platforms include three essential components: a space for users to construct a profile, the possibility of linking many users to this profile, and the ability to exchange content with one another (boyd & Ellison, 2008). Users are drawn to social networking sites to connect with family and friends as well as to awaken dormant relationships (Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008).   Additionally, social networking sites play an important role in political engagement and the cultivation of professional networks (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). These benefits create powerful motivations to use social media, supporting the first part of the paradox (widespread use and sharing of information).

Social media technology has several structural affordances (characteristics that enable certain actions) that depart from norms of offline (e.g., mail, email, telephone, texting) communication. Here, we describe the set of affordances postulated by Fox and Moreland

(2015), but slightly variant sets have also been proposed (e.g., boyd, 2010; Treem & Leonardi, 2012) . First is *connectivity,* the ability to connect with many people/users at once. The second is *visibility*, in which information is more easily accessible than it would be offline and in which users witness each other's messages to third parties. The third difference is *social feedback* wherein users respond to and comment on each other's posts. Another affordance is *persistence*, meaning that the content exchanged continues to be visible online following the communication and is difficult to remove. Finally, *accessibility* of online communication means that individuals have the possibility to communicate on social media constantly throughout the day, because of the design of the interfaces and the ability to use mobile platforms to access content.

Social media affordances create communication patterns that differ from face-to-face communication or communication through offline channels. This new structure of engagement has both positive and negative consequences. For example, studies indicate that bonds between friends are enhanced by engagement on social media (Vitak, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2011). Ties between distant friends and acquaintances can also be awakened and strengthened by social media use (Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008). On the other hand, the structure of social media that affords connectivity and visibility can also bring forth negative consequences such as disturbances and relationship disruptions (Fox, Osborn, & Warber, 2014). Many of these disturbances are directly related to issues of privacy, so it is appropriate to draw from theories of privacy in order to better understand them.

Privacy Theories

Privacy, the control of who has access to information about the self, plays an important role in individuals' lives and serves multiple psychological functions. Westin (1967) described four such functions. Privacy provides *personal autonomy* that allows us to be free from

manipulation by others and thus have more control over our own lives and outcomes. Privacy also provides a space for *emotional release* from the demands of impression management and emotion regulation that go along with life within a social group. When in a private space we are able to experience "down time", mourn losses, manage bodily functions, and engage in minor deviances. A third function of privacy is *self-evaluation*, providing a space to process and evaluate experiences and find meaning in them, as well as to plan for the future. Finally, privacy of dyads or small groups also serves a social function, as a space for *limited and protected communication* that both sets boundaries and, for people within our boundaries, can help to build trust and intimacy.

Some overlapping functions were proposed by Newell (1994). She stressed the necessity of some amount of privacy in order to engage in *system maintenance* (protecting the self from threats and nurturing a state of homeostasis or equilibrium; similar to Westin's (1967) concept of emotional release) as well as *system development* (extending and enhancing the self through introspection, creative thought, and self-evaluation; similar to Westin's self-evaluation concept). All of these functions are relevant within social media.

Altman (1975) treated privacy as part of a more complex system that also involves crowding, territoriality, and personal space. Privacy itself is understood as a process of boundary regulation, however in a way that differs from the conceptions of other theorists. Altman does not conceptualize privacy merely as keeping information from others or protecting one's space but acknowledges the dialectical process of both seeking out and restricting information flow and connection with others. In some ways, this theory provides a means to explain the privacy paradox in social media in that social media provide convenient and efficient means of connection with others (and thus will be sought out and used when connection is desired) but

also make it more difficult to erect a boundary when that is desired (and thus will lead to concerns about privacy).

Another important theory of privacy, Communication Privacy Management Theory (CPM, Petronio 2002) expands on Altman's work. CPM focuses mostly on privacy disclosure: how people decide when and what to disclose, how they prevent unwanted disclosure, and how they deal with unwanted disclosure when it occurs. This theory includes five main principles. The first principle of CPM is one of *privacy ownership*. People believe that their private information belongs to them; in essence, that they "own" it in the same way that they own their belongings. The second principle, *privacy control,* follows from the first: if I own my own information, I should have the right to control access to it. To protect control of their information, people develop and use *privacy rules* to decide whether and when to reveal or conceal personal information. The fourth principle, *co-ownership*, relates to an important contribution of CPM which is that it explicitly acknowledges that, whenever information is shared, protection of that information must henceforth be coordinated with the other people who now are privy to that information. *Privacy turbulence* occurs if unauthorized others gain access to one's personal information, either accidentally or through the deliberate actions of a co-owner. To prevent privacy turbulence, co-owners must develop and execute coordinated rules regarding *permeability* (how much information can be shared), *linkage* (who can be told), and *ownership* (whether co-owners can make independent judgments about how much to share or who to share with, or whether they must first check in with the primary owner of that information).

CPM theory is highly relevant within social media networks. In particular, the negotiation of privacy rules may be especially challenging within this domain. Yet if rules cannot be negotiated and enacted, privacy turbulence is likely to be the consequence, and conflict

may ensue. As Petronio (2002, p. 49) argues, "For boundary maintenance to work, everyone must agree on the rules. When one person has different ideas about the way rules are formed and used, the management system may be disrupted and lead to turbulence." CPM theory highlights the importance of privacy not simply in allowing individuals autonomy and providing them a space to be left alone, but as defining how and to whom information about the self is revealed (Livingstone, 2008).

This focus on process is also present in Nissenbaum's (2004) theory of contextual integrity. This theory posits that situating privacy questions within their specific social, relational, cultural, and historic contexts will serve us better than relying on more general and abstract definitions of and prescriptions for privacy. Importantly, each context has norms not related to the appropriateness of the information content being shared but also related to the flow of information. For example, it is expected that our doctor will ask us questions about our health, but it is a violation of the norm of appropriateness if this information is requested from our banker or employer. The norms concerning the distribution (or flow) of our information also vary across context. In the case of friendship, there is generally a norm of confidentiality: it is assumed that information shared with a friend will not be disseminated further. When being interviewed by a journalist, on the other hand, there is no norm of confidentiality and it is understood that information shared will be disseminated publicly.

Nissenbaum (2004) focused primarily on the privacy implications of public surveillance but the theory of contextual integrity has implications for the relatively more private setting of social media. In particular, whereas users may be applying the norms of friendship to their interactions, the company providing the social media platform certainly is not. Also, some of the affordances of social media, particularly visibility and accessibility, make it much easier to

deviate from the appropriateness or flow norms. Moreover, the affordance of connectivity means that any deviation from flow norms can easily reach a multitude and the affordance of persistence means that it will be difficult to repair the deviation. In other words, social media affordances increase the potential for harm.

Relationship Between Privacy and Social Media Use

Friendship

Social media affordances complicate individuals' ability to control who receives information about themselves because they are encouraged to have an ever-growing number of "friends." Individuals imagine a certain audience for their posts as they share them, but these posts become available more widely, to people who weren't part of the original imagined audience, thus interfering with the privacy function of having protected communication (Westin, 1967). This disconnect is due to a binary notion of the concept of *friends* that is present in most social media sites, with individuals either being a friend or not. This binary concept contrasts with our intuitive understanding of friendship which is more subtle and context dependent. For example, some social media "friends" are work colleagues or sports teammates; others are neighbors or relatives. Our intuitive understanding also allows for variation by degree (e.g., close friends vs. acquaintances), but the binary concept inherent in many social media platforms does not (Livingstone, 2008). Moreover, according to Nissenbaum's (2004) theory of contextual integrity, our intuitions about privacy violations are highly context-specific. Thus, social media platforms that do not allow for contextualization will necessarily be unable to deal with our inherently nuanced sense of privacy requirements.

Having an increasing number of friends in varying degrees complicates the notion of audience crucial to human communication and meaning making (Ochs & Capps, 2009). Social

media affordances eliminate the possibility of knowing who one's audience is. When it is not clear who the audience is, or when the audience is only imagined, messages produced will be judged as inappropriate by some (Thorne & Nam, 2007). Research indicates that people commonly express annoyance with inappropriate or offensive messages from friends in their networks (Fox & Moreland, 2015). Similarly, when users take advantage of the visibility affordance in order to disseminate intimate information broadly while expending little effort, such disclosures may be seen as inappropriate and may lead recipients to state that they like the discloser less than they did before (Bazarova, 2012). According to Fox and Moreland (2015, p. 171), "reactions to . . . inappropriate content ranged from annoyance (e.g., due to continuous negative posts from a sulking friend) to shock (e.g., from hearing important news from a close friend via an impersonal channel like Facebook) to disgust (e.g., from seeing lewd, offensive, or otherwise inappropriate content posted by friends)."

The visibility affordance of social media encourages people to save face and show themselves in the most positive light. Witnessing others in a continually positive light encourages social comparison and jealousy (Fox & Moreland, 2015). Individuals who negatively compare themselves to others on Facebook are more likely to experience rumination, and in turn, depressive symptoms (Feinstein et al., 2013). In sum, the affordances of social media connectivity come into tension with the need to know and control who one's audience is. The sharing of content to unintended audiences violates the privacy control expectation highlighted in CPM (Petronio, 2002) and leads to annoyance and even alienation and depression, as the messages one receives from friends or "friends of friends" are unintended and inappropriate (Bazarova, 2012).

Romantic Relationships

Social media networks can help individuals find a suitable romantic partner and sustain an engaged and happy romantic relationship. However, the structure of social media can also create serious relationship turbulence. As individuals in the first stages of dating become 'friends' on a social networking site, they are exposed to their partner's profile, which may provide information about their budding romantic partner's past that is not sensitively portrayed or contextualized (Fox, Warber, & Makstaller, 2013). Because exchanges on social media are widely visible (due to the affordances of accessibility and visibility), romantic partners' exchanges with others (who may be threatening to the relationship) can also be viewed. Research finds that users' engagement with social media contributes to tension and jealousy beyond the offline relationship dynamics (Elphinston & Noller, 2011; Muise, Christofides, & Desmarais, 2009).

Additionally, the accessibility affordance of social media together with the valuation of romance and love in contemporary society may lead to uneven performance of love in social media. For instance, a person with lower self-esteem and a greater need for popularity, or simply with different norms about appropriateness (Nissenbaum, 2004) or different privacy rules (Petronio, 2002) may post pictures and romantic texts more often. When their partner does not reciprocate their performance of love on Facebook, it may lead to relationship dissatisfaction (Fox & Moreland, 2015). This relationship dissatisfaction will be enhanced by individuals' need to save face, as the lack of reciprocity is publically constituted on the pages of social media (Utz & Beukeboom, 2011).

When romantic relationships end, the persistence affordance of social media may complicate and prolong the mourning process. Fox et al. (2014) report that participants found that separating from an ex-partner on social media can become particularly grueling because

relationship statuses, shared pictures, or exchanged messages are still visible. Moreover, to sever communication, participants may choose to delete an ex-partner from their network as well as mutual friends who may share private information with the ex-partner. As one participant in the Fox et al. (2014, p. 532) study recalled, "…I deleted his sister, I deleted his brother, because I knew that if I was friends with any of them that I could get to him. And I knew, like, I know myself well enough to know that if I had the opportunity to creep on him or creep on his friends, and, like, in doing so creep on him, find out about him, that I would." The anonymity of social media that allows individuals to examine each other's profiles and exchanges–directly or indirectly–can lead individuals who are mourning a loss to attempt to reconnect or make sense of the loss through anonymously surveilling, or "creeping on", the lost partners' social media footprints. Even when people are no longer connected as friends in social media, they can often still inspect one another's profiles, which groups they've joined, and which new people they've friended. The ease with which a few clicks can provide information about the lost object of desire can lead to frequent checkups on that person that further prolong the mourning and healing process, and might even verge into an addictive pattern. In addition, the expectation to update one's relationship status and to continue to interact publicly on social media while mourning a breakup may not provide enough seclusion to ensure the emotional release (Westin, 1967) that is one of the important functions of privacy.

In sum, budding romantic relationships require sensitive management of information shared with the partner as the couples come to know each other. The break-up of romantic relationships requires an increase in privacy as individuals uncouple and mourn the ending of the relationship. Affordances of social media that collect information over time and make this

information visible to members of shared networks of "friends" create tensions related to individuals' needs for privacy.

Parents and Children

The relationship between parent and child poses unique challenges within a social media platform. Parental friend requests and even their mere presence on social networking sites frequented by their children can lead adolescents and even young adults to feel that their privacy is being violated (Marwick & Boyd, 2014). Young adults indicate that social networking sites are places for them to interact with their peers, and that having parents present at all is an intrusion akin to snooping through their room (Livingstone, 2008; Padilla-Walker, Coyne, & Fraser, 2012). In other words, they see social networking platforms as sites for fulfilling Westin's (1967) protected communication function. In addition, adolescence is a time of identity exploration (Erikson, 1963) and the self-evaluation function (Westin, 1967) served by private online spaces may help to enable that exploration.

Doty and Dworkin (2014) examined the use of social networking sites by parents of adolescents and found that whereas nearly 80% of parents surveyed reported using these sites for general purposes (e.g., communicating with friends), 63% reported using social networking sites specifically for parenting. Examples of this include communicating with their child, monitoring their child's behavior, and even communicating with their child's friends and their parents. Adolescents are often aware that their parents may be participating in social networking sites as a monitoring tactic, which is a major factor in the perception of parental friend requests as an invasion of privacy (Doty & Dworkin, 2014; West, Lewis, & Currie, 2009).

Although the majority of adolescents and young adults report that they would accept parental friend requests (Child & Westermann, 2013; Karl & Peluchette, 2011; Mullen & Fox

Hamilton, 2016), they often employ various strategies to preserve their privacy before doing so. One common strategy is to simply modify their privacy settings such that their parent is unable to view anything that would elicit an undesirable reaction (Marwick & boyd, 2014). Similarly, many report that they would go through their profile and delete certain types of posts before accepting a parental friend request (Child & Westermann, 2013). Another common strategy is to speak in "code" when communicating with peers so that parents remain unaware of anything that the child wishes to keep hidden (Marwick & boyd, 2014). In some cases, parental presence on social networking sites may lead children to become less active on the social networking site or to migrate to another social networking site entirely (Wiederhold, 2012).

In addition to wanting to portray a certain image of themselves to their parents, individuals often wish to present a different image to their peers; however, this is difficult to do, given the connectivity and visibility affordances of social media. Thus, adolescents and young adults also report being concerned that their parents will share information that they do not want other people in their network (i.e., their peers) to access. Many of these concerns arise out of fear of embarrassment, which may occur when a parent makes an inappropriately sentimental post on their profile or tags them in a childhood picture (Padilla-Walker, et al., 2012; West, et al., 2009). Adolescents interviewed report such occurrences as being awkward or annoying, but they do not seem to weaken the parent-child relationship (Madden & Fox Hamilton, 2016). In order to prevent further embarrassments, the adolescent may confront their parent in order to define more explicit boundaries. Alternatively, they may simply delete the posts or untag themselves from the photographs.

At present, it is unclear how adding a parent on Facebook or another social networking site may impact the relationship between parent and child, if at all. Some report that they would

feel awkward or anxious upon receiving a parental friend request, and would be unsure how to respond (Child & Westermann, 2013). Other studies have shown that interacting with parents over Facebook is associated with having a stronger parent-child relationship (Coyne, Padilla-Walker, Day, Harper, & Stockdale, 2014; Kanter, Afifi, & Robbins, 2012). However, it is acknowledged that this is likely influenced by the preexisting relationship with the parent, because those who already voluntarily disclose a great deal of private information to their parents are less likely to have reservations about adding a parent as a friend on a social networking site (Child & Westermann, 2013). Nevertheless, it is also possible that parental monitoring and communicating over social media fosters voluntary disclosure by the child; future research could explore this possibility. Because children are able to proactively protect their privacy by making use of available privacy settings (as well as other aforementioned strategies), privacy turbulence does not seem to occur as often as one may think, despite the privacy violations that are seemingly inherent in this scenario (Mullen & Fox Hamilton, 2016).

Workplace Relationships

Social media's visibility affordance also has consequences to professional relationships such as those between employees and their employers. Between 21-45% of employers indicate vetting potential employees' social media accounts (Clark & Roberts, 2010). Examining job candidates' professional profiles can serve as a quick and inexpensive source of background information. Moreover, subsequent to a job interview, employers can corroborate information about candidates using social media. Such practices are ethically questionable because they provide employers with information that is not applicable or does not fully relate to the tasks and skills required for the position (Clark & Roberts, 2010), thus violating Nissenbaum's (2004) norms concerning appropriateness.

Surveys indicate that 35% of human resource managers report rejecting a candidate based on their social media profile (Brown & Vaughn, 2011). Access to publically available information (i.e., from social media) about a job candidate that is not directly related to the required job skills may increase the psychological likelihood of discrimination based on irrelevant cues. For instance, in an experiment with college and high school students, Daniels and Zurbriggen (2014) found that if a woman's Facebook profile had a sexualized photograph, she was judged as less professionally competent than if her picture was non-sexualized; such judgments might extend to a hiring situation. In another study with undergraduates (designed to mimic a job search), hypothetical job candidates with a social networking website profile picture that suggested alcohol use were less likely to be recommended to be hired or receive high pay compared to those whose profile picture suggested a family orientation (Bohnert & Ross, 2010).

Once hired, employees are faced with potential boundary turbulence as they navigate expanding their social network to their new colleagues as well as their superiors. The flattening of hierarchies of power and the condensing of different social fields (family, past friends, present friends, and classmates) makes the visibility of information shared on social media threatening (Peluchette, Karl, & Fertig, 2013). Survey research suggests that employees may consider their supervisor as a friend, but don't necessarily wish to be her/his friend on Facebook. For example, in one survey, 32% of individuals who are Facebook friends with their supervisor reported wishing that they were not (Adecco, 2010), perhaps because this would interfere with a sense of personal autonomy (Westin, 1967) that they would otherwise experience on social media.

Other research suggests that some may wish to become connected on social media channels with their supervisor because this allows them to feel that they are part of a prestigious in-group (Karl & Peluchette, 2011). A study on nursing students indicates that they would prefer

to be social media friends with physicians and supervisors, but not with patients (Peluchette, Karl, Coustasse, Rutsohn, & Emmett, 2012). The extent to which there is a power differential and overlap in association may influence individuals' interest in sharing information with supervisors and colleagues. As one Microsoft employee explained, "my main concern is my ability to keep my personal and professional networks separate except where they genuinely overlap" (Skeels & Grudin, 2009, p. 6). This reflects a concern with boundary regulation (Altman, 1975) as well as with privacy ownership and control (Petronio, 2002)

Psychologists

Studies examining the use of social networking sites by professional psychologists have found that the majority surveyed report participating in these sites (Taylor, McMinn, Bufford, & Chang, 2010; Tunick, Mednick, & Conroy, 2011). Especially in smaller communities (where "friends of friends" might include most of the community), this opens the possibility that clients will come across the profile and learn things about the therapist that might interfere with the therapeutic relationship.

Some professionals may wish to use social media as a way to monitor their clients, but this approach is fraught with ethical concerns. While there may be benefits to be had by perusing a client's profile, doing so without their knowledge or consent is a clear privacy violation, violating norms of appropriateness and perhaps flow as well (Nissenbaum, 2004). Furthermore, as Tunick et al. (2011) point out, the psychologist will then face a dilemma should they find any concerning content (e.g., suicidal ideation). It is unclear whether they are obligated to report such content or address it with the client; if they pursue either of these actions, it will likely break the client's trust. Additionally, taking action on a particular post may imply a responsibility over all posts of that nature. While it may be unethical to go through a client's online profile without their

knowledge or permission, some suggest that it may be helpful to read through blogs or profiles with the client (Lehavot, Barnett, & Powers, 2010).

Application and Recommendations

Social media comprise a relatively a new communications space, one that blurs public and private in ways that other communications media do not. Social media use has many benefits, which helps to explain why it is so popular among all age groups internationally. It also has specific drawbacks that other communications media do not, including more extensive risks to privacy.

In general, studies show that users care about privacy but are not very good at ensuring it, thus resulting in a paradox (Barnes, 2006). Individual solutions to this paradox may not work well (but see Brunton & Nissenbaum, 2015, for creative ideas that individuals or groups can pursue). To fully protect one's privacy it may be necessary to abstain from using social media. This is unfortunate, given the documented benefits of engaging with other people through social media (Trepte & Reinecke, 2011), and is unlikely to be a viable solution for most people.

We propose several suggestions that may help to increase privacy. It's important to note that the effectiveness of many of these strategies has yet to be assessed comprehensively. In addition, for ease of exposition we describe separate translational pathways; however, in practice these pathways can (and likely will) be navigated in parallel, and will converge and interact, and perhaps (at times) even contradict each other. Thus, the process of resolving the privacy paradox will be an organic one.

Advice for Users of Social Media

One way to partially resolve the privacy paradox is to attempt to reduce privacy boundary violations without completely abandoning social media. Some specific steps that may aid these

attempts include the following. Be aware that posts to a network of hundreds of "friends" will be seen by individuals that the message was not consciously directed toward. Personal updates or opinions that users are keen to share with their close friends and family will often also be shared with acquaintances and distant friends. Because the meaning of messages is audience dependent (Ochs & Capps, 2009), this far-flung sharing is likely to lead to misunderstandings of the meaning intended (Bazarova, 2012). Spending time thinking about and programming who can read one's posts is important to help manage other people's impressions. Moreover, refusing pressure by social media companies to constantly increase one's friend group online is helpful for more mindful communication.

Be aware not only of social privacy threats (violations by other users of the site) but also institutional privacy threats (the technology company's use of your private data for its own commercial purposes). Realize that when you post online you now essentially are co-owners of that information with a broad and diverse set of users, including the corporate entity that provides the social media platform. The risks of privacy turbulence are much more extensive when information is posted to social media sites than when the same information is shared privately with a few friends via a different communications method that has different affordances. The ability to control the information and negotiate privacy rules is severely compromised. This suggests caution around posting sensitive information on social media. At the same time, some of the threats to privacy are from within one's closer network. CPM theory describes the importance of privacy rules that can be explicitly negotiated with friends, parents, or significant others (Petronio, 2002). We recommend that explicit conversations about social media privacy rules take place between friends, romantic partners, and family members. These conversations are especially important when people have different sharing styles.

The power and information asymmetries between service providers and end users result in built-in equities. These are daunting, yet they do not eliminate opportunities for resistance, Means to block access to information or to provide inaccurate information were discussed by Marx (2003). The related concept of "obfuscation" was elaborated at length by Brunton and Nissenbaum (2015). Obfuscation refers to a family of techniques that attempt to protect privacy not by hiding information but by proliferating false information (noise) that makes it more difficult to identify, analyze, and exploit the accurate information that exists. In essence, obfuscation allows one to hide, at least temporarily, in a crowd of misleading signals.

One example of social media obfuscation is "Bayesian flooding" (Ludlow, 2012) or adding hundreds of bogus events to one's Facebook Timeline in order to confuse and overwhelm Facebook's algorithms. Special software has been developed to implement obfuscation strategies, including TrackMeNot which generates fake search queries to interfere with the construction of accurate profiling from Google searches and FaceCloak which is a front-end to Facebook that sends false information to Facebook's servers and keeps accurate information encrypted and stored on its own servers, accessible only to friends you have authorized (Brunton & Nissenbaum, 2015). In situations where it is impossible or impractical to "opt out" of surveillance, and especially when there is a power imbalance between the surveillor and the surveilled, obfuscation may be one of the few practical and effective strategies for protecting privacy.

Advice for Parents

The studies reviewed above suggest that close monitoring of children on social media is not effective but some monitoring may be helpful, and might even lead to increased voluntary disclosure. Many parents impose internet restrictions in an effort to protect their children from

harm, especially from so-called "online predators." Although we must not minimize instances in

which children are manipulated and assaulted as a result of participating in an online social

network, boyd (2014, pp. 109-112) points out that these occurrences are rare and that parental

fears are often unfounded. By having such harsh restrictions, parents may lose some credibility

and trust if children recognize that social media are not the looming threat that they have been

made out to be (Haddon, 2015). O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011) suggest that parents should

seek to educate themselves on the technologies that their children are using, as well as educate

their children on the potential risks and issues they face when participating in online social

networks. It is important that parents have these conversations with an empathetic approach that

encourages open communication, rather than in a way that induces fear and promotes isolation

(boyd, 2014).

Advice for Psychologists

In order to ensure that the professional relationship that a psychologist has established

with his or her client is not threatened, it is important for those who are active on social media

platforms to utilize privacy settings (as well as carefully consider what is disclosed) in case a

client were to come across the profile. It is generally advised that psychologists do not "friend"

their clients on social networking sites due to potential breaches of confidentiality as well as

issues regarding boundary violations (Jordan et al., 2014; Lannin & Scott, 2013). Because there

are currently no formal guidelines set by the American Psychological Association (APA)

regarding the use of social networking sites, it is important for professionals to develop a

consistent policy regarding social media and to practice transparency with clients around this

policy at the beginning of treatment (Jordan et al., 2014; Kolmes, 2012; Lannin & Scott, 2013).

Advice for Social Media Companies

Social media companies need to increase their sensitivity to the privacy needs of their users. The growing trend of allowing users to partial their network of friends into different groups (e.g., family, distant friends, close friends) and thus generate messages directed to a specific audience is a positive one. On the other hand, the trend of forcing people to use their "real" name and the increase in face recognition technologies puts in danger those users who aim to project their identity selectively (DeNardis & Hackl, 2015). Such risks became clear recently (Lil Miss Hot Mess, 2015) when Facebook forced many in the LGBTQ community to change their profile name from one that was based on their performed gender identity to their "real name". Drag queens and transgender people whose identity is celebrated by certain groups but not others are put in a dangerous situation by policies such as these. Moreover, these policies are especially troubling because they prioritize the economic value of the users to the corporation (which is reduced if users can be anonymous or create an identity unique to that social media site and separate from other online transactions or identities) over the rights and safety of users.

Advice for Policy Makers

Legal or constitutional protection for users' privacy may be one of the few means of providing a strong balance to the immense financial benefits that technology companies reap by encouraging or requiring the wide sharing of information for those who use their systems. Although the process of seeking legislative solutions is complex and fraught with challenges, systemic legal change may be able to protect user privacy in a way that guidelines (especially guidelines developed by technology companies themselves) do not.

Piecemeal legislation related to privacy and social media content has been enacted or considered in several U.S. states. For example, California's "online erasure" law for minors requires websites to delete posts if they are asked, as well as to inform minors that they have this

right (Mason & McGreevy, 2013). It was enacted so that minors are not haunted by a digital trail. There is currently no similar federal law, nor are there similar state or local laws for adults in the United States, despite the fact that adults may also face consequences as a result of online disclosures. In contrast, residents of European Union countries enjoy superior privacy protection, due to a ruling by the E. U. Court of Justice in May 2014 that supported the "right to be forgotten" -- the ability to request technology companies to remove online information about oneself (Timberg & Birnbaum, 2014). Other examples of piecemeal legislation are laws that protect people's rights to keep social media content private from use by employers and possible future employers. Such laws were first enacted in 2012 by six states; an additional 16 states have subsequently enacted such laws and legislation has been considered in an additional 23 states in 2015 (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2015).

Rather than developing individual laws, especially at the state level, a more comprehensive solution would be to consider a constitutional amendment to protect privacy. Such constitutional protection is provided to citizens of other countries such as Belgium, Finland, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, and Spain (EPIC, 2006) and privacy protections are part of several U.S. state constitutions (e.g., California, Florida, and Montana).

Conclusion

Social media provide important new channels for human communication, which can enhance relationships and intimacy as well as weaken them. Critical and informed approaches to the use of social media are essential for decreasing privacy turbulence and relational tensions. We need to continue researching and discussing the nuances and functions of communication, privacy, and intimacy in order to create better norms, practices, and protections that enhance the

benefits of social media and minimize their risks. Changes in laws, technology, and individual

and social practices will likely be necessary in order to achieve these goals.

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