Trapped in Facebook

A grounded theory exploration

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Abstract

Facebook is the biggest social network and therefore it is of interest to view how people get immersed into the user experience of it. Not much has been done about immersion into Facebook and how it entraps the user in a never-ending flow of impressions. Using a combination of qualitative interview studies and think-aloud walkthroughs we set out to study this phenomena. We found a varying mix of immersion, from those who couldn’t stop looking through their feeds to those who just used Facebook as a phonebook. We also found that while many wanted to reduce their usage of Facebook, none seemed able to make that plunge. From this we find design implications for both designing for immersion and avoiding entrapment. One key to the former is to have an error free environment, while the latter would be to make sure that all information is searchable.

Keywords: Facebook, Immersion, Entrapment, Social Media

1. Introduction

Like googling became a verb for searching the web via the search motor Google, so has Facebooking become a verb for using the social networking site Facebook. In the past, before Google, navigation on the internet was a maze with a few custodians of knowledge who like librarians knew where to find all knowledge. It came Google and suddenly everyone could find everything once they mastered Google’s search engine. In much the same way Facebook has revolutionized our social sphere, from interactions happening by meeting in churches, happenings and through phone, with a select few being the center of massive webs of connections, to everyone being able to get gossip, information and contact through Facebook. Thanks to Facebook, it has never been so easy to keep in touch with so many at the same time.

In popular culture there are those that are warning against internet addiction and by extension social media addiction. In the Japanese anime Code Geass there’s an incident where a truck crashes and everyone posts pictures of it on their social media and wondering why no one’s called for an ambulance. Doctor Who shows people having the same response when the sun is about to explode as well as having a Villain of the Week that uses social media to spy on everyone. One journalist who got hacked tried as an experiment to not log back in to Facebook on his laptops and to his horror, he found his fingers trying to go to Facebook whenever he had the slightest lapse in attention. This was a habit that he able to break after seeing the login screen enough times and he was further dissuaded to go back to scrolling the feed after the hack erased all information Facebook used to filter content that was relevant to him, leaving him with a feed that was filled with “noisy, irrelevant garbage” (Bercovici, 2016).

Two thirds of the internet users use Social Network Sites (SNS) with Facebook being the most popular (Purcell, Rainie, Mitchell, Rosenstiel, & Olmstead, 2010). What makes Facebook different from previous platforms is that the site provides the user with lightweight mechanisms such as the “like” button, inline comments and photo-tagging (Burke, Kraut, & Marlow, 2011). The communication services that Facebook can offer through its architecture are email, instant messaging, photo and video sharing and blogging among others. Lately new services have been presented in the last F8-convention. Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook, introduced Messenger-bots, where ‘bots’ stands for robots that offer the user a more
customizable interaction. As an example, the user is able to order flowers through conversational language without the necessity to call the flower company, instead encapsulating that experience within Messenger (Newton, 2016).

“Facebook is neither a neutral platform nor open communication platform, it is a business with an architecture designed to support its business plan. This is not criticism; it is just a reality” (Best, 2014 p. 22).

1.1 The focus of this study
With the sheer size of Facebook, what do people feel when they are using it? Are they using it merely because they have to or is it because they genuinely like it? More importantly knowing how people are immersed to Facebook as well as how their feelings of entrapment appear can give us design insights for other social media, other types of communication as well as games. The former is good to know in order to get a better idea of how to make users keep using it while for the latter we hope to avoid the feeling of being trapped that might appear if the user suddenly realizes how much they are using the tool and don’t see any way to stop. Despite the fears that are raised by popular culture, there doesn’t seem to be much research done in this aspect of people feeling trapped in Facebook, the closest we could find was a study going through various ways people chose not to use Facebook (Baumer et al., 2013). There are studies going through internet addiction that covers Facebook, such as Boyd (2014), however these focus on teenagers’ perspective of the experience and they don’t focus on the feeling of being trapped. Thus it falls naturally to ask the questions of:

How immersed are people into Facebook?
And:
Do people feel trapped in Facebook and if so, how does that show?

2. Related Research
In this section we will first brush up on how humans communicate with and through computers as well as go through how humans are communicating with other humans. From there, we walk through the basis of the second generation of the internet and platforms. After this we go through social media in general and finally land on Facebook.

2.1 Humans interacting with computers
HCI is a multidisciplinary area that was coined in the 70’s that focuses mostly on how people act with or through computers (Huh, Ackerman, Erickson, Harrison & Sengers, 2007; Shneiderman, 2011). HCI as a field focuses more on changing the world rather than describing it in contrast to more classical fields (Harvey, Golightly & Smith, 2014).

One goal that exists within the HCI field is to make the computer invisible, like how you don’t notice a hammer when you're hammering nails or don’t reflect over the door to your house. However, many designers focus more on the efficiency of use, while we instead should
be considering how meaningful the artifact is and how best to get it to blend into our lives (Hallnäs & Redström, 2002).

Another thing that shows in the designs is how our various computer systems don’t manage stress levels at a noticeable level, leading to disasters that might have been avoided if the designers considered the user’s state of emotion, in particular stress, anxiety, frustration and boredom (Hudlicka, 2003). Areas that Hudlicka points out of particular interest is high stress decision making systems such as flight control systems, though other areas such as educational systems are also of interest. However, this type of adaptation to the user has had several examples in the past that makes users very annoyed, with one example being Microsoft’s ‘clippy’, the digital assistant in the office package that tries to provide useful help but most of the time just ends up being annoying rather than helpful (Sampson, 2006). Part of the issue was that while the idea of giving hints and recommendation to the users was good, none of the design team had a background in HCI and considered the user experience. This showed in the way the agent was designed for first time users of Word, rather than experienced ones, therefore making Clippy’s way of repeating the same advice over and over extremely enervating (Graesser, Gernsbacher, & Goldman, 2003; Kaulgud & Sharma, 2015). This issue was further compounded by the many different ways to interpret emotions and expressions, with some types of emotions that are culturally dependent (Boehner, DePaula, Dourish, & Sengers, 2007). There’s also many different ways of measuring emotions, either as something clearly defined with everyone having the same types of emotions. Alternatively them being ambiguous and not being able to be clearly labeled and instead should be measured by how aroused and positive/negative the individual is feeling. (Saariluoma & Jokinen, 2014).

When humans talk to each other we have to our advantage the implicit use information to characterize, for example a very particular situation. We are able to contextualize in order to get our ideas through. When interacting with computers, in the case of current traditional computing, humans realize that context is not apparent in the human-computer dialog, unless the computer gets, via input, the information that increase the conversational bandwidth. In other words, improving the computer’s access to context (Dey, 2001).

Even though speech is one of our most natural forms of communication, our communication with computers is done mostly through menus and text as the natural language of humans is very hard for computers to handle (Aylett, Kristensson, Whittaker, & Vazquez-Alvarez, 2014; Munteanu, Jones, Whittaker, Oviatt, Aylett, Penn, Brewster, d’Alessandro, 2014). Even to this day, we adapt to the computer instead of the other way around, simplifying our complex thoughts into ways that something as logical and literal as a computer can understand.

However, the one thing that we do the most in our modern society that is covered by HCI is computer mediated communication and social computing. Therefore we will start with a brief overview of the history of communication and from there work our way to the core of our thesis, Social Media, more precisely Facebook.

2.2 Humans communicating with each other

Technology-mediated communication is a given in the modern human life. We all know the limits for humans natural capacity to communicate vocally with the distance limits that are
inherent in unaided voice communication (Graesser et al., 2003). “Furthermore, this natural communication behavior are ephemeral and do not persist over time” (Graesser et al., 2003, p. 243). As a way to counteract the temporal aspect of this we started very early on with the written arts (Graesser et al., 2003). The written form of communication has existed as long as we can see, with early examples being the petroglyphs from the ancient stone age (Strid, 1999), the hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt and the Norse Runic alphabet. However, it was first during the time of the ancient Greeks that it started to become mainstream with Socrates being skeptical against it as it not only exposed the softness of human memory but also opened up for discussions when the other party wasn’t there (Briggle & Christians, 2010).

In more recent times, the rise of the typing press made books an everyday item instead of being something reserved for the rich and famous. With the invention of the Telephone our way of communication changed once again, instead of having to send letters when communicating with people far away we could just talk to them. However, this in turn brought its own set of problems as parts of the non-verbal shined in its absence, with aspects such as posture, distance and facial expressions being lost from the communication distorting the message being sent as well as making communication harder (Burgoon & Walther, 1990). The next step in two way communication was the Internet, where most of the world’s computers were interconnected and people could send the electronic letters (e-mail) through various services. The early web pages were also mostly non-interactive, with at most a link to contact the author of the webpage. Then came a paradigm shift where suddenly everyone could become participating thus making web became more customized from the user perspective (Fuchs, 2014). The uprising of the digital computer in the mid twentieth century as well as the later development of the Internet are the main parameters that enabled the shifting era in media and communication. “The shift here is from broadcast to network communication -arguably implying a shift from state control and masses to democratization and individuality” (Briggle & Christians, 2010 p. 221). The ‘new media’ got distinguished features such as interactivity, hypertext, dispersal and virtuality.

2.3 New type of internet?
Technically, Web 2.0 isn’t any different from Web 1.0, with the possible exception of the introduction of AJAX that allows web pages to fetch data without reloading the page. What has changed is how the existing infrastructure is used. Instead of static web-pages, pages fetch only the things that need to be shown and dynamically update content as it is made available. This shows through various ways, with one notable example being that the back button became relatively useless most Web 2.0 sites never change their URL, therefore making the old “undo” functionality that the back button provided useless (Brown & Harper, 2011; Pilgrim, 2008). Web 2.0 also made it easier for users to provide their own content to websites because the sites went from being newspapers to being billboards where everyone can post things (Baeza-Yates, 2009; Fuchs, 2014). In other words, the difference between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 is that the internet became more of a universal platform connecting all manner of devices and that uses the user’s contributions to better itself. It does this by remixing and using already existing pages and content into new, more adapted pages. Web 1.0 had the page metaphor, Web 2.0
goes beyond this into the platform metaphor and provides a richer user experience (O’Reilly, 2005, 2007).

2.4 Platforms and networks
What is a platform? In computer terminology it is a combination of software and hardware that makes it easier to write applications to it. As aforementioned, Web 2.0 is a platform. Other examples of this is Apple’s iOS with its app store, Google’s Android with Play Store or Windows 10 with its Store. Operating systems such as Windows, Linux and Mac OS are also examples of platforms. What these have in common is that they allow developers to more easily write programs without having to deal with all the massive amount of variability of the underlying hardware, such as memory access. Some platforms such as the App Store also aids in distribution to the costumer (Evans, Hagiu, & Schmalensee, 2006). These platforms also have a complex business relationship, not only do they sell to their end users, they also sell access to the platform to others. An example of this is Apple’s App-store where they not only sell applications to the end users, they also sell access to the tools needed to create and publish apps on their app store to third party developers. Windows as a platform is even more multifaceted, not only do they sell to users and developers, they also involve hardware developers in their three sided platform (Evans et. al., 2006). Another platform is Facebook with the people who read posts on one side of the fence, those posting on the other side and advertisers on a third side. Facebook also provides messaging services and ways to map out your social network. Who is the end user in this equation?

Most platforms also benefits from network effects, where every person who joins increases the worth of the network itself. A common example used for this is the telephone network, when it was just between two households it was just a neat toy, however when an entire town (or world) gets connected, the use becomes exponentially greater (Rainie & Wellman, 2012) with more uses for the same basic function popping up. One implication of this is that there’s a “critical mass” that has to use a network before it becomes useful (Grudin, 1994) and another is that it becomes harder to leave a network for another because of the network’s value (Yen & Hsu, 2015). Eventually it comes to a point where you are expected to be part of the network and it’s simply not possible to abstain as that would exclude you from social interaction (Baumer et al., 2013). Telephone has been there for a long time, with internet and e-mail following close behind. Is Facebook the next example of must have networks?

2.5 What is Social Media and what is it for?
Social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, was classified by Boyd & Ellison (2007) as follows:

"a networked communication platform in which participants 1) have uniquely identifiable profiles that consist of user-specified content, content provided by other users, and/or system-level data; 2) can publicly articulate connections that can be viewed and traversed by others; and 3) can consume, produce, and/or interact with streams of user-generated content provided by their connections on the site. (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 158)"
Social media comes in many different formats with various amounts of social presence and self-disclosure. Examples of social media that is low on both is collaborative projects such as Wikipedia, while an example of one where you disclose much of yourself and have a much higher degree of social presence is Social network sites such as Facebook (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

All Social Media allows for varying amounts of affordances and constraints. A common affordance is the ability to post text messages with various constraints. One such constraint is Twitter’s 140 character limit. As per Ellison & Boyd’s (2007) definition, all social media allows you to “befriend” others, however, Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) defined World of Warcraft as a Social Network and while you can friend people on World of Warcraft, you can’t view who other have friended and you can only friend people belonging to your faction and server. However, if you expand World of Warcraft to include Battle.net, a network hosted by Blizzard-Activision and tightly integrated to World of Warcraft, StarCraft 2, Diablo 3, HearthStone and other games from the company, you can befriend anyone connected to the network, either via your “BattleTag” or your “Real-ID”. A battletag is simply an alias you have chosen for yourself and doesn’t provide much information, while “Real-ID” is connected to your email address and shows the name you registered with Blizzard-Activision. You can then view who your friends are friends with but you can’t see who those are friends with unless you befriend them first. An affordance offered through this system is to block such friend of friend queries, hiding you from anyone trying to see if you are friends with someone. An Affordance on Facebook is that you can hide any message from people who aren’t friends with you as well as remove any message on your personal space if you so choose without having to unfriend and or block the author of an offending message.

So what do people actually do on social media? One of the things that they do is build social capital (Burke et al., 2011; Jung, Gray, Lampe, & Ellison, 2013; Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008). What is social capital? One recurring definition by Bourdieu (2002) is that it is the resources that are linked to the relationships you have within networks, while another definition is “the information, trust, and norms of reciprocity inherent in one’s social networks” (Woolcock, 1998 p. 153). According to Burke et al (2011), you increase your social capital by receiving messages. Examples of what this social capital can be used for is getting access to jobs (Dillahunty, 2014) and friendsourcing (Rzeszotarski & Morris, 2014). Other aspects of social media that is of note is how you handle your network of friends and get it in the first place. Earlier research has shown that age doesn’t affect the size of your social network but rather just how it is segmented. Older people were found to have a larger degree of one single large network while younger people had more small segmented networks (Brandtzæg, Lüders, & Skjetne 2010). Other research shows that people try to minimize the amount of posts they later regret by both managing who can view the post but also by self-censuring and not posting content that can be misinterpreted, though when regretful posts slip through this process it’s usually in emotional moments, positive as well as negative (Wang et al., 2011). Another thing that many do on Social Media is create one or more personas. These are often a representation of an aspect of yourself (Marichal, 2012), like things you wish you could be or who you are.
When studying Facebook Friendship Pages, Shi, Xu, & Chen (2013) found some privacy issues that are rooted from informational norms in the theory of contextual integrity. This theory is particular useful to understand norms governing distinct social contexts. In the particular case of Friendship Pages the act of sharing and its high interactivity puts privacy as a communal matter, where data exchange and interpersonal communication are more than apparent, with everyone knowing everything about everyone.

Different social media are used for different things however, with media such as Facebook being used to share emotional and interpersonal content while a site such as Twitter is used more to share things of a more casual, explicit and relating to impression management (Lin & Qiu, 2013). One interesting conclusion Lin and Qui (2013) draw from their study is that Facebook users might be less emotionally stable than Twitter users.

One regrettable thing about Social Media is that, just like the real world, there are bullies and miscreants causing chaos. Protected by a cloak of anonymity and the general lawlessness of the internet it becomes a haven for malicious comments, insults and other bullying (Lee & Kim, 2015). One way of dealing with this issue is to simply implement a set of rules that are followed, while another approach would be to remove the anonymity. On Facebook, the issues of cyber bullying still exists but as there isn’t as much anonymity as well as there being a set of rules of conduct governing the use of the social media there’s less cyberbullying there than would be expected when reading all the things written about Cyber Bullying (Birnholtz, Merola, & Paul, 2015).

2.6 Facebook

Facebook has a navigation bar at the top of each page, that provides ways to reach various parts of the site, such as your news-feed, your wall, other peoples profiles and privacy settings. It also provides an access port to Facebook messenger as well as having a menu of rarely used functions, such as logout, create ad or changing the settings of your news-feed.

Picture 1: Navigation bar. Facebook icon at the top left corner takes you to the news-feed, next to it is a searchbar. After this is a mini profile picture and first name of account that if clicked on takes you to your wall, followed by another button marked “home” that takes you news-feed. The next icon gives suggestions of people to befriend, and the icon after that shows what messages you have gotten via Facebook Messenger. The globe shows notifications from the site, such as people commenting to posts you’ve done or people posting in groups you have set up notifications for. The icon with the lock provides a shortcut to the privacy setting while the arrow at the end provides options to create pages, groups, ads and logging out.

On Facebook you have your own “wall” (Picture 2 on next page) where you and others can post messages. On this wall, basic information of your profile is displayed, such as the number of friends you have, profile picture and posts and image you have shared and posted. At the right side of the screen there’s a section where it shows various recommendations for various pages and games to play, as well as your friend-list that you can communicate with through the web version of Facebook Messenger. In the center column all “posts” and “shares” you have done show up in reverse chronological order, simply put: newest first, called the “timeline”. It
also has any messages others have put on your wall in this list, as well as any relationship changes or other “lifetime events”. You can also choose to display a profile picture, that can be of any of the current standard formats such as .jpeg, .bmp or .ico. You can also change the cover photo in much the same manner.

Picture 2: Facebook Wall. The blue clouds is a cover picture, with the camera icon indicating that you can change it. The picture in the white box is your profile picture. Update Info gives access to a wizard that suggests various things to update on your profile. Activity log shows all actions you’ve taken on Facebook in reverse chronological order. The three dots provides options such as viewing your wall as another user or timeline settings. The box at the lower left corner displays basic profile information. Next to this box is a box to post things to your wall and under this is your “timeline”.

The “feed” (Picture 3 on next page) is where you can view what your contacts and those you “follow” has posted and done lately as well as post your own things. The feed shows whatever Facebook think is the most relevant to you based on a number of criteria, among others what you have liked in the past. You can’t search the feed but you can scroll down on it to access more posts without any limit.
Facebook’s beginnings are fairly humble, they started as a small university project by Mark Zuckerberg as a small networking site, reserved for the students of the university. From there, it has rapidly grown to become big enough to be compared to IT giants such as Google. Good or bad, Facebook is almost synonymous with ‘online social life’.

As a social network, nothing can compete with the sheer size of Facebook, with a staggering 1590 million active users. Its closest competitor, WhatsApp, reaches just 1000 million active users, while Facebook’s own messaging service has 900 million active users. Twitter has a mere 320 million active users (“Leading global social networks 2016 | Statistic,” 2016). These numbers can be taken in relationship to the estimated global population that is 7421 million people (“World Population Clock”, 2016.). The mere size of Facebook’s network, especially considering that its competitors all have a relatively small user base makes it hard to switch from Facebook to another social network because of the network effect and how comparatively little the other network brings to the table. Other factors that makes it harder to leave (or just more convenient to stay) is that through Facebook you can log into other social networks, forums and other services. And the option to actually delete your Facebook account is hidden away beneath layers of menus. If you do try to delete your Facebook account, not only does Facebook try to encourage you to stay by listing how your various friends will miss you but also show exactly how many people won’t be able to keep in touch with you. If you get through that ‘emotional blackmail’, there’s a period of 2 weeks where you can easily abort and restore everything merely by logging in to Facebook (Baumer et al., 2013). Something that might be quite hard to avoid doing if the habit to log in that Bercovici (2016) experienced is the norm.
According to public information on Facebook, 80% of the human resources of the company is dedicated to keep the low level Facebook architecture invisible. These technical details saying nothing to the average user, they are meant to be kept invisible from the average user in order to deliver a flawless experience to them. Facebook has delivered this type of service for twelve years now; their maxim to its audience has since then been “stay in contact with your family and friends”.

Facebook also means different things to different users with a vast set of functions that all need to be examined as part of a whole as well as separate from the rest. As an example, those who use the like button tend to prefer to respond to media clips more often than status updates (Spiliotopoulos & Oakley, 2013). Another function is the broadcasting affordance - the ability to quickly disseminate content across one’s entire network- as expedited way to share to their network (Vitak, 2012). Other important aspects is the ability to get (and give) emotional support and information (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007) as well as a way to deal with nostalgic content. Nostalgic posts help people deal with their present circumstances and usually deal with things such as family, life stories and historical events, in contrast to non-nostalgic posts that tend to focus more on the things that happen right now (Davalos, Merchant, Rose, Lessley, & Teredesai, 2015). Another important factor of Facebook is likes, a micro interaction where you can say that you “like” something, with roughly half of the users liking something posted by their friends at least once per day. Getting a like usually a positive thing and people like getting likes more from their friends than their parents for most types of posts. However, this might get reversed for embarrassing types of posts, such as losing your job (Scissors, Burke, & Wengrovitz, 2016).

When studying the non-use of Facebook, Baumer et al (2013) talks about the ramifications of leaving Facebook that are many, such as not being able to keep in touch with others or missing events. In relationship to other networks such as Gmail, there’s a great deal of interoperability that allow their users to mail other social networks such as Yahoo and Hotmail. Facebook on the other hand has no interconnections. There’s no way to send a friend request from Facebook to Orkut and vise versa.

Facebook is “neither a neutral platform nor open communication platform, it is a business with an architecture designed to support its business plan. This is not criticism; it is just a reality” (Best, 2014, p.22).

2.7 Summary

Communication has been a cornerstone of our society for as far back as we can see. Lately, this communication has started to go through computers and the Internet, allowing near instantaneous communication across the globe. Web 2.0 is at the center of how we communicate, providing more options than we have ever had before by allowing anyone to publish, through platforms such as Facebook. Platforms are the new markets places, allowing commerce and communication like never before. And of special interest is Facebook with its massive size and how deeply it imbeds itself into our lives. While entrapment might be possible to see on smaller platforms, chances are that if you use the smaller platforms you will just leave and move over to another solution if you start feeling trapped, a task that isn’t really possible with how much we depend on Facebook to keep in contact with friends, family and colleagues.
Add to the fact that we also use it as way to disseminate information. Leaving Facebook is possible, but many parts of society are starting to depend on you having Facebook.

3. Definitions

In this short section we will be presenting the two central concepts that are central for the rest of the thesis. These two are Immersion and Entrapment, the first positive while the second is mostly negative.

3.1 Immersion

Merriam Webster defines immersion as “complete involvement in some activity or interest” (“Definition of Immersion,” 2016), something that is usually something that is mostly heard when talking about games or Virtual Reality (VR), though it does appear when talking about other IT solutions where the digital tool just fades away and you just use it. To get immersed into a game or VR is to stop acting like it's merely a game or a VR. As an example from our own experiences with World of Warcraft, when your playing and really get into it you aren't pushing buttons to damage the enemy, you're throwing fireballs or concentrated moonlight at your enemy to vanquish the enemy. In much the same way you no longer “go to Facebook and click the like button”, you simply “like” it. It might even get to the point where you start looking for a like button in the physical world.

3.2 Entrapment

Merriam Webster defines entrapment as “the condition of being entrapped” (“Definition of ENTRAPMENT,” 2016), with entrapped being defined as “to catch in or as if in a trap” (“Definition of ENTRAP,” 2016). This might happen when you’re so immersed into using things that you don’t think about it anymore but rather just do it. This type of conditioning is what is studied with “Skinner boxes”, where an animal (or human) gets a piece of food (or other reward) for doing some arbitrary task (Extra Credits, 2012; McLeod, 2007). For Facebook, some types of behavior gives you likes. Add to the fact that the “feed” is transient and ever-moving without ability to search it. Thus if you don’t keep checking it, you might miss something you’ll never get back. If you don’t check your feed, Facebook sends messages to point out the things you almost missed in order to get you back into looking at the feed, in much the same manner than the Skinner boxes of old make rats and doves do crazy things for food. For us humans, that would be sharing our innermost secrets for likes, birthday wishes and the ability to like things. However, discovering that you are being conditioned to use a platform isn’t the only way to feel trapped. If you wanted to leave Facebook, you’d have to move all your contacts that you still care about over to a new platform, a task that is far too large for most of us to manage. We would also have to find other ways to get the broadcasted information from all activities that depend on Facebook as its broadcasting tool. There are many ways, we are interested in the feeling of being trapped.
4. Method

In this section we will go through the method we used for the study, the ethical considerations that we did, how we actually did the study, introducing the respondents of the study as well as briefly going over how we analyzed our data.

One of the big advantages of a qualitative study is by using a few simple questions you can peer into people’s thoughts as they start talking regaling about their past. This gives you a data material that is rich of personal attitudes, patterns and slices of their lives (Trost, 2010). As our research question is all about what attitude people have towards social media, this type of method hits straight on the head.

The way we conducted our interviews was with the semi-structured interview approach. The use of a well designed interview-guide for the questions is vital for the execution of the interview in order to avoid the most common pitfalls such as accidentally leading questions (Charmaz, 2006; Hickman & Longman, 1994). One of the perks of semi-structured interview compared to its structured counterpart is the ease for the interviewer to ask follow up questions which enrich the main questions and/or go into more specific sort of information (Hickman & Longman, 1994). And compared to the unstructured one is that it makes it easier to get to the point. However, one advantage of the structured interview is that you get less data to process in comparison to both the semi-structured and the structured interview, while an unstructured interview would produce a lot of data that isn’t relevant and is harder to steer in the direction you want.

In comparison, the advantages of a quantitative structure is that you will be able to get quantifiable data and run statistical analyses and more easily generalize it to the population as a whole. In other words, find the frequency of a type of behavior and how often certain types of behaviors appear together. However, quantitative methods tend to not work very well exploring the unknown in comparison to the qualitative methods, therefore it would be ill suited to find out what types of attitudes exist.

An example of a popular quantitative method within HCI is to look at the usage data of social media. While this would be wonderful for discovering how often, when and how people post, it doesn’t give any deeper insight into their feelings for the social media, especially not the immersion and entrapment. While you could make a guess as to that effect, it wouldn’t be as clear as interview data where you can often see clear as day how people treat Facebook.

4.1 Study execution

Like many others (i.e. Lapides, Chokshi, Carpendale, & Greenberg, 2015; Wang et al., 2011; Zhao et al., 2013) we utilized semi-structured interviews in order to answer our research question. This in combination with a section of co-exploration of both their own Facebook feed, where they were asked to show one or two examples of memorable things they have posted, things that they remember others posting as well as looking through a set of posts we created and posted on the profile page David Örnbo (See appendix 2). The interview guide (Appendix 1) had four parts, the initial part asked about their general Social Media usage, the second part about their Facebook usage, the third part had them read and comment on David Örnbo’s posts and the fourth and final part was a set of debriefing questions where they were asked if there
was anything they thought we missed and how they think their usage of Social Media will look like in three years. The interview was done in Swedish with five of the respondents and in English with the remaining two. This structure was chosen in order to follow the recommendations of how to conduct an interview laid forth by Charmaz (2006), Holme & Solvang (1997) and Mathers, Fox, & Hunn (1998). In accordance to the ethical guidelines (Vetenskapsrådet, 2002) we informed our respondents that they could at any time leave the interview without consequences as well as briefed on its purpose at the start of the interview. We also asked for permission to record the interviews as well as permission to use any examples they share (after anonymizing it), both as part of the finished thesis and also as to show other respondents. While we did have permission from 6 out of 7 to use their examples, we ended up not showing any examples to any subsequent respondents. The data material was transcribed utilizing the open source tool oTranscribe, a tool written in HTML5 that doesn’t send any data to its servers (Bentley, 2016). The transcription work was evenly split up between the two of us.

The interview guide itself was based on neutral questions, though this doesn’t mean that the interview as a whole is neutral. As we used a methodology based on Grounded Theory our interview questions were general in nature in order to get a lot of data about how the respondents feel when posting, reading and in other ways use Facebook and not specifically about entrapment and immersion, our two topics that became apparent from our data. We therefore asked our respondents how they would describe their feelings about their general Facebook usage. The follow-up questions were designed to help them give a more detailed description of a particular field within Facebook. We first went through their general social Media usage and then refocused on their Facebook usage. We went through how they posted things on Facebook, what they felt and what consequences this might lead to. Then we asked them to think about if they could remember a post someone else has done and if so what might have caused this post, what emotions the person in question was feeling at the time as well as what potential consequences this might have had. Another thing we also asked about if they ever written a post they chose not to post and what went through their heads when they did that. We then let them reflect upon David Örnbo’s posts in order to give them more material to reflect on as well as giving them someone totally unknown to discuss freely about, without fear of hurting anyones feelings. After these questions, we had a question to let them talk freely about how they think their Facebook usage will look like in three years as well as opening up for them to talk about anything they think we might have missed in the interview.

The artificial account of David Örnbo had 11 entries with one being a profile picture and another a group picture. These entries were initially written in Swedish but was translated for our English participants. The profile picture was selected from our personal images with permission from the individual in it to use it. The group picture was similarly from our personal collection of photos and is a typical family picture. These posts can be seen in Appendix 2.

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1 The recording was done via both a dictaphone as well as a recording app on a cell phone just in case something were to happen with the primary recording.
4.2 Respondent Selection

The respondents were selected through a convenience selection by selecting friends of friends as well as participants of an unrelated design event with the intention of asking them about their Facebook habits. The reason we didn’t choose friends but rather decided to only take friends of friends was in order to get access to people that wouldn’t care too much about how we might react to their answers (Filstead, 1972) in addition to not putting pressure on them to answer as would be the case if we asked our friends. Initially we had 11 individuals who preliminary said yes, however 4 of them were unable to participate due to external factors. The contact was done via SMS or Facebook.

4.3 Reducing bias

The interviews was done with one person being responsible for leading the interview and the other responsible for taking notes. This allowed the one holding the interview to focus on just doing the interview and focus on the respondent and by so doing making it more informal.

One potential bias that might crop up is the environment where the person was interviewed in, with the two least forthcoming people being interviewed in group-rooms of the university and the two of the most verbose one’s being interviewed in their own homes. It could also be that the verbose people simply are more talkative by nature and that the two who didn’t want to share very much simply are private by nature. The remaining three were interviewed in the interaction lab of Informatics, a workshop area that is more informal than a group room.
4.4 Our respondents

We had 7 respondents, with people in the age span of 20 to 40 years with a gender distribution of 4 women and 3 men.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent 1</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>News Source</th>
<th>Social Media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22-25</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>Facebook, Twitter,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Instagram, Pinterest,</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Linkedin, Google+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22-25</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Internet, E-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Instagram, Facebook, blog, Snapchat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>Mother and Journalist</td>
<td>Internet, TV,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Tinder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35-40</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Internet, Social</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Media</td>
<td>hi5, Facebook, Google+, Twitter, LinkedIn, Ello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22-25</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>Facebook, WhatsApp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Radio, Newspaper,</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>Facebook, Instagram</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Respondent number, gender, age, occupation, primary information source and the social media they said they used in the order they mentioned it with a limit of 6 entries, not including Social Media that they consider “dead”.

The respondents all used Facebook, but besides that there were several different other social media mentioned such as Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest. There were also some social media that was mentioned in past tense due to them being abandoned for one reason or another, such as Lunarstorm, Skunk, Apberget and Myspace.

4.3 Data-Analysis

Our first step with working with the data was to get an overview of it. This was done by reading through the transcriptions and finding out what emotions and what general themes that could be found in what the respondents discussed. Once this was done as a way to familiarize ourselves with the data, we utilized the data coding methods described by Charmaz (2006). That is to say, go through the data and code it line by line and describe what the participants are doing. We did this separately in order to reduce bias as our diverging point of views captures different aspects leading to a fuller view. We went through each other’s coding after the fact and planned to mark any coding we didn’t agree on for further review, however we didn’t find any such coding. Once this was done, we had on average 300 codes (2x150) per
respondent that we had to go through and group together, both within the data for one respondent but also between the respondents to see patterns and recurring themes. This lay ground to a mapping where the potential themes could be condensed to several different categories of coding-themes. We ended up with around 40 different types of codings, with everything from how they described how they felt when using Facebook to what types of content they posted. This data was compiled into a list to how the different respondents fit in with the various code groups. From this we listed what respondents expressed each type of coding and while doing this we discovered that all the data was pointing towards people feeling trapped in Facebook, expressed in various different ways, such as wanting to drastically reduce their usage in three years or only using it because everyone else is using it. After coming to this realization we went through all the categories and transcripts once again and ended up with two aspects relating to our central theme of “Trapped in Facebook”. These aspects being immersion and entrapment.

5. Results and Analysis

In this section, we will show the results of our study, grouped according to our two themes Immersion and Entrapment. Starting with Immersion and how people don’t seem to think about using Facebook but rather just using it in various ways. Examples of this is how they all simply post things, go into the feed and look at things and other things that are done more or less automatically. From there we going over to Entrapment and how despite some of them wanting to leave Facebook and all of them wanting to reduce the time they spend on Facebook, they all seem to spend a lot of time on it. Actually getting rid of it altogether is something that only one respondent seriously considered and tried, with less than stellar results.

5.1 Immersion

Immersion comes in many forms and expressions, from the one’s who post their entire lives on social media without any thought, to those who just can’t stop reading just one more post in their feed. There’s also those who have escaped from this and instead only use it as a phonebook and the like.

Starting with someone who lives their life through Facebook we have Respondent 3, a journalist whose taking paid parental leave, describes how she uses Facebook to keep in contact with those she used to work with.

“Ah, that’s because it’s simple and fun, mmm. Many have Facebook and when people don’t have Facebook it’s a little like “But helloo, now I don’t know anything about you” like “What!”’. Its also a way to maintain relationships, erh, to show acknowledgement to others and if I maybe sometimes become pals with the people I work with, like I’m not a full-time employee anywhere so it becomes a little so that you still are visible somewhere, you’ll easily be forgotten otherwise, show presence somehow.”
Respondent 3 [Our translation from Swedish]
For her it’s an obvious part of everyone’s lives and identities to have Facebook, to not have it becomes something strange and unusual. It’s even updated parts of her offline life, with things like diaries moving more to Facebook instead of being kept offline. Posting things to Facebook becomes as natural as writing your diary or talking to people.

“Erh, I’ve always written a diary, all my life, erh and that have I stopped with a little bit since Facebook came and that has changed how I a little bit have that need, like some sort of confession I think, to get an impulse to… It’s like you are always surrounded by all these friends or a massive network that you can heave out things to, even if they aren’t in the room “What in heaven’s name happens here then?!” and you can react to things, this sometimes goes to quickly of course but it’s also that, erh… What was the question again [Laughter]?”

Respondent 3 [Our translation from Swedish]

It also creates a way to still be social with people even if you can’t leave the house and to a point it compliments and/or replaces communication in the physical world.

“We four buddies talk about ‘this here’ or we send jokes to each other like that or me and my cohabitant have mostly communicated via Facebook, Messenger all the time to”

Respondent 3 [Our translation from Swedish]

And when asked for the reason to why she uses Facebook, she replies that she does it mostly because it’s fun and because she’s curious.

“Oh, curiosity, happiness if someone I like acknowledge me or if I want their acknowledgement, then it feels fun. Can get pissed off at people putting up shit. No, curiosity is the biggest drive, cause and drive to kinda watch.”

Respondent 3 [Our translation from Swedish]

This is just one way that people are immersed into Facebook. Another type of relationship to Facebook we saw from one of our respondents is to refuse to post things herself but only watch what other posts. She’s the one who posted the least and she perceived herself to not be active on Facebook. Still, she still claims that:

“Yeah, been, like been updated, or just see what’s going on, or also kinda of distract yourself, while you’re working, like really working on something but then still Facebook it’s Always open”

Respondent 6

However, she still recognized that she needed Facebook, giving an example of her university studies or in her own words on the next page:
“That's a good question, because everyone does it and if you don't do it if you don't have it you, kinda of outsider, or you don't know what's going on, for example, just an example of studying, I need so much Facebook to get in Contact with other people to also talk about what's going on in the lectures what do we have to prepare afterwards, stuff like that, but the main thing is Communication, I would say.” Respondent 6

It's also her go to place when she's bored:

“How do I feel when I use Facebook? Uh, curious I want to know what's going on, um; sometimes I feel bored, so that's the reason why I go to Facebook, I feel bored so I go there, I feel happy, amused by other people often what they post what they do, umm, happy, but I'd say in general positive.”
Respondent 6

Our other respondents all used Facebook in their own ways, one of them used it to keep in touch with his family back home and share his thoughts:

“For me it is more of a place where I can share my thoughts. I use social media to keep in touch with family so let them know what I'm doing here specially when I have family back home, so when I use it, so when I use it, I using it for both of that stuff, so yeah.”
Respondent 5

Another respondent used it in this way:

“To keep track of what my, or keep up to date on what my pals are doing, especially those who don't count as my close friends and also what happens in different companies that I follow. Sport, sports stars, musicians or politicians, I especially use twitter a lot for political views and things, and sports and stuff”
Respondent 1 [Our translation from Swedish]

One notable way people are immersed into Facebook is this how Respondent 4 shared her travel picture (picture 4 on next page) and then acted like this:

“Like, at first, because I post so rarely so like, I was with my sister and two buddies when, like I posted it, I just “AArhh!, now you have to go in and like right now to make sure that I get likes on this picture! So then they went in and liked right away and then I got tons of likes and then I like wanted to go in and check all the time, I like “How many likes do I have now? How many likes do I have now?”
Respondent 4 [Our translation from Swedish]
Another type of posting that can occur is to friend sourcing and more surprising, asking someone else to forward your friend sourcing request to others.

“Sometimes I might post to be nice to someone else if they want me to post something, maybe they are searching for an apartment and then maybe I post it to be kind to them. Otherwise I usually don’t [post]. I am not super-active at posting stuff, but it’s things like that I might post.”
Respondent 2 [Our translation from Swedish]

Reactions to group pictures are varied, with one side focusing on the number of likes you could get:
“Effects? ... Well, I think that you would get rather happy effects really by this... Not, it wouldn’t be a top post like I’ve done but it would, you would still get quite a few likes I would think, really. A few comments”
Respondent 4 [Our translation from Swedish]

With another side reacting like this:

“So I think positive because its sense of nostalgia and everyone is like, people associated with that Picture would be like "Oh yeah, I remember this day It was great, we should do this again" so it is kinda a trigger to recreate or create a new memory but is as such fun”
Respondent 5
A basic profile picture also has different reactions, with one respondent responding like this:

“If think in an old way about it I’d think it’s so ridiculous, that you think, you kinda want this, that people like your picture, it’s you shouldn’t care who like it or not, but still it’s so stupid, but yeah; so I’d say yeah if I focus on this it’s a updating a profile picture but there are actually no, maybe negative effects of if it does not get a lot of likes”
Respondent 6

While another reacts like this:

“I don’t know [why it was posted] but I think it is a really worthless picture. It feels like he just needed a picture quickly and took a picture that cut out a person as well. You see the arm of another person to, what is it? Left or right? Well, on the side of the picture”
Respondent 4

One way that people relate to and interact with Facebook is to maintain a positive image of themselves, with a set of things that shouldn’t be posted according to them. As an example, when we let our respondents read through our synthetic person’s posts we accidentally broke a few of the rules that they had set for how people are allowed to post, leading to the comments that follow.

“Well, one example of this could be if he has an employer who knows that David Örnbo is home due to illness and then he posts this and the boss thinks that, “Ah right, that’s why he’s home, to watch house of cards.”.”
Respondent 1 [Our translation from Swedish]

“Because it’s more, I think a lot about employers and things like that. It might not look great that you post things like “Today I’m gonna get wasted”
Respondent 2 [Our translation from Swedish]

“Erh… Well because it also indicates some kinda drinker culture, kinda “Now I’m going to get wasted tonight”. That’s something I couldn’t do either”
Respondent 4 [Our translation from Swedish]

However, these rules aren’t set in stone and are far from universal. On the same question that related to alcohol consumption, other respondents were much more positive towards it.

“Because it is a little funny and not quite straight to the point “Going to party” but more, “let’s see where this is going” so absolutely, and it’s a bit psyching.”
Respondent 7 [Our translation from Swedish]
“He was just excited about the night and maybe happy […] Maybe he also want if other people want to go out tonight,”
Respondent 6

“I would say he posted it more, ’cause he want it engagement, he probably wanted to amuse or entertain his friends with the stuff that he is doing, or maybe even that once he finished the gin and coconuts he probably wouldn't be in a position to post”
Respondent 5

“Might want to tell someone, on Facebook that he kind of is friends with a girl or a boy that he is interested in, erh, and want to tell that “now I’m going out partying” and “let’s see where this leads to” maybe he is going to meet this person tonight [humming] I don't know, a little flirty [Laughs].”
Respondent 3 [Our translation from Swedish]

The fact that these rules exist seem to indicate that people are immersed into their posting and reading of people. Part of why these rules might be so important might simply be because of all the friends we have on our Facebook wall. This shows itself in comments like the quote from our third respondent, where she mentions that some things you have to stop yourself from posting the thing.

“Why should I share that feeling with all four hundred people including an old work buddy, then I might need to stop myself, eh, or I just post it to my close friends...”
Respondent 3 [Our translation from Swedish]

Overall, there wasn’t a lot of responses that talked about managing your content based on how many friends you had and it wasn’t an included question. However, when asked if we missed something, Respondent 7 replied with:

“[…] I have a lot of friends, and then I thought why you choose to have so many friends, and how you choose to filter in that, what your own feeling is kinda, that’s what I thought spontaneously, that you would ask when you came, it was so, because it’s interesting, how you keep closed what forum you use for one’s own feeling and for me it’s pretty open, so long that I know who the person is, then I say [yes] absolutely”
Respondent 7 [Our translation from Swedish]

5.2 Entrapment
With all this immersion into Facebook, there are also aspects where the respondents act and respond like they are trapped and can’t get away. One example of this is how they all say that they use Facebook at least once per day.
“Every day, many times every day [Laughter], to often.... Maybe, yes once per hour, when I'm awake, at least. Naah, that might not be how I do it now but like generally. If you would spread it out over a day then it would be once an hour, absolutely.”

Respondent 3 [Our translation from Swedish]

We had one respondent who tried to leave Facebook because of how intense it was and how heated the various debates that happens on Facebook became but she’s returned to Facebook after a bit of back and forth, or in her own words:

“I've actually been with Facebook to and from. That they, now I've had it quite a long time but, for one and a half years ago, then I removed it and had it gone for a few days, then I took it back, then I removed it again after some weeks, then I took it back, so with Facebook I have something like a love-hate relationship with removing it and taking it back”

Respondent 4 [Our translation from Swedish]

While none of the other respondents had quite as strongly worded complaints about Social Media, the most strongly positive quote we found about their future usage was from Respondent 3 who was the one who didn’t say that she was tired of social media but she still said that she might drastically reduce her usage of it:

“I think I will use Social Media more in three years actually, I think... Or get tired of it and like shut off the telephone entirely or maybe work with it, for example on a media workplace and then maybe not check it so often on the evening, that depends a little on how circumstances end up.”

Respondent 3 [Our translation from Swedish]

The other respondents either wanted to reduce the time they use on Facebook or had already done so. Or in the words of Respondent 7 when asked about his usage on Social media in three years:

“... Hopefully I'll use it a little less, I want to use it every day but not super many times every day, like so”

- Respondent 7 [Our translation from Swedish]

The usage of Facebook in the case for 3 most popular, read more than 500 friends, respondents vary from the usage of the rest of the respondents in one substantial way; they convey a lot of what is happening career wise and/or in their spare time embed in blog. Using Facebook’s affordance in communicate one to many people. The connection they rely on Facebook through their network of friends permit them leverage other mediums such as respondent 2 external traveling blog, Respondent 5 massive sports fan page in Google+ or Respondent 7’s acting career. Respondent 7’s acting career bolster his friend number as well as his work and natural charisma attracts followers and friends. This however means that he’s
getting more and more tied to Facebook, giving him more content to go through as well as making the decision to actually leave harder and harder. In a similar vein, Respondent 2 cleverly uses Facebook as a way to attract more readers to her blog as well as putting thoughts on how to best attract the friends of her friends to read it.

“Because to let others, especially, I went with quite a few, we were 14 people who went on the trip and then I thought it could be good to post it so that their friends who doesn’t really know me can follow [the trip] on my blog because I will be writing about it, while maybe my guy-friends don’t write so much but their mothers still want to read so I tag them [guy-friends] in the picture so it comes up in their flow [mothers of guy-friends]”  
Respondent 2 [our translation from Swedish]

All the respondents use Facebook in order to keep in touch with old acquaintances and to see where they are nowadays, both geographically and in life. The capabilities to do so exists in Facebook, as it is just as easy to keep in contact with someone on the other side of the globe as it is to keep in contact with someone across the street. This also makes it harder to leave the network as you would have to bring your friends over to a new network or cut them out of your life, the former is likely impossible while the latter is self destructive. This is described by Respondent 4 who tried to leave Facebook like this:

“Mostly, ah, like the reason not to remove it, that’s because you are part in these groups that write things sometimes, that you have in like school or other culture-clubs. Oh and then, it’s also a bit fun with people you don’t meet so often, but that you still like. And that you, like, if they have a birthday to write congratulations, that I think is good to really.”  
Respondent 4 [Our translation from Swedish]

However, this sentiment about friends from the past or “not near friends” is echoed in all the other interviews.

“I use social media to keep in touch with family so let them know what I’m doing here specially when I have family back home...”  
Respondent 5

However, many respondents say that Facebook is something they must have, not something “nice to have” or something you necessarily want to have. Not only because it’s the de facto standard communication path within their studies but also because as been repeatedly said, it makes you an outsider if you don’t have it.

“I need so much Facebook to get in contact with other people to also talk about what’s going on in the lectures what do we have to prepare afterwards, stuff like that, but the main thing is Communication, I would say”  
Respondent 6
The various ways that Facebook entraps us are many, from the network's sheer size, all the little reminders like wishing people happy birthday or even just the news feed that keeps zooming past. While there's a lot of nice things in the news feed, many of our respondents had a hard time to remember anything really memorable from it, just that they felt special about some of the posts. And by tailoring the news-feed according to what you like, the feed just becomes even more addicting.

“No, actually not. I've absolutely seen posts and status updates where I like thought that, wow this is good, but the flow is so saturated nowadays that you often just forget things like that. Like, specifically what it was for something. But absolutely that I've experienced status updates that have been good and made me feel something extra”
Respondent 1 [Our translation from Swedish]

As mentioned before, there's quite a lot of pressure to get likes (or comments) and post content that is appreciated by others. This need is put side by side on how potential employers can view your page and affect your employability. As said earlier with all the drunken posts but also when discussing political things. Respondent 3 expresses that the reason she posts so many personal things is because she's not allowed to be political because of her work in public service, even though she might want to. Facebook has such an impact on our life that what we post doesn't just affect our social life, it also affects how employable you are.

“But maybe because, I don't know, because I from time to time am employed by public service and then I can't like, it is not good to put up to much political content, articles and such, I try to keep it personal but not to personal, not too exposing but still like personal, my family thinks that I put up to much but at the same time I think “what the hell, I can share” and I think people are too cowardly sometimes, it is just that, I'm not against sharing some things that might be the difference between personal and being private and because I can't be so political I instead try to be personal.”
Respondent 2 [Our translation from Swedish]

5.3 Summary
In summary, people use Facebook everyday as an obvious part of their day. It takes up a varying amount of time for everyone, with people being immersed into Facebook at various intensities. The more immersed they are, the less they feel that they are trapped in Facebook, however if this immersion shatters for whatever reason they might start to question how much they are actually using it. As Facebook is one of the de facto standard ways of communication for many of our respondents, it becomes hard for them to actually leave as not only would they have to give up everything that Facebook offers, the platform does many things to keep you interested. One example is how much attention you can get via Facebook, via comments and Likes and how easy it is to provide this attention to others. And as it's the largest online social network at
the moment everyone you know has Facebook and if you were to leave, it would be harder to keep in contact with them, especially if your only contact at the moment is through Facebook. Paraphrasing our respondents, if you're not on Facebook then we don't know anything about you.

6. Discussion

So how does our research relate to what has already been done? For one, we found many of the groups that Baumer et al. (2013) with people claiming that they are just using it for friends, the respondents are stigmatizing not having Facebook. However, only one of our respondents actually tried to get rid of Facebook, while others can’t get away because it is either a great time-waster like the TV or because it’s their primary line of socialization. However many of our respondents use Facebook as their first channel of direct communication even between couples, as one of our respondents mention when they were asked on their usage of Facebook’s messenger.

Regarding nostalgic posts, we did notice that there’s some who focus on the here and now, while others focus more on what happened before, however we didn’t see a good pattern on who thought about nostalgic content versus those focusing on the here and now. While we didn’t focus on cyber bullying, a topic that has been studied by many others, we did get one response that writing on Facebook is a lot nicer than writing on blogs, while we also had responses saying that some types of content, more specifically politically, being a hotbed for racism and bullying.

This might imply that Facebook is nicer because people know better than to invite to these types of discussions or that the control mechanisms that Facebook offers are effective. Or simply that Facebook isn’t anonymous enough to be affected by this type of behavior. Another interesting thing is that in our research we found very few mentions that Facebook is a company, with more thought being put into how others perceive you rather than how Facebook might use your data. This falls in line with what we saw when going through other studies of Facebook, with it becoming more of a pillar of the community rather than an active participant itself, just like people don’t think about Google and what they gain from everything we give them by using their many varied products, like their search engine.

6.1 Design implications, Immersion

Facebook is constantly looking for ways to keep you immersed into it. With most interactions happening as easy as typing your thoughts and hitting enter, without immersion breaking confirmation boxes and things just working. And because almost everyone has Facebook, there isn’t the jarring immersion break of trying to find someone who isn’t on the network. And as there’s always something new to see in your feed you can always come back and be entertained by it, therefore making you come back over and over. And thanks to the simplicity of Facebook, everyone can use it, especially as Facebook does its best to keep the immersion intact by making sure that things such as error messages, noticeable slowdowns or elements that look like they don’t belong don’t appear on the site. These are the things we noticed but there are probably
even further insights to find studying Facebook, especially if you focus on just the immersion parts.

### 6.2 Design implications, (anti-)Entrapment

Facebook does a lot of things to keep you in, from sending you messages when you don’t sign in for a while, making the feed transient as well as making sure that everyone you know is using Facebook. Not all aspects of this are bad of course, however one should consider how to design in such a way that the user doesn’t feel trapped. One way to stop people from needing to check their feeds all the time, therefore reducing one part of the need to check, is to allow them to search their news-feed for posts. Furthermore by providing a way to go back and see previous versions of the news-feed in case you want to find a post you saw last time you were into Facebook you don’t have to scroll through your feed for ages to find what you were looking for. Something that would solve both these issues would be to send out a daily digest with all posts that was done during the day ordered in the same way that the timeline is, like YouTube and other services does. This would in turn allow you to utilize the various search functions built-in in most modern email solutions and it would also allow the users to pick and choose what to store for later and what to get rid of. However if Facebook keeps going the way that it’s going it will soon join the number of things that we get used to always having, just as initially there were some people feeling like their cellphone forced them to be constantly reachable. We developed methods to deal with the cellphone, who’s to say that we won’t do the same with Facebook?

### 7. Conclusion

In this globalized world, how can we keep in touch with our relatives? Phone works when you’re within the same time zone but when the time difference starts to get more than a few hours this starts getting problematic. Letters takes a long time to send through the normal post system with a latency of at least two days. Various messaging services such as Skype and Facebook Messenger helps for one to one communication but doesn’t really do broadcasting well. In the end, Facebook with all its options is a very strong contender for this function and that’s a reason why you can’t get rid of it. Add in old classmates and people from your old work you want to keep track of and it becomes harder and harder to use something else to keep them up to date with what you’re doing and what they are doing. Facebook has become so large that it’s an obvious part of our lives, just like Google has managed to take over and become the defacto standard of searching. Is this for the betterment or is it a detriment to society as a whole? Does it matter? In the end, do we really want to leave the comfort that Facebook provides? And even if we do, what are the alternatives? Either way, you should probably check your news-feed, who knows what you might have missed.

### 7.1 Future research

Something that might be interesting to look closer on that we discovered in our research is how the uncertainty of how a message is going to be interpreted influence if a message gets posted
or not. Another thing that could be done is to see how prevalent the immersion and entrapment into Facebook is by sending out a quantitative questionnaire asking for the reasons they are using Facebook, if it's because they have to in order to keep in touch with their network of friends, because they actually want to, because there’s nowhere better to be or if they just use it because it’s something they do on automatic.

7.2 Reflections
One of the issues with using grounded theory is that at the start you don’t know where you end up. Our initial line of inquiry were along the lines of if how people felt when posting their own posts reflected on how they themselves interpreted other’s posts and if this could cause problems. However, once we analyzed our data it became apparent that what we found was more along the lines of how people are immersed into Facebook and how they feel trapped by it. If we had known ahead of time and had an initial focus on entrapment and immersion, we would have asked our participants outright if they felt they used Facebook to much as well as describe their reasoning for how much or little time they spent on it. While we don’t think more participants would have drastically changed the results, more participants would most likely have given a richer picture with more viewpoints.

7.3 Acknowledgements
We would like to thank our supervisor Mikael Wiberg for his patience and guidance, as without his invaluable help and support we wouldn’t have made it through this work.
References


Appendix 1 Interview guide

**Interview Guide**

The purpose of our study is to investigate the emotional experience social media users have when they post, and the relationship between this experience and what they post on them. By examining this, we hope to get a better understanding of the emotional states of individuals posting and its emotional meaning.

**Formalities**

The interview is expected to take about an hour.
Before we start the interview, we want to remind you at any time have the right to cancel the interview with no repercussions.
No one but us will view the information you provide before it has been anonymized (ie switch to fictitious names and edit images and/or blurry them).
When we are done with the results section, we will send it to you so that you can read how we use the information you give us.

May we record the interview so that we can later review what you said? __
May we contact you for any additional questions that may arise? __
Can we take screenshots of any examples you show? __
Can we use them in our thesis if we blur identifying information? __

**Background Questions:**

Gender: M F
When were you born? _______
What is your main occupation? ________________________________
What is your main source of news? ________________________________
Appendix 1

Recording of Interview with respondent number ____ started.

**Preliminary issues**

1. How long have you used social media in general?
2. Which social media have you used?
   a. How long have you been using them?
   b. How often do you use them?
   c. What do you feel when you use them (social media)?
   d. What emotions do you feel when you use them?
   e. How do you use them?
   f. Why do you use them?
   g. What is the main reason that you post through this social media?
      i. Is there any other reason?
   h. Is there social media you have chosen not to use?
      i. Why have you chosen not to use them?
      i. Is there any social media you have used before you are not using now?
      i. Why did you stop using that?

**Facebook questions**

1. Do you use Facebook?
   a. How long have you use Facebook?
   b. How often do you use Facebook?
      i. Has your use of Facebook changed in the last three months?
         1. If Yes: Why?
   c. How many friends do you have on Facebook?
   d. What do you feel when you use Facebook?
   e. What emotions do you feel when posting via Facebook?
   f. How do you use Facebook?
Appendix 1

g. Why are you using Facebook?

h. What is the main reason that you post via Facebook?
   i. Is there any other reason?

2. If we focus on this, can you give an example of a post that has given memorable positive effects?
   a. Memorable negative effects?

3. Can you give examples of what you've posted via Facebook?
   a. What feeling did you experience when you posted this example?
   b. What did you feel when you posted this example?
   c. Why do you post?
   d. Can you imagine some memorable positive or negative effects that could arise due this posting?
   e. Can you give some other examples of what you've posted via Facebook?

4. Can you remember any time you wrote a post but decided not to post it?
   a. What feeling did you experience when you chose to not post?
   b. What kept you from not post it?
      i. What feeling do you think you would had if you posted it?
      ii. What feeling did you have when you chose to not post it?
      iii. Can you think of any effects that could be caused by the posting of it?

5. Can you give an example of a memorable post that someone else has done?
   a. What feeling do you think they felt when they posted example?
   b. What do you think they felt when they posted example?
   c. Why do you think it was posted?
   d. Could you post something like this?
      i. Why would(n't) you?
   e. What effects do you think it could get?
Appendix 1

6. If you look at these Facebook posts from David Örnbo:
   a. What feeling do you think he felt when he posted example?
   b. What do you think he felt when they posted example?
   c. Why do you think it was posted?
   d. Could you post something like that?
      i. Why could/couldn’t you?
   e. What effects do you think it could get?

Rounding off

1. In three years, how do you think your use of social media will change?
2. Is there anything that you think we have missed in the interview?
3. Can we use the examples you have shown to display to other respondents?
4. May we return with additional questions if needed?
Appendix 2 David Örnbo
Appendix 2
Appendix 2

The artificial posts that were created for the persona David Örnbo, who is a young Swedish guy who has partner and likes to travel, was made with the main intention to make sure that all respondents had some posts to reflect and comment about. The posts were meant to reflect David’s personal opinions posted in a casually and spontaneous manner. Post 4 and 5 have an underlying private innuendo in order to make our participants reflect on David’s situation’ at the moment of those postings. The order of the posts were purposefully selected to show a low quality profile picture as first post then nine casual posts and one nicer group picture, that was also used as David’s background picture, to round off at the last post;

The posts were selected in this order to provide a rhythm of sort with the early posts starting with 3 casual posts that he more or less just threw out, going through two cryptic messages where you have to read into what situation he is in, then going back to casual posts for five more posts, some referring to travels and finally ending with a more high quality picture, in comparison to the first picture, of himself and a group of friends and/or family. This makes for a total of eleven posts that are as follows:

Post 1:
Profile picture

Post 2:
Kickass black jeans and crisp shirt are ready; so I am for dinner with my parents in law

Post 3:
I have a bunch of coconuts and a bottle of gin, let see how this plays out...

Post 4:
This time, it's not my call.

Post 5:
I'm either in a crossroad or so I'm lost, I dunno...

Post 6:
Just think of all the love letters that sent before we started to use Facebook

Post 7:
My last name means “Eagle nest” in Swedish

Post 8:
It is only three days until my better half comes to join me

Post 9:
Australia is the p-l-a-c-e-

Post 10:
“House of cards” season 4 out now back home in Sweden... I cannot wait no more!

Post 11:
Group picture (Background picture)