

Young People and New Media: A Grounded Model for Connecting Communication Channels and Social Ties in Social Media Engagement

Table 1: Interactions in SNS (Social Networking Sites)

Interaction with Other - Voice and Textual Engagement			Interaction with Other - Social Ties	
HI Co-presence & Immediacy			AF Affiliations Type	
Private -1 to 1/few Public/Ntwk - 1 to all			AF-C	SNS & Non-SNS strong ties
HIGH Level of Priority LOW	OF	OF-Fam/Fri	Talking/sharing w/Family/Friend	
		OF-Phone	Landline phone	
	CL	Cellular Engagement Off-line		
		CL-Vc	voice	
		CL-Tx	text	
	Vid	Vid-Ch	chat video/conf.	
	TX	Textual Engagement (UGC) On-line Messages		
		TX-Ch	IM/chat	
		TX-DM	direct mess	
		TX-Cm		post comment to other
		TX-Cm-Wal		post FB Wall (status)
		TX-Ry		reply to comments
		TX-Tg		tag photos
		TX-Lk		"like" (fb)
		TX-Pk		poke (fb)
		TX-Sta		provide status update
		TX-Grp		group (fb)
		TX-Rel		relatshps (fb)
		TX-App		apps (fb)
		TX-Shr		"share" news/info (fb)
	TX-Gi		gift (fb apps)	
	TX-EM	e-mail		
	TX-Doc	attachents, etc.		
				AF-P SNS weak ties
				school peers
				extra-curricular
				neighborhood
				extended adult family
				others in age group
				consequential strangers
				AF-W Non-SNS weak ties
				teachers, coaches, bosses, strgrs
				ident. conf./security
LOW Co-presence & Immediacy				

The model represents a strategy by the study subjects to overcome how, "social media treats all users the same: trusted friend or total stranger, with little or nothing in between" (Gilbert and Karahalios, 2009, p. 1). Study participants manipulated the affordances and limitations of each SNS technology to compensate for the relatively limited ability to differentiate based on social ties.

This model brings together several theories for understanding "socialiable" media engagement:

Social presence (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976), examines how different levels of social cues impact communication during synchronous interactions. Focus is on the emotional phenomenon of social perception, but not the medium itself.

Media richness (R.L. Daft & Lengel, 1984), focused directly on a medium and its richness, which is defined by its information carrying capacity. Primarily asynchronous communication channels compared rich and lean media for their task solving abilities. Note the similarity of Daft & Lengel's chart below and the model.

Social ties theory (Granovetter, 1973), defines social relationships between individuals and within organizations. Assumes that all relationships are social, but not created equal. Strong ties are trusted friends and close family members. Weak ties are loose acquaintances, which are still important and valuable because they often provide access to novel and creative information and ideas. A useful lens for understanding online social interactions and basis for model.

Co-presence (Zhao & Elesh, 2008) represents the sense of being with someone. The critical dimension for positive interactions in mediated communication environments is immediacy and intimacy, rather than the mere sense of being present at a particular place and time.

A relationship is identified between the relative **co-presence** of interpersonal communication channels and the **social ties** between participants in a social interaction. This relationship represents a significant structuring influence on communication practices of youth in networked publics.

The 2010 Study:

- Activity-based pilot study of American teens (13-17 years of age.)
- Auto-ethnographic reports of a panel of 11 teen respondents.
- Each had a laptop for one week that recorded oral reports and on-screen activities (using Morae by TechSmith.)
- Qualitative grounded approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to examine how teen respondents developed and maintained strategies for social participation in new media spaces.
- Protocol analysis methodology (Ericsson & Simon, 1993) to "verbalize their thoughts in a manner that does not alter the sequence and content of thoughts mediating the completion of a task and therefore should reflect immediately available information during thinking" (Ericsson, 2006, p. 227).
- Experience sampling method (ESM) to document human behaviors, thoughts, or feelings as they occur in real-time (Larson and Csikszentmihalyi, 1983).

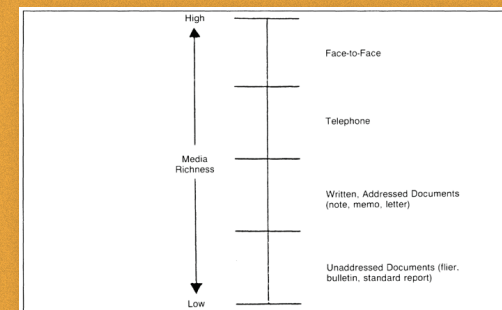


Figure 1: Hierarchy of Media Richness

Daft, Lengel, and Trevino (1987)

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