

Creative Expression and Social Networking in a Digital Culture: Why Students Heart Facebook (and why you should too!)

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UBC e-strategy Town Hall
June 21, 2007

Citation: Jeffrey, Phillip (2007). Creative Expression and Social Networking in a Digital Culture. Why Students Heart Facebook (and why you should too!). *UBC e-strategy Town Hall Workshop*. University of British Columbia, June 21.

[This is an expanded version of the actual talk. There are corresponding slides which accompany the text in addition to a podcast]

Act 1: Introduction

[slide1] When I was talking to one of the friends in my lab, a student that doesn't have Facebook, he relayed the story to me about how his friend had lost her wallet. It didn't contain her phone number or a current address, however when she logged onto Facebook, there was a request from someone to meet up to give her back her wallet. Apparently the person had gone onto Facebook and found her name because students are all on Facebook.

Good afternoon and I thank all of you for coming. It is a pleasure to be given the opportunity to speak at this year's town hall. My name is Phillip Jeffrey. I am a graduate student in the Interdisciplinary Studies program and my home department is the Media and Graphics Interdisciplinary Centre (or MAGIC as its called). My presentation is entitled "Creative Expression and Social Networking in a Digital Culture: Why Students Heart Facebook (and why you should too!). For the next hour I hope to educate you on how Facebook is being used by students and provide some guidance on its value as a research or educational tool. I took this picture of this student with her t-shirt labelled "I stalk you on Facebook" at this year's Arts County Fair and I felt it would be an appropriate example of student creativity regarding Facebook here at UBC.

[s2] I have broken my presentation down into 4 sections. First, I will describe what Facebook is. Next I will explain how it is being used by students. I will then outline potential effective strategies for using Facebook in an academic environment and I will conclude by drawing attention to privacy issues within Facebook. [s3] Facebook [Facebook, 2007] is a social utility that connect you with the people around you. It has also been called a social networking site, which can be defined as a digital space that enables members to create a public or friends-only viewable personal profile [boyd, 2006; NMC, 2007] and provide tools to build a network of "friends" that are visible and connected with one another.

[s4] Rather than provide a lot, actually pretty much any text, on my slides, 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. For example, this screenshot of "thefacebook" as it was called back in 2004 was uploaded by Brian "DocaBu" Moore. What should be noted from the original profile page is how student-centric one's profile page was. For example, under access it says "Brian is logged in under a non-residential location". Clicking on "My Parties" would show Brian the upcoming parties he had RSVP'd for. There is a space where Brian has included

the residence as well as his room number and there are also photos and names of his friends also at his university.

Facebook was launched in February 2004 by a Harvard sophomore named Mark Zuckerberg, who was 19 at the time. His objective was to create a space where students could communicate and socialise with their real-world friends at Harvard based on three principles: control, ease of access to information, and exclusivity. By control, this meant that students could determine what level of privacy they wanted to display personal information (e.g. share a phone number only with friends, but display religion to everyone). By ease of access to information, this meant that it was easy to find out which of your friends were also taking Psych 200 simply by clicking the Psych 200 hyperlink. By exclusivity, this meant that you could only search and access information for your own university (e.g. Harvard) and your little brother in high school was out of luck.

After beginning as a Harvard-only venture, Facebook expanded to include other universities as requests came in from students to add their school. High-schools were later added, last Fall Facebook was opened to the public allowing anyone with a valid email address to join (including your mom). Features on Facebook also appeared over time such as the ability to share photo albums with friends, to write notes, import a blog entry, and most recently the Facebook platform was opened to developers to create applications inside Facebook such as displaying Flickr photos.

[s5] This is an example of my profile page. I have closed the different features and applications so that everything could be visible on one screen. At the top is a link to my profile, Friends will show me all of my friends, Networks will show the two networks I am on, and Inbox is like email, I am able to send a private message to any of my friends. On the left hand side are displayed Applications in which clicking a link will display my own as well as my friends. You can see Photos, which are actually photo albums, Groups that I or my friends have joined as well as you can search for public groups in Facebook, 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.

Beneath my profile picture, it shows the number of photos in which I have been tagged either by myself or others. Tagging just means that someone attached my full name to a picture using a drop-down menu of one's friends. There is a system message stating that I am online now and beneath my name in the top right corner it says my current status "Phillip Jeffrey is giving his UBC Town Hall workshop presentation". Below is some basic information about me such as the UBC and Vancouver networks that I'm on 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 contain profile pictures of friends at UBC, below "Friends in other networks" will show the number and networks (e.g. University of Toronto, 2) where I have friends. Photos will show all of my photo albums, Posted Items are webpages/links of interest that I have posted for my friends to see, and Groups will display all the groups I am a member of.

On the right hand side are the mini-feed which show actions (called stories by Facebook) that I perform in Facebook (e.g. Phillip joined the group Northern Voice Conference), Information are things such as my interests, favourite movies, about me. People write stuff here so that friends know more about them. In addition, each word is actually a hyperlink so clicking the "Heroes" link under favourite TV shows will display all the people that also have that written in their profile in my network. Gift box are

digital gifts that friends have sent, The Wall is where friends can leave comments for me which are visible to anyone that can view my profile. Education and Work shows my education background and work experience, Notes are notes that I have written or blog entries that I have imported. Video are videos that must include friends or myself. The next applications have been created by people not affiliated with Facebook: twitter, favourite quotes, ma.gnolia, and I'm reading.

Before I move on, it should be noted that if I was showing the profile of someone else, if we had any mutual friends these profile pictures would be visible behind that person's profile picture. In addition, any application or feature doesn't need to be visible to friends.

[s6] As I just stated on the left are two wall comments. The first is from myself and reads "Has anyone ever written on their own wall when they meant to reply to a friend?". What is funny is that everyone at least once has accidentally written on their own wall rather than replying to a wall comment written by a friend. Below is a wall comment by Cyprien Lomas. I can view all the comments that we have written to each other on a separate page by clicking "wall-to-wall", I can write a comment on his wall, send a private message, or delete it. On the right hand side are displayed some of the groups I belong to (e.g. Web Wireless Vancouver) and I also included below what the photo album feature looks like which displays my last two photo albums.

[s7] The Minifeed feature as shown here displays all the actions a user performs or has performed on them. Jessamyn wrote in her status message "in Manhattan...Kansas" which appears in her Mini Feed as "Jessamyn is in Manhattan...Kansas". By clicking the X, a user is able to hide a story from their profile page but that doesn't delete it, it may still appear in the News Feed visible to all of their friends.

[s8] The News Feed shows the actions performed by my friends. It is the screen that is visible whenever you log into Facebook. In the middle screen is shown actions such as "Bob has created a group", "Boris added new photos", "Susan wrote on Sandy's wall". It is a way to keep informed of what is going in my friends lives without having to call each one or if I see something cool, it may lead to a call or message to them to discuss it. On the right hand side, it shows friend requests and invitations to events or applications that friends have added. I can see my current status update as well as view the most recent 3 updates from my friends. I can also see my upcoming events over the week, and any recent marketplace listings from friends. One of the coolest features are the birthday notifications from about 3 days in advance so I know which of my friends have a birthday upcoming. At the bottom I can use the contact importer to find my friends that are already on Facebook via my email address or invite new ones to join.

[s9] Clicking on Preferences on the News Feed screen doesn't have to do with privacy, instead it enables you to get more or less of the stories by your friends. For example, you may decide you want to receive more stories about when people add friends and less when people add photo albums. You can also choose to receive more stories about some friends and receive less information about others. For example, if you add a childhood friend you may not as interested in all of their stories each day.

[s10] Time magazine named everyone that uses the Internet as Person of the Year for 2007. This mashup of the magazine cover by Flickr user jjessalo places a Facebook profile page screenshot as if Facebook is being displayed in the computer shown. Facebook has over 24 million active users, with almost 3 million being Canadian. It has had about 3% average growth since January and more than 100 000 new registrations have been added a day since then.

The fastest growing demographic is 25+. Sixty percent log in daily. It is the number one photo sharing

application on the web with more than 1.8 billion photos on site. There are more than 6 million photos uploaded daily and 2.2 billion friends have been tagged in photos. There are more than 6 million active groups and Canada has the most users outside the US.

Act 2: How do students use it?

[s11] In Facebook, the ability to comment on another friend's wall, share photos, broadcast status updates, and send messages between friends are features designed to foster community. 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 graduate residence called Green College [Green College, 2007] after our pancake breakfast for incoming students last September. Green College is situated on a beautiful property overlooking the water across from the Chan Centre. We are 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)" last Fall.

[s12] 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 this academic year began last September there were a lot more. Having a group would just make it easier to find GC residents as she wrote under Recent News.

We already use a student-run mailing list as well as a wiki and website that are password-controlled for disseminating information among our members. What the Green College Facebook group allows us to do is share aspects of everyday Green College life with the Facebook community.

Our motto is "Ideas and Friendship" and we created a global group (meaning anyone, anywhere with a Facebook membership can join) in order 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.

Each member of the group (at present there are 120) can request a cool and interesting officer title courtesy of Mika if they don't have a preference themselves. As shown on the right-hand side, each officer is listed with their picture, title, and name. Any Green College resident can also become an administrator which provides additional control such as being able to add officers or send out broadcast messages to the entire group.

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 network profiles on UBC can't be viewed by them (specifically those not friends-only). Nor would non-UBC network people be able to see groups or events specifically created for the UBC network. It is for that reason that most groups and events are created so that they are visible globally to all on Facebook.

[s13] The Green College group also has open access. Facebook allows the administrator (can be more than one) to determine the access for new members. It can be open (anyone can join and invite others to join, non-members can see the members photos, group information, the discussion board, the wall, and any photos); it can be closed (admin approval required for adding new members, non-members can see the members of the group but can't see the discussion board, wall or photos); it can also be secret. Now a secret group means that it will not appear in search results or on the profile page of any members. New members can only be invited and any information about the group is only visible to members. Even if you chose to have an open or closed group, you can also have the group excluded from the Networks page (e.g. UBC) or in the search results. [s14] Members with administrator access can change anything on the group page except the name and network on which it is situated.

[s15] On the group page, members can add news, upload photos either from one of their photo albums on Facebook or their desktop, start targeted topics on the discussion board (e.g. someone has written about the Green College article on wikipedia), view the membership, or write comments on the wall.

[s16] Let's view the wall comments. This is a screenshot from 4 different people. The first is from Mika, the group's creator offering a friendly message for new members about becoming an officer or an admin. The next 2 are people that are excited about coming to Green College in September and have joined the Green College group after getting their acceptance letters. I'll read one, "Hello, I will be living at Green College starting in the fall and after reading the Greenie's Magazine I'm starting to get really excited about the move!". The last is from a Green College alumnus thanking 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" last month 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.

[s17] 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. Within Canada, the CBC [Burman, 2007], last month began a partnership with Facebook and the Canadian Youth Organization called "Student Vote" to create "the Great Canadian Wish List". Leading up to our 140th birthday, Canadians can share opinions and hopes on the discussion board and wall while having their "wishes" counted. On Canada Day, CBC News will announce the top ideas from across Canada.

[s18] 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.

[s19] 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.

[s20] 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.

[s21] 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.

[s22] One can also find various UBC groups such as the UBC Board & UBC-V Senate Info and the UBC co-op where students collaborate for work purposes and discuss internship possibilities.

[s23] 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.

[s24] When the Virginia Tech tragedies occurred, students turned to Facebook to express their sympathy and share in the grief. People used their status message to broadcast that they were ok to their friends. In addition, immediately someone created a group on the Virginia Tech network where Virginia Tech students could let others in the VT community know that they were ok and to track down friends. It was solely for information, not for outsiders to provide condolences, which is why it wasn't global. Those that personally knew the victims created memorial pages such as "Remembering Ryan 'Stack' Clark". Both Canadians and those from around the world felt compelled to create broad memorial sites such as "A tribute to those who passed at the Virginia Tech Shooting" and "A tribute from Canadian students to those who passed away at Virginia Tech" [Belous, 2007].

[s25] On sites such as the Canadian tribute page, students would leave comments expressing their sadness for the event. Students would also replace their profile picture with one that included the VT logo and their university logo as shown here on the right-hand side as a show of solidarity. A little side comment on how things spread virally – a University of Miami student named J. Russell Denney created this phrase "Forget any and all college affiliations today. For today, we are all Hokies" (which refers to the school football team) and many people included this quote in blog posts, comments, and mashups of the VT logo as shown here.

If a tragedy happened at UBC, it would be best for the administration to use all available means to contact students (email, phone, and Facebook). However, this isn't a way to mass contact everyone on a network. Facebook is viral though, and people could quickly create notes, update their status message, write on their own wall about the situation – it would get broadcast through the News Feed to everyone's friends quickly.

[s26] 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).

[s27] 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.

[s28] As I discussed earlier, as a default, actions (called stories) that students perform on Facebook or involve them are shared on the News Feed after appearing in each students' Mini Feed on their profile.

For example, when a student adds a friend it would say “Phillip and Susan Smith are now friends” in each of their Mini Feeds. In the News Feed which is visible to all of their friends, it would say “Phillip Jeffrey and Susan Smith are now friends”. Now people can completely turn off their Mini-Feed so that their stories don't appear in their friends' News Feed. In addition, adjusting the privacy settings will control what is shared with others. The benefit of the News Feed for students is that they can keep up-to-date on how their friends are doing.

[s29] There is a Status Updates page where all the status messages from friends are visible. The status message is used in a variety of ways such as broadcasting emotions, information, or questions to all of the student's friends as everyone knows that can be read on the News Feed page. It is in a sense a bullhorn. For example, one of the messages read “Susan is looking like a drowned rat”.

[s30] Students live in a digital and mobile environment. As many students have laptops, they are able to access Facebook wherever, whenever they desire. With wi-fi available throughout the campus, students can naturally create knowledge spaces in any location, to do their work.

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.

Act 3: Facebook as a Learning Tool

[s31] 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.

[s32] The group function provides a light-weight method of disseminating information [Stutzman, 2006]. People join groups because it enables them to feel part of something. The UBC BirdCoop Fitness group was started by one of the student staff members. Under Recent News it lists the new hours and one of the Discussion Board questions asks viewers “What you like about the Coop” with requests that you email the manager Laura using the email provided. This gives the members of the Birdcoop whom socialise there regularly a community space online.

[s33] A research lab could do the same thing which would also promote the lab to the Facebook community such as upcoming events by creating an event page that links to the group page. I couldn't find any examples of labs at UBC, however here is the page of the EDGE Lab at Dalhousie created by Kori Inkpen, who received her dissertation here at UBC and heads up the lab. Again, recall this notion

of folding time that I spoke about while discussing Green College. This is a shared space for students interested in joining the lab, current students, and past members that may now be faculty or researchers from around the world to interact. It can become an archive of knowledge. Faculty departments could do the same thing. Existing students could upload photos of cool projects they have done. Links could be shared testimonials from students posted to YouTube. This is the digital age, *use* the tools students are familiar with to connect with them and share information. If you keep the group open, then students are able to invite their friends to join as well.

[s34] This is a library profile I found. There may actually be some issues regarding Facebook as this isn't a real person but it may be useful for libraries such as Koerner to create a group.

[s35] 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.

[s36] For those that attend conferences and workshops, check if a Facebook event or group already exists. If not, then create one. It is a great way to network prior to the conference to find out about accommodations, recommended talks to attend, determine which attendees you *should* know. In addition, when you join, all your friends should become aware of it through the newsfeed. It is a good way to stay in touch afterwards.

[s37] What should be noted here is that although there is a Facebook group there is a link to the wiki for the organisation of the conference simply because it provides control over the content and allows functionality that Facebook can't provide.

[s38] The Notes function can be used in the same way. A lot of students in Facebook either write notes or use an RSS feed in order to import photos or a blog entry into the notes section. This is a note that a student wrote during a bout of procrastination. "It's hard to resist the temptation for all of these amazing activities when you have that insane assignment tomorrow: go jogging, go for sushi, talk on the phone as long as possible, whatever can help you procrastinate a little bit more..."

So for UBC staff, why not use the Notes function to broadcast to your friends (whether students or other colleagues) as you write about your day after giving a conference presentation or share what's going on in your department. In the note, you can also upload a photo with the note AND when you post the note, all of your friends will know through the News Feed.

[s39] If you want to have the note directed at specific friends just tag them in the note (which just means that their name is associated with the note and they become notified that a note posted is of interest to them). Everyone that can view the note can see who has also been tagged. And the note remains as long as you want. It should be noted that notes can be seen by anyone that can see your profile. Also if you tag Susan's name, for example, then Jill, if she is Susan's friend, can also view your note because it is associated now with Susan's profile which Jill has access as well as her friend even though Jill isn't your friend.

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 to go to a Foam Party? 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.

[s40] Campus ads which are included on the UBC network page and on the left side of the page you are viewing and can be created by anyone for \$5 for 10000 times viewing per day. I have seen them used by the UBC AMS (Alma Maters Society) to broadcast their election dates for student government. As shown here you have the UBC network page, showing a UBC flyer for a Grouse Grind Social Night which when clicked takes you to their Grouse Grind Social Night group page.

So these types of direct engagement with UBC students can also be used for building a relationship with students that are not yet a part of our community. Facebook can potentially be a recruitment tool – e-recruitment. For example, The University of Florida used Facebook to successfully get more people into 3 graduate programs they targeted [July, 2007]. A UBC flyer on the Vancouver network may be useful in letting high school students, that are on the Vancouver network, learn more about UBC.

[s41] 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.

So, knowing that are UBC staff out there, I will provide advice on how to create a profile for directly engaging with your friendship group and students within the UBC network. First off, you will have to decide whether you want to maximise the amount of students that connect with you such as joining the UBC or Vancouver network or would you rather just have a friends-only profile. I can't really answer that, it just depends on the level of privacy you desire and any concerns you have regarding others seeing your profile.

Again, remember there is a power relationship between UBC faculty and students and as Facebook up to last September 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.

[s42] For your profile, you are creating a digital identity, you are sharing something about yourself that students 1) don't feel threatened by 2) shows you as being human. You don't need to add content such as your birthday, religion, or marital status, however putting down some of your favourite books or movies shares something about your personality.

[s43] Photos are key. They don't have to be of your trip to Disney World but professional – e.g a talk at

a conference, or a picture of you on a field trip. Perhaps you may even want to post a video from one of your graduate students talking about their research. You may want to post URLs to cool articles you've written or write a note describing a city you've just been to. This is also an opportunity to start blogging and RSS the feed into Facebook, it could be pictures you've taken, or links to interesting websites you've bookmarked. You can use your status message to broadcast information to your friends -- "I am attending our departmental open house tomorrow". These are all examples of profile-based engagement in which your actions become known to all your friends via the News Feed in order to keep students informed about interesting things.

[s44] 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. If you do decide to engage students on a Class 2011 group for example, send in intermediaries such as student ambassadors to answer questions, provide advice as necessary. You may also want to join as an officer as students may want to directly contact you. Learn the cultural boundaries. Perhaps UBC should set up a social networking or a Facebook workshop and have a panel with tech-savvy UBC people such as Brian Lamb and Cyprien Lomas who are exploring these digital spaces for their educational value. Or it may be useful to have a link on the UBC page to articles that provide advice on student use of Facebook.

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?

Final Act: Privacy Overview

[s45] 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".

[s46] 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.

[s47] 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 it is acceptable to tag them in photos without their permission?

[s48] 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?

Don't be scared about new technology, don't think of yourself as technophobic, don't get overwhelmed. Remember it is important that institutions understand new technology in order to stay current with their students. In fact universities in the States such as the University of Michigan are creating Social Computing programs where graduate students are doing research in digital spaces such as Facebook [School of Information, 2007].

At UBC, there are people that continue to travel the world discussing how these digital tools are being used by students and their value as educational tools. Seek these people out – learn from them. Yes, they are on Facebook, creating groups and networking with people they have met. People like Brian Lamb and Cyprien Lomas. Get on Facebook and see how Internet-related groups are out there such as Classroom 2.0 or go to an un-conference such as Barcamp Vancouver 07 where you can discuss whatever technology interests you have. One of the organizers is Kris Krüg of Bryght and it takes place in August.

[s49] 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 you'll be helping your students succeed in this information age.

[s50] I thank you for coming to my talk. This presentation is being podcast thanks to Duncan McHugh and Cyprien Lomas and I will be uploading this talk to my blog (fadetoplay.com) as well as provide links to related references. Pictures will be posted on flickr under “ubctownhall2007” over the next week.

I will now take questions.

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