

The Role of Facebook in Everyday Student Life

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Brown Bag Lunch Series
The Learning Centre
University of British Columbia
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[This is a rough version of the actual talk. There are corresponding slides which accompany the text in addition to a podcast]

[Title Slide] Good afternoon and I thank you for coming. It is a pleasure to be given the opportunity to be the first speak of the 2007 Brown Bag Lunch Series. My name is Phillip Jeffrey. I am a graduate student in the Interdisciplinary Studies program and my home department is the Media and Graphics Intradisciplinary Centre (or MAGIC as its called). My presentation is entitled “The Role of Facebook in Everyday Student Life”. My plan for this seminar is to present for 40 minutes about Facebook and its potential role in academic setting and allow 20 minutes for questions/focus group-type discussion.

[Slide 2:Structure] My presentation is broken down into 5 sections. First, What is Facebook [Facebook, 2007]? Next, How is Facebook used? After that, I will examine academic applications and potential opportunities through Facebook. I will then move on to discussing socially appropriate behaviour and conclude by exploring privacy and discussing how expectations may differ from reality.

I prefer to use screenshots and pictures that I found on Flickr [Flickr, 2007] as well as Facebook screenshots to provide a visual face to my text. My Flickr photos and

screenshots are all used under a creative commons license [Flickr CC, 2007] in which I must provide attribution to the Flickr user.

[Slide 3: Facebook Experience] I am a UBC graduate student. I have been a member of Facebook since November 2005. I have given presentation, written articles, and been invited to CBC Radio Vancouver a number of times, in order to provide expert analysis on some aspect of Facebook.

[Slide 4: Act 1: What is Facebook] Facebook is a social utility that facilitates the flow of information between users and their friends, those with whom a real-world connection exists. Since it became publicly accessible to anyone about a year ago, there are a significant number of people using Facebook for professional and business purposes in which they have “friends” (waving hands in air) as well.

It was launched in February 2004 by a Harvard sophomore named Mark Zuckerberg, who was 19 at the time and he is now 23. He wanted to create a space where students could communicate and socialize with their real-world friends at Harvard based on three principles: control, ease of access to information, and exclusivity.

By control this means that students could determine what level of privacy they wanted for their personal information (e.g. willing to share mobile phone number only with friends, but will make their educational history available to everyone in their college). By exclusivity, this means that searching for another non-friend’s profile information is only possible if you attend the same college (so your little brother was out of luck).

Over time, as students requested that their campus be added to the Facebook network, additional ivy-league colleges, other institutions of high learning throughout North America, then high schools were accepted. About a year ago, Facebook was available to anyone with an email address. Facebook has progressively added features since 2004 by simply adding it and watching the reaction (e.g. the sharing of photo albums, the addition.

In an August 20-27th 2007 Newsweek article [Levy, 2007] entitled “Facebook Grows Up”, danah boyd discussed why she perceived that Facebook was successful out of the blocks. She stated that it provided an interactive social network, with a slight degree of social stalking, while being restricted to one’s college. What this did was create a familiar space for students to interact with their friends. As you could only view profiles at your own college (e.g. only see Harvard students), it may have created an enhanced perception of a comfortable, safe space. In addition, underlying these was the high trust factor among students. For example, as many students know, it is not uncommon to ask a fellow student to watch one’s laptop while talking a washroom break in the library.

[Slide 5: What Facebook needed...] In the Newsweek article [Levy, 2007], Mark Zuckerberg discusses the concept of a social graph. This is his notion that there are real-world connections with everyone being a node that radiates links to the people a relationship exists with. According to Zuckerberg:

“The social graph is this thing that exists in the world, and it always has and it always will. It's really most natural for people to communicate through it, because it's with the people around you, friends and business connections or whatever. What [Facebook] needed to do was construct as accurate of a model as possible of the way the social graph looks in the world.”

This social graph moves into the digital realm when you are on Facebook with your friends and enables you to get an enhanced experience out of these connections – more so than what you would have expected. It becomes especially interesting when you begin expanding your circle through your friends of friends.

[Slide 6: Facebook by the numbers] Facebook has grown rapidly since allowing anyone with an email address to join last September. There are now more than 35 million active users worldwide (meaning that they log in once a month), there are 3.3 million active users in Canada. Sixty-eight percent of active users log in once a month. It is the top website in Canada with 8.5 billion page views per month. The fastest growing demographic are those 25 years old and older and there is a 3% growth rate a week since January 2007.

[Slide 7: A tour] This is a live example of my profile page. At the top is Profile, clicking on it will take you to your profile. Clicking Friends will show you all of your friends, Networks will show the networks (if any) that you are on (it shows that I am on two – Vancouver and UBC), and Inbox is like email, where you can send a private message to any of your friends or actually anyone.

On the left hand side are displayed Applications in which clicking that link will display all the different applications that are available in Facebook – both those created by Facebook (e.g. Events) and those on the Facebook platform that are created by independent developers (e.g. Ma.gnolia – a social bookmarking site). Below, you can see Photos, which when clicked will display the existing photo albums you have as well as your friends' albums, clicking Groups will show any groups that you have joined as well as your friends, Events are simply activities such as birthdays or parties and like groups you can search for any event in Facebook, Marketplace is where you can buy and sell stuff like textbooks or search for housing, Mobile enable you access Facebook on your mobile phone, and Video is where you can see videos that have been shared by friends or that you have created.

Beneath my profile picture, I can view all the pictures that either myself or another person has tagged “Phillip Jeffrey”. ‘Tagging’ just means that someone or myself have decided to link my name to a picture (or actually any type of jpeg). I can edit my profile (e.g. add photography to my Activities) and you can see that I am online now. There are also some icons for applications that I use on my profile (e.g. groups, photos, and ma.gnolia).

On the top right is my status message. I have written “Phillip is very excited to be attending the Akon/Rihanna concert next Saturday. He is still looking for a date though” . Below is basic information about me such as the UBC and Vancouver networks that I am on, my relationship status, and my hometown.

I would now like to comment quickly on these next features and I will be elaborating further on in the presentation. Below my profile picture are profile pictures of my friends at UBC (I currently have 139) and you can see the number of friends I have in other networks. You can see that I am a member of a number of groups – most related to digital technology (e.g. Third Tuesday and Launch Party).

On the right hand side are the mini-feed which show actions (called stories by Facebook) that I have performed in Facebook (e.g. Phillip has joined the group Third Tuesday) or that other have performed that include me (e.g. Susan Smith tagged Phillip in a photo”). Information are things such as my activities (e.g. photography) or contact information. People write stuff here so that people that view their profile know something about them. In addition, each word is actually a hyperlink so clicking my “Photography” link under will display all the people on my 2 networks that also have that written in their profile. The Wall is where friends can leave comments for me, visible to anyone that can view my profile. The Education and Work sections show my educational background and work experience, and Notes are notes that I have written or blog entries that have been imported. Video contains personal videos that have been uploaded by the person. Throughout my profile you can see a few platform applications that I use (e.g. Mag.nolia, Twitter, and My Flickr). I don’t have a lot of applications because I personally find them too busy and want to keep as much white space as possible.

One of the purposes of a profile page which includes the different types of content, applications, and information is to remain connected with your friends – especially those one does not see everyday. Facebook members are able to be kept up-to-date about the current activities in their friends’ lives and use Facebook as a platform for communication and social interaction. Through Facebook, friends through their actions are saying “I care about you”, “I am interested in what is happening in your life”.

[Slide 8:How used by students?] In Facebook, the ability to comment on another friend’s wall, share photos, broadcast status updates, and send messages between friends are features that seem to underlie a desire for community-building. At its core, Facebook provides a place to feel comfortable hanging out with your friends and enrich your real world relationships through the digital space.

This is a picture of my former graduate residence called Green College [Green College, 2007] after our pancake breakfast for incoming students one year ago. Green College is situated on a beautiful property overlooking the water across from the Chan Centre. It is home to about 92 graduate students and post-doctoral researchers. As its academic focus is on interdisciplinary collaboration, our tradition of a self-governing community (e.g. we have a student-run non-profit dining society) just naturally led to one of our members

creating a Green College group on Facebook called “Green College (unlimited)” in Fall 2006.

[Slide 9:Green College Group] So why was this group created? According to Mika McKinnon, the group creator, during the 2005/2006 academic year there weren't many residents in Facebook, when the 2006 academic year began, there were a lot more. She left (according to the Recent News) that having a group would just make it easier to find residents.

The Green College motto is “Ideas and Friendship” and the advantage of creating a global group is that anyone, anywhere with a Facebook membership can join. The group members are then able to share events such as our annual Alumni BBQ with non-GC community members, each other, and to enable Green College alumni to feel part of the community through social networking. One of the benefits is being able to attach faces to names, to enable current members to see what alumni or future members look like and visa-versa.

The Green College group is global rather than restricting membership to those associated with the UBC network. If it said “UBC” in the right corner rather than global that would have meant that a Green College resident that is not on the UBC network could not access the page. On Facebook, people do not have to be on a network such as “Vancouver” or “UBC”. It just means that profiles on the UBC network of non-friends can't be accessed. In addition, members not on the UBC network wouldn't be able to view groups or events specifically created only for the UBC network. It is for that reason that most groups and events are created so that they are visible globally through Facebook.

[Slide 10:Administrator] The Green College group also has open access. Access can be closed (admin approval to join) or secret (it would appear in searches or profile pages).

[Slide 11:Green College Wall] Here are four of the wall comments that have appeared: The first is from September and the person is wondering where we can purchase plants. The second is a request for help moving items stored in Vancouver into Green College. The third is from May and the person is excited about coming to Green College in the Fall after the Green College Reading Room magazine online. The last is from an alumnus in which she thanks everyone for attending the Alumni BBQ.

So not only are Green College residents and alumni on this group but also future residents have found out about the group and joined. This will enable them to develop online relationships with the existing Green College community online which may make the transition in the Fall easier, especially when coming from outside the province.

A blog entry entitled “SATCo and How Facebook folds time” earlier this summer by Darren Barefoot discussed this phenomenon of how Facebook is an ad hoc engine for folding time in an informal way [Barefoot, 2007]. It is the idea of how Facebook through the creation of groups can enable past, present, and future members of an organisation to

interact, share knowledge and exchange information. This is what the Green College group is attempting to achieve by enabling alumni, and past members to co-exist with existing members. This could be used to organise exchange programs, find future jobs, or recommend supervisors. The potential opportunities are endless while other online forums such as the Green College wiki are used to maintain institutional knowledge about Green College, some of which needs to be kept private.

[Slide 12:The Power] Groups are also being used within Facebook for advocacy purposes. In March 2007 [Marcelo, Lopez, and Kirby, 2007], a survey looking at civil engagement among young men and women in the States reported on the popularity of Facebook as a tool for advocacy activity. They found that among students, both in college and non-college were members on average to almost four Facebook advocacy groups.

Here at UBC some of you may have heard the controversy regarding the UBC Aquatic Centre Weight room earlier this year. It was believed that when the weight room closed in mid April for scheduled maintenance that it would not reopen. To provide a little background, it was constructed in 1978 and students contributed 40 per cent of the building costs. [Korby, 2007].

There were two articles last March in the Ubyyssey, one addressed the closure [Korby, 2007] and the second discussed student reaction to the closure [Tang, 2007]. However, a Facebook page called “Save UBC Aquatic Centre’s Weight Room” [Harriman, 2007] was created that became a central location for people interested in learning about the situation, remaining informed, and inviting friends to join. The Wall and Discussion Board were used to provide support and share informally relevant information such as attendance at a recent Senate meeting.

[Slide 13:Aquatic Centre] However, what motivated students was the effective use of the Recent News and the Discussion Board. There was a long explanation of the background regarding why students are provided with free times today based on a 1978 Liability Act. Information was share regarding upcoming meetings to attend and press coverage. The names of people in power as well as their email addresses were displayed so that students knew *who* to contact and *how* they could be reached. The discussion board provided sample letters to send to those with influence. Digital media (i.e. Facebook) was used with a tool everyone was familiar with (i.e. email) to launch a plan for mobilising student support. In the end, victory was achieved and the Aquatic Centre gym will not be closing as had previously been announced. Joining advocacy groups on Facebook and acting on issues instills students with a sense of creativity and accomplishment – Maybe *I* can motivate people, instill action, organise event, create a group about something I am passionate about.

Recall from the Green College group how there were graduate students and post-docs joining that were coming to Green College in the Fall. They have already begun integrating themselves into the Green College community before setting foot on campus. This idea of networking before entering a university doesn’t seem limited to just graduate students. There is a 2007 Noel-Levitz report focusing on e-recruitment entitled

“Engaging the “Social Networking” Generation: How to talk to today’s college-bound Juniors and Seniors” [Noel-Levitz, 2007]. 1000 college-bound Juniors (Grade 11) were interviewed in the US regarding their expectations and behaviour on issues such as mobile phone usage, blogging, and college websites. The findings suggest that the Internet is becoming a social networking space for expressing creativity, communicating with friends, and sharing online.

[Slide 14: ‘Trek Park’] The Ubyyssey last Friday reported on the ‘Trek Park’ Petition which some students created last week to protest the university square construction site. So I checked to see if there was a Facebook group and lo and behold there was. This is just another example of bottom-up approach to advocacy.

[Slide 15: UBC Class] Here at UBC, students are using Facebook as an information space before they physically meet to be better prepared for their academic life. High school students that will be attending UBC in September have been creating 2011 groups such as UBC 2011, UBC class of 2011 – Ontario Chapter. If you search on Facebook, you will find hundreds of similar groups created by incoming students to their university. There are also professional student groups such as UBC Medicine 2011 and Northern Medical Program – Class of 2011.

[Slide 16: UBC Class] So what is going on within these groups? Let’s look at the UBC Class of 2011 group [Matheson, 2007]. Under Recent News, you can view information about registration dates, how to get a UBC interchange email account set up in order to join the UBC Facebook network, as well as important email addresses for international students. The photos uploaded are screenshots of the different screens (e.g. Student Service Centre and Netinfo registration) that have been added by the creator of the group along with step-by-step instructions. There is also a link to the ASSIST 2007 page which is an intense 2 week program to help international students adjust.

[Slide 17: UBC Marketplace] Earlier this spring Facebook launched an application called Marketplace which is like a networked version of Craigslist [Craigslist, 2007] where you get buy and sell items with photos, if desired. Students are using it to sell things (such as a car or textbooks) and find housing. So being on the UBC Network gives you access to the UBC Marketplace, there isn’t a global marketplace. What is interesting is how it can be used to assist students that are, for example, looking for a roommate as you can see whether you share a mutual friend. This brings an additional element of trust as you are able to find about the person from a “friend” which should be a reliable source. In addition, a couple of months ago, Book Exchange was launched that allowed members to buy/sell using ISBN.

[Slide 18: Birthday Greetings] Students also use Facebook for its value as a communication tool and to easily convey information to all their friends. On the main page when one logs in, is where members are kept up-to-date on upcoming Birthdays (3 days in advance). This is one of the most helpful bits of information Facebook provides because sometimes you’re so busy as a student you forget what day it is.

From the day before someone's birthday you will see "happy birthday" messages on their wall from their friends. This screams out "I'm loved", "I have friends that care", and it is especially touching from friends that are far away and that are not able to attend your birthday party (which you advertised on Facebook as an event).

[Slide 19: Gift Giving] Students send digital gifts to each other, which cost \$1 US and can contain a public or a private message. They are placed above the wall section as a default making them visible to anyone that can view that particular profile. It is another way that a student can tell another student that they are thinking about them.

[Slide 20: Act 3: Academic] So I have described for you what Facebook is and I have provided some information regarding how students use it. Now let's discuss Facebook from an academic perspective. Facebook was created as a place for university students to keep in touch with their friends – to further enhance their existing relationship. For students the environment fostered a sense of trust and exclusivity because it was "my-uni" centric enabling students to connect with one another in a digital place where one could feel comfortable *because* everyone was a student. So, it is no longer a 'student-only' space, which provides educators with an opportunity to better relate to students by understanding more about their digital world.

So how can Facebook be used as a learning tool? Fred Stutzman, a PhD student at the University of North Carolina is an expert on Facebook and wrote a relevant blog post last December called 'Facebook as a Tool for Learning Engagement' which I incorporated into this section of my presentation [Stutzman, 2006]. Remember that Facebook is a social space. It wasn't designed as a course management tool such as a wiki or WebCT. It is basically a place to organise your social life and Facebook still frames friendship in a real world college framework as evident by the options when adding how you know the friend you're adding. You don't see something like – "I read their blog" or "We are work colleagues". Instead you see options such as "Took a course together" or "We hooked up". This option doesn't have to be selected when adding a friend, it can always be added later. It is important then to understand the limitations of Facebook and who it is targeted at.

[Slide 21: LFS] Facebook is also a great place for organising events. Just create the event, add a cool photo or graphic, and easily invite friends. This could be used to promote an open house such as was done for the Learning Centre which Cyprien Lomas is the director at UBC. As it is an open event, students can invite their friends. At the event, you could take photos, tag people and then post them to Facebook either on the events page or on the department/lab group that you have. Photos, groups, events are all ways of directly engaging with students – you are at a real world event and are able to create a digital memory of it.

[Slide 22: Create] I just found out about a course at Stanford University called "Create Engaging Web Applications Using Metrics and Learning on Facebook" [Stanford University, 2007] that is being offered this term at their computer science department. Students will build applications for Facebook, then gather and

analyze detailed information about how Facebook users actually use them. Students will focus on using detailed numerical measurements to guide software iterations, just like developers do on thousands of existing Facebook applications:

- Students in the class will work in groups of three, first developing an application designed to appeal to most Facebook users.
- Groups will then develop a second application, more closely focused around helping students use Facebook for education, such as a way for students to share class notes with each other.
- They'll be graded based on how many Facebook users they can get actively using their applications.

[Slide 23: Look to Apps] Last night I discovered a group on Facebook for teaching and learning called *Create Apps for Facebook* for the course, which is an open group for non-Stanford students [Fogg, 2007]. The creator of the group is the course co-instructor Dr. BJ Fogg. On the Facebook page restricted to the course students, BJ Fogg outlines 3 advantages of using Facebook for the course:

- The students use Facebook and enjoy it
- The social network is already built in
- Everyday there are additional applications being added

[Slide 24:Act 4] Should TA or professors create a group for their class? I am unsure. Facebook is a “casual, fun” place and it doesn't have the same academic maturity that is in a WebCT, a wiki, or a blog that is run by a class because of that social framework. Would a student feel it is appropriate to see course-related messages right after receiving a message from their friend sharing their pictures from the beach? In addition, who owns the content and how much control exists by members in Facebook? What happens mid-course if Yahoo buys Facebook?

That said, it may be advisable if one desires to create a course group to use an invite-only group that isn't visible to everyone. In addition, for contacting students, WebCT or email would be preferred for academic correspondence. The students I spoke to would like to keep their social life and friends separate from the academic world.

Again, as educators, as members of the university community that interact with students daily, it is important to understand, and use, these new channels of communication such as Facebook, text messaging, instant messaging that come naturally for these students. Think of Facebook as an information space through which someone's profile can be used to engage people.

Again, remember there is a power relationship between UBC educators and students and as Facebook up to a year ago was a student-only space, boundaries should be respected. You should let students friend you. Remember that with the News Feed all their friends will be aware of it. Those that know you or think it cool to have a faculty member as one of their friends may also “friend” you.

If you are friended, you should not cross contexts. Stutzman [2006], that I referred to earlier discusses this as a person of power (i.e. you) bringing up something from their profile (for example that they added Gilmour Girls to their favourite tv shows). That would just feel weird. However, if their status message changed to reflect something academically cool happening in their life (e.g. got a full scholarship to medical school), then it would be ok to congratulate them next time you meet face to face.

[Slide 25:Terms] So this interaction between UBC faculty and students within an online environment is a touchy area because the conventions and rules of behaviour are not always clear in a digital space (e.g. what does it mean to poke someone?). So read the terms and service of Facebook. Understand the environment to determine if there are any copyright issues that should be addressed. Play around with it. Talk to students to better understand how it works. Learn the cultural boundaries.

Regarding this I recommend reading an April 3 online article in Inside Higher Ed entitled “The Brave New World of MySpace and Facebook” [Steinbach & Deavers, 2007] in which 2 lawyers discuss how campus administrators need to be cautious about students engaging in these spaces in 3 areas:

- What about the threat of criminal behaviour?
- How may they be perceived to potential future employers?
- Are there any possible violation of UBC’s code of conduct?

[Slide 26: Privacy] What are the privacy issues regarding Facebook? Mark Z. founded Facebook on three principles: control, access to information, and exclusivity. Every feature that is visible such as your date of birth doesn’t need to be displayed on your profile page. Look at the privacy overview, profile and search features can be adjusted to control who can view your profile or find you when searching. From the standpoint of displaying your profile to other people, more and more people are setting their profile to ‘only friends’ because as a friend said “you never know who is on Facebook now”.

[Slide 27: News]] Privacy can also be controlled in the news feed. For example, you may decide that times when you perform stories in Facebook shouldn't be revealed, in case you don't want friends to know you were creating photo albums at 4 in the morning.

[Slide 28:Tagging] One of the interesting aspects of Facebook is the tagging of photos. Facebook now can be accessed via one’s mobile phone as text messages or via the mobile web browser. It is also quite easy to upload pictures from a camera phone or a digital camera, tag them (meaning that you click on your friend’s face and then add their name from a list). What this does is push that picture onto your Mini Feed as it is uploaded. It will also appear in your friend’s Mini Feed and should appear in the main News Feed sent to our respective friends as “Phillip Jeffrey has been tagged in a photo by Susan Smith”.

Photos can be un-tagged after the fact, but people cannot prevent friends from tagging them. As an academic with student friends, you will have to think whether is it acceptable to tag them in photos without their permission?

[Slide 29: Blocking] The ability exists to block people, such as stalkers, so that searches for your name do not return anything to them. You can also create limited profiles for people. In addition, when you send someone a message in Facebook, they can view your profile for one month. But again, you are able to control what you share with them. Maybe you only want to share your name rather than your photos or even your wall comments from friends. Just ask yourself, what information do I want to share and who is looking at it?

[Slide 30:Public] Last week Facebook became searchable by google. So simply typing the name “Cyprien Lomas” will return his Facebook search listing which includes in this case his profile picture, his name, and the ability to send him a private message, request to become his friend, and poke him. It is possible in the privacy features to change this so that one does not become visible on public searches.

[Slide 31:Privacy] During my talk at this year’s town hall [Jeffrey, 2007], I learned from an audience member that there may be issues regarding the transferring of student information outside of British Columbia. So it would be wise to look into whether there are legalities in creating course groups on Facebook.

[Slide 32:Why Popular?] This is a picture of 23 year old Justine Ezarik (called ijustine), who became famous on the Internet when she made a video of her 300 page iPhone bill from AT&T which is posted to Revver, a video sharing platform [Ezarik, 2007; Revver, 2007]. So why are digital media such as Facebook popular among youth? Youth grow up around digital technology, they have a desire to share with others, and want to extend creativity beyond their immediate friends. One can see examples of this in video sharing sites such as Revver [Revver, 2007] where members create a short MeToday video or in YouTube [YouTube, 2007], in which youth as directors create fun skits for their subscribers (eg. LisaNova [LisaNova, 2007]).

[Slide 33:Strive for Identity] So my theory is that creativity is being expressed by teens and young adults within Facebook and I have a few references to share with you that I would like to use for support.

[Slide 34: Growing] One of the first books to explore the digital experiences of young people in Canada and the United States is called “Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation” [Tapscott, 1998]. It follows the children of the baby boomers, (born between 1977 – 1997) labeled the “net generation [N-Gen]” [p.2] and states that they are the first generation to grow up immersed in digital media throughout their daily lives [Tapscott, 1998].

[Slide 35:Generation Me] More recently, “Generation Me: Why Today’s Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled, and More Miserable Than Ever

Before” [Twenge, 2006], discusses how those born in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s should be called Generation Me as the ‘Net Generation’ label hasn’t seemed to have caught on. For “GenMe” [p4], the focus is on independence, feeling good about oneself, getting fulfillment out of helping others such as volunteerism, and a belief in self-expression.

[Slide 36:Facebook] According to a study of 9-17 years olds [National School Boards Association, 2007], young people today are spending a significant amount of their time online interacting with their real-world friends and engaging in activities that promote creativity through the creation, manipulation, and sharing of their content. These activities include: writing on message boards; sharing videos, photos, or artwork of their own creation; or creating personal online journal entries.

Goffman [1959] in the “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life” wrote about the importance of self-presentation – especially for youth you strive to answer the question “Who am I”. In one’s daily life, this type of impression management and cultural activity is visible in youth’s style of dress, personal tastes, hairstyle, and attitude. I would also expect today this behaviour to manifest itself in digital spaces.

[Slide 37:Merging of] Canadian youth aged 9-17 reported that they did not perceive the Internet as a separate environment [Media Awareness Network, 2005], instead believing that their virtual and physical spaces have merged. This may not be too surprising as the Internet become increasing pervasive within Canadian society.

So young people are using digital technology to enhance their skills, extend creativity...they are being drawn to this communicate and shared spaces for interactions that are as natural to them as breathing. User-generated spaces such as Facebook are just another platform for self-expression.

[Slide 38:Digital Natives]] In closing, Marc Prensky [Prensky, 2001] wrote an article in 2001 called “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants” regarding students in the educational system that is still relevant today. Digital natives are those that grew up their whole lives with digital technologies (e.g. mobile phones, IM, ipods), they are “native speakers of the digital language of computers, video games, and the Internet”. Digital Immigrants have adopted aspects of digital technology later on in life, they continue to adapt and “struggle to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language”. The best way to reach the digital natives is to immerse yourself in these online and mobile technologies. Have fun and good luck.

[Final Slide] I thank you for coming. My blog is called Fade to Play and this blog entry will be tagged “Brownbaglunchseries”. I will also be uploading my slides to Slideshare.net.

I will now take questions.

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