PHD PROPOSAL SAMPLE

SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERACTION

The hidden dangers of online identity management and the world of social media

This research is highly concerned about computer mediated communication (CMC) in between individuals using Facebook, as the leading social networking platform these days. Facebook was created in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, as is currently known as a social networking portal wherein various individuals from different places all over the world can share personal details, pictures, friends, and conversations (Bahn, 2007). Despite the fact that there are other social media sites which were created, including Friendster, MySpace and Bebo, Facebook is accepted generally as the leading site in its category, consisting of more than a billion users all over the world (Facebook, 2015). Facebook has been consistent in becoming deeply incorporated into the daily routines of users. For example, a recent study has discovered that students usually spend about 38 minutes every day logging in to their accounts in this platform (Ulaan et al, 2011). This means that about 9 days in each year are dedicated to various types of activities through Facebook. With the current increase of use of this platform through mobile devices, it is most likely that this figure will further increase as time continues to pass by.

With all of these factors taken into consideration, it is quite interesting to consider these platforms as a capable means of revealing vital information as to how young adults communicate with each other in this modern age. Functions of the platform including comments, wall posts, private messages, statuses and a lot more also offer several text based communication to occur. In order to be sure, some individuals even believe that computer mediums, including social networking sites are unsuitable and impoverished arenas for social interaction. Yet, because of the time in which people spend in these sites, their natural social nature, including the variety of interactions available, Facebook is often understood better as a ground for social interaction. Therefore, it is imperative that these forms of media should be considered when discussing about computer mediated communication, as well as in other interaction related research.

This research aims to take into consideration how the interaction on Facebook looks like in aspects such as language, talking, and discursive makeup. How are the conversations being constructed? Is there a difference depending on specific functions, as well as audience? These questions do not just present identity presentations on this social network as it aims to further dissect the language involved in social networking, through discursive analytical tools so as to offer a unique understanding of the world of Facebook, as well as the language used in computer mediated communication.

Potential ethics and challenges

Just like when proposing any other projects, it is very important to prepare any issues which may arise during the analysis and data collection phases so as to act on certain issues, putting solutions right in place. The method of data collection for this project offers a unique understanding into the online interaction, yet simple, low maintenance and low cost. However, the primary ethical concern which needs to be addressed in this method involves privacy. With the use of online recording software, different researchers gain access to all of the interactions of the participants through, and with the computer. The possibly invasive nature of this method also means that it may be challenging to find participants who definitely agree to the recording as individuals may not feel comfortable with their personal interactions and conversations being recorded and analyzed consequently.

Even though this may be considered as a concern, by following the ethical guidelines presented by the university, any uncomfortable feelings may be avoided. For one, we will be adhering to the concept of 'informed consent'. As such, participants will be informed completely of what the research involves, and how it will be used later on. Anonymity among participants will also be protected, which means that any data that will be collected will only be used for the purpose of study, and will be destroyed when completed. Lastly, participants have the right to inform us if they want to withdraw from the research at any time, informing us if there is anything that made them uncomfortable.

References

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