Faculty and Facebook: attitudes of selected faculty toward utilizing Facebook to connect with students

Janet Schmeelk

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FACULTY AND FACEBOOK: ATTITUDES OF SELECTED FACULTY TOWARD UTILIZING FACEBOOK TO CONNECT WITH STUDENTS

by
Janet M. Schmeelk

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services, Administration, and Higher Education
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration
at
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Thesis Chair: Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.

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To my son, Alexander, you are still my greatest creation. You are my inspiration in completing this project.

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To Dr. Sisco, thank you for supporting my research. My study is nowhere near perfect, but I have learned more than I ever could have imagined.
ABSTRACT

Janet M. Schmeelk
FACULTY AND FACEBOOK: ATTITUDES OF SELECTED FACULTY TOWARD UTILIZING FACEBOOK TO CONNECT WITH STUDENTS
2011/12
Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.
Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes of selected faculty toward utilizing Facebook in their collegiate responsibilities, in February, 2012. This study also looked at how familiar selected faculty are with Facebook and its uses. Subjects included assistant, associate, and full professors in the College of Education, the College of Fine and Performing Arts, and the College of Communication at Rowan University. Data on attitudes were collected through means of a survey using 20 Yes/No, Likert-type items, and one open ended response item. Data analysis of quantitative data suggest that the selected faculty generally have a negative attitude toward Facebook and its possible classroom uses. Results of the open ended response item indicate faculty’s’ hesitance to use Facebook with students because of unwillingness to blur professional lines. Some faculty did report using Facebook to post relevant class material, connect with alumni, and keep a departmental page up-to-date. Recommendations for further practice and further research are included.
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Chapter I

Introduction

The uses of Web 2.0 technologies, such as Facebook, are changing the face of the college classroom. Gone are the days of having to go to a professor’s office hours to communicate with him or her. With a few clicks of their mouse, college students are able to have almost instant access to their professors. Faculty use of Facebook allows students and professors to engage on a level previously thought unattainable.

Statement of the Problem

Facebook is making its way into academia. Previously thought of as student-only territory, Facebook is now being used by college faculty to connect with their students. An assistant professor at Michigan State University, who has spent three years researching student behavior on Facebook said, “There’s tremendous potential with these social networks for developing relationships and being exposed to different perspectives. They are particularly well suited to academic work” (Young, 2009, ¶ 16). A recent study by Sturgeon and Walker (2009) reported that over 90% of the interviewed faculty members mentioned Facebook providing an open line of communication between professors and students. One professor stated, “Anything that helps students feel more comfortable in the classroom environment, where they can feel a connection with their instructors, opens the door to better understanding, better communication, and better learning” (¶ 11).
While Facebook presents a unique opportunity for faculty to engage with students, it is not without criticism. Not all students believe that faculty should be on Facebook, let alone interact with them. There are also concerns about appropriate student-teacher interaction, privacy, and over-sharing. Tales of professors publicly bad-mouthing their students and colleagues (and vice-versa) on Facebook have swept through academia. These headlines made sure that even the most professional-mannered faculty double-checked their privacy settings on Facebook.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to assess selected Rowan faculty attitudes towards using Facebook within their collegiate responsibilities. Another purpose of this study is to explore how familiar selected Rowan faculty are with Facebook and its uses. Of related importance was discovering a possible link between reported levels of technical expertise and attitudes toward Facebook usage.

**Significance of the Study**

This study examined faculty members’ current Facebook habits in regards to students, and their attitudes towards using this social networking site as a means to enhance communication with students. The findings may provide insight for professors and other higher education administrators who are interested in using Facebook as a tool to engage students.

**Assumptions and Limitations**

The scope of this study is limited to faculty members at Rowan University. The survey instrument was distributed to 144 assistant, associate, and full professors, but the response rate remained unpredictable. The use of Facebook within universities is a
relatively new topic, limiting the findings from prior studies and peer-reviewed literature. It was assumed that most faculty members are familiar with social media websites such as Facebook, and that they were truthful in their responses about usage of the website to connect with their students. Findings for this study were limited to the faculty members who participated during the spring semester of 2012. The age and level of technology proficiency of the faculty, as well as researcher perspectives, may present potential bias in the findings.

**Operational Definitions**

1. **Attitudes:** Viewpoints, opinions, and positions of Rowan faculty toward Facebook.

2. **Facebook:** A social networking website designed in 2004 by Harvard student, Mark Zuckerberg. The original purpose of the website was to keep college students connected. By 2006, anyone aged 13 or older can keep a Facebook page. Today, college faculty are implementing Facebook into their work with students on a level that the modern college student is comfortable with.

3. **Faculty:** Assistant, Associate, and Full professors at Rowan University who participated in this study during the spring semester of 2012.

4. **Internet:** The network through which Rowan professors access Web 2.0 applications such as Facebook.

5. **Technical Expertise:** Rowan faculty’s reported levels of competence within the technological realm.

6. **Web 2.0:** Emerging technologies such as Facebook, blogs, and Twitter that allow users to interact, create, and share information.
Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the attitudes of selected Rowan faculty toward the uses of Facebook in their collegiate responsibilities?
2. How familiar are selected Rowan faculty with Facebook and its uses?
3. To what extent do selected Rowan faculty use Facebook to communicate with current and former students?
4. Is there a significant relationship between reported levels of technical expertise and attitudes toward Facebook usage?
5. What feedback did Rowan faculty provide about Facebook?

Overview of the Study

Chapter II provides a review of literature pertinent to this study. This section includes a brief history of Facebook, an introduction to Web 2.0 technologies, a presentation of theoretical framework, a discussion of faculty use of Facebook, appropriate student-teacher interaction on Facebook, privacy concerns, and over-sharing information.

Chapter III describes the study methodology. The context of the study, population, sample selection, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis operation are all described.

Chapter IV presents the findings of the study. The focus of this chapter is to address the research questions posed in the introduction of this study.

Chapter V summarizes and discusses the major findings of the study, with conclusions and recommendations for practice and further study.
Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Brief History of Facebook

Mark Zuckerberg created Facebook (thefacebook.com) in 2004 while he was a sophomore at Harvard University. Roeder (2011) reported that the name for Facebook came from the publications that some colleges pass out to students at the beginning of the year to help students get to know each other better, called a Facebook. In the beginning, only Harvard students could access Facebook as a way to keep in touch over the Internet. The site became so popular that it was opened to other colleges within a matter of months. It became Facebook.com in August 2005 after the address was purchased for $200,000 (Phillips, 2007).

United States high schools could sign up starting in September 2005, then Facebook began to spread worldwide, reaching United Kingdom universities the following month. By 2006, Facebook was open to the “general Internet public as long as you were 13 and older” (Roeder, ¶2). As of September 2006, the network was extended beyond educational institutions to anyone with a registered email address. The site remains free to join, and makes a profit through advertising revenue.

Phillips (2007) reported that the company announced the number of registered users had reached 30 million, making it the largest social-networking site with an education focus. Facebook has become the predominant social networking site on college campuses. Schwenn (2010) wrote that Zuckerberg’s modest motivation in 2004
was to create an online version of a long-running paper-based face book that Harvard published. Within five years his mission became “to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected” (¶ 2). There are many social networking sites, but only Facebook has its roots in academic culture.

Consumer Reports (2012) provides the latest Facebook statistics. Over 150 million Americans use Facebook with 800-million-plus users globally. The “number grows daily as Facebook makes it easy to keep up with friends, family, and colleagues, discover great content, connect to causes, share photos, drum up business, and learn about fun events” (Consumer Reports, ¶ 1). Organizations maintaining pages on Facebook and buying ads is what keeps Facebook so profitable. “The company has multiplied revenue almost fivefold in the past two years, to 3.7 billion in 2011” (¶ 11).

A basic Facebook profile includes the following information: the user’s name, location, birthday, education information, employment status, and marital status. Each profile includes a “wall,” where users can post a status, picture, video, or link. Depending on the user’s privacy settings, friends can comment on anything users have posted. A profile can also include a user’s political views, favorite artists and television shows, and general activities and interests.

Web 2.0 Technologies

Emerging technologies change the way people access, interact with, create, and share data and information (Ajjan & Hartshorne, 2008). Web 2.0 provides online users with interactive services, in which they have control over their own data and information (Maloney, 2007). Examples of Web 2.0 technologies include wikis, blogs, instant messaging, and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Social networks
allow users to create personal profiles and establish a variety of networks that connect him/her with family, friends, and other colleagues (Lenhart & Madden, 2007). These sites could also be used to establish a series of academic connections to foster cooperation and collaboration in the higher education classroom (Ajjan & Hartshorne, 2008).

Although Web 2.0 services are not specifically designed for educational purposes, the applications have a number of affordances that can make them useful in teaching and learning environments (Ajjan & Hartshorne, 2008). They are easy to access, easy to use, and the flexibility of the technology has made them much more appealing as instructional tools. Also, Web 2.0 applications can support pedagogical approaches such as active learning, social learning, and student publication, by providing environments and technologies that promote and foster these interactions (Ferdig, 2007).

Most traditional web applications focus on the delivery of the content. Web 2.0 applications focus much more on social connectivity. These applications are driven by user contributions and interactions. Web 2.0 applications provide venues for collaboration and sharing of information to support the networks necessary for social and active learning. Using Web 2.0 technologies such as social networks to supplement in-class instructions could create an interactive, collaborative learning experience for students in a media they are familiar with. This is especially true for college students who are considered “digital natives” of the world of Internet and computers (Prensky, 2001).
Theoretical Framework: Diffusion of Innovation

Rogers’ model of diffusion of innovation (1995) specifies four elements in the diffusion process: the innovation, communication channels, time, and the social system. There are five characteristics of an innovation: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. Liao (2005) states that “an innovation has to be relatively advantageous, compatible with the existing values or needs of potential adopters, and simple to use. An innovation that can be experimented with on a limited basis and is visible to others will also be more likely to be adopted” (¶ 4). In other words, if college faculty find Facebook (the innovation) easy to use as an instructional aid, they are more likely to utilize the technology.

Rogers’ diffusion of innovation model has been used to examine the adoption and contribution of a web-based course management system at a college campus. Liao (2005) found that “Rogers’ model successfully explained the adoption of the innovation. The adoption of the innovation also led to increased interaction between students, instructors, and course materials. The increased amount of interaction, in turn, significantly contributed to student learning” (¶ 1). These findings serve as motivation for faculty members to utilize Facebook.

There are many benefits of utilizing web-based technologies, such as Facebook, for faculty. Professors can enhance interactions with their students through the adoption of new technologies. Web-based communication technologies made interaction between student with course material, faculty, and other students possible, and facilitated students’ critical thinking and writing skills (Meyer, 2003). Web-based communication technologies also made active learning feasible in which students could design their own
course content and post the course content on the web, in contrast to the traditional learning method in which the instructor was the main source of course information (Lim, Plucker, & Bichelmeyer, 2003; Stocks & Freddolino, 2000).

Faculty’s adoption of WebCT and Blackboard as course management systems is an example of an academic use of communication technology. Faculty adopt course management systems (CMS) principally to manage the more mundane tasks associated with teaching, especially large classes (Morgan, 2003). “Faculty look to course management systems to help them communicate easily with students, to give students access to class documents, and for the convenience and transparency of the online gradebook” (¶ 7). Once faculty start to use a CMS, their use of technology tends to grow.

Faculty use of a CMS grows as they begin to see increased uses for it in their teaching. “Faculty using a CMS see new ways they can use it in their classes, and they learned about new uses of the CMS from discussions with colleagues” (¶ 9). Faculty whose use of a CMS decreased over time related that the new technology was time consuming, inflexible, and difficult to use. They also reported that their “use of CMS would grow if the software were easier to use and if training, for them and their students, were more readily available” (¶ 11).

In order for faculty to utilize Facebook, they need to perceive it as advantageous to their work. Rogers (2003) defined relative advantage as “the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being better than the idea it supersedes” (¶ 6). If teachers see that technology has value in their instruction, then they will use it (Finely, 2003). However, individual faculty members will differ in their rate of adoption of a new
technology. Even if professors are fully aware of the benefits of using a technology such as Facebook, it does not necessarily mean they will jump at the chance.

Rogers’ theory includes an adoption/diffusion continuum that recognizes five categories of participants: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards who may never adopt technology and may be critical of its use by others. Innovators tend to be experimentalists interested in technology itself, and early adopters are technically sophisticated and interested in technology for solving professional and academic problems. The early majority are not technically focused, and the late majority are even less comfortable with technology and are skeptical of its use. The distribution of these groups within an adopter population typically follows a bell-shaped curve (Carr, 1999).

The adoption and diffusion of an innovation within an institution does not guarantee its successful integration into the curriculum or its continued use. Carr, (1999) describes internet usage: “If its glitz, popularity and apparent ease of use are allowed to preempt careful planning, or if teachers and students do not receive proper training in its use, its integration as an information and learning resource, as well as a communication tool will likely be subverted” (¶ 47). If the technology is perceived as difficult to learn and/or too time consuming to prepare and use, or is in some other way perceived as threatening, it probably will not be used. “A perception of value in terms of needs/problem solving and academic or other rewards through establishment of policies, incentives, recognition and an on-line presence in the Internet culture and environment need to be nurtured by the institution's administration” (¶ 48).
Faculty on Facebook

Blankenship (2011) reported that a survey conducted by the Babson Survey Research Group and Pearson Learning Solutions drew from almost 1,000 colleges and university faculty nationwide. The survey revealed that more than 80% use social media (Facebook) in some capacity, and more than half use the tool as part of their teaching. The survey notes that 30% of faculty use social networks to communicate with students, while more than 52% use online videos, podcasts, blogs, and wikis (all components of Web 2.0) during class time. Furthermore, the survey reveals that older faculty (those teaching for 20 years or more) use social media at almost the same level as their younger peers (Blankenship, 2011).

As more and more faculty become Facebook users, the opportunities for student-teacher interaction to occur on Facebook increases, especially considering that communication with students is one reason presented in Hewitt and Forte (2006) for professors to register on Facebook (as cited in Teclehaimanot & Hickman, 2011). If teachers wish to engineer social learning opportunities available through Facebook, students and teachers will have to interact with each other.

One major issue addressed in the literature is whether teachers should even be on Facebook. Hewitt and Forte (2006) report that 66% of students thought it was acceptable for teachers to be on Facebook. A study entitled “Faculty on Facebook: Confirm or Deny?” (Sturgeon & Walker, 2009) found that over 55% of faculty at Lee University have students as friends on Facebook. This study also revealed student perspectives on relating to their instructors based upon the instructor having a profile on Facebook. Students appear to be more willing to communicate with their instructors if they already
know them through the use of Facebook. This relationship might suggest that the in-class interaction between student and instructor is enriched based merely on the use of a social network (Sturgeon & Walker, 2009).

Qualitative results from Sturgeon & Walker’s (2009) study revealed that several faculty members initially created a Facebook account to keep in contact with their own children, but they have since recognized the academic benefits, with over 50% mentioning that Facebook has the potential to be a useful academic tool. The idea that Facebook provides an open line of communication between faculty and students was mentioned by over 90% of the interviewed faculty members.

On the other end of the spectrum are nearly “75% of the interviewed faculty members’ concerns about the balance between being a teacher and being a friend to their students” (¶ 11). There was a general consensus that faculty do not want to be viewed by students as equals, and the line that differentiates faculty and students seems to fade with social networking. This line “might blur as a result of a mutual sense of transparency through self-disclosure on both parts of faculty and students” (¶ 12).

Sturgeon and Walker (2009) also surveyed faculty on the matter of being more approachable as a result of their Facebook profiles. The results show that over 75% of the faculty responded with some level of agreement that credits Facebook with molding student perception of faculty “approachability.” Moreover, this study suggested that students felt a connection with their instructors because of Facebook. However, the faculty responses did not suggest that the connectedness was felt in both directions.

Sturgeon and Walker (2009) concluded that many faculty members do not recognize the importance that students put on using technology as a way of building and
maintaining relationships. One professor stated, “I think that a lot of people who have trouble with Facebook may be people who have trouble with a lot of cultural change in general” (¶ 26). Though faculty members are hesitant to utilize such technology, they must keep in mind that it is not all about them. As professors, “it is their job to put learner’s needs first, and if that means having to use Facebook, then so be it” (¶ 26).

Other topics of investigation regarding teacher Facebook use are the positive and negative effects on student attitudes associated with their teachers being on Facebook. Among the potential positive effects were students having the ability to better know their professors, students developing a positive perception of their teachers, and students anticipating a more positive classroom environment (Hewitt & Forte, 2006). However, in order to better know their teacher as a person, students will need to access the teacher’s personal information provided through profiles, status updates, photos, and so on. In doing so, they risk the possible negative outcomes of Facebook interaction, such as losing their professionalism (Teclehaimanot & Hickman, 2011).

Appropriate Student-Teacher Interaction on Facebook

In order to most effectively utilize Facebook as a learning tool to create social learning opportunities, teachers must understand how to interact with their students in a way that promotes the improved positive perception of the teacher and classroom environment while not engaging in behaviors which might harm these perceptions (Teclehaimanot & Hickman, 2011). Facebook provides opportunities for teachers and students to interact in new ways, but “the guidelines and expectations for behavior have not been clearly defined” (¶ 13). An area of concern is “friending” students on Facebook.
It seems to be less acceptable for professors to invite students to become friends than the other way around.

A study by Teclehaimanot and Hickman (2011) on student-teacher interactions on Facebook aimed toward a better understanding of how appropriate students find interacting with their teachers on Facebook. An appropriate behavior is defined in this context as something with which the students are comfortable. What the teacher might intend as a way of connecting with students (e.g., commenting on their status or photos), might unintentionally cause the student to withdraw from the teacher as the student found the behavior inappropriate (Teclehaimanot & Hickman, 2011). Students found passive behaviors in student-faculty interaction most acceptable. Examples of passive behaviors include reading through another’s profile information, viewing photos, and watching videos. Students found active behaviors such as sending a message, commenting on photos, or sending a poke least acceptable.

Mazer, Murphy, and Simonds (2009) studied the effects of teacher self-disclosure via Facebook on teacher credibility. Researchers suggest that teachers who relate well with their students are more likely to be perceived as a credible source (Teven & Hanson, 2004). In a previous study, Mazer, Murphy, and Simonds (2007) found that students exposed to a high self-disclosing teacher on Facebook reported higher levels of motivation, affective learning, and evaluated the climate of the teacher’s classroom more positively than students who viewed a teacher’s Facebook page featuring limited self-disclosures. The findings of their current study suggest that teachers who exhibit high levels of self-disclosure on a Facebook website may appear more credible than teachers low in computer-mediated self-disclosure (Mazer et al., 2009). Teachers can “present
themselves through Facebook as individuals who function outside of the classroom in
social situations unlike the traditional face-to-face classroom environment” (¶ 17).

Despite these potential benefits, Mazer et al. identify a major potential hazard of
faculty on Facebook. Facebook friends can post messages on a user’s “Wall,” a
discussion-board device that allows users to communicate through the network. Teachers
can control the content they disclose on their university-housed web pages, but friends,
strangers, or other students can post defamatory messages on users’ Facebook websites,
heightening concerns about its impact on teacher credibility (Mazer et al., 2009). Also,
instructors may violate student expectations of proper teacher behaviors and damage their
credibility if they self-disclose on Facebook while communicating with students.

Facebook has emerged as a contemporary technological tool, and offers
substantial benefits for students and their instructors. Mazer et al. (2009) said that
“teachers may utilize Facebook as a way to foster their relationships with students;
however, they should proceed with caution” (¶ 42). It is undoubtedly difficult for
instructors to strike the perfect balance between communication in the traditional
classroom and in the online environment, while at the same time appearing as competent,
trustworthy, credible teachers.

Privacy Concerns and Over-Sharing

Young (2009), tells the story of a Dartmouth college professor who shared on her
Facebook profile,

I feel like such a fraud, do you think Dartmouth parents would be upset about paying $40,000 a year for their children to go here if they knew that certain
professors were looking up stuff on Wikipedia and asking advice from their Facebook friends on the night before lecture? (¶ 5)

Another comment read, “Some day, when I am chair, we’re all going to jog in place throughout the meeting. This should knock out at least half of the faculty within 10 minutes (especially the blowhards) & then the meeting can be ended in a timely manner” (¶ 6).

This professor thought that only people she had designated as Facebook “friends” could see her comments, but she had accidentally set her Facebook so that anyone at the college could see her page, including all of her students. One of her students sent the professor’s comments to the school newspaper’s blog, and soon other blogs were linking to the tale of the professor who “clearly needed to take Facebook 101” (¶ 5). College administrators have warned students to watch their step in online social realms, reminding them not to share too much since future employers may be watching. Now that professors are catching “Facebook fever,” they should heed their own advice (Young, 2009).

Setting personal boundaries is the first step professors should take when setting up a Facebook profile. One can control who sees each and every post. Facebook.com (2011) states, “before you post a status update, link or anything else, click the lock icon to choose who can see it.” Facebook also allows the user to block other users. “You can specify friends you want to ignore invites from, and see a list of the specific users that you’ve blocked from accessing your information and contacting you” (Facebook.com, 2011). This feature grants college professors complete control over what they share, and
who they share it with. A detailed explanation on all of Facebook’s privacy settings can be found at http://www.facebook.com/privacy/explanation.php.

Perlmutter, a professor at the University of Iowa, wrote an article entitled “Facebooking Your Way Out of Tenure” (2009). He talks about the “Facebook effect: how Facebook can negatively influence the way people, including those who will decide on your tenure bid, think about you” (¶ 5). Perlmutter (2009) discusses ways that faculty can utilize Facebook without losing their tenure bid. He advises faculty to consider their final audience for promotion and tenure before posting anything on Facebook. It is always possible that the head of the tenure committee will see your remarks. He also tells faculty to control their own content. Perlmutter stated, “Facebook is a particularly dangerous weapon for self-injury because it is so easy to share an embarrassing admission or offensive quip. Don’t do or say anything that you would not want to see on the front page of the newspaper” (¶ 10).

Perlmutter’s next piece of advice is to choose your friends carefully. If you do not wish to become friends with undergraduates, explain your policy so that it does not come off as unfriendly. The one goal of “tenure-track years is to establish an image of seriousness, focus, and diligence” (¶ 14). Lastly, he cautions college faculty to avoid distraction. “For the sake of promotion, tenure, and good sense, we should all be prudent about what we tell and show the world about ourselves. But this need not be all about caution and avoidance. Facebook can advance your teaching, research, service, and career” (¶ 20).
Gasman (2010) “confesses” that as a professor, she likes Facebook. She admits to getting her best research and writing ideas from reading the Facebook posts of her students and colleagues.

For those who worry that Facebook is a distraction, it probably can be to those faculty who are easily distracted. But for those faculty who are disciplined, Facebook can be an interesting and creative way to interact with students and colleagues – a method of communication that, in many ways, breaks down some of the status barriers between faculty and students. (Gasman, 2010, ¶ 6)

She also talks about enjoying the connections she forms with her students through Facebook. “I like the idea of being seen as a real person rather than just a scholar – Facebook bridges the scholarly and personal for me” (¶ 5).

To find out how much information Facebook is really collecting about users, and how this information is being used, ConsumerReports.org (2012) queried Facebook and interviewed security experts, privacy lawyers, application developers, and victims of security and privacy abuse. They also surveyed 2,002 online households, including 1,340 that are active on Facebook. Their projections suggest that “almost 13 million users said they have never set, or didn’t know about Facebook’s privacy tools, and 28 percent shared all, or almost all, of their wall posts with an audience wider than just their friends” (¶ 4).

Andrey Noyes, Facebook’s manager of public policy communications, says the company takes privacy and safety issues seriously. He pointed to a blog posted by founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who wrote, “We do privacy access checks literally tens of billions of times each day to ensure we’re enforcing that only the people you want
to see your content” (¶ 11). A user’s data can escape through Facebook games and applications. The game accesses your name, gender, and profile photo, and if you give it certain permissions, it can look deeper into your data. Unless you have chosen your privacy settings meticulously, a friend who runs the game could grant it access to your information without your knowledge. “Given that fact, it’s troubling that our survey found that only 37 percent of Facebook users say they have used the site’s privacy tools to customize how much information apps are allowed to see” (¶ 32).

*Consumer Reports* (2012) offers nine ways to protect oneself. These are simple ways to control your content, and eliminate a lot of misinformation about Facebook. They are:

Think before you type. Regularly check your exposure and review individual privacy settings. Protect basic information by setting the audience for profile items. Know what you can’t protect such as your name and profile picture.

“UnPublic” your wall by setting the audience to just friends. Turn off Tag Suggest so that Facebook will not automatically recognize your face in photos.

Block apps and sites that snoop. Keep wall posts from friends if you don’t want to share every post with every friend. When all else fails, deactivate. When you deactivate your account, Facebook retains your profile data, but the account is made inaccessible. (¶ 63)

**Summary of the Literature Review**

While Web 2.0 applications have many characteristics that support teaching and learning, research related to this area is limited. The majority of studies have been comparative in nature and have focused primarily on social networking tools and their
uses in extracurricular educational contexts (Pence, 2007). The use of Web 2.0 technologies is commonplace among “digital natives,” and it is important to explore perceptions of the teaching and learning implications of Web 2.0 applications, as well as actual use of Web 2.0 technologies to support teaching and learning of faculty (Ajjan & Hartshorne, 2008). Much more research is needed on faculty utilizing Facebook to connect with students.

This study addresses the attitudes of selected Rowan faculty toward utilizing Facebook within their collegiate responsibilities. An additional area of exploration was discovering the extent to which selected Rowan faculty use Facebook to communicate with current and former students. This study sought to add to the limited knowledge base of studies based on faculty members using Facebook to connect with students.
Chapter III
Methodology

Context of the Study

The study was conducted at Rowan University, in Glassboro, NJ. Rowan University is a selective, medium-sized public university. In 2011, *US News & World Report* ranked Rowan 23rd of Northern Regional Universities, 3rd among the public universities in the category. According to Rowan’s website, ([www.Rowan.edu](http://www.Rowan.edu)) the College of Engineering is ranked 22nd nationally. Rowan’s commitment to the environment was recognized when the U.S. EPA named it a “Top Green Power Purchaser” in its athletic conference and *The Princeton Review* listed it in its “Guide to 286 Green Colleges.” Courses are offered on the main campus (Glassboro), Camden campus, local community colleges, and also online.

In 2011, Rowan enrolled 11,392 students (9,918 undergraduate and 1,474 graduate) from the Mid-Atlantic States and 30 foreign countries. Rowan offers 80 undergraduate majors, including 3 accelerated Bachelor’s to Master’s programs, 55 majors leading to master’s degree; 7 professional certification programs; 26 graduate certification of graduate study programs; 6 teacher certification programs, and a doctoral program in educational leadership. On the main campus there are 62 computer labs, and 60% of the classrooms are technology enabled. Internet access is available indoors and outdoors throughout the entire campus. Rowan students and faculty can download the
wireless configuration installer from Rowan’s technology toolbox to configure their computer for Rowan’s secure wireless connection.

**Population and Sample Selection**

The target population for this study was all faculty members in the College of Education, College of Fine and Performing Arts, and College of Communication at Rowan University during the Spring 2012 semester. The convenience sample population of 144 assistant, associate, and full-time professors received the survey instrument via email in January 2012, as well as a follow up email reminder in February 2012. An email list of all faculty members was obtained from the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

**Instrumentation**

The instrument used to assess the attitudes of faculty members towards Facebook is a survey adapted from Sturgeon and Walker’s 2009 study, “Faculty on Facebook: Confirm or Deny?” Sturgeon and Walker’s study examined the opinions and reactions of faculty members and students at Lee University in Cleveland, TN in reference to their use of Facebook and how it affects education, directly or indirectly. The researchers hypothesized that faculty with less than 10 years of experience put a higher value on social networking, students are more comfortable in communicating with their instructors in and out of class if their instructors have a Facebook profile, and the relationship resulting from Facebook enhances classroom learning experience and academic outcome.

Sturgeon and Walker found that their study was not helpful in attaining a variety of information about faculty if they did not have students as friends on Facebook. Only 40 of 147 respondents had students as friends on Facebook. Their quantitative data
demonstrates that faculty with 10+ years of teaching experience accessed their Facebook account more than their less experienced peers. Sturgeon and Walker also found that over 75% of the faculty responded with some level of agreement that credits Facebook with molding student perception of faculty “approachability.” While students reported feeling an additional connection with their instructors because of Facebook, faculty responses did not suggest that the connectedness was felt reciprocally.

With permission from Michael Sturgeon of Lee University (see Appendix B), the current survey instrument was enhanced to consider instructional, professional, academic, and communicative uses of Facebook by faculty. Gender, academic rank, and tenure were also considered in relation to these variables. Since the primary purpose of this report was to investigate selected faculty members’ attitudes toward utilizing Facebook to connect with students, the survey used in this study focused only on faculty members rather than on faculty and students together. The aforementioned survey influenced the design of the final instrument used in this study; many of the items were taken directly from the survey, and a few were created exclusively for this study.

The survey (Appendix C) consists of five parts totaling 20 items. The first section consists of four items, aimed toward collecting demographic information. The second section consists of five items which collects data on faculty members’ familiarity with and usage of Facebook. Section three consists of five items, noting faculty communication patterns with current and former students. Section four consists of five items aimed toward discovering the attitudes of Rowan faculty toward Facebook as an online tool. Section five is an open comment area for faculty to comment on
Facebook in any way they choose. The Chronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was determined to be 0.83, indicating internal consistency among the items.

Following approval from the Institutional Review Board of Rowan University (Appendix A), a pilot test of the survey was conducted. Sixty-nine faculty members from Rowan’s College of Education, College of Engineering, College of Fine and Performing Arts, and College of Business responded to the survey in order to test its face and content validity. Many of the faculty members noted issues and possible problems with the initial instrument such as: faculty members who do not use Facebook need an “N/A” response available for use, many faculty members use Facebook to keep in touch with alumni which was not an option on the initial survey, and lack of a comment box for further feedback. All of the suggestions were considered, and the instrument was modified prior to data collection.

The format of the survey remained the same, with Yes/No items and Likert-scale items, with an additional space for feedback. An “N/A” option was added where the use of a Facebook account was vital for an appropriate response. Certain items were marked with new directions such as, “Please skip this question if you do not have a Facebook account.” An item involving faculty communicating with alumni via Facebook was added to the instrument.

**Data Collection**

The faculty members selected to receive the survey were all assistant, associate, and full-time professors in the College of Education, College of Fine and Performing Arts, and College of Communication at Rowan University. The survey (Appendix C) was then administered via email in February, 2012. The survey was formatted in
“Google Docs” and all of the responses were automatically compiled into a spreadsheet. The initial email contained an informed consent statement, and no identifying information was collected on the survey itself. Due to a low response rate, a follow up email was sent out as a reminder once per week for two weeks after the initial email. A faculty member from the College of Fine and Performing Arts assisted with recruiting other faculty members to complete the survey.

**Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using frequency tables that were created for each of the 19 items of the survey instrument. Mean, median, mode, and standard deviation were noted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. A cross-tabular analysis was used to study the relationship between reported technical expertise and attitudes toward Facebook usage. Correlations (Pearson product-moment calculations) and descriptive statistics (frequency distribution, percentages, and measures of central tendency and dispersion) were used to examine the data in regards to this particular research question.

Data from the open comment area were analyzed separately. Analyses involved summarizing data into key themes guided by the frequency of faculty responses. Content analysis was used to identify convergent and divergent themes (Appendix D).
Chapter IV

Findings

Profile of the Sample

The subjects for this study were faculty members from Rowan University’s College of Education, College of Fine and Performing Arts, and College of Communication, during the Spring 2012 semester. Of the 144 surveys distributed, 95 surveys were completed and returned, yielding a return rate of 66%. There were 44 males (46%) and 51 females (54%). Most of the subjects had 10+ years of teaching experience (74%). Sixty-seven subjects (71%) reported having a current Facebook account.

Table 4.1 contains demographic data on faculty’s gender, years of teaching experience in higher education, current academic rank, and tenure status during the Spring 2012 semester.

Table 4.1

Sample Demographics (N=95)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>53.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teaching Experience
Missing=1
1-5 years  11  11.7
6-10 years  13  13.8
10+ years  70  74.5

Academic Rank
Missing=3
Assistant Professor  25  26.3
Associate Professor  40  42.1
Full Professor  27  28.4

Tenure Status
Tenured  70  73.7
Tenure Track  12  12.6
Neither tenured nor tenure track  13  13.7

Analysis of the Data

Research Question 1: What are the attitudes of selected Rowan faculty toward the uses of Facebook in their collegiate responsibilities?

The initial analysis of the data was very negatively skewed, due to the high number of “N/A” and missing responses. Participants were asked to respond to certain attitudinal items with “N/A” if they did not have a Facebook account. Twenty-eight participants (29.5%) reported not having a Facebook account, and only 16% reported using their account for academic purposes. This yielded distorted results. Data were reanalyzed filtering out the “N/A” and missing responses. Table 4.2 demonstrates a corrected view of the sample population who reported having Facebook accounts.

An overall look at the responses dealing with attitudes indicates that faculty have a fairly negative attitude toward Facebook (see Table 4.2). Over half of the participants
(57%) do not feel that academic results are enhanced when faculty/students establish an online relationship. However, 77% of participants are conscientious of the information they post on their Facebook profile, knowing that the information can be viewed by students. When faculty were asked if they concurred with the statement, “Facebook has affected the way that I teach,” only 11% showed some level of agreement. Finally, 24% of participants also agreed with the statement, “I feel that my students are more likely to approach me as a result of Facebook.”
Table 4.2

*Faculty Attitudes Toward Facebook (N=95)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f %</td>
<td>f %</td>
<td>f %</td>
<td>f %</td>
<td>f %</td>
<td>f %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am conscientious of the information I post on my Facebook profile, knowing that students can view it. n=57, M=4.32, SD=1.105, Missing=38</td>
<td>1 1.1</td>
<td>5 5.3</td>
<td>7 7.4</td>
<td>6 6.3</td>
<td>38 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that academic results are enhanced when faculty/students establish an online relationship. n=92, M=2.38, SD=1.185, Missing=3</td>
<td>26 27.4</td>
<td>26 27.4</td>
<td>25 26.3</td>
<td>9 9.5</td>
<td>6 6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that the relationships I have built on Facebook have a positive impact on my learners. n=29, M=2.24, SD=1.300, Missing=66</td>
<td>11 11.6</td>
<td>8 8.4</td>
<td>4 4.2</td>
<td>4 4.2</td>
<td>2 2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that my students are more likely to approach me as a result of Facebook. n=39, M=2.21, SD=1.174, Missing=56</td>
<td>15 15.8</td>
<td>7 7.4</td>
<td>13 13.7</td>
<td>2 2.1</td>
<td>2 2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook has affected the way that I teach. n=25, M=1.84, SD=1.179, Missing=70</td>
<td>15 15.8</td>
<td>2 2.1</td>
<td>6 6.3</td>
<td>1 1.1</td>
<td>1 1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 2: How familiar are selected Rowan faculty with Facebook and its uses?

While 71% of selected faculty reported having a Facebook account, only 19% use it for academic purposes. Twenty subjects (25%) reported having current students as friends on Facebook, and 48 subjects (62%) have past students (alumni) as friends on Facebook.

Table 4.3 shows how often faculty access Facebook. Twenty-six respondents (35%) reported accessing Facebook often or very often.

Table 4.3  
*Facebook Access (n=74)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 3: To what extent do selected Rowan faculty use Facebook to communicate with current and former students?

Sixteen of 37 respondents (43%) showed some level of agreement with the statement, “I would like to be friends with more current or former students on Facebook.” While only seven respondents indicated that they communicate more often with current students if they use Facebook, 31 respondents indicated that they communicate more often with alumni or past students if they use Facebook. Results of this section are summarized in Table 4.4.
Table 4.4

*Communication with Current and Former Students (N=95)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I communicate with current students more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>often if they use Facebook.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing=43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I communicate with past students (alumni)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more often if they use Facebook.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing=34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel an additional connectedness in the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classroom as a result of Facebook relations.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing=46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 4: Is there a significant relationship between reported levels of technical expertise and attitudes toward Facebook usage?

A Pearson product moment was calculated for the relationship between reported levels of technical expertise and attitudes toward Facebook usage. No significant relationships were found.

Research Question 5: What feedback did Rowan faculty provide about Facebook?

Of the 95 survey instruments completed and returned, 32 provided written feedback. Content analysis was conducted and five themes emerged within the 32 faculty feedback responses.

“Friending.”

Twelve of the respondents indicated Facebook friending is inappropriate between faculty and students. Selected Rowan faculty hold policies that they do not have current
students as friends on Facebook. One faculty member commented, “when a current student sends a friend request, I respond by telling them very politely that I do not friend current students.” Another faculty member commented that “friending is counter to the analysis and evaluation I expect in an academic situation.”

However, selected faculty opinions differ when it comes to alumni. One faculty member commented, “I will “friend” past students but only if they initiate the contact, as there is no longer an academic relationship to maintain, having a social one is fine.” Seven faculty members mentioned becoming friends with past students. Another faculty member commented, “once they graduate, I enjoy keeping in touch with former students through Facebook, I certainly hear from them more often than I used to before Facebook.”

Social Aspects.

Seven of the selected Rowan faculty mention that Facebook is more for social networking, rather than an academic instrument. One faculty member said, “social networking sites are used for developing and maintaining personal relationships, not for professional and/or academic relationships between students and faculty.” Another faculty member sees Facebook as a “social networking device, not an academic instruction tool.” While another professor “treasures online connections with students,” she still feels that the connection should be “segregated from social networks.”

Boundaries.

Six of the selected faculty members mentioned boundary issues as a reason not to connect with students on Facebook. A faculty member commented, “I think there are concerns about breaking down boundaries too much with having current students on
Facebook. It could possibly be a tool, but I’d have to rethink how I currently use it.”
Another professor said, “I think that using social media is okay, it is the blurring of personal and professional that occurs when using a personal Facebook account that is problematic.” A third professor commented, “I use blogs in class as well as texting outside of class, these are much more effective than Facebook.”

**Positive Aspects.**

Five of the selected faculty members left positive comments about Facebook and how they use it as a classroom tool. One professor commented,

I often post articles that are relevant to the material that I am focusing on in my classes. I am able to use Sociology Club and Alumni groups via Facebook to maintain news about activities for both current and former students. I love the tools offered to me via Facebook for my past and current students!

Two other selected Rowan faculty commented about using Facebook to maintain the departmental page, and advertising the department.

**Misinformation.**

Some of the comments left by selected faculty reflected a lot of misinformation about Facebook in general. One faculty member commented, “when you come to discover that anyone can tag you in any picture and publish it, you understand that you no longer have any privacy.” This is a common misconception, as any Facebook user is able to set their privacy settings as to avoid being tagged. Another faculty member commented, “is a faculty member responsible to his employers for everything anyone posts on his wall? Who owns his page?” Facebook preferences are easily managed
through the “settings” tab. A Facebook member can set their preferences so that users are not allowed to post on their wall.

A third faculty member commented, “I mainly use Facebook to play Scrabble. I’m reluctant to do more.” Scrabble is an example of an application for Facebook that is more likely to leak your personal information than a simple correspondence.
Chapter V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

This study investigated attitudes of selected Rowan faculty toward the uses of Facebook in their collegiate responsibilities, in the Spring, 2012 semester. This study was also designed to find out how familiar selected Rowan faculty are with Facebook and its uses. Further, this study looked at a potential relationship between reported levels of technical expertise and attitudes toward Facebook usage. The subjects in this study were assistant, associate, and full professors at Rowan University.

A 20 item survey was sent to 144 faculty at Rowan University within the College of Education, College of Fine and Performing Arts, and College of Communication. The first four items the instrument collected demographic data, the next 15 items were Yes/No and Likert-type items, followed by one open ended feedback item. Ninety-five completed surveys were anonymously returned, yielding a return rate of 66%.

Descriptive statistics, correlations, and content analysis were used to analyze the data from the completed surveys. Variations in faculty’s attitudes were explored using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Statistical differences were determined using Pearson product-moment calculations. Qualitative data were analyzed and sorted into five major themes through content analysis (Sisco, 1981).
Discussion of the Findings

Quantitative data revealed that the majority of the participants had an overall negative attitude towards Facebook and its uses. Twenty percent of selected Rowan faculty agree that Facebook has a positive impact on their learners, yet 77% are conscientious of the information they post on their profile, knowing that students can view it. While selected faculty were very careful as to what they post on Facebook in general, they are not using it in their collegiate responsibilities at Rowan University. This is not consistent with Sturgeon and Walker’s (2009) study, where 90% of the interviewed faculty mentioned Facebook as a way to keep the line of communication open between faculty and students.

Qualitative results yielded much consistency with the current literature on faculty utilizing Facebook. Consistent with Teclehaimanot and Hickman, (2011) many faculty in the current study would never “friend” a student on Facebook, as it is found to be an unacceptable behavior. Selected Rowan faculty agree that “friending” is a social aspect of Facebook and should only be used to maintain personal relationships, not professional and academic relationships between students and faculty. However, many selected Rowan faculty mentioned becoming Facebook friends with past students, as a way to keep in touch once the academic relationship has ended. While they may not become friends with current students, faculty enjoy keeping up to date with former students through Facebook.

Selected Rowan faculty are under the impression that they cannot control their own content on Facebook, and that anyone is able to see what they are doing at any time. This misinformation can be corrected by visiting Facebook.com/privacy. Setting
personal boundaries is the first step every Facebook user should take when setting up a profile. Privacy settings ensure that professors have complete control over what they share, and to whom they share. This is consistent with Perlmutter’s (2009) advice to faculty about choosing friends and audiences carefully. He also cautions faculty to control their Facebook content at all times.

Another concern of selected Rowan faculty is the user’s “wall,” and what content should be posted there. Mazer et al. (2009) warns faculty about the potential hazards of Facebook, such as the user’s “wall.” If professors take control of what can be seen on their wall, they can present themselves as individuals who function outside of the classroom. If Facebook is used properly, it can foster faculty relationships with students. Mazer et al. advise faculty to “proceed with caution.”

This is also consistent with the nine ways Consumer Reports (2012) offers to protect oneself and keep personal content under control. Set the audience for all profile items, disable the tag suggest feature, and most importantly, think before you type. Even if a user deletes an account, some information can remain in Facebook’s computers for up to 90 days. Almost 13 million Facebook users were unaware of or had never set privacy controls. If faculty were more aware of all the ways in which they can control their Facebook content, they might be more likely to utilize it in their collegiate responsibilities. Instead of viewing Facebook as just a social networking site that invades their privacy and blurs professional boundaries, Facebook may be perceived as a powerful tool capable of connecting faculty and students.

Sixty-two percent of selected Rowan faculty have current and/or past students as friends on Facebook, which is consistent with Sturgeon and Walker’s (2009) study
revealing that 55% of faculty at Lee University have students as friends. Also consistent with Sturgeon and Walker’s (2009) study is the overwhelming concern of faculty who are reluctant to strike a balance between being a teacher and being a friend to their students through Facebook. Selected Rowan faculty reported that using social media is acceptable, but it becomes problematic when professional and academic boundaries are crossed.

However, there were also positive aspects of Facebook reported in the current study. The minority of selected Rowan faculty reported using Facebook to post relevant class material, connect with alumni, maintain news for current and former students, advertise their departments, and maintain a departmental page to reach out to current and past students. This is consistent with Ajjan and Hartshorne’s (2008) study which concluded that Facebook could be used to establish academic connections and to foster cooperation and collaboration in the higher education classroom.

The results of this study generally confirmed the findings of previous studies, with notable exception. The selected faculty generally do not use Facebook to connect with students, but the few that do seem to truly enjoy its benefits. Rogers’ model of diffusion of innovation (1995) states that individuals will differ in their rate of adoption of a new technology. “Laggards” may never adopt the technology and will be critical of its use by others. Rogers model also says that if the innovation (Facebook) is easy to use, individuals are more likely to utilize the new technology.

Facebook is not easy for faculty to use. They have to be diligent about their personal privacy settings, and always be thoughtful and aware of what they are posting (Consumer Reports, 2012). Facebook is not the type of instructional aide to be used
frivolously. Careful attention must be paid to its application if faculty members and students are going to benefit from its instructional uses. It is also believed that an innovation has to be advantageous, compatible with existing values or needs of potential adopters. The selected Rowan faculty have made it clear that Facebook does not fit into their existing values or needs, and therefore they will not adopt the technology.

**Conclusions**

While Facebook has quickly made its way into society, its entry into academia is a much slower process. This study’s quantitative data show reluctance among many faculty members to adopt Facebook into their collegiate responsibilities, despite much reviewed research on the potential benefits. Hazardous Facebook behavior is easily avoided by using the many offered privacy controls. The qualitative data illustrate much misinformation on the part of faculty members especially in the area of content and privacy control. If faculty members were taught how to safely, privately, and correctly use Facebook as a classroom enhancing tool, they would be more likely to do so.

Sixty-two percent of selected Rowan faculty have past students (alumni) as friends on Facebook, compared to 25% having current students as friends. These statistics demonstrate willingness on the part of faculty to begin using Facebook, at least as a way to keep in touch with former students. As more faculty begin to adopt to this new technology, the number of faculty who communicate with current students will also rise. Also, this study showed that 77% of faculty are conscientious of the information they post on Facebook, suggesting that they are at least somewhat aware of how to control their content.
Qualitative data revealed a professor who preferred to “text outside of class” instead of communicate via Facebook. Providing a personal cell phone number is crossing a much bigger boundary than connecting on Facebook. This demonstrates a lack of understanding about proper uses of Facebook. The service discloses as much or as little user information as requested ensuring safe and professional uses and/or dissemination of information.

**Recommendations for Practice**

Based upon the findings and conclusions of the study, the following suggestions are presented:

1. Professional development for faculty that focuses on teaching them how to appropriately use Facebook as a classroom tool.

2. Professional development for faculty that focuses on teaching them the many possible benefits of using Facebook as a way to connect with students.

3. Student affairs professionals who already use Facebook appropriately can model this behavior for faculty during workshops.

4. Facebook pages can be setup for faculty to stay connected with alumni, and these pages can be advertised as students are reaching graduation.

5. All college departments should maintain a Facebook page to keep students updated, informed of important news and deadlines, and aware of what is going on in their field.

6. College departments should use Facebook as a way to advertise their division and majors offered, along with links to students who are currently in the major and are willing to answer questions from perspective students.
Recommendations for Further Research

Based upon the findings and conclusions of the study, the following suggestions are presented:

1. A study with a larger sample size of participants who have a Facebook account and use it for academic purposes should be conducted in order to obtain more attitudes toward utilizing Facebook within collegiate responsibilities.

2. A more valid and reliable survey instrument should be created, as the instrument used in this study is not very valid or reliable. An instrument that focuses on Web 2.0 applications in general (Blogs, Wikis, and Twitter in addition to Facebook) should be used.

3. A qualitative study should be performed with interviews and focus groups, to truly gain access into the viewpoints that faculty hold toward Facebook.

4. Further research into the attitudes of faculty toward utilizing Facebook is also suggested.
References


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APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter
December 14, 2011

Janet M. Schmeelk
632 Bem Street
Riverside, NJ 08075

Dear Janet M. Schmeelk:

In accordance with the University’s IRB policies and 45 CFR 46, the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to inform you that the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has exempted your project:

IRB application number: 2012-128

Project Title: Faculty and Facebook: Attitudes of Selected Faculty Members toward Utilizing Facebook to Connect with Students

If you need to make significant modifications to your study, you must notify the IRB immediately. Please reference the above-cited IRB application number in any future communications with our office regarding this research.

If, during your research, you encounter any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects, you must report this immediately to Dr. Harriet Hartman (hartman@rowan.edu or call 856-256-4500, ext. 3787) or contact Dr. Shreelanthi Mandayam, Associate Provost for Research (shreel@rowan.edu or call 856-256-5150).

If you have any administrative questions, please contact Karen Heiser (heiser@rowan.edu or 856-256-5150).

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Harriet Hartman, Ph.D.
Chair, Rowan University IRB

c: Burton Siacco, Educational Services, Administration and Higher Education, Education Hall
APPENDIX B

Permission Letter from Michael Sturgeon
Faculty on Facebook

Janet Schmeelk 11/23/11  
to msturgeon

Hello,

I am a graduate student at Rowan University, doing my thesis on faculty use of Facebook. May I use the survey you created for my research? I'll be adding my own modifications, as I'm only surveying faculty, not students.

Thank you,
Janet Schmeelk
Reply Forward

Michael Sturgeon 11/27/11  
to me

Janet,

I wouldn't mind if you used my survey at all. It does need some tweaking, I am completely aware of that. Would you mind referencing the origin of the survey, even though you are making changes?

Thanks,
C.M.Sturgeon

*************
C. Michael Sturgeon, PhD  
Faculty Coord. of Instructional Technology  
Center for Teaching Excellence  
Lee University; P.O. Box 3450;  
Cleveland, TN 37320-3450

*************
Sent from my EVO Shift via Sprint!
APPENDIX C

Survey Instrument
Faculty on Facebook

While your participation in this survey is voluntary and you are not required to answer any of the questions herein, your cooperation and participation are important to the success of the project and are greatly appreciated. If you choose to participate, please understand that all responses are strictly anonymous and no personally identifiable information is being requested. Your completion of this survey constitutes informed consent and your willingness to participate. Any questions, please contact Janet Schmeek at schmeek02@students.rowan.edu or my advisor, Dr. Burton Sisco at 856-256-4500 ext. 3717 or ssisco@rowan.edu

* Required

Gender *
- Male
- Female

Please select your teaching experience in higher education.
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 10+ years

What is your current academic rank?
- Assistant Professor
- Associate Professor
- Full Professor

Please choose the statement that best describes your position at Rowan University.
- I am tenured.
- I am tenure track.
- I am neither tenured nor tenure track.

I have a Facebook account.*
- Yes.
- No.

I use Facebook for academic purposes.
Please skip this question if you do not have a Facebook account.
- Yes.
- No.

I have current students as friends on Facebook.
I have past students (alumni) as friends on Facebook.
*Please skip this question if you do not have a Facebook account.*

- Yes.
- No.

How often do you access Facebook?
*Please skip this question if you do not have a Facebook account.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very Often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I would like to be “friends” with more current or former students on Facebook.
*Please skip this question if you do not have a Facebook account. Please select “0” for N/A.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How technically savvy would you rate yourself?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Savvy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very Savvy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I communicate with current students more often if they use Facebook.
*Please skip this question if you do not have a Facebook account*

- Yes.
- No.
- N/A.

I communicate with past students (alumni) more often if they use Facebook.
*Please skip this question if you do not have a Facebook account.*

- Yes.
- No.
- N/A.

I feel an additional connectedness in the classroom as a result of Facebook relations.
*Please skip this question if you do not have a Facebook account.*

- Yes.
- No.
- N/A.
I feel that academic results are enhanced when faculty/students establish an online relationship.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly Agree

I am conscientious of the information (i.e. comments, photos) I post on my Facebook profile, knowing that students can view it.

Please skip this question if you do not have a Facebook account. Please select "0" for N/A.

0 1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly Agree

I feel that my students are more likely to approach me as a result of Facebook.

Please skip this question if you do not have a Facebook account. Please select "0" for N/A.

0 1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly Agree

I feel that the relationships I have built on Facebook has a positive impact on my learners.

Please skip this question if you do not have a Facebook account. Please select "0" for N/A.

0 1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly Agree

Facebook has affected the way that I teach.

Please skip this question if you do not have a Facebook account. Please select "0" for N/A.

0 1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly Agree

Please leave feedback below.

Submit

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APPENDIX D

Rules and Procedures for Logical Analysis of Written Data
The following decisions were made regarding what was to be the unit of data analysis (Sisco, 1981):

1. A phrase or clause will be the basic unit of analysis.
2. Verbiage not considered essential to the phrase or clause will be edited out--e.g., articles of speech, possessives, some adjectives, elaborative examples.
3. Where there is a violation of convention syntax in the data, it will be corrected.
4. Where there are compound thoughts in a phrase or clause, each unit of thought will be represented separately (unless one was an elaboration of the other).
5. Where information seems important to add to the statement in order to clarify it in a context, this information will be added to the unit by using parentheses.

The following decisions were made regarding the procedures for categorization of content units:

1. After several units are listed on a sheet of paper, they will be scanned in order to determine differences and similarities.
2. From this tentative analysis, logical categories will derived for the units.
3. When additional units of data suggest further categories, they will be added to the classification scheme.
4. After all the units from a particular question responses are thus classified, the categories are further reduced to broader clusters (collapsing of categories).
5. Frequencies of units in each cluster category are determined and further analysis steps are undertaken, depending on the nature of the data--i.e., ranking of categories with verbatim quotes which represent the range of ideas or opinions. (p.177).