CHAPTER 15

CONTEXTUALIZING STUDENTS' MEDIA IDEOLOGIES AND PRACTICES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN A WRITING CLASS

Michael J. Faris
Texas Tech University

Writing scholars have increasingly encouraged teachers to incorporate social media in writing courses, situating social media as important sites of rhetorical action and literacy (Buck, 2012; Daer & Potts, 2014; Maranto & Barton, 2010; Vie, 2008). While calls for using social media in writing classes have become numerous, there have been relatively few empirical studies of actual practices in writing classes, and most scholarship has been anecdotal (as Lilian W. Mina also observes elsewhere in this collection). How do students engage with social media? What understandings do they bring to writing classes? How do their educational practices with social media mesh and conflict with their personal practices with these sites? How do students understand and engage with social media in pedagogical settings? This chapter explores these questions by sharing the results of an IRB-approved empirical study of students' literacy practices and understandings of those practices (Gershon, 2010) in a 2013 upper-division class on social media at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire.[1]

I want to start by suggesting that we know very little about our students' actual practices and understandings of social media, despite growing bodies of scholarship that explore teenagers' and young adults' social media practices in rich detail (see, for example, boyd, 2014; Buck, 2012; Gershon, 2010; Ito et al., 2010; Pigg et al., 2014; Mina, this volume). A reason for this gap in understanding is the overgeneralizations many teachers and scholars make about "our students" (and, of course, students make these generalizations as well). These generalizations ignore the specific and situated practices and understandings of new media that students bring to pedagogical settings.

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[1]   This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire, protocol #FARISMJ13232013. Students' names in this chapter are pseudonyms.

Popular narratives about young adults and new media do little to contextualize student practices. For instance, the "digital natives" narrative, popularized by Marc Prensky (2001), held that young adults are "all 'native speakers' of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet" (p. 1). This narrative has been critiqued as one unsupported by empirical research that lumps together a whole generation while ignoring differences among youth, especially socioeconomic class, race, and access to technologies (Hargittai, 2010; Jones, 2011). Additionally, students' potential comfort with social media does not necessarily translate into critical engagement with those sites (Daer & Potts, 2014; Vie, 2008). We still have little understanding of students' practices and understandings of new media sites in particular contexts and situations. Teachers often rely on narratives about an entire generation, which can occlude the actual practices and understandings of social media by students at particular institutions and in specific classes.

These generational narratives are frequently reproduced in the halls of our buildings and in conversations among teachers. For example, in 2013, various news services reported on Daniel Miller's ethnographic research in a village north of London, generalizing from his research to claim that young adults were fleeing Facebook because adults (especially parents) were joining the site, which was deemed "dead and buried" (see for example Tate, 2013). The media coverage of his research prompted Miller (2013) to respond in a blog post, stressing that his research was applicable only to his ethnographic site in Britain. Other findings by the Pew Research Internet Center that teenagers "have waning enthusiasm" for Facebook and more teens were using Twitter (Madden et al., 2013) gained similar traction in mass media, leading lead researcher Mary Madden (2013) to later clarify that they didn't find that teens were leaving Facebook, but were rather diversifying their social media usage. But mass media didn't report on Madden's or Miller's clarifications, and continued to report sensationally rather than with nuance. In the halls of my institution at the time (and elsewhere I'm sure), casual conversations among teachers revolved around how students were leaving Facebook because it was uncool and flocking to Twitter.

Narratives that draw on the "digital natives" trope or claims that youth are fleeing Facebook for Twitter can lead teachers to make unwarranted assumptions about our own students' literacy practices and ideologies. It is important, I contend, for writing teachers to attend to the situated practices and understandings of social media that our students are bringing to writing classes. Because the goal of writing teachers is to help students make choices as writers and rhetors, writing teachers are well positioned to address questions about social media literacies and to teach new literacy practices in emerging digital environments (Wysocki, 2004). As literacy scholars have long argued, literacy is not a matter of mastering a single set of skills; rather, literacy activities are social, multiple, and situated in particular

contexts (Street, 1995). I follow Cynthia L. Selfe (1999) and others in the field in understanding literacies as "a complex set of socially and culturally situated values, practices, and skills involved in operating linguistically within the context of electronic environments, including reading, writing, and communicating" (p. 11; see also Lankshear & Knobel, 2008; Selber, 2004). The ecological turn in rhetoric and writing studies has encouraged us to attend to not just how individuals create texts, but how people engage in media ecologies—especially technologically rich environments (Brooke, 2009; Buck, 2012; Dobrin & Weisser, 2002). In *Lingua Fracta*, Collin Gifford Brooke (2009) argued that scholars and teachers should attend to interfaces, exploring "ecologies of practice" rather than the production of stabilized texts (p. 6). However, digital interfaces are not the same for everybody, as they are dynamic and constantly changing. As Brooke argued, because of the dynamics of new media (like frequent updates on blog posts, dynamic and constantly updating Twitter streams and Facebook newsfeeds, and continuously updated wikis), there is an "absence of shared experience" in new media environments (p. 11). Further, users bring different experiences to interfaces, and thus, Brooke advocated a perspective of looking from, attending to how users approach interfaces differently at different moments, influenced by their experiences, familiarity, purposes—a perspective that encourages us to attend to the dynamic relationships between actors and changing interfaces (pp. 133, 140). Or, as Sidney Dobrin and Christian Weisser (2002) explained, "writers enter into particular environments with a certain ideological code and then contend with their environments as best these codes allow" (p. 576).

While literacy and writing scholars are accustomed to discussing differing literacy practices and ideologies, I draw from communication scholar Ilana Gershon's (2010) discussion of media ideologies and idioms of practice to assist in understanding how students in my study brought with them differing understandings of social media environments and differing understandings of practices. These analytic concepts, I suggest, are useful for writing teachers and literacy scholars to explore how students approach, use, and understand new media. In her discussion of how young adults end relationships via technology, Gershon (2010) defined media ideologies as "a set of beliefs about communicative technologies with which users and designers explain perceived media structures and meaning" (p. 3). In other words, beliefs about a medium influence and shape how people use that medium, and those beliefs are shaped by how they understand other media that they view as similar or different. Gershon explained that idioms of practice are those shared practices that users of media develop over time through shared experiences and conversations (p. 6). These concepts are helpful in understanding why people approach new media with different expectations and engage in different practices. Because social media are new

and changing, users develop a variety of media ideologies and idioms of practice for particular sites, often leading to conflicting understandings and practices in those sites. Gershon's discussion of defriending others on Facebook is instructive here. Because of differing idioms of practice, Facebook users have different notions of what it means to defriend someone on Facebook. Some of her participants saw this action as casual, going through "regular bouts of defriending," while others saw this action as "an excessive act of hostility" (p. 42). Because our idioms of practice are developed over time, through shared experiences and discussions about new media, they lead to different understandings and practices on new media sites. These practices are informed by media ideologies—what media we compare new media to and how casual or formal we see the media.

If we are to effectively teach social media literacies, we need to understand our particular students' media ideologies and idioms of practice—that is, what social media practices they are bringing to class, how those practices were shaped and formed, and how they understand social media as sites of social activity. I am not advocating that we understand these practices and ideologies in order to correct them: The goal of teaching social media literacies is not mastery of a set of skills, but gaining practice in a variety literacy activities and perspective on those practices (Daer & Potts, 2014).

This chapter argues, in part, that writing teachers need to attend to the particular media ideologies and idioms of practice of their students. With this study, I provide an example of an approach to understanding students' practices and ideologies. Before explaining the study in depth, I first start with a discussion of privacy ethics relating to teaching with social media and researching student literacy practices on social media. I then explain the context of the course and this study's methods in the following sections. In the discussion section, I explore themes that arose from the study relating to the issue of students' prior social media activities before the class, their understanding of new sites through these prior experiences, their perceptions of interacting with classmates and teachers online, and challenges of integrating school-based social media practices into their work habits and privacy practices. I close this chapter with implications related to these interrelated themes for understanding students' practices with social media and their own perceptions of those practices in localized contexts. I present these implications in the forms of questions that teachers need to ask in relation to students' idioms of practice and media ideologies.

DIGITAL PRIVACY: A FEW NOTES ON TEACHING AND RESEARCH ETHICS

Before turning to a discussion of this study specifically, a note on ethics regard-

ing privacy is warranted. As writing teachers require students to use social media sites, and as teacher-researchers explore student literacies in these sites, we must confront the changing landscape of privacy in digital environments. I cannot do justice to every aspect of privacy and ethics in this chapter, but I do want to raise a few issues regarding student privacy, first regarding how I introduced issues of privacy in the course I am discussing, and then regarding research ethics. Writing for the Web has numerous affordances, including increased permanence and access—two affordances that we need to take into account as teachers and researchers.

At the start of the term, before students set up accounts on social media sites, I have conversations with them about issues of privacy and access. These conversations revolve around informational privacy, accessibility privacy, and expressive privacy (DeCew, 1997). We discuss how privacy is a matter of managing access to information and access to the self, as well as having spaces in which to express oneself and develop an identity. Importantly, privacy concerns are social (related to their social relationships with others), economic (related to companies having access to information), and legal (related to educational laws like the Federal Rights and Privacy Act [FERPA]). Students and I have conversations around a variety of related issues: whether to use their name or be pseudonymous on a site, whether to create a dummy email account to manage their required social media accounts, whether to use already existing accounts for coursework or whether to create new accounts, whether to use a profile picture with their likeness or not, and more. Each of these questions has multiple implications. Some students are not that concerned. Others want to separate their social activity on a site like Twitter from their educational activity. Some students do not want information posted under their name, which will then be accessible later after college when they are searching for jobs. I also want to respect their expressive privacy, and so do not follow them on Twitter, but rather ask that they use a course hashtag if they want their classmates and me to see their tweets. I also provide a brief statement on my syllabus:

> Because we will be using non-university services (Yammer, Diigo, Twitter, and possibly others), you will need to create accounts for these sites. You may use already created accounts (if you have them), but you are also welcome to create new accounts. I encourage you to consider creating pseudonymous usernames for some of these accounts in order to explore them with less risk (and perhaps even using a dummy email account). I legally cannot (and ethically will not) require you to use your real name, with the exception of Yammer, which is a private network and requires your UWEC email address.

This last statement is important: While interpretations of FERPA vary from institution to institution, it is generally understood that teachers cannot reveal records about students. My interpretation of FERPA is that teachers can require students to share their work online, but should not require students to publicly attach their name to a course. Thus, I often require students to engage in publicly shared work (e-portfolios, blogs, tweets, and so forth), but I do not require them to use their real name if that work is attached to a course. In the case of using Diigo in this class, for instance, students belonged to a publicly accessible group, where others could see membership. Thinking through—and discussing with students—the social and legal implications of their profiles and activities is crucial not only for students' safety and legal protection, but also to help our students make informed decisions about their online presences.

Another aspect of privacy is that information companies are collecting more and more data about users, and using that information, through aggregation, to analyze populations. (Estee Beck's chapter in this collection explores the use of individual, prosumer labor to create massive amounts of data that is then used to surveil users.) Indeed, Google's and Facebook's ad revenue relies on this information. While responses to this development over the last few decades have ranged from the libertarian (let Google do what it wants!) to the paranoid (Google is Big Brother!), I think it's important to present information to students and help them make decisions. For example, are they concerned, and should they log off of Google, Twitter, or Facebook when they're not using it? Also, as teachers, we should be concerned about requiring accounts not affiliated with our institutions—we are, in effect, compelling students to provide data to private corporations. And our institutional software—like learning management systems—is designed to protect student information. Because of this dynamic, I believe we need to have thoroughly developed pedagogical rationales for requiring accounts on services. What opportunities for practicing and exploring literacies do they provide that wouldn't be provided by using institutional software? (If a sole goal is to have a threaded discussion, then why not use Blackboard, even with its less-than-ideal interface, rather than require students to use Facebook?)

Further, there are privacy implications for teacher-researchers as well. Twitter keeps archives of users' tweets, and even though Twitter makes it difficult to find older tweets through its interface, Google's search algorithm makes it easy to find tweets through searching for quotations. Changes in accessibility and permanence made possible by the Web affect the ethics of how we name and quote research participants (McIntire-Stasburg, 2007; McKee & Porter, 2009). Quoting or referencing text from the Web can draw attention to that text, and though texts (like students' tweets) may be publicly accessible in one way, writers may view them as private, or contextually private—that is, public in that it's

accessible, but understood in context as private communication (Nissenbaum, 2010). For these reasons, while I quote from my students' video logs, and occasionally from other materials that are not accessible online, I do not quote students' tweets so as to protect their anonymity. While my students certainly understood their tweets as public, they also understood Twitter "as a place where people gather to share conversations" rather than a space of published material (McKee & Porter, 2009, p. 81).

PROJECT BACKGROUND: THE CONTEXT OF THE COURSE

In spring 2013, I designed a "Topics in Popular Culture" course as "Social Media and Society" to explore changing literacy practices in social media environments. Twenty-four students initially enrolled in the course, twenty of whom participated in this research study. Students came from a variety of liberal arts disciplines and included eleven white women, eight white men, and one African American man, all traditionally college-aged (between ages 18 and 24).

The goals of the course included gaining practice with social media, recognizing the affordances of digital media, articulating theories and arguments about digital literacy, and analyzing arguments and practices about and in social media environments. In addition to readings, course assignments included reading responses; video logs reflecting on their experiences using social media; a print or multimedia literacy narrative exploring experiences writing with digital media; a presentation introducing a social media site to the class; a final project that built off a literature review and took the format of a variety of deliverables; and, of course, engagement in social media for the class.

As I designed this course and study, I wanted to select social media environments for the class that would introduce students to a wide array of practices and experiences and would provide opportunities to discuss differences in site architecture, user experiences, and practices. I required that students use three social media sites:

1. *Twitter*, a micro-blogging platform in which users send missives of 140 characters or less, and can follow and respond to other users. Students used a course hashtag (#engl372) to follow each other's tweets. I selected Twitter because, after Facebook, it is probably the most well-known social media site, and thus students could draw on their own familiarity of the site (either first-hand, second-hand, or from cultural narratives and mass media). As Stephanie Vie (2008) has suggested, writing teachers should incorporate social media sites that students likely have some familiarity with, but probably do not use or think through critically. Additionally, because Twitter is by default public, and because its user base is so large,

it provides ample opportunities to witness it in use for many different (and at times conflicting) purposes. As a public forum, Twitter also served as useful terrain for exploring conflicting notions of the public/private distinction and different conventions for practicing privacy and publicity.

2. *Yammer*, a social networking site limited to those within a network (a business or school). I created a private group within our university's Yammer network for students to share resources and hold online conversations. Yammer provided a different type of environment to explore digital sociality and literacy than Twitter: Akin to Facebook, only limited to other members of the university network, Yammer allowed students to explore how conversations in one medium (a site like Facebook or Yammer) are different than one like Twitter. In this way, I viewed Yammer as a site that could help explore some of the implications of Facebook and similar social networking sites.

3. *Diigo*, a social bookmarking site that allows users to save and share bookmarks online. Students saved resources to our shared group and tagged those bookmarks with relevant labels. Diigo serves a different purpose than Yammer or Twitter, both of which are focused more on the immediate present. Diigo, as a curation and bookmarking site, focuses on creating searchable archives, and thus has a more "past-based" focus (what have I read in the past, rather than what I am reading and sharing now). In using Diigo and asking students to share resources with each other, my intent was, in part, to draw on the affordances of new media to explore notions of collaboration, curation, and folksonomies (Rice, 2008) with students.

Students and I collaborated on an assignment sheet to develop minimum requirements during an eight-week period in the term, including having profiles (that did not have to include one's likeness or identifying characteristics), saving relevant resources to Diigo, contributing to conversations weekly on Yammer, and tweeting regularly. Some tweets were responses to required prompts, and other tweets were up to students to decide how they wanted to contribute. Students were to experiment and explore a variety of styles of tweets, and we explored the implications of divergent and diverse practices as a class. My aim was that students would develop an assortment of uses for these sites, and ultimately see and recognize a wide array of practices.

METHOD

I designed a mixed-methods research study of students' activities and perceptions in order to employ a "rhetorical methodology" (Sullivan & Porter, 1997, p.

9) that triangulates data and methods through multiple sources (DePew, 2007). To provide a robust picture of students' idioms of practice and media ideologies, I gathered data through several methods: 1) an automated archive of tweets using the course hashtag; 2) analysis of students' Yammer posts; 3) students' reflective video logs; 4) an initial survey about students' practices; 5) students' writing projects; and 6) my own observations and notes about the class.[1]

While this study draws on all of these data points, I draw from their video logs most frequently in this chapter. Students posted three- to six-minute videos to our class' private YouTube account five times throughout the term, responding to a series of questions about their perceptions and experiences with social media. Questions asked students to explain and reflect on their experiences using social media, what they learned, what challenges they encountered, what their practices were like, and how they understood the sites we were using. These video logs were downloaded and transcribed, and the transcripts were coded.

DISCUSSION: FOUR THEMES

This discussion explores four themes relevant to social media and writing pedagogy: 1) students' understanding of social media sites through the lenses of their prior experiences; 2) students' perceptions of encountering and interacting with teachers on social media; 3) students' practices and perceptions of interacting with each other in social media environments; and 4) issues related to integrating school-based and self-sponsored social media literacies, including issues of work habits and privacy. Before discussing these themes, I first describe the prior literacy activities of students in this study. Throughout the discussion of these themes, I highlight how students' decisions on social media sites and their understandings of those sites and their decisions are informed and shaped by their media ideologies and idioms of practice.

STUDENTS' PRIOR LITERACY PRACTICES USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Students' use of social media can vary widely, from limited use of only one site (or none at all) to heavy engagement on many sites for a variety of purposes. On one end of the spectrum was Don, who used only Facebook and no other sites, and explained that social media was "not much for me. I prefer face-to-face interaction." On the other end of the spectrum were Angela and Katherine,

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1   Tweets were archived using Martin Hawksey's Twitter Archiving Google Spreadsheet (TAGS), available at http://mashe.hawksey.info/2013/02/twitter-archive-tagsv5/. Because Twitter's search application programming interface (API) is not fully reliable, the archive does not represent all tweets from students.

whom I discuss more below. While every student in the study mentioned using Facebook, other sites were used less: Eight had Twitter accounts, seven used Instagram, and five had used Tumblr. A few students had used other services, like SnapChat, Google+, Pinterest, Reddit, and Foursquare. But numbers don't give a complete picture: Users turn to these sites for a variety of purposes and in a variety of ways. Russell, for instance, had a Twitter account before class, but had never tweeted and used it mainly to follow news and celebrities. Or Tricia, who had a Pinterest account but didn't consider it social media, because she doesn't engage with other users or "pin" things. She explained, "I just look at all the pictures and waste time." And sometimes students test out a site and realize it is not for them. For example, Justin reported that while he had a Tumblr account, he had posted on it only once.

I draw on Mizuki Ito and her research team's (2010) taxonomy of "genres of participation" to categorize students' prior social media practices. They categorized practices into either friendship-driven practices ("hanging out") or interest-driven practices, those practices where "the interests come first, and [those interests] structure the peer network and friendship" (p. 16). They further categorize interest-driven activities as either "messing around"—activities that mark "the beginning of a more intense engagement with new media" (p. 54)—or "geeking out," "intense commitment or engagement with media or technology" (p. 65). After discussing students' out-of-school practices, I briefly describe their experiences with social media in school.

Hanging out. The most frequently cited reason for using a social media site was keeping in contact with friends and family, especially those who students could not see face-to-face often. Many students were busy and sites like Facebook were effective ways for them to stay in touch with friends they couldn't see often or family members back home. Stacy, for instance, explained that she didn't have time for long phone conversations and Facebook allowed her to chat quickly with her mother and see photos of cousins she couldn't see often.

Messing around. A small group of students also expressed that they used social media for messing around: keeping up with news, following celebrities or sports figures on Twitter, and finding and saving strong examples of sports news stories (for a few of the journalism students). For a few students, networks of affiliation on Tumblr and LiveJournal were important for interest-driven activities. Anica, for example, shared her reviews of books on Goodreads and followed the blogs of authors like Neil Gaiman on the site.

Geeking out. Two students in this study engaged in what Ito et al. (2010) called geeking out. As Ito et al. explained, geeking out doesn't have to be related to interests that are considered "geeky" or to a "geek" identity; instead, it's about expertise, credibility, and intensity in a community of shared interests (p. 66).

Angela had been highly active live-tweeting at professional conferences, where she saw how powerful it could be for networking and having a backchannel for presentations; she was disappointed by her journalism classes where Twitter was used sparingly and had numerous accounts she had started and abandoned. Katherine was the most engaged in interest-driven activities. She explained, "You name it, I've probably tried it." Describing herself as "a little scene kid," Katherine was on Twitter in its early years to interact with her favorite bands, and before that was on MySpace to engage with the music industry. Katherine was the only student in the class to explicitly discuss meeting strangers online through sites like LiveJournal, and she shared her fan-fiction on the website Mibba, where she reported having 516 readers and 57 recommenders.

In sum, students' self-sponsored social media use prior to this course mirrored the activities described by Ito et al. (2010): Hanging out with friends and family was the most frequently cited activity, some students dabbled in messing around, and a few explored the intensity of geeking out.

Compared to their personal lives, their educational experiences involved little engagement with social media. Only four students mentioned using social media in a course before. Angela and Joel had been in a journalism course that required live-tweeting a lecture to practice that style of reporting, but had only done so for one lecture, a requirement of three tweets. Angela also expressed frustration that her teachers who required blogging didn't understand the blogging software, how to assess students' blogs, and how to integrate blogging into the classroom. My students' experiences confirm other educational research: Social media is not thoroughly integrated across the curriculum. A 2013 survey by Pearson Learning Solutions found that while more professors are using social media in their teaching than in the past (41 percent of their respondents), most of those professors are using blogs and wikis and no other social media. Very few seem to be using sites like Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, and consuming social media (like podcasts) is much more common than creating it or commenting on it (Seaman & Tinti-Kane, 2013).

Students' self-sponsored learning activities on social media seemed to be more valuable experiences than teacher-sponsored activities. For example, when they took a series of courses together, the English education students in this class created a Facebook group to support each other. Tricia and Russell both described how the group was more convenient than texting or emailing friends because of the wider network of support and the quicker responses to questions in the group. The Facebook group provided a way to "clear things up" for Russell and provided "instant answers to your questions" for Tricia. Other students expressed that social media was useful for working on projects with classmates because it helped with managing busy and conflicting schedules when meeting

face-to-face was difficult. They had found ways to incorporate social media informally into their educational experiences in ways that helped them successfully manage coursework. In contrast, Joel expressed that "there really wasn't much of an educational use" to live-tweeting a lecture without any follow-up discussion.

THEME 1: COMPARISONS TO PRIOR MEDIA

Students' histories and prior experiences with social media mattered as they used social media in this course in ways that both assisted in and interfered with their understandings and uses of these sites. As a social networking site for educational and work environments, Yammer incorporates features that are similar to Facebook, and students quickly intuited that they should understand Yammer like they do Facebook. For example, Anica understood Yammer as "just an academic Facebook." Students' media ideologies helped students to understand the site's general architecture, as students drew upon useful similarities: profiles, posts that are either available to an entire network or within a private group, threaded comments on posts, and so on.

But these comparisons also led to difficulties during the first few weeks using Yammer. Everyone in the network (school or organization) can view a post on Yammer, in contrast to most users' experiences on Facebook, where a post is shared with only one's friends (unless a user sets their privacy settings more broadly than friends-only). I had created a private Yammer group for the course so that content shared within the group was only accessible to the class. However, the distinction between network and group was difficult for some students to grasp in practice. Early in the term, students often unintentionally shared their posts with the entire network instead of within the course group. For instance, Katherine "wasn't familiar with the interface, so like when I shared my [literacy narrative], I only posted it to my wall and I guess I didn't realize that it was that much like Facebook, and I needed to put it in the group, and that it was possible to share to all of the Eau Claire community. That was a little daunting." Stacy did the same and struggled to figure out how to delete her original post. Some students, like Anica, did not appreciate their profiles being accessible to the entire university network: "If I wanted to be everybody's friend who goes to our school, I would friend everybody on Facebook." Anica chose to make her profile picture one of her cat to protect her privacy.

After I alerted students to the accessibility of their posts, they often took these posts down and reposted them within the private group. However, this happened often enough that a learning technology specialist on campus noticed and emailed me. She encouraged, perhaps even admonished, me to have students post course-related content to the class group, because posts irrelevant to the whole

network could harm the development of the larger community. Additionally, she noted that if students were posting to the entire network, they should have a professional profile picture (in contrast to Anica, who preferred not to).

As Dànielle Nicole DeVoss, Ellen Cushman, and Jeffrey T. Grabill (2005) have argued, institutional infrastructures provide both support and disruptions for digital writing in classes. "Writing within digital spaces," they wrote, "occurs within a matrix of local and more global policies, standards, and practices. These variables often emerge as visible and at times invisible statements about what types of work are possible and valuable" (p. 16). We can see here an instantiation of these variables at play: The values and policies (implicit and explicit) of network administrators were at odds with the values of some of my students (Anica's value of privacy, for instance). Further, a network administrator saw this as an opportunity to "correct" student behavior and to professionalize students who were not ideal users. Indeed, the "when [of infrastructure] is acutely felt when students are seen as potential threats to the networks as opposed to its users" (p. 30). I had a goal different from "correcting" behavior, and used this email conversation as an opportunity to discuss with students differences between policies and practices, and the different conventions of various sites based on discourse communities and purposes. As DeVoss, Cushman, and Grabill noted, policies—shaped by and shapers of ideology—help to define digital writing and shape "who gets to learn it, where, and how" (p. 17).

While this discussion is related to institutional issues around Yammer's network structure and students' comparisons of Yammer to Facebook, it raises issues about social media in general: Students will approach new media through lenses of media that are familiar to them—drawing on their ideologies about media and their prior practices—leading to mistakes, breaches in their own privacy ethics, and perhaps practices that are at odds with the values of other stakeholders (like network administrators). Explaining the architecture of a new site is not sufficient to prevent these issues (though I question whether prevention of mistakes is a primary goal): I had explained how Yammer works numerous times during class.

Transference of media ideologies played out in other sites in the class as well, for better or worse. Students compared and contrasted Twitter to various print and digital media, including Facebook, Tumblr, newspapers, passing notes and holding side conversations in class, letters to the editor, living room conversations, texting, and search engines. These comparisons helped to highlight affordances of Twitter, including filtering news, finding more perspectives on events than the mainstream media provides, sharing one's perspective with a public, and having a backchannel during class. But these comparisons also led to confusion: Tricia, for example, compared favoriting tweets to "liking" Facebook

posts, and wasn't sure what the implications for favoriting were; retweeting further confused her, as she wasn't sure what that meant for representing her own persona.

One upshot of students' struggles with understanding a site's architecture is the importance of using social media in writing classes that allow for students to make mistakes and to learn about the differences in sites. For students who are often afraid of making mistakes, this can lead to anxiety. Tricia, for example, was very concerned about "messing up" on Twitter, worrying that she would "sound like a guy" when she retweeted a funny tweet about a guy discussing his girlfriend, and wondering how others would interpret her favoriting these tweets. If a writing class is a space to experiment, to take risks and make mistakes, and even to make failure a meaningful and worthwhile experience, then it is important to allow space for making mistakes, to encourage taking risks and trying out new things, and to incorporate risk-taking into assessment (Carr, 2013; Reilly & Atkins, 2013).

Additionally, these experiences speak to the importance of teachers having some familiarity with a social media site before assigning it, as Vie (2008) has argued. But it also speaks to the necessity of teaching functional literacies that involve the ability to navigate new spaces and learn how to troubleshoot problems (Selber, 2004). As Stuart Selber (2004) has argued, functional literacies are thoroughly social; for example, part of being functionally literate involves learning the language others use to describe problems and the conventions that communities share on a site. While I thoroughly agree with Vie (2008) that it is important for teachers be familiar with social media, I also believe that it can be useful pedagogically to learn about social media sites along with students and to model problem-solving strategies when new issues arise in class. This practice can make a teachers' own assumptions about a site (and their own expectations drawing from their own media ideologies and idioms of practice) visible, and assist in students' critical reflection on their own assumptions, comparisons between sites, and practices they carry with them.

Theme 2: Students' Interactions with Teachers on Social Media

Teachers are often concerned about how their social media profiles and activities will be interpreted by students. Teachers may also be concerned about "invading" spaces that students feel are "theirs" by requiring students to use social media environments popular with youth (Maranto & Barton, 2010). Because of the shifting nature of professional, public, and private boundaries on social media, teachers need to ask questions about their own presence on these sites and how students will interpret and interact with them online. As a teacher,

should I use a social media account that is solely for the class, or should I use an already existing account that also has other social purposes? What sort of ethos should I present on a site? If a site is being used for a class, should I friend or follow current students?

Students' discussions of interacting with teachers online suggest that care, media ideologies, and context are important aspects of those interactions. Generally, students in this study expressed amicability about finding their teachers on Facebook in their video logs. Anica's views of seeing content from teachers on Facebook are representative of many of her classmates: "If anything, it makes me more aware that they have an outside life that they have too, aside from teaching, which is kind of nice." Those who had friended former teachers expressed interest in experiencing their teachers as real people, and didn't see those teachers' presence on Facebook as ethos-harming. And generally, these students' teachers (both high school and college) had developed policies of only friending students after they had completed high school or the college class.

The only two negative responses came from Justin and Don, and they spoke to appropriate professional behavior and the sort of genres that Facebook recalls. Justin shared his experience seeing a professor's post on Facebook:

> Last semester she actually had a couple Facebook posts that were kind of questionable about her criticizing a student. . . . They were kind of mean and—I don't know—it just didn't seem like something that should come from a professor, and eventually a couple weeks after that post, she put out an apology on Facebook, and I think she took a little break from [Facebook] for a while.

While Justin noted a case of a teacher acting questionably on Facebook, Don drew on his media ideologies about Facebook and his experiences in high school to imagine a potential interaction with a teacher online:

> For some reason, it's just strange and—it's like in high school, if you saw your high school teacher at the grocery store or something. It's, you know, it was the weirdest thing ever. Like, they shouldn't have a life outside of high school.

Students' interpretations and willingness to interact with a teacher on social media will depend, in part, on their media ideologies about those particular sites and their idioms of practice they bring to those sites.

Maranto and Barton's (2010) warning that using Facebook in a class might seem like an invasion of a space away from adults is now likely an outdated

perspective to many of our students, who are friends with older relatives and former teachers already. And some students benefit from networking with teachers online: The English education students in this course stressed the usefulness of being friends with teachers, because it provided mentorship, and students like Russell expressed how useful it was to set up meetings with me through Twitter or get updates about the course without checking his email. Ultimately, teachers need to think in terms of access and care when deciding how to present themselves on social media, when deciding whether to assign certain sites to students, and when discussing those interactions during metadiscursive conversations with students.

By care here, I mean a sort of situated respect for others and concern for the welfare of others (Porter, 1998, pp. 92–94, 154). One might think that it's important for a teacher to have a professional, scholarly identity presentation on a social networking site so that students would interpret the teacher's ethos as credible and professional. However, I would like to suggest that how one interacts and develops a situated ethics of care is more important than an "appropriate" scholarly ethos. In a study of student perceptions of teachers based on their Twitter stream, Kirsten A. Johnson (2011) found that students were more likely to find a teacher credible if their Twitter account was comprised of "very personal" or "very conversational" tweets compared to a Twitter stream solely composed of scholarly tweets (pp. 33-34). She speculated that perhaps care was a more important indicator of credibility for students on social media than scholarly competence. While Johnson's study was an experiment decontextualized from actual classroom practices, it does point to how a teacher disclosing personal information on social media can actually be helpful in building trust—as does the experiences of some of my students in this study. And the converse, not showing care, as in the case of Justin's teacher, harms that trust building.

Access, too, is important to think through, and here is where particular groups of students' media ideologies play a role in determining what sites teachers should inhabit along with students. As we saw above, students differ in how they understand a teacher's presence on a site. While many of the students in my study were comfortable with friending former teachers on Facebook, Don compared Facebook to a public space (the grocery store) that he saw as a realm distinct from the space of a school. We might consider social media sites as spaces that students have media ideologies about, understanding them differently in terms of access to the self and away from parents, teachers, and other authorities. Students in this study often referenced high school when discussing Facebook—understandable, given how Facebook remediates

many high school genres, like yearbooks, "cruising" car culture, and hang-out spots like arcades (Bogost, 2010; Maranto & Barton, 2010). For other social media spaces, how do students understand them? What media ideologies do they draw upon to understand the site and access to the site? Given that much social media is used for self-expression and identity development away from authority figures—what Judith Wagner DeCew (1997) called "expressive privacy"—even if the space is publicly accessible (boyd, 2014), we need to consider students' media ideologies about specific sites in specific times and spaces.

THEME 3: STUDENTS' INTERACTIONS WITH EACH OTHER IN SOCIAL MEDIA ENVIRONMENTS

Overwhelmingly, students reported that using Twitter and Yammer helped to create a classroom community and helped them get to know their classmates more personally. Tricia's and Nolan's comments are representative of their classmates' claims. Tricia explained, "In class, it's more student-to-teacher, like I'm answering your questions, and then on social media, I'm actually talking and responding, tweeting back to classmates directly, which is pretty nice. I like that aspect of it." Nolan claimed, "It is definitely leading to relationships with people in the class who I wouldn't have spoken to otherwise."

The archives of students' Twitter and Yammer activity both confirm and challenge these claims. Figures 15.1 and 15.2 visualize students' engagement with each other on Twitter and Yammer, respectively. Arrows represent the direction of a response; the thicker an edge (the line connecting two students), the more replies that user sent to another user. A node's size represents a student's replies to classmates: The larger the node, the more responses they wrote.

Some, like Russell, interacted with numerous classmates: He replied to 11 classmates on Twitter and to 13 on Yammer. Others were less interactive, including Alex, who didn't reply to any tweets or Yammer posts all term, in part because he didn't post much on Yammer or Twitter all term. And interactivity is not captured solely through replies and comments: Alicia, for example, tweeted about classmates' presentations without mentioning their username, and retweeted classmates (which don't show up as replies in Figure 15.2). Many students claimed that social media seemed to provide a place for quieter students to "talk," and this played out in the data. For instance, April was quiet in class and explained in a video log how she felt that everyone thinks too fast in class and she was always behind during class conversations. She was a frequent tweeter and responded to nearly half of her classmates throughout the term.
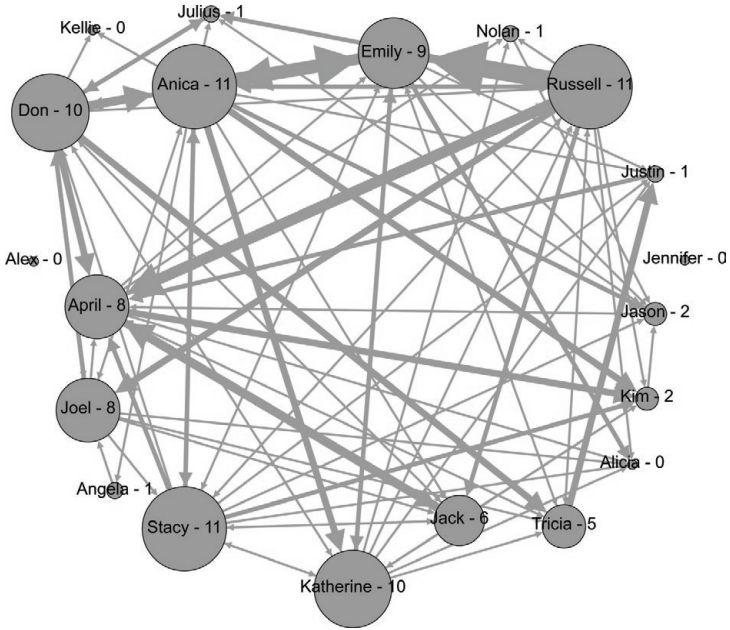
Figure 15.1. A network visualization of students' replies to each other on Twitter.
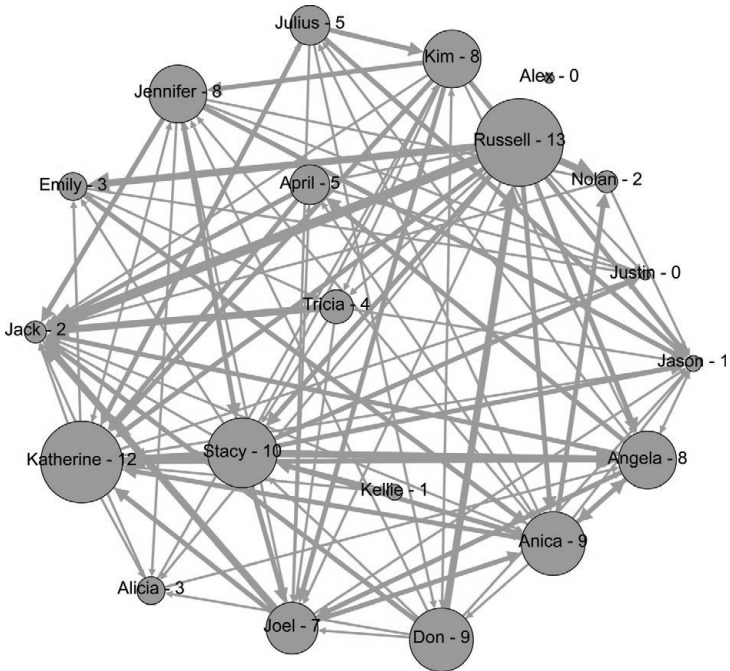

Figure 15.2. A network visualization of students' responses to each other on Yammer.

But we should be skeptical of some claims about increased engagement on-line: The students who replied to tweets the most—Russell, Anica, Emily, Stacy, and Don—were some of the most talkative during class. And Nolan, who claimed to be creating new relationships, only responded to one tweet (from Jason, though he did retweet classmates occasionally), and only responded to Yammer posts by Jack and Jason. Nolan was much more active in responding to his classmates' comments during class. He provided an interesting anecdote, though: "One time I commented on Jason's post, and then I saw him outside of class, and he like waved to me and laughed, and for some reason I just knew that that's what he was laughing about."

Nolan's claim about himself and his anecdote give me pause: Teachers should be cautious about measuring engagement through visible metrics like replies and comments. Though replies and comments are important for a variety of pedagogical reasons—practicing those activities, contributing to conversations, challenging ideas, developing a voice in a particular medium—they are not the sole measurement for engagement. Social media works through a logic of visibility, as does assessment (we can only assess what we see), but we can't rely solely on literacy activities that are visible in these environments. (And further, such metrics can be means of teacher control; see Losh, 2014.) We need to value listening and reading as well. Kim, for example, showed to me that she was quite aware of her classmates' various "perspectives on the readings and videos that we watch" on Twitter, though she only responded to two classmates' tweets throughout the term. Thus, regarding assessment of social media practices in writing classes, it may be more useful to evaluate reflections, which can show metacognitive understanding of students' practices and allow for risk taking rather than perfection (Daer & Potts, 2014; McKee & DeVoss, 2013; Reilly & Atkins, 2013).

Theme 4: Integrating School-Based and Self-Sponsored Social Media Literacies: Work Habits, Contextual Privacy, and Convergent Audiences

Tensions between school-based literacies and out-of-school literacies come to the forefront when writing teachers ask students to use social media, as social media use for class may clash or conflict with students' self-sponsored social media literacies. (Though self-sponsored literacies can also be very supportive of academic literacies; see Chris M. Anson's chapter in this collection.) In this section, I discuss two issues that arose for my students out of tensions between school-based use and personal use of social media: work habits and contextual privacy.

Students in this course tended to conceptually organize their school-based literacies separately from their out-of-school literacies, leading to difficulties in managing their work habits and integrating social media into their school-based writing. This does not mean that students separated schoolwork and social media in space and time. Emily is a good example of this: Before this class, she had used Twitter to manage her desire to talk with friends while working on a paper. Knowing that co-present friends would be a distraction for finishing a paper, Emily used Twitter to manage conversations so that she could both work effectively and maintain social contact. (See Patricia Portanova's chapter in this collection on how students develop metacognitive strategies for managing multiple media while composing.)

Again and again, students expressed that the biggest challenge was remembering to check in on these sites, read each other's posts, and post themselves. Students are trained in print literacies for education, and might not see much of their digital activity as involving required schoolwork. (Even most digital educational activities model print activities, like downloading PDF readings from a learning management system or writing essays in Microsoft Word.) The conceptual schemas that students had developed over time—their idioms of practice—allowed them to check social media frequently for personal reasons, but to forget to do so for class. Stacy, though she was trying to cut back on her Facebook use, explained, "When I open my computer's web browser, I almost always immediately start typing in 'Facebook' without even thinking about it, even if I don't want to go to that site!" She explained that while she has habits of checking social media, she didn't remember to use the course-based social media sites unless she wrote it down. Jack said that he tweeted a lot for personal reasons, but often forgot to do so for class. Nolan expressed that he's developed habits of social media "for fun" and hadn't yet developed a habit of it being required. Tricia expressed that her poor memory for checking social media often meant she missed out on responding in a timely manner to her classmates' tweets and comments to her. And even though some students kept the default settings for daily email notifications from Yammer and Diigo, many, like Kim, "kind of ignored those emails."

Clearly, integrating social media into work habits was a challenge for many of these students, but I view it as a productive challenge, and one writing teachers must face as we move from courses that teach traditional print essays to courses that teach for a variety of literacies.

Another tension that students faced was their contextual privacy (Nissenbaum, 2010), or managing what danah boyd (2014, p. 31) called "collapsed contexts," while integrating their social and school-based literacies. Students

already have developed strategies for managing privacy using social media. Emily's example of using Twitter to manage contact with friends is one example, and Nolan provided another: In high school, to have privacy from parents, he contacted friends through social media instead of a landline phone (see boyd, 2014, for more on this type of privacy management). Students who already had Twitter accounts prior to this class especially had to manage privacy tensions. Angela, for instance, decided to create a second account for the class, but quickly found that she struggled to remember which account she was logged into when tweeting for class or for personal reasons; midway through the term she reverted to using just a single account. Kim created a new account as well, concerned that she would lose followers if she tweeted for class a lot. Russell explained that he had friends who were excited to see him finally start tweeting but then expressed disappointment that all his tweets were for class. Jack, who used his personal account for class, had friends who were annoyed that he was filling up their Twitter feeds with class tweets, and fielded tweets from friends telling him to stop.

These are just a few of the instances when students had to manage collapsed contexts on Twitter and decide how they wanted to integrate, or attempt to make separate, their personal social media use and school-based use. Again, as with work habits, these tensions provide opportunities to explore conflicting practices and media ideologies with social media. While students often struggled through managing new work habits and contending with collapsed contexts, they were largely successful (as is evidenced by over 200 Yammer posts and over 800 tweets by students throughout the term).

CONCLUSION: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER ABOUT STUDENTS' MEDIA IDEOLOGIES AND IDIOMS OF PRACTICE

This study adds to research and scholarship exploring the complexities of integrating social media into writing classes. Students in this study showed that experiences with social media can vary widely; that students use their experiences with some sites in order to understand new environments; that, depending on their media ideologies, they are comfortable interacting with teachers on some sites; and that they can struggle to integrate social media into their work habits. I close with some questions to consider when incorporating social media in writing classes:

Before teaching, where and how is social media being taught across the curriculum at your institution? What practices are valued and being taught elsewhere at the university?

What idioms of practice and media ideologies are your students bringing to the class? How do these idioms of practice challenge or conform to popular narratives about young adults and digital media?

What sort of activities do you want students to gain practice and perspective in? How do their prior experiences align with or challenge some of those practices? What social media platforms are useful for these practices?

What examples can you provide for students of a variety of practices in these environments to help them explore implications they might not recognize because of their own media ideologies?

What are the implications of using your already existing accounts as a teacher? Will you use your personal Twitter, Facebook, or other account, or create a new one specifically for working with students? How might students interpret your account based on their media ideologies and your persona presented on the site? Similarly, what are the implications of students using already existing accounts?

How will students assess their own practices? How will you assess their practices? What media ideologies are they carrying forward to see certain practices as successes or failures? What media ideologies are you drawing upon to see successes, struggles, and failures? How can these online spaces be used to allow for making mistakes?

How will you assist students in managing and integrating social media into their work habits?

How will you assist students in managing collapsed contexts and managing their social privacy in online environments?

What technologies are students bringing to class, and how do they use them for social media? Are there technology resources on your campus, such as devices students can borrow?

Young adults are not a monolithic group of digital natives ready to excel in social media literacies in our writing classes. The idioms of practice and media ideologies they bring into class will vary and lead to mistakes, struggles, and conflicting understandings of sites and practices. How, ultimately, can we develop our own awareness of students' practices and beliefs in order to provide a learning environment where they can experiment and practice? Overall, our goal should be to assist in developing our students' rhetorical faculties, or "the degree to which a student interprets a problem, recognizes how their learning can inform a solution, and then produces a context-appropriate solution" (Daer & Potts, 2014, pp. 26-27). In order to assist in this rhetorical development, I believe, we need to attend to—and help our students be reflective about—our students' particular media ideologies and idioms of practice that shape and influence their literacy practices.

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