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John R. Gatermann
Lindenwood University

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Facing the Book of Reliance:

An Analysis of College Student's Dependency on Facebook

John R. Gatermann[8]

The principle of this study was to determine if college students have become dependent on the online social network, Facebook. It was hypothesized that college students have become dependent on Facebook in order to gain and maintain social connections; they have become reliant about the utilization of the online social network tool. Additionally, the terms, addiction and dependent were analyzed in order to discover participants' interpretation of their own behavior in relation to the online network. Participants were led to believe that Facebook had been temporarily terminated. By informing the participants that the website had a multitude of legal suits being brought against them. A fabricated newspaper article accompanied this deception in order to achieve credibility. Afterwards, the participants were given a survey which consisted of questions pertaining to dependency on Facebook. The participants were asked about their utilization of the network, how it has affected their relationships, how their behavior has changed upon entering college (in regards to the participants' frequency of using the site), and a demographics portion. All 59 participants in the study possessed a Facebook account. According to the addiction survey all but three participants showed signs of dependency. Furthermore, those participants who openly admitted to being addicted had a statistically significantly higher dependency score than those who did not.

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[8] John R. Gatermann, Psychology, Lindenwood University
JRG985@Lionmail.Lindenwood.edu

At the click of a button, the world is brought to an individual without leaving the sanctity of their very home. Americans have become enveloped by this astounding network of electrical connections that is the internet. Whether people stream the web for sport updates, new clothing, former presidents, or new love interests, the internet has revolutionized every aspect of Americans' lives. Social networks have become increasingly popular with today's youth and have begun impacting adults as well. In particular, there has been one social network that has seemed to dominant all others. Facebook has been rapidly growing amongst all generations and has become the leader of all social networks.

According to Holliday and Knoop (as cited in Smith, 2010) the increasing number of Facebook subscribers is astonishing. In six months preceding March 25, 2009, four million women and three million men utilized Facebook (Holliday & Knoop as cited in Smith, 2010). Holliday and Knopp (as cited in Smith, 2010) also tracked Facebook subscribers increase back to 2008 and discovered a remarkable enhancement; there were 34 million people subscribed to Facebook, internationally. In 2009, that number intensified to 95 million. However, today's findings are inconceivable. In 2010, the total number of Facebook subscribers soared to 400 million people globally (Holliday & Knoop as cited in Smith, 2010). In order to understand the significance of this factor, the United States population is 308,837,693 according to the United States Census Bureau (2010). This illustrates that there are 91,162,307 more subscribers to the online social network, Facebook, than there are people currently residing in the United States today.

Seemingly, Facebook has taken the industrial world by storm; however, how does this social network match-up against other online social networks? In the aspect of one

of its more substantiated rivals, MySpace, Facebook has overtaken this social network. According to Smith (2009), MySpace subscribers dropped by 2%, whereas, Facebook subscribers, in 2009, increased its members by 16.6 %. Other online social networks failed to match Facebook's impressive expansion during this time (Smith, 2009). On the contrary, the new incumbent, Twitter, to the social networks has to be analyzed as well. According to Ostrow (2010), Twitter has increased its member status from 12.1 million members in 2009 to 18.1 million members in 2010. This is a 10.8% increase over the past year and the projected members are suggested to increase dramatically over the next few years as this network matures (Ostrow, 2010). Even though this number of members is relatively low considering the number of members Facebook possesses, Hameed (2010) argues that future increases in Twitter will be remarkable. Among its active members, there were 35 million Tweets sent per day during 2009 (Hameed, 2010).

AlthoughTwitter has become increasingly popular over the past few years, it is conceivably immature next to the magnitude of Facebook's popularity. Among its competitors, Facebook seems to stand triumphantly at the top of the online social networks. The sheer multitude of subscribers raises the question of why people are so engaged in utilizing this tool.

The dependency on the online social network is apparent. However, this newly discovered tool by the public has raised many concerns. In regards to school, Facebook seems to be problematic amongst students when attempting to manage Facebook utilization and school work. According to Brydolf (2007), students are becoming increasingly vulnerable to threatening material posted on these social networks. Subsequently, this material is transcending into the classroom and causing student's

learning environments to be impeded (Brydolf, 2007). Moreover, Brydolf (2007) noted a survey compiled by the National School Boards association that 36 % of students reported that material posted on the networks were conflicting with their learning environments. In relation to this problem, Fodeman and Monroe (2009) outlined that the potentiality of harassment on Facebook is very high. Under their investigation of this online social network, they discovered that "students post embarrassing, humiliating, denigrating and hurtful content in both text, photos, and videos" (Fodeman & Monroe, 2009). Also, they noted that students have a misconception of privacy when using the internet to maintain social connections (Fodeman & Monroe, 2009). In relation, this same belief is also shared by Brydolf (2009). As reported, educators are faced with the dilemma on how to control this public service without infringing on the students' freedom of speech (Brydolf, 2007). The problem lies in regards to how much authority the school has on students' personal lives. Consequently, social networks have conflicted school environments and concern about subjective material posted on these cites is a relevant issue.

Aside from the slander discovered on Facebook between students, concerns regarding relationships are also in question. Students and other people from the general public are resorting to using online social networks for making and maintaining social connections with others. However, this dependency on the service is a major concern. According to Fodeman and Monroe (2009), children have become accustomed to formulating their relationships online. This is a concern because real-life socialization may be impeded. Often, these students may make unsafe decisions in formulating

relationships, and may leave themselves exposed to becoming a victim of harassment or other crimes (Fodeman & Monroe, 2009).

By understanding the potential risk concerns revolving around Facebook utilization, the reasons for dependency on the network can be analyzed. According to a study conducted by Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert (2009), 92 undergraduates were assessed on issues pertaining to their Facebook use. Reportedly, these students frequented the site for at least 30 minutes per day (Pempek, Yermolayeva & Calvert, 2009). During this time, it was reported that students utilized this tool in order to maintain connections between peers. They discovered that students were more often observing the content posted by others, rather than, posting their own material. In the aspect of maintenance of friend connections, students had a previous offline relationship with these people and used Facebook to preserve the bond (Pempek, Yermolayeva & Calvert, 2009).

On the contrary, does this maintenance of relationships facilitate dependency on the social network? According to Bedi (as cited in Pope, 2010), the addiction to the internet has become apparent across university campuses due to the fact that internet capabilities have been made easily accessible. Moreover, it is noted that Facebook provides intermittent reinforcement to its users (Bedi as cited in Pope, 2010). Specifically, people receive similar feelings to gambling highs when anticipating new notifications and messages on Facebook (Bedi as cited in Pope, 2010). They find it hard to restrain their urges to check Facebook for these new notifications that could be potentially awaiting them.

In relation to this addictive component to Facebook, Garbley (as cited in Herman, 2010) suggests that Facebook is not a physical addiction like drugs, but it is more of a psychological dependency. Additionally, he adds that the problem becomes apparent "when school work calls, when relationships demand your attention and you chose Facebook over those relationships" (Garbley as cited in Herman, 2010, p. 1). In relation, the theory about Facebook Addiction Disorder (FAD) has become a controversial issue in today's society. In a report by Fenichel (2009), FAD is prevalent in society. With the increased dependency on the internet as a whole, Facebook has seemingly become a major concern. According to Fenichel (2009, p. 1), "Facebook Addiction Disorder (FAD) appears to have the most ingrained and self-reinforcing of all scenarios, reinforcing through immediacy, acclamation, intimacy, shared experience, shared creativity, and the ability to be the complete and total captain of the ship of one's Facebook home page". Moreover, Fenichel (2009) discussed how this dependency is often undermined because of the vast majority of subscribers. According to him, Facebook has become such a commonplace due to the simple fact that it has taken on the perception of "everybody's doing it" (p. 1).

Facebook is a growing concern amongst all generations worldwide. The risks and concerns revolving around privacy matters and dependency amongst its users is potentially problematic. In this paper, it was hypothesized that college students have become dependent on Facebook in order to gain and maintain social connections. Additionally, they have become reliant about the utilization of the online social network tool. In order to assess this hypothesis, a resume was formulated in order to test the dependency of participants' on Facebook. The survey included questions from a

previous nicotine addiction survey (adapted from Difranza's nicotine addiction test), as well as, other questions related to reliance. By interpreting these results, it was hoped that the risk factors of becoming dependent on Facebook would be brought into awareness, and that the severity of the issue is more pertinent than previous perceptions dictate.

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were recruited from the Lindenwood Participant Pool (LPP). The LPP is through Lindenwood University as is designed in order to pool participants for research in an ethical nature. Fifty-nine participants were recruited from the LPP. The participants ranged from various ethnic backgrounds in order to gain a consensus of the dependency of Facebook on people inhabiting different countries apart from the United States, and how Facebook has allowed for them to stay connected to peers and family. Participants obtained extra credit from the following undergraduate classes: ANT 112, ANT 300, PSY 100, PSY 101, SOC 102, SOC 220, AT 295, EXS 100, and SOC 318. All participants that partook in this study were at least 18 years or older.

Materials

The study included a survey that outlined questions related to dependency on Facebook (adapted from Difranza's nicotine addiction test) and demographic related questions (Appendices A & B). Moreover, additional materials were utilized during the process of the study: signup sheet B (which allows researchers to set specific times for participants to sign up), informed consent forms (two copies per participants which will allow for students to keep one for personal record, see Appendix C), a feedback letter

(depicting the nature of the study, its importance, and why deception was utilized, see Appendix D), a room to conduct the study (which always consisted of one chair and desk for the participant to complete the research), experimenters' list of participants (to obtain all individuals participating in the study), participants' receipts (which was provided to the participants by the researcher in order to ensure that credit was fully allotted to these individuals), and a mock document (Appendix E) stating the reasons for the online social network's termination (to ensure credibility of deception).

Procedure

In the beginning, the participants were informed that the social network, Facebook, has been terminated due to the fact that the site was pending cases due to inadequate privacy measures (see Appendix F for script). Moreover, this fabrication was associated with a synthetic document (Appendix E) that outlined the basis of the termination and the cautionary measures the government was utilizing in order to provide a secure social network.

After being erroneously informed of the temporary shutdown about Facebook, the participants were asked to fill out a survey on how their lives will be affected by this termination. In regards to the questions that were outlined on this survey, they included topics pertaining to how the social connections between friends were altered; they were asked to inquire how the online social network has altered their lives in general; they were asked how their usage of the network has changed from previously entering college; participants were assessed on how their school work is affected; finally, participants were assessed on demographics pertaining to their frequency of Facebook usage, and the gender differences in Facebook use (see Appendix B for entire list of questions).

After the study was completed, the participants submitted their surveys in a closed container, ensuring the privacy of the participant, and were debriefed about the essence of the study. Moreover, the participants were informed of the fraudulence in the beginning of the study. They were informed that Facebook has not been terminated and is fully active. Furthermore, participants were explained the nature of the deception. They were made conversant in the aspect that the deception was only used in order to simulate an environment where individuals are lead to believe the online social network has been actually terminated and to obtain candid answers.

After the debriefing, the participants were given a feedback letter outlining the circumstances of the experiment. Finally, they were asked to not inform any peers about the nature of the study in order to protect the anonymity of the study.

After concluding, the participant received a participant receipt in order for him/her to fill out and receive their bonus points for partaking in the study. They were informed to provide the receipt to the LPP office to ensure their extra credit was recorded.

Results

Analyses were focused on the participants' dependency on the online social network, Facebook. After analyzing the results of the questions related to the addiction survey (adapted from Difranza's nicotine addiction test), it was discovered that the average number of participants answering yes (indicating addiction) was 4.4 (SD = 2.50) with the most frequently occurring being 7. According to Difranza's (2002) interpretation of the analyses, 56 out of the 59 participants indicated signs of dependency on Facebook (94.92 %).

After comparing these results to the analyses of participants identifying themselves as being addicted, the results indicated that these participants who revealed their addiction had a statistically significantly higher dependency score than those who did not outwardly address their addiction, $t(59) = 2.16$, $p < .05$; however, those who indicated that they were not addicted to Facebook, still possessed a scale higher than one which is indicates addiction according to Difranza (2002).

All in the present study possessed a Facebook account (100 %). Of these 59 participants, 12 participants indicated having the online social network Myspace in congruence with Facebook (20.3%). All other networks: Freindster, Twitter, Classmates, and Linkedln, were possessed by less than 3.4 % of the participants. Participants also provided that only 32 of the 59 would choose another network if Facebook were terminated (54.2 %). In relation to Facebook, the participants acquired their memberships 2.68 (SD 2.06) years ago. Furthermore, it was revealed that of the 59 participants, 40 of them increased their activity after entering college (67.97%).

The majority of the participants indicated that they checked Facebook twice the day prior (19 of the 59), and only 4 of the 59 participants indicated that they do not check Facebook during homework (6.78 %), meaning, 93.22 % of the participants check Facebook occasionally while doing their homework.

Finally, 29 of the 59 participants indicated that they were addicted to Facebook (49.20 %); whereas, 22 of the 59 participants believed they were not dependent of the social network (37.30 %).

Discussion

As previously indicated, it was hypothesized that college students have become more dependent on the online social network Facebook. When participants were informed that the social network was being terminated due to legal proceedings, students indicated signs of dependency on Facebook. After being evaluated by an addiction survey, it was suggested that college students would be diagnosed as being addicted to Facebook (note, addiction and dependency reliance are utilized interchangeably and maintain the same definition).   After conducting analyses, the results indicated that college students were addicted to Facebook. According to Difranza (2002), by answering yes to any of the ten questions pertaining to addiction, the participant elicits signs of dependency. As a result, 56 participants answered yes to at least one question on the addiction survey thereby revealing their reliance. Furthermore, it was shown that participants who admitted to their addiction revealed a statistically significantly higher dependency scale on Difranza's (2002) test.

Accordingly, Fenichel's (2009) argument in regards to Facebook addiction being diagnosed as a disorder may not be outlandish after all. In his report, he argued that Facebook has self-reinforcing qualities similar to other addictions. Comparably, it is like smoking cigarettes;it satisfies emotional cravings, it is immediate, and, it can pose as a social outlet. Even though nicotine is considered, biologically, the addictive aspect of smoking, all these others qualities can be suggestive of a dependency. Likewise, Fenichel (2009) argued that these are the aspects that have created this mass addiction to the online social network. Nevertheless, others like Bedi (as cited in Pope, 2010), have suggested that it was these same qualities about Facebook that made it addictive. She

compared the feelings that users receive from Facebook to the emotional highs that gamblers receive (Bedi as cited in Pope, 2010). Potentially, this is the reasoning why the results indicated such a vast majority of the participants being dependent on the network.

On the contrary, research conducted by Garbly (as cited in Herman, 2010) suggests that Facebook is not an addiction akin to drugs. He provides that Facebook addiction is more reminiscent of a psychological dependency. The problem becomes apparent when the need to access Facebook starts interfering with everyday life events (Garbly as cited in Herman, 2010).

Garbly's (as cited in Herman, 2010) research makes apparent the argument revolving around addiction and dependency and how each of these terms is interpreted. According to the results of this study, there was a discrepancy between addiction and dependency (29 indicating they were addicted and 22 indicating they were dependent). However, Difranza (2002) regarded the terms as being interchangeable and did not discriminate between them. In his test, he expressed that participants were dependent if they answered yes to any one of the ten items. Accordingly, there was an item on his test expressing the word "addiction" (Difranza, 2002). Nevertheless, the results indicate that there is some aspect of reliance on the network.

Aside from the results from Difranza's (2002) addiction survey, it was intriguing to discover that every participant possessed a Facebook account. Every participant who partook in this study maintained a Facebook profile with minimal influence of other social networks. Correspondingly, previous research conducted by Holliday and Knoop (as cited in Smith, 2010) indicated that Facebook was the fastest growing social network on the internet. Furthermore, the results of this study were congruent to Holliday and

Knoop's research(as cited in Smith 2010), on the basis that Myspace was a distant second. However, their research pointed that Twitter had increased dramatically and was projected to continue to increase over the next few years. According to the present study, however, study, Twitter had a remarkably low subscriber rate.

After interpreting these results in congruence with the prior research done on Facebook, some limitations were perceived pertaining to the study. In regards to the deception tactic utilized within the study, it can be argued that it was interpreted differently amongst each participant. Some participants may have been more susceptible to believing the deception than others; however, if it was not used the study could have potentially not been taken as earnestly. Suggestively, the deception created a sense of awareness in the participant that this study was serving a necessary cause and that genuine answers to the survey were needed. On the other hand, by not using deception, the possibility of making the participants feel uneasy is reduced and could yield different answers. It is possible that subjects felt inclined to answer in such a fashion that provided a higher reflection of dependency.

Apart from the deception, the high number of Facebook subscribers amongst the participants can be analyzed. Suggestively, the study may have yielded such a high number of Facebook users due to the fact that those who had a Facebook account were more inclined to participate in the study because they knew it pertained to Facebook. This could potentially skew the results because these people may already have a higher tendency to access Facebook more often due to their partiality to the network.

In relation to the participants themselves, most were female, 18 to 20 years of age, and white. This could bias the sample being that women fitting this profile access

Facebook more often and are more expressive about their activity with the network. Possibly, men are not as involved on Facebook as women, or people from other parts of the world may use other means of interacting socially online.

Correspondingly, there were 24 participants who were absent from the study based on their failure to show up for the study. Having such a high number of participants not present at the study could be representative of diffusion of treatment. It is possible that the deception of the study was compromised by participants informing others of the nature of the study. Consequently, this could have caused participants to not be willing to partake in the study.

By understanding these limitations within the study, suggestions for future research can be outlined. Being that Facebook has become apparent in today's society, the risk factors related to the issue of dependency need to be analyzed. Because the internet has created a new breeding ground for potential criminal predators to strike, people need to be made aware how dependency on such a network like Facebook could be problematic. In the future, research could be regionalized in order to assess where these problems are most apparent. By targeting the geographic that are most dependent on Facebook, more awareness could be spread about how to safely use the network.

Moreover, gender research in regards to Facebook could be generated as well. Being that this study representative females being most addicted to Facebook, a new study could analyze how many of these women have been victimized due to their frequency on the network. Furthermore, research could be conducted on men in the aspect of how dependent they are on the network and if they have ever been victimized

due to their behavior on Facebook. On the other hand, research could be conducted to discover who the possible assailants are.

Aside from the prospect of criminality on Facebook, research can be conducted on its utilization as a marketing devise. Vastly, companies have been quick to jump on board with utilizing Facebook as a marketing tool. Companies continue to dump money into new schemes to sell their products. Future research could be conducted in order to discover what strategies within Facebook work the best and how to maximize the market without jeopardizing the company. Additionally, new research could provide safeguards against certain crisis like the deception that was used in this study. A termination of Facebook could prove detrimental to many businesses, but with research, safeguards could be discovered to prevent such a crisis.

Overall, Facebook is a growing popularity and people have become heavily involved in utilizing the tool. Whether college students are maintaining contacts with peers residing in various parts of the world, businesses instituting new marketing schemes, or, criminals discovering new victims, Facebook has made its mark on society. It is a swelling epidemic that possesses an untold future. Continual research may be the only tool to be able to shed light on its mysterious forthcoming

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Appendix A

Nicotine Addiction's 10 Warning Signs
HONC - Hooked On Nicotine Checklist

1. Have you ever tried to quit but couldn't?
2. Do you smoke now because it is really hard to quit?
3. Have you ever felt like you were addicted to tobacco?
4. Do you ever have strong cravings to smoke?
5. Have you ever felt like you really needed a cigarette?
6. Is it hard to keep from smoking in places where you are not supposed to, like school?

*In answering the last four questions, when you tried to stop
smoking, or when you have not used tobacco for a while ...*

7. Did you find it hard to concentrate?
8. Did you feel more irritable?
9. Did you feel a strong need or urge to smoke?
10. Did you feel nervous, restless or anxious because you couldn't smoke?

Answering " **yes** " to any **one** of the above ten questions indicates that you may already be hooked on nicotine and are chemically dependent. Your "yes" answer is your own honest self assessment that you have already lost the freedom and ability to simply and effortlessly walk away. Two-thirds of all teens who you see smoking regularily will spend their entire life as slaves to nicotine. If you HONC we'll help - WhyQuit.com

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Source: HONC - (Hooked on Nicotine Checklist), Tobacco Control, Sept. 2002
Dr. JR Difranza, Development of symptoms of tobacco dependency in youths.
Reliability study of HONC factors - July 2002

Appendix B

1. Do you currently have an active Facebook profile?

    1. Yes   2. No

2. If you do not use Facebook, do you use other online social networks?

    1. My Space
    2. Friendster
    3. Twitter
    4. Classmates
    5. Linkedln
    6. Other _____
    7. I don't use a social network

3. If you do, when did you open a Facebook profile (estimate)?

    1. 0-1 year ago
    2. 2-3 years ago
    3. 3-4 years ago
    4. 5-or more years ago

4. Since you have been in college, being away from friends and family, do you feel your activity on Facebook increased?

    1. Yes   2. No

5. If you do, how many times did you check your Facebook yesterday (estimate by circling one)?

    1. 0
    2. 1-2
    3. 3-4
    4. 5-6
    5. 7 or more

3. Normally, what do you use Facebook for (circle all that apply)?

    1. Keeping in touch with friends, old and new
    2. Viewing status' of others
    3. Looking at pictures
    4. Posting what I am doing or feeling at the moment
    5. Playing games
    6. Other _____

4. While on Facebook, do you find trouble concentrating on other tasks (i.e. homework)?

    1. Yes   2. No

5. Have you ever tried to limit your Facebook use?

    1. Yes   2. No

6. Have you ever felt like you may be addicted to checking Facebook?

    1. Yes   2. No

7. Do you ever have a strong desire to check Facebook?

    1. Yes   2. No

8. Have you ever felt like you really needed to check Facebook?

    1. Yes   2. No

9. Is it hard to keep from checking your Facebook when a computer is accessible like?

    1. Yes   2. No

10. Did you find it hard to concentrate when you haven't checked your Facebook?

    1. Yes   2. No

11. How often do you check Facebook while doing homework?

    1. Never
    2. 1-3 times
    3. 4-6 times
    4. It's running the whole time

12. Did you feel more irritable when you do not check your Facebook?

    1. Yes   2. No

13. If you tried to limit or stop using Facebook, did you feel an urge to use it?

    1. Yes   2. No

14. Have you ever felt restless or anxious because you couldn't access Facebook?

    1. Yes   2. No

15. Would you consider yourself dependent on Facebook (meaning, needing to check it at least once a day)?

    1. Yes 2. No

16. If you are from another country outside the United States, how would you describe the use of Facebook?

    1. People use it often (meaning at least 50% of the people you know have a profile)
    2. People seldom use it (meaning less than 50% of the people you know have a profile)
    3. I am from the United States

17. Do the people you know frequently (3-4 times daily) check Facebook (i.e. friends, roommates)

    1. Yes   2. No

18. What is your sex?

    1. Male
    2. Female

19. What is your grade level?

    1. Freshman
    2. Sophomore
    3. Junior
    4. Senior

20. What is your ethnicity?

    1. Latino/Hispanic
    2. Asian
    3. Caucasian (white)
    4. African American
    5. Native American
    6. Other

Appendix C

I, _____ (print name), understand that I will be taking part in

a research project that requires me to complete a short questionnaire asking about

involvement with the online social network, Facebook . I understand that I should be

able to complete this project within 15 minutes. I am aware that my participation in this

study is strictly voluntary and that I may choose to withdraw from the study at any time

without any penalty or prejudice. I should not incur any penalty or prejudice because I

cannot complete the study. I understand that the information obtained from my responses

will be analyzed only as part of aggregate data and that all identifying information will be

absent from the data in order to ensure anonymity. I am also aware that my responses

will be kept confidential and that data obtained from this study will only be available for

research and educational purposes. I understand that any questions I may have regarding

this study shall be answered by the researcher involved to my satisfaction. Finally, I

verify that I am at least 18 years of age and am legally able to give consent or that I am

under the age of 18 but have on file with the LPP office, a completed parental consent

form that allows me to give consent as a minor.

_____ Date: _____

(Signature of participant)

_____ Date: _____

(Signature of researcher obtaining consent)

Appendix D

Thank you for participating in my study. The questionnaire was used in order to determine people's dependency on the online social network, Facebook. The deception of informing participants that Facebook was being terminated by the government was used in order to produce an environment for the participant of how their livelihood would be altered due to the termination of such a popular online social network. Moreover, this deception allowed for the potential of obtaining truthful responses by the participant. The story told prior to the investigation, along with the governmental document, was completely false. They were only used in order to provide a sense that Facebook had actually been shut down.

Please note that I am not interested in your individual results; rather, I am only interested in the results of a large group of Facebook users, of which you are now a part of. No identifying information about you will be associated with any of the findings.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding any portion of this study, please do not hesitate to bring them up now or in the future. My contact information is found at the bottom of this letter. If you are interested in obtaining a summary of the findings of this study at a later date, please contact me and I will make it available to you at the completion of this project.

Thank you again for your valuable contribution to this study.

Principal Investigators:

John R. Gatermann   (JRG985@lionmail.lindenwood.edu)

Supervisor:

Dr. Michiko Nohara-LeClair 636-949-4371 (mnohara-leclair@lindenwood.edu)

Appendix E

The New York Times
ON THE WEB

Thursday 11th March 2010

Government says Facebook must go!

Today, politicians passed a vote to terminate Facebook due to privacy infractions. Even though

they would not go into detail on the basis for closing the social online network, they provided a

statement claiming that Facebook has been temporarily shut down due to lack of privacy and

security measures.

During this hiatus, the government will work with Facebook management to help improve

security for Facebook users. Recent lawsuits brought against the network have led to the

termination of the website and has caused governmental officials to step in.

In the midst of the sudden closure, publicists are questioning how the Facebook community is

going to react to the news. Nevertheless, critics suggest that this sudden closure may influence

people to retreat back to prior online social networks.

John Peters

Associated News & Press

2010

Appendix F

Researcher: "Thank you for coming to participate in this studying. During this session, I will be inquiring about the online social network, Facebook. Due to the recent closure of Facebook, I was trying to investigate how people's lives would be affected."

Participant: "Facebook shut down?"

Researcher: "Yes. The government temporarily terminated Facebook on the basis that their privacy and security measures are inadequate. They said that the recent lawsuits brought against the network have caused politicians to investigate the security of the network. So, I am leading an investigation to see how this may affect the lives of their subscribers. This brings me to the question in regards to if you have a profile established with Facebook?"

Participant: "Yes I do."

Researcher: "Okay, well please fill out this inform consent form stating that you will partake in this survey study pertaining to the social network, Facebook. Remember, if at any moment you need to terminate this study, you may do so without prejudice. Furthermore, you will still be entitled to receive full credit for this study even if you fail to complete the survey. Do you have any questions?"

Participant: "No."

Researcher: "Okay, then let's begin."

Participant takes the survey.

Researcher: "Okay, now that you are complete, please insert your survey into this closed container. Now, I would like to take a few minutes to discuss with you about the true nature of this study. First of all, the statement I made about Facebook being temporarily terminated was completely false along with the document I provided. I used this deception tactic in order to create an environment for the participant that made him/her question their true behavior on Facebook.

In all actuality, this study was conducted in order to gain a sense of how dependent people are on the social network. Furthermore, the questions on the survey were facilitated to test this aspect of dependency rather than question how lives would be changed if Facebook had been terminated.

Please be aware, that all names and other information pertaining to you as an individual are omitted from this study and your privacy will be handled with the upmost regard. Your answers to the survey questions will be calculated only as part of aggregate data.

Do you have any concerns or questions about the study or deception tactic used in this study?

No, okay well here is a feedback letter informing you of all the information I just mentioned to you.

Lastly, please do not inform any other student of the nature of this study because it may skew my results. It is very important that you protect the anonymity of the study in order to achieve valid results. Also, if you wish to know the results of the study, please email me and I will gladly make sure to inform you of the results.

Thank you for your time and participation."