DANGEROUS PITFALLS OF SOCIAL MEDIA: REPERCUSSIONS OF AMPLIFYING ONESELF ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Author:
Claudia Holonics

Faculty Sponsor:
Lisa Ortiz-Villarelle
Department of English

ABSTRACT

I will use James Gibson's idea that there is a set of possibilities for action an environment presents to its users to set up my suggestion that we lose ourselves in sharing ourselves and then rely on the theory of affordance to argue that social media users have encouraged the comparing of one another's' lives by finding websites such as Facebook so enticing. Through conducting research, I want to be able to understand the social media realm and the dangers that it imposes. I want to look at the "technological self," the one who can let the public know on Facebook how they are feeling, what they are celebrating, what they are drinking, where they are traveling, and what they are thinking about, and what they are supporting. Before Facebook, we kept many of these facets of our lives private and only shared them with our closest friends and family. If it were not for the "technological self," we would not know these things about people. When social media users expose more parts of their life to the public, essentially amplifying their self-image, they are making their lives look more exciting. Amplifying oneself across digital platforms nurtures embellishment and social media quickly becomes a show, a place to make one's life look more exciting than others. People lose sight of the meaning and purpose behind what they are posting about on social media when the focus becomes on the post and who will read it, not the actual life event they are broadcasting for the public eye.

INTRODUCTION

The behavioral shift from keeping our lives private to making them public by posting on different social media domains has created a profound impact in the lives of American culture. The different facets of our lives that we once kept private and only shared with our closest friends and family are now available to anyone on the internet. Before the social media domain, Facebook, we were not consciously aware of what people were doing with their lives and where they were. Now, these domains allow us to "check in" to the restaurant, sports arena, movie theater, etc. that we are at. By "checking in" to these places, we are inevitably oversharing because before domains, such as Facebook, our location was private. Unless we were spotted by family and friends when we were out shopping or at a local restaurant, our location was not accessible. Whereas online environments are "publicly private" because while we can share things with a large group of people, it is not open access because we can determine who sees it. We have the control in our Facebook settings to set our account up so that the information we publicize is just for us and those that we are friends with on Facebook. James Frey is an example of an author who is already public figure because of the fame that he earned from the publication of *A Million Little Pieces.* Now that he is already a public figure, he uses this to create a public version of his private life. When our "friends" on Facebook check our status updates, if we tag people in our statuses or pictures that another person is friends with, there is the possibility of one friend experiencing the fear of missing out. The more we find ourselves on social media platforms, the more likely we are to see that someone is having more fun than we are right now. When social media users expose more parts of their life to the public, essentially amplifying their self-image, they are making their lives look more exciting. Amplifying oneself across digital platforms nurtures embellishment and social media quickly becomes a show, a place to make one's life look more exciting than others. People lose sight of the meaning and purpose behind what they are posting about on social media when the focus becomes on the post and who will read it, not the actual life event they are broadcasting for the public eye. James Gibson's theory of affordance supports the claim

that we lose ourselves in sharing ourselves and that social media users have encouraged the comparing of one another's lives by finding websites such as Facebook so enticing.

AFFORDANCE AND THE TECHNOLOGICAL SELF

The technological self is abstract and arbitrary compared to the person we are away from the screen. The version of ourselves that we construct online is inconsistent with the person that we are offline because when we log on to social media platforms, we are posting for the sake of other people seeing it. However, before social media became so widespread in our culture, we lived in the moment and took a picture for the sake of having it as a memento, not to show other people how we were living our lives. In Aimee Morrison's "Facebook and Coaxed Affordances, "affordance" is described as: "A concept first articulated in ecological psychology, then moving through industrial design, and into human-computer interaction, usability, and user-experience design for digital environments. James Gibson (1986) devised the neologism "affordance" to describe the set of possibilities for action an environment presents to its users" (Morrison 117). The environment in question here is the social media domain, Facebook. Facebook presents a wide range of actions for its users that have ripple effects on people who have a Facebook account. It allows us to post pictures in an album, check-in to our location, tag our friends, contact people through messenger, invite people to our events, fundraise, update our statuses, etc. However, when we post pictures in our albums or check-in to our locations or update our status, we only post pictures that we are happy in or places that bring us joy and satisfaction. We are not likely to post about our challenging sides. This is therefore inconsistent because our lives are not only comprised of the happy moments. Rather, our self-formation is based off all the good and bad that we have experienced. Like memoir, social media users on Facebook essentially "put on a show" for their friends. People put up a façade on Facebook when the statuses on their timeline do not match how they are feeling. Today's Facebook has the feature that asks, "How are you feeling?" There is no guarantee that the feeling we click on the computer screen matches how we are feeling. When we communicate through a screen, we can make up how we are feeling without anyone knowing that we are only "putting on a show." In memoir, one can also "put on a show" because they can choose what they want to include in their memoir and what they do not want to include in their memoir.

Social media users are guilty of creating different versions of themselves based on the social networking sites that they are using. Facebook is no longer the most dominant social network among teens. Most teenagers that are still on Facebook utilize the social media platform as a space where they can update their parents, aunts, uncles, etc. about their lives. Other social media platforms such as: Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat have become more popular among teenagers. These sites are where they will post the pictures from their night out at the bar or the pictures from the fraternity party that they do not want their family members finding out about. By only posting the "appropriate" pictures to their Facebook accounts for their family members to see, teenagers on social media are creating different versions of themselves across different digital platforms. For example, in "The Social Media Landscape," Miller poses the question, "What is acceptable to put on WhatsApp but not on Facebook, for example, or on Twitter but not on LinkedIn?" (Miller 22). LinkedIn is a popular professional networking and career development site. It is based on the basic principles of Facebook such as: connecting with friends, posting updates, sharing and liking content, and instant messaging other users. However, LinkedIn also allows the user to put a professional spin on their profile because their profile becomes a resume, complete with work experience, accomplishments, recommendations, and referrals from colleagues. LinkedIn allows users to search and apply for jobs. So, one would not want to post scandalous pictures on this digital platform because it is even more likely for a potential employer to find them on a professional networking site, such as LinkedIn. When we post certain pictures on one digital platform and not the other, we lose oneself. Ultimately, we lose our identity when we spread ourselves across so many platforms.

Social networking sites set themselves up as environments for users to post about the positive in their lives and in turn, they neglect to reflect on the negative. When we get so focused on making positive posts on Facebook and pushing the negative aside, we lose oneself. When Facebook first launched, it

encouraged the sense that one's entire life needs to be networked (McNeil and Zuren 18). McNeil and Zuren state that, "In 2012 and 2014, Facebook algorithmically curated members' lives, offering "Year in Review" slideshows based on individual's photos that generated the most uptake by one's own network, through likes or comments" (McNeil and Zuren 18). As Facebook has been updated and revamped, some users have made complaints about how they feel about Facebook's new features: "A Facebook life review necessarily defaults to a positive framework; the slideshows ran with the upbeat tagline, "It's been a great year! Thanks for being a part of it," a move that generated significant negative press due to complaints by users who had not a "great year" (McNeil and Zuren 18-19). Facebook users who did not have a "great year" who scroll through their feeds and see the "Year in Review" videos that their "friends" posted are inevitably going to compare their year to that of the friend who posted the video. This is also when people with social media accounts lose themselves because they become so focused on comparing their year to someone else's year. Seeing the "Year in Review" with the upbeat tagline, "It's been a great year! Thanks for being a part of it," reminds some people of the not so great year that they had. Without social networking sites, people would not be enticed to display all the positive in their life for the public and watching other people's "Year in Review" would not be an option. The difference between the "Year in Review" feature on Facebook and a traditional memoir is the repetitive nature of the "Year in Review" feature. A traditional memoir provides a specific timeline and a much more intimate relationship to the writer's own memoires, feelings and emotions. In contrast, the "Year in Review" feature is a personalized video that lets one highlight and share their meaningful moments from each year. This is different from the traditional memoir because we can look back on more than one specific timeline, since Facebook provides us with the "Year in Review" for every year that we have had a Facebook account.

When we make our self-forming activities visible to others, we are creating room for comparison because our "friends" on Facebook are likely to do the same. The formation of our self-identity results in the recognition of one's potential and qualities as an individual, such as knowledge of one's skills. Social media platforms such as Facebook have coaxed us to give away a part of ourselves that we used to hold so sacred, such as a picture of the house we grew up in, the day we took our first steps as a child, our wedding day, our first A on a paper, etc. These were events or places that marked milestones in our lives, and they played a role in shaping us into the person we are today. Facebook has milestone features where one can share and remember important moments from their life. When one clicks on the "About" page on their Facebook account, they have the option to add a life event. Some of the categories include the following: work, education, relationship, home and living, remembrance, and travel. However, because of Facebook, these moments in our lives do not hold the same meaning that they once used to. James Frey, for example, posted pictures on his personal Facebook account on May 16, 2019 of the place in Connecticut where he writes his books. He posted a status update along with the photos that said, "People always ask me where I write my books. In this little barn in the woods of Connecticut. I usually walk, occasionally drive (vehicle in first photo)." The place where he writes his books inevitably shaped James Frey into the person he is today because he is known for being an author and the little barn in Connecticut is where he developed his skills. But what Facebook allows is for other authors to like James Frey's Facebook page and compare their writing space to his. In "Self-Narratives on Social Networks: Trans-Platform Stories and Facebook's Metamorphosis into a Postmodern Semiautomated Repository," Theresa Sauter argues that SNS platforms, "provide a means for people to subject themselves to a public gaze and make their self-forming activities visible to others" (Calzati and Simanowski 31). When another author learns that Frey writes in a very intimate and secluded place, it could make them rethink and question how meaningful the place where they create pieces of literary work is to them. This questioning and self-doubt about if something is meaningful to someone or not was not something of concern before social networking sites.

Not only do social networking sites cause us to devalue the significant moments in our lives, the focus becomes on the post and who will read it, not the actual moment we are reflecting on. If we take James Frey and his barn in the woods in Connecticut, for example, if he did not want people to know where he wrote his books, he would not have posted pictures of the barn on a site where anyone that

likes his Facebook page can see it. Because of the integration of digital platforms, we want people to know what we are up to and where we are when we are doing these things. We want people to know if we are somewhere that is cool and "artsy," such as James Frey's barn. His barn in the middle of nature is more "artsy" than another author who writes their books in a desolate office space in their home. We yearn for people to comment and like our posts because this gives us validation that our pictures were worth sharing or our experiences were worth being told. Many people commented on James Frey's posts: "Beautiful!" "Blessed little barn. It allowed you to write masterpieces." "Looks so peaceful." "A tiny lodge in the woods. My dream!" These comments provide the social media user, such as James Frey, with satisfaction because they reaffirm why he posted the pictures of the barn in the first place. He wanted people to see the "tranquil" and "peaceful" barn where he writes his books. However, another person commented, "I love this! John Irving has a similar writing cabin on his property. It must be a sign of a great author!" By posting the pictures of his cabin, Frey created room for comparison. One person compared his cabin to John Irving's writing cabin. When Frey shared his barn and somebody commented saying that John Irving has a similar writing cabin, the barn loses some of its meaning when Frey finds out that his barn where he does his writing is not original anymore.

By exposing different facets of our lives to the public through social media domains, we are subjecting ourselves to the uncertainty of how the public will react or if they will react at all. In "Online Lives 2.0: Introduction," McNeil and Zuern state that, "This atmosphere of uncertainty and vulnerability, we argue, is transforming not only our relationships with other people but also our experience of our own identities, and consequently, our practices of self-representation" (McNeil and Zuern 13). When we expose ourselves on the internet, especially the most personal stories about ourselves and pictures of ourselves, we are demonstrating our vulnerability because we understand the effects of an environment in which we could potentially be harmed emotionally. People post things on their social media accounts with the intention that they will receive positive feedback. However, this is not always the case. Sometimes people receive backlash for their posts because it might unintentionally offend someone, it might be inappropriate, etc. For example, on October 2, 2019 James Frey posted a picture of himself in his underwear on his timeline on Facebook and captioned it, "Walking Around DTLA in my underwear. Happy Wednesday, my friends, Happy Wednesday." One person commented on his post and said, "Why? Just why…" Other people on Facebook could have responded to his post of himself walking around DTLA in his underwear by picking on him and saying something along the lines of "Put some pants on" or attacking him by saying "What makes you think you have the right to walk around the streets in your underwear?" Walking around in one's underwear is something that is normally done inside the comfort of our own home. When we take something that we do in the privacy of our own home and post it on social networking sites, we lose ourselves in sharing ourselves.

Social networking sites, such as Facebook, cause one to lose themselves because they are preoccupying themselves with the social networking site itself. Instead of focusing on themselves, social media users are preoccupied with the online environments that have become an integral part of their lives. Posting pictures into our Facebook albums or updating our statuses has almost become second nature to us. We rely on Facebook and other social networking sites as an outlet for us to recount our experiences for other people. When are focused on constructing the post, we are too preoccupied to remember why the post was important to us in the first place. For example, today Facebook has a new feature that allows us to post Facebook stories. Many people go to concerts today and post so many videos on their Facebook stories from the concert that when we view their stories it feels like we were at the concert as well. The question then becomes are we recording the concert so that we can look back on the memories later or are we recording the concert for the purpose of posting it on social media? When we become so preoccupied with posting our experiences for the public, we forget to live in the moment. On September 5, 2019, James Frey posted a picture to his timeline on Facebook with Sam Taylor Johnson and Aaron Taylor Johnson and captioned it, "Dinner with people I love." Sam and Taylor Johnson were responsible for turning *A Million Little Pieces* into a movie. James Frey, already a public figure before joining Facebook because of the controversy surrounding his autobiography, is guilty of posting for social

media. Before social media networking sites dominated our culture, Frey would have just kept that photo in his camera roll. Now, he feels the need to post it so that his social media followers know that he is spending time with people that he cares a lot about. The desire to share our experiences is one of the reasons that social networking sites have become so popular.

Facebook allows us to reconnect with old friends that we lost touch with and share our experiences with them; however, when we reconnect on social media platforms we are moving away from the traditional in-person conversations that relationships used to be built upon. Sharing our everyday experiences on Facebook enables people to see our Facebook friends' reflections and connections. However, when we share our everyday experiences on social media, we lose the chance to build credibility and trust between the people that we are friends with on Facebook. In the past, we built credibility and trust between our family and friends through in-person conversations. In "The Social Media Landscape," Miller demonstrates that when we advertise our lives to the public through various social media networks, we lose the genuine conversations that generate away from the screen:

ALL ABOUT PLATFORMS

The trouble is that, once we turn to social media, the discussions make it seem as though communication is suddenly about all platforms, about Twitter or Instagram. Who uses them, where and when? We discuss communication in terms of a Facebook share or a 'Twitter beef' (quarrel). The implication would be that platforms replace conversational genres as the foundations of communication (Miller 20).

Facebook not only allows us to do things such as share our experiences by posting pictures in our albums and updating our statuses on our timeline, but there is also a feature called "messenger." On Facebook, "messenger" is essentially another way to communicate with people on a social media network. Facebook gives us the opportunity to reconnect with old friends by "friending" them on our Facebook accounts, but when we communicate with them through "messenger" instead of planning to get together face-to-face, we lose the genuine conversations that we used to value. Communicating face-to-face allows us to prevent misunderstandings and it also allows for people to read each other's body language and hear the "tone" in their voices. We lose these advantages of face-to-face conversations when we resort to social media platforms as our forms of communication. Miller also argues that, "…social media have come to dominate communication for certain individuals today" (Miller 20). We have lost sight of the importance of face-to-face communication. When we rely on Facebook as our form of communication, we do not have immediate feedback or response from the person we are having a conversation with because they might not be logged on to Facebook at the same time as we are. Whereas if we still valued face-to-face conversations as much as we did in the past, we would not be facing these problems.

Facebook bridges the gap left by memoir and face-to-face communication. Even though we lose the chance to build credibility and trust when we depend on social media as a form of communication, at least we can see pictures and watch videos. Facebook also has the feature today where people can watch live videos. If someone is unable to attend a family event, they can essentially "be there" by joining the livestream. In traditional memoir, we read about the family event that the author lived through. However, social media allows us to see the moment and feel the joy and hear the laughter that the author felt being surrounded by family and friends. With traditional memoir, we are not able to click on a link to the album that says, "Ashley and Mark's Wedding," for example, and scroll through pictures from that day. Instead, we must envision what the wedding looked like based on the description that the author provided in the text. Social media gives us a more accurate representation of the wedding day, for example, than a traditional memoir can provide. The social media platform Facebook provides us with visuals that traditional memoirs do not, and this enhances the memoir. Arthur argues that, "Even those people who do not live second or alternate lives online are finding that their lives gain new dimensions and take on a new complexity because of the growing interrelationship between humans with technologies that augment our abilities" (Arthur 77). The writer's life stories take on new dimensions and have more depth when we can also see pictures and videos that depict their lived experiences. Instead of constructing in our own heads what the writer discussed in the memoir, we can go online and see for

ourselves. This does allow for the writers' lives to take on a new complexity because they are able to share their lives through visual and textual representations.

PERSONAL AGENCY AND FEAR OF MISSING OUT

Facebook causes us to lose sense of our personal agency because it allows us to share pictures of our lived experiences and tag our friends in the pictures without notifying them beforehand, unless we change our Facebook settings. Individual agency is when a person acts on his/her own behalf. In "Introduction: Digital Dialogues," Poletti and Rak raise the question, "Where does agency begin and end?" and argue that, "As more and more people use electronic banking, engage in online commercial transactions, and communicate with each other online, the idea of identity as property as well as one's essence is put under increasing pressure" (Poletti and Rak 9). When someone takes a picture that we are in, tags us in the picture, and post it to their timeline without Facebook notifying us before it is posted, someone else is acting on our behalf. Sometimes we do not want a picture posted or we do not want to be tagged in the picture because it could potentially be of something that would be deemed inappropriate by a potential boss. It could also be a picture that we personally did not think that we look flattering in, so we do not feel comfortable having the picture on the internet for people we are not "friends" with on Facebook to see. Facebook gives another person the power to post pictures of us that we would not normally have posted ourselves. We are no longer in control of what people on the internet can find of us or about us because of social networking sites, such as Facebook. We used to think that we were responsible for the sharing of our thoughts and experiences, but it is no longer in our hands. Now, not only are we responsible for oversharing different facets of our lives because of the thrill we find in social media, but people we are "friends" with on these social media platforms are equally responsible for oversharing our lives.

Fear of missing out is a direct result of addiction to social media platforms, such as Facebook, because social media is about seeing what other people are doing and feeling compelled to compare our lives and experiences with the people that we are "friends" with on Facebook. In the article "Fear of missing out: prevalence, dynamics, and consequences of experiencing FOMO," it states that, "The popular media has suggested that FOMO is likely amplified by the proliferation of social media, making it easier than ever to be aware of experiences on which one is missing out" (Milyavskaya, Saffran, Hope, Koestner 726). Before social media platforms existed, we were unaware of when people we knew were together and what they were doing. Now, the minute we log on to our social media platforms we can see anything that our "friends" on Facebook are doing. Cover states in "Becoming and Belonging" that, "The desire for existence is the desire for categorization and coherence, the desire "to be" ("this" or "that" in an intelligible and socially recognizable way)" (Cover 61). When we see our friends on Facebook doing something exciting and adventurous, it makes us feel a desire to want to do more exciting and adventurous things. We begin to lose ourselves when we become so focused on wanting to be a part of what everyone else is doing on Facebook. We develop feelings of inferiority when we see our close friends on Facebook posting pictures of when they were together and did something exciting that we were not invited to. In the same way, when we see our friends post pictures somewhere that we were invited to but could not go because we had prior commitments, we experience the fear of missing out. There are also the social media users that purposefully post pictures or tag friends in their status updates so that the others that were not invited to the gathering know that they were hanging out without them. These feelings of inferiority and missing out could all be avoided if we were not always so eager to post pictures from our daily lives on the internet. Sometimes we post so much on our social media platforms, such as Facebook, that it appears that we do more in our lives than we do.

When we become so focused on posting about the moments in our lives that bring us joy and gratitude, we lose oneself unintentionally. We lose oneself unintentionally because we do not realize that we are only posting the moments in our lives that bring us joy and gratitude and we refrain from posting the moments that bring us sorrow and grief. However, these are the moments that teach us how we handle ourselves and our emotions. They play an equal role in the forming of our self-identity. And when we refrain from expressing these feelings on social networking sites, such as Facebook, a part of our

identity is missing. In "Digital Biography: Capturing Lives Online," Arthur argues that: "A crucial difference between traditional biographies- including film and television- and people's lives represented in the online "space" is that online identities are easily manipulated at any time by the individual subject or by others. There is no doubt that even this single feature, the ability to "manage" online content at will, is changing the way we see ourselves and others" (Arthur 76). We manipulate our own online identity when we leave out parts of our lives on Facebook. If we only post about the things that made us feel happy or accomplished, then the people we are "friends" with on Facebook or the people we have used Facebook to reconnect with are not getting to know the full versions of ourselves. Furthermore, when we manipulate our online identities by only posting pictures and making statuses about the good in our lives, it changes the way that people we know away from the screen see us. They might think that we are "putting on a show" on Facebook in order to hide the fact that our lives are far from perfect beyond the screen. We might unintentionally lose the respect of these people that we were friends with before social media dominated our culture because it might appear that we are downplaying the upsets that we have faced in our lives.

Social networking sites such as Facebook help people to form unrealistic expectations of various experiences and places. Today when people are looking for a new restaurant to try, they will often go somewhere that they have seen either their friends post pictures of on their social media platforms or an advertisement for a place they found on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. One place that attracted customers because of the mass amounts of people that have taken to social media to post about their experience is "Black Tap" in New York City. "Black Tap" serves confectionary, candy-topped milkshakes. It is common for people who go to "Black Tap" to post a picture of their confectionary milkshake on their snapchat story and then ask their friends they are dining with to take a picture of them posing with their milkshake. This is where the phrase, "Phone eats first" came from. Social media has not completely changed our behaviors, but it has altered them. Before social media, when the waiter would bring out our food at a restaurant, we would eat our food right away and not even think about taking out our phone to take a picture of our dinner or dessert. In the past, peoples' pictures in their camera roll were of people, not plates. When one looked back on pictures, they remembered the laughs shared with friends, not whose milkshake looked nicer. Likewise, social networking sites such as Facebook give an unrealistic expectation of the experience that we will have at places such as "Black Tap." For example, often people wait hours in line to get a table at "Black Tap," sometimes the milkshake that they saw pictures in their friend's profile picture on Facebook isn't available on the day that they go to the restaurant, the milkshake they order will not look exactly like it looked online, or it will not satisfy their taste buds in the way they anticipated. When we become so focused on ordering the exact milkshake, for example, that we saw on our friends' social media accounts and taking an "instaworthy" picture with it, we give all our attention to something other than ourselves. Then, the question arises, "Do we want the milkshake because it looks like a sweet treat or do, we want the milkshake because of the attention people are getting from going to places such as "Black Tap?" Prior to social media platforms, people gave their attention to the people they were with at the restaurant, not the pictures they were taking of their meal.

When we become so focused on posting to our social media accounts, we lose oneself and begin to stop living in the moment. People forgetting to live in the moment has become a trend in society because of social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. In "Introduction: *Digital Dialogues*," Poletti and Rak argue that, "The constant directive to "share" personal information on social media sites such as Facebook or Linked In is an example of a media affordance, which asks for users to create a specific types of identity, one that can be shared" (Poletti and Rak 5). Since Facebook provides so many different opportunities to "share" about our lives that include: posting photos and videos, tagging friends, uploading a live video, checking-in to different places, and updating our statuses, we feel compelled to stop what we are doing and take out our smartphones so that we can share what we are doing. For example, if we are hanging out with our friends and someone says or does something funny, instead of enjoying the moment laughing with our friends, we have to record them so that we can post to our Snapchat story and save the moment in our Snapchat memories. Some people post so often on their social media accounts that

it poses the question, "If I don't post about it, did it even happen?" This is like the modern equivalent of the old philosophical brain teaser, "If a tree falls in a forest and nobody is there to see it, does it make a sound?" James Frey, for example, posted a picture of a pond on October 13, 2019 and captioned it, "The Pond as Autumn comes, as Autumn Comes." Instead of taking the moment to enjoy and revel in the fall foliage, Frey felt the need to log onto his Facebook account and post the picture of the pond. The question then arises, "Are things becoming more about capturing moments than sharing 'what's on your mind' as Facebook asks us to do?" Because technology is such a big part of someone's life today, it is a lot easier for one to leave the present moment.

In the age of overexposure, there is certainly an appeal of going offline because of the impact that social networking sites have on society. Social media users of all ages are guilty of mindlessly scrolling and stalking accounts that they follow, such as Instagram, or people that they are friends with on Facebook. People today are essentially "glued" to their smartphones and they start to lose themselves when they become so focused on going through endless posts on Facebook just because they are there. In Arthur's "Digital Biography: Capturing Lives Online," he quotes Yager when he says, "They can also offer up information about a location- they "see" things that humans can never see. These phones have become "our most trusted associates," but they also become our enemies: "The trust we invest in our mobile phones," writes one commentator, "makes them utterly convincing witnesses against us" (Arthur 77). Our smartphones act as our worst enemies become people are reliant on them as a tool for them to post on their Facebook accounts. Aside from the messenger feature on Facebook acting as a conversational tool, Facebook is a branding device where people put a massive amount of thought into what they publish and try to cultivate the "best versions of themselves" for their audience. Our obsession with our phones and using the social media apps that our phones allow us to download reflects the value society today places on image. An enemy is defined as a thing that harms or weakens something else. Facebook harms or weakens the user's self-worth because today's generation has been conditioned to base their self-worth off the amount of "likes" one gets on a post they make on Facebook or a picture they add to their Facebook album. In the past, one used to only be able to like a post or picture on Facebook. Today, the options have changed to: "like," "love," "haha," "wow," "sad," and "angry." If a person makes a post or uploads a picture to Facebook of something, they are very proud of and one of their closest friends uses the "like" feature instead of the "love" feature, they are likely to overthink why they chose one feature over the other. These tendencies to overthink our friends' reactions to our Facebook posts are damaging to our self-worth and are a direct result of our trust in our smartphones.

OVEREXPOSURE

The social media domain, Facebook, draws people in because of the features that allow one to share even their most intimate selves with their friends on Facebook. Facebook works to our advantage because it gives us the opportunity to reconnect with old friends, keep our family and friends updated on our lives by posting in our albums, and reflecting on our accomplishments with the "Year in Review" feature. But when we think about the number of things that we are guilty of sharing on our Facebook accounts, it becomes obvious that we are in fact living in the "age of overexposure." There are people that post on their Facebook accounts when they are going to the bathroom, when they have a doctor's appointment, etc. These are events in a person's life that do not concern their friends on Facebook; however, Facebook has conditioned us to scroll through our Facebook friends' feeds mindlessly. Other social media users post meaningful events and accomplishments on their Facebook accounts. But when people who are facing more challenges in their lives than successes see these posts as they scroll through their Facebook feeds, they feel compelled to compare the challenges they are facing to the successes of their friends on Facebook. This is when we lose ourselves because we become so focused on comparing ourselves to other people on Facebook that we lose sight of what is important in our own lives. Facebook users also lose themselves when they post the different facets of their lives that they once kept private to their timelines for their friends on Facebook to see. The focus on the picture one posted or the update they made to their status, not the moment they captured in the picture or the experience they are reminiscing on in the status update. The social media user loses themselves when they become so caught up in the idea of how many likes or

comments their picture or status update will get that they forget why they updated their status or took the picture in the first place. While Facebook provides an accessible and powerful environment for reconnecting with old friends and keep up with our family and friends' lives, it is damaging because it results in users losing themselves when they overshare and feeling the urge to compare their lives to one another.

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Arthur, Paul. "Digital Biography: Capturing Lives Online." *Auto/Biography Studies*. 2009. Vol 24, No. 1. pp. 74-92. The Autobiography Society. https://ezproxy.tcnj.edu:2185/article/394172

>   This article is from a journal and the article claims that there is a crucial difference between traditional biographies- including film and television- and people's lives represented in the online "space" is that online identities are easily manipulated at any time by the individual subject or by others. The article also claims that there is no doubt that even this single feature, the ability to "manage" online content at will, is changing the way we see ourselves and each other. I will quote the article to demonstrate that when we take selfies of ourselves and add filers or use editing apps to get rid of blemishes, we are manipulating our identity. This is also true for others as well. When other people add filters and edit their pictures, they are manipulating the way we see them.

Calzati, Stefano. Simanowski, Roberto. "Self-Narratives on Social Networks: Trans-Platform Stories and Facebook's Metamorphosis into a Postmodern Semiautomated Repository." *Biography*. 2018. Vol 41, No. 1. pp. 24-47. University of Hawai'i Press. https://ezproxy.tcnj.edu:2185/article/690277

>   This article is from a journal and the article tells about a research study that was designed in order to explore how processes of self-representation are affected by the infrastructure of SNS platforms (Face-book in particular), and to compare offline and online autobiographical practices to assess differences and similarities in identity-construction practices between the two realms. Theresa Sauter argues that SNS platforms, "provide a means for people to subject themselves to a public gaze and make their self-forming activities visible to others." I will quote from this article to demonstrate that when we make our self-forming activities visible to others, we are creating room for comparison because our "friends" on Facebook are likely to do the same.

Cover, Rob. "Becoming and Belonging." *Identity Technologies: Constructing the Self Online,* edited by Anna Poletti and Julie Rak. Madison, Wisconsin. The University of Wisconsin Press. 2014.

>   This chapter from *Identity Technologies: Constructing the Self Online* that discusses the performativity, subjectivity, and the cultural purposes of social networking. The chapter says that social networking sites have been taken up and become popular as an efficient, effective yet also problematic site for the performance of coherent, intelligible, and recognizable identities and subjectivities. Cover argues that, "The desire for existence is the desire for categorization and coherence, the desire "to be" ("this" or "that" in an intelligible and socially recognizable way). I quote this chapter to demonstrate when we see our "Friends" on Facebook doing something exciting and adventurous, it makes us feel a desire to want to do more exciting and adventurous things.

McNeil, Laurie. Zuern, John. "Online Lives 2.0: Introduction." *Biography*. 2015. Vol 38, No. 2. pp. 48-65. University of Hawai'i Press. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/42417

>   This article is from a journal and the article claims that there is an atmosphere of uncertainty and vulnerability that is transforming not only our relationships with other people, but also our experience of our own identities, and consequently, our practices of self-representation. I will use this argument to set up my suggestion that we lose ourselves in sharing ourselves. By exposing different facets of our lives to the public through social media domains, we are subjecting

ourselves to the uncertainty of how the public will react or if they will react at all. The article also claims that social media has emptied everything, even death, of meaning and gravitas. I will use this idea to demonstrate that when we amplify the information we share on social media sites, increase the amount of information or the intensity of the information being shared, we are losing the information's importance.

Miller, Daniel. "The Social Media Landscape." *Social Media in an English Village*. 2016. 1ˢᵗ ed. Vol 2. 19-44. UCL Press, London. www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1g69xs1.6.

This is a chapter from a book and the chapter claims that once we turn to social media, the discussions make it seem as though communication is suddenly all about platforms, about Twitter or Instagram. The chapter also claims that the implication would be that platforms replace conversational genres as the foundations of communication. I will quote this chapter to demonstrate that when we advertise our lives to the public through various social media networks, we lose the genuine conversations that generate away from the screen.

Milyavskaya, Marina. Saffran, Mark. Hope, Nora. Koestner, "Fear of missing out: prevalence, dynamics, and consequences of experiencing FOMO." *Motivation and Emotion*. 2018. Vol. 42, No. 5. pp. 725-737. http://ezproxy.tcnj.edu:2277/ehost/detail/detail?vid=2&sid=96af11e9-2fbc-4b56-981b-d0375e2ad295%40sessionmgr4007&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=131498228&db=aph

This article is from a journal and the article focuses on two different experimental studies. In the first study, an experience sampling was used to assess FOMO experiences among college freshmen. The second study investigated FOMO on a conceptual level, distinguishing FOMO from general self-regulation and exploring its links with social media. In the article it says that, "The popular media has suggested that FOMO is likely amplified by the proliferation of social media, making it easier than ever to be aware of experiences on which one is missing out." I will use this quote from the article to demonstrate that fear of missing out is a direct result of addiction to social media platforms, such as Facebook, because social media is about seeing what other people are doing and feeling compelled to compare our lives and experiences with the people that we are "friends" with on Facebook.

Morrison, Animee. "Facebook and Coaxed Affordances." *Identity Technologies: Constructing the Self Online*, edited by Anna Poletti and Julie Rak. Madison, Wisconsin. The University of Wisconsin Press. 2014.

This chapter from *Identity Technologies: Constructing the Self Online* defines affordance as a concept that was first articulated in ecological psychology, then moved through industrial design, and into human-computer interaction, usability, and user-experience design for digital environments. "Affordance" describes the set of possibilities for action an environment presents to its users. All these actions are abstract and arbitrary compared to the real, physical manipulation of objects. I will use this chapter to discuss how the technological self is abstract and arbitrary compared to the person we are away from the screen. I will also use this chapter to discuss how we are conditioned by social norms on what to post on our social media pages and what not to post on our social media pages.

Poletti, Anna. Rak, Julie "Introduction: Digital Dialogues." *Identity Technologies: Constructing the Self Online,* edited by Anna Poletti and Julie Rak. Madison, Wisconsin. The University of Wisconsin Press. 2014.

This chapter from *Identity Technologies: Constructing the Self Online* looks at what some of the connections between narrative and identity have been as well as what are some alternate ways that fit better with what digital media and identity production are about. The chapter claims that

Locke's belief that identity is in fact personal property (because it can be stolen) *as* it challenges other ideas from Locke and later from psychoanalysis about identity as a process of self-incorporation. The chapter also poses the question, "Where does personal agency being and end?" I will quote from this chapter to demonstrate that when someone takes a picture that we are in, tags us in the picture, and post it to their timeline without Facebook notifying us before it is posted, someone else is acting on our behalf.