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Facebook and Information Trust

Facebook as a tool of information seeking and trust in the information gathered

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ABSTRACT:

This thesis explores Facebook as a social networking site and its uses as an information-seeking tool. This research was set out two explore two facets of information seeking when utilizing Facebook: why do people utilize Facebook as an information-seeking tool and what makes them trust the information that they have gathered through that tool. The main focus of this study is linked to aspects of information trustworthiness. This research uncovered that people utilize Facebook to gather either social information or miscellaneous information. Where the type of search influenced the usage of Facebook with five main categories: "monitoring" people, searching for social events or groups, searching for people with perceived similar previous experience and searching for specific pages. Trust was separated into two main parties, the system (i.e. Facebook itself) and the users. Trust with the system was low due to internal factors, such as privacy settings, and extraneous factors, such as Internet hackers. Trust in information between users was influenced by when the trust was established between the users, if trust was breached and whether the other user is known or unknown.

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Gothenburg, Sweden, May 2009

1.0. INTRODUCTION

According to Giddens (2002:16), globalization is a multifaceted process encompassing the economic, cultural, political and technological spheres of the modern world. Furthermore, the impact of the globalization is multicausal, where spatial and temporal hindrances are gradually decreasing.

One particular occurrence that is partly due to the globalization process is the world slipping into a new era often referred to as the information age. Fundamentally, the information age rests on the notion that the advances of technology have steadily altered social and communication patterns around the world (Mesch & Talmud, 2011). The developments in technology have permitted individuals all over the world to access virtually almost any information anywhere at anytime.

Although describing globalization and the information age is too complex these primary notions are essential in the fathoming that nowadays, due to these processes, individuals in the modern world are potentially submerged with great amounts of information (Mesch & Talmud, 2011). The implications are vast but one particular concern is how do individuals decipher between material that they consider useful, valid and trustworthy.

Now, one crucial aspect of gathering information is information seeking behavior. Often, when individuals search for information when they are faced with a challenging task, they encounter two major methods to acquire information: asking someone more competent (e.g. teacher) or usage of artifacts for relevant information (e.g. books) (Zimmerman & Pons, 1986). These in the past were strongly delineated patterns of behavior. As presented by Zimmerman and Fons (1986), the former pattern, asking a more competent individual, was defined as "seeking social assistance". The later, using artifacts was presented as "seeking information". Therefore, help seeking was defined as human-human interaction and information seeking as human-artifact interaction. However, according to Puustinen and Rouet (2009), due to technological developments enabling the integration of human in artifact-based information seeking has now blurred this previously strong dichotomization. Nowadays, one can use an artifact, such as a computer and access information using a program but get extra information or help due to the interation of "humans" in the system, e.g. Wikipedia is both an artifact as it is an encyclopedia but is developed by other humans mixing human and artifact interaction. Furthermore, Puustinen and Rouet (2009), present the idea that help and information seeking should be presented along a continuum where both pure help and information seeking behavior exist but are gradually becoming less common.

1.1. Purpose

Nowadays, one could argue that the main interaction people have with an artifact to search for information is a computer and the usage of Internet. Furthermore, it was presented by Mussell (2012) that since its introduction, the bulk of people's interaction with the Internet is with social media. These claims were supported by the Facebook having over 800 millions users of which half log on everyday. Furthermore, Twitter has over 100 million users and over a billion tweets a week and YouTube has over 3 billion video views everyday.

This virtual world of social media has opened new areas of research and concern both for the scientific world and the general population. This interest is spurred due to the

huge interaction people have with social media and its implication across situation, for example in conflict (e.g. Zeitzoff, 2011). One particular aspect that has risen to be a hot topic is the idea of "virtual trust". How is trust established between people in a virtual "arena"? According to Pettit (2004), the establishment of trust between two strangers in a virtual setting is impossible due to the lack of evidence of one another. However, some social media such as Facebook usually connects people who already know each other before the Facebook interaction. Furthermore, de Laat (2005) has argued both theoretically and empirically that people in the virtual scene demonstrate acts of trust relying on social cues and reputation built on the virtual space. One recent incident that occurred in Gothenburg even demonstrated "over-trustworthiness" when high school students were outraged about sex rumors that had been posted on the social network Instagram. Teens had been sharing pictures of other students labeling them as "sluts" or "whores". These teens went on to riot and even through bottles and rocks at the police (The Local Swedish News in English, 2012).

1.2. Research Question

This research would like to combine all of these modern issues and research information seeking behavior using social media and more specifically when do people consider the information trustworthy. The specific research question presented is, what makes people trust information that they have gathered on Facebook? This research question is twofold, where the first aspect is researching why individuals use Facebook rather than another tool to search for information. The second facet and most important one is what makes people trust (or not) the information that they have gathered using Facebook. As previously iterated this research is motivated due to the large interaction that people have nowadays with social media. Trusting someone that is not trustworthy can easily occur in the virtual world. Furthermore, trust and social media is a hotly debated topic and has recently been shown to have grave consequences.

2.0. LITTERATURE REVIEW

This section defines the factors that are essential to fathom in order to understand all the facets of this research question. Furthermore, this segment of this paper will explores some of the relate studies to the research. The first fragments explore the concept of social media and information seeking. Finally, the final segment will explore some definitions of trust. It is important to note that according to the researchers' knowledge much research has been carried out on social media but little concerning information seeking and trust, therefore not many studies directly linked to this research can be preseted.

2.1. Social Media

First, it is fundamental to get a clear idea of what social media means. Very often in research the word and concept of social media is thrown around without describing it properly with the expectation, due to its success, that everyone knows its exact meaning.

Now, media is described as any instrument on communication. Therefore, media encompasses all means of communicating information such as radio, newspaper or video. Thus, social media is a social instrument on communication (Wang, Cui, Sun, Chua & Yang, 2012: 179). Wang et al. (2012), further present that the notion of social media is more specifically, an Internet based application that allows the sharing of user-generated content. The central and key aspect of social media is that the content is user-generated. In this fashion this definition includes obvious sites such as Facebook, Twitter or YouTube and also other sites less commonly referred to as social media such as Yelp, Trip Advisor and Wikipedia. In terms of media and information sharing this has many implication as it has reshaped the way one searches for information. Furthermore, due to this consumer-generated information, social media at times has been referred to as forming a "collective-Intelligence" (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010).

Xiang and Gretzel (2010) claim that the development of social media has fundamentally altered the tourism-related information paradigm. First, in a study conducted by Travel Industry Association of America, it was reported that about two thirds (64%) of all traveller used search engines (e.g. Google) for travel planning and organizing. Now, according to the authors the phenomenon is here the link between search engine search and its link to social media sites and it is highly under-investigated. In this study it was found that an information search related to tourism resulted in a substantial amount of information responses by social media sites. This implied that the 64% of people doing travel planning using the Internet were confronted with a substantial amount of information given by social media sites. However, no information was provided on the estimation of how many of the 64% actually used these social media sites.

2.2. Information Seeking

As afore defined, information seeking behavior can be described along a continuum of help seeking and information searching. The former, described seeking information or help by demanding information from a person who is perceived as competent and the latter, is defined using artifacts to search for information (Puustinen & Rouet, 2009).

Now, most recent studies utilize this continuum paradigm to explain information seeking behavior in technologies allowing the integration of human interaction. In a study carried out by Stenmark and Jadaan (2008), they studied information-seeking behavior and the utilization of e-mail. In this study, the artifact was the computer system but the use of e-mail integrated the human-human interaction when searching for information. This study revealed that individuals particularly enjoyed using e-mails to look for certain pieces of information due to its people-centric nature. In other words, people enjoyed the human-human interaction.

This study portrays an important factor that is potentially related to the social media and Facebook. Individuals enjoyed the people-centric nature of e-mail, due to the fact that social media is rooted in consumer-generated material this people-centric aspect of information seeking can be potentially present in researching with social media.

One study conducted by Stefanone, Hurley and Yang (2011), investigated the usage of Facebook for individuals to reduce uncertainty regarding individuals connected to the social networking site. They demonstrated that individuals utilized Facebook in order to reduce global uncertainty when it came to new friends and otherwise for already existing friends people utilized Facebook to gather information about communication apprehensions. An interesting finding was that geographical distance did not seem to influence information seeking behavior for uncertainty-avoidance.

Although this researched taped onto information seeking and Facebook usage, it did not look into what are the reasons for people to utilize Facebook as an information-seeking tool. This study simply explored how people utilized Facebook to gather information to reduce uncertainty between them and their Facebook friends.

2.3. Trust

According to Lapavitsas (2007), trust is an essential ingredient in an information sharing relationship. First, an information relationship is socially constructed, creating dissimilar patterns of trust development and sustainment between different types of parties, i.e. different between friends, relatives or a financial institution (Lapavitsas, 2007: 417). Lapavitsas (2007) further stipulates, that trust is crucial as information sharing relationship usually generates asymmetries. These asymmetries are both engendered by the relationship of information sharing, with the dominant information provider and the secondary information provider (e.g. during an information request by a party) and by social convention (e.g. teacher and student) (Lapavitsas, 2007: 417).

Another interesting phenomenon is the development and sustainment of trust in an information relationship is based on the Internet. It has been pointed out that when utilizing the Internet trust is more scarcely appointed to the information provider. This is explained by the fact that on the Internet, anything can be posted by anyone and trust is too valuable to offer so easily (Berry III, 2006).

This presents all the complexity of when trust will be attributed when seeking information utilizing Facebook.

Facebook provides the user with the possibility of connecting with anyone, a friend, a relative, an acquaintance, a professor, a famous individual, an institution etc....

First, this section will explore frameworks and theories related to trust in order to get a deeper fathoming of the concept. Subsequently, this segment will investigate how this trust may be created and sustained.

2.3.4. Rational Choice Framework

The rational choice framework of trust is one of the major theoretical strains. This framework is rooted in the notion that human beings are calculating individuals. Furthermore, it emphasizes the economizing transaction nature of trust. The underlying assumption is that individuals will calculate the potential benefits of a relationship. These benefits can come in many shapes or forms. Then, the potential threats are discerned in order to calculate the potential negative outcomes that betrayal might infer. Betrayal is always a possibility because as we will see in the later fragment that when trusting another there is always a facet of vulnerability to the others actions or experience. After "calculating" these pros and cons the individual assess whether the potential benefits of a trust relationship outweighs the potential negative outcomes of betrayal (Coleman, 1990).

2.3.5. Putnam Social Capital

Putnam description of social Capital is somewhat related to this notion of calculation. This perspective emphasizes the social nature of trust. This framework stipulates that resources are embedded within the social structure. Now, social capital is the expected benefits, economic or collective, that are embedded in a social structure due to cooperation between individuals or groups. In other words, trust is essential in order to gain those expected resources. Now, these resources actually enhance the possibility of action and thereby influencing the facilitation of information flow and cooperation in order to gather these resources. Moreover, due to this social structure it reduces the need for monitoring and controlling actions of others. Although there are many subtle differences between the social capital approach and the rational choice framework, its main difference resides in the fact that the resources or the benefits derived from trust are collective in nature and not individual based (Putnam, 1993).

2.3.3. Trust and Vulnerability

Misztal (2011) states that there are many different strands of research and approaches to trust. However, most research points out that trust is related to vulnerability. In other words trusting someone is to be confident that one's partner (in trust) will not exploit one's vulnerability. Now, according to Misztal (2011) vulnerability is a complex concept that cannot be explained on a simple continuum. Vulnerability is multidimensional and can be described along three types: Responsibility, promising and forgiveness.

Responsibility vulnerability resides in dependence. That is one party responsible for another and this other is dependent on the other. For example, on a family level, generally the responsible parties are the parents and the dependent parties are the children. Now, this dependence is usually created by need of security and poses great threats to potential harm. The responsible party is in a position of power where exploitation of the subordinate or dependent party is possible, to a greater or lesser extent depending on the relationship. Furthermore, dependency can lead to harmful effects if the responsible party is affected in a way that incapacitates them, e.g. parents being alcoholics. It is important to note that this vulnerability can be extended to a macro level, e.g. the state and its citizens (Misztal, 2011).

Promising responsibility is related to the uncertainty of human action and human experience. Each human has a framework from which he bases others and his own actions. However, this always creates a sense of unpredictability about others actions and this unpredictability can be reduced by *promising*. Promising is establishing certain guidelines of "reliability" in future actions. Now, in these relationship one

party is vulnerable to the party in power, which is the one promising as this party can always digress from these guidelines, and the promising party is entangled with obligations to follow the guidelines. Feelings of distrust might be created if someone goes against their promises (Misztal, 2011).

Finally, forgiveness vulnerability resides in the irreversibility of past actions or experience. Past actions or experiences may affect others and make us vulnerable to other parties, who are potentially able to forgive these actions. In these cases there is always the forgiver and the forgiven, where the forgiven is always vulnerable to the forgiver going back on his word and not forgive the other one. Feelings of distrust might be created if the forgiver goes to many times against his word of forgiveness (Misztal, 2011).

2.3.1. Trust Development

As previously mentioned, two main ingredients in trust is related to its development and its sustainment. First, in order to sustain trust it has to be created or developed.

According to Woolthuis, Hillebrand and Noteboom (2005), Noteboom distinguished between two forms of trust in a relationship. The first type of trust is referred to as competence trust. This is trust based on the belief that the other has the necessary technical, cognitive, organizational and communicative competences. The second form of trust is intentional trust. Intentional trust is rooted in the relationship between the parties. It refers to trust one offers the other in the belief that the other has positive intentions concerning the relationship and will refrain from opportunism. Opportunism is utilizing the other party's trust for self gain without concern in harming them (Woolthuis, Hillebrand & Noteboom, 2005: 814).

Furthermore, trust may be "weak" or "strong". When trust is weak is when it is considered to be a simple instrument and breaching trust might lead to risking the relationship, e.g. Now, when trust is strong, its breach is seen as serious as it might lead to punitive acts, e.g. not respecting a contract (Woolthuis, Hillebrand & Noteboom, 2005: 815).

Thus, trust might be appointed on the other party's competence or its intention towards the relationship. A positive intention to the relationship is appointed when one has the belief that the other party will refrain from acts such as opportunism leading to harm.

2.3.2. Trust Sustainment

Now, once trust has first been established, it is important to sustain it. Trust is built and developed but it time or due to breach in trust (e.g. by acts of opportunism) it can fade (Woolthuis, Hillebrand & Noteboom, 2005).

According to O'Hair, Friedrich and Dixon (2011), once this mutual state of trust is engendered, its sustainment resides in four key components: constancy, congruity, reliability and integrity. Constancy, as the name suggest, resides in the person, in which the trust has been founded, to stay on course of their beliefs and visions, especially in times of adversity. Congruity is linked to the parallelism between a person's behavior and his or her words. It is important, to maintain trust, that a person's behavior is congruent with his statements. A person's action and behavior needs to match his words. Now, reliability is whether one can depends on the other person in times of need. These needs can come in different forms, such as personal or professional needs. Integrity is strongly linked to moral and ethical behavior. In order to maintain trust through integrity one has to keep promises and commitments without compromising the well being of others. It is important to note that some decisions

made might be dislikable but the ability to uphold these key four components will enhance trustworthiness between parties (O'Hair, Friedrich & Dixon, 2011: 174).

3.0. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Methodological Approach
In order to collect data a qualitative approach to the question was utilized. A qualitative method was appropriate as the research question entails that the researcher has to obtain information about an abstract and uncountable construct (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011: 9).

To be more specific the procedure used in order to gather data was a semistructured interview. An interview is a procedure that requires the researcher to question the participants on the topic at hand (Hennink et al., 2011). The semistructured interview is a technique that necessitates the development of an interview guide. The interview guide is a draft utilized by the researcher that contains all the questions that need answering during the interview. However, the semistructured interview, offers the researcher leniency and freedom so that other questions can be asked to collect supplementary interesting information that was not foreseen when creating the interview guide (Oktay, 2012).

This method was suitable as interviews enable the researchers to gather information about participants' belief about a certain behavior. Additionally, this method is appropriate as Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011: 110), claim that interviews are suitable in order to gather information on how people make decisions and how they motivate these decisions. Furthermore, as previously iterated, a semistructured interview allows the researcher to digress during the interview to collect unanticipated interesting information, which is not possible when utilizing a questionnaire.

The data gathered was then analyzed through a grounded theory approach. Grounded theory was originally designed in order to get create theories from real-life situation, when "grand-theories" were not achievable targets. Nowadays, grounded theory has evolved but still relies on that premise of creating theories from the data gathered and understanding a particular situation, however, hypotheses from conceptual ideas are now tested using the grounded theory scope. Grounded theory is often used due to a lack of theoretical knowledge, and this particular approach creates the stepping-stone to theoretical frameworks (Oktay, 2012). These reasons motivated this research to take a grounded theory approach, due to a lack of research relating to trust and information seeking on Facebook. Furthermore, the goal of this research was an attempt at creating a theoretical framework to the particular research question.

3.2. Data Collection
3.2.1. Participants
The selection of participants was criterion-based. That is the selection was based purposefully on one standard. More specifically, potential participants were screened on Facebook by the researchers in order to check whether these definitely use Facebook to acquire information. An example of identifying a potential participant is whether one uses his status and asks a question, that is not rhetorical, in order to obtain this information, e.g. does anyone know where I can get a tram card?

This process was utilized, as the researchers did not want to interview someone and realize that these do not use Facebook to gather information. Furthermore, if some participants claimed not to use Facebook to gather information some proof could have been potentially shown to them that they do or did, however, this was never the case.

Most participants interviewed, were friends or acquaintances of the researchers. Snowball sampling, was also utilized to gather a minority of the participants. Snowball sampling is a method where an initial participant is used and provides the names and possibilities of other actors that may be used in the study (Atkinson & Flint, 2004).

At the end of the data gathering process ten participants were interviewed, three of which were participants found through snowball sampling. Six participants were females and four were males. At the time of the interviews the participants age ranged from 22 to 32 years old. All participants were students but one who had a professional occupation. Eight different nationalities were to be identified. However, except for the participant who had a professional occupation, all participants were part of extremely international communities, whether in school or in their personal lives. Another important factor to mention is that of the students four of them were music students. However, none of these students were part of the same orchestra or band and not all knew each other. The subsequent table summarizes the participants.

Participants	Gender	Age	Occupation	Nationality
P_1 (S)	Male	22	Worker	Swedish
P_2	Male	32	Student	Vietnamese
P_3	Male	23	Student	Spanish
P_4 (S)	Male	26	Student	British
P_5	Female	24	Student	British
P_6 (S)	Female	25	Student	Spanish
P_7	Female	25	Student	Finnish
P_8	Female	24	Student	Hungarian
P_9	Female	21	Student	German
P_{10}	Female	25	Student	Polish

Table 1: Participant details

* (S): Partipants acquired through Snowaball sampling

3.2.2. Instruments
Now, in order to gather the data during the interview process a computer was used to record the interviews. Furthermore, a pen and a notepad was used to note extra information; such as when in the interview did the participant say something interesting or something unanticipated that perhaps will need clarification later in the interview.

No photographs or video were taken during the interview process. These were not used as they would perhaps make the participants uneasy and no extra information could be inferred from these means. Moreover, not using photos and video recordings facilitated the anonymity process.

3.2.3. Time and Place
All interviews were conducted face-to-face. All the interviews took place at a time and place that the participants decided. Many different locations were utilized, people homes, university grounds and public places such as cafes. The interviews took place in the month of February and March in two countries Sweden and the Netherlands. Three interviews were in the Netherlands and seven in Sweden.

3.2.4. Ethical Considerations

Hennink et al. (2011) claim that qualitative research often requires more attention to ethical considerations than quantitative methods. According to the aforementioned authors, important facets of ethics in qualitative research are: anonymity, confidentiality, minimization of harm, self-determination and less harm than potential gain from the research (Hennink et al., 2011: 62)

Anonymity of all participants is kept and no information compromising the confidentiality of their identity is revealed. Furthermore, all data records will be kept confidential unless the scientific community requires the researchers to present some of the data. It is safe to assume that during the interview process, none of the participants were harmed. Additionally, all participants determined whether they participated in the interviews. Finally, one can assume that the potential scientific benefit of this study will be greater than its potential harm.

4.0. RESULTS

The results are presented into two main sections. The first section is focused on Facebook as an information-seeking tool and the subsequent section is targeted at sharing information on Facebook and trust.

4.1. Utilizing Facebook

During the interviews participants emphasized some specific factors that triggered their usage of Facebook as an information-seeking apparatus. This part presents these factors from the most important factor to the least. The importance of a factor was estimated by how many participants mentioned this factor and an approximation of how many times they mentioned it during one interview. The specific factors will be illustrated by examples of participants' responses. The quotes were corrected in order to enhance comprehensiveness and the linguistics intricacies are not relevant for this research. There are four categories presented: "monitoring" people, searching social events, searching for people with perceived similar previous experience and searching groups and pages.

4.1.1. "Monitoring" People

During all interviews the participants instinctually described their usage of Facebook and looking for information about a person. This particular activity of people seeking was described in two main ways.

The most common act was to monitor current Facebook friends and their actions and other facets of their life displayed on the social networking site. In other words, people use Facebook to check what their friends are doing or what they have been doing. This quote from a participant illustrates this phenomenon:

" I: So, how do you use Facebook in general?
P_2: I go on Facebook most days to check what's going on with friends and check for example if they're going to a nice party soon (…)"

The second occurrence described by the participants is the usage of Facebook to look for a "new" individual that they want to interact with using Facebook. These individual can be someone that they recently met and that they wish to connect with:

" P_2: Yeah, I can use it for after a party and I met someone and maybe I want to talk to them some more."

Additionally, one participant has described that they also utilized Facebook to look for an old acquaintance that they wished to reconnect with. Now, one participant described a supplementary category, which overlaps with the previous categories. This participant described his usage of Facebook as "Facebook Stalking". According to this participant Facebook stalking is:

"I: So generally how do you use Facebook?"
P_5: Mostly for private messaging.
I: Private messaging is there any other things you do then?
P_5: Yeah (…) and bit of Facebook stalking.
I: So what's Facebook stalking?

P_5: Facebook stalking is generally, finding out about people's that you have no idea about. Maybe someone you've heard of through a friend and you maybe want to check them out (…) see everything they're up to.
I: Do you Facebook stalk people that you do know?
P_5: Both!"

Facebook stalking is the excessive usage of Facebook in order to gather information about people's lives without their knowledge or consent. These people "stalked" can be current Facebook friends, people you have just met or friends' friends.
When "monitoring" individuals, the participants described two different types of information that they might be looking for. The first type of information is related to actions of others. This type of information has a huge range of variety, e.g. holiday plans, going to a restaurant, pictures of a newborn, parties etc…
The second type of information is related more to social status (e.g. a job) or personal details (e.g. phone number) of a person. Two participants claimed that they used Facebook to look whether a person they had just met was in a relationship or not.

 "P_8: (…) When I meet a nice boy I check on Facebook if he is single…"

In these cases of looking for information for someone all participants seem to note that they utilize Facebook as a primary means of search, i.e. if they look for information about people Facebook is the first or the only tool that they use for research.
To recapitulate, people utilize Facebook to explore other Facebook users.
This can come in two main categories and an overlapping type: looking for information about someone, connecting with someone new through Facebook and Facebook stalking. Generally when people utilize Facebook it is to find information of two types: Other people's action or information about other's social status or personal life.

4.1.2. Searching for Social Events
The second most prominent factor cited by the participants was the usage of Facebook for social activities and events. All participants mentioned that they utilize Facebook in order to collect information about a specific social event. These social activities ranged in formality. All participants mentioned the usage of Facebook to gather information about an informal event, where these participants mentioned using Facebook in order to get information about the time, the place and the organizer of the event:

:"I: What kind of information do you look for?
P_5: well then obviously what's going on, is there anything interesting to go to especially in music. There are a lot of things posted up that aren't going to be advertised on their websites or online."

These informal events ranged in attendance and intimacy. The most commonly described event was for a party, which is typically a large event with many people attending providing with low intimacy. However, some participants also described using Facebook in order to schedule more intimate meetings with another person or a few individuals. While all participants described utilizing Facebook for larger less

intimate events, only two participants stated that they utilized Facebook's private messaging system in order to get information for more intimate happenings.

Furthermore, four participants mentioned using Facebook in order to keep track of other people's birthdays. Most Facebook users provide their birthdate on the social networking site and therefore make it accessible for other users. These particular participants reported checking Facebook in order not to miss either a friends or an acquaintance birthday by looking at Facebook and its events:

:" I: When you look for information through Facebook how do you do it? Describe all your ways.

P_5: Ok so, obviously (…) check activities what parties are going on the events, the events page on Facebook (…) then obviously birthdays reminders (…)"

Three participants mentioned using Facebook for more formal social activities that they wished to attend to. These participants were all musicians and described that they utilized Facebook in order to schedule and plan rehearsal times and schedule other important meetings. It is essential to note that, although these participants were all musicians none of them were in the same orchestra or same band, thus, these musicians were not describing exactly the same occurrences:

"I: Generally, it seems maybe I got it wrong but it seems like it's informal information?

P_5: Yeah Informal.

I: Are there any times when its formal information?

P_5: Well yeah sometimes I have communication with colleagues on the orchestra that are posting information about rehearsal schedules."

Participants have described utilizing Facebook for social events. These events ranged in formality. Furthermore, from the information gathered from the participants, informal events ranged in intimacy. Facebook was often described the primary means of information seeking, meaning that the participants described Facebook as the first or the only information-seeking tool utilized. One participant even mentioned that its use nowadays makes more sense then utilizing e-mail:

"P_4: No I think that knowing that it's a good way to kind of bypass e-mail, I think it's slightly replacing the chatty e-mail, it's the first place you go on the Internet.

P_4: People might check their e-mail twice a day while Facebook they check all the time when their on the computer."

However, intimacy and formality had a negative impact on whether individuals utilized Facebook for information seeking purposes. Facebook is generally utilized, as primary means of research, however, if intimacy and formality are high Facebook is likely to not be used at all.

4.1.3. Searching for People with Perceived Similar Previous Experience

Most participants, seven, mentioned that their Facebook use for information seeking was stimulated by their Facebook friends having potentially experienced a similar situation. This claim by a participant illustrates this particular phenomenon:

"I: Can you describe a concrete example of when you have used Facebook?
P_2: (…) Well I was looking for a room in Amsterdam and I know it's a problem for many people so I know, so I knew I can use Facebook to try and get information about it"

One particularly recurring factor that seemed to influence people's information seeking behavior was how recently did the others' experience that similar situation. The more recent the situation was encountered the more likely were the participants to utilize Facebook as an information-seeking tool. While conversing about information seeking and previous experience a participant stated:

"P_2: (…) If I know they went there last week I'm most probably going to ask them"

Now, when describing Facebook usage and others' similar previous experience, participants described *two patterns of information-seeking behavior*.
The first behavior is characterized as the information being sought as the goal in itself. In other words, the information is the only goal that the participants wish to get. These cases were often related to experiences of an informal and relative unserious nature. The experiences most often described by the participant related to a party, similar social gatherings or looking up someone on Facebook.
The second pattern of information seeking behavior described characterized the information being sought as a means to a greater goal. Therefore, the information that is gathered using Facebook is only "part of a puzzle" that the seeker is trying to solve. This information-seeking behavior was linked to more formal matters and to relative serious matters. The previous example of the person who was looking for a room in Amsterdam portrays this behavior. Later in the interview this participant claimed:

"I: When you were looking for a room, why did you use Facebook to look for information?
P_2: I didn't only use Facebook but trying to get information from there can always be useful someone can tell me about I don't know a site or maybe someone looking for a roommate and yeah other things."

The first pattern of information seeking showed that when Facebook was used it was used as a primary information-seeking tool:

"I: when you look for someone you only use Facebook or is it your first choice?"
P_5: Yeah it's my first choice for sure".

However, the second pattern of behavior showed that Facebook was either used as a secondary or complementary source of information. This is shown in the quotes of the person looking for a room in Amsterdam. However, a lot of people said that if they were looking for something serious they would most probably not use Facebook.

4.1.4. Searching for Specific Pages and Groups

During the interviews, four participants stated that their Facebook information-seeking behaviors were related to a search of a specific group or page. Facebook provides users to create pages or groups related to a specific matter. On the one hand, companies, celebrities, or other public figures develop a Facebook page. These pages are made visible to everyone on the Internet and are made to spread as much information as possible. On the other hand, a Facebook group is designed by a relatively small amount of people and is visible only to a relatively small community. Its content is not available for everyone on the Internet (Pineda, 2010).

All four participants' mentioned going on these pages in order to gather information about a company or professionals in their respective fields:

"I: When you look for information on Facebook, if you would use Facebook to look for information, how would you do that how would you go about it?
P_4: I think for something specific like a page or a person I would search for it."

Facebook pages were accessed simply to gather information about a specific brand or organization without any purpose in mind. In other words, Facebook pages were utilized for entertainment:

"P_4: (…) and the pages well on my newsfeed things comes from the pages I like, for an artist and stuff. In this case I just scroll down for no particular reason for well in the end probably hours of my life."

Furthermore, three participants claimed that they utilize specific Facebook group related to their professional or academic activities in order to schedule certain meetings or to get specifications on how to perform a certain procedure related to this group:

"I: How do you use these that you are, groups you are in?
P_5: Well sometimes we have an assignment for school and I have a group for my course, then it's easy to find the people on there and schedule like a meeting or something through there."

Finally, two of the participants mentioned utilizing pages not only to gather information but also to spread information. One of the participant stated that using Facebook is a good way to advertise, as the development of a page is free:

" P_4: (…) and also kind of promotion like I got a gig. I have a few bands who use the pages interface for fans and news and things."

Furthermore, he also claimed that using Facebook advertising is simple and if one is willing to pay it offers targeted advertising to others. In other words, previous searches from Facebook users permit Facebook to customize the advertisement according to that user.

When seeking information related to a specific group that the participants were part of, Facebook was described as the sole and primary means of research:

"I: When is Facebook your first choice when looking for information?

P$_2$: (…) and well the groups like for school I definitely check first before checking on… somewhere else.”

However, when it came to searching for information on a page, Facebook could be both used as a primary or complementary tool of research. Three participants mentioned that sometimes they knew that the Facebook page had more information than if they used other means of research. However, the opposite scenario was also described:

“I: For what reasons would you prefer using Facebook than I don’t know Googling? P$_3$: It’s a pretty useful tool for looking up especially music concerts and things like that when you want to know something about a specific venue even if you’re playing there yourself it’s pretty easy just to go to the Facebook page of that particular venue and ask your technical question either the manager of that Facebook page or someone else who has played there will know the technical aspects (…)”

4.2. Trusting Information on Facebook

This section presents the answers of the participants related to trusting information shared on Facebook and trusting Facebook. The results to these answers are offered by themes touched upon by the participants. Moreover, these answers will be illustrated, akin to the previous section, by relevant quotes from the participants. However, unlike the previous section these are not shown by the frequency at which these answers have been given to the interviewers as no specific pattern was identified.

4.2.1. Facebook as A Company

During the interviews most of the participants portrayed Facebook in a bad light. Although, all these participants both have been screened and admitted to utilizing Facebook, these emphasized their suspicion towards Facebook as an institution. The participants highlighted different reasons explaining this lack of trust.
One participant claimed that Facebook as a company generates huge amounts of profit by using content provided by their users:

:”I: Generally do you trust Facebook?
P$_4$: I guess Facebook as an organization, the business side no because, it’s basically a way of publishing your personal information and the more you publish the more you’re investing for free. You’re creating the content. It’s almost like a plastic box (Facebook) whatever you put in everyone can see (…)”

Other participants stated that Facebook should not be trusted due to the privacy settings Facebook offers. These participants generally claimed that Facebook should not be trusted as privacy can be very easily undermined while utilizing Facebook. One particular participant further stipulated that her privacy settings were at the highest level possible but is still reticent when it comes to her privacy and Facebook:

:”I: Generally do you trust Facebook?
P$_5$: No, I don’t I mean as a website you have to be very careful, I mean in terms of privacy settings I have them on the highest settings for people who are not my friends on Facebook, I know that doesn’t necessarily mean that people can’t access

information. I'm still aware of the fact that anything I put on Facebook can be accessed pretty much by anyone. Even private messages can be hacked into by … in legal cases like nothing is ever private on that site. If someone needs information and they've got the right people to do it then it can be accessed and obviously there are Internet hackers."

It is interesting to note that her suspicion towards Facebook is both rooted in distrust towards Facebook and it's policies on privacy as an organization but also due to extraneous factors such as Internet hackers.
Moreover, additional participants shared their lack of trust towards Facebook due to the possible liability that one might face after posting something on Facebook. That is, that once information has been shared on Facebook it is accessible for many users and potentially permanently. One participant illustrated this by stating:

:"I: And why don't you trust Facebook?
P_9: Because once I share information there it's for the public it's out there and anyone can read it especially if it's not encoded and I don't know it's just unsafe there. So once I put a Facebook status there, someone found it and make fun of me for it it's horrible."

Finally, the participant who expressed his distrust towards Facebook due to its leniency towards users private settings even further claimed that its usage is "dangerous". She stipulated that Facebook is dangerous as an institution as it provided users with new ways to gather personal information about others and get extremely involved in others lives without any effort:

:"I: I'm just going to ask you if you have anything to add or were you like to say or any extra comments?
P_5: Yeah I think Facebook is kind of "dangerous. No but in terms of Facebook stalking that is a new level of finding out about people. I mean I am guilty of it but I mean I know so many people that are as well you know. People who have boyfriends or or ex-boyfriends who have look to follow their ex-boyfriends to see if they got new girlfriends or who the people are that they are talking to and in this instances Facebook can get out of hand. Especially for the people who don't have privacy settings."

Although most accounts towards Facebook and trust have been negative two participants have claimed the opposite. One of the participant claimed that she trusts Facebook due to his usage of Facebook. This participant stated that all information that he shared on Facebook is not compromising and thus for all eyes to see:

"I: So generally do you trust Facebook?
P_6: Yes because I do not put things that I'm not conformable things. I wouldn't put anything on Facebook that I consider private. So anything I put on Facebook I am happy for anyone to see."

The other participant is not as categorical as the previous. This participant claimed that he trust Facebook to respect the settings that he chooses. This participant also claims that due to his usage and knowledge about his account settings that he trusts Facebook and his trusts use own usage of Facebook.

Although it might seem like they trust Facebook, these participants mention that they only trust Facebook due to their usage. They do no say Facebook is good but rather that they are responsible enough to avoid any negative consequences.

4.2.2. Facebook Users

During the interviews, the participants were asked whether they trusted the information gathered from the people they interacted with, i.e. their Facebook friends and other unknown Facebook users. The participants' answers were multifarious as they offered different scenarios in which they interacted with Facebook users whilst sharing information.

First, most participants have claimed that they either do not interact with unknown Facebook users or generally do not trust them when these share information:

" I: Have you ever trusted information from a friend that you did not meet in real life, I mean a Facebook friend?

P_2: No I don't have well I don't exchange with people I do not know."

However, even though all participants had similar answers to how they relate to unknown individuals and information trusts some offered a scenario in which they thought these could be trustworthy:

"I: But can you think of any times when you were on these pages you talked about before where you trusted a Facebook user that isn't your friend and you didn't know at all?

P_1: Well yeah in these groups well people there have some kind of relevance to me. They do the same things has me and I would answer honestly in these groups so I guess I expect people to do the same."

Furthermore, another participant that stipulated that it was not usual to trust unknown Facebook users then offered scenarios in which he thought unknown Facebook members could be potentially be trusted with the information they provide:

"I: Have you ever trusted a Facebook friend or someone that you didn't meet in real life?

P_5: Well yeah, I guess I trust people who post events who I don't know so obviously I trust that the information they put up on the event is accurate (…) so I guess that I do have trusted them."

Now, a participant highlighted a specific scenario in which he trusted a particular Facebook user in their information sharing relationship. This participant had never met or talked to this particular user before their Facebook interaction. However, in this scenario the individual in question was a friend of a friend that the participant believes to be trustworthy. Furthermore, due to the outcome of the situation one can stipulate that the other Facebook user also trusted this participant:

"I: What about an individual?

P_4: Yeh I have had a few individuals before, I've had people that were passed on my contacts through friends. A guy who studies on the same course of me this year got in touch messaging about, wanting to find out what's it's like here. So, without meeting

he trusted me with what I said well it'd be interesting to see what he'd say but yeah well he's here. But that was through a mutual friend (…)"

Additionally, this participant claimed that he has trusted information from individuals on Facebook if these had official positions or represented a trustworthy company. This particular individual especially emphasized the fact that he would trust information shared by charities as these seemed trustworthy sources of information:

:"I: Have you ever trusted information from a Facebook friend that you did not meet in real life?
P$_4$: I think yeah in terms of having friends in your friend list, there are friends or profiles that work as venues or for like charity or for corporations and you know that's the account for them. So there is kind of something official about it."

Secondly, participants have described how they relate to Facebook users that are part of their Facebook friends list and that they have meet or interacted with outside the Facebook universe. The participants were separated into two main groups. The first group of participant admitted that most if not all of their friends on Facebook are people that they deem to be trustworthy. These friends are therefore, trustworthy when they share provide information on Facebook:

"I: Do you trust your Facebook friends when they share information? That can be when it's directly addressed to you or not, if they put a status or anything?
P$_6$: Yeah, I don't have anyone on Facebook that I don't think I cannot trust, I don't have so many friends on it."

The second group of people described having people on their list that are not friends in the more conventional sense. These Facebook friends could be acquaintances or people that they know through their academic or professional life. Therefore, this second group seemed much more suspicion on which friend is sharing what kind of information and whether they should consider this information as legitimate:

:"I: Do you trust your Facebook friends when they share information through Facebook?
P$_5$: I think it depends who the friends are I mean I have a lot of friends on Facebook some of whom I don't really know that well. Some people I don't even know who they are."

However, although these two groups had a different outlook on their Facebook friends and whether they trusted the information that these shared, all people highlighted some factors that influenced which friends they trusted the most with information. One of the most recurrent factors mentioned by the participants was how much "real life" interaction did they have with the particular Facebook friend sharing information. The participants claimed that the more they interacted with Facebook friends outside of Facebook, the more likely they would trust these friends when they share information on Facebook:

:"I: Do you trust your Facebook friends when they share information on Facebook? Do you trust the information that they share?

P₄: (…) Yesh close friends that you see on a daily basis you kind of trust. So like people I go to school here if they post things on Facebook. I know what they are like and what they are posting so I've got a real world thing to back up."

Here is another quote from another participants illustrating this:

"I: Which Facebook do you trust when they share information and how in particular do you relate to these people?
P₅: (…) My friends that that I communicate outside of Facebook so people even if I don't see them on a daily basis you have communication with them outside of Facebook. They are the people that I trust people you speak to either in person or on the phone or you have a working relationship with."

Moreover, many of the participants mentioned "closeness" towards their Facebook friends. There was no clear answer as to what they defined as closeness but it would seem that they relate to closeness as much they appreciate a particular friend. The participants claimed that they closer they were to a Facebook friend the more like they were to trust the information that they would be sharing on Facebook:

"I: Are there friends that you trust in particular on Facebook? When they share information you always trust the information that they share?
P₅: Well I guess the closer the person is to me in real life the more I trust what they share on Facebook."

One participant has mentioned another factor about people that he trusted on Facebook, which is family. This participant was the only one who mentioned that his parents are on Facebook and these are the people that he trusts the most when it comes to the information they share:

"I: (…) Which Facebook users do you actually trust when they share information and how in particular do you relate to these people?
P₅: The people that are trust the most are obviously my parents because they're on Facebook so obviously like I trust them."

4.2.3. Previous Experience, Competence, Frequency and Links to Legitimate Sources
During the interviews the participants mentioned different parameters that had influenced whether they had trusted information shared via Facebook.
One of these parameters has been touched upon heretofore, which is previous experience. Participants have mentioned that during an information search while utilizing Facebook, an individual perceived has having been through the same experience and sharing information about it could be trustworthy information. However, unlike in the previous section where perceived previous experience was enough to motivate users to utilize Facebook, this information had to be shared on a specific page or group, which made the impression of these individuals appear as legitimate:

:"I: But have you ever trusted information from an individual that you did not know?
P₃: Well for technical stuff at venues often I can ask on a page and I know that the manager of that or someone who has been there before can answer that question for me."

Participation in a group or page seemed to be an essential factor in these cases. When individuals are known or unknown, if they participate in these groups or pages they can be considered as trustworthy when sharing information, as a certain code on conduct seems to take place.

Another important aspect that was touched upon by some participants was the perceived competence of the users sharing the information. This competence can be shown in multiple ways. The first way described by participants are individuals that have some position of authority or expertise on a particular matter. This position can be a managerial position or a title (also portrayed in the previous quote), which displays expertise, e.g. Doctor. One particular individual whose major interest was exercising and dietary control illustrated this case. Due to this interest, this individual was part of a page linked to fitness and correct eating. While on the subject this participant stated:

"P$_3$: (…) When I ask there, I know that I can believe or at least to a large extent well they know what they are talking about."

Furthermore, the participants could perceive competence in another fashion. Sometimes users without a position of authority or a particular title displaying expertise were still seen as competent and as trustworthy when sharing information. These competent individuals were described as members of a group. These group members at times offered answered to other people queries and even though these might be classmates or colleagues at the same level of authority these were seen as trustworthy and competent in their ability to answer a question:

"I: Can you think of a particular example of when you did trust a friend sharing something on Facebook? Directly to you

P$_5$: I trust them if they like on our site for university (meant as Facebook university group) I trust people if they said rehearsal at that time or if we have a piece of work handed- in at a certain time."

Some participants mentioned that they utilized Facebook as a filter for information. Facebook users and Facebook friends share much information. Now, Facebook provides its users with the ability to filter which person or which information they want to appear on their homepage. This filtering system helps users gather information that they deem relevant for themselves and hide information that they consider to be irrelevant or irritating:

"P$_4$: Wow I really don't what I'm reading and what is this bringing, because if I wanted to read that I would go on the daily mail site. But if I wanted to read things like that I'd go to a place where this information is, information that I don't want to see but now because of people I just know it's being brought to me (…)

I: It's a filter for actually most then?

P$_4$: Yeah, I think that, if you didn't want to see like posts with loads of swear words and stuff the only thing you could do is filter it or not add people who are going to swear loads. "

Now, this "filtering" system can influence Facebook users on whether they believe a piece of information to be trustworthy. Many users mentioned that, whether directly

due to the filtering system or not, that they were likely to believe people who shared information coming from a legitimate source. What was deemed a legitimate source in this case were links to famous newspapers or reliable journals.

: "P_5: I look at the newsfeed a few times a day just like to keep just when I'm bored (…) and like links to news articles that friends like think I'd be interested in and quite often post things on like UK newspapers like The Guardian talking about current affairs"

One of the participants mentioned a factor, which he deemed essential in order to trust information shared through Facebook. This person emphasized that the higher frequency at which he saw information shared on Facebook the more likely he is to believe what is being shared. In other words, the more a particular piece of information is being spread the more influential it becomes. This quote from the participant shows this phenomenon, however, this participant could not think of a concrete example that happened to him:

:"I: Can you give an example of when you did trust a friend but this time it has to be directly that they shared information with you? (…)
P_9: (…) Well if *everyone* is saying it's snowing then it's most likely snowing.
(…)
I: Well you said person, recency and sources (factors mentioned by the person influencing trust in information.)
P_9: and Frequency.
I: By frequency you mean if someone's…
P_9: More than once."

4.2.4. Breaches of Trust and Trust Prior and Post Facebook Interaction
During the interviews the candidates were asked questions concerning whether other Facebook users had provided them with incorrect information. In other words, the participants were asked whether other Facebook users that they trusted had incorrectly or inaccurately informed them. Most participants have mentioned that at times other Facebook users have misinformed them. One participant mentioned a particular example of when one of her friends' birthday was notified on the wrong date. This particular participant goes one by mentioning a general example of when friends on Facebook put up inaccurate information:

"I: Can you described a situation where a Facebook friend that you usually trust with information or just that you generally usually trust and you really questioned the information that they put up on Facebook?
P_5: Yeah actually really recently one of my friends it came up that it was her birthday but it wasn't her birthday. Yeah so there you go. So I knew it wasn't her birthday. And also quite often you know people's Facebooks' have been hacked because they have like really bad statuses, and you're like no.

Another participant mentioned an interesting event on which he was misinformed. This event happened when a trend on Facebook came and people started putting up statuses regarding copyright laws and how Facebook has been misusing them. However, this participant then came to a conclusion when looking into that matter that this information was incorrect.

:"I: You questioned something that a friend has posted or…

P$_4$: Actually! I do question because every time the settings have been change. Like all your messages are going to go on your timeline and stuff. (…) That thing about copyright as well I read a few things about like with a few artist friends of mine put this statement as in, what was it… It was "I hereby declare that all recordings or photographic or visual content my copyright right rights reserved and stuff" and by posting that as a status it was kind of like a remedial thing. And I saw some kind of people comment like lawyers saying like this isn't how copyright law work it's not protected you signed the terms and agreement when you applied for Facebook. (…)"

One participant did mention that he could not think of a single time where he was inaccurately informed through Facebook and if it happened it was accidental.

Now, participants were asked whether their relationship was affect by being misinformed by other Facebook friends. Generally the participants reported that being misinformed on Facebook did not alter their relationship with others:

:"I: Did it affect anything in your relationship or how when they shared information through Facebook…

P$_5$: No it didn't change anything."

However, the participant mentioning the Facebook trends on misinformation reported that it did change some of the relationship he had. He claimed that people following these trends without correctly being informed had a negative effect on the relationship he had with them:

"I: When a friend or a Facebook friend provided information that was wrong did it affect your relationship with them and how they shared information with you do you think it became less trustworthy what they said?

P$_4$: Yeah I think so. I think just because it's really easy to copy and paste a statement. And knowing that someone would do that just… assume that Facebook well and I know we all signed the terms and agreement we've all clicked the Itunes (…) So there's a certain well maybe it's always going to be like that forever now. But has it changed my yeah maybe disappointed that someone just copied and pasted it because they are anxious about Facebook.

I: So like a bit disappointment."

Following this point this participant also mentioned that Facebook shed a light on some individuals that he did not know particularly well. In general he mentioned the negative effect it had on his relationship with them especially if they posted erroneous pieces of information or information that did not concur with his beliefs:

" P$_4$: But also going back to like (recapitulating points previously iterated by the participants). If you don't filter it you'll discover things about people once they are behind a keyboard and put whatever shit comes out of their head you'll discover things (…) Like I didn't realize my old trumpet teacher was such a hard on conservative nutjob. "

Finally, during the interviews it was discussed how the trust in information sharing was established. The main focus was on whether people trusted others with sharing

information on Facebook prior or posts their Facebook relationship. More specifically, was a trust in information sharing relationship built before or after people had connected on Facebook. As one could imagine by now, all participants mentioned that this trust relationship was built before people interacted on Facebook:

:"I: The Facebook friends that you trust were the trust established before or after you started in interacting on Facebook?
P_5: Before Facebook.
I: Always Before?
P_5: Yeah Always Before."

However, as we have seen previously one participant did mention that a trust relationship could be potentially built solely after the Facebook interaction had occurred. This was the case of the participant who mentioned having built a trust relationship with a friend of a friend.

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5.0. ANALYSIS

Just as in the results section, the analysis is presented into two main parts. The first part s analyzing when people utilize Facebook to look for information and the subsequent part focuses on when individuals trust the information that is being shared through Facebook.

5.1. When People Utilize Facebook as an Information-Seeking Tool

The results section emphasized four ways, which might trigger people to utilize Facebook as an information-seeking tool: people seeking, previous experience, social gatherings and groups and pages. In this section we argue that these aspects can be connected and made into two main research paths in which Facebook is utilized to gather information. These patterns of research are: Facebook as a social information-seeking tool and Facebook as a miscellaneous information-seeking tool. In this section the patterns will be described and illustrated by models in order to accentuate comprehensiveness.

Moreover, it is essential to note that all factors described here are influencers that trigger Facebook usage, i.e. these factors are not described has having a direct and strict correlational or causal relationship with Facebook usage.

5.1.1. Information Seeking Behavior Patterns and Mechanism of Research

First of all, it is important to comprehend the notion of the two patterns of information seeking behavior. These patterns of information seeking were highlighted in the segment on *Previous Experience* in the *Result* section. The first pattern of information seeking behavior is described as the information being looked for as the goal. The information is solely what the seeker is looking for. Now, in these cases, if and only if Facebook is used then it is used as a primary mechanism of research. To summarize, if the goal of the research is the information then, if Facebook is used, it is the only information-seeking tool utilized.

Now, the second pattern of information seeking behavior is described, as a behavior exhibited when the information being researched is only the means to another goal. To use the previous analogy, the information is a piece to the bigger "puzzle". In these cases, if and only if Facebook is used, it is utilized a secondary mechanism of research. To recapitulate, if the information being researched is just a means to something else than Facebook is utilized as a complementary or as a second resort to other information seeking tools. Furthermore, although these patterns were presented in the *Previous Experience* section of the *Results*, these patterns transcends these boundaries and is applicable to any search characteristics when utilizing Facebook.

5.1.2. Facebook as a Social Information-Seeking Tool

Now, Facebook is first and foremost used in order to gather social data. The participants, as portrayed in the results section, described three occurrences where they utilized Facebook for social purposes: "Monitoring" People, Searching for Social Events and Searching for Groups.

5.1.2.1. "Monitoring" People

Facebook is utilized to gather information about people in their social circle. The people included in this social circle can be from close relatives (e.g. parents) to people one has not met (e.g. friend of a friend).

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Department of Applied Information Technology
Gothenburg, Sweden, May 2009

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As previously iterated in the results section, people monitor other people in two ways: gather information about people and connect with new people. Furthermore, there is third category that falls under gathering information about people referred to as Facebook stalking. Facebook stalking is the excessive use of Facebook to gather information about an individual that has no idea you are engaging in this activity.

There are two types of information about people gathered through Facebook: action related information and personal details.

Furthermore, it would seem that there are no additional factors influencing whether people utilize Facebook in order to gather information about other people. When Facebook is used in order to monitor other Facebook users, it is used as a primary means of research. People utilize Facebook as a first resort in order to gather information about people actions and people's personal details. In other words, the utilization of Facebook in order to collect information about people is solely based on whether these other individuals being research have a Facebook account. In this case, Facebook is a primary means of information seeking and the first pattern of information is exhibited. This pattern is characterized as the information being the goal in itself. The information about that person you are looking is solely what the other Facebook user is seeking for.

This particular trend can be explained due to the fact that Facebook is one of the world's largest social networking sites. Its primary use is to connect socially with other people and by putting information about oneself using different media, e.g. writing, videos and photos.

5.1.2.2. Searching for Social Events

Facebook is utilized by its users in order to gather information about a particular event. Its use is multifarious; most commonly, Facebook is used to gather information about a specific social event such as a party. The information gathered is related to the location, time and organizer of a particular party. These events are usually informal in nature and most of the information, if not all, is contained solely on Facebook. There is a trend that if the event increases in formality the less likely it is that people utilizes Facebook to gather information.

Another parameter engaged is the intimacy and the attendance of the event. Generally, the less intimate the event the more likely it is for users to utilize Facebook for information seeking purposes. This can be explained by the fact that if an event is intimate it will less likely be advertised through Facebook. Furthermore, if an event increases in intimacy, people are perhaps more inclined to contact the person directly either face-to-face or by other means of communication, e.g. phone or e-mail.

Generally, for these social events Facebook is used as a primary tool of research except when intimacy and\or formality is high then Facebook is most likely not used at all. Therefore, the first pattern of information seeking is exhibited, where the information is the goal in itself.

Furthermore, Facebook was utilized in order to keep up with Facebook friend birthdays. If one is looking for that information then it is usually the only goal someone has. Therefore, the first pattern of information seeking is exhibited and Facebook is the primary tool of information seeking. This particular usage of Facebook is again explainable by the fact that these types of information are rooted in social interaction or networking, which is the basis of what Facebook is founded on.

5.1.2.3. Searching for Groups

The final usage of Facebook for social information-seeking purposes is through the utilization of Facebook groups. These groups are designed for a smaller community to communicate on relatively any specified topic. Often these groups are created on account of a similar social, academic or professional identity, i.e. people from the same program, the same job or any social group (e.g. football fan club).

In these cases, Facebook is accessed in order to get to the relevant group. Then information is gathered according to what the seeker was looking for. In these cases the first pattern of information seeking behavior is exhibited. The information is the goal in itself and thus, Facebook is the primary method of research.

This can be explained due to the fact that these groups are usually used when it is extremely relevant to the problem at hand. For example, if one needs help or clarification regarding an assignment for class, accessing the course Facebook group (if one exists) will be easy to gather the information necessary and more relevant than using other searching methods.
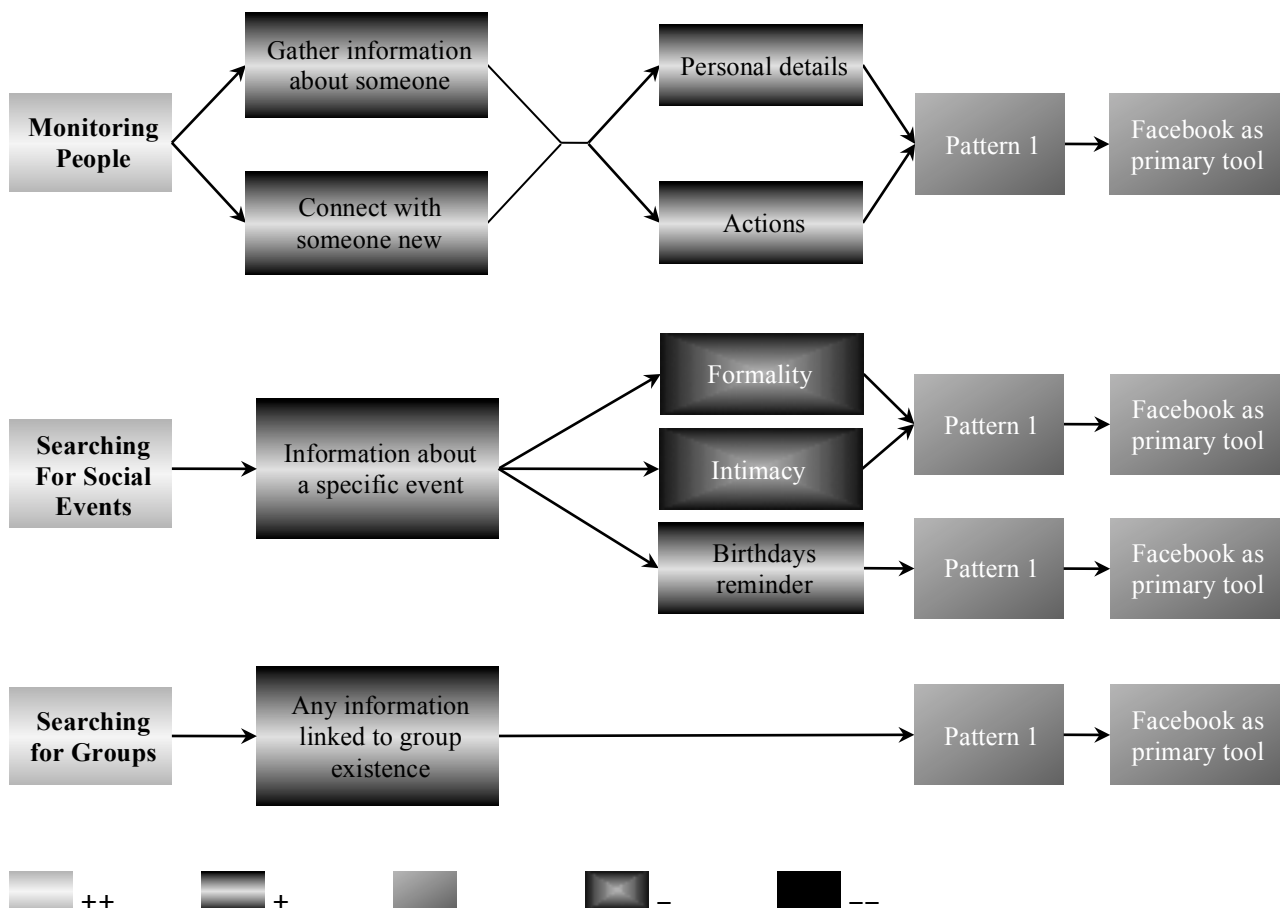
5.1.2. Model

Figure 1 - Facebook as a Social Information-seeking tool

* The + and – determine whether there is a positive and negative effect, the strength (delineated by amount of pluses or minuses are derived from participants' answers)

5.1.3. Facebook as a Miscellaneous Information-Seeking Tool

Although Facebook as been primarily described as a tool for social action or communication, at times it usage as crossed the "typical" social boundaries. In this fragment we argue that the two ways in which Facebook can be used for non-particular social behavior are: Pages and Previous Experience.

5.1.3.1. Searching for Pages

Facebook pages are designed in order to communicate to a large audience on the Internet. Facebook describes its pages' as designed for business, organizations and brands (these include artists as well as venues) in order to share stories and increase their visibility on the Internet. In other words, Facebook pages are a way of advertising through the social networking phenomenon.

These pages are used to gather information in different ways. First, as one can imagine, at times these pages are simply used in order to gather information randomly about a specific brand and/or organization that one is interested in order to seek entertainment. In these cases, Facebook is the primary means of research as often no specific information is actually required in that search. That is people utilize Facebook in order to entertain themselves with news stories from a specific brand or organization. Therefore, as Facebook is the primary means of research, the first pattern of information seeking behavior is exhibited.

This particular behavior is explainable as Facebook provides this entertainment to its users. Akin to surfing on the Internet aimlessly, Facebook users surf Facebook for random information concerning brands. Due to its random nature if Facebook is used it is fathomable that it is used as a primary mechanism of research.

Furthermore, Facebook users utilize Facebook pages to gather more relevant information concerning a particular organization. This relevant information differs from user to user and from time to time. An example is a person, which is interested in learning about a specific action that a charity organization is undertaking. This person might then go on the Facebook page in order to gather this information.

Now in these cases, Facebook can be both used as a primary means of information or complementary mechanism. Therefore both patterns of information seeking behavior may be exhibited. The factor influencing whether Facebook is utilized as a primary or complementary means of research is whether the information that has been gathered is relevant to what the participant is looking for. If the Facebook page is up to date and offers the relevant information and required actions that the user is trying to perform than it is used a primary mechanism of research. However, if the information is not enough and supplementary information is required and/or the action that one to perform is not possible on the Facebook page than it is used a complementary mechanism of research.

This is perhaps easier to comprehend with an example. Taking the charity example, if one is only looking for information regarding a particular charitable action and this information is present on Facebook, then, if Facebook is used, then it is utilized as a primary means of research and the first pattern of information seeking behavior is executed. However, if one is for example looking to give money to that charitable organization (e.g. goal is to give money not to simply gather information) and that action is not possible through Facebook then if Facebook is used it is used as a complementary mechanism of research and then second pattern of information seeking is noticeable.

This particular behavior and Facebook usage is understandable as it is solely limited on the capacities of Facebook. If Facebook is used and it offers the required actions and information than no other mechanism need to be used.

5.1.3.2. Searching for People with Perceived Similar Previous Experience

Although previous experience, as one will notice, is firmly rooted in social experience, the researchers believe that it also transcends the social dimension. That is at times someone in your social circle might interact with you to share information on a matter previously experienced, however, sometimes this experience transcends social boundaries, e.g. looking for a job an apartment or applying to a program. Furthermore, previous experience is not related to searching information about people and other Facebook users.

Now, one of the most important factors that trigger people to utilize Facebook for information seeking purposes is whether people perceive that other users have lived through similar experiences. It is one of the most crucial factors that trigger Facebook searches and it is interesting to note that the experience does not have to be real but that the users believe that people might have lived through these experiences.

Additionally, there are a few factors that affect whether people utilize Facebook for information seeking. One of these factors is the perceive recency of when the action was performed. To be more specific, if people's belief that the similar experience has been experience recently the more likely they are to use Facebook as an information-seeking tool. This factor of recency will be further explained in the information trust analysis as it is also has a strong link to information trust.

Another factor that influences people's utilization of Facebook for information seeking purpose when a perceived similar previous experience is believed is information "seriousness". Seriousness is linked the formal nature of the information and its relative importance to the user. Importance and formality are often relative to each user but when it comes to Facebook searches, the more "serious" the information is perceived by the user the less likely they will utilize Facebook. As an example, on the one had if someone is looking for a price to get into a party would generally be low seriousness as it lacks relative importance and formality. On the other hand, looking for a job or an apartment is high in importance and formality and therefore Facebook will be user least in these instances.

Now, for previous experience both patterns of information seeking are exhibited. The first pattern of information seeking, where the goal is the information itself and Facebook is used as a primary mechanism, is linked to low seriousness. The second pattern of information seeking is exhibited with high seriousness.

This particular distinction makes sense as the more formal an action the more likely it requires bureaucratic measures and multiple actions rather than simple information gathering. Facebook can then be used to gather any extra information but does not provide users to enact the other steps.

To come to a conclusion the scenario in which users most likely utilize Facebook when a previous experience is perceived is when this similar perceived happened recently and is linked to a relatively low serious matter.
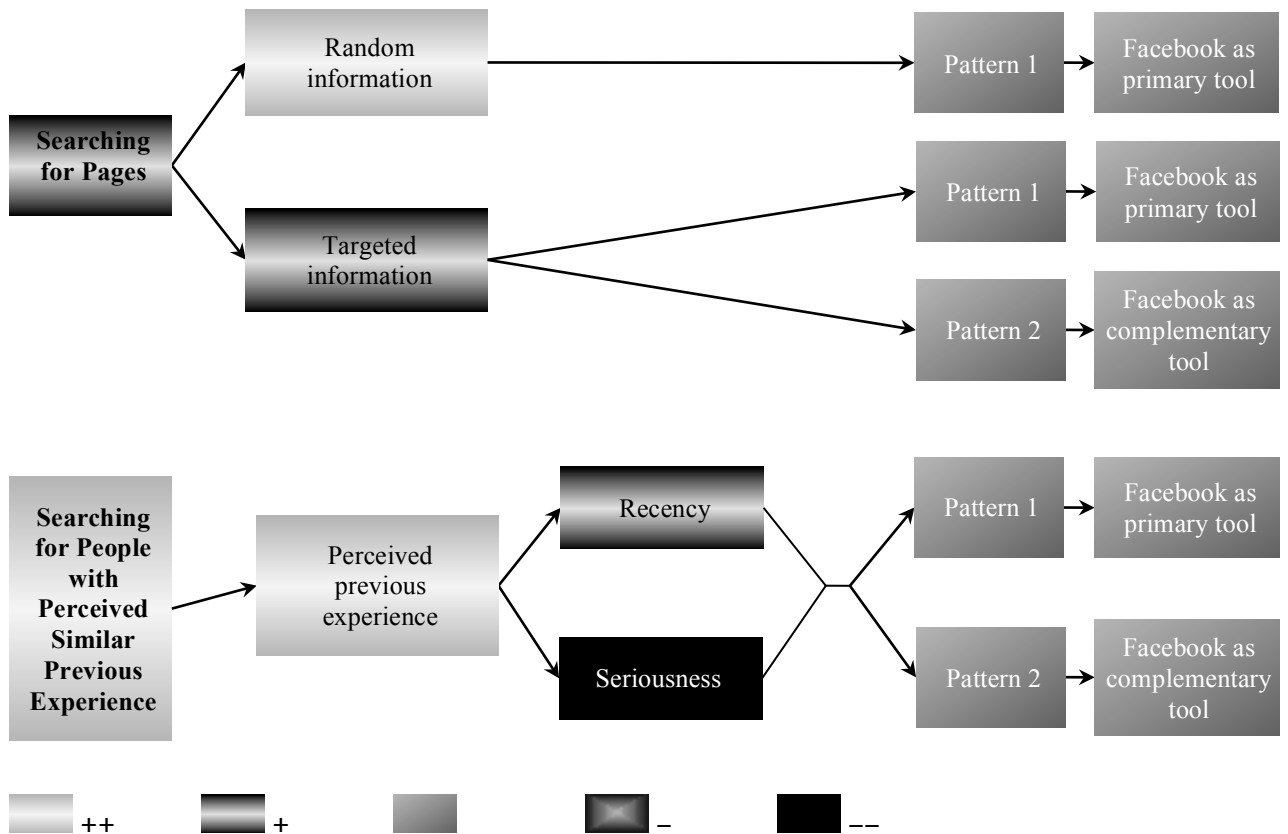
5.1.3. Model

Figure 2 - Facebook as a Miscellaneous Information-seeking tool

* The + and – determine whether there is a positive and negative effect, the strength (delineated by amount of pluses or minuses are derived from the participants' answers)

5.2. Trust in the Information Being Shared

This final section will analyze what factors influence the trustworthiness of information gathered on Facebook. This section is divided into two main segments: The system and the Users. The first segment, as the name suggests, is focusing on trust on Facebook as a system and trustworthiness in information sharing linked to that system.

The subsequent segment is devoted to information sharing trustworthiness between users. This fragment will focus on factors that build a trustworthy information sharing relation and differences that may occur between known and unknown Facebook users.

5.2.1. Trustworthiness of The System

Facebook is generally linked with untrustworthiness. Just like the previous section these are simply factors that influence the trustworthiness that people have about the system and sharing or the shared information on that system. These factors are not "indestructible" barriers as all the information was gathered from Facebook users. This implies that, even though there is a suspicious relationship, there individuals still utilize this system for information sharing.

5.2.1.1. "The plastic box"

The most interesting factor influencing the trustworthiness of Facebook as a system and its spreading information is what can be referred as the "plastic box effect". Now, as previously iterated, Facebook is a part of the social media phenomenon. Social media's key component is its user-generated content. Due to this Facebook profits from content that it does not create but that its users create themselves. Therefore, on its own Facebook is such as an empty plastic box, in which any Facebook user adds its piece of information creating the content. Now, Facebook users feel uneasy about a company that basically does not really create any of the content of the service that they sell. Furthermore, anyone can add to that plastic box, from the system itself (Facebook), to all its individual users. Due to this plastic box effect, there are two main issues that arise linked to trustworthiness in the system. The first issue is related to the users of the system. Facebook allows anyone to put any content. This lack of filter allows anyone to post anything without being checked for validity or reliability towards the information. This phenomenon of lack of trust or distrust towards information on social media content has been pointed out in a research done on Wikipedia. In a study carried out by Luyt et al. (2008), they demonstrated that due to a lack of filter on social media, in this case Wikipedia, the information on these sites, even though highly utilized, are often taken on by suspicion. Wikipedia was depicted as unreliable and inaccurate in its information content. This feeling of inaccuracy is similar on Facebook since the only filter is oneself. Perhaps, even more than Wikipedia since its content is perpetually reviewed for correction, which is not the case on Facebook. Furthermore, Wikipedia is an attempt at gathering factual information while Facebook is largely informal or subjective thought sharing. Therefore, due to its user-generated content, Facebook is seen as untrustworthy as the information distributed by its users is not filtered and therefore lacking accuracy and/or reliability.

The second phenomenon linked to the "plastic box" is directly linked to the Facebook system. As previously stated, Facebook does not create its content, or barely, however, Facebook is the owner of the content that users share. In other words, Facebook users put the content in the box but Facebook owns that box and everything you subsequently put into it.

Now to the researchers knowledge there is no literature describing this phenomenon creating distrust on Facebook. However, from this research factors have been drawn to influence how this distrusts is spawned. These two aspects are privacy and accountability and lack of control.

5.2.1.2. Privacy

One of the main factors creating distrust between the system and its users is privacy. Facebook users are more or less aware, depending on the particular user, that most information shared on Facebook is often personal in nature. Although this information is personal, thus private, users are suspicious with the amount of privacy provided by Facebook. According to Facebook users, the system offers the possibility to customize their privacy settings but even at the highest level of privacy available unrest persist for most users.

These main suspicions rest on the fact that Facebook owns the content that the users post and share on Facebook. Therefore, although the privacy settings might be customize, Facebook as a system can utilize the content you are posting. It is interesting to note that although the suspicion is there users are not actually

completely knowledgeable on who owns what content and to what extent. This is what Facebook (2012) states:

"You own all of the content and information you post on Facebook, and you can control how it is shared through your privacy and application settings. In addition:
1. For content that is covered by intellectual property rights, like photos and videos (IP content), you specifically give us the following permission, subject to your privacy and application settings: you grant us a non-exclusive, transferable, sub-licensable, royalty-free, worldwide license to use any IP content that you post on or in connection with Facebook (IP License). This IP License ends when you delete your IP content or your account unless your content has been shared with others, and they have not deleted it.
2. When you delete IP content, it is deleted in a manner similar to emptying the recycle bin on a computer. However, you understand that removed content may persist in backup copies for a reasonable period of time (but will not be available to others)." (Facebook, 2012)

More rules and regulation are posted on the site but it confirms that these suspicions are raised from actual Facebook regulations.
Now, most participants in this study were aware of this factor but it can be assumed that not all Facebook users are aware of this fact.

5.2.1.3. Lack of Control
Now, Facebook users are often worried about the lack of control that they have on the content that they share or that is provided by others (about themselves) on Facebook. To be more specific, users are reticent to the accountability that might arise from sharing or by shared information on Facebook. System users are afraid that some comprising information, whether to their professional or personal life, might be shared on Facebook. This compromising information was not detailed by Facebook users but what created wariness is the lack of control that they have on the information. This lack of control has two dimensions, a time component and an other users component. The time component is related to the enduring nature of the information that is put on the Internet, i.e. once information is put out there it can come back to you. Furthermore, as stated in the previous quote on Facebook regulations, deleted information might still be accessible by Facebook as they have a right to your image and the content that you share.
The other user component is the possibility that anyone that has some information about you, a photo, a story, is able to share that information on Facebook. It is difficult to scrutinize everyone that you have on Facebook and what they are sharing, therefore, some information that is compromising mgith be shared without your consent or your knowledge.

5.2.1.4. Security: Hackers and Stalking
The final factors influencing trust on the system is the security of users when creating such an account. Facebook users are especially aware of account hacks or stalking from other users.
Hackers are by definition; a person that uses computers in order to access unauthorized data (Hacker, 2013). Facebook users are apprehensive about account hacks as personal information is present on Facebook and the possibility of hackers spoofing their identities. If a hacker gains access to a users account he may share

information while seemingly being another person. The consequences of this may be multifarious and may have an extremely negative effect, which is explains users guardedness of Facebook hackers.

Furthermore, some Facebook users have been prone to describe their usage of Facebook as stalking. As described in the results section Facebook stalking is a behavior characterized as the over usage of Facebook in order to gather information about other Facebook users. This increases caution from system users as Facebook stalking from other users is done without their consent. Facebook "allows" users to over scrutinize people's action and thought without the knowledge of these users and their consent. This increases wariness of Facebook users as Facebook increases the likelihood of general stalking and this can be a serious security threat.

Nowadays, these security threats are a concern. This hotly debated topic has spurred due to this virtual social world, which facilitates acts of bullying, stalking and other forms of social pressure. These have been shown by the happenings in Gothenburg as presented introduction. Other act have been demonstrated in the United Kingdom where the Guardian presented the social networking phenomenon as increasing cyberbullying and leading to increase in suicides in the teenage population (Topping, 2011). These are but some acts of an apparently growing phenomenon, which explains some of the suspicion brought on by Facebook.

5.2.1.5. Why People Utilize Facebook

Now, throughout this section, much has information was put forward describing the suspicions and the distrust that is created between Facebook and its users. However, these users still utilize the system and the question that arises is why people use Facebook? Answering this question would be a completely different endeavor than this research but some information has to be disclosed on this matter to shed a light on this peculiar usage of a system (from which one as a choice to be part of) that raises suspicion rather than trust.

According to a research conducted by Nadkarni and Hofmann (2012), there are two primal needs that induce individuals to partake in the Facebook community: the need to belong and the need for self-representation.

The need to belong is described has humans innate dependence on social support. Being ostracized impacts negatively on one health, such has hindering self-esteem and general emotional-well-being. Now, as presented by these authors, Facebook community is growing and implication in this community has almost become necessary for one feeling of belongingness especially in teenage or young adults communities. In other words, Facebook as become such an important social phenomenon that not being part of this virtual world could lead to a sense of pariahism. However, it is essential to note that certain cultural factors affect one's sense of belonging. Nadkarni and Hofmann (2012), emphasized that individualism and collectivism were important cultural facets which affect one's feeling of belonging and people's Facebook identity needs. Individualistic countries self-esteem is central to life satisfaction making Facebook central to one's social identity.

Now, the need for self-representation is even more deeply rooted in personality. Personality traits such as neuroticism, narcissism, shyness and self-worth are fundamental in the need for self-representation. Facebook allows it users to display their idealized selves on the Facebook network. Users are then inclined by personality traits as described above to display themselves as they wished but in the most positive lights. The personality traits influences one usage of Facebook. Neuroticism and narcissism affected how one portrayed them on Facebook, where physical

attractiveness is central. Shyness and self-worth were linked to how crucial the number of Facebook friends was needed in order to be socially relevant and socially represented (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012).

This phenomenon is applicable to Putnam's idea of social capital. Although at first it might seem that participants are reluctant to the idea of being part of Facebook they still utilize it and rather frequently. That is because the social capital embedded within the entity of Facebook is extremely important. It is safe to assume that for most users, the financial benefits of Facebook are minimal or inexistent, however, the social benefits are huge. Being part of Facebook is being part of a social group and not being a pariah. It helps gather friends, communicate and network. All the benefits in the social capital embedded in Facebook, especially the social benefits rather than financial benefits, then outweigh the potential skepticism linked to using Facebook.
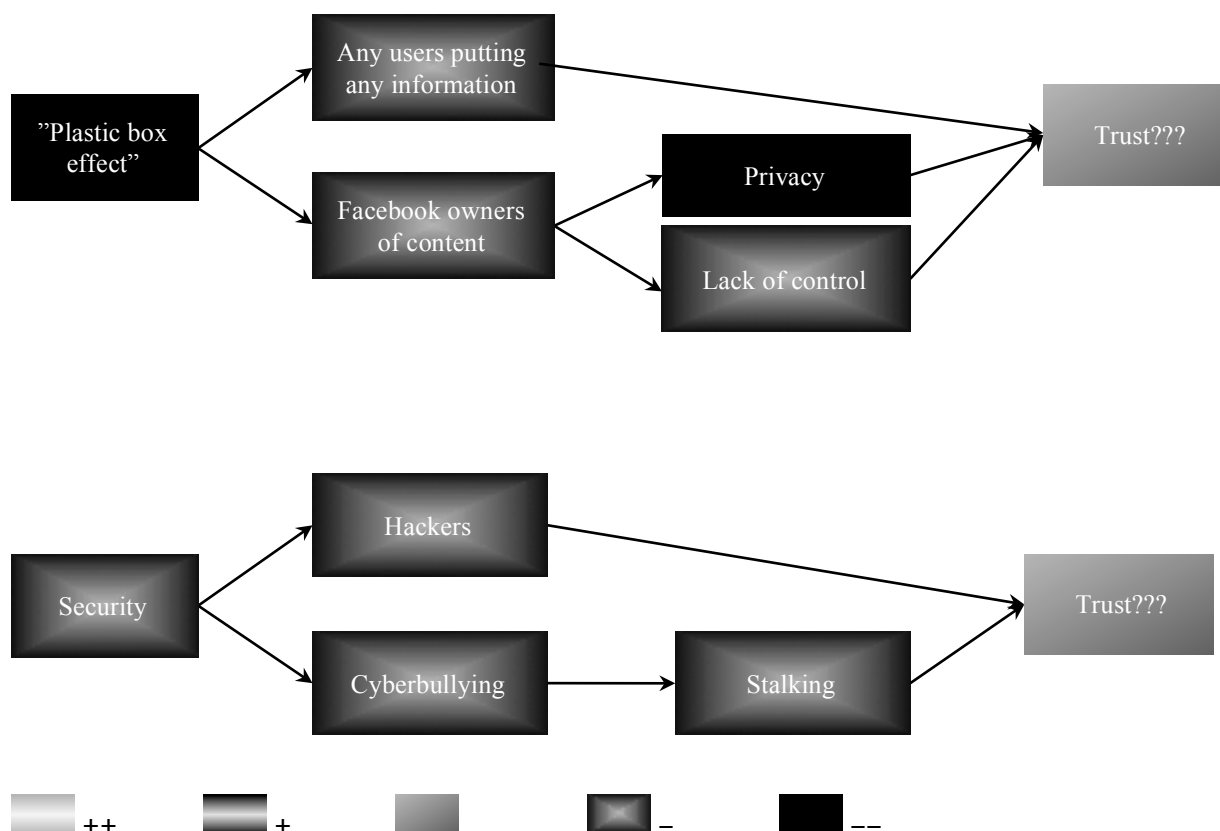
5.2.1. Model Summary

Figure 3 – Trustworthiness in the system

* The + and – determine whether there is a positive and negative effect, the strength (delineated by amount of pluses or minuses are derived from the participants' answers)

5.2.2.Trustworthiness Between Users

Now, as presented, this fragment of this section is exploring trustworthiness in the information sharing relationship between Facebook users. The first part will investigate the factors that enable the flourishing of a trusting information relationship

between users as well as factors hindering the relationship. The following part is focusing on the qualities or characteristics that other Facebook users require in order to be trusted in an information sharing relationship.

5.2.2.1. Establishment of a Trustworthy Relationship

One of the main factors influencing whether a trusting information sharing exist is when the trust was established in relation to the Facebook interaction these individuals have had. In other words, did the individuals sharing information through Facebook interact prior their Facebook relationship and shared information in a more traditional setting.

Generally, individuals tend to only trust people that they have interacted in real life prior to having a Facebook relationship. This is explainable due to the fact that Facebook and the virtual world in general permit individuals to pose as their idealized selves or simply as someone else. This was demonstrated by Petit (2004) who stated that in a virtual arena it is impossible to trust others due to the lack of evidence one has on the other. According to Petit (2014), individuals in the virtual sphere can present themselves as freely and as inaccurately as they wish. Due to this freedom a certain ambiguity exists between users in the virtual world creating uncertainty and a lack of trust.

Although, research as shown, e.g. de Laat (2005), that trust can be created in an ambiguous virtual world situation Petit's point as to the researcher's knowledge never been dismissed in its entirety, i.e. trust can be established between virtual world users *but* due to uncertainty it is more difficult than in a real life situation.

Furthermore, Facebook users were shown to create a trust in information sharing relationship after only having interacted with someone on Facebook.

The crucial factor determining whether one trusted another Facebook individual he has only interacted on with Facebook is how closely he is related to his social network. More specifically, whether this particular individual is a friend of a good friend that you know in real life or whether this individual more or less distant family member.

This phenomenon is explainable, as research has often shown that people tend to trust or favor in-group members. An in-group is defined as a group from which we share kinship or some common social factor, e.g. income (Lei & Vesely, 2010).

Voci (2006) conducted a study attempting to discriminate the contrasting views between in-group and out-group feeling of trust and favoritism. In this study, it was shown that especially under threat, individuals favor and trust their in-group members more than out-group members. Although this is especially related to general trust and favoritism it can be applicable to information sharing trust.

Now, to recapitulate, Facebook users establish a trusting information sharing relationship with other individuals when they have interacted with these individuals prior their Facebook relationship in a more traditional setting.

However, cases may arises where trust can be established when they have only interacted through Facebook. These cases are usually characterized by trusting a member of a particular in-group.

5.2.2.2. Breaches of Trust

After trust has been established, trust can be breached and affect an information sharing relationship between Facebook users.

However, generally users are not affected when another user considered as trustworthy has shared incorrect information. It was demonstrated that trustworthy

individuals that share incorrect information was interpreted by others as having done this most probably not on purpose or simply committed a simple mistake. It is difficult to explicate this phenomenon, however, one can speculate that a trust relationship in information sharing is difficult and at times lengthy process and seldom mistakes or incorrect information sharing does not affect the long-term relationship. A particular researched carried out Kurzban, Rigdon and Wilson (2008) demonstrated that trust is generally an incremental process rather than a one-shot investment. In other words, trust is enhanced and more long lasting when it is established as a step-by-step process. This supports the idea that if a trustworthy information sharing relationship is established as a process, it is more likely to remain even if a particular individual rarely breaches that trust.

Now, at times when some individuals share incorrect information it does affect the trust relationship negatively. However, these cases were reported to be ones where a weak trustworthy relationship in information sharing exists. This supports the previous speculation supported by Kurzban et al.'s research where if a firm basis for trust is constructed it is difficult to break; however, when a feeble and not incremental process of trust relationship was established it is more readily broken or affected. If individuals where a weak but existing trust in information sharing relationship has been established and incorrect or inaccurate information has been shared then that relationship can cease to be or be negatively affected by this occurrence.

5.2.2.3. Unknown and Known Facebook Users

On Facebook there are two categories of people, which one can interact and share information with: know and unknown Facebook users.

On the one hand, as one can infer, unknown users are individuals, which one is not related to in any way and has never interacted with. On the other hand, known users are individuals, which one are either related to or have interacted with in some way. Generally, a Facebook user will tend to trust more another known Facebook individual rather than an unknown. This is probably due to the fact that trust is often linked with vulnerability. According to Misztal (2011), vulnerability is central in a trust relationship as when one offers trust to another its fundamentality resides in the other not exploiting one's own vulnerability.

Furthermore, Misztal (2011) states that all trust research whether opponents or proponents of each other, support the idea that trust is a means of overcoming the lack of evidence that one has creating vulnerability. Moreover, when one is vulnerable, one is at risk of consequences arising from trusting another, e.g. betrayal. This is directly transferable to trust in information sharing relationship, where one is lacking a certain type of evidence and has to accept information at face value, leading vulnerability of being misinformed and any consequence that might arise from that. Now, one does not offer trust to anyone easily as humans tend to avoid being vulnerable. Humans tend to avoid vulnerability from an evolutionary point of view, where we try to diminish ways that could lead to our potential harm and enhance the likelihood of our survival.

Now, the next two segments will describes the factors that increase the likelihood of a trusting relationship between known and unknown Facebook users.

Known Users:

Users are most likely to create a trusting relationship in information sharing with users that they know. There are two main factors influencing whether a user trusts another Facebook user in their sharing of information: Closeness, previous experience.

Closeness:

As in the previous section, closeness to a particular individual is essential in trust in information sharing. However, in these cases as the users sharing information are known they are all part of a specific in-group. The first facet of closeness is relatable to kinship. *Nuclear family members* are considered to be especially close (i.e. parents and siblings) and trustworthy in information sharing relationships. Furthermore, other family members are considered as potentially trustworthy in information sharing but the further the family member in terms of kinship the lesser the trust.

Among non-family members closeness between known Facebook users can be distinguished into two main groups: acquaintances and friends. Acquaintances are rated are not close as they are members of an in-group that one did/does not really interact with, e.g. a classmate one never really talks to. Friends are closer as they are people rated as people one interacts with and appreciate to at least some extent. Now, it is difficult from this current research what distinguished closeness amongst friends. According to Kelley, Berscheid, Christensen, Harvey, Huston and Levinger at al. (1983) relationship closeness can be characterized into four factors: frequency, duration, strength and diversity. Frequency refers to the amount of interaction one has with this other individual, increased frequency is enhanced closeness. Duration is the longevity of the relationship, the longer the relationship the closer the individuals are. Relationship strength is characterized by the individuals' subjective idea of how close this person is to him/her and how many others are rated as closer than this particular individual. Finally, diversity is linked to interdependence between the individuals, the more interdependent the individuals in a relationship are the closer they are.

Previous Experience:

The next factor related to whether an individual trusts a known Facebook user is whether one perceives the other user sharing this information has having lived through a similar experience. It is essential to note that this experience only has to be perceived in order to lead to trust. In other words, if a Facebook user believes that another had lived through a similar experience then he is more likely to believe the information he is sharing, i.e. similar experience leads to trust in information sharing. Now, just as in the previous segment on "when people use Facebook to search for information" the factors linked to it are recency and seriousness. However, in this case the only factor enhancing or linked to trust in information sharing is recency. To recapitulate, recency is described has own recently was a event perceived to be experienced. Now, the more recently is a perceived experienced believed to have happened to more likely is the user to believe it as true. Thus, others having experienced a similar experienced leads to information sharing trust and recency enhances this trust.

Unknown Users:

Generally, users tend to trust less unknown users when they share information due to vulnerability. However, certain factors raises awareness that "others" may be right and change this inclination of untrustworthiness towards the unknown. The factors enhancing a trust in information sharing between unknown Facebook are: frequency, perceived competence and links to legitimate sources, and the "social contract".

Frequency:

An important factor when it comes to information shared by unknown individuals is the frequency at which this information is shared. Frequency refers to the number of times this particular and specific information has been shared. The higher the frequency of a specific piece of information is being shared the higher the trust in the information that an individual is sharing. In other words, in order to more likely trust

an unknown Facebook user's information more unknown individuals have to share that same piece of information. One can speculate that this aspect of trust is fathomable by the fact that in these cases you do not trust one individual with one piece of information but multiple individuals. In these cases one is somewhat dispersing vulnerability for one aspect. Furthermore, one can further speculate that individuals that trust information in these cases certainly have faith that not all these individuals are wrong, i.e. "if so many people say it it must be true".

Perceived Competence and Links to Legitimate:

One factor essential in order to trust *one* unknown Facebook user is to perceive that this individual is competent. Now, just as similar experience, the competence has only to be perceived and not actual, one does not know the other individual, therefore one has to take at face value the information being shared by a seemingly competent individual.

There are two kinds of competent unknown Facebook users: official representatives and group members. Official representatives are usually Facebook account or pages of influential individuals within companies, brands or organization. This phenomenon can be explicated, as competence is usually an important facet of trust. According to Noteboom (2005), trust in competence is a basis trust relationship that can be built. This trust resides in the fact that the trustee believes that the trusted has the necessary cognitive and technical skills. This can be related to information trust as one believes that the other is competent, cognitively and technically, in order to share the correct information.

Furthermore, competence has been related to power and power relations. According to Stolte (1978), power structures enhance the viewing of powerful individuals as competent. In other words, the social structures lead us to believe that powerful individuals have become powerful because they are competent. To conclude, official representative are trusted in information sharing because their position inclines the belief that they are competent leading to enhanced trust in information sharing. However, one can argue Stolte research is quite dated and rooted in American power structured. These findings may not be completely transferable to current power structures.

The other type of perceived competence attributed to unknown Facebook users is whether these users are part of a same group as oneself. It is difficult to explain this phenomenon, as it seems typical to the virtual world and Facebook. Unknown users of a specific group may be seen as competent when they are sharing information related to a matter linked to this particular group. For example, one may trust another unknown user sharing information about how to hand-in an assignment for university if this group is a course program group. This is perhaps linked to perceived similar experiences. One believes that these individuals have lived through a similar experience and therefore are competent in handling this situation.

Finally, another aspect where competence comes into play is when unknown Facebook users utilize links to legitimate sources in order to share information. In these cases the unknown individual are not necessarily the trustworthy party in the information sharing relationship but the link used is deemed legitimate enough in order to trust it. Competence comes into legitimate sources are believed to be written or created by individuals or are competent in the subject matter that they are creating, e.g. experts.

Social Contract:

Now the "social contract" is perhaps the most interesting phenomenon of trust in information sharing paradigm in the Facebook world. Unknown Facebook individuals

might be trusted solely on the creation of a "social contract" that is spurred amongst members of a particular page or group. This social contract is imaginary in nature and is rooted in the Golden Rule of ethics of reciprocity: One should treat others as one would like others to treat oneself.

Many Facebook users trust other unknown Facebook users when sharing information on a page or group that one is part of as they themselves believe that they would share correct information on that particular platform. This social contract is then based on mutual and reciprocal trust that the others would do the same as you would in good faith.

This particular social contract basis of trust is what Putnam (1993) describes as social capital. Putnam describes that the resources embedded within the social network enhance the outcome of positive action and facilitate information flow. As described in the literature review section of this paper, Putnam (1993) describes trust as the glue that holds society together both on a macro and micro level, i.e. from families to states. Social Capital from Putnam's point of view is the benefits one can get from cooperation and trust. In a society, which in this case can be Facebook, there are expected benefits from trusting others and these expectations are what creates social capital. In a society where social capital is high, there is less need for monitoring has cooperation and trust is high. In other words, the society of Facebook, has communities of users in groups and pages, where social capital is high enough for other members to trust each other, i.e. the expected benefits are high.
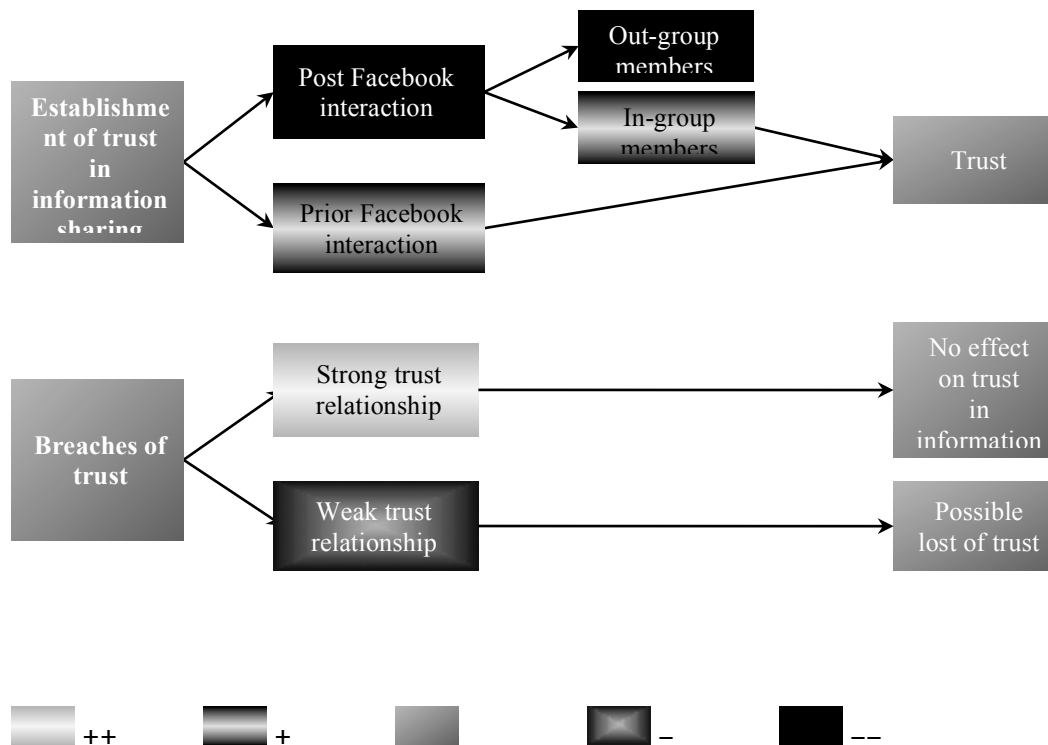
5.2.2. Model

Figure 4 – Establishment and Breaches of Trust Between Users

* The + and – determine whether there is a positive and negative effect, the strength (delineated by amount of pluses or minuses are derived from the participants' answers)
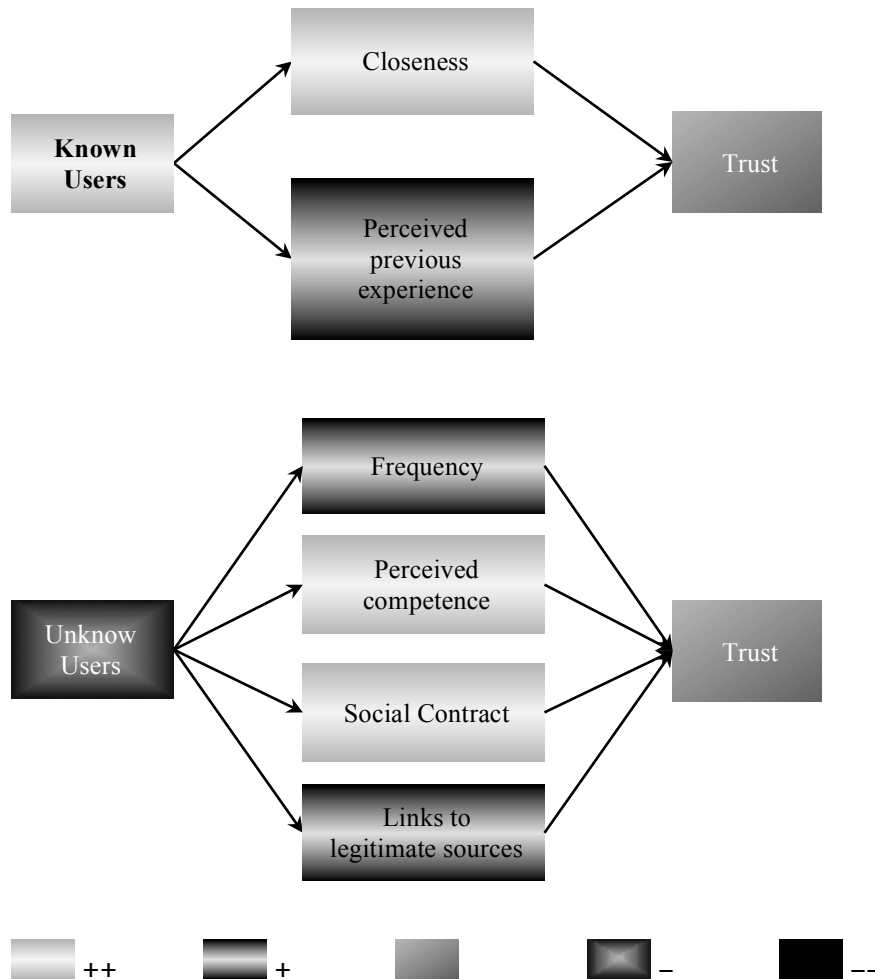
Figure 5 – Known and Unknown Users

* The + and – determine whether there is a positive and negative effect, the strength (delineated by amount of pluses or minuses are derived from participants' answers)

5.3. Future Research

This research offers some interesting insights that are the potential for future studies in information-seeking, social media and the trust field. First, it is would be of academic importance to replicate a similar study but from a quantitative point of view to discern the particular ways of when people utilize Facebook and delineate between difference types of users along different categorical variables, e.g. gender, age etc…

The researchers believe that from this type of research, more essential studies, especially qualitative studies, will be spurred and a light will be shed on when and why individuals utilize Facebook in order to gather information.

Furthermore, social media is already an extremely popular field of research in the current scientific world. However, much still needs to be uncovered as to why people utilize these tools and for what purposes and how.

Now, according to the author of this thesis, it is essential to deepen our understanding of Facebook and information trust. This study, especially due to time and economical constraints barely touch the tip of the iceberg. More and more individuals are connected using Facebook and information sharing takes place continuously through that channel. As one of the participants pointed out in this study, it sometimes replaces the e-mail medium. Learning the factors influencing one trust or acceptance

of information can be beneficial and also preventive. It can be beneficial as one could acquire knowledge on how to influence people and how to make them trust relevant and important information. The preventive issue is perhaps one of the most important; as most people's exposure to Facebook is significant it is important to know what can influence people to trust certain pieces of information in order to reduce the possibility of manipulation through unethical or yet unknown marketing schemes.

Furthermore, more studies concerning more diversified participants could potentially show that in different parts of the world people utilize Facebook differently, e.g. Western and Eastern, Europeans and Americans.

Studies investigating the utilization of social networking, such as these, and what influences people in their usage and trust towards the information they receive is fundamental. Learning about these issues is essential in order to avoid occurrences such as the cyberbullying and riots akin to the ones that happened in Gothenburg.

Moreover, the studies and the information from these studies have to be tackled towards the population that requires that knowledge the most and not necessarily the scientific community. According to Mussells (2012), there are 800 millions users which would make it the second most populous country in the world behind China. Now, according to Houghton (2013) demographics are correlated with who uses which social networking sites and at what frequency. Facebook is the most used social networking sites where in the United States of America an estimated 83% of 18-29 year old, 77% of 30-49 year olds, 52% of 50-64 year old and 32% of 65+ utilize Facebook or at least have a Facebook account. The main groups at risk are then definitely the younger generations who have to learn about the risks of using Facebook, and that its usage although beneficial can have grave repercussions.

5.4. Method Limitation

Now, this research has some limitations that were a product of the methodology used. It is essential to note that this method was seen as optimal to answer the research question. However, all methods have some shortcomings. In this case the main limitation is that people's account on their behavior is not always the actual behavior that they engage in to. Furthermore, interview usually requires more time than filling in a questionnaire and it is therefore, harder to gather participants.

Furthermore, in this research the population of participant is a very specific sample with mainly students and young adults in the population, where a majority of these students were musicians. Although, the goal of qualitative research is not necessarily to be generalizable these could have potentially influenced the data gathered greatly.

In addition to that, has one can see from the methodology section, most of the participants were somewhat known to the researchers. This was not seen as an optimal data population from the researchers point of view, however, given the time constraints it was the easiest method to apply and collect a meaningful amount of participant. Moreover, many individuals did not want to participant in a study that is related to their Facebook use to a stranger and a student.

Another aspect of this research, also linked the participants background, is that many of the factors that are described has influencing trustworthiness and Facebook information searching might be deeply rooted in western thinking. Most participants were westerners and/or studied in a western environment. Therefore, subjective factors described in this analysis, such as information seriousness, intimacy and formality, might differ greatly in western thinking or even European thinking to other cultural set of mind.

5.5. Conclusion

Facebook is a tool used in order to gather information from other users as well as the system itself. Facebook is used in order to gather information relating to social matters, i.e. "monitoring" people, searching for social events and searching for groups. Moreover, the social networking site is utilized in order to gather miscellaneous information related to a multitude of matters, i.e. searching for pages and searching for people with perceived similar experience.

In these cases there are multiple factors triggering the usage of the Facebook system in order to gather information, however, these elements cannot be causally related to one's Facebook usage.

Now, users collecting the information might attribute this information with the quality of being trustworthy. Facebook utilizers regard the system, of Facebook, as untrustworthy. The social networking site is deemed to be untrustworthy due to the lack of privacy and control that one has on the information being posted and that they post themselves. Furthermore, Facebook users trust other utilizers when sharing information when these display qualities of: being known to the user, a trust relationship was achieved prior the Facebook interaction and the trust relationship is characterized as strong.

Knowing about these matters is essential due Facebook's influence on people's daily life. Facebook is a tool and like every tool, knowledge is required in order to use it properly and safely. Matters of bullying have grown due to this social networking phenomenon and Facebook is no a stranger to this raise in trend. Quantitative and qualitative knowledge should continue to grow to answer these questions.

6.0. REFERENCES

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7.0. APPENDICES

7.1. Appendix I
Semistructured interview:

Researching with Facebook:

1. Generally, how do you use Facebook ?

2. When looking for information how do you use Facebook?

3. When using Facebook to gather information, what sort of information are you looking for?

4. When generally looking for information, is Facebook your first choice? If yes/no why? (other probing questions such as what is your first choice, when does Facebook come into play)

5. (depending on previous answer) When is Facebook (not) your first choice?

6. For what reasons would you prefer using Facebook in a search for information? For what reasons wouldn't you?

Trust in whom:

1. Generally do you trust Facebook?
    a. Provide vs receive.

2. Can you provide a concrete example of when it happened that you did trust Facebook with information, and when not?

3. Generally do you trust your Facebook "friends" when they share information, whether directly to you or not? Why? (what vs who)

4. Can you provide a concrete example of when you trusted a friend with information that he shared this time (directly probe) to you, and when you did not trust them? How did these people in these particular examples relate to you?

Trust in Facebook friends (always related to trust in information sharing):

1. When receiving information on Facebook from a "friend", what makes you trust this information as legitimate? (if nothing comes up in the third)

2. Can you provide an example of when you received information that you trusted and how it related to your previous answer on what makes you trust this information as legitimate?

3. Which friends in particular do you trust, how do you relate to these people?

4. Have you ever trusted information from a Facebook "friend" that you did not meet in real life? What qualities did these people show? A concrete example of when it happened if it did.

Trust Consequences and Trust Development (always related to trust in information sharing):

1. The Facebook "friends" you trust, was the trust established prior or post Facebook your relationship? i.e. did you trust these people with information before you were friends on Facebook? (vulnability)

2. Can you describe a situation where you really questioned the information provided with a trustworthy Facebook friend?

3. If it happened, that your friend provided with wrong information did it affect your relationship?

Final Question:

Do you have anything to add that you believe is related to the matter that you have not mentioned or simply that you would like to share?