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College Students' Inappropriate Posting Behavior Across Social Media Sites: The Role of Friend Group Overlap

Robert E. Miller
Central Michigan University, mille5re@cmich.edu

Abstract

Research has shown that college students routinely post content on Facebook and Twitter that could be viewed as inappropriate by potential employers. Attempts to explain why students engage in this risky behavior have, so far, been inconclusive. The current paper expands the research on inappropriate posting by examining social media sites beyond Facebook and Twitter. The paper then investigates friend groups as a potential factor influencing inappropriate posting behavior. First, the degree of friend group overlap between sites is examined. Second, posting behaviors are compared between sites with high and low degrees of friend group overlap. The paper ends with a discussion of the results and implications for future research.

Keywords: Social media, inappropriate posting, cybervetting

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1. Introduction

College-aged young people have been, and continue to be, the single largest group of social media users (Auxier and Anderson, 2021). Through social media, college students create friend networks where they share information on a wide array of topics from relationship updates to social/political commentary. Some of this shared content can be intensely personal – providing an unfiltered view into the student's thoughts, beliefs, and personality. Early on, employers recognized the value of social media accounts as potential "windows into the soul." They began reviewing the social media accounts of job candidates in order to uncover the "real" people behind the resumes. This process, called cybervetting, has become extremely popular with recruiters (Berkelaar and Buzznell, 2015). In fact, Jobvite (2014), reports that 93% of recruiters will review a candidate's online presence before making a hiring decision. Recruiters defend their use of cybervetting, pointing to research that indicates social media content can be used to assess the candidate's personality traits (Stoughton et al., 2013) and potential job performance (Kluemper et al., 2012). Cybervetting also uncovers content that some employers view as problematic - with 55% of recruiters reconsidering a candidate based on what was uncovered during the online review (Jobvite, 2014). Given that college students routinely post exactly this type of inappropriate content (Peluchette and Karl, 2010), cybervetting has become a serious issue for many students entering the job market.

The interesting thing about cybervettting is that it is hardly a secret. According to Root and McKay (2014), students are aware of the widespread use of social media screening. If they are aware their accounts could/will be reviewed, why would students continue posting inappropriate content? This question has been addressed by researchers with limited success. Much of this research has focused on users of Facebook and, to a lesser degree, Twitter. Researchers have noted that inappropriate posting is present on both sites, with Twitter having significantly more inappropriate content (Miller and Melton, 2015). This raises some interesting questions - does this pattern hold across other major social media sites and why would some sites have more inappropriate content than others?

In order to address these questions, the current paper begins by discussing the differences in social media sites. It then discusses the phenomenon of inappropriate posting, defining "inappropriate" in the context of corporate recruiting and cybervetting. Given that inappropriate posting has been reported on Facebook and Twitter, the paper questions whether the behavior is also present on other social media sites popular with college students (e.g., Instagram and Snapchat). The paper then discusses the posting behavior of close friends as a possible factor influencing a student's decision to post inappropriate content. Extending existing research in this area, the paper proposes comparing the posting behavior of students on sites based on the degree of friend group overlap. If friend groups are a significant contributor to inappropriate posting, then sites with high friend group overlap should have similar levels of inappropriate posting. By the same token, site-pairs with low friend group overlap should have dissimilar levels of inappropriate posting. To test this theory, the paper reports the level of inappropriate posting present on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. The paper then reports the degree of friend group overlap by site-pair (e.g., Facebook-Twitter, Twitter-Instagram, etc.). Finally, the paper compares the level of inappropriate posting by site-pair where the degree of friend group overlap is high and low.

2. Literature Review

The following sections present a review of literature related to social media sites and their use by college students. Specifically, the posting of inappropriate content by students and their close friends is discussed. In order to investigate the possible relationship between student and friend group posting behaviors, a theoretical framework based on uses and gratifications theory is employed to develop a series of research questions.

2.1 Social Media Site Differences

Four of the most popular social media sites used by college students are Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram (Alhabash and Ma, 2017). Although all these sites allow users to share content, they are actually quite different in terms of function, format, and demographics (Barnhart, 2022):

- Facebook is primarily used to connect with family and friends. It allows user to set up a profile and post updates, photos, links, etc. Facebook's users are slightly older, with the largest number of users being 25-34. The second largest group of users is 18-24.

- Twitter is a microblogging site that allows users to send short messages about what they are doing or links to resources of interest. It's largest number of users is 18-29.
- Instagram is a photo-sharing application that allows users to take pictures, apply filters, and share them with friends on the site and other platforms. The largest group of users is 25-34 with 18-24 a close second.
- Snapchat is a mobile application that allows users to send and receive time-sensitive photos and videos that expire upon being viewed. Snapchat's largest group of users is 15-25.

While these sites may differ in function and format, they are all still popular with college-aged users. College-aged users constitute the first or second largest group of users on each site. This popularity means that college students are posting a lot of content on these sites. Based on previous research (e.g., Peluchette and Karl, 2010; Miller and Melton, 2015), it could be argued that much of that content can be viewed as inappropriate.

2.2 Inappropriate Social Media Posting

Using the term "inappropriate" to describe something as improper or undesirable can be very subjective. As with much in life, what is and is not appropriate is in the eye of the beholder. This is especially true for social media because the content is often intensely personal. While the majority of people in a social network may view a given posted item as appropriate, others may not. How then should inappropriate social media content be defined – if it can be?

In order to avoid the subjectivity trap, this study defines inappropriate social media content in a very specific context, namely the view of recruiters while cybervetting candidates for employment. In this context it is possible to define inappropriate content as content that a company would view as problematic – leading to a candidate being reconsidered or rejected. Recruiting literature has identified specific "red flag" content that companies look for when reviewing social media accounts (Jobvite, 2017). Examples of this inappropriate content include excessive use of profanity, discussions of alcohol/drug use, political rants, racist comments, and sexually-explicit photographs, etc. Peluchette and Karl (2010) found that college students, as a group, routinely post just these types of inappropriate content on Facebook. Follow-up research has confirmed that inappropriate content is even more prevalent on Twitter (Miller and Melton, 2015). To date, there has been no research into inappropriate posting (as defined herein) on Instagram or Snapchat. Given their popularity with college-aged users, and their functional/format differences from Facebook and Twitter, investigation of these sites appears justified. Does inappropriate posting happen outside of Facebook/Twitter and, if so, to what extent?

2.3 Posting Behavior of Close Friends

Given that inappropriate posting has been confirmed on multiple platforms, a better understanding of the phenomenon is needed, especially the factors that lead students to engage in this risky behavior. Various factors that could affect inappropriate posting have been studied including personality traits, time to graduation, and being "on the market". In addition to these factors, researchers have also found that the posting behavior of close friends influences a student's decision to post inappropriate content (Miller, 2020). Specifically, students with close friends who post inappropriate content on Facebook and Twitter are more likely to post inappropriate content on their own Facebook and Twitter accounts, respectively. Essentially, the posting behavior of close friends acts as a social factor, creating a subjective group culture with shared norms and values. Students then adopt these norms because they wish to be considered part of the group (Triandis, 1980). If the friend group posts inappropriate content, then the student will internalize this behavior as a group norm and post similar content in order to show that they belong.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Uses and gratifications (U&G) theory proposes that individuals actively seek out media content that suits their needs (Lariscy et al., 2011). A number of researchers (e.g., Belk, 2013; Seidman, 2013; and Hollenbaugh and Ferris, 2014) have used this theory to explain why individuals use social media. According to this research, individuals use social media because, through that use, they are able to satisfy certain needs. Employing U&G, Whiting and Williams (2013) identified 10 motivations for using social media: social interaction, information seeking, passing time, entertainment, relaxation, expression of opinions, communicatory utility, convenience utility, information sharing, and surveillance. Also using U&G, Alhabash and Ma (2017) identified seven motivations for social media use: information sharing, self-documentation, social interaction, entertainment, passing time, self-expression, medium appeal, and convenience. Alhabash and Ma (2017) were able to show that the level of each motivation differed when measured across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. This result is not particularly surprising given the differences between the sites in terms of function and format. As an example, a user concerned with self-expression is probably more motivated to use

Twitter than Facebook because Twitter is designed around sharing one's own thoughts through blogging while Facebook is designed to keep friends and family connected. Since differences in the function and format of sites can lead to differences in use motivations, it could be argued that there could also be differences in inappropriate posting behavior. Differences have already been noted between Facebook and Twitter. How will the differences in Instagram and Snapchat affect inappropriate posting?

Given the differences in social media sites and the subsequent differences in use motivation, it could be argued that students will not, necessarily, use the same sites as their close friends. By extension, it could also be argued that students could end up with different friend groups on each site. While this is a logical argument, there is no current research to verify it. Do friend groups differ by site? Are there some site-pairs with more friends in common? Essentially, how much do the friend groups overlap between sites? These are important questions because it has already been shown that student posting behavior is affected by the posting behavior of close friends (Miller, 2020) – at least for Facebook and Twitter. If friend posting behavior influences student behavior, then sites with similar friend groups should have similar levels of inappropriate content. This could also help explain why Twitter has more inappropriate content than Facebook assuming, of course, that there is little overlap between Facebook and Twitter friend groups.

Based on existing literature and the theoretical framework, the following research questions should be addressed:

1. How does inappropriate posting behavior compare across major social media sites (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat)?
2. How much friend group overlap is present among major social media sites?
3. Is inappropriate posting behavior a function of the friend group?

3. Research Method

3.1 Measures

To address the first research question, the Revised Faux Pas Scale was used to assess how inappropriate posting compares across social media sites. The scale was developed by Miller (2020) based on the original Faux Pas Scale created by Karl et al. (2010). Miller (2020) revised the original scale to include items that recruiters had determined to be problematic when uncovered during cybervetting. Specifically, the revised scale asks if the social media account in question contains a lot of the given item. The eight items include "alcohol references", "drug references", "sexist comments", "racial comments", "gun references", "profanity", "sexual references", and "political comments". Participants responded using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).
Previous research (Miller and Melton, 2015) has shown that students don't exhibit the same posting behavior across social media sites. For that reason, participants were asked to complete the Revised Faux Pas Scale for each of their social media accounts separately.

The Revised Faux Pas Scale was also used to address the third research question. In this case, participants were asked to report the amount of inappropriate posting present in the social media accounts of their close friends. As with their own accounts, participants completed the revised scale for each social media site separately – using the friend group relevant to each site.

For the second research question, participants were asked to report the level of overlap in friend groups between site-pairs. Specifically, participants were asked how much their friends overlapped between the following combinations: Facebook-Twitter, Facebook-Instagram, Facebook-Snapchat, Twitter-Instagram, Twitter-Snapchat, and Instagram-Snapchat. Participants responded with "Same friends", "A lot of overlap", "Some overlap", "Little overlap", or "No overlap".

3.2 Participants

Study participants were recruited from undergraduate business courses at a large university in the Midwest United States. Given the research questions, the use of college students is appropriate since they are avid social media users, preparing to enter the job market, and their posting behavior can impact their employability. Participants were asked to complete a short online survey (Appendix I). All survey questions were evaluated and approved by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Based on the nature of the questions, the students were assured that, if they chose to

participate, their responses would remain anonymous.

4. Results

In total, 150 students (56.0% male) participated in the study. The mean age was 21.09 years (SD = 3.36), with a range from 18 to 41. Of the 150 participants, 136 (90.7%) had Facebook accounts, 120 (80.0%) had Twitter accounts, 137 (91.9%) had Instagram accounts, and 139 (93.3%) had Snapchat accounts. A detailed gender breakdown by site is provided in Table 1.

	n	Male	%	Female	%
Facebook	136	73	54%	63	46%
Twitter	120	72	60%	48	40%
Instagram	137	74	54%	63	46%
Snapchat	139	77	55%	62	45%

Table 1. Gender breakdown by site

In addition to site usage, participants were also asked to report the privacy setting used on each account. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the privacy settings by site.

Facebook	n	%	Twitter	n	%	Instagram	n	%	Snapchat	n	%
Everyone	29	21%	Protected	42	35%	Private	83	69%	Everyone	20	14%
Friends of friends	11	8%	Public	78	65%	Public	54	45%	Friends only	119	86%
Friends only	94	69%									
Me only	2	1%									

Table 2. Privacy settings by site

Table 3 provides the mean Faux Pas score for each site along with the significance of paired T-tests used to compare scores between sites. The results indicate that all site-pairs had significantly different Faux Pas scores except Facebook-Instagram. Based on the responses, participants believe their Facebook and Instagram accounts contain similar amounts of inappropriate content.

		Significance			
	M	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Snapchat
Facebook	1.613	-			
Twitter	2.415	.000	-		
Instagram	1.583	.565	.000	-	
Snapchat	2.137	.000	.036	.000	-

Table 3. Significance of Faux Pas score comparisons between sites

A review of Table 3's mean scores, indicates that the Twitter score was highest, followed by Snapchat, Facebook, and Instagram. Essentially, Twitter accounts contained the most inappropriate content, while Facebook and Instagram contained the least. Snapchat accounts contained less inappropriate content than Twitter but more than Facebook or Instagram. This finding supports previous research that showed Twitter accounts contained more inappropriate content than Facebook accounts. Further, it shows that Twitter accounts also contain more inappropriate content than Instagram and Snapchat.

Descriptive statistics and reliabilities for the Revised Faux Pas Scale, across social media sites, are shown in Table 4.

	M	SD	α
1. Facebook Faux Pas	1.613	.885	.878
2. Twitter Faux Pas	2.415	1.407	.911
3. Instagram Faux Pas	1.583	.812	.856

4. Snapchat Faux Pas	2.137	1.212	.867
5. Friends' Facebook Faux Pas	2.929	1.430	.917
6. Friends' Twitter Faux Pas	3.778	1.591	.920
7. Friends' Instagram Faux Pas	2.793	1.408	.902
8. Friends' Snapchat Faux Pas	3.321	1.374	.875

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics and Reliability of Measures

A review of the results in Table 4 indicates that Faux Pas scores for friend accounts are all higher than the respondent's scores for their own accounts on the same site. The results also indicate that the Revised Faux Pas scale is highly reliable ($\alpha > .850$) regardless of site.

Table 5 breaks down the overall Faux Pas score by presenting the mean of each item by site. Again, Twitter has the highest mean score for all items except alcohol.

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Snapchat
Alcohol	1.80	2.94	2.09	**3.38**
Drugs	1.35	**2.56**	1.49	2.36
Sexist	1.27	**1.68**	1.33	1.50
Racial	1.21	**1.59**	1.31	1.35
Gun	1.68	**1.78**	1.36	1.52
Profanity	1.98	**3.18**	1.97	3.12
Sexual	1.41	**2.62**	1.60	2.14
Political	2.18	**2.97**	1.53	1.72

Table 5. Mean Faux Pas scores by item (participant)

Based on the means, political comments were the most common inappropriate item on Facebook (2.18), while profanity was the most common inappropriate content on Twitter (3.18). References to alcohol were the most common type of inappropriate content on both Snapchat (3.38) and Instagram (2.09). Racial comments were the least common inappropriate content across all four sites (Facebook = 1.21, Twitter = 1.59, Instagram = 1.33, Snapchat = 1.35).

Table 6 shows the degree of friend group overlap between site-pairs. Participants reported that their friend groups overlap the most between Twitter and Instagram. Nineteen percent of participants reported that their friend groups were the same on Twitter and Instagram, while 49% reported there was a lot of overlap between the two sites. Participants reported that their friend groups overlap the least between Facebook and Instagram. Twenty-nine percent of participants reported some overlap, while 33% reported little or no overlap between the sites. Although not the lowest, there was also a noticeable lack of overlap in friends between Facebook and Twitter (some overlap - 28%, little or no overlap - 27%).

	Facebook-Twitter	Facebook-Instagram	Facebook-Snapchat	Twitter-Instagram	Twitter-Snapchat	Instagram-Snapchat
Same friends	10%	12%	10%	**19%**	18%	18%
A lot of overlap	22%	47%	26%	**49%**	38%	45%
Some overlap	28%	26%	**29%**	18%	26%	26%
Little overlap	23%	11%	**30%**	8%	15%	9%
No overlap	**4%**	1%	3%	3%	3%	1%
N/A	14%	4%	2%	3%	0%	1%

Table 6. Friend group overlap between sites

To assess the impact of friend group, overlap on inappropriate posting, the Faux Pas responses were segmented by degree of friend group overlap for each site-pair. As an example, to compare responses for Facebook and Twitter with a high degree of friend group overlap, a dataset was created with Faux Pas scores for Facebook and Twitter where the degree of friend group overlap between the sites was reported as high (i.e., same friends or a lot of overlap). Paired-T

tests were then conducted to compare the Faux Pas scores between the sites. This procedure was then repeated using Facebook and Twitter Faux Pas scores where the degree of friend group overlap was reported as low (i.e., some overlap, little overlap, or no overlap). This high degree/low degree segmentation and analysis was repeated for each site-pair. Table 7 shows the significance of comparing overall Faux Pas/component scores by site-pair using the high degree of friend group overlap data.

	Facebook-Twitter	Facebook-Instagram	Facebook-Snapchat	Twitter-Instagram	Twitter-Snapchat	Instagram-Snapchat
Overall Faux Pas Score	**.005**	.448	**.001**	**.000**	.120	**.000**
Alcohol	**.000**	.067	**.000**	**.000**	.135	**.000**
Drugs	**.000**	.237	**.000**	**.000**	.635	**.000**
Sexist	.298	.874	.204	**.007**	.500	.096
Racist	.139	.469	.229	**.007**	.066	.392
Guns	.770	**.005**	.135	**.001**	.182	.077
Profanity	**.001**	.784	**.003**	**.000**	.366	**.000**
Sexual	**.003**	.436	**.001**	**.000**	**.025**	**.005**
Political	.300	**.001**	**.010**	**.000**	**.000**	.094

Table 7. Significance of Faux Pas score comparisons - High friend group overlap

A review of Table 7 indicates no clear pattern. While all Faux Pas scores were significantly different between Twitter and Instagram, every other site-pair contains a mix of results – some significantly different, others not. The pattern of results is also unclear in Table 8. This table shows the significance of comparing overall Faux Pas/component scores by site-pair using the low degree of friend group overlap data.

	Facebook-Twitter	Facebook-Instagram	Facebook-Snapchat	Twitter-Instagram	Twitter-Snapchat	Instagram-Snapchat
Overall Faux Pas Score	**0.000**	0.991	**0.000**	**0.008**	0.155	**0.013**
Alcohol	**0.000**	0.435	**0.000**	0.427	**0.004**	**0.000**
Drugs	**0.000**	0.279	**0.000**	0.116	0.746	**0.003**
Sexist	**0.000**	0.335	0.054	0.054	**0.022**	0.584
Racist	**0.007**	0.204	0.180	0.292	**0.026**	0.743
Guns	0.857	0.135	0.424	0.073	0.360	0.351
Profanity	**0.000**	1.000	**0.000**	**0.012**	0.801	**0.005**
Sexual	**0.000**	0.140	**0.001**	0.057	0.130	0.266
Political	**0.000**	**0.034**	0.051	**0.001**	**0.000**	0.612

Table 8. Significance of Faux Pas score comparisons – Low friend group overlap

5. Discussion

In the current study, inappropriate posting behavior by college students is examined relative to three research questions. Each of these questions will be addressed, in turn, using the study results.

5.1 Inappropriate Posting Behavior Across Major Social Media Sites

This is the first study to use the Revised Faux Pas Scale to assess inappropriate posting across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. As such, it is important to note that the scale continues to demonstrate good to excellent reliability (range: 0.856 - 0.911) across all four social media sites. This consistency is important because the social media environment is ever-changing, with new sites coming on-line all the time and almost constant migration from older sites to newer ones. The sizable shift by college-aged young people away from Facebook is just one example of this dynamic environment. As new sites are developed and the migrations continue, the scale will need to be reassessed to ensure its reliability. Based on the results of this study, the scale provides a reliable means to measure inappropriate posting in the

current social media environment.

Confirming previous research (Miller and Melton, 2015), Twitter continues to have the most inappropriate content. Twitter accounts had an average Faux Pas score of 2.415, which was significantly higher than the other three sites. Twitter accounts also had higher scores for every Faux Pas item expect alcohol. Clearly Twitter remains in a league of its own – making it the obvious choice for recruiters when selecting sites to review during cybervetting. Students continue to aid recruiters by making their Twitter accounts easy to view. In-line with previous research, 65% of Twitter accounts in the present study were left open to the public.

After Twitter, Snapchat accounts contained the next most inappropriate content (2.137). Snapchat accounts even had a higher score for alcohol than Twitter. While Snapchat accounts may be nearly as inappropriate as Twitter, Snapchat users are more likely to make their accounts harder to view. In the current study, only 14% of Snapchat accounts were open to everyone.

There was no significant difference found between the Faux Pas scores for Facebook (1.613) and Instagram (1.583) and both sites had scores that were less than Twitter and Snapchat. While Facebook and Instagram accounts may have the least inappropriate content, they fall between Twitter and Snapchat on the access continuum. In the current study, 21% of Facebook accounts and 39% of Instagram accounts were open to the public.

Finally, it should be noted that participants reported significantly higher Faux Pas scores for the accounts of their close friends, as compared with their own, on every site. This result supports previous research showing students reported the Facebook and Twitter accounts of their friends contained more inappropriate content than their own (Miller, 2020). Twitter accounts had the highest Faux Pas scores for close friends, followed by Snapchat, Facebook and Instagram (in order).

5.2 Friend Group Overlap Among Major Social Media Sites

The results from this study indicate that friend groups vary significantly across social media sites. Participants who reported having the same friends on two sites ranged from a low of 10% (Facebook-Twitter) to a high of 19% (Twitter-Instagram). This is hardly surprising given that friends will not, necessarily, have accounts on all the same social media sites. That said, of the six site-pairs considered in this study, over half the participants reported a lot of friend overlap on four of them: Twitter-Instagram (68%), Instagram-Snapchat (63%), Facebook-Instagram (59%), and Instagram-Snapchat (56%). At the same time, however, there were site-pairs where friend group overlap was minimal: Facebook-Twitter (32%) and Facebook-Snapchat (36%).

In this study, Facebook friends overlapped the least with other sites. This could be explained, in part, by the fact that older adults are more likely to have Facebook accounts than other social media sites. According to a Pew study (Auxier and Anderson, 2021), while 77% of 30–49-year-olds have Facebook accounts, only 27% use Twitter, 48% use Instagram, and 24% use Snapchat. A college student could, therefore, be friends with their parents, aunts/uncles, grandparents, and/or teachers only on Facebook because these people don't have accounts on other sites.

While user demographics can be used to explain much of Facebook's lack of friend group overlap, it can't explain all the difference. Demographics, alone, also can't explain the variability in overlap for the other site-pairs. The differences in site function and format, along with differences in use motivation, may also play a part. Social media sites are not all the same. Each site has a specific function and format. Motivations for use will also differ by student. Since students will choose to use sites that provide the function/format that best satisfies their needs, it could be argued that friend group variability is a natural result. This is an area that deserves further investigation in future research.

5.3 Inappropriate Posting Behavior and the Friend Group

If friend groups are a significant influence on the posting behavior of college students, then it stands to reason that where friend groups overlap between sites, there should be similar levels of inappropriate content on each site. Said another way, if a student is influenced to post inappropriate content by friends on one site, and the student has the same friends on another site, then the student's level of inappropriate posting on the second site should be like that of the first site. Although this seems reasonable, the data collected in this study, do not show clear support. According to the data, there is a high degree of friend group overlap between Twitter and Instagram (the highest degree of overlap for any site-pair in the study). If friend groups influence student posting behavior, then there should then be similar levels of

inappropriate posting by students on Twitter and Instagram. Unfortunately, the data provide no support for this relationship. In fact, the Faux Pas scores for all items were significantly higher for Twitter. Having the same, or mostly the same, friends on Twitter and Instagram did not mean that a student would post similar levels of inappropriate content on both sites. Clearly there must be other factors beyond friend group that determine which sites have higher levels of inappropriate posting. It is possible that the function of the site, or its format, play a role. As an example, Twitter is a microblogging site which allows users to express themselves in short, pithy, messages. This format may lead students to make more direct statements with less filtering, resulting in more inappropriate content. At the same time, Instagram is mostly a photo-sharing site. This difference in format may make inappropriate content less likely on Instagram even when friend group overlap is high.

Excluding the Twitter-Instagram pair, the results were mixed. The Facebook-Instagram pair showed similar levels of inappropriate posting on all items except for guns and political comments. The Twitter-Snapchat pair showed similar levels on all items except sexual and political comments. The remaining site-pairs had as many differences by items as similarities. When reviewing the data with little, or no, friend overlap the results were just as mixed. Clearly there is something beyond the friend group that is motivating students to post inappropriate content. Whether it is site function/format, student use motivations, or factors yet to be identified, further research is warranted.

6. Conclusion

It is clear from this, and previous studies, that inappropriate posting is common on social media. What is less clear is why some sites (e.g., Twitter and Snapchat) contain more inappropriate content than others. In this study, the influence of friend groups was considered as a possible factor. Although significant friend group overlap was found for some site-pairs, there was no clear relationship between shared friend groups and the corresponding level of inappropriate posting between sites. While the influence of friends and the content they post may ultimately have an effect on a student's inappropriate posting behavior, the impact was too nuanced to be detected under the current research design. Modified research designs may bear more fruit. At the same time, there may be other factors involved that should be investigated. As an example, the differences in site format and function should be considered in future studies. Do the differences in site format/function affect the level of inappropriate posting? If so, which aspects of the sites affect posting behavior and why? Likewise, student use motivations should also be investigated. How do motivations affect posting? Do specific motivations lead to more inappropriate posting behavior?

Although the reasons behind inappropriate posting by college students may not be clear, the negative outcomes from this behavior are far more certain. As the use of cybervetting of candidates continues to grow, students engaging in this behavior are putting themselves at increased risk. Understanding the factors that motivate students to post inappropriate content is critical if we hope to change this risky behavior.

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Author Biography

Robert Miller is a Professor of Information Systems at Central Michigan University. He received his Ph.D. in Information Systems from the University of Arkansas. His current research interests include information systems service quality, social media, and the faux pas posting. His publications have appeared in several journals including *Behaviour and Information Technology, Information Systems Management, Journal of Information Systems Education, and MISQ Executive*.

Appendix I

1. What is your gender?
    - Male
    - Female

2. What is your age?

3. What is your academic classification?
    - Freshman
    - Sophomore
    - Junior
    - Senior

4. What is your major?

5. Do you have a Facebook account?
    - Yes
    - No

6. Who can view the contents of your Facebook account?
    - Me only
    - Friends only
    - Friends of friends
    - Everyone

7. Please think about **your Facebook account** and consider how much you agree with the following statement for each of the listed topics. My Facebook account contains a lot of_____.
    - alcohol references
    - drug references
    - sexist comments
    - racial comments
    - gun references
    - profanity
    - sexual references
    - political comments

8. Now think about the **Facebook accounts of your close friends** and consider how much you agree with the following statement for each of the listed topics. My close friends have Facebook accounts that contain a lot of_____.
    - alcohol references
    - drug references
    - sexist comments
    - racial comments
    - gun references
    - profanity
    - sexual references
    - political comments

9. Please think about **your Facebook friends**. How much do your Facebook friends overlap with the friends on your other social media accounts?
    - Twitter
    - Instagram
    - Snapchat

10. Do you have a Twitter account?
    - Yes
    - No

11. How many followers do you have on Twitter?

12. How many people are you following on Twitter?

13. Is your Twitter account public or protected?
    - Public
    - Protected

14. Please think about **your Twitter account** and consider how much you agree with the following statement for each of the listed topics. My Twitter account contains a lot of_____.
    - alcohol references
    - drug references
    - sexist comments
    - racial comments
    - gun references
    - profanity
    - sexual references
    - political comments

15. Now think about the **Twitter accounts of your close friends** and consider how much you agree with the following statement for each of the listed topics. My close friends have Twitter accounts that contain a lot of_____.
    - alcohol references
    - drug references
    - sexist comments
    - racial comments
    - gun references
    - profanity
    - sexual references
    - political comments

16. Please think about **your Twitter friends**. How much do your Twitter friends overlap with the friends on your other social media accounts?
    - Instagram
    - Snapchat

17. Do you have an Instagram account?
    - Yes
    - No

18. Is your Instagram account public or private?
    - Public
    - Private

19. Please think about **your Instagram account** and consider how much you agree with the following statement for each of the listed topics. My Instagram account contains a lot of_____.
    - alcohol references
    - drug references
    - sexist comments
    - racial comments
    - gun references
    - profanity
    - sexual references
    - political comments

20. Now think about the Instagram **accounts of your close friends** and consider how much you agree with the following statement for each of the listed topics. My close friends have Instagram accounts that contain a lot of_____.
    - alcohol references
    - drug references
    - sexist comments
    - racial comments
    - gun references
    - profanity
    - sexual references
    - political comments

21. Please think about **your Instagram friends**. How much do your Instagram friends overlap with the friends on your other social media accounts?
    - Snapchat

22. Do you have a Snapchat account?
    - Yes
    - No

23. Who can view the contents of your Snapchat account?
    - Friends-only
    - Everyone

24. Please think about **your Snapchat account** and consider how much you agree with the following statement for each of the listed topics. My Snapchat account contains a lot of_____.
    - alcohol references
    - drug references
    - sexist comments
    - racial comments
    - gun references
    - profanity
    - sexual references
    - political comments

25. Now think about the Snapchat **accounts of your close friends** and consider how much you agree with the following statement for each of the listed topics. My close friends have Snapchat accounts that contain a lot of_____.
    - alcohol references
    - drug references
    - sexist comments
    - racial comments
    - gun references
    - profanity
    - sexual references
    - political comments