

User Experience Design to Synchronize Government Acquisition Strategy and Schedule
(Technical Paper)

College students' presentation of the self via the social networking site Instagram
(STS Paper)

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On my honor as a University Student, I have neither given nor received
unauthorized aid on this assignment as defined by the Honor Guidelines
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General Research Problem: Using smartphones to connect for personal and professional reasons

How do people use smartphones to connect and engage with others in their personal and professional lives?

77% of American adults today own a smartphone, with almost half agreeing that their smartphone is something they “couldn’t live without” (Perrin, 2017). Smartphones have become such an integral part of society due to the connectivity and efficiency they provide in the personal and professional lives of a majority of Americans. Many individuals, especially young adults, use their smartphones in their personal lives to connect with others via social media platforms such as Instagram, allowing them to share their lives with others and learn and explore new ideas. Through presenting oneself online to others, social media can help in developing a stronger sense of self and identity (Hwang, 2018). In a work environment, individuals use smartphones to easily contact one another through the workday, increasing productivity. Work related applications have been shown to boost efficiency by 34% (Lellis, 2018). Many workers also use their mobile devices to view their calendar and schedule meetings, helping them stay organized. There are, however, concerns with the increased usage of smartphones in society with smartphone addiction, causing distractions during personal conversations and throughout the workday. As smartphones continue to have an increased presence in society, understanding how we can utilize these devices in an optimal way to connect with others and define ourselves in personal and professional settings can maximize the positive impacts these devices have on our lives.

User Experience Design to Synchronize Government Acquisition Strategy and Schedule

How can an application be best designed to improve government acquisition efficiency?

The government spends up to 560 billion dollars per year on contracts for tasks which private companies perform (Snyder, 2019). These contracts are obtained by government acquisition agencies releasing a request for proposal, to which private companies submit corresponding proposals. The agencies then analyze the various options and choose the one that best fits their needs. The request for proposal is essential in acquiring strong contracts because it defines the requirements and criteria on which the winning proposal will be chosen. There are many iterations of the relevant documents for a request for proposal, each requiring approval from a variety of stakeholders, and workers are currently finding it difficult to meet deadlines due to poor communication and task management. This causes the government to be less efficient in acquiring contracts, wasting money and resources, and obtaining a lower quality of contracts. The government has attempted to utilize certain task management tools such as Microsoft

Planner to streamline the acquisition process, but the implementation of these tools thus far has frustrated users more than helping them. Also, different tools are used across different industries which makes it difficult to communicate effectively between industries. The goal of the technical project will to design a user interface for a new mobile application that is easy to use and can be implemented across the entire government acquisition space. The design should be very intuitive and user friendly so it does not cause frustrations like past online task management tools have, and should be fun and engaging to foster a collaborative environment. The app will provide visual displays of task progress and allocation as well as providing a more optimal way to form teams and collaborate within them. To design the interface of this application, the team will create various mockups using Adobe XD and compare them by implementing user testing such as focus groups and surveys to determine the best design. The mockups created will draw on design principles obtained from previous user experience design courses. The final project will be a full design of the application which will hopefully be programmed and implemented widely in the government contracting space to allow workers to acquire better contracts more efficiently. This project employs the use of smartphones to improve communication and engagement.

College students' presentation of the self via the social networking site Instagram

How does the way college students present themselves via the social networking site Instagram change as they develop their identity throughout college?

Introduction

Humans have always used self-presentation as a way to express their identity, but now with social media, the ways of presenting the self have expanded to include online audiences. Social media helps convey important information about one's self quickly and easily, and has become an increasingly popular way to express oneself in today's world. The concept of developing an identity for oneself online is important for many because social media is a digital representation of themselves and interactions on social media are often intertwined with other aspects of their lives (boyd, 2015). There have been studies in the past on adolescents' presentation of self on social networking sites, but studies about Instagram in particular are scarce, especially in the United States. Those that do exist lack a focus on how this presentation of self evolves during a period of one's life.

Since college is a time when many people are developing an identity for oneself and transitioning into being a working adult, this time period is crucial in understanding this formation of the self-image. The development of self-identity is so important because it directly affects people's self-confidence and self-worth. The best way to measure self-presentation of college students on social media in my opinion is through the social networking site Instagram,

since this is the most commonly used social networking site of many of my peers and I. This paper will aim to fill gaps in knowledge on how persons change the way they present themselves during their college years on social media as they further their identity development.

Background and Theoretical Framework

Throughout college, individuals develop a stronger sense of self as they find belonging and purpose in the world around them. As they explore their independence, they begin differentiating themselves from others around them and forming a concept of the self (Bilming, 2010). As college students expand and enrich their identity, they may change the way they express themselves in person and on social media sites to reflect this self. (Yang, 2016).

College-aged individuals, as well as other demographics, express themselves in a way they believe will make them liked by others. Many college students choose to present themselves on Instagram to build a brand for themselves to their target audience, and this brand and presentation may change as they continue to go through college. Their target audience may also change, as they move from their peers being high school friends and family to being other college students. At the transition to college, students carefully craft their image online and in person in ways to maintain connections at home and make new connections at college (Hwang & Cho, 2018). Individuals may find this transition difficult, since in contrast to self-presentation in person, on social media platforms, they cannot tailor their presentation of self to different audiences. Individuals may find it especially hard to picture every person that will come in contact with their post and how they will react to it, making information presented easy to take out of context if someone who didn't understand a certain situation sees the content and interprets it differently (boyd, 2015). This may hurt personal relationships if a family member sees a post they think is inappropriate because it was intended for college peers, or old friends see a person post with new ones and get jealous.

In their adjustment to college, students use online self-presentations to introduce a version of themselves to their peers, which may help them find a niche in the new environment and regain a clear sense of self (Hwang & Cho, 2018). The process of presenting oneself online forces the user to consider where they fit in best and who they share likes and interests with. As students progress through college, they may become more comfortable with their peers and after finding their place, be less of perfectionists on which images they post of themselves (Fan, Deng Dong, Lin, & Wang, 2019). When graduating college and ready to move into the professional world, students are maturing and portraying themselves in a professional way, and may reflect this same maturity in their presentations online. They may begin to consider if hiring managers will view their profiles and ensure they feel confident about their self-portrayal.

Data Collection and Analysis

To gather the information for my thesis, I plan on first examining theories of the development of the self throughout college. I will then explore studies of self-presentation, both foundation and recent ones, dealing with self-presentation through social media, making connections between the forming of identity and the presentation of that identity. Once I have a solid understanding of the development of self-identity and the presentation of such online, I will move to collecting data on social media through interviews and analysis of social media profiles. I will go through different individuals' social media profiles with them and ask them to explain their reasoning behind presenting themselves in certain ways at different points throughout college. I will interview fourth year students and ask them to reflect on the way their social media usage has changed as well as first year students to get their point of view as they are still transitioning into college. I plan to determine whether the information I collect on my peers' social media usage parallels and aligns with the theories of self-development and self-presentation I have found in my research.

I will focus on two main aspects in my interview questions: the reasons behind their Instagram usage, and the amount and substance of the information they present and determine how these two aspects have changed throughout their college career. To quantify how the substance of information presented on Instagram changes throughout college, I will draw on Hwang's theory of dividing measurements of self-presentation into breadth, depth, positivity, and authenticity. Through my interviews, I will determine how these four measurements shift throughout college development and how these shifts reflect self-development by asking questions such as "How has the depth to which you present yourself on Instagram changed over your college career?"

In order to analyze whether the reasons behind social media presentation changes, I will draw on the use and gratifications theory, which looks into how individuals portray themselves to get gratification from others (Hwang, 2018). I will frame my interview questions in such a way to determine if this need for gratification diminishes as students form a stronger sense of self. I will also analyze Cheung's theory of the three main reasons people present themselves on Instagram, – ingratiation, supplication, and enhancement (Cheung, 2014), and determine whether the relative amounts of these reasons change throughout their college career. I will ask questions such as, "What are aspects do you currently consider when choosing what to post on Instagram?".

By using these methods to frame my interview questions and my analysis of the answers I receive, I will be able to draw conclusions of how and why the way students present themselves changes throughout college, and whether this reflects the self-development theories I find. The primary sources will help me serve, expand, and complicate the theories I draw on.

Conclusion

Through this analysis and research, I hope to determine how the way college students use Instagram as a form of self-presentation develops through their college career. I would like to not only determine the reasons behind their presentation of self on Instagram but what affect this has on their awareness of the self and how others view them. Having a better understanding of how the forms and motivations behind self-presentation of college students develop can offer insight into the development of the self in college aged years. In doing this research, I will also address the broader theme of using smartphones to engage and connect in personal and professional life. I have focused on how smartphones have impacted, mostly in a positive way, the connectivity and interactions in personal and work lives. To better fully understand the impact of smartphones in the everyday lives of Americans, we would need to consider the negative effects of smartphones in society as well, such as the barriers they create in interpersonal relationships and the distractions they may cause at work.

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