

**MESSAGE ME WHEN YOU LAND: TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY STUDENTS'
SOCIAL MEDIA RELATIONSHIPS WITH FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND DEVICES**

by

David R. Wray

B.A., York University, 2012

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(Media and Technology Studies Education)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

April 2020

© David R. Wray, 2020

The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for acceptance, the thesis entitled:

Message me when you land: tourism and hospitality students' social media relationships with friends, family, and devices

submitted by David Wray in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

in Media and Technology Studies Education

Examining Committee:

Stephen Petrina, Professor, Curriculum and Pedagogy, UBC

Supervisor

E Wayne Ross, Professor, Curriculum and Pedagogy, UBC

Supervisory Committee Member

Jillianne Code, Assistant Professor, Curriculum and Pedagogy, UBC

Additional Examiner

Abstract

This qualitative study addressed the problem of maintaining relationships via creative and routine uses of Mobile Devices (MDs). Twelve participants were recruited from a private college in Vancouver, which specializes in tourism and hospitality education for international students. Interviews focused on their uses of MDs in creating and maintaining relationships with family and friends. The study addressed three research questions: 1) In what ways do international students utilize MDs to maintain relationships with family, friends, and the devices themselves? 1a) How do the students maintain relationships at home, school, and online, while fostering newer, more immediate relationships? 1b) How do the students maintain relationships with media and technology (M&T) devices and apps? For analysis and interpretation, the theoretical framework draws on Hinde's (1976a, 1976b) research into relationality and on Goffman's (1974) caution of the collusion of technology in changing relationships. Findings are organized around four themes: Shifting Time and Space Constraints, Necessity vs. Habit, Online Identity, and Influence and Marketing. Within each theme, one, two, or all three questions are explored. The participants post memes, photos, and videos to their social media but do not always keep up their relationships with family and friends directly, though they said most of their significant relationships had not faltered. Participants were hard pressed to say that their personal technology use was a bad thing, though they consistently expressed how it would get in the way of experiencing real life in the moment. The participants have their technologies on them and interact with them on a regular basis, but their views on MDs extend from necessity to habit. This research has implications for the process of intercultural relationship building among students, as it takes the pervasiveness of M&T into account. Given current conditions of life, play, study, and work, implications are placed in context of Covid-19. How this sample of

international students interacts and depicts themselves online suggests the strengthening of some relationships while keeping others at a comfortable distance, but still near, nonetheless.

Educators of all levels should be aware of how students create, maintain, and destroy relationships via MDs.

Lay Summary

This study explores how international students' relationships with their friends and family are maintained by their mobile technology use while studying tourism and hospitality in Vancouver, BC. By doing so, participant relationships with their devices and with social media are also studied in detail. The research investigates four major themes regarding mobile technology use and the maintenance of their new and existing relationships. These themes include how time and space constraints have shifted, how much their mobile technology use is out of necessity vs. out of habit, how they create and understand online identity that differs from real life, and lastly, how they influence and are influenced by ways of digital marketing.

Preface

This research project was originally conceptualized by the author, David R. Wray. The author is also solely responsible for writing this thesis, under guidance of the Supervisor and oversight of the committee. Ethics approval for this research was provided by the University of British Columbia Behavioral Research Ethics Board: Certificate # H06-80670.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Lay Summary	v
Preface.....	vi
Table of Contents	vii
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures.....	x
Acknowledgements	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	4
1.3 Research Questions.....	4
1.4 Purpose of the Study	5
1.5 Positionality	5
1.6 Theoretical Framework.....	8
1.7 Terminology.....	9
1.8 Limitations of the Study.....	9
1.9 Thesis Overview and Its Structure.....	10
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	11
2.1 Pervasiveness of MDs.....	11
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	14
2.3 Relationships with Technologies	18
2.4 Hospitality and Tourism Education	21
2.5 Social Media and Relationships.....	23
2.6 Summary and Conclusion.....	26
Chapter 3: Research Methodology.....	27
3.1 Restatement of the Research Questions.....	27
3.2 Research Design.....	27
3.3 Interview Protocols	28
3.4 Participants.....	29

3.5	Setting	33
3.6	Data Analysis	34
3.7	Summary	41
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings		43
4.1	Shifting Time and Space Constraints.....	43
4.2	Necessity vs. Habit.....	48
4.3	Online Identity	57
4.4	Influence and Marketing.....	64
4.4.1	Summary	68
Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations		69
5.1	Summary and Conclusions	69
5.2	Implications.....	72
5.3	Tourism and Hospitality Amidst Covid-19.....	73
5.4	Recommendations for Future Research	78
Bibliography		79
Appendix A: Consent Form		84

List of Tables

Table 3.1: Interview Participants.....	30
Table 3.2: Data Analysis.....	36

List of Figures

Fig 1.1 "Nexopia" by Trebor Scholz' Photos.....	6
Fig 1.2 "RuneScape" by Bobbi Newman.....	7
Fig 2.1 Social Scalability. Adapted from Miller et. al. (2016) "Scalable Sociality" (p. 3).....	17
Fig 2.2 "free Emoji Vector Design Pack" by Yusuf Caglar.....	19
Fig 1.3 Screenshot from my Instagram posts.....	21
Fig 3.1 Participant Home Countries.....	30
Fig 3.2 "Kakao talk vs. Line" by Sakiroo Choi, KAZE PARK.....	33
Fig 4.1 Facebook active status setting.....	47
Fig 4.2 Screenshot of Google Maps Application.....	49
Fig 4.3 Example of Snapchat streaks.....	53
Fig 4.4 "Tinder Mockup. "Tinder Mockup". Downloaded from Freepik.com	60
Fig 4.5 Example of Social Media Marketing.....	67
Fig 5.1 "iMcDonalds 6+++ " by Stephen Cannon.....	76

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Stephen Petrina for all his continued support and knowledge through my coursework and the writing of this MA thesis. I am very grateful for the perspectives and lessons given from my professors. Thank you, Dr. E. Wayne Ross, for your teachings on alternative methods of education, as well as being a committee member for my thesis defence. Thank you, Dr. peter cole, for your course on indigenous teachings and learning, and thank you, Dr. William Pinar, for your insightful analysis of education and modernity. Thank you to Dr. Jillianne Code for being the external examiner at my defence and for the input given to finalize my thesis. Thank you to Dr. Sandra Scott for convincing me to transfer from the M.Ed. program to the MA program. I would also like to give huge thanks to Alan Jay who helped me on numerous occasions with questions I had throughout the program.

The research was partially funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Insight Grant #435-2014-0510 (How We Learn Media & Technology Across the Lifespan), under direction of Dr. Stephen Petrina.

I am extremely grateful for the contributions of my participants who volunteered their time to speak with me about my topic. To my employer who gave me the opportunity to meet such wonderful people from around the world and who also allowed me to take a significant amount of time off work to complete my studies.

Lastly, I wish to give my upmost thanks and gratitude to my family, friends and partner for being nothing but supportive through this whole process

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

With an increasingly widespread use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), internet access, and global travel, we are experiencing a reconfiguration of the accessible world (AW). Nineteenth century geographers demarcated boundaries to the AW. In the 21st century, the AW has few or seemingly no physical and virtual limits. How we communicate as a global people continues to undergo tremendous evolutions in both content and method. ICTs connect and change unconnected regions of the globe faster than laws regulate expansion. In 1995 there were 16 million people connected to the internet, 0.4% of the population at the time. In January 2018, the number of mobile phone users was 5.135 billion with almost 3.2 billion active social media users “with 9 in 10 of those users accessing their chosen platforms via mobile devices” (McDonald, 2018, para. 5). As of June 2019, 58.8% of the global population had connected to the internet (Miniwatts, 2019) and more than 4.5 billion people are online (Clement, 2019a). If we are to learn how to live together and strive for a better connected AW we need to understand how ICTs have altered and continue to transform cultures across the globe.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2018) shows 1.326 billion international tourist arrivals in 2017 (p. 2) while the World Travel and Tourism Council’s (WTTC) *Economic Impact Report* (2018) mentions that “Travel & Tourism generated 118,454,000 jobs directly in 2017 (3.8% of total employment)” (p. 4). Having been an international student, an employee in the hospitality industry for over a decade, and as a current teacher of a hospitality and tourism program, this resonates with my experience. Through the global Covid-19 and economic crisis beginning January 2020, all of this has changed. This is a point to which I return in the

conclusion of the Thesis.

I have been teaching international students at a private college since May 2017. New students begin the study portion of the program every four weeks, over six units for a total of 24 weeks with 20 hours a week of class time (480 hours). Most students enroll in the Diploma program, allowing them to continue with a work co-op after their study portion, within the tourism or hospitality industry. Certificate students are supposed to complete a capstone project in lieu of the work co-op.

A high concentration of students come from Mexico, Brazil, Korea, and the Philippines, though students do arrive from other countries such as Poland, Spain, Columbia, the Dominican Republic, Switzerland, Japan, and many others. They are all over the age of 18, but the age of most averages in the mid-late 20s and early 30s. Students also come from many different occupational and study backgrounds, including engineers, hospitality experts, lawyers, and teachers. The language of instruction is in English and proficiency varies from student to student, but each must communicate and regularly engage with each other in English as the common tongue.

While students work to complete their study portion, they are split up every 4 weeks (1 unit) and placed in a different teacher's class, so that they may be subject to different teaching styles and experience while learning from and with others who they may not have had the chance to interact with in previous units. I for instance have worked mostly in restaurants and heritage villages, while a co-worker of mine has extensive knowledge and experience in hotels.

During each student's 24-week study period, I get the chance to listen to their stories, about their aspirations, challenges, and motivations. I have seen how incidents from home affect them when they can only be present through their technologies, like when the Puebla Earthquake

in Mexico happened on September 19, 2017 or when the far-right Jair Bolsonaro won in the Brazilian election on October 7, 2018. While focused on course material and starting their lives in Canada, my students are also engaged in social realities distinct from their locally present interactions abroad.

I observe how my students engage my class and it is hard not to notice our shared attachments to our “smart” technologies. We are continually maintaining schedules in a digital space. We stay up to date with our families, friends, work, online obligations, and to some extent, our online popularity and self-portrayed image. We take breaks from our immediate realities to engage in others that do not require us to be entirely here, nor there. To take generally from Searle (1995), we participate in separate social realities and tend to our networked digital space as a solitary escape. We do not go far without our mobile devices (MDs). Smartphones are portals to instant interaction, gratification, and frustration. We play games, read up on current affairs, view hours of entertainment media on streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime. We listen to music, podcasts, and audiobooks. We tweet, post, ‘go live’, troll, or lurk around internet forums and of course, we use our technologies to directly communicate. As Code (2013) emphasizes, we are “continuously embedded within and among networks of social relations and interactions”, and MDs have various influences on these relations (p. 38).

By opening up one of the plethora of applications (apps) on our MDs, we are exposed to more information than ever before. With all this access and immediate connection, we further enable ourselves to become emotionally attached to our technologies as they become more embedded into the global social fabric and part of our perceived social realities. With widespread mobile technology data services and Wi-Fi being more readily available, sharing large amounts of data with each other has become increasingly easy. Sharing personal social media profiles

with another person can be done moments after meeting and new relationships can form without the need to be in the same place or time to hold a discussion. We use our portable technologies to communicate with new people, all while maintaining our existing relationships. The AW gives us more opportunity to interact with one another without needing to be physically present.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In this study, it is not my intention to establish social media as a good or a bad thing, but rather to explore examples of its use and make suggestions for its application. Many of us have learned to converse fluently in emojis, GIFs, memes, and newspeak (Orwell, 1949), sometimes without the use of any written word at all but only an image representing some preconceived understanding within a given digital community. By being active in the AW, specifically through social media, we continue to traverse borders without passports, and communicate with others without knowing their language. We only must plug text into a translation application to get a decent understanding of another's post in some unfamiliar language. We can instantly share our real-life moments with others and remain in consistent conversation with anyone around the globe, regardless if the other party is awake at the same time. The messages will be read at the most convenient time for the recipient AW (Gleason, B. and von Giller, S., 2018). ICTs can also nullify and distract us from the here and now.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions grounded and directed data collection and analysis:

1. In what ways do international students utilize MDs to maintain relationships with family, friends, and the devices themselves?

- a. How do the students maintain relationships at home, school, and online, while fostering newer, more immediate relationships?
- b. How do the students maintain relationships with media and technology (M&T) devices and apps?

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is thus two-fold. The first is to better understand how social media has affected the international tourism and hospitality students' new and held relationships while the second purpose is to investigate how their M&T use has affected them in their physically present world.

1.5 Positionality

I have been on both sides of the desk so to speak. I taught English in Taiwan for two years to students aged 6-16 then left to study "Futures Studies" in Finland for one year. I moved across Canada to study anthropology in Toronto and I continue to travel as much as I can, when I can. I enrolled in the Media and Technology Studies masters program to pursue research interests. Here, I set out to learn the ways in which some of my international students utilized their technologies to pursue, develop and maintain relationships with family, friends, and their own devices.

I have been a social media user since I was thirteen years old. I had an account on the Canadian lifestyle and community forum, Nexopia (Fig 1.1), a precursor to the ever-popular Facebook. I talked on MSN messenger to other kids from school. I had a Runescape (Fig 1.2) account, an MMORPG (Massively multiplayer online role-playing game) where one could meet

other users online to do quests together, challenge each other in PvP (Player versus Player) combat, or just explore the game by fishing, mining or refining other in-game skills. Whenever there was a new social technology, I wanted to use and be a part of it. While this earlier adoption may have garnered some interest for me, it was not until I traveled to Spain for two months in 2007 when I was convinced by another exchange student to first make my first Facebook account. I learned quickly how powerful a tool it could be.

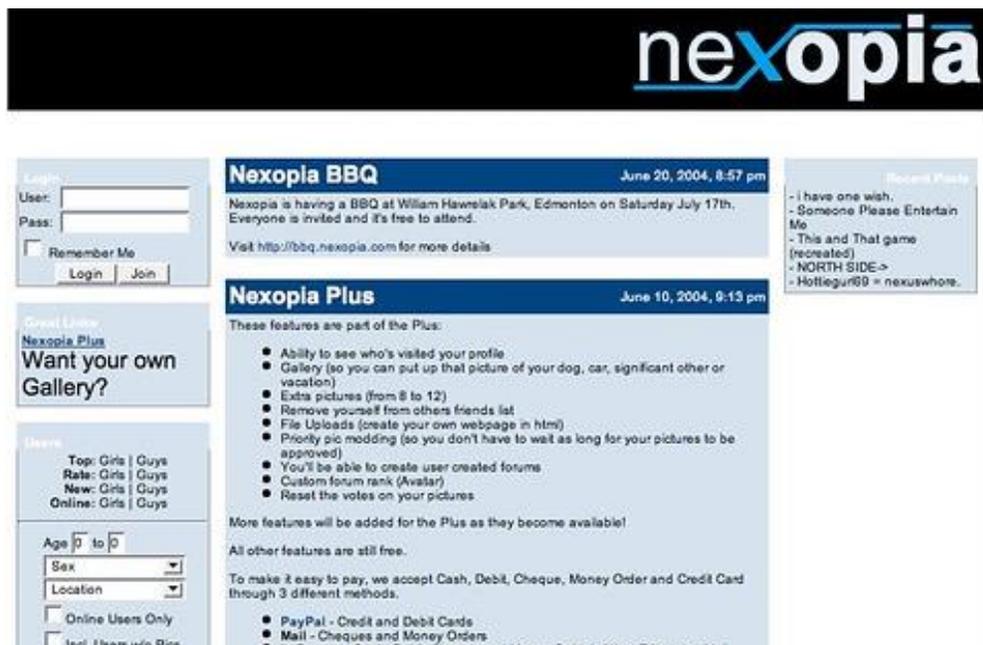


Fig 1.1 "Nexopia" by Trebor Scholz' Photos is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.



Fig 1.2 "RuneScape" by Bobbi Newman is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

I made friends while abroad, both from Spain, as well as other young people in the exchange program from other parts of Canada and the USA. Friendships that seemed fleeting, were preserved by being able to store their contact and profile information, easily accessible at any time one was able to use the web application. I am still in contact with my exchange student, 13 years later, and even went to visit her and her family at the end of 2014 for the Christmas holidays while I was studying in Finland.

However, I also found out that social media could be rather hurtful and had some less than kind interactions that took place online as well. I became so self-conscious of the pictures that other people had “tagged” me in, that after my first year of university, I went through every post and tagged picture and proceeded to delete any trace that it was connected to that account. Then, I made a new one. I did not want to get rid of social media, but I did not want to see my past digital self because I was not confident in my own image. The pictures still exist of course

on other people's profiles who originally posted them, but the tags were no longer connected to the new account.

Now, just over ten years later, I still have the same Facebook account, with fewer updates, but more connections. I use it mostly as a digital address book and logbook. I have made over a thousand connections, and have a decade's worth of photos, posts, and events that I can explore at my leisure. While I do not speak to every contact on my Facebook account, I have stayed casually up to date with what is going in some of their lives by seeing the odd post appear on my news feed. Some of these people I was once close with however no longer use Facebook and may be more active on other networks, or simply inactive on social media altogether.

I continue to make and maintain connections everywhere I go, and since I have found myself teaching international students, who are living with social technologies so close to their person, and who maintain their connections from home, while tending to their newer more immediate relationships. I grew curious as to what extent they held on to previous relationships while developing these newer ones.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

My research problem focuses on how a group of international tourism and hospitality students create and maintain relationships through the everyday use of MDs. For analysis and interpretation, the theoretical framework (expanded in Chapter 2), draws on Hinde's (1976a, 1976b) research into relationality and on Goffman's (1974) caution of the collusion of technology in changing relationships.

1.7 Terminology

MMD vs MD – Though I use the term mobile device (MD) throughout this work, another term I have used before is multimedia device (MMD) as an interchangeable term synonymous with ‘smartphone’, ‘mobile device’ and ‘personal technology’. However, I would point out that not all Multimedia devices are mobile, such as desktops and other larger computing technologies. My references to “apps” in this study assume their installation and use on MDs and references to MDs assume apps.

Relationship – For purposes of this research, a relationship is a pattern of interactions or “a series of interactions in time” (Hinde, 1976a, pp. 3, 4, 12). Hinde (1976a) notes that an interaction “involves a strictly limited span of time,” and a relationship, “a much longer period” (p. 3). Hinde (1976b) clarifies that to characterise a relationship fully we need to know not only the content and quality of the interactions, but also how they are patterned— patterning being taken here to include the absolute and relative frequencies of the component interactions, when they occur with respect to each other, and how they affect each other (p. 5).

1.8 Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study is the sample of participants (n=12), as the research questions lent themselves to an in-depth analysis of the small number. A second limitation is the setting, which was populated by a specific type of participant— international tourism and hospitality students. These students tend to be early adopters and heavy users of apps for communicating with family, friends, and new acquaintances. While it may bring some insight to researchers and students, this study is only representative of the voices within. There are drawbacks with the

sample size, but again, there is no goal of generalizing through this. I wanted to listen to their stories and impressions, as they will likely be similar to current and future students.

1.9 Thesis Overview and Its Structure

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 provided the background, research questions, purpose of the study, a brief definition of core terms, and statement of limitations. Chapter 2 provides a review of literature for the theoretical framework and relevant concepts. Chapter 3 presents the methodological framework used in this study including the use of qualitative interviews and small focus groups. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the research findings. Chapter 5 concludes with a summary of the research findings and implications. Following the analysis of the findings in this study, future research is recommended.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I provide a review of literature relevant to central and core concepts in the study along with the theoretical framework. The first section reviews research related the pervasiveness of MDs and apps in human-human relationships. In the second section, the theoretical framework is explained, which focuses on temporal dimensions of relationships. This framework is primarily drawn from Hinde's (1976a, 1976b) research and elaborates on the definition of relationship given in Chapter 1. The third section addresses relationships with technology (i.e., human-technology relationships) while the fourth section examines existing relevant literature in tourism and hospitality education. The final section addresses social media relationships, including relevant critiques.

2.1 Pervasiveness of MDs

There is a large volume of literature addressing how mobile technology has become integral to our lives. In this section, I focused on literature that helps us better understand the research problem. Ling (2012) describes the status of mobile technology for many people across the world:

We are convinced that it is not just 'nice to have'; rather, it is essential. This willingness to believe in the potential of the device facilitates its integration into our daily lives and facilitates the sense that the mobile phone is taken for granted. (p. 115)

Ling (2012) examines how mobile internet technology gives us reason to split our attention among the "copresent and the remote" (Ling, 2012, p. 110). For example, texting at the family dinner table, the family sees the mobile user becoming copresent (not here, nor there) in their immediate engagement, while simultaneously engaging in mediated conversations on their

mobiles. This is seen not entirely in a negative way, but to show how technology forces itself or makes its way into our social fabric. Ling explains that like mobile technology, the origins of the automobile were initially not well received. There were very few paved roads and automobiles would always be breaking down. Similarly, mobile technology was not very attractive, large, and had spotty coverage when introduced (Ling, 2012, pp. 4-6). Now, it is present in most of our interactions.

Miller et al. (2016) researched in multiple field sites including Brazil, Chile, China, England, India, Italy, Trinidad, and Turkey. They concluded that “social media has entirely contradictory consequences across the range of field sites. Yet this is partly because the term ‘social media’ conjoins a wide range of platforms” (Miller et al., 2016, p. 109). They continue by explaining that “people typically have to deal with elements of identity that are no longer fixed and stable, [because of our online connections] but reflect the dynamics of people’s situations, to the extent that now the struggle is to preserve a coherent narrative of self-identity” (Miller et al., 2016, p. 110). For my research, I’m interested in relationality within these narratives.

Miller et al. (2016) evaluated their relationships through a digital medium while abroad, but also looked at social media as something of its own accord. The AW provides an escape from the physical world and gives satisfaction from its constant use. It can be therapeutic as it allows the mind to drift away from real-world responsibilities, but it can also contribute to anxiety and stress, (Višnjić, A. et al., 2018; Shoukat, S. 2019) by always demanding our constant attention.

There are millions of apps available to download onto our MDs, making them an incredibly strong actor in how we build upon and expand our relationships (Code, 2013). Huang et al. (2016) created a mobile learning tool to aid in English language learning for young people in Taiwan. They had two groups, comprised of three subsets. One group of the three was the

control group and used more traditional methods of teaching while the experimental group had use of the learning app. The app used situational data to aid the students in learning about things around them. The students could hear and see the word in English and input the meaning of the word in Mandarin. The experimental group did considerably better than the control group.

Perhaps overgeneralizing, they conclude that “learning can occur at any place and time and that using mobile devices to learn can expand the fields and scope of learning; mobile learning may thus be considered an extension of online learning” (Huang et al., 2016, p. 264). While Huang et al. explore the use of one app for mobile technology, they posit that by having access to mobile apps as learning aids, students are more likely to be motivated in self-study.

By having technology on our person at all times, we are in constant flux between using it as an aid for our study *and* distraction. Huang et al. focused on how it aided the students but did not consider other applications and distractions that MDs provide. While my own students are encouraged to use their mobile technologies as study aids, I find most are enveloped in their social technologies and engaging in their own worlds multiple times a day.

Huang et al. (2016) suggest that

teachers in general have to get used to the idea that the school is not the only place for learning and they have to be willing to recognize that the value of non-formal and informal learning. One way to enhance teachers’ views on informal learning is to engage them in the informal learning process. (p. 274)

I have been involved with technology use as both educator and student and while I continue to use it to engage my students, with gifs, memes, and videos, they will experience and test a range of apps relevant to tourism and hospitality, their everyday lives, or both.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

As indicated in Chapter 1, Hinde (1976a) defines an interaction as occurring within “a strictly limited span of time,” while a relationship sustains over “a much longer period” (p. 3). For Hinde (1976a, 1976b), relationships are defined by time (1976a, p. 3). Though his studies predominantly focused on the relationships between mother and child, along with a comparative study on rhesus monkeys, he gives way to a taxonomy of relationships. He explained that our interactions create the relationships we find ourselves in. These relationships may not always be ones we want to be in, but by being in another location, and encountering new interactions, we form some relationships out of convenience (Hinde 1976b, p. 5). When travelling to a new country to study an unfamiliar subject, relationships of convenience may not stand the test of temporal and spatial differences, but the relationships deemed worth maintaining, are ones that we are more likely to consider friendships.

While able to pursue and maintain a select few relationships, we compile lists of others that we have held interactions with, but do not consider them close enough to have a regular relationship. Rather, we call upon a list or project to an audience at other times to potentially build upon with each new interaction, or simply to satiate our need for inclusion and community. Through this research, I have tried to follow this framework to better understand how we regard relationships in the midst of the hundreds of connections we make on social media. Like Goffman’s frameworks, we can divide our plethora of interactions and connections into moments of our lives and understand the relationships that unfold. While we could refer to every contact on our social media as a “friend”, it would surely depend on one’s own definition of closeness concerning the word.

To elaborate on the relationship we form with our MDS, it is one that we might consider being akin to one's relationship with food, religion, or sports. We pursue interests and find a passion for them, some without even realizing it. The relationship with these things, however, follow a very similar pattern as with people in our lives. The relationship is something formed over time, with multiple interactions. We pursue aspects of the thing we enjoy, then it becomes a regular part of our lives on a scale of practiced ritual or habit.

We can measure our relationships by their significance to us. Hinde (1976b) gives an example of how the many diverse interactions we experience influences how we build our relationships. He says,

such influences may be mutual: the behaviour of a motorist to a policeman is affected by his past encounters with (other) policemen and vice versa. In such cases we may speak of relationships between categories of individuals. This is a weak usage of 'relationship' in comparison with series of interactions between individuals. (Hinde 1976b, p. 5)

The bonds that we form with each other are made over time and through repeated experiences they can become stronger. However, interactions can mean something different to each individual and “prognoses about relationships must therefore involve the personalities of the participants as well as the nature of the relationship itself” (Hinde, 1976a, p. 6).

Goffman (1974) explores how we create ‘frameworks’ or ‘frames’ to organize our experiences better to make sense of our current situations. We compartmentalize or comport ourselves in those frameworks more appropriately within social experiences. We practice and perform for specific social roles. Goffman suggests that when we try to involve ourselves in a task, our attention can falter and cannot be adequately maintained while in a social situation and thus others around us may notice and react accordingly (Goffman, 1974, p. 347). In any way we

act, those who are receptive may take on a mirrored role to either progress or distance a relationship. He acknowledged that technologies (e.g., institutions, buildings) collude in progressing, proximating, and distancing relationships. Goffman's conceptualization of relationships and collusion of technologies are relevant to current uses and misuses of MDs.

My research problem focuses on the creation and maintenance of relationships within the everyday use of MDs. For instance, Aviram (2001) problematizes relationality, given MDs facilitate "immediate connections among individuals throughout the world." He explains that

the ICT revolution is bound to extensively facilitate individuals' abilities to connect on the basis of similar interests, quests or problems, and thus has an important empowering effect; in doing so, however, it also exponentially increases the number of relationships one has and renders each of them more superficial, fragmentary and temporary, thus perhaps contributing to increasing emotional 'flatness'. (p. 343)

In a qualitative sense, my research explores how relationships or patterns of interaction are formed, maintained, or altered with the use of MDs. We establish 'closeness' to those we interact with in space and time. How we encourage a relationship with the use of technology has created a need to distinguish how "offline and online is replaced by a consideration of many different dimensions of how we grade relationships" (Miller et al., 2016, p. 113). Described above, Miller et al. (2016) throughout their work on social media in several field sites suggest how we can control many relationships through "scalable sociality" (p. 3) (Fig 2.1).

The problem of this research is how technologies are changing relationships. On this, Licoppe (2004) reported:

In the case of relations which are constructed solely through electronic interaction on the Internet, detailed ethnographic studies have shown that the switch from 'fleeting'

electronic interaction to a `virtual' relationship, which is perceived as strong, occurred when the interlocutors took the initiative to tell each other, during their electronic interaction, about important events in their lives (for example, a family event such as a birth). (p. 154)

He continues, observing that “the construction of a common world of signification in the frame of a particularly strong and personal relationship redefines the status of other relations in the world of sociability” (p. 154).

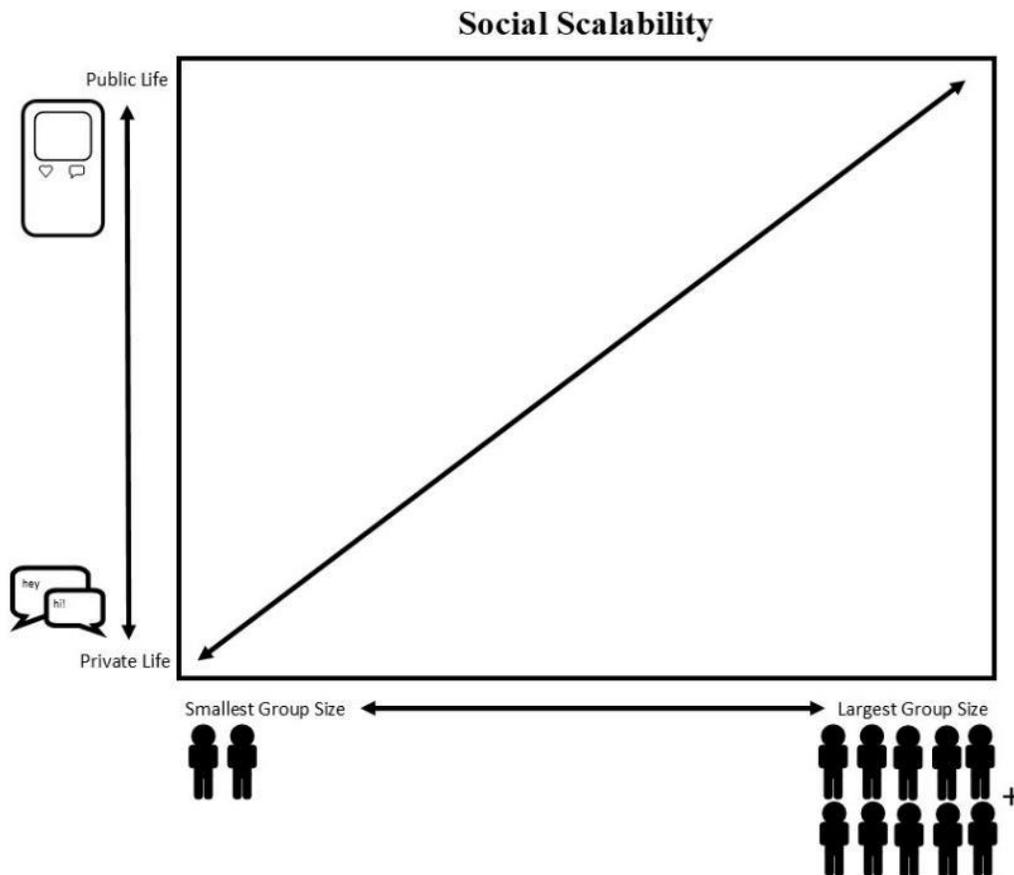


Fig 2.1 Social Scalability. Adapted from Miller et. al. (2016) “Scalable Sociality” (p. 3).

2.3 Relationships with Technologies

We want to devote our time to people who we share connections with, so it is no surprise to me when my students say they maintain the strongest connections with their parents while abroad. For Miller et. al. (2016), social media can work to strengthen relationships, as noticed in some of their fieldwork, families not living together created more emotional bonds by spending “more time together online than they might have done if actually living together” (Miller et. al. 2016, p. 105). When the time comes to move away from home, students have spent most of their lives with people that they have had repeated experiences with, forming strong bonds with others who share their first language, their culture and exposure to similar media.

My students have contributed to my beliefs that the culture of an AW is stimulated by our use of MDs and social media, which transcend temporal and spatial limitations. The technologies help to construct and maintain relationships significant to us. For expression in reinforcing relationships with the MDs, we need little to no body language or aural inflections. Digital stickers, emoticons, and memes can depict feelings (Fig 2.2). “As the smartphone becomes more pervasive,” Jin (2017) indicates, “and as more and more aspects of life become digitalized, it is becoming much easier for human beings everywhere to access, learn from, share, and improve upon the impossibly varied and plentiful information available on the phone” (p. 70). For my students, social media interaction is neither a disliked nor preferred method of communication but a consistently adopted one. It is a practice that allows one to project their voice to a scalable network, including those closest to them, without the need to be in the moment or for extended periods of time.

Beyond being just habitual users, my participants repeatedly explained that the person you are on social media is not an entirely accurate representation of who you are in real life. On

social media you can portray an image of yourself in a digital space to keep family, friends, and even people you do not know, in an area of social scalability (Miller et al., 2016, p. 200). By making occasional posts, one can ensure they are not alienating others, but also keeping them at a comfortable distance from one’s personal life. Although social media can provide a space for some to garner negativity, for myself and my participants, we predominantly use it as a space to promote and display our best selves. We subjugate each other to the things we want our friends and followers to see and often feel a connection with another user by receiving something as simple as a “like” or a view. For some, when followers view a social media post or story, it brings some satiation to their sociality by appearing to be accepted or appreciated.



Fig 2.2 "free Emoji Vector Design Pack" by Yusuf Caglar is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Social media is used as a marketing tool. It is used by businesses to sell products and services, but it is also used to push political agendas. We subscribe to and follow influential

people like artists, chefs, comedians, and politicians, and retrieve information from these sources while taking part in the online communities they provide. It does not require one to be actively involved by commenting or posting, but simply by digesting the given media. Targeted advertisements will appear on your social media because of what you search for and who you follow. It is a direct representation of the digital footprint you leave behind. These ads can be very useful in helping social media consumers find products or influencers they may wish to subscribe too. But they can also be quite invasive, as students point out.

We take part in social media as representations of ourselves, something that is mostly true, but is often a production of the ideal version of ourselves. We express ourselves much more through media expression and posts on the different social media platforms. We can talk with others in a digital space differently than how we would approach them in real time. There is an appreciation for some anonymity when in use and this can give us some leeway in stretching the truth. For my own Instagram account, I post pictures I have taken from the different hikes I do, and pictures of myself that I am particularly happy with (Fig 2.3). A lot of the posts are taken from older photos, but I continue to post them to keep my audience engaged. It is comprised of family, friends, and a large portion of people I do not even know. I am not alone in this type of online behaviour as expressed by my participants, seeking the admiration of others to elevate our own happiness.

Our relationships with social media applications and we represent ourselves on them are a problem that needs to be explored in order to learn about their meanings. The more that researchers know about these relationships, the more we will learn about effects of the technologies.

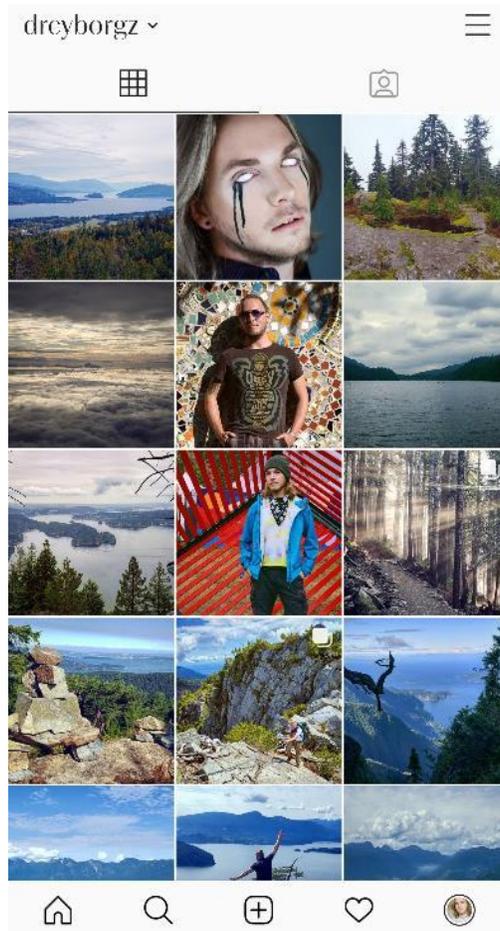


Fig 2.3 Screenshot from my Instagram posts.

2.4 Hospitality and Tourism Education

While studying how MDs and social media have been used in the tourism and hospitality classroom, researchers tend to overlook the relationships that we form with our personal devices. Our attachments to our mobile devices are demonstrated not only by their usefulness in terms of the students' studies but also in terms of relationships.

Patiar et al. (2017) report that the last few generations (millennials, Alpha, Z, etc.) of children and youth crave interactivity in the form of digital learning because of their upbringing and constant exposure to video games and social media (p. 131). An indication of this, Deale's

(2020) undergraduate tourism students believe that social media is the biggest trend in how tourists decide on a travel destination, with no difference of opinion regarding gender, race, or ethnic background (p. 37).

According to Lee et al. (2019), many millennials make decisions to study and find employment in the hospitality industry based on what they find on social media sites like LinkedIn and Facebook because they are comfortable in navigating these sites (p. 78). In this study, Lee et al. state that international students are much more influenced by social media than domestic students when choosing a career path in hospitality (p. 82). In fact, Aluri and Tucker (2015) explain how integral social media is for hospitality students and professionals alike to develop both their private and professional networks in finding careers in the field. In tandem, they report that 85% of hiring managers check social media profiles before hiring someone, and the 15% balance is mostly due to company hiring policies (p. 48).

In a study based in Egypt, Sobaih and Moustafa (2016) explain that students they interviewed liked to use social media to communicate with classmates, as this provides a more informal environment for sharing ideas, knowledge, and discussion (p. 29). Social media use, especially over Whatsapp and Facebook, allowed these students to stay in touch and trust the relationships made in their program. This reliance reduces exam-anxiety and demands to gather information from a peer if they miss a class. Instructors of tourism and hospitality preferred to use the school's communication network believing that social media sites "are a source of entertainment and serve more as a distraction and barrier to academic achievement than as a facilitating tool" (p. 22). Chen (2018) emphasized this in her study, describing how instructors are often at odds using social media for curriculum and pedagogy. Barriers to more common uses

include loss of control and monitoring, the digital divide among students and between students and faculty, and simply the lack of awareness of social media's potential (p. 335).

Among professionals dependent on interdependencies of culture, nature, and technology, hospitality and tourism educators and researchers are extremely aware of the potential of social media. In many ways throughout the world, MDs are transforming hospitality and tourism experiences and practices. In this review of literature, I did not identify a study that specifically addressed how students' are developing and maintaining relationships with and through MDs and social media. Given this niche problem, my study can contribute to practices in hospitality and tourism education and its knowledge base of research.

2.5 Social Media and Relationships

“Can Social Media Build Deep Relationships?” This is a common question and, although not the focal problem of this Thesis, deserves attention. This work looks predominantly at how we maintain relationships and use it as a supplementary tool to further relationships, rather than building them. Jeffries (2019) declares that for online relationships to be successful, they require intent and trust equal to that of our real-life relationships. Building deep relationships relies on our ability to disclose personal or intimate information and that it be mutually reciprocated. While revealing things of that nature in real-life requires some risk, online, one has the ability to think over a message and edit it as necessary, which, according to Jeffries, could make it seem less authentic. Despite this, for others, social media can provide a helpful buffer between interactions without the fear of spur-of-the-moment reactions. What Jeffries wants to make clear is that as more of our interactions continue to take place online, it is “increasingly important not

to ignore the indispensable practices that are foundational to building meaningful relationships” (Jeffries, 2019, para. 13).

Turkle (2011, 2012, 2015) provides a critical analysis. She explains that in-person relationships move at a more gradual pace and take time to develop, but with the intervention of social media, our relationships have sped up in turn. Turkle exclaims that we continually scroll through our information feeds to get the highlights of other people’s lives rather than take the time to invest in a whole story or conversation. When up against these fragmented pieces of each other’s lives we tend to be more inclined to find ways of standing out amongst the crowd. To deem ourselves worthy of an audience’s attention, we inflate the importance of a status post and hyperbolize a moment in time. Turkle suggests that we are forced to stay interesting and develop our online identity, because when we grow bored or tired of one relationship, we are quick to give up and move on to someone new who is more readily available online (Turkle, 2011, p. 288). She adds that “social media ask[s] us to represent ourselves in simplified ways. And then, faced with an audience, we feel pressure to conform to these simplifications” (p. 185). These over-simplifications of our own lives have driven us to live up to those moments in real-life.

This oversimplified projection of the self has altered the relationships we have with ourselves. Turkle writes that because we are constantly connected on social media, it has become very hard to find time for oneself, even when doing things like hiking or enjoying time at the beach. She suggests that seeking solitude does not come as easily as it once did, arguing that there is a general struggle of who we have become amid a networked life that leaves little time for reflection (p. 289). In her *New York Times* article (Turkle, 2012), she expresses her worry that because we feel it necessary to constantly connect with each other in order to feel more like ourselves, we have lost the capacity to experience comfortable solitude. “If we are unable to be

alone, we are far more likely to be lonely. If we don't teach our children to be alone, they will know only how to be lonely" (para. 24).

In Turkle's later work (2015), she explains that one of her colleagues felt that she was constantly worried about how she presented herself online, performing her online personae rather than taking the time to reflect on who she truly was. Social media created a need for Turkle's participant to show as little vulnerability as possible, performing her identity rather than tending to her more immediate relationships (Turkle, 2015, p. 20).

Both Jeffries and Turkle propose points of view that hold some significance in understanding my own students and their relationships with others and their technologies. New students come into the program every four weeks and many of them feel intimidated by the already existing social groups formed before they arrived. However, because the students that have been there longer had been in the same position when they arrived, they understand the stress of coming to a new country, being forced to speak in a language different from their mother tongue, and trying to build new relationships in a new area. The students themselves do well to integrate themselves into their new life, often making friends very quickly, even if they may appear to be surface-level relationships at the start.

Over the past couple of years, my students began connecting immediately with each other on Instagram, where they were able to learn about each other quickly without struggling to find the right words to explain their interests in person. However, the relationships, if they were to deepen, took time, as Turkle suggests. Most worked to include each other in after school activities and checked up on each other about how their work search was going or how they were adjusting to their new lives. While it is important for students to look up from their MDs and

engage in real conversation, they were motivated to stay connected because of the technology they had at the disposal of their fingertips.

Can social media build deep relationships? I believe it may be possible for social media to take in-person relationships a step further, but like Jeffries explained, it is necessary to apply the same practices we would person-to-person as we would through our devices. Turkle on the other hand, while acknowledging the pervasiveness of our social technologies, puts an emphasis on how important it is to look up from our technologies, look at one another, and start having real conversations.

2.6 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter provided a review of literature related to our use of mobile technology and how we explore our relationships through social scalability. I described the theoretical framework which is defined through Hinde's (1976a, 1976b) framing of relationality. I also reviewed literature related to social media use in hospitality and tourism education, demonstrating the need for more research in this field. Finally, I looked at how social media plays a part in maintaining and building upon relationships with others, ourselves, and our devices. While additional literature is referenced in the balance of the Thesis, this chapter established the groundwork and framework for my research.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

With such a wide availability of ICTs influencing many aspects of our lives, we need to consider our place within networked M&T. McBride (2003) noted that we experience adoption of MDs at different rates. For example, he observed that “governmental control and legislation at a national level may both inhibit and encourage technology adoption” and cultural upbringings may “influence resistance to technology, or encourage the spread of mobile usage through a sense of community ownership of the technology” (p. 267). Acknowledging that my participants are actors in vastly different networks, learning how they interact within these networks is of great interest to me. This chapter describes the methodologies, interview questions, participants and setting, and procedures used for data analysis and findings.

3.1 Restatement of the Research Questions

The following research questions grounded the research design:

1. In what ways do international students utilize MDs to maintain relationships with family, friends, and the devices themselves?
 - a. How do the students maintain relationships at home, school, and online, while fostering newer, more immediate relationships?
 - b. How do the students maintain relationships with media and technology (M&T) devices and apps?

3.2 Research Design

The research questions lent themselves to an in-depth analysis of a small number of participants. I recruited 12 participants, detailed below. I utilized common ethnographic or

qualitative data collection techniques, including informal participant observation, formal interviews (individual and focus group), and researcher's interview notes. I was unable to observe the participants in their work setting so participant observation is limited to participants' uses of the MDs during the interviews and other interactions with me. In qualitative research designs, the goal is primarily the generation of meaning and findings are primarily descriptive and interpretive. In this case, the focus was on meanings participants make of their relationships via uses of MDs. Hence, I focused on the participants' attitudes, beliefs, commentary, and experiences of or toward relationships maintained through uses of MDs.

3.3 Interview Protocols

As I was interested in the stories that each participant had to tell, I used individual and focus group interviews. For data collection, I developed the following interview guide allowing additional questions to surface depending on how the conversation was going:

Relationships with Social Media

1. How much would you say social media is a part of your daily life?
2. Which social media app(lication)s do you use?
3. How often do you use them and do they take a priority in your life?
4. Do you ever take breaks from social media for extended periods of time?
5. Do you feel anxious being disconnected from your social media? Why or why not?

Relationships with Friends and Family

1. How challenging is it maintaining your relationships back home with friends, family or partner(s)?
2. Do you have reserved times to connect with friends and family back home?
3. Who are you in contact with most?
4. What are some of the difficulties you experience with communicating with family and friends via social media?
5. What is the hardest part about communicating with friends and family while living abroad?

Relationships with Friends, Family and Technology

1. While here in Vancouver, were you able to make friends easily?
2. Do you maintain contact with them still? How?
3. How important is maintaining a private life away from technology? Are they intertwined?
4. Does your online presence ever interfere with your presence in real life?
5. Do you get upset when other people are on social media in a social setting?
6. Is there any time when technology use seems to annoy you?

3.4 Participants

The 12 participants in the study are past students of mine from nine countries (Table 3.1) (Fig 3.1). They graciously volunteered their time to participate. At the time of this study, the participants completed their study portion of a Tourism and Hospitality Diploma program and had moved on to the work portion. I specifically sought out these students to avoid any conflict of interest between teacher and student. Every participant has given their written consent to be a part of this study and has been informed if they no longer wished to participate, their interviews and data associated with it would be discarded from the final product. I have done my best to accurately represent their responses the interview questions.

I tried to keep the voice of the participants as true as possible when quoting and referencing our conversations but made minor changes to the grammar for ease of reading by a larger audience. While the bulk of my research consisted of eight one-on-one interviews and two small focus group discussions, I connected with participants a number of times over social media with further questions. The one-on-one participants chose a time and location that was convenient while the focus groups were held in a classroom at the college I teach at. The two focus group sessions each consisted of two new participants, while the Filipino woman Rachel furthered her participation and joined the second session. These groups were much more detailed in the responses given to my initial interview questions, and often deviated from those prepared.

I asked each participant if they would prefer that I gave them an alias, but all had favoured the use of their real names, or English name in the case of Oliver, the Korean participant.

Interviews were held and listed in order with:

Table 3.1. Interview Participants.

Participants	Country of Residence
Individual Interviews	
1. Rachel	The Philippines
2. Oliver	Korea
3. Mirelle	Brazil
4. Rumi	Japan
5. Stef	Switzerland
6. Luis	Peru
7. Gerardo	Mexico
8. Ishita	India
Focus Group Interview 1	
9. Marcelo	Brazil
10. Andrea	Mexico
Focus Group Interview 2	
11. Mariana	Uruguay
12. Jasmine	The Philippines
Rachel (above)	The Philippines



Fig 3.1 Participant Home Countries.

The participants have all travelled a great distance, many for their first time to live in another country for a full year, away from their friends and their families. They have incurred the cost of moving to a new place and tuition, but they come for different reasons. On paper, they come on a co-op work permit that allows them to find work related to their course of study while in Canada. The program can be a pathway to getting Permanent Residency within Canada or help a student become sponsored by a business granting them a longer stay. For some, the program is used to gain international work experience that will help them get a better job back home, while others use the opportunity as a way of exiting their own country or simply to try something new. My participants come from a multitude of upbringings in terms of belief systems, traditions, cultures, ecosystems and learned approaches to the globalized world. I have spent many hours with them prior to this study, learning about who they are through their motivations, stories, and outlooks on life.

Mirelle for example, was a lawyer in Brazil, but with political grievances and a general dissatisfaction with her current state of life, she came to Canada to try something in a completely new field, having now worked in restaurants and a craft brewery. At the time of writing this, she has since moved back to Brazil to spend time with family, then will move to Australia to find if that may be the right fit for her.

During their stay in Canada, the students complete the diploma program over six units of equal length over 24 weeks with new students entering and completing the program every four weeks. While they are in the study portion, they are only allowed to work 20 hours a week, but when their work term begins, they can legally work up to 40 hours a week until the expiration of their Canadian work-study visa. The students must have a working proficiency of the English language to join the program, tested by college staff prior to arriving, while most improve

through their course of study. The assigned presentations are always done in multinational groups which I hoped would provide them with more international experience and understanding between cultures.

This was what I tried to encourage within the classroom. What happened outside was of course, entirely up to them. But they, like myself, live lives beyond that of just outside in the physical world and are all active members of the AW. Through my interviews, one thing remained the same regardless of who answered the question. All regarded social media as necessary. It was not just a tool to remain in contact with their lives back home, but also a place to displace boredom and to escape responsibilities in the physical world.

The social media platforms they used are commonly used in Canada, aside from Oliver and Rumi. Oliver most frequently uses KakaoTalk, a favourite in Korea while Rumi predominantly uses Line messenger, popularly used in Japan and Taiwan, each with their own distinct characters and stickers (Fig 3.2). The rest all held a preference for Instagram and WhatsApp. All of the participants use Facebook but admittedly much less often than the others. Only Gerardo, Luis, and Jasmine had previously used Snapchat. Though none of my participants in this study used it, another notable social media network is WeChat, with over a billion monthly users in China.



Fig 3.2 "Kakao talk vs. Line" by Sakiroo Choi, KAZE PARK is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

3.5 Setting

As indicated, the setting is a private college for tourism and hospitality education. The college is in Vancouver, BC. I have been teaching there since May 2017. All of the participants completed their program prior to their participation in this research.

On the first day of each new unit I ask which of the students are active social media users. Of the 400+ students that have come through my doors, from over 25 countries, I only recall there ever being, a single one who was not on social media, and by the end of their study portion, they had joined at least one social media network. The twelve participants I have spoken with for this study are only a sample of the total population from my school, and a much smaller one of an entire international tourism and hospitality student population.

In my classroom, I am hard-pressed to find someone who is not drawn into their mobile devices at some point during class time. There is a leniency I give my students, as there may be

words they wish to look up, or cultural comparisons to lecture material that they would like to draw from to participate in some class discussions. I also recognize that because my students come from around the globe, they have relationships that are hard to maintain because of the time difference. Allowing them the freedom to use their devices in my class has its benefits and drawbacks, dependent on the student. Many times, I find that students are using their MDs that contribute to the discussion, while at other times, I see students making an escape from the present moment, to play a mobile game or to scroll through Instagram, mentally departing from the class and those around them.

This is an ethical dilemma where I can pose arguments on either end. If I enforced a “no technology” rule in class, it may seem like I am treating these adults with a level of disrespect and mistrust. This could separate them from the learning experience and the comfort of participating when they feel more inclined. By putting the mobile phones away and enforcing discipline, I might get more forced engagement from the students, but their responses may be not as informed or only said to appease the disciplinary rule. There is a lot to be said about the use of MDs in a class of international adults, which is a main objective of mine in better understanding how these students are using their technologies to create and maintain relationships, with friends, family, and various technologies. As international travel continues to rise and their reasons for global travel vary significantly, I continue to be curious about relationships.

3.6 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to make sense of the data and assist in interpretation. Fugard and Potts (2015) define thematic analysis as “a qualitative method for uncovering a collection of themes, ‘some level of patterned response or meaning’ within a data-set. It goes beyond word or

phrase counting to analyses involving ‘identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas’” (p. 669). Petrina (2016) clarifies that “on various levels and scales, a theme is abstracted from and empirically connected to data” (p. 1). Derived from coding and familiarity with the data, themes “capture the essence of some degree of recurrent meaning across a data-set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 740).

Data were carefully examined and categorized to address the research questions (Merriam, 1998; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2003). As suggested by Merriam (1998) and Hatch (2002), I kept written field notes of my observations in a research journal to maintain an “on the spot record” (2002, p. 88) of the interview sessions.

Data analysis involved a triangulation of listening to interview recordings, transcribing segments of these recordings, and reading my notes. I preferred working with word processing and spreadsheet files rather than data analysis software, such as NVIVO. While researchware helps researchers identify relevant data and create “nodes”, to generate themes, I felt comfortable enough through the data analysis process with making my own notes on printed transcriptions of the audio recordings. The language each participant used held a good amount of variation in terms of their emphasis, explanation, and vocabulary and when compared to my on the spot notes, I was able to generate relevant themes to capture a sense of the participant’s perspectives. (Table 3.2). I applied different codes of a few words to quotes from my participants. I was then able to group these together creating the four major themes explored in the next chapter of this thesis (influence and marketing, necessity vs habit, online identity, and shifting time and space constraints).

Table 3.2. Data Analysis Examples.

Participant Quotes	Codes	Themes
They don't ask me specifically, hey how are you doing, they are just waiting for post.	Indirect communication	Shifting Time and Space Constraints
Sometimes you have a huge message and you don't respond and weeks go by and you didn't respond to some people, because I don't feel like, I don't want to.	Ability to put conversation on hold	
If somebody replies to me, and I didn't see it directly. Like I read it only here, but I don't open it. And later I will open... Because I'm lazy.	Ability to put conversation on hold	
How difficult? The time. The time is different. I have to wake up early and I have to stay almost midnight because of using communication.	Wish to talk in real time vs text	
Fear of missing out. Because there is like a specific event you usually join or something, and then if you're not there, you feel sadder, and you are just, I dunno, I feel uncomfortable, because there are events...	Viewing events while not physically present	
My friends are also in different countries, so I want to make sure that I post something to make sure that they watch it or something.	Online participation	
I don't want them to feel like, oh, she's active why didn't she talk to me or she didn't reply. ...Also, like, I don't wanna see people like who I am used to talking to and who is active, I don't want to see them.	Visibly online	
Everybody now wants to know how my life here is all the time, like all the time. Whatsapp is my best friend.	Online participation	
We have a group called "What time is it?" because it is 4 people in 4 different	Indirect communication	

countries, 4 different time zones, and yeah, so it is very useful when you don't just live for it, and don't pay attention to it all the time.		
They want to see what I'm doing. For them, my family, they go to FB or IG, they're searching my name and let's see how he is doing in Vancouver because sometimes I don't have like too much communication with my...	Online participation	
You wanna hang out, something like that and can you text me back like, 6 hours after I text you, and I'm like, for example I'm doing another thing like, I just ignore what he texted me.	Ability to put conversation on hold	
Because they are so used to talking in that group, and sometimes I'm just like, see the text and put it back. And the other day, they say, why didn't you respond to the text, and I'm like, oh, I dunno.	Ability to put conversation on hold	
Sometimes I go to concerts, I have been to 3 concerts and I wasn't able to load them on IG, because I didn't have the time, but I always think that I should do that, because concerts are my thing. I love it. I love to put it on social media.	Belief in what one should do	Necessity vs. Habit
In the beginning I didn't have my smartphone on me, but more and more I kept taking it out, and I have it, and sometimes we are all on our phones, and I'm like oh my god, we are working, and I dunno, it's just, so bad. Yeah. I don't like it. But you just have a look and then you put it back. It's always here.	Need to look at phone	
I think, maybe, I think, people are not aware if it is really an addiction or it's just, as I said, I always look on my phone. I don't know if that's an addiction or not to be honest. I have no idea. But I	Expectation from others	

think for me the hardest thing is just the expectation of people using social media.		
I went to a Korean restaurant with friends, there was a big hot pot, and then I came here, and everyone took a picture, a lot, and one took a video for a long time, so I couldn't eat. So I had to wait, a little angry.	Annoyance from usage	
First thing you do when you wake up in the morning is to check if someone has texted you or someone like posts a picture or something.	Need for digital	
I remember we had this retreat, like you know, we had to go to a place and will have to talk about stuff like that, and our professor told us we are not allowed to take our phone. And what we did is we gave her an old phone and we kept our phones in our bags.	Hiding usage from others	
If you are getting together for dinner or something and all your friends are just using their phones and it just feels so, bad, cause like, we are here to socialize in person, not like on phones.	Annoyance from usage	
Then she liked a person, like, her workmate, but, when she found out you can check if he was active or something, she would check it, like, all the time. Like, every second I guess.	Constant usage	
More than 90% because I always do my Facebook every time when I'm working, when I was in the washroom, the bedroom, yeah, I always do my Facebook.	Constant usage	
I can't give up my technology because it is very convenient, but sometimes I need to be independent from the world.	Need for digital	

Technology gives us a high quality of life. I totally admit that it is a necessary thing. I can't remove it from my life.	Need for digital	
I still have the habit of unlocking the phone and then I realize I don't have the app anymore.	Habit	
Still you just make up something and just post in IG so to show to people you are still doing something.	Habit	
It's like everyone is pretending to be like happy, pretending to have the perfect life. The pictures are not real.	Pretending	Online Identity
You just told me that you are not good, that you are not doing well, and then half an hour later pictures from you on IG saying how wonderful life is.	Personal vs private	
I'm living with a family friend and sometimes when we hang out and we have some drinks I try to hide it, I don't want them to think that I'm that kind of person or something like that, so sometimes I hide it or I just don't post it to my FB.	Perceived self	
People want to know you, and your personality through your story of what you posted on your story.	Posted self	
I always am posting something, I always post everything cause like I want to show them like, you know, that like, I'm happy here in Canada, you know, even though it's my private life, it's just not something that I have to keep...	Posted self Personal vs private	
It is so addictive to just pay attention to people's lives and think about things like, oh I should post this, oh I should post this, oh, you know...	Posted self	
my friend that just came here, he used to work on a TV show, so he posts	Posted self	

everything, everything that happens. He is used to that...		
Nobody will post the crappy stuff. So you get caught in that.	Personal vs private	
Doing things like, pretending doing things that you are not... For example, you see a nice car outside, you take a picture or you go inside the car and know and then It's like, oh it's my car.	Pretending Posted self	
How they are going to portray themselves as this happy couple, but they're not really, but it's up to them.	Posted self	
Even I use other apps to make my picture look better than the real picture so I can post it on IG.	Posted self	
People try to keep this image of them in SM that's not really them	Personal vs private Posted self	
Like all the people in the Philippines use all the social media platforms... for example, you go to a place like this one, like a fancy coffee shop, like they're gonna post it, that they are drinking coffee you know, like posting their milk tea, their Starbucks.	Show and tell	Influence and Marketing
I usually watch the news about Korea, but I followed some Vancouver pages, so I can see the news like about Vancouver.	News	
I am a little bit sad because people are always on the phone, and they don't talk see each other, they don't talk to each other. The world is going to be colder.	Online influence	
I see people's lives from home and I see people's lives here and I'm kind of in the middle of that. Y'know? Because I don't want to go back to my old life, but I will go back to my old life for two months and here, well, I'm already missing my life here and it's very complicated.	Online influence	

I went to see what she did and I was like, oh man, I wanna be this girl, I wanna do the things she does, I wanna travel. I want to be to the places she's been.	Show and tell	
Linkedin is pretty good here. In my country, yes some big businesses use it. Not all of them. Actually I get my job on Indeed... I know all my cousins use LinkedIn...	Show and tell Online influence	
I'm really interested in, all the Vancouver stuff, related to touristic points or things to do, or coming events...	Information resource	
The advertng is there, so I click it. Sure. To check, how much is it.	Information resource Online influence	
I mean, that's the way how you can get informed and say okay, where should I go? Where should I buy this?	Information resource Online influence	
Sometimes you see things that you don't need, but then you just want to click on it.	Online influence	
If you see something good, you're like, ooh, I want to buy that stuff.	Online influence	
They see the bloggers, like sitting and playing video games on Youtube. And now, my niece wants to be a Youtuber.	Online influence	
A lot of people are making their shops online. Because the majority of the stuff that I have, I bought off the internet.	Online influence	

3.7 Summary

This chapter outlined the research methodologies and clarified the research design. The study is qualitative and drew on ethnographic techniques for data collection. The participants were convenient in that they were recruited from a larger pool of graduates that I taught. These participants were also conducive to my study in that they are advanced users of MDs and, as

international students, hold key insights into the development and maintenance of relationships via social media. I also explained the techniques used for data collection and analysis and provided examples of how I found the four major themes discussed in the next chapter. The following chapter provides the analysis and discussion of data and findings.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter presents the data analysis, organized by four major themes. The first in this section will explore the uses of social technologies that help shift immediate time or space constraints, which help preserve relationships without needing persistent attention. The second theme looks at how the participants viewed their technology and social media use as something between habit and necessity. The third theme addresses how identity on social media networks is constructed and is rarely ever a true example of the real-life version of the self, while also being a close representation. Finally, the fourth theme reflects how participants understood what they were being shown and led to believe because of social media. This fourth theme, while borrowing from the third, moves away from identity and addresses marketing, in terms of politics, religion, and knowledge acquisition.

4.1 Shifting Time and Space Constraints

Speed (2010) compares the similarities between how we understand time and space through social media to the ‘overview effect’. In seeing the Earth from orbit, one gains a fuller appreciation of unity with the entire planet rather than by identifying with just a part of the globe where we may have grown up (Speed, 2010, p. 169). He argues that an ‘overview effect’ can occur to those of us unable to travel to space while still being able to gain the same appreciation through our connections with each other. My students exemplify this in my class and the participants more so during our interviews. A large portion of the students I have had have told me that their journey to Vancouver, Canada, was the first time they had been outside their home country, and given the heavy intercultural mix of students, they have learned more about different areas of the world than they ever had before.

We map our understanding of the world with those we connect with, and not always the physical boundaries we live in. Speed (2010) suggests that by making posts of the places we visit and the things we see on social media, we allow both our strong and weak connections to form more coherent global understandings of the world (p. 172). It is through the interactions we make that makes a new place more real not only for us, but for our geographically distant relationships as well.

By encouraging a relationship with our MDs, we are tending to our relationships with and connections back home. When we post to our 'stories', it is not a direct message to anyone in particular but is something we hope others may see and potentially respond to within 24 hours (the typical time for a story post before it's displaced). In this sense, sharing a new experience to one's social media account can help reinforce interconnectedness. I was curious if being a long distance from home affected the relationships my students held before they came to study in Vancouver.

I asked every one of them how difficult it was to maintain their relationships with their family and their friends back home, and many answered that they did not rely on immediate face-to-face communication, unless it was with the closest members of their family. When they receive a notification on their phone where someone messaged on a social media application, they may be quick to read it, but are quick to forget it moments later. The message itself is expected to be perpetuating small talk or allows the receiver to choose if they want to have the conversation in that moment. The message itself is one that does not require immediate attention. If it was truly important, then the expectation is the other party would call for an immediate response to a problem.

In a conversation where both people are physically present and are conversing at the same moment, to respond right away is the normal thing to do, otherwise leaving a lull in conversation may make it only seem like the other participant would rather not be a part of the conversation. It would come off as rude to ignore another person talking directly to you and for you to opt out of the conversation. Responding to emails understandably takes more time, but with instant messaging, the potential for instant conversation is there with messages, photos, stickers and videos sent and received within seconds, while responding to them does not take priority. If one begins to take part in a regular back and forth with someone else, it invites further conversation. “We are perpetually accessible to friends, family members, acquaintances, and even people with whom we might not want to speak at the moment. With mobile communication, we call to individuals, not to locations” (Ling, 2008, p. 3).

On the issue of prioritizing, Ishita from India responded:

I purposely don't see [friends'] messages and reply after because if they know I text back, I'll get another text, and then eventually they'll just end up calling me, which I don't want... I mean, it's not that I don't want to talk to people, I love my friends, yes, I do, but I'm a very self-dependent person, I would rather enjoy my own company and be alone and do nothing, than to discuss somebody else's life. I don't really enjoy that.

There needs to be an accepted assumption that the other person may be otherwise engaged, so to send a message at any given moment is fine, and it will be replied to at the other's convenience. Anywhere around the world, this is becoming more normalized. When travelling to a different time zone, we must assume that schedules will not always perfectly line up, so engaging in a full-on conversation might take a back seat to what is going on in our more immediate lives. Both the sender and the receiver must have a mutual understanding that

replying back to the other person when time permits is acceptable. There is no obligation to message back right away, and there is often little reason to demand the other person's immediate response.

Rachel offered her thoughts on this as well. She said, three years ago I turned off my [online] status on Instagram and [Facebook] messenger because you know like, I don't want people to see that I'm active or something, 'cause like, if they want to text me or something and I wasn't able to reply or just don't know what to answer, or I just don't feel like talking to them, I don't want them to feel like, oh, 'she's active why doesn't she talk to me or why doesn't she reply? Something like that. And on the other side, also, like, I don't wanna see people who I am used to talking to and who is active, I don't want to see them. If I talk to them, it's like the same thing, like, for example, if I'm on messenger and you're active, and I see that you're online on messenger or Instagram and then you don't reply back to me... I don't want them to feel bad so that's why I just turn it off, so I don't feel uncomfortable.

Licoppe (2004) explores the give and take relationship with technology in our social environments. He writes that text-based exchanges on our mobile technologies "help to reduce the physical investments, cognitive efforts, and financial costs of initiating a connection, so that permanent accessibility... becomes conceivable" (Licoppe, 2004, p. 152). Living busy, demanding lives often seemingly justifies convenience. With an onslaught of information and demands of our increasingly large social structures, we maintain relationships by supplementing in-person relationships with conversations via MDs. Licoppe (2004) further explains that "transaction costs are thus redistributed in the negotiation of the interlocutors' availability" and

one's availability becomes a matter of calculation of how much time is necessary to maintain the specific relationship (Licoppe, 2004, p. 153).

Stef from Switzerland explains what she factors into relationships:

Since I've been here, I am kind of happy to have some distance with my friends because I realize they have a negative impact in my life because they have bad vibes. And I realize that some of them, they draw me down, and some of them, it's not easy, because here, you have other friends, you make new friends and the real friends, I always talk to them and I write them, sometimes you have a huge message and you don't respond and weeks go by and you didn't respond to some people, because I don't feel like, I don't want to.

Although even when those weeks go by and she was technically available to respond on more than once occasion, she felt like her relationship was unaffected by the time that went by.

While mobile users can set their status on some social media applications like Facebook and Instagram to appear offline (Fig 4.1), others can remain to appear online, allowing the app to run in the background, meaning the application stays active, but it does not take up use of the screen. We have control of how accessible we want to make ourselves appear to others.



Fig 4.1 Facebook active status setting.

My participants held very similar feelings to Licoppe (2004) as they explained how tiring it is to stay in touch with all their friends back home and so often, they do not. However, this did not take away from their belief that their relationships had decayed or deteriorated in any way. Gerardo commented: “sometimes I do message the group [of my friends], but I don’t feel like I have to maintain those relationships. When I’m back home, the friendship will still be the same.” His sentiments echoed across my other participants as well. Rachel’s maintains that there is a mutual understanding between her and her friends living busy lives and there is no necessity to stay in constant contact to maintain their relationship. Rumi, from Japan admittedly said she was just too lazy to do it, but was also not worried that her relationships with her friends would suffer.

Participants would often call a couple of their good friends once a week or two, while sometimes a month would go by with no contact, but some effort was put in to satiate their own need for connection to their friends. With family, it was often a requirement to talk with them at least once a week, and for some like Ishita, her mother had to speak with her at least once a day, and oftentimes more. Oliver and Luis said they call their mothers once every three days, while Luis also messaged his family every day through text.

The immediacy of being with friends and family from back home had been displaced for all my participants, but with the use of their MDs and the applications on them, they are never truly disconnected from their family or friends.

4.2 Necessity vs. Habit

Throughout Ling’s (2012) work, he explores how we have taken our technologies for granted, because of how they have interlocked themselves in almost every aspect of our lives.

Ling (2012) observes that the use of mobile phones are a huge cause of stress and are seen by many as a course of annoyance and yet are incredible necessary tools to manage our daily mundane tasks (p. 2). He asserts that even though our lives are increasingly mediated through mobile technology, “these technologies provide us with efficiency and utility” (p. 8). Many rely on their phones to tell the time, set up their calendars, and in the case of participants in this study, be a readily available translator, map, and compass. Mirelle and Stef declared their enthusiasm for Google Maps (Fig 4.2), one of many map applications that utilize the global positioning system (GPS) present in nearly all current mobile technologies.

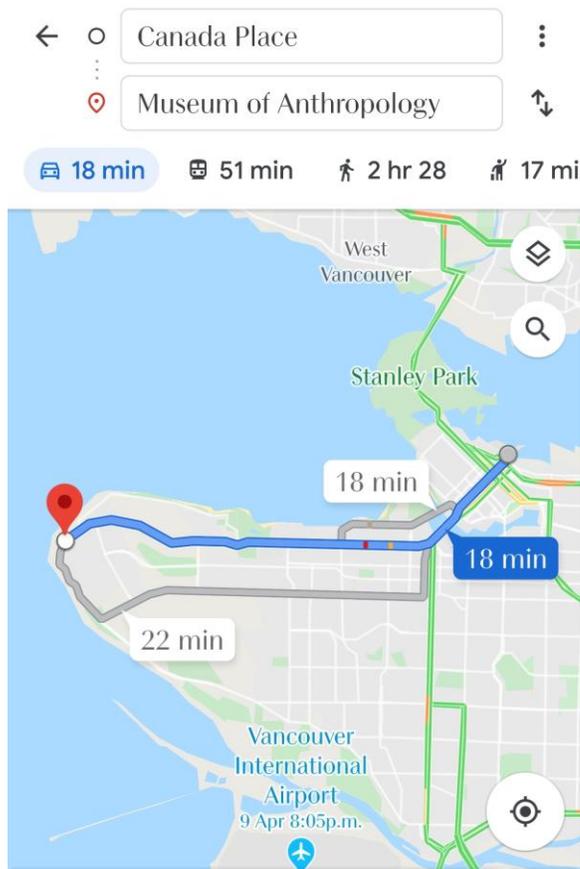


Fig 4.2 Screenshot of Google Maps Application.

I share their enthusiasm for the app, it being such a useful tool while in an unfamiliar place. For example, I was in Seattle for the first time in 2017 and stumbled upon a pop-up art gallery. After speaking a while to the artist, I was extended an invite to a party that evening. He connected with me on Instagram and sent me the relevant information. I typed the address into my maps application and had zero trouble locating it while in an unfamiliar city.

Beyond just a maps application, I use my phone for almost every task in my life, as Ling (2012) suggests most of us do. For picking up a skill like the guitar, I have one app to help tune it properly and another to learn chords from different songs to play. I can use my phone to record and playback the recording. I can use it to post and share content I practiced. In every step, I use my mobile phone. A precise reason why I refer to Smartphones as MDs. They do more than just keep me entertained and connected; they are helpful to organize my everyday activities. However, the immediacy of so much on my Smartphone is a principal reason why I am slow to accomplish those tasks.

Our personal technologies are certainly consistent in their ability to penetrate our offline worlds at any moment. My participants all have an app that they use consistently. For Oliver, it was Kakao Talk, for Mirelle, Whatsapp, for Rumi, Line, for Ishita, Facebook, and for Rachel, Andrea, Jasmine, Luis and Gerardo, the most habit-forming social media application was Instagram. While Mariana, Marcelo, and Stef do not feel like they had a particular app that demanded their constant attention, they still acknowledged they turned the display on their MDs without any real purpose. For me, I am consistently reopening Reddit, a massive “social news aggregation and web content discussion website” with over 330 million active users (Clement, 2019b) and I have been doing so regularly since February 2011. While holding a certain

ambivalent attitude towards it, I know I have a problem. Is there a healthy amount of time to spend on our technology?

Our MDs are so pervasive they can become an annoyance. They are habit-forming and we find ourselves losing hours of our days mindlessly scrolling through other people's posted lives. Rachel explained in our first talk that while she was awake quite a few hours before our interview. She found herself lying in bed for the better part of the morning doing exactly that. Scrolling through post after post on her Instagram feed, liking this one and that one, and switching between her other social media apps, distracting her from the day's tasks.

This theme of habit was present in every conversation I had after I asked each participant how much they thought social media played a part in their daily life. The global discussion in the AW has allowed for more conversation yet more isolation. Participants were constantly checking their social media feeds for updates to their digital worlds. On Instagram, after posting to one's story, checking it every couple of minutes to see who has seen it was very common for Jasmine, Rachel, and Ishita who declared to doing so on more than one occasion. They post to keep their friends updated, to connect with someone they are interested in, to get support and recognition from friends, and sometimes they just want to feel appreciated among their peers.

Finding "The Goldilocks Zone" of not too little and not too much is a difficult task to accomplish. For our sociality, we might feel like maintaining multiple relationships stretches us thin and developing many strong and meaningful relationships is difficult when we are catering to our ever-expanding networks. We can use social media to keep most others at an arm's length, and can still devote enough time to our strong relationships through additional efforts like direct messaging, video calling or leaving a string of voice messages. Then there are applications like Snapchat.

Snapchat is a social media network that launched in 2011. Messages are often in the form of a video or picture, sent to people on their contact list or to their story. When directly sent, the image or video may be looked at once, then will disappear, with the option of replaying the “snap” once immediately after. Images or videos sent to one’s own story last for 24 hours before they can no longer be viewed by their chosen audience (friends only or public). If the receiver of a snap takes a screenshot of it, the sender is alerted with a message of the receiver’s actions. Snapchat can also be used as a news media outlet, for celebrity gossip, or for other interests by free subscription to account stories.

All of the participants that used Snapchat at some point said that they rarely use it anymore and that it is no longer as popular as it once was, with Gerardo, the youngest participant of 19 years of age, having used it the most. Gerardo and Luis both used Snapchat but rarely use it much at all now. Gerardo explained that it just became less popular with his network of friends, and Luis thought it was too much of a commitment to consistently be messaging someone back and forth and the pressured obligation to post.

Gerardo explained that when he was an active user, he made sure that he was keeping “streaks” with his contacts (Fig 4.3). A ‘streak’ is a score tallying mechanic within Snapchat when two people consistently send a snap to each other at least once per day. For example, if you both sent a snap to each other every day for 5 days, you would see the number 5 with a fire emoticon to the right of the contact’s name in the main message window. If you missed a day, the emoticon would disappear, and the streak would be lost. There are other mechanics built into the app as well that encourage friends to message back and forth often, such as other display emoticons beside the contacts name or camera filters that act as turn-based games. Snapchat

while still popular with younger teens, was not the app of choice by any of my participants.

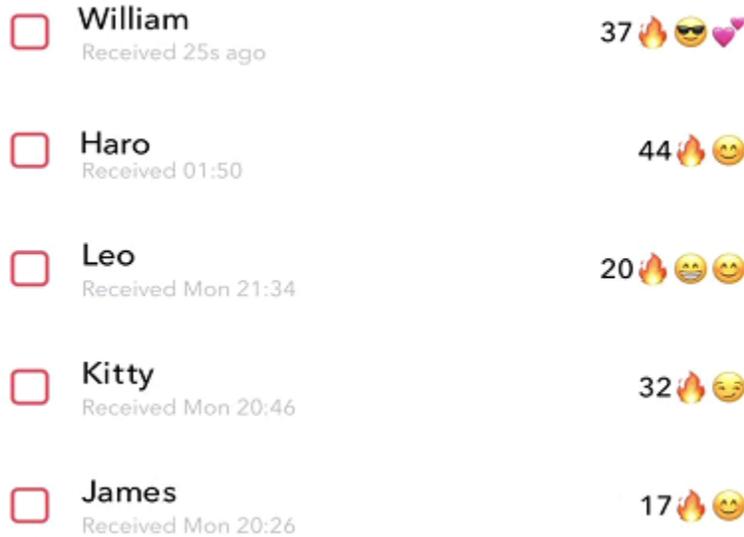


Fig 4.3 Example of Snapchat streaks.

Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and Facebook are all owned by Facebook Inc. and make up 4 of the top 6 social media networks with the most active users, with only YouTube, owned by Google at the number 2 spot, and WeChat, owned by Tencent and most popular in China, at number 5 (Clement, 2020). YouTube, being such a notable social media application was used by all of my participants but was solely looked at as an entertainment medium to digest digital content as none were content creators themselves. And while WeChat is the top application used in China, as I did not have any Chinese participants or users of the app in my research, my focus will be on other applications.

The most popular application with the students I interviewed were Instagram and Whatsapp, both used to some extent because of their functionality and because their friends and family used them. There are some very distinct functional differences between them. Whatsapp is the most often used app for conversation among family and close friends back home while

Instagram is one where people update their followers more publicly. Instagram is a site of false identity, yet one that allows others to feel more connected without having to be immediately engaged. I will speak more on this in the next section on creating identity.

Mirelle explained that the phone companies charge too much to send SMS back and forth and that video messaging using mobile internet as opposed to data was fairly awful. Mirelle elucidated that she did not know a single person from Brazil that does not use WhatsApp. She explained, that if you have a phone in Brazil, you are using WhatsApp. And while in Vancouver, WhatsApp was more than just a communication tool, rather her “best friend”. She explained that she could not get off WhatsApp because of how integral it was to ensure she had a daily connection with her close friends and family back in Brazil. She continued to explain that leaving social media would give her friends and family an increase in anxiety not being able to connect with her.

Oliver, comparatively, only installed WhatsApp when he arrived here because it was the most commonly used application to get in touch with his colleagues. The program I teach in is fully based around working in group projects to enhance their personability within the hospitality industry. Although he did not know what WhatsApp was before in Korea, Kakaotalk, their local app, was the most important to use for him. It does more than most of the social media we have familiarized ourselves with, like that of Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram. Within Kakaotalk, is the ability to shop, order food for delivery, and connect to many other convenience services. Oliver explained that even though his parents used Kakaotalk, they were not as familiar with all the functions of it, and because of that, did not use it as well as they could.

Regardless of which app the students used, they all held some sort of relationship with their technologies. In my research, I set out to find how social media and technology were

utilized to reinforce existing relationships of my students and their families and friends back home, as well as the new one's formed here. As their use and understanding of social media varied from participant to participant, the one thing they all had in common, was a recognition that it was an indispensable extension of themselves.

Oliver said if he was away from his phone for too long, his hands would shake. Rachel, said she could not even imagine what it would be like without her phone because it was always charged, and she is always sure to carry a portable battery charger to make sure she does not get disconnected. Luis, from Peru, said they he could live without his phone but is on it for up to 65% of his time apart from sleeping and working.

Rachel explained how she gained a sense of gratification upon seeing her friends take part in her life by viewing a snapshot of her life, regardless of how important it was. When I asked my participants if they ever felt anxious being without their smartphones or social media, they were all quick to say that they either did or knew someone close to them who did. The focus shifted quite quickly to justify their use or their annoyance of others who used social media consistently in public and so I asked them if they believed that the incessant use of technology had become normalized within society.

Mirelle, from Brazil, believed that it is a mindset that people fall into after using social media for a while, to notice things in real life specifically to post on social media for others to see. Ishita explained that before social media, she would go out to simply enjoy a place or the company she was with, but now usually goes out specifically in order to take a photo to post on her Instagram page. This sentiment was also echoed by both Filipino participants.

Would quitting the bigger social media apps altogether prevent me from mindlessly scrolling from one app to the next? How would I connect with my friends and family? Are we

actively using it to ensure that meaningful relationships are not lost so easily, or are we simply picking it up and scrolling because there is nothing better to do? For my participants, it ended up being both. It is a necessary evil. If the technology is available and you have taken the time to understand how it functions as a user, picking it up will come with ease and few complaints.

It was not until my last focus group interview that I started asking more about how social media had influenced their lives rather than just being a present feature. My last focus group consisted of a woman from Uruguay, and two from the Philippines, one of which was Rachel. It was during this session where I learned how aware they were of their own social media use.

Jasmine, from The Philippines, mentioned that because everyone was on social media, she acted carefully in public, afraid that someone might capture her doing something embarrassing, or something out of context to be used to bully her with. Social media is where we connect, on all levels of social scalability (Miller et al., 2016), as even being a victim of bullying is a relationship, although, one not of our choosing, and certainly not one of our preference.

My participants told me how they often felt the need to escape further into their digital realms than ever before to maintain those connections, but also felt like a lot of the time spent on their Smartphones was mindless and simply done out of habit.

While being a part of the AW proves to help students stay involved with each other from different cultures by entering temporary moments of co-presence to search for unknown subject matter, having access to a world of information in your own language is certainly comforting. For example, Mexican participant Gerardo explained how he fell out of an in-person conversation with some Korean students while in class, but by leaving the conversation to search for a culturally understood topic online, he was able to quickly re-immense himself back into the conversation.

Many of the internationals that came to Canada began using Instagram a lot more when they first moved here. It seemed to be a common platform that was easy to use among people from across the world. While Whatsapp focuses mostly on direct messaging and group chats, Instagram allows for the sharing of stories, and a connection to another person with a simple username search and follow. Whatsapp requires the other person to have a phone number registered to the account, and Facebook, though widely popular, was only kept by my participants to ensure connection with older friends and extended family. Ishita was locked out of her Facebook account for a couple of months and has remained locked out at the time of writing this. For her, she explained, that it was like losing a part of herself because of all the people she regularly kept updated through the medium. Now she has taken to using Whatsapp much more often as her family worries about her well-being. However, because they can no longer see those regular status updates on Facebook, the incessant messaging and checking up on WhatsApp has begun to wear on her.

4.3 Online Identity

Each person has things they like most about themselves and with the consistent upward ownership of MDs, more people are creating content about their interests than ever before. Being able to share created content as well as other content of interest adds to one's online depicted personality. We capture moments of ourselves to share with others, and not always because we want to seek fame. Sometimes just letting our friends and family know that we are doing well, or at least for their sake, appear to be, is enough. My participants held many beliefs on what they should and should not share about themselves online, all believing that sharing moments when

one is sad, frustrated, or angry is not how they want larger social networks of people to judge their more public image.

Referencing the advances in surveillance technology back in 1969, Goffman explained that we could “expect an increase in care regarding certain expressions and an increase in willingness to be exposed regarding other expressions” (p. 28). He also expected that people would be more guarded during face-to-face interactions or at least will “shift in focus” (p. 28). Five decades later, our interaction is heavily mediated by our technologies, contributing to a vast network of sousveillance. We may be more careful about how we interact in public, like Jasmine and Rachel conveyed in our discussion. They told me that because everyone in public has a recording device on hand, that they worry about others capturing a moment of them when they are not at their best and post it to social media. Rachel explained that a video showing her in a negative light could garner criticism from other people without them knowing the whole context, misrepresenting them.

Rachel gave an example of her worries explaining that someone she witnessed several months earlier had been sitting in a priority seat on public transit. She was told to move out of the seat by another passenger, but she refused to move explaining she was getting off at the next station. Rachel then witnessed this person having her video taken and posting it straight to Facebook to shame the person for not giving up their seat. For Rachel it struck a nerve leading Jasmine and Mariana to agree that because of social media and the apparent sousveillance that comes along with it, they try and not do anything that could defame their public image.

While the three of them explained how social media affected their offline behavior, all of my participants acknowledged the way they present themselves online, is to only show the best, the pretty, and the positive moments. In my interview with Mirelle, she described that the type of

life you put on for others to see on social media will only ever be “the best bits” and never the worst. She then told me about a new connection she recently made. Mirelle was moving to Brazil, followed by Australia and needed to find someone to sublet her room to. After meeting and briefly getting to know one another, the two exchanged Instagram information to chat further over the app. By doing so, both gave each other access to the many photos and snapshots of their lives. Mirelle was briefly envious of her new connection’s life seeing that her profile showcased photos of herself surfing, hiking, and doing yoga in Indonesia, India, and Australia. Mirelle explained that it felt normal that she only got to see the best bits of her life and not the bad parts they talked about in person and over the app. Instagram allowed the other to take a glimpse if the other from how they represented themselves on the app.

We all identify with multiple roles within social society, whether that means identifying as a bisexual, conservative, construction worker, foodie, or soccer player, or all of the above, “going online adds additional frames to this mix. When this sociality becomes more scalable, it may also provide a greater flexibility to online identity” (Miller et al., 2016, p. 110). How we present ourselves online allows us to interact with preferred audiences and strengthen ties in the AW. Learning how to publish oneself and further contribute to your online identity becomes essential to some for strengthening ties online. However, for others, by trying to represent ourselves in a certain light, we can mislead people into believing we are someone who we are not. Catfishing means to “lure (someone) into a relationship by means of a fictional online persona” (OUP 2019). This is something typically seen on dating applications like Bumble and Tinder, and where users create profiles comprising of a couple of photos and a short-written biography about themselves (Fig 4.4).

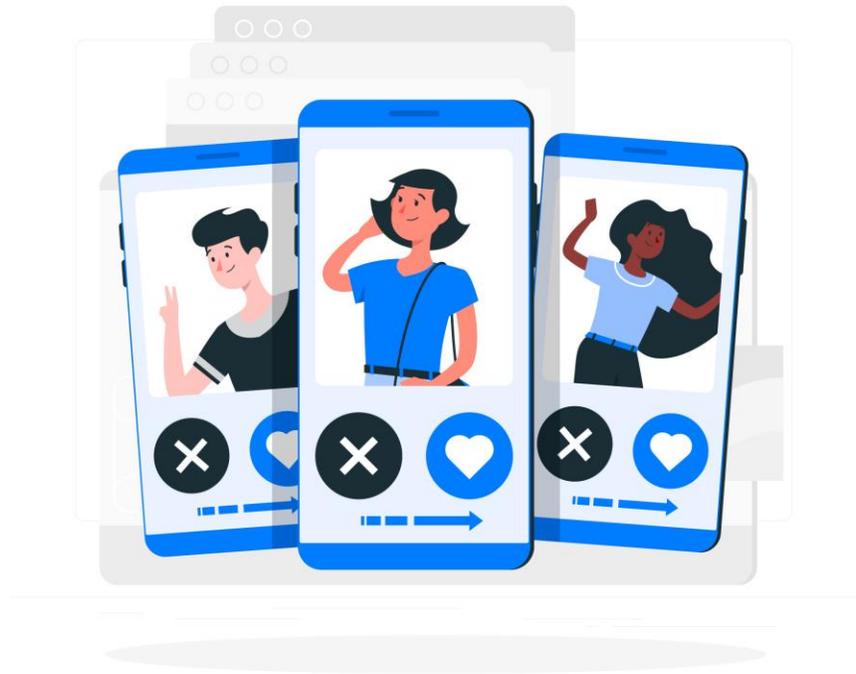


Fig 4.4 "Tinder Mockup". Downloaded from Freepik.com <https://www.freepik.com/free-photos-vectors/love>">Love vector created by stories - www.freepik.com

These dating apps are perfect examples of how we form relationships in the AW. Users consume mass quantities of content in the forms of public profiles that represent an ideal image of themselves to engage with another and to potentially form a strong bond with them. Making the choice to engage with another profile is typically done by swiping a profile image to the left or right. A choice is made to attempt a relationship tie where none existed before. The other person's profile will disappear after the choice to match is made, and will only be visible again if both parties chose to match with the other, wherein dialogue can occur. Communication is initiated between both parties in order to learn more about the other person before an attempt to meet up might occur. Dating applications like these can put a lot of pressure on how one person

chooses to depict themselves so it makes sense why some people would want to create their profiles to seem more desirable by another. However, when someone uses photos of themselves that are not accurate to their current real-life appearance, and the two do meet, a party may feel like they have been lied to or catfished.

In popular news media I tend to see catfish exploit unsuspecting individuals to send naked photos of themselves, or in more extreme cases, child predators who pretend to be underage themselves. On the show, *To Catch a Predator* on NBC, for example, someone would volunteer to pose as a young person to lure potential predators into bait-houses where local police made arrests after TV host Chris Hansen met with them, instead of the adolescent they expected to meet. The show worked with the activist group 'Perverted Justice' who helped participate in sting operations to catch those online predators who typically targeted people between 12-15 years old.

The show however was cancelled in 2008 after a lawsuit was made against NBC. A man, by the name of Louis W. Conratt Jr. did not show up to the baithouse, so the local police, allegedly pushed by NBC, went to arrest him at his house. When they arrived with TV cameras, Louis Conratt shot and killed himself. After the family filed a suit against NBC, the judge declared a jury found that "NBC crossed the line from responsible journalism to irresponsible and reckless intrusion into law enforcement" (Stelter, 2008).

A more lighthearted showcasing of catfishing and building relationships online is visibly exploited in the reality TV show, *The Circle*. The show was released in the UK with the exclamation, "anyone can be anyone" (Channel 4, 2020). The show ran for two seasons, and was picked up for three new versions by Netflix and All3Media, the first was an American version released in January, 2020 with versions from France and Brazil to come.

The format of *The Circle* is similar to that of the long running reality gameshow, Big Brother, with 44 seasons since 1999, where contestants live together, compete in challenges and vote each other off periodically for a chance to win a cash prize. However, on *The Circle*, each contestant enters a flat of their own in an apartment complex and are only allowed to interact with each other using the show's social media platform, "Circle". On *Circle*, contestants create and view each other's profiles consisting of a photo and a short biography. More photos could be added later in the game. Several contestants pretend to be completely different people than themselves while others make slight adjustments to their profiles usually in hopes of seeming more desirable or likable. These often were done by changing their age, gender, sexuality or weight. Of the total 44 contestants, over the three seasons released, only 19 did not lie at all about their identity on the show.

The first season in the UK was won by a male internet comedian, Alex Hobern, who catfished as a 25-year-old woman named Kate by using pictures of his girlfriend. In the second season, Paddy Smyth won by playing as himself, but not revealing on Circle that he had cerebral palsy.

I believe this show does well to exemplify how we maintain our social media profiles online and the identities we create on them. The participants I interviewed held the belief that no one on social media truly is themselves. Stef held some contempt towards social media exclaiming that it is "fake". When I inquired further about what she meant, she explained:

It's like everyone is pretending to be happy, pretending to have the perfect life. The pictures are not real. I mean, I always try not to put filters on it (photos of herself) or something like because, I dunno, sometimes it's too much, it's too much.

Ishita explained that it is because people are never comfortable posting sad moments or their most private details of their lives, so putting on our best face on SM is very “normal”. People do not want to show the bad parts of life because they do not want to entertain disappointment or sadness, but rather, let others know that they are doing well.

As I scroll through the seemingly endless posts on Instagram, I do feel a degree of envy looking at what everyone is doing in their lives. My social media feed on Instagram comes from photos from people’s accounts including people I may have only met once before, family members, friends of varying closeness and some “influencers” who I do not know in the slightest, but my social media certainly look like they are all living exciting and fanciful lives.

As I take a critical look at my own Instagram profile, I too am guilty for selectively highlighting things I want others to see in me. I make semi-regular posts that showcase the gorgeous views from the mountains I have hiked, the city I live in, and some shots of myself that I am particularly happy with. I believe my profile gives the impression that I am someone who loves the outdoors and who is constantly active, with an aspiration of being an amateur model. This is because I compose my profile with a pretty consistent aesthetic of two outdoor photos on each side of another with just myself for every row of three.

Luis explains that it is very easy for people to pretend to be other people on social media by just doing things that you are not. He gives the example that a person can post a picture of a car that they see in the street, or of an expensive watch they tried on to give the impression that they are very well off. Luis further explains that some could make the occasional post of what they are making to eat, like from a meal preparation service such as FreshPrep or MissFresh to give the impression that they are quite an excellent at home chef.

We are constantly engaging in our online social realities in ways that are meaningful to us. Many of us try and be ourselves on social media, but we tend to be our best selves, as to warrant others viewing the posts we make. Stef and Ishita, being quite vocal on the subject explained that it is because we not only want to share our best moments with our friends and family online, but to prove to them that we are doing well, and that we are okay. For them, making regular posts on social media is to make sure that their families do not have to worry about them, but done so tactfully to only let on certain amount. We rarely want to show others that we may be exhausted from stress at work or from finding a better apartment to live in. We will likely not post that we were recently in a fight with a close friend over a petty argument, and there is a level of stigma associated with suffering from depression, homesickness, or heartache. We are supposed to put on a happy face, and “just keep swimming”. We do not want to bring others down, so we keep pretending.

How we showcase ourselves online is how we continue to comprise our digital footprint. What is viewed by onlookers, of post history, and stories frames our identity and leaves an impression of supposed identity. By regular maintenance of our profiles and interactions, we allow social media to speak for us without the use of linguistic conversation.

4.4 Influence and Marketing

We know that relationships are something that we form over time with others, both good and bad. We mitigate our relationships in how we approach them. To progress a relationship over social media one must start by initiating an attempt at conversation because if the relationship solely exists based on sharing content on a public stage, the relationship may remain weak, and potential for a closer relationship can fade. While a relationship is built off an

exchange of time spent with the other, the moments spent on a digital medium, makes those moments seemingly more fleeting. By sharing what we are interested in and receiving validation for those things by our peers, we gain a desire to post more content. It is this type of created identity, where we can find our “brand” of material. By sharing our interests with others on the public medium, we are marketing influence to those who partake in our posted content. Taking part in the AW, expands on the many sources of information contributing to our existence as actor-networks.

As a communicative tool, we market to one another which artist, band, or politician to support, which restaurant to go to, or which cause to care about. While our public conversations over social media can sometimes seem rather empty of meaningful content, we are in a way, selling our identity in order to build a social rapport together. By expressing something on social media, we are indirectly asking others to take part in something we care about. For a relationship to grow, we can bond over these instances of shared interest. This indirect sharing of common interest allows parties to give recognition without crossing boundaries of necessitating a progression of a relationship, but requires a more stagnant understanding of positionality.

As all participants in this study have explained, they find themselves swiping through the many photos and videos uploaded to Instagram, liking and commenting on them to show acknowledgement of the other, often without feeling entirely emotionally invested. Our relationships are mediated. By taxonomizing each other and through “scalable sociality,” we place a value on each other. We establish how much we want to invest our time into that relationship. We devote our attachment and time to instances in order to develop a relationship.

With companies, cultures, ideologies, religions, philosophies, and politics, we are exposed to and influenced by the many uncertain aspects of society that further our positions as

actor-networks. While we do it more indirectly with the content shown on our social media profiles, these things can be taken advantage of by companies who target us based on our shared content. For many, we absent-mindedly agree to the terms and conditions or cookies to access, download, and upload content, be it for social media, productivity, or otherwise. It is something that we often take for granted with the ease of accessibility these apps provide. Our data, purchases, and digital footprint are one often tracked by interested parties to try and profit from their analytics, by direct advertising of products and services. Mariana, Rachel, Jasmine, Andrea, and Marcelo acknowledged that the things that are often marketed to them, are things they have an interest in, and will quite often, click open the ad to learn more about what has targeted them. If they intend to make a purchase from what was marketed to them, they were also likely to showcase it further by posting it on their own social media profiles, further extending the influence into their social networks (Fig 4.5).

One could argue that the day of the billboard is over as it requires too much physical real-estate while digital-estate comes at a fraction of the price and nearly guarantees viewership. Commerce targets and directs us to what we seemingly want from the online world. It also draws us to a vast void of information of fact and fiction. We give in to a recycling of our own beliefs, desires, and inhibitions.

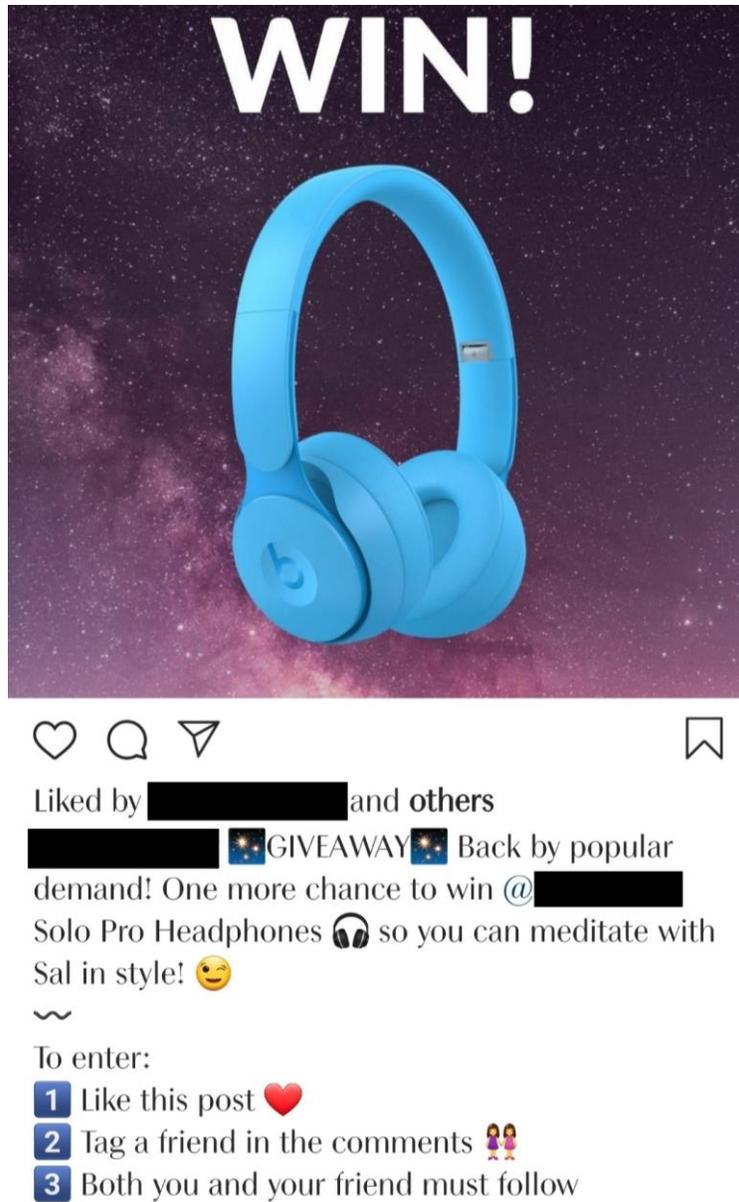


Fig 4.5 Example of Social Media Marketing.

Google Maps, as articulated by Mirelle, Rachel, Gerardo, Oliver and Rumi is an essential tool in learning how to get around in Vancouver, and acts as teaching aid for becoming comfortable and familiar with the lay of the land. Location apps provision geographic marketing, which then extends the cycle of marketing to our physical movement.

Our social circles often involve others with likeminded aspirations, goals, political sentiments, skills, or thoughts, and we are oftentimes marketed products we think we need or are sentimentally told we want to hear about. We take part in large scale, sometimes unfathomable outputs of groupthink. With enough exposure, we can make nearly anything we believe in seem favourable and correct to defined social groups. z If there is something that we like about someone, we try and be close to them, replicate their behaviour, and inject it with our own personalities. We output what we learn and what we are subject to. Details for every individual may differ but only by focus.

4.4.1 Summary

This chapter presented an analysis of findings, organized around four themes. The first section explored how MDs help users shift time or place to maintain various relationships. The second section addressed MD uses as necessity *and* habit, with the consensus from participants that it is definitely both. The third section took up how we perform identity online. The fourth and final section addressed a range of influences that advertising and marketing have of MD users. Data and findings were presented in this chapter in discussion with a range of literature. Throughout, the presentation and discussion of findings, including the four themes, were framed by senses of relationality. Chapter 5 presents conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

This qualitative study addressed the problem of maintaining relationships via creative and routine uses of MDs. Twelve participants were recruited from a private college in Vancouver, which specializes in tourism and hospitality education for international students. Interviews focused on their uses of MDs in creating and maintaining relationships with family and friends. In the midst of concluding this Thesis, the Covid-19 crisis intensified. In the implications section, I address this in economic, personal, and social terms. Overall, this chapter presents a summary and conclusions, implications, and recommendations.

5.1 Summary and Conclusions

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. In what ways do international students utilize MDs to maintain relationships with family, friends, and the devices themselves?
 - a. How do the students maintain relationships at home, school, and online, while fostering newer, more immediate relationships?
 - b. How do the students maintain relationships with media and technology (M&T) devices and apps?

Findings were organized around four themes: Shifting Time and Space Constraints, Necessity vs. Habit, Online Identity, and Influence and Marketing. Within each theme, one, two, or all three questions were explored.

For all the participants, the predominant way of staying in touch with family and friends, both based at home and new ones made while in Vancouver, was MDs and related apps accessible on their laptops and tablets. They post memes, photos, and videos to their social media

but do not always keep up their relationships with family and friends directly, though they said most of their significant relationships had not faltered. They were experiencing less in the way of temporal or spatial experiences but were still maintaining connections by interacting in indirect ways.

A few participants said their social media use increased substantially after moving to Vancouver, while also admitting that they checked their devices every moment they were not otherwise preoccupied with work or sleep. The Swiss participant, Stef, who seldom used social media before her move to Canada, noticed that because of those around her at school and at her job in a bike rental shop, she mimicked their behaviour by repeatedly unlocking and glancing at her phone. Not that there was something that demanded her immediate response, but because it seemed like the normal thing to do. While some participants did not admit to being completely addicted to their technologies they did admit that they were habit-forming. These participants were still heavily reliant on MDs.

Participants were hard pressed to say that their personal technology use was a bad thing, though they consistently expressed how it would get in the way of experiencing real life in the moment. The actual experience was often less important than the recording of it for others to hear or see. The participant from India explained that before she had social media, she would go out and enjoy any situation like going for dinner or a hike, but because of social media, she would schedule activities in order to fill her social media account to demonstrate to her family, friends, and followers that she was living her best life or the high life.

Both Filipinos, Rachel and Jasmin, and the Mexican participant Andrea, used social media to learn how to cook different dishes. For the Brazilian Marcelo, social media provides a space to stay updated with news on cars and his favourite athletes. The participants reiterated that

social media has penetrated their homes and personal lives through the use of sharing articles, memes, pics, or videos over networks like Facebook and Instagram. In sharing personal third-party data with other commercial entities on what users like and dislike, social media platforms uses algorithms to reinforce preferences and dictate or suggest what to see, by whom, and how often.

The participants have their technologies on them to interact on a regular basis, but their views on MDs extend from necessity to habit. Korean student Oliver first described mobile technology use as a necessary evil. Necessary in how they help one learn, communicate or get directions, but 'evil' because of how tirelessly the devices demand our attention. They are hard to put down or be away from, and yet they allow us to scale our sociability for whatever and whenever works best for us. We can read a message and sometimes wait a day or longer to pick up the conversation again without repercussion.

While the strength of relationships may lessen over time, the connection remains. Our snapshots remain, making it easy to pay attention, even haphazardly to those we have met, even if only once or twice. Our connections may not develop into a conventional relationship, but they preserve a bond. A bond between people may not be restricted to immediacy and consistency as one can pick up wherever it was last left off. MDs and their apps help us check in on the ones we thought we got to know and associate the memories with them. A simple hello here and there may occur, but by connecting, we may be victim to the influence it provides. Relationships form over time as Hinde (1976a, 1976b) suggests, but that time can be broken up over longer periods.

5.2 Implications

I began this thesis believing that the experiences of each of participant would be distinct of themselves but by finding the similarities in how they directed our conversations and with the literature explored, there is certainly a number of conclusions and implications. What I have learned is something that greatly influences how I will continue through my own academic and teaching careers and motivations to explore and interact with others both online and offline, and both in and out of the classroom.

This research has implications for the process of intercultural relationship building among students, as it takes the pervasiveness of M&T into account. How this sample of international students interacts and depicts themselves online suggests the strengthening of some relationships while keeping others at a comfortable distance, but still near, nonetheless. Educators of all levels should be aware of how students create, maintain, and destroy relationships via MDs. This research addressed how international students create and maintain relationships but none of the participants provided examples of how they may have been implicated in the destruction of relationships via MDs.

What we are subject to online, can influence us to follow certain interests and those interests may inspire new relationships. An event may occur where you notice someone is also interested in attending that event or posting on a cause that you share an interest in. We are also cautious to keep many at a comfortable distance as to not partake too closely in our “authentic” private lives, and adopt Miller et al.’s (2016) scalable sociality (i.e., most private to most public, smallest group to largest group).

5.3 Tourism and Hospitality Amidst Covid-19

As I near the end of this study and my Masters program, I am compelled to consider implications in context. On Wednesday, March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) a global pandemic, affecting over 150 countries and counting world-wide. On March 18 the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau announced that the borders between the USA and Canada will be closed to prevent the spread of the virus. The novel Coronavirus has directly impacted the tourism and hospitality industry and will continue to do so over the coming months. As borders are being closed world wide, no new students will be joining the program in which I teach for the foreseeable future. With the severely reduced numbers, I was laid off on Monday, March 23.

However, before my lay off, I helped my co-teacher begin adapting the tourism and hospitality program online. We used a combination of Google Classroom and Zoom. We used Google Classroom for students to hand in their assignments as well as have them take part in daily discussions. We used Zoom to host smaller group discussions with students to clarify anything as needed by the students. We used a Google conference call to host our graduation meeting which was a new experience to say the least. Regularly seeing students Monday-Friday, I developed close ties with many of them. In class, I was readily available to discuss any problems or issues with the entire class or individually as needed, checking in throughout the day and guiding them through the planned lessons. There was a certain level of spontaneity that being physically present in class provided that was lost over the digital medium.

For graduation, we asked our thirty students to join the meeting at 11am and while some students were late to arrive, the most difficult parts were the technical issues some had during the call. Students joined in on the call from both computers and MDs with some unable to turn on

their microphones or webcams while others struggled to maintain a stable internet connection, often seen leaving and rejoining the call throughout. Being mediated by the digital window, and not being able to see the faces of most of the graduating students, I felt less emotionally invested in delivering a graduation speech to them as they did as well in listening. During the call, students commented that they would like to redo their graduation in person after the pandemic passed and we were allowed back into the physical classroom.

These students came to Canada to experience a new culture, a new way of life, and many had hopes of gaining the necessary experience to thrive in the tourism and hospitality industry. While our classroom sessions are able to continue online, many of the students will find it very hard to afford to stay in Canada during this time. As international co-op work students, they are financially unprotected during this time and are victims of further layoffs as governments strongly suggest to self-isolate for two weeks during the pandemic upon repatriation to home countries. The restaurant and hotel industry are two of the biggest employers for these students, and these have been hit especially hard. On March 18, the province of British Columbia declared a state of emergency to last 14 days, and on March 20, Vancouver restaurants closed for any dine-in service, leaving only take-out and delivery options for customers. With many places closing down for very limited service, many of my students are worried about their futures in terms of employment and financial ability to survive through this.

The *status quo* in education, hospitality, and tourism, among nearly every other field and industry, has changed. Even if a critical perspective is defined as merely questioning the *status quo*, “critical tourism [and hospitality] studies” configure into living with and the aftermath of the Covid-19 crisis (Ateljevic, Morgan, & Pritchard, 2007, p. 1). With Ross (2018), we might say that especially now, educators be inspired to question “the learner as passive; democratic

citizenship as a spectator project; and ultimately the maintenance of *status quo* inequalities in society” (p. 378). At the same time, as mentioned, there are now good reasons to question the *status quo* of M&T despite the prolific demands on carriers in this Covid-19 crisis (Petrina, 2017).

While I was studying in Finland for a year at Turku University, I was enrolled in a Masters program called Futures Studies. While every colleague of mine in the Futures Studies cohort had their own ambitions, study interests, and motivations for being there, we were all taught a variety of futures methods to apply to our areas of expertise. My own interest was on how people would change with the further development of personal technologies. I thought about how businesses would change and how the state of the world would be affected. As broad as that is, it was very hard to pinpoint a direct topic of interest, such as the one I have explored throughout this Thesis, but there I had a substantial interest in cyborgization, or how we have begun to integrate technology into every aspect of our daily habits, movements, thoughts and overall lives. The AW has the potential to become more than just easily accessible by many, but for some, technological integration could become the most immediate and prevalent world. Entire lives going through a technological filter to aid in every decision made. It is because of this global pandemic, that these initial research motivations have surfaced once again.

I am of course, a huge fan of science fiction and the lessons that can be learned from the imagination of others. Reading on utopias and dystopias have always intrigued me, because it makes me think of extreme events that can severely alter our way of functioning as a society. In the tourism and hospitality industry, which I have been employed in for over a decade, I have watched how some businesses have started to automate the industry and go the way of convenience. My very first job in the hospitality industry was a cashier in McDonald’s at sixteen

years old. I greeted people as they came in, input their orders, accepted their payment, gave them their orders, and wished them well as I saw them off. Today, while there are still cashiers, they are much less frequent. The McDonald's self-ordering kiosks are now a common sight (Fig. 5.1), where customers have very little human interaction at all. They punch in their orders, pay, and receive their order number at a kiosk. Customers then wait for their number to show up on a screen and receive their food over the counter. While not all aspects of McDonald's is automated, the human interaction and hospitality have been greatly reduced, favouring as little human-to-human (H2H) interaction as possible.



Fig 5.1 "iMcDonald's 6+++⁺" by Stephen Cannon is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

Other restaurants and fast food places have moved to very similar models, with SkipTheDishes and UberEats being very popular platforms to minimize human interaction when it comes to ordering food. SkipTheDishes and UberEats are food delivery services that register many restaurants on their application for customers to order from. Customers select the food they wish to order, pay online, and then have it delivered by someone working for the delivery company. Experiences I have with these apps is they are very quick and again, rely very little on experiencing much H2H interaction at all and focus heavily on the convenience aspect. Covid-19 has made these gig economy SM platforms extremely popular. With the strongly recommended practice of “social distancing” during the pandemic, are we experiencing a greater distancing of H2H interaction in attempt to slow the spread of the virus and get back to work as usual?

There are further implications for students wishing to pursue a career in tourism and hospitality as automation becomes more prevalent in different sectors of our lives. Tourism and hospitality professionals must think creatively on reasons why H2H (human-to-human) interaction remains an integral piece to the profession. While automation removes one from the need to interact with another person, it is the nuances and the unexpected occurrences that further develop relationships within the field.

What this means for the future of the hospitality and tourism industry requires much further research. Research that I would love to see done in the field of futures studies to utilize the abundance of methods explored in *The Millennium Project* (Glenn, 2009), such as the Delphi method, environmental scanning, and scenario planning. While futures research is action-oriented, seeking “to identify and describe current forces that should be understood in order to make more intelligent decisions”, futures studies are subject or question oriented, intended to “explore all possibilities fully so that others can find specific insights to their needs. Future

studies can also contribute to a specific field of study and/or body of information” (Glenn, 2009. p. 6).

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

My research has only scratched the surface of how we interact online and form relationships. One recommendation for further research is performed identity. I am curious to explore the rapid integration of mobile technology in different social settings beyond the tourism and hospitality classroom, which is where I based my research. A second recommendation is for similar, perhaps like Miller et al. (2016), ethnographic research in multiple field sites around the world.

A third recommendation is for research on other sectors of digital influence, like that of celebrity influencers, who are paid to market ideas and products to wider audiences, or of gamers who livestream their matches to millions of people world-wide. A fourth recommendation is for more research to explore identity politics on social media platforms, including LinkedIn, TikTok, and Wechat, which I did not explore at length during this study. As virtual reality and augmented reality technologies become more mainstream, there will undoubtedly be more networks that will appear while others fade. These new technologies and accessibility to them will prove to develop increasingly complex and intertwined relationships.

One final recommendation for further research was something my mother suggested. She explained that her social media usage increased when I was an international student and that she was paid closer attention to when my last online status was to ease her parental anxiety that I was okay. So further research on how parents’ social media habits change when their children study abroad would be another potential study to pursue.

Bibliography

- Aluri, A., & Tucker E. (2015) Social influence and technology acceptance: The use of personal social media as a career enhancement tool among college students. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 27(2), 48-59.
- Anderson, B. (1990). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London, UK: Verso.
- Atif, Y., & Chou, C. (2018). Digital citizenship: Innovations in education, practice, and pedagogy. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 21(1), 152-154.
- Ateljevic, I., Morgan, N., & Pritchard, A. (Eds.). (2007). *The critical turn in tourism studies: Innovative research methodologies*. Oxford, UK: Elsevier.
- Aviram, A., (2001). From “computers in the classroom” to mindful radical adaptation by educational systems to the emerging cyber culture. *Journal of Educational Change*, 1, 331-352.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Channel 4 (2020). *The circle*. Channel Four Television Corporation. retrieved from <https://www.channel4.com/4viewers/take-part/the-circle>.
- Chen, M. (2018) Students’ perceptions of the educational usage of a Facebook group. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 18(4), 332-348.
- Clark, A. (2003). *Natural born cyborgs*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Clement, J. (2019a, August 14). *Number of social network users worldwide from 2010 to 2021*. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-socialnetwork-users/>.
- Clement, J. (2019b, February 14). *Reddit - Statistics & facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/topics/5672/reddit/>.
- Clement, J. (2020, November 20). *Global social networks ranked by number of users 2020*. retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>.
- Code, J.(2013). Agency and identity in social media. In S. Warburton & S. Hatzipanagos (Eds.), *Digital identity and social media* (pp. 37-57). Hershey, PA: IGI Publishing.

- Deale, C. S. (2020) Students as researchers: Learning about tourists of the future. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 32(1), 32-42.
- Gleason, B., & Von Gillern, S. (2018). Digital citizenship with social media: Participatory practices of teaching and learning in secondary education. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 21(1), 200-212.
- Fugard, A. J. B. & Potts, H. W. W. (2015) Supporting thinking on sample sizes for thematic analyses: A quantitative tool. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 18(6), 669-684.
- Glenn, J. C. (2009). Introduction to the futures methods research series. In *Futures research methodology, v3.0* (pp.1-17). Washington, DC: The Millennium Project.
- Goffman, E. (1969). *Strategic interaction*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Goffman, E. (1976). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books.
- Haraway, D. J. (1991). *Simians, cyborgs, and women: The reinvention of nature*. London, UK: Free Assoc. Books.
- Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. New York, NY: SUNY Press.
- Hinde, R. A. (1976a). On describing relationships. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 17(2), 1-19.
- Hinde, R.A. (1976b). Interactions, relationships and social structure. *Man, New Series* 11(1), 1-17.
- Huang, C. S. J., Yang, S. J. H., Chiang, T. H. C., & Su, A. Y. S. (2016). Effects of situated mobile learning approach on learning motivation and performance of EFL students. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 19(1), 263-276.
- Jeffries, D. (2019). *Can social media build deep relationships?*. retrieved from <https://medium.com/the-4-elements-of-change/can-social-media-build-deep-relationships-c9cfdeddf9a5>.
- Jin, D. Y. (2017). Chapter 4 - Mobile communication, globalization, and technological hegemony. In *Smartland Korea* (pp. 66-86). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

- Latour, B. (2005). Part 1 – How to deploy controversies about the social world. In *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (pp. 21-158). New York, NY: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Lee, P. C., Lee, M. J., & Dopson, L. R. (2019) Who influences college students' career choices? An empirical study of hospitality management students. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 31(2), 74-86.
- Ling, R. (2008). *New tech, new ties: How mobile communication is reshaping social cohesion*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Ling, R. (2012). *Taken for grantedness*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Licoppe, C. (2004). Connected presence: The emergence of a new repertoire for managing social relationships in a changing communications technoscape. *Environment and Planning: Society and Space*, 22, 135–156.
- M.a Luisa Sevillano-García, & Esteban Vázquez-Cano. (2015). The impact of digital mobile devices in higher education. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 18(1), 106-118.
- McBride, N. (2003). Actor-network theory and the adoption of mobile communications. *Geography*, 88(4), 266-276.
- McDonald, N. (2018). *Digital in 2018: World's internet users pass the 4 billion mark*. retrieved from <https://wearesocial.com/us/blog/2018/01/global-digital-report-2018>.
- McLuhan, M. (1964) The medium is the message. In *Understanding media: The extensions of man* (pp. 7-23). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- McLuhan, M., Agel, J., & Fiore, Q. (2005). *The medium is the message: An inventory of effects*. Corte Madera, CA: Gingko Press.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miller, D., Costa, E., Haynes, N., McDonald, T., Nicolescu, R., Sinanan, J., Spyer, J., Venkatraman, S., & Wang, X. (2016). *How the world changed social media*. London, UK: UCL Press.
- Miniwatts Marketing Group. (2019, June 30). *Internet growth statistics*. retrieved from <https://www.internetworldstats.com/emarketing.htm>.

Orwell, G. (1949). *1984*. London, UK: Secker and Warburg.

Oxford University Press. (OUP). (2019). Lexico.com. retrieved from <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/catfish>.

Patiar, A., Kensbock, S., Ma, E., & Cox, R. (2017) Information and communication technology enabled innovation: Application of the virtual field trip in hospitality education. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 29(3), 129-140.

Petrina, S. (2016). Thematic and schematic analysis. retrieved from <http://blogs.ubc.ca/researchmethods/files/2019/02/Thematic-Schematic-Analysis.pdf>.

Petrina, S. (2017). Critique of technology. In P. J. Williams & K. Stables (Eds.), *Critique in design and technology education* (pp. 31-49). Dordrecht, NL: Springer.

Ross, E. W. (2018). Humanizing critical pedagogy: What kind of teachers? What kind of citizenship? What kind of future? *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 40(5), 371-389.

Sobaih, A. E. E., & Moustafa, M. A. (2016) Speaking the same language: The value of social networking sites for hospitality and tourism higher education in Egypt. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 28(1), 21-31.

Searle, J. R. (1995). *The construction of social reality*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Shoukat, S. (2019). Cell phone addiction and psychological and physiological health in adolescents. *EXCLI Journal*, 18, 47–50.

Speed, C. (2010). Developing a sense of space with locative media: An “underview effect”. *Leonardo*, 43(2), 169-174.

Stelter, B. (2008, June 26). *NBC settles with family that blamed a TV investigation for a man's suicide*. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/26/business/media/26nbc.html>.

Travis, C. (2018). The digital anthropocene, deep mapping, and environmental humanities' big data. *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities*, 5(2), 172-188.

Turkle, S. (2011). *Alone together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Turkle, S. (2012, April 21). *The flight from conversation*. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.saddleback.edu/faculty/agordon/documents/TheFlightFromConversation.pdf>

- Turkle, S. (2015). *Reclaiming conversation: The power of talk in a digital age*. New York, NY: Penguin Press.
- Višnjić, A., Veličković, V., Sokolović, D., Stanković, M., Mijatović, K., Stojanović, M., Milošević, Z., & Radulović, O. (2018) Relationship between the manner of mobile phone use and depression, anxiety, and stress in university students. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 15(4), 697.
- World Tourism Organization. (2018). *UNWTO tourism highlights*, 2018 Edition, UNWTO, Madrid, ES. <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284419876>.
- World Travel & Tourism Council. (2018). *Travel & tourism economic impact 2018 world*. Retrieved from <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/regions-2018/world2018.pdf>.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research* (third edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Appendix A: Consent Form

Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy

Consent Form

Message Me When You Land:

Tourism and Hospitality Students' Distance Relationships with Friends, Family and Devices

Investigators

The principal investigator for this study is Dr. Stephen Petrina, Professor in the Faculty of Education and who may be reached at [REDACTED]. This research will be used for the MA Thesis of David Wray, graduate student, who may be reached at UBC [REDACTED].

Study Purpose and Procedures

The study investigates international students who have studied tourism and hospitality in Vancouver and their distance relationships with families, friends and communication technologies. The total time necessary to participate in the study is approximately 1 hour. Your participation will be primarily through interviews.

Confidentiality

Your identity will be kept strictly confidential. All documents will be identified only by code. Physical hard copies will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. Electronic copies will be encrypted and protected by password. This data will be kept in the research office in the Neville-Scarfe building on the UBC campus and will be accessed only by research team members.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, you may contact Dr. Stephen Petrina at [REDACTED] or David Wray at [REDACTED]. If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

Consent

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

Participant Signature

Date

Printed Name of the Participant