

DIFFUSION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

An empirical study of user groups and adoption

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The thesis accounts for 241,714 keystrokes, equivalent to 106 standard pages of 2275 keystrokes.

ABSTRACT

By examining how diffusion of social media differs from the process as presented by Rogers' (2003), the following research question is posited; how does social media diffuse? The thesis takes an empirical approach, with results founded upon both quantitative and qualitative data, gathered through 128 questionnaires, 13 interviews and six case studies. The data is collected from an international, broad sample of social media users and companies, and is coded and analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. A user typology is developed, resulting in five social media user groups. These groups act as the infrastructure that founds the discussion of the following subjects; the innovation decision-process; adoption and rejection; networks; user-generated content; user activity and the bell-curve. Combined with supportive literature addressing subjects, including service management (Normann, 2010), diffusion of information technology (Moore, 2000) and networks (Burt, 1992), the findings are extensively discussed and applied in the context of social media. The study puts forth that the social media decision process includes a stage of 'trial', and that the process of adoption occurs within a community, rather than as an action carried out by an individual. It is further deduced that the five user groups do not join or adopt social media in a sequential manner, due to several barriers and a chasm, that disrupt it from doing so. As such, it is suggested that creators of social media approach users based on communities of interest or demographic, defined as 'communities of commonality', rather than on the basis of their technical adeptness. Lastly, a series of potential areas for further research are suggested, including the exploration of social media platform types; varying behaviours and relationships; and the dynamics of the communities of commonality.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 MOTIVATION

Younger generations are plagued by an often unhealthy propensity for, and reliance on social media, gaining recognition by scholars as a modern epidemic (Dretzin & Maggio, 2008; Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009); from firsthand experience we have been affected in our lives and relationships both on and offline, as the age of digital culture is upon us. Subsequently, our own use has motivated a great faith and interest in the value social media can deliver, by uniting people across distant boundaries under an infinitum of pretenses; be it an interest, demographic, ailment, or even for the sake of disaster relief.

That said, we have also come to acknowledge, that the influx of social media has also resulted in significant failure. As researchers and authors of this thesis, we have a strong appreciation for the aesthetics, functionality, novelty and design of digital products. Further, a great curiosity for how users come to commit to use of particular products over others, and why particular platforms have become so widely adopted whilst often higher quality contenders cannot compete, has generated extensive questioning and uncertainty. We thus wish to explore the challenges faced by the creators of social media, when encouraging adoption and tackling a marketplace where selection and variety is ample, and users are driven by *wants* rather than *needs*.

To approach this, we will first provide the reader with a brief evaluation of the social media industry, followed by a review of prominent contributions to innovation diffusion theory that continue to serve as resources, to understand how products come to be adopted. In doing so, we strive to identify discrepancies in the current body of literature,

and ultimately determine how our research can provide value both for other academics, and for social media industry players.

1.2 EXPLORING THE FIELDS OF INTEREST

1.2.1 Social media

As a fairly recent phenomenon, characterized by “*a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content*” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61), social media has swept up consumers of popular culture across the globe, having grown to now entertain 1.5 billion users in just a few years (Chiu et al., 2012). Scholars Boyd & Ellison (2007, p. 7) consider the phenomenon as “*web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system*”. However, as the industry develops, the degree of social connectedness delivered through digital media, sets products apart in the ever-growing marketplace of new online product. Given the rapid evolution of user demands and preferences, as well as the diversity of consumers of social media, creators of such products must constantly iterate their medium to appease such lofty needs.

The advent of real-time social media services date back to 1997, when Sixdegrees.com, a service that enabled users to create profiles and list friends, as well as blogs and online messaging services were made available to anyone with internet access (Digital Trends, 2012). In 2002, the market exploded with social network services such as Friendster, LinkedIn and MySpace, however it was not until 2004 with the launch of Facebook, that social media became a widely accepted concept. Social media now serves as the primary activity online and users are becoming increasingly diverse; supporting evidence includes the surprising fact that one in four American internet users over 65 now own a social media profile (Norman, 2010).

Having “*changed the nature of online user participation into more democratising forums*

where people can communicate and add their user-generated content [...] more active use indicates more varied use and forms of participation” (Brandtzæg, 2011, p. 29). Social media further distinguishes itself from traditional media, as it is inexpensive and easily accessible while enabling individuals to both publish and consume information. Consequently, social media has been classified as one of the most powerful sources for news, trends and marketing, especially as favored platforms such as Facebook and Twitter increase in popularity, both for individuals and companies alike. Through its interactive nature, this media channel has been a revolution not only for the communications of organisations, communities, and individuals, but has also grown an entirely new commercial marketplace.

With the success of Facebook in particular, reporting 1 billion active users in October 2012, who average seven hours of use per month (Facebook, 2012), the market has seen a dramatic rise in new social media products. Low entry barriers for both adopters and producers has encouraged growth in contenders, many of whom aspire to be ‘the next Facebook’. Businesses including large enterprises are also quickly incorporating technologies, that mimic the real time dialogue enabled by online social networks to improve collaboration and productivity (Chiu et al., 2012). However, with the influx of new players and rapid industry growth, high failure rates in the market of social media products has ensued as developers struggle to move forward from the initial hype into mainstream, and long-term successful markets (Helft, 2012).

Following its success, social media has gained significant attention from practitioners, resulting in an influx of ‘how-to’ literature (Sterne, 2010; Safko & Brake, 2009; Agresta & Bough, 2011), however there is a lack of empirical research on the topic. Furthermore, current research appears to be highly focused on the demographics of users, the superficials of their behaviour and even more so, how organisations can exploit the media from a marketing standpoint. Despite the huge interest in social media, academic research is lacking and does not provide a fully detailed understanding of the phenomena (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Current literature is often rigid, becoming quickly outdated and does not appreciate the innovative and composite nature of the social media market and its contributors - commonly from failure to incorporate adequate empirical foundations. The lack of sufficient inquiry to postulate a logical and thorough understanding of the

users who drive a medium through their activity and commitment, has resulted in both creators of social media and academics to resign to the nobody-knows principle (Caves, 2000). This screams for further research, to better understand and positively impact the users of a medium, both for the organisations using the platforms and the companies who create them.

1.2.2 Diffusion

Diffusion theory seeks to explain how, why and at what rate new ideas and in particular technologies, spread through a social system. The founding theories of innovation literature, which are consistently used to nurture current innovations, are founded on the basis of a diffusion process encompassing the following: *“two types of actors, an advocate of change and a potential acceptor of change; the situations in which these actors operate; communication between the actors; and the subject of that communication, a new thing or idea”* (Fliegel & Kivlin, 1966).

Many classification systems have attempted to achieve standardisation of adopter categories, however those defined by Rogers (2003) half a century ago, still persist as a dominant resource for understanding users, even in regards to new innovations today. Applied in rural sociology, Rogers (2003) argues that innovations are diffused through various channels over time (p. 11), amongst members of a social system who are categorised within five distinct groups: *innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards* (p. 22). This theory is recognised, tested on, adapted for and applied to many other industries beyond those used in its origination.

While Rogers' (2003) theory creates a broad foundation for how innovations spread through a social system, Bass (1969) attempts to predict adoption based on the interaction between existing and potential users of a product; using consumer durables he mathematically forecasts new users of a product over a duration of time. Further, theorist von Hippel (1986) asserts that certain technologies allow the end user to participate in the production of the innovation. In particular he develops the concept of 'the lead user', who can create important feedback to producers and lead other user groups to adopt a product. Moore (2000) adds to the body of knowledge, by addressing the diffusion of high-technology products. He states the existence of a 'chasm' that must be overcome

through marketing efforts that allows the product to diffuse through user groups similar to those proposed by Rogers (2003).

Based on the above summary of existing knowledge, we thus assert a gap in the body of research, that focuses on the diffusion of online products.

1.2.3 Gaps in existing theory

As Rogers (2003) delimits his theory using agricultural technologies, we regard the fundamental differences between the products used in Rogers' theory and those of social media, as the root of incompatibility in predicting the diffusion of social media. The social media market demands a theory that accounts for the vast differences between its respective products and the 'infrequently purchased' tangible goods, that founded traditional diffusion theory (Bass, 2004, p. 182). By nature, adoption barriers for social media are low and lasting relationships between its users are essential for long-term success; thus the innate differences between the products referred to in original diffusion literature and those of social media presents an ineptitude.

Recent attempts to apply diffusion theory to social media have materialised, with a focus on generating a user typology for online social products (Brandtzæg & Heim, 2011; Ortega, Menendez, Gonzales, 2007; Horrigan, 2007; Li et al., 2007; Roberts & Foehr, 2004;). Such attempts have yet to deliver a thorough understanding that lends generalisations that can be applied to all social media often due their narrow scope.

Whilst Brandtzæg and Heim (2011) provide relatively new research in the field, their results have been gathered only on the basis of Norwegian subjects' use of four local social networks, with samples averaging a median age of 16 years. This study thus fails to capture a fair representation of the complex diversity of social media users. A similar approach by Roberts & Foehr (2004) identifies six user groups, using a sample of American youth between eight and eighteen years of age, again failing to depict the broad demographics of social media users. In comparison, the study carried out by Li et al. (2007) has succeeded in using an approach that encompasses a broad sample base, but lacks a theoretical foundation and identifies only highly superficial qualities within its six user groups. Kozinets (1999) studies the consumption activity and the intensity of

relationships, between members of a virtual community; identifying four user groups. However, this classification relies only on levels of interaction between users, dismissing their motivations for use and factors that influence adoption. Furthermore, Kozinets' (1999) theory is based only on findings declared by other researchers, and lacks empirical insight into the world of social media.

A series of gaps are thus apparent in today's research body on social media and diffusion. 'Time' has become a major classification factor, that has led to over-homogenized results, as it fails to incorporate the critical qualitative differences between various users (Brandtzaeg, 2010). We thus find that current studies strive predominantly to determine user types on the basis of frequency of social media use, and thereby fail to acknowledge the importance of understanding the gratification, motivation and behaviour of these users. This complexity thus ascertains a need for the development of a more nuanced description of how people use social media, and how it manages to diffuse through networks (Selwyn, Gorard & Furlong, 2005). On account of this we assert that empirical studies in the field do not utilise a broad enough sample of users and social media types to warrant a comprehensive on social media diffusion.

Lastly, we identify a disinclination of researchers to generate results that can be applied more practically, by incorporating real life cases and references to the industry. These academic findings are often seen in isolation and thereby fail to be translated into knowledge that can be employed by companies to improve the performance of social media products.

1.2.4 Problem identification

As general innovation diffusion theory is a framework or way of thinking dependent on the specific context for application, a series of challenges arise when applying it to a specific industry. Without the frame of reference on the subject in question, application can become hazy and diluted, thus failing to deliver any value or relevant insight. The application of a general framework (Rogers, 2003) to industry specific innovations, demands high scrutiny in the validity of results, as they often require a sui generis approach on account of idiosyncrasies with prior innovations.

Through preliminary interviews with social media producers, repeat reference to terms

purported by Rogers (2003) arise. One in particular expresses their severe struggle to advance beyond early users, so to reach the mainstream market (RM, app. 1.1.1.1). In contrast, another conversation with a social media producer expressed a direct tactic to exclude such early users from their platform (TT, app. 1.1.1.2). This discrepancy lead us to question the application of such widely used terms and concepts for social media, and to consider the degenerative effects the implementation of such theory can have. Suggestions that the most advanced users should be first attracted to further diffuse an innovation was particularly unsettling. To further probe at the suspicion that such a strategy is ill-fitted to diffuse a social medium, we interviewed a likely ‘innovator’ (Rogers, 2003), paying particular attention to their motivation for use and the indications of a desire to further diffuse a social medium through their network. Through this preliminary research, it became apparent that the advanced user had a greater interest in the technical aspects of social media, rather than the connections the platform enabled (PL, 1.1.2.2). The user is thus unlikely to recommend, advocate and/or share a product with others. The preliminary inquiries, therefore uncover profound findings that motivate and justify further research to vindicate such discoveries.

Thus we appreciate prominent incompatibilities with Rogers’ diffusion theory in its application to social media. Given its widespread acceptance and use in the social media industry, this theory has been left un-criticised or challenged in its applicability to new technology. This subsistence may be a result of habit, rather than of proof or validity in its application to the successful diffusion of a modern innovation. With the above review of prior inquiry into our subject, we present our primary focus, where we seek to evolve the body of knowledge pertaining to the diffusion of social media innovations.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

How is a social medium diffused?

1.4 PROJECT DESIGN

1.4.1 Purpose

1.4.1.1 Value

Driven by curiosity and interest in the diffusion of social media products, and on the account of the increasing popularity of this channel as a standard mode of communication, this thesis seeks to further the understanding of why so many social media products fail to reach the mainstream market and how this can be rectified. To do so, we hereon make an inquiry into both the motivations and behaviors of social media consumers and juxtapose those with the strategies of the companies who create the platforms.

Essentially, this research addresses the recurring assumptions made by many companies in the industry who rely on theory that predates the invention of the products they produce. We believe that this dependency ensues blindsightedness and negligence to pertinent signals and circumstances, that should be closely monitored and continuously adapted. Thus this thesis is relevant, as it contributes new insight into the behaviour and motivations of social media users, and attempts to resolve the misaligned theory, that continues to create gaps in the understanding of how to best approach users, so to increase the likelihood of long-term success.

1.4.1.2 Objectives

This thesis and the results identified will seek to;

- ◆ Define adopter groups for social media.
- ◆ Identify and understand the motivation, attachment and use of social media by the various adopter groups.

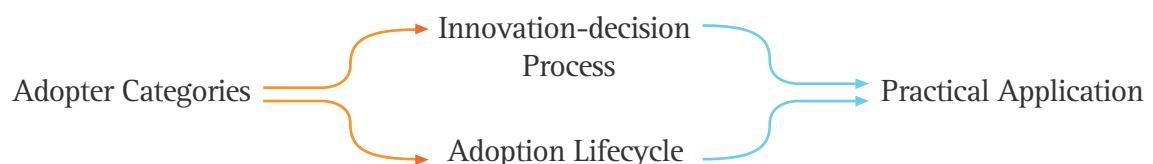
- ◆ Understand the relationships between users of social media.
- ◆ Deconstruct the theory of innovation diffusion, and reconstruct it to fit social media innovations.
- ◆ Provide a diffusion framework for creators of social media.

1.4.2 Approach

Based on the theoretical foundations for innovation diffusion, we identify a series of key points to use as a launchpad in generating a new approach to social media users.

We will begin with an empirical approach, to enable the categorisation of the social media users into their respective groups. From there, to gain an insight into how their qualities affect diffusion, their behaviours will be applied to two crucial facets of traditional diffusion theory: the innovation-decision process and the adoption lifecycle. Addressing these two concepts allows for the typology to be applied broadly to the diffusion of a social medium.

Fig. 1 - Key diffusion concepts

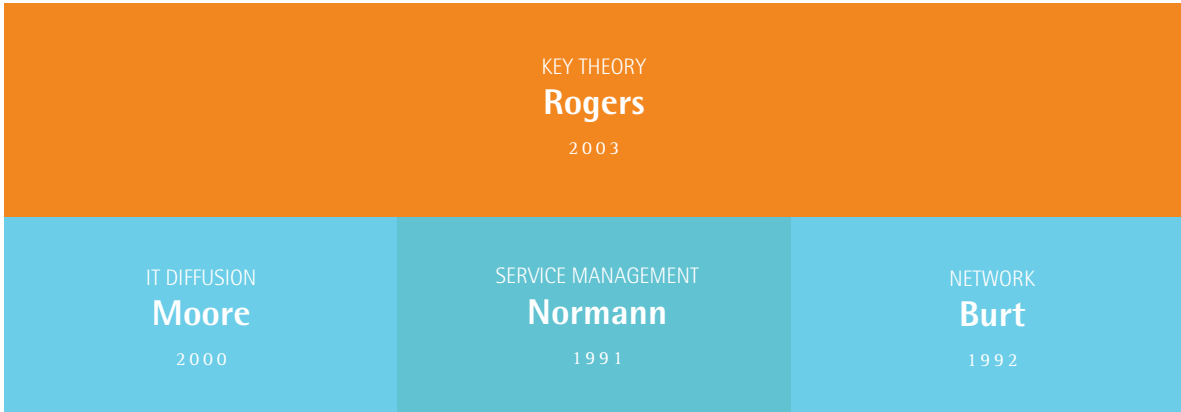


Defining the innovation-decision process will serve to explain the motivations of the different adopter groups to distinguish where some resist adoption. Further, this can determine whether Rogers' innovation-decision process has any relevance in its application to social media. Applying the adoption lifecycle, particularly the bell-curve (Rogers, 2003), will further establish whether a structured model outlining adoption patterns can be applied to social media, given its global, scattered and demographically diverse users. This will finally enable the testing of the fundamental question; are the *innovators*

(Rogers, 2003, p. 282) the appropriate group to lead a social media product into mainstream markets.

By presenting the typology in a broader context, we hope to gain a deeper insight into users' actual behaviour and how this differs from that in the original theory. Applying the theoretical findings in a practical context will assist in generating suggestions, that can enhance the odds of success for social media creators. Besides a series of real life case studies, facilitating the validity of the results and statements made, we aim to continuously compare the empirical findings with the selected literature presented below.

Fig. 2 - Literature



Rogers' (2003) diffusion theory is used as the base of our research and juxtaposed and challenged throughout the thesis. Whilst we acknowledge that Bass (1969) and von Hippel (1986) promote theories highly applicable to this subject, Rogers' theory demands re-evaluation in particular, due to its prominence. Likewise, we recognise the value of other prominent schools of theory including 1) the theory of uses and gratifications (Katz et al., 1974), which focuses on why users employ specific media channels to satisfy different needs, and 2) the technology acceptance model (Davis, 1989), that models how users come to accept and use technology. However, due to the aforementioned reasons we have chosen not to focus heavily on these additional theories in the discussion, giving precedence to Rogers (2003).

To utilise this theory in a more modern and fitting context, we also depend on Moore (2000), as his reference to modern technology is more closely related to social media. His recognition of a 'chasm' inhibiting adoption, can additionally give another perspective on the barriers of diffusion. To gain a theoretical understanding of some of the points that differentiate social media from the products in Rogers' theory, we integrate aspects of Normann's study of service management (1991). Lastly, in an attempt to understand the community aspect of social media and the interaction between the various users, we integrate elements of Burt's (1992) network analysis. In addition, various other literature will be integrated where appropriate. Use of existing theory throughout the thesis is supplementary to our empirical findings, and serves to either illustrate the incompetence in its application to social media, or to support unique findings.

The use of a sizable selection of demographics, as well as varying social media platforms, allow for comparisons and pattern analysis, rather than solely quantitative interpretation. By using our results to create qualitative support for over-arching and recurring findings, we can further understand the complex world of social media and generate new insights, that can serve to predict outcomes.

1.5 READING GUIDE

Table 1 - Reading guide

2.0 Methodology

Page 15

This section will discuss the choices in the research design, and justify the value they can deliver. We will provide a detailed overview of the various types of data collected, the reasoning for each initiative, in addition to tables representing the various samples to validate the research. Additionally we will discuss how the collected data is addressed and analysed, in an attempt to create a clear understanding of our decisions in this stage. Lastly, we identify a series of 'quality evaluation criteria' to further strengthen the empirical findings made.

3.0 Bias and limitations

Page 46

We present a series of potential biases and limitations, that can impact our research. This is to ensure clarity, validity and transparency in our study, but also to show the considerations and prioritisation for the choices made, to best reflect upon and overcome the identified problems.

4.0 Analysis

Page 50

In the analysis we present our initial findings and their meaning. This chapter relies heavily on quantitative findings, but with a qualitative approach, constantly evaluating the findings critically within their context. The goal of this chapter is not only to extract key findings from the analysis of our research, but also to provide transparency and support for the statements made throughout the thesis. Lastly, on the basis of the extensive analysis, we present our recommendations for a new social media user typology. This will furthermore be compared with that of Rogers, to identify prime resemblances and differences that can be further discussed.

5.0 Discussion

Page 80

In the discussion we aim to explore the extensive findings we have made, and put them within the context of the innovation-decision process, as well as the adoption lifecycle (Rogers, 2003). We will extensively discuss these concepts in comparison with our new user typology, and relate our findings back to real life case studies. Throughout the discussion we will be making a series of 'generalisations', comprised of short summaries of our findings; this is to provide the reader an overview of the process, to better comprehend the complexity of the study. The discussion seeks to further understand how social media users are different from those outlined in Rogers theory, with the goal of providing newfound understanding

of diffusion in social media, as well as insight for social media creators.

6.0 Conclusion

Page 131

Here we summarise the findings made in both the analysis and the discussion. Here, we also reflect upon the general differences and surprises identified throughout the research process. Lastly, we suggest a series of possible subjects for further research.

7.0 Reference list

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Here we present an overview of the various literature quoted or referenced throughout the thesis.

8.0 Bibliography

Page 146

Here we present an overview of the literature that influenced our research, and served as a foundation for our knowledge on the subject. Further, this background literature has assisted in the determination of our research question.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODS

Social media is driven by users through both content and activity, and the understanding of these users is thus essential for the successful creation of a social media product. On account of this, our approach has been built around what we identify as a gap in the research body: a lack of focus on a broad, general selection of social media users across several platforms. Due to this gap, that also lead to the formation of our research question¹, we find it essential to take an empirical approach and thus carry out a vast amount of data collection. The rich results gathered from this strategy, enables the analysis of our research question. What is particularly important is gathering data from the right people; in order to accomplish this, we carefully ensure that data is gathered from sources, to both give insight into our problem and effectively help develop an understanding of the broad range of social media users.

After defining the research aim and question, as well as the theory which creates the foundation of our study, we address data collection, reduction and analysis. As the methodology has a great impact on the course of the research and the quality of data gathered, we discuss and justify our methodological choices, in relation to the research question.

In our methodology we thus aim to create an overview of the various acts of method collection carried out. Furthermore, we will discuss and evaluate the range of data

1 See p. 9

gathered, and provide a demographic overview of our selection. Lastly, we identify any bias and limitation that might affect the quality of our study. The following section seeks to provide clarity and transparency of the exhaustive processes that we undertake to gather and make sense of our data, to explain how we arrive at our findings.

2.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

2.2.1 Methodological paradigm

As a recent innovation, social media still remains quite unexplored from an academic point of view. By querying the application of older, classic theory to social media, we thus aspire to add to the lacking body of research, through the integration of practical observations and empirical data. Through direct interaction with social media users we take an empirical approach and aim to arrive at conclusions on the basis of observable data, to meet our objectives as outlined in the introduction.

Meaning is thus developed by examining the collected empirical data, and comparing the results and hypotheses against diffusion theory. By using empirical data to critically test and evaluate the application of Rogers (2003) diffusion theory on social media, we can overcome the contextual differences presented in our introduction² and thus understand and respond appropriately to the complex dynamics of the subject.

Rogers' (2003) theory was critical in establishing the foundation of our research and continues to feature throughout the study, based on the hypothesis that the theory is not directly applicable to the diffusion of social media. However, as our research has evolved, the empirical data has taken a more central role, resulting in an approach governed more by grounded theory than initially expected. In doing so, while our ambition lay not in theory development, elements of grounded theory are employed in our empirical analysis. Corbin & Strauss (1988, p. 158) identifies grounded theory as when “*theory evolves during actual research and it does this through continuous interplay*

2 See p. 1

between analysis and data collection”. The approach is clearly reflected in this study as constant analysis, hypotheses and adjustment has resulted in a thorough and complex research process. Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008, p. 154) put forth that “grounded theory methodology consists of a specific set of procedures for carving out the inbuilt middle-range theory from and with the help of the empirical data”. This is essential in the design of this study, to focus specifically on social media, without sacrificing the applicability that can be obtained from a broader, abstract delimitation.

2.2.2 Inductive and deductive reasoning

While theory and data cooperate in tandem through inductive and deductive reasoning, our study is inspired by both modes of research, as we move frequently between the two. The inductive approach, often deriving from the constructionist paradigm, starts with an examination of the social world, followed by the development of a theory consistent with that of the observed data. The deductive approach differs in its focus on operationalising theory, through the testing of hypotheses, in order to validate or reject them.

2.2.3 Hermeneutics

Throughout the research process, we continue to change and adapt our research question and approach; thus working within the so-called hermeneutic circle. This constitutes the methodological process of understanding, constructing and deepening a meaning during research activities (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 32). Starting with an often vague and intuitive understanding, the hermeneutic circle provides a cyclical perception of meaning creation, continuously interpreting and relating information (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008, p. 210).

Thus, “based on the notion that research is a human, subjective activity but that this humanity is a crucial resource in the development of understanding” (McAuley, 2004, p. 201), it is assumed that our presuppositions will affect the gathering of data (Meyers, 2009, p. 165). Whilst allowing space for interpretation and acknowledging the existence of the researcher, we attempt to identify and account for potential biases in our analysis.

2.2.4 Design

The following section outlines the methods used for data collection, reduction and analysis and justifies the choices made for each process, as they infer a significant impact on the findings and further analysis. On the basis of our problem formulation and chosen research philosophy, it is obvious that a large selection of data should be gathered in order to provide a suitable insight into social media users (Punch, 2005, p. 44). We settle on the following types of data, which will be discussed in further detail:

- ◆ Preliminary interviews with social media companies and users
- ◆ Questionnaires distributed among social media users
- ◆ In-depth interviews with selected questionnaire respondents
- ◆ Case studies

In the initial stages of the data collection, we considered a practical observation study on a selection of volunteers. This approach was however discarded in its initial stages, yet some results were obtained and will be addressed further.

2.3 PRELIMINARY INTERVIEWS

To test our hypothesis and further develop our research question, it is essential to carry out preliminary interviews with social media companies and users, in the early stages of the research process.

2.3.1 Social media companies

These two case companies are chosen for the preliminary interviews, as both are within their first years of development of a social media, and are thus very closely involved with their users. The interviews with key members of the companies prove vital in confirming the direction of our research and rectifying our uncertainty. Additionally, both companies are easily accessible, due to personal relations; this helps encourage

honest and comfortable discussion to derive greater value.

Table 2 - Social media companies

Company	Interviewee	Code	Date	Format	Length	App
Kinetik	Raul Moreno, CEO	RM	12.04.2012	Skype	45 min	1.1.1.1
Everplaces	Tine Thygsesen, CEO	TT	27.04.2012	In person	45 min	1.1.1.2

The interviewees were briefly introduced to our area of interest, and were informed that the discussion would be informal and conversational. Whilst both interviews were carried out using the same general interview structure, the conversations were allowed to take their own direction when suitable, to open up for as many potential discussion subjects as possible (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 82). The interviewees were asked to introduce their company, then further discussion focused on their users, their relationship to these and the approach undertaken to recruit them. Furthermore, the interviewees were asked about the initial stages of product development and deployment - again with a specific focus on the role of the users in this stage.

Due to the exploratory nature of these interviews, they are not used directly in our further discussion, however the importance and effect of these should not be undermined, as knowledge achieved from these continues to play a key role in our research.

2.3.2 Social media users

To support the initial findings gained from the interviews with social media companies, we test these against information gathered by interviewing selected social media users. Through our personal social media channels, we found two highly opinionated users who were willing to be interviewed. These were chosen on the basis of their high degree of dissimilarity, so to produce comparable data.

Table 3 - Social media users

Code	Date	Format	Length	App
PL	22.04.2012	In person	24 min	1.1.2.2
AP	26.04.2012	Skype	16 min	1.1.2.1

Before the interview, both subjects were asked to fill out a simple questionnaire (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MHRZZQN>), about what social media sites they have an account on, how often they visit them and what their intentions were when they joined - these were used as the foundation for their respective interviews. Again, the interviewees were briefly introduced to our research and area of interest, and informed that the interview was to be informal and conversational.

Whilst both interviews were of great value in contributing to our research question, the interview with PL was particular rich, and has therefore been coded and used in our further research, along with the detailed social media user interviews later carried out.

2.4 QUESTIONNAIRES

2.4.1 Constructing the questionnaire

Based on the gaps in research and the characteristics identified by Rogers (2003), we select a series of subjects we wish to explore with our questionnaire (app. 2.1) and which we believe are important in the examination of diffusion in social media. The subjects are derived in part from dominant themes from Rogers' (2003) user categorisation, to reflect any parallels and differences. The remaining subjects are created to represent the unique nature of social media and are generated on the basis of social media literature, as well as prior attempts at creating a social media user typology. The themes are as follows:

- ◆ Technical ability

- ◆ Amount of social media accounts
- ◆ Frequency of visits
- ◆ Amount of online connections
- ◆ Initiative and interest to join social media platforms
- ◆ Influence of friends

Furthermore, the questionnaire gathers some basic data on the respondents, including their gender, age, profession and current place of residence.

2.4.2 The questionnaire

Thirty-one social media platforms are selected, and range within four categories. Guided by our preliminary research, background knowledge of the most popular platforms in the market, and the case studies included in the discussion, we present a description of the four types of social media, along with the social media platforms used in this study.

Table 4 - Platform categorisation

Network	Content
<p>Refers to platforms that support personal or professional relationships, and dialogue between account holders, while allowing for the customisation of individual profiles. Activity can be performed through dialogue and content creation, and users are encouraged to follow the profiles of other account holders, through 'friendships'. This media is often dominated by online replicas of offline relationships.</p>	<p>Refers to platforms that promote the discovery, organisation, filtering and sharing of existing online content, through social interaction with other account holders.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Bebo ◆ Facebook ◆ Google+ ◆ LinkedIn ◆ LiveJournal ◆ Myspace ◆ Orkut ◆ Twitter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ deviantArt ◆ Dribbble ◆ Flickr ◆ Soundcloud ◆ Vimeo ◆ YouTube ◆ Tumblr

Service	Mobile
Refers to platforms that enable account holders to share and broadcast unique, user-generated content, and for others to consume and interact with it.	Refers to platforms in the form of 'apps', that are developed for use on smart-phones. These often focus on interaction and consumption on the go, based on location or real time sharing and updates.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Delicious ◆ Digg ◆ 8tracks ◆ Goodreads ◆ Kaboodle ◆ Last.fm ◆ Pinterest ◆ Reddit ◆ StumbleUpon ◆ Yelp ◆ Quora 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Everplaces ◆ Foodspotting ◆ Foursquare ◆ Fribi ◆ Instagram ◆ Kinetik

2.4.2.1 Structure

After identifying key demographic information, the users are asked to answer what social media enabled devices they own³, as well as how able they consider themselves to be technically. This is followed by asking on which of the 31 social media platforms listed the respondents have an account; regardless if they use the account or not.

3 Respondents have the choice to select any number of the following: Smartphone, Tablets, Laptop, Desktop

Sequentially, respondents are asked a series of questions about the specific platforms on which they indicate they have an account; including their use of the platform and why they joined, how many people they are connected to on the specific site and how often they use it. This is followed by a list of possible actions indicating how they use the site, concluding with a series of statements focussed on the users' opinions of and attachment to the product.

The questionnaire is carefully constructed to uncover the extent to which the users are active on the individual platforms. To do this, they are asked to indicate the extent to which they engage by browsing, 'liking'⁴, commenting on or sharing content created by friends, strangers, high-profile persons and celebrities, as well as companies. Further, respondents are asked whether they are likely to create their own content, share things found online and act upon information and events they have learned about on the social medium on each of the specific sites. Lastly, at the end of the survey respondents are asked to indicate if they are willing to participate in further research, by providing their name and email address.

2.4.3 Distribution

The questions are collected in an online questionnaire and distributed through a variety of social media channels. Our personal connections have also been encouraged to share the questionnaire, within their network. Lastly, several people have been approached outside of social media platforms, to ensure that users who are not as active and engaged online will still be represented in the research.

To further ensure a broad selection of respondents, we have each been given a unique URL, enabling us to track how many respondents from each of our networks have completed the survey. Being from Denmark and Canada respectively, it is important that each of our networks are used equally to gather data, as to ensure fair geographical representation of respondents.

4 Liking: Clicking a 'like' button to actively indicate to the original creator of the 'liked' content, that one acknowledges and appreciates such content.

2.4.4 Respondent demographics

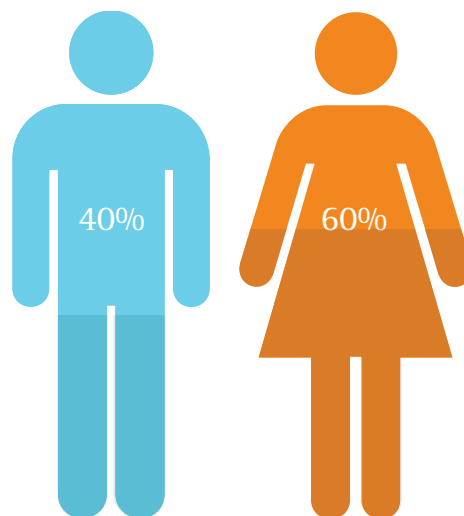
After deactivating the questionnaire, invalid surveys are eliminated including those encompassing profanity, any incomplete surveys⁵ as well as duplicates; this has resulted in a total of 128 respondents.

Due to the online format of our questionnaire, we are unable to select and control the representativity of the respondents. However, to provide transparency in our results and to account for any potential biases, the demographics of the respondents have been analysed and compared to existing statistics on social media users.

The following demographics are determined on account of the initial mandatory questions, that are posed at the the beginning of each questionnaire.

2.4.4a Gender

Fig. 3 - Gender distribution



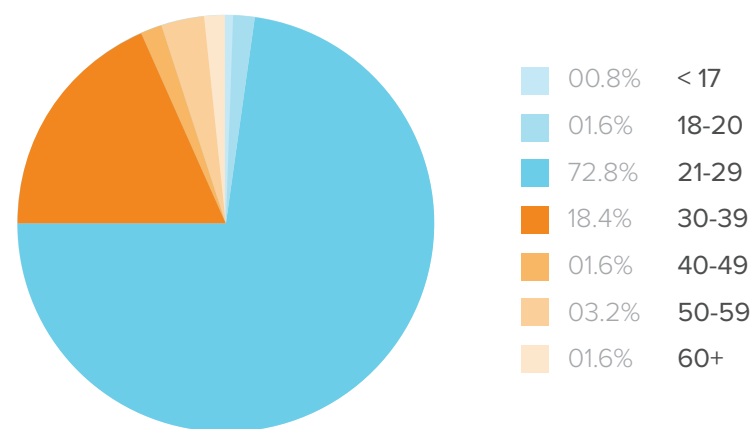
Of the valid questionnaires, we have had 76 females and 51 males complete the survey;

⁵ Due to the extensive size of our questionnaire, many respondents did not complete the survey. However, surveys whereby only one field has been left unanswered, likely because they have been overlooked or forgotten, have still been included. This can result in the total respondent number, not equating to 128 in specific questions.

equaling 60% women and 40% men. While these numbers are not equal, they are supported by general social media statistics, as a fair representation of the social media landscape; Pingdom (2012) finds that the majority of social media platforms have more female users than male.

2.4.4b Age

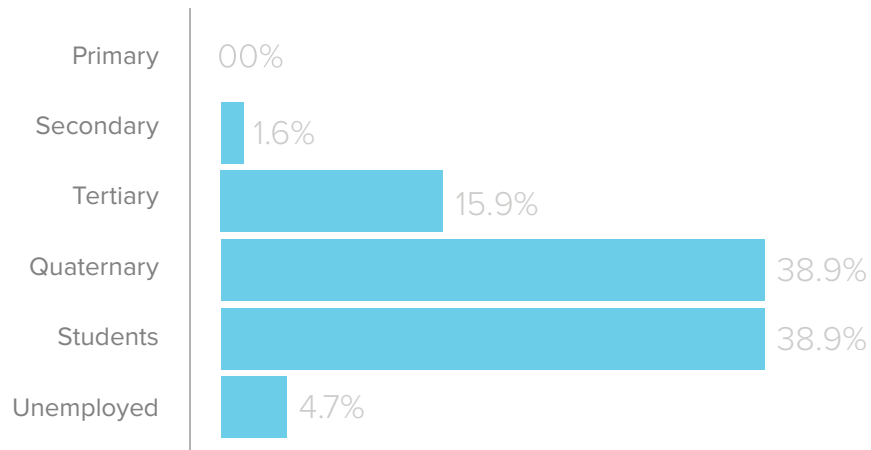
Fig. 4 - Age distribution



Our two largest groups of respondents are those aged 20-29, accounting for 66.4%. There are followed by the 30-39 year-old category, which accounts for 16.7% of all respondents. The remaining age groups range between >1 and 3%. Though statistics support that the dominant age groups in this study are likewise in social media in general (Pingdom, 2012), the other age groups should be better represented to create a fairer picture. This has been accounted for in our biases and limitations (p. 46).

2.4.4c Profession

Fig. 5 - Profession distribution

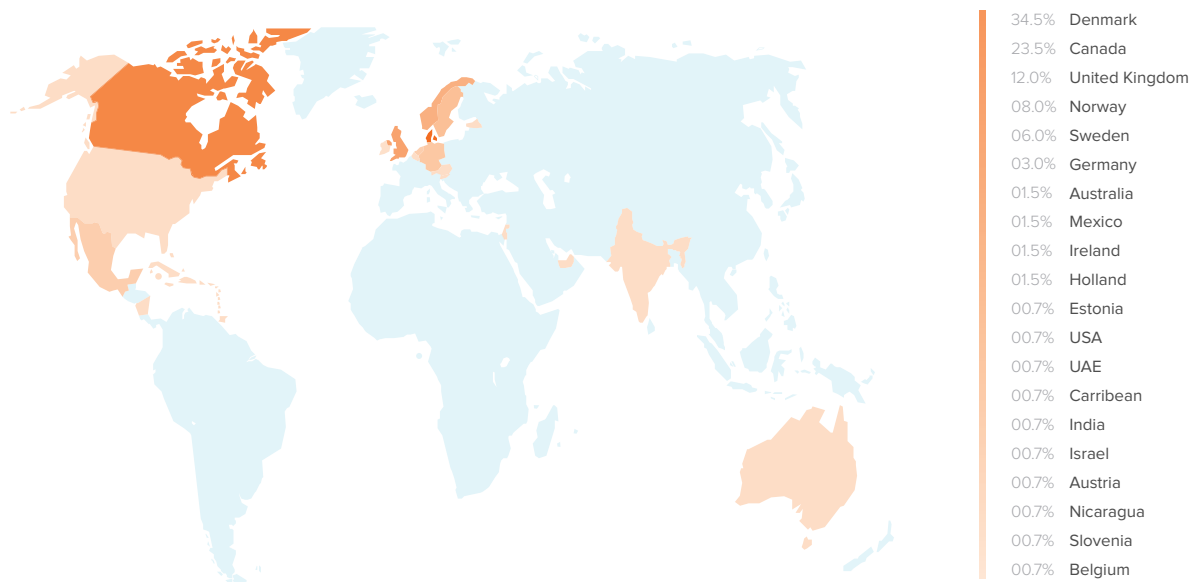


Respondents are asked their profession, which is later grouped into 6 categories to give a better overview: primary, secondary, tertiary, quaternary, student and unemployed. Primary consists of people involved in sourcing raw materials such as loggers, fishermen or miners. Secondary includes people working in processing raw material for example builders. Tertiary represents workers providing a service for example retail, hospitality or real estate workers. Lastly, quaternary consists of intellectuals such as managers or professionals working in government, technical or cultural companies.

Students and intellectuals represent a large part of the respondents, as these are a natural part of the networks the questionnaire was distributed to. This will be discussed further in our biases and limitations (p. 46).

2.4.4d Location

Fig. 6 - Geographic distribution



Results on geographic location show that respondents are widely represented from a total of 20 countries. Again, the results have been somewhat impacted by the networks they were distributed within, however the sample still represents an impressive geographical spread; broader than in previous studies.

2.4.5 Questionnaire data reduction

As our questionnaires present a significant amount of data, it is vital to reduce this information into a workable format. Over a period of two weeks, through trial and error, we attempted to sort, code and analyse the vast amount of data. This process was long and tedious as the data initially presented no clear patterns or results, however it also played an essential role in itself, in the later analysis and discussion of the final results.

All questionnaires have been printed, equating to over 500 pages. Due to the plethora of our results and the lack of a clear mode to make sense of the rich data, we use systemised approaches to attempt to break down the results and uncover any patterns that can prove valuable. While many of these attempts are rejected, they allow us to gradually uncover how to make use of the results. To arrive at this point of lucidity, we employ a series of techniques to “*reduce the number of variables, [...] without losing the*

information the original variables provide” (Punch, 2005, p. 125).

Through these various attempts of systemising, visually sorting, extracting exemplary data and re-sorting, evaluation criteria and patterns are emphasised and help us shape the analysis and better understand the results. Thus, despite the trial and error nature of the analysis, this process proves extremely valuable and lead to a much more complex and exhaustive dissection of the questionnaires through the following methods of sorting:

2.4.5a Sorting method no. 1

First, we attempt to categorise users into groups based on the amount of platforms on which they have an account. However, with this attempt it became increasingly difficult to find patterns indicating potential user groups. This lead to the recognition, that the social media platforms used in the survey cannot all be considered equal, when used to measure how advanced the users are in their use of social media. It therefore becomes apparent, that a more nuanced form of analysis must be carried out. Users active on few, less mainstream platforms, can not be categorised together with users owning the same amount of accounts, but on well-known, and popular sites.

2.4.5b Sorting method no. 2

Based on the findings from the first round of coding, this second method takes the disparity of social media platforms into account. Thus, to better represent the value of complex or rare sites, a grading system is implemented; complex or rare platforms are given a higher value, than are mainstream products, such as Facebook, which are valued much lower. Respondents are then awarded points according to the specific platforms on which they have an account, rather than only the amount they own. Once tallied, users are organised sequentially from least to greatest total number of points and divided into groups, when notable gaps in points permits.

However, this formula for categorisation is likewise rejected, as was the case with sorting method no. 1, no identifiable patterns were discovered.

2.4.5c Sorting method no. 3

Consequently through the various methods of sorting, the complexity of the data is

acknowledged, as is the depth of analysis needed to understand it. Due to the diverse demographics of social media users (Blakley, 2011), age, location and profession are not seen as suitable sorting mechanisms. Instead, we identify elements that are not considered in the application of the original theory of diffusion (Rogers, 2003), to a typology of social media users.

Based on this, each questionnaire is analysed on an individual basis, by summarising key findings about each respondent; thereby translating the quantitative data into qualitative findings. The following is thus accounted for in our final categorisation of the respondents, as they are fundamental, differentiating elements, that set our findings apart from prior research:

Table 5 - Assessment criteria

Criteria	Assessment	Comments
Amount of accounts	How many platforms is a user active on, and how many inactive accounts do they own?	<i>We acknowledge both active and inactive accounts, as indicators of a user's behaviour and propensity for social media.</i>

Criteria	Assessment	Comments
Type of platforms	What platforms is a user active on, and what platforms does a user own inactive accounts on?	<i>We denote varying value to platforms that are widely used, versus those that are niche, and thereby account for not only how many platforms a user has an account on, but also which platforms. We further assess which of these are in use, in contrast to those that are idle or never put into use.</i>
Frequency of visits	How often does a user visit a social media platform?	N/A
Device	What devices are utilized by a user to access social media?	N/A
Size of networks	How many connections does a user have on social media?	<i>We assess the size of a user's network on each social medium on which they have an account.</i>

Criteria	Assessment	Comments
Type of connections	Who does a user communicate with on social media?	<i>We take into account if the user mainly communicates with friends, strangers, companies or high profiled people and celebrities.</i>
Motivation	Why does the user sign up for a social medium?	N/A
Level of attachment	How attached is the user to social media?	<i>This is gauged on a user's likelihood of recommending a site to others, how a user would cope without access to particular sites, or if they would be likely to switch to competing products.</i>
Level of engagement	How much content does the user create or interact with?	<i>We assess engagement levels by measuring the extent to which a user browses, interacts with others' content or create their own.</i>

Criteria	Assessment	Comments
Quality of engagement	What is the quality of the content and interaction carried out by the user?	<i>This measures how much thought is given to content created and how aware and cautious a user is when portraying themselves on social media.</i>

This initial review is followed by a reflection process, whereby each respondent is discussed separately and grouped with other respondents bearing similar attributes. Lastly, each group of respondents are discussed and key patterns found and summarised, resulting in seven separate groups.

On account of further debate, several of the groups have been amalgamated due to great similarities of major features, thereby resulting in a reduction to five final user groups. Lastly, these groups are compared with the results from the first two sorting methods, and adjustments made for individual respondents where fit.

2.5 INTERVIEWS

To obtain a deeper understanding of how members of the five groups differ in their use of and relationship to social media, a series of follow up interviews are carried out. These interviews are used to further help us identify key traits of each of the user groups, and solidify or refute the findings gathered from the questionnaires. We thereby follow Kvale's (1996, p. 32) philosophy whereas the "*focus is on nuanced descriptions that depicted the qualitative diversity, the many differences and varieties of a phenomenon, rather than on ending up with fixed categorizations.*" In doing so, we uncover a deeper

understanding of the users' emotional relationship to social media, and provide a more elaborate understanding of the variance of users' personalities. This is necessary to create an accurate user typology.

These interviews serve as the fundamental point at which we depart and add a qualitative element to prior research, that seeks to understand and create a classification of social media users on account of their use of, behavior on, and relationship to social media.

2.5a Semistructured interviews

According to Kvale (1996, p. 291) "*The very strength of the interview is its privileged access to the common understanding of subjects that provides their worldview and the basis for their actions*". Thus, our emotional interview approach is set up to uncover "*the participants' authentic experiences*" and understand their "*perceptions, conceptions, understandings, viewpoints, and emotions*" (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 79). Using semi-structured interviews allow us to use a prepared outline of topics and themes, whilst still having the option to customise each interview (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, pp. 82).

Thus, the interviews follow a set structure that is deviated only, when the respondent's answers prompt new curiosities that are not included in the original set of questions. Respondents are therefore also encouraged to make their own interpretations of questions, and take the interview in the direction they see fit. That said, it is ensured that all general areas are covered, and supplemented with individual questions for the specific respondents where fit. As "*a qualitative research interview seeks to cover both factual and a meaning level*" (Kvale, 1996, p. 32), our interviews has enabled the gathering of comparable data; facilitating the comparison of like questions.

2.5.1 Interview guide

The interview guide (app. 1.2a) used for the ten post-questionnaire interviews, is created to reveal information about the three overall themes (Rogers, 2003), that represent the focus of this study:

- ◆ Adopter categories

- ◆ Innovation-decision process
- ◆ Adoption lifecycle

As discussed earlier, these themes are identified as key aspects of the original diffusion theory, and thus create the foundation of the interview guide. Questions are composed within these themes to provide insights into both diffusion of social media in general, and specific adopter behaviours. The following provide an overview of the areas explored within each theme;

Table 6 - Interview themes

Adopter categories	Innovation-decision process	Adoption lifecycle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Opinions on social media ◆ Relationship to social media ◆ Perception of own behaviour on social media ◆ Actual behaviour on social media ◆ Thoughts about privacy on social media ◆ Intentions for social media use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Effect of friends on social media decision process ◆ Evaluation criteria and comprehensive decision process of new social media platforms ◆ Early behaviour on a social media platform ◆ Sourcing of and exposure to new social media platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Time of joining various social media sites ◆ Reasons for joining social media ◆ Frequency of visits to social media ◆ Dependency on social media ◆ Relationship to other users of social media ◆ Perceived value of social media

Adopter categories	Innovation–decision process	Adoption lifecycle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Interaction with friends and strangers on social media ◆ General relationship to technology and the internet ◆ Importance of friends and networks on social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Evaluation criteria of new social media platforms ◆ Reaction to changes of social media interfaces ◆ Opinion on branding of social media sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Likelihood to terminate social media accounts

We make minor adjustments to the interview guide where necessary to fit the individual respondent on account of learnings from prior interviews.

2.5.2 Samples

The interviewees are picked based on a specific set of criteria, to ensure a fairly wide selection of samples. The following factors are taken into consideration during the selection of potential interviewees;

- ◆ Gender
- ◆ Age
- ◆ Profession
- ◆ Location

To give the reader an overview of the diversity of our samples, we provide the profiles

of our interviewees, presented in a random order and without reference to their name or transcript, for the sake of data protection. We thus end up with the following user profiles, ensuring a wide selection of demographics within our interviewees;

Table 7 - Interviewee demographics

	Gender	Age	Profession	Location
Profile 1	Male	26 years	Designer	England
Profile 2	Female	59 years	Teacher	Canada
Profile 3	Male	35 years	Phd. student	Denmark
Profile 4	Male	26 years	IT Support	England
Profile 5	Female	55 years	Administrator	England
Profile 6	Female	17 years	Student	Canada
Profile 7	Male	25 years	Business Development	Austria
Profile 8	Female	23 years	Communication Manager	Canada
Profile 9	Female	26 years	Photographer	England
Profile 10	Female	24 years	Student	Canada
Profile 11	Male	24 years	Unemployed	Germany

During the interview process, we learn that a number of the interviewees, categorised on the basis of their survey, belong to different groups than initially expected. These

users are moved to less advanced user groups and new respondents are found to replace them. On account of this, adjustments are made to the interview plans so that all interviewees are designated to the correct group.

The ten interviews carried out, comprise two users from each potential user group, to effectively gain a broad representation and formalise the quality of our primary data. As our preliminary user interviews are used as a departure in the creation of the final research design, we have decided to use the interview of PL (app. 1.1.2.2) and code it together with the ten others. On account of this, this qualitative data is comprised of a total of eleven user interviews. With the exception of the preliminary interview with PL, all interviews are conducted over a nine day period

Table 8 - Interviewee overview

Code	Group	Date	Format	Length	Appendix
JA	5	02.08.2012	In person	24 min.	1.2.1.1
AR	5	02.08.2012	In person	20 min.	1.2.1.2
PL	5	22.04.2012	In person	24 min.	1.1.2.2
ER	4	31.07.2012	Skype	27 min.	1.2.2.1
GS	4	09.08.2012	Skype	19 min.	1.2.2.2
NC	3	06.08.2012	Skype	19 min.	1.2.3.1
WL	3	14.08.2012	Skype	25 min.	1.2.3.2
BC	2	31.07.2012	In person	46 min.	1.2.4.1
BT	2	06.08.2012	Skype	13 min.	1.2.4.2
KR	1	04.08.2012	Skype	18 min.	1.2.5.1
YL	1	09.08.2012	Skype	15 min.	N/A ⁶

6 Due to technical failures, this interview was unable to be transcribed, as the recording failed. The results from this interview still contribute to our findings.

2.5.3 Decomposing the interviews

Our initial assumptions about social media, user motivation, adopter categories and adoption barriers set various guidelines that influence the way in which our interviews are coded. Further, our pre-understanding of previously formed adoption theory, general observations on social media and use-based knowledge also impact our results. This approach resembles concept driven coding (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008, p. 202), whereby the researcher has formulated codes in advance. However, open-coding is to a certain extent integrated in our analysis, since the collected data and the analysis here-of is constantly reviewed as new concepts and themes emerge or prove of greater importance than earlier assumed.

Thus, to make sense of our extensive qualitative data, all interviews are transcribed and coded. Following the structure set forth by Coffey and Atkinson (1996) we follow the basic procedures of qualitative coding by:

1. Acknowledging relevant phenomena
2. Collecting examples of those phenomena
3. Analysing those phenomena to uncover patterns, differences, commonalities and structures

Through the process of coding, we classify our empirical data into themes (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 128), and thus condense the extensive interview texts by providing overview and structure (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008, p. 201). Transcriptions are organised according to user group, and individually colour coded according to six recurring themes:

1. Decision process related to adoption
2. Privacy and personal presentation
3. Opinions and emotions
4. Behavior

5. Desired/revered attributes
6. Network and community

All valuable quotes are assembled according to theme, within each specific user group; creating a usable overview of patterns and opinions within each group. This process plays a key role in the identification of common user group traits and exemplary quotes to illustrate these, feature throughout the thesis.

2.6 CASE STUDIES

In an effort to contrast the lacking body of research, a series of case studies will feature throughout the discussion. This research strategy aids in the understanding of complex issues arising from the empirical data (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 117). Additionally, the use of case studies support the uniqueness of the study and research question.

2.6.1 Pinterest case

To further understand and study the stages of adoption of a new social media and further learn about adoption barriers, we enlist individuals to participate in a case study designed to examine their adoption process. This is tested on Pinterest, an online visual bookmarking service, launched as a closed beta in March 2010, that quickly generated large amounts of media attention and subsequent mass user signups.

Ten participants are recruited through our own social media networks, by requesting interested persons to complete an online webform⁷. As with our interviewees, these are carefully selected to reflect diversity. The participants are requested to commence usage of the platform, and through regular interviews we aim to gain knowledge about their experience and challenges faced, in using a new social media site. A package of

7 Pinterest observation study webform on Podio, <http://podio.com/webforms/1505284/88215>

empowerment resources (app. 2.2) are provided to each user. As most of the volunteers express prior intention of signing up, the empowerment resources are meant as motivation to overcome any barriers having impeded them earlier. With that said, we act as catalysts to accelerate the participants' sign-up and usage of Pinterest.

The study is carried out over a period of a month, and prompts and reminders are periodically sent. Whilst offering support and technical assistance if needed, conversation also gathers insight into the users' experience. However, when learning that none of the participants had actively used the site, the study is cancelled. Nevertheless, significant findings are derived and continuously affect the analysis of other results, particularly in relation to adoption.

2.6.2 Supportive case-studies

When analysing and applying our empirical research, we find it important to ground our research in real life cases; various supportive case-studies are thus featured throughout. By using real-life cases as supportive scenarios to strengthen proposed findings, the cases further act as “instruments”, assisting in the development and testing of general theoretical propositions (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 119).

The following cases are constructed from relevant news stories and our industry-related knowledge. The following are integrated where findings arise, that can explain the events related to these eminent cases.

Table 9 - Supportive case-studies

Case	Featured on page
Myspace	101
Google+	108
Kinetik	111
Pinterest	112
Facebook	122
Everplaces	128

2.7 QUALITY EVALUATION CRITERIA

By adopting explicit evaluation criteria, the transparency of our research is enhanced and thus conveys the strengths and limitations of our research (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 290). Due to the analytical and interpretative nature of the study, we attempt to overcome these challenges by applying the following quality evaluation criteria:

2.7a Transparency

To create a traceable and well documented study, we collect transcripts, questionnaires, and all other relevant material in the appendix when possible. Furthermore, the approach and intentions behind each initiative is explained in the methodology and supported by relevant literature. Lastly, quotes and extracts used in the analysis reference the appendix accordingly, to allow for easy verification of facts.

2.7b Reflexivity

Great care is taken to critically outline any biases and to reflect how practical initiatives and methodological choices affect results. Furthermore, the limitations of the research is reviewed and possible further research identified.

2.7c Clarity

To create clarity, highlighted 'generalisations' feature throughout the thesis. These are to highlight important findings and avoid misinterpretation of results, due to the reader's possible predispositions. These generalisations have been collected in the appendix (app. 4.1) to provide an easy overview of conclusions. Furthermore, the appendix presents a glossary of key terms (app. 4.2) used throughout the thesis. This is to prevent any misunderstandings of results, due to variations in interpretation.

2.7d Validity

Validity plays an essential role throughout; not only is the research question founded in the attempt to test the validity of Rogers' (2003) theory against social media, we also strive to validate our own research, by constantly providing the reader with explanations, overviews and background knowledge for our decisions.

3.0 BIAS AND LIMITATIONS

3.1 CHANNELS OF DATA COLLECTION

The majority of our data is collected by distributing the questionnaire through our own social media profiles. This means that the respondents comprise mainly people within our networks, thus resulting in a large selection of tech-industry professionals and students or graduates.

Furthermore, it is probable that the technically advanced and frequent social media users are more likely to respond to our requests, than are less advanced or frequent users. Action is taken to rectify this, through distribution of the questionnaire outside of social media to ensure less advanced users are also represented.

3.2 PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH INTERVIEWEES

As the majority of interviewees are personally related to us, we take great care to prevent this from affecting our research. In doing so, we avoid providing any interviewee with details or in-depth explanations of our research question, to ensure honesty and genuineness in their responses. However, after coding and analysing the interviews, we believe the personal and friendly atmosphere, enables the interviewees to speak their minds freely, thus enhancing the quality of our results (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, 57).

3.3 FACEBOOK AS A MAINSTREAM MEDIUM

The social networking site Facebook features both in our questionnaire and interviews. As Facebook is so widely adopted, it features heavily in most users' online behaviour and can falsely enhance our results. This is particularly the case with the least advanced user groups with whom Facebook may be their only social medium.

Whilst the importance of Facebook cannot be undervalued and continues to feature in this study, we acknowledge the impact it can have and thus account for this in our analysis. Through the inclusion of niche platforms in our questionnaire, we gather insight into the behaviours of advanced users of social media and balance the bias that Facebook may have caused.

3.4 USER GROUP SIZES

As the respondents are allocated to the respective user groups, these prove to be of substantially differing sizes. Though we do not strive to determine the dimensions of these groups, the analysis of the smaller groups⁸ do not have as great an empirical foundation, as do the larger groups. This has an effect on our quantitative data, as one user's behaviour can heavily impact the overall results for their group respectively. To overcome this, we ensure that quantitative results are supported by interview findings, whilst we continue to take this imbalance into account.

3.5 SIZE OF THE INTERVIEW SAMPLE

During our interviews, we discover that several of the interviewees must be moved to other user groups than that of their initial placement. As we gain a detailed insight into

8 See Table 10, p. 52

the behavior of the interviewees, we discover their answers to the questionnaire are not always an accurate representation of their user group. As time restricts us from interviewing every questionnaire respondent, we acknowledge this as a limitation, as other questionnaire respondents might have been wrongly categorised.

Through the extensive interview process and application of cases, our findings are in a constant stage of review and comparison to enable critical evaluation. In light of this, categorisation choices for the questionnaire respondents are altered where necessary.

3.6 CATEGORISATION OF PLATFORMS

Our choices in the selection and categorisation of platforms used in this study, may present a bias, as it has been constructed on the basis of our own knowledge of the market, various media publications, statistics and existing attempts of classification. Therefore, these are not made on account of existing, official, academic delimitations. However, this categorisation does not play a critical role in the continuous analysis and discussion of results, and as such is not expected to generate any major discrepancies.

4.0 ANALYSIS

In the following section, we present the findings obtained from our research. These results are a compilation of the answers of 128 respondents, collectively owning 659 social media accounts, as well as interviews with a selection of them. Based on this, we convey a series of quantitative representations of our results, which we briefly analyse and reflect upon. To further strengthen these, we integrate quotes and knowledge gained from the qualitative research in our final user typology; here the groups will be briefly compared to the fundamental qualities defining Rogers' (2003) adopter groups.

The formation of our user groups has been an ongoing, active process, that has taken place from the onset of questionnaire distribution through to the follow-up interviews, as new insights have arisen thereby demanding continuous alterations to the groups. Whilst the statistical findings, as presented here, were assembled after the analysis of our questionnaire respondents and subsequent interviews, we provide them to support the validity of our analytical process, and gain insight into the common characteristics of the groups as a whole, rather than as similar individuals. The patterns found in this data, further our understanding of the groups and assist in the later creation of the ultimate typology, where the groups are given names and personas. Thus at this point, the groups will only appear in order of number, *Group 1* being the least advanced and *Group 5* being the most advanced.

4.1 FINDINGS

4.1.1 Group introduction

To provide a clear and honest representation, we give a brief overview of the size of the groups, as well as the amount of accounts held between them.

Table 10 - Group introduction

	Size of group	Total number of accounts	Average number of accounts per user
Group 1	4	9	2.25
Group 2	44	156	3.55
Group 3	59	297	5.00
Group 4	17	129	8.01
Group 5	4	68	17.00

4.1.2 Number of accounts

Respondents are asked to identify every social media site on which they have an account, of the 31 proposed sites used in the questionnaire. The following results thus represent the percentage of users within each group and the distribution of accounts between them.

Table 11 - Number of accounts

	No. of Users ¹	1	2	3	4	5	6-9	10-12	13-15	16-19	20+
Group 1	4	25%	25%	50%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Group 2	44	10%	24%	35%	24%	5%	13%	-	-	2%	-
Group 3	59	-	8%	14%	17%	25%	31%	5%	-	-	-
Group 4	17	-	-	-	-	13%	44%	44%	-	-	-
Group 5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	75%	25%

There is indeed a clear connection between the number of accounts a user has and in the group to which they belong. We observe that the less advanced groups have fewer accounts, than the the more advanced groups; the distribution of accounts increases incrementally with *Group 1* having the fewest amount and *Group 5* the highest. The value and importance of this division will be discussed further.

4.1.3 Distribution of platforms

As respondents were asked to indicate on which of the 31 platforms they have an account, we are able to gain further insight into the subtle differences of the respondents' preferences. We acknowledge the amount and type of account is of equal importance and therefore present the distribution of accounts between both the individual platforms and the four categorisations of social media type (network, content, service and mobile).

1 Total number of users = 128.

4.1.3a Platform distribution

The percentages show how many users within each of the groups, have an account on each site. The sites are presented in order of most to least popular, on the basis of the total number of accounts held on each platform, by all respondents.

Table 12 - Platform distribution

		Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
	<i>Number of accounts²</i>	9	156	297	129	68
	<i>Average number of accounts</i>	2.25	3.55	5.00	8.01	17.00
1	Facebook	75%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2	Twitter	-	34%	66%	94%	100%
3	LinkedIn	50%	43%	61%	59%	100%
4	YouTube	-	45%	54%	71%	75%
5	Google+	25%	23%	44%	76%	100%
6	Instagram	-	16%	29%	76%	100%
7	Pinterest	50%	7%	24%	54%	100%
8	Flickr	-	5%	19%	59%	100%
9	MySpace	-	11%	20%	29%	75%
10	Last.fm	-	9%	15%	24%	100%
11	Tumblr	-	5%	12%	35%	100%
12	Foursquare	-	2%	7%	35%	100%
13	StumbleUpon	-	11%	8%	12%	50%
14	deviantArt	-	9%	7%	18%	50%
15	8tracks	25%	2%	12%	12%	25%

2 Total number of accounts = 659

		Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
16	Delicious	-	2%	3%	29%	100%
17	Goodreads	-	7%	7%	18%	-
18	Soundcloud	-	2%	5%	12%	50%
19	Digg	-	-	3%	12%	50%
20	Dribbble	-	-	2%	24%	25%
21	Quora	-	-	3%	12%	25%
22	Vimeo	-	-	2%	-	75%
23	Everplaces	-	2%	-	6%	50%
24	Yelp	-	2%	-	-	6%
25	Reddit	-	5%	-	6%	-
26	Orkut	-	5%	2%	-	-
27	Fribi	-	2%	3%	-	-
28	Bebo	-	-	2%	-	25%
29	Kinetik	-	-	2%	-	25%
30	Kaboodle	-	2%	-	-	25%
31	Foodspotting	-	-	2%	-	-

We find that the popular platforms held by the respondents in our study, have a high degree of resemblance to those of social media users in general (eBiz, 2012). Furthermore, the less advanced groups tend to only hold accounts on mainstream sites, while as groups become more advanced, niche platforms are progressively used. Interestingly, we also find that the most advanced social media users (*Group 5*), are not deterred from the mainstream platforms, but rather use them to the same extent as the other groups, whilst simultaneously using a number of lesser known platforms.

4.1.3b Platform-category distribution

The percentages are based on how many of the accounts held by specific user groups, fall within each of the social media platform categories. These are presented in order of most to least popular.

Table 13 - Platform-category distribution

	<i>Number of accounts</i>	<i>Average number of accounts</i>	Network	Content	Service	Mobile
Group 1	9	2.25	67%	-	33%	-
Group 2	156	3.55	62%	19%	13%	6%
Group 3	297	5.00	58%	19%	15%	8%
Group 4	129	8.01	41%	25%	21%	13%
Group 5	68	17.00	29%	27%	29%	15%

By categorising the platforms on which respondents have an account into the four categories³, we see a strong pattern in the type of social media platforms, used by each group. Here we find that the distribution of the four types of media become increasingly even, as the groups increase in advancedness. On the basis of the groups technological adeptness we can thus derive from the above distribution, that network driven social media is the most commonly used platform type, whereas the mobile driven platforms are generally used only by advanced users.

4.1.4 Frequency of visits

Respondents are asked how often they use each of the social media sites, on which they have an account. As most users have more than one account, each account is calculated as a separate answer within the respondent's user group and allocated to the respective column indicating frequency of use.

3 For breakdown, see Table 4 pp. 23-24

Table 14 - Total frequency of visits

	<i>Number of accounts</i>	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never
Amount	659	32%	22%	21%	10%	15%

Table 15 - Frequency of visits by group

	<i>Number of accounts</i>	<i>Average number of accounts</i>	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never
Group 1	9	2.25	-	56%	33%	-	11%
Group 2	156	3.55	33%	22%	18%	9%	18%
Group 3	297	5.00	33%	22%	18%	9%	18%
Group 4	129	8.01	39%	21%	21%	9%	10%
Group 5	68	17.00	20%	20%	30%	14%	15%

There is not as clear a difference between the user groups, as initially expected. Upon first glance, these findings show that all user groups have a considerable amount of accounts not in use, and that *Group 2* to *Group 4* are much more likely to use accounts daily, than are *Group 1* and *Group 5*. However, these results must be seen in relation to the average amount of accounts held by a user in each of the groups. To illustrate this, we consider the average number of accounts used daily by *Group 3* in contrast to those used by *Group 5*. So, while *Group 5* appear to have few frequently used accounts, it must be taken into consideration that users from this group hold an average of 17 accounts. Therefore, while *Group 3* have an average of 5 accounts equating to 1.65 daily-used accounts, the average user in *Group 5* use 3.4 accounts daily.

On account of this, we likewise acknowledge that *Group 5* have a large proportion of

accounts used monthly or less frequently, totalling 49% of their average of 17 accounts (8.3 accounts), compared to 45% of *Group 3*'s 5 average accounts (2.25 accounts). Based on this, we can thereby conclude that though *Group 5* are avid users of social media, they are also likely to own a large number of rarely used or idle accounts, that do not generate value for a social medium.

4.1.5 Device

Respondents are asked which devices they use to access each of the social media sites, on which they have an account. As users have the option to choose more than one answer for each site, each account can contribute several answers per response (a maximum of four).

Table 16 - Total devices used

	<i>Number of responses</i>	Desktop	Laptop	Tablet	Smartphone
Amount	1013	16%	46%	9%	29%

Table 17 - Device by group

	<i>Number of responses</i>	<i>Average number of accounts</i>	Desktop	Laptop	Tablet	Smartphone
Group 1	12	2.25	8%	33%	42%	17%
Group 2	222	3.55	18%	50%	6%	27%
Group 3	436	5.00	16%	47%	8%	30%
Group 4	230	8.01	15%	41%	12%	31%
Group 5	113	17.00	26%	31%	14%	29%

These findings are particularly valuable in providing a stronger understanding of the technical skills possessed by each of the user groups, their reliance on the various technologies they use, as well as their dependency on social media.

It is surprising that *Group 1* depends heavily on using an iPad for social media use, whilst their smartphones have little to no importance. This can indicate these users rarely check their social media accounts whilst on the go, or is a possible symptom of these users being more likely to own an iPad, than they are a smartphone. In contrast, the younger of the users, *Group 3*, who are more computer-literate, depend heavily on their mobile devices as well as their laptops, probably as these are used in the context of school and/or work.

It is important to acknowledge the difference between social media that is only available on mobile devices, in contrast to mobile versions of media platforms, that are accessible on both mobile and computer. So, as *Group 3* scores highly on mobile devices, as they are likely to check network focused platforms (such as Facebook) on their mobile phone when on the go; *Group 5*'s high percentage on this specific question is due to their propensity for social media that only function on mobile devices, such as instant location-based sharing apps.

Group 5 scores relatively evenly across all devices, as they use all four equally to access their accounts. However, when looking at the individual questionnaires, it becomes apparent that this is a result of these users often owning all of the mentioned devices and using them on a frequent basis. As these users engage intensively in their online communities, they are likely to check in on their social media platforms frequently, on the device they have access to at that given point; for instance, they will use a smartphone while shopping, opting for a an iPad at home, and favoring a laptop to check into social media whilst working.

4.1.6 Connections

Respondents are asked how many friends they are connected to, on the various social media sites on which they have an account. While most users have several accounts, each account indicated is counted as a separate answer. Respondents can only select one

answer per account.

Table 18 - Total connections

	<i>Number of accounts</i>	0-10	10-50	50-100	100-200	200-400	400-1000	1000+
Amount	659	37%	21%	10%	10%	9%	11%	2%

Table 19 - Connections by group

	<i>Number of accounts</i>	<i>Average number of accounts</i>	0-10	10-50	50-100	100-200	200-400	400-1000	1000+
Group 1	9	2.25	56%	11%	-	22%	11%	-	-
Group 2	156	3.55	44%	19%	8%	9%	10%	9%	-
Group 3	297	5.00	37%	20%	9%	11%	9%	12%	2%
Group 4	129	8.01	26%	29%	13%	11%	6%	12%	3%
Group 5	68	17.00	38%	20%	15%	4%	12%	7%	3%

Interestingly, these results show that social media users in general have considerably more accounts on which they are not connected to any other users, than they have accounts on which they are. However, it is important to consider the reasons behind this, as well as how this reasoning differs between the various groups.

Whilst *Group 1* have several accounts on which they are connected to very few people, this is not deliberate. Rather, it may be a consequence of *Group 1* users not having any more people to connect with on social media, or an indication of *Group 1*'s lack of technical know-how in understanding how to connect with others; they may rely solely on having users either follow or request to connect with them, requiring no initiation on their part. Furthermore, one must also remember that users, such as those in *Group 1* and *Group 2*, tend to own very few accounts; thus a high percentage value indicates

a smaller number of accounts for these groups, than it would for a group with a higher average number of accounts, such as *Group 5*.

Due to the extensive number of social media sites they sign up for, users in *Group 5* have a large number of accounts, on which they have very few to no connections. This is not because they do not know anyone with whom to connect, but because they sign up with the sole intention of trialling a newly launched product, and do not invest the time to add their connections or rally for friends to join. Additionally, the high number of accounts with few connections, held by *Group 5*, can also be a consequence of these existing on platforms that have not yet attracted many users, or those that will never reach a broad enough audience, to justify their return post-sign up.

4.1.7 Reasons for joining

Respondents are asked the primary reasons for joining each of the social media platforms, on which they have an account. To accurately express their motivations, respondents are allowed to respond with more than one reason for joining, per account.

Table 20 - Total reasons for joining

	<i>Number of replies</i>	I had need for the service	My friends use it	I was curious	I was invited by a friend	I had read about it in the press	Work purposes
Amount	1016	14%	23%	33%	13%	7%	10%

Table 21 - Reasons for joining by group

	<i>Number of replies</i>	<i>Average number of accounts</i>	I had need for the service	My friends use it	I was curious	I was invited by a friend	I had read about it in the press	Work purposes
Group 1	10	2.25	-	-	30%	40%	20%	10%
Group 2	224	3.55	13%	26%	34%	14%	5%	8%
Group 3	463	5.00	16%	24%	33%	11%	5%	12%
Group 4	200	8.01	12%	23%	34%	12%	8%	13%
Group 5	119	17.00	14%	20%	34%	14%	13%	4%

Like some of the other quantitative results, those related to reasons for joining are not as clear, as expected prior to their analysis. Firstly, most groups appear to have joined predominantly out of curiosity; thus on their own initiative. However, when analysing the questionnaires individually, we find that most users indicating they have joined because '*[they] were curious*', also selected an additional reason for joining. We therefore interpret 'curiosity' as a supportive reason, rather than the sole basis for joining and do not regard this as a strong indicator of the various groups' motivations.

It is also surprising that *Groups 2 to 5* depend fairly equally on friends⁴, when joining a new medium. However, further exploring this finding through our qualitative research, it becomes clear that the motivation behind this statement differs vastly for the separate groups. For the less advanced groups, friends motivate the act of joining when having amassed to a substantial enough degree for the user to feel obliged to also join. On the other hand, *Group 5* requires only a select few persons or valued connections to mention

4 Account for both the answers '*My friends use it*' and '*I was invited by a friend*'.

a medium to motivate joining, so to participate in discussions either on, or about the platform. However, in both cases, one could argue that users join the platform because of friends.

Though only 4% of *Group 5* users indicate they have joined a platform for reasons related to work, our qualitative results show that besides working in technology-related professions, these users also have a personal interest in and dependency on using social media as a primary means of communication. They are thus likely to join on their own initiative.

Further we find that *Groups 3* and *4* are also motivated by work. For *Group 4* this can be a result of these users often maintaining marketing positions, requiring them to work directly with social media. Also, when inspecting the questionnaires, we find that *Group 3* (consisting largely of students), often have LinkedIn⁵ accounts to enhance career prospects. As these users are likely to have chosen 'For work purposes' in this instance, this may have had an impact on our results. Lastly, *Group 1* is also highly affected by their work when joining; likely in an effort to keep up with technological developments, that may impact their professional lives - this may also be the reason why they are influenced by messages from media and press sources, related to social media.

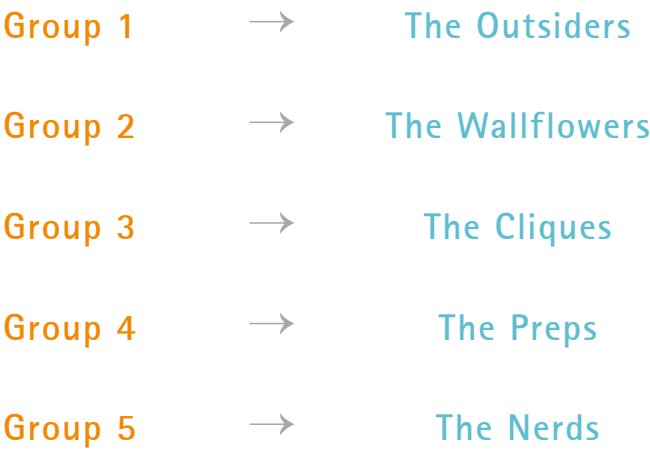
4.2 SOCIAL MEDIA USER TYPOLOGY

On the basis of the analysis of the results, we will deepen our understanding of the five groups and their motivations, through the application of our extensive interviews with users. This enables the generation of characteristics and personas, and helps to set our user groups apart from those of Rogers (2003). Like Rogers, we also categorise our users into five groups, and while there are many similarities to Rogers' adopter groups (2003, p. 282), there are also many differences. The concepts and ideas presented in this brief comparison will be extensively discussed and applied throughout the analysis.

5 A professional social network for contact sharing and job applications.

Due to social networks and relationships being an integral element, inherent in all social media, we have found inspiration for our groups in another familiar and distinctive social world: the high school. By using characters from this setting, we are able to clearly present the different user groups and their personalities, as well as how these interact with one another. From here on, we will refer to our groups, according to their corresponding high school persona, as presented below:

Fig. 7 - Group names

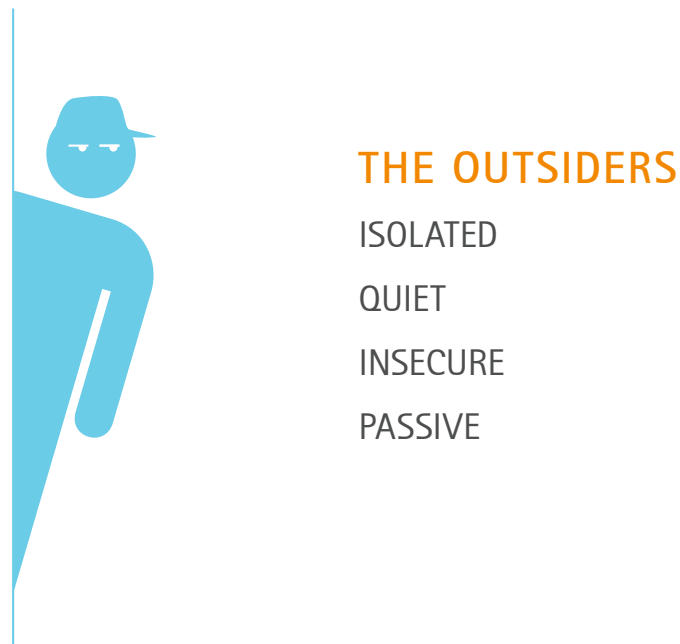


Group 1	→	The Outsiders
Group 2	→	The Wallflowers
Group 3	→	The Cliques
Group 4	→	The Preps
Group 5	→	The Nerds

At this point, it is also important to acknowledge, that the attributes allocated to the various online personas, do not necessitate that the social media user employ the same role in their offline life. The user groups thus only predict behaviours and interactions online.

4.2.1 The Outsiders aka Group 1

Fig. 8 - The Outsiders



4.2.1.1 Profile

The *Outsiders* have very few friends, on whom they depend heavily. They are unlikely to speak without reservation when sharing opinions and information. Due to high levels of insecurity, they are passive in their interaction with their surroundings and thus often become isolated from the greater community.

4.2.1.2 Findings

This group is likely to have only one social media account; on Facebook. While the *Outsiders* do not seek out new platforms, they rather need to be enlightened by others about the benefits obtainable from a social medium. Therefore, members of this group are often invited by a friend or family member, and are likely to connect only with a few, close acquaintances. They will never create their own content, in the form of status

updates or pictures, and will often only browse others' content; rarely commenting or 'liking'.

The *Outsiders* use minimal time on social media and therefore do not have a strong attachment or opinion about it. As a result they are likely to forget about the platforms on which they have an account and often fail to use them regularly, due to a lack of online routine. Their lack of adeptness can also result in unfavorable attitudes, towards changing online behaviours or adopting new platforms. The *Outsiders* are thus highly passive and extremely novice in both how they use technology and social media. Consequently, privacy concerns, an inability to use the full scope of sites and dependency on close connections are common tendencies for these users.

The *Outsiders* are typically middle-aged (~35-60+), with very simplistic technological ability and or skills; further, they are generally only active upon network based media.

4.2.1.3 *The Outsiders vs. the Laggards*

Strong similarities are apparent between the *Outsiders* and Rogers' 'Laggards' (2003, p. 284) who, "[possess] almost no opinion leadership," as their "decisions are often made in terms of what has been done previously and [...] interact primarily with others who also have relatively traditional values". Rogers (2003) further identifies this type of user as suspicious of innovations and slow to complete the innovation-decision process. This supports our findings, that this group is present only on the best-known social media and is often highly troubled by potential privacy issues (KR, 2012, app. 1.2.5.1).

However, in opposition to Rogers (2003) and Moore (2000) who argue that efforts to attract these reluctant users are a waste of resources, we find the *Outsiders* possess a great willingness to interact. Having said that, their lack of technological knowledge makes them heavily dependent on their peers, to guide them from knowledge to adoption. KR (2012, app. 1.2.5.1) explains; "I am not very good at reading the directions or following instructions, but if someone tells me verbally how to do it, then I will more readily do it". The fundamental characteristics of the *Outsiders* are thus; their lack of technological knowledge, the little time they dedicate to interacting online and their passive approach to seeking out, joining and using social media. Nevertheless, we do not make the same

conclusion as did Rogers (2003) that this group is always the *last* to join a medium. This is an important finding in our research, and will be discussed in greater detail later.

Further, the *Outsiders* value the considerable benefits they derive from the ease of communication permitted by social media, and thus are more open to new social media if they are lead to them by adept users in their personal networks. The ease in influencing the *Outsiders* ascertains them a good target for thought leaders of new social media.

4.2.2 The Wallflowers aka Group 2

Fig. 9 - The Wallflowers



THE WALLFLOWERS

DORMANT
OBSERVANT
LOYAL
GUARDED

4.2.2.1 Profile

Though knowledgeable and opinionated, the *Wallflowers* rarely voice themselves in an open and direct manner. They tend to stay on the periphery of social situations and are never at the forefront of conflict or discussion. While highly observant of their surroundings, they stay guarded in the way they share information and communicate with new people. However, the *Wallflowers* are very loyal once won.

4.2.2.2 Findings

The *Wallflowers* are predominantly Facebook users. They join solely for the purpose of communicating with friends. They do not create their own content, but will browse friends' content and are likely to comment on, or like it. Whilst they might be present on *content* driven sites such as YouTube, they rarely use these in a social manner by

interacting with other users, and thus have little to no connections, on those sites. Therefore, they are unlikely to share social media sites with friends, as they engage only with a select few.

This group has no particular attachment to social media, however they do have strong opinions about the platforms they use, especially with regards to interface changes and updates, which they have a propensity to reject or highly dislike. The *Wallflowers*, while aware of privacy issues, are so limited in their usage of social media, that they rarely take the time to act upon any concerns. However, this hesitation on social media makes the *Wallflowers* unlikely to switch to a competing product, unless the entirety of their connections migrate and encourage them to follow.

The *Wallflowers* span all age groups and are often in non-IT related jobs. They predominantly use network driven media, however they may also use *content* driven sites for entertainment, without engaging in the communities on them.

4.2.2.3 The *Wallflowers* vs. the Late Majority

The closest equivalent to this group in Rogers' (2003) typology, is the 'Late majority'. Rogers (2003, p. 284) argues that these users "*do not adopt until most others in their system have already done so.*" According to Rogers (2003, p. 44), "*the pressure of peers is necessary to motivate adoption,*" within this group; further, Moore (2003, p. 44), who refers to them as 'Conservatives', argues that "*they believe far more in tradition than in progress*". The same holds true for the *Wallflowers*, in that they do not join social media on their own volition. Rather they respond when a majority of their close connections having joined; motivating them to follow as they place considerable value on staying up to date and connected to their peers. The *Wallflowers* are not affected by 'fads' and they are therefore loyal towards social media products, as they are unlikely to seek out or switch to competitors. However, while loyal to the platforms they use, this is not transferred to social media in general; BC (2012, app. 1.2.4.1) expresses that "*[social media] is not the be-all-end-all of my life*" and there is not "*anything that valuable in social media that I would be [willing] to pay sums of money for*".

When asked what is of importance when making the decision to join a medium, BC

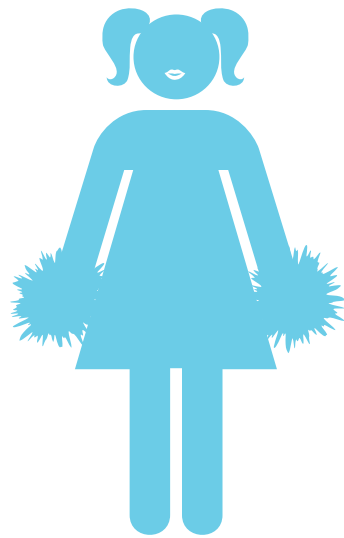
(2012, app. 1.2.4.1) explains they will “*wait to see if enough of [their] friends join it and if it’s worthwhile*” - thus depending greatly on peers to justify joining. So, when Rogers (2003) explains that the ‘Late majority’ must feel no uncertainty to adopt, this can also be applied to the *Wallflowers*, as they demand the presence of their network to feel *safe* and perceive adequate need, to attempt adoption.

This lack of dedication, and indifference to social media is also reflected in the passive way these users communicate. “*I am just seeing what people are doing and keeping myself up to date, rather than share trending topics or breaking news*” explains one user (BC, 2012, app. 1.2.4.1). The *Wallflowers* are infrequently active on social media, as expressed by BT (2012, app. 1.2.4.2) who asserts that he only checks social media accounts, when there is a specific need or time allocated for it. Lastly, these users prefer viewing content of others rather than creating content of their own (BC, 2012, app. 1.2.4.1).

Whilst this group is extremely committed when they *do* adopt a new innovation, they can be incredibly “*stubborn in their resistance to the call from the previous group of adopters to conform*”. They tend only to commit to a new idea, towards the end of the product’s life cycle, when “*products are extremely mature*” (Moore, 2000, pp. 44-45). Moore (2000, p. 46) further explains that this group understands simple, single feature innovations best, and as they are slow to approach new innovations, they can be relied on after the ‘fad’ of an innovation has passed and other users might have moved on to newer, more revolutionary products.

4.2.3 The Cliques aka Group 3

Fig. 10 - The Cliques



THE CLIQUES

SOCIAL

INTERDEPENDENT

COMMUNICATIVE

SELECTIVE

4.2.3.1 Profile

The *Cliques* is very engaging and communicative, with the select individuals they surround themselves with. They depend greatly on interaction, but also provide significant value to their network. The *Cliques* has elitist tendencies, as they are reluctant in opening up to strangers and are careful not to divulge excessive amounts of information, to people outside their close network of friends.

4.2.3.2 Findings

Members of this group use at least two social media sites extensively; often Facebook and Twitter, which they have joined out of curiosity or because of friends. The *Cliques* are likely to possess up to six profiles that are not in use or which are used in a non-social way. Further, they tend to use Youtube for its content, but also have accounts on the professional network LinkedIn, though they do not engage within its communities.

The *Cliques* create their own content, predominantly in the form of statuses and pictures. They furthermore have a tendency to share content they find online and act upon prompts, they receive from social media, such as invitations or advertisements. Whilst this group will interact extensively with their large group of friends by browsing, commenting and liking their activity, they are also likely to periodically browse content produced by strangers, companies or celebrities. The heavy dependency on their network make them likely to actively convince friends to join sites, as they will never switch to or explore a new product, without the presence of their friends.

The *Cliques* have a strong attachment to social media, but are also aware of privacy issues and the fragility of their personal content, thus are likely to have adjusted their privacy settings.

The majority of *Cliques* is between the ages of 21 to 29. Most are students or have jobs that involve a moderate amount of computer-based work. They predominantly utilise network based media, but often find material to share on social platforms on either *content* or *service* driven sites; however, they do not engage within the existing communities on these.

4.2.3.3 The Cliques vs. the Early Majority

The middle group in our research known as the *Cliques*, is referred to by Rogers (2003) as the 'Early majority' and by Moore (2000) as the 'Pragmatists'. While considered to be highly cautious in the face of risk, they still "*adopt new ideas just before the average member of a system*" (Rogers, 2003, p. 283). As they do not seek recognition for being early to adopt, they are likely to carefully consider a new idea, before taking what they regard as a risk to adopt (Rogers, 2003). Moore (2000, pp. 41-42) further states they are unlikely to communicate with people outside of their existing network and are thus a difficult group to gain the allegiance of.

Our research shows that members of the *Cliques* tend to possess little technological know-how; "*I pretty much stick to the basics, so unless it's really easy to use and super helpful, I still hesitate to expand my horizon*" says WL (2012, app. 1.2.3.2). However, this lack of technological savviness does not reflect in the amount of time they spend on

their 'favourite' platforms. They rely heavily on frequent visits, even if brief, to ensure they stay at the forefront of any news related to their connections. The lack of technological skills are however reflected in the *Cliques*' reluctance to join media if an existing network is not present; making their decision to try out a medium more complex and dependent on others. WL (2012, app. 1.2.3.2) states: "[if] I'm the only one on it, it's obsolete".

Like Moore's (2000), this study also shows that the *Cliques* mainly communicate with people they already know and are thus unlikely to connect with strangers or people they are not somehow connected to, in the real world. Nevertheless, members of the *Cliques* are social by nature and as their network is their most important facet of social media, they actively create and maintain their network, making them likely to invite friends to a medium.

While careful and considerate (Rogers, 2003; Moore, 2000), the *Cliques* are highly private in the way they ensure that only close connections have access to their content online. However, they are also very loyal; making them unlikely to seek out competing products after becoming familiar with the interface of a medium. This reluctance also becomes apparent when changes in design and interface are likely to stimulate negative impressions of a product.

4.2.4 The Preps aka Group 4

Fig. 11 - The Preps



THE PREPS

COMPETITIVE

SKILLED

WELL-CONNECTED

SOCIAL

4.2.4.1 Profile

The *Preps* are social by nature, and very well connected to friends and professional contacts. They are skilled and knowledgeable, and use this knowledge to remain at the ‘top of their class’; they are thus highly competitive.

4.2.4.2 Findings

The *Preps* are likely to have a substantial selection of social media accounts, on which they are often connected to a large network. They join social media sites on their own accord and often with the intention of connecting with new people. This differentiates them from the *Cliques*, as they are professional in their approach to social media and constantly on the looking for novel products to broaden their networks.

Interacting broadly with friends, strangers, companies and high profiled people, the *Preps* try out many new social media products but are unlikely to actively convince others to join. Rather, they receive gratification when trialling a new product, as they sharing their experience on other platforms, to portray themselves as adept and knowledgeable. They do so to enhance their image within particular communities they revere.

The *Preps* create their own unique content on most platforms on which they are active. They also share content they find online, and act upon things they see on social media. Their deep engagement on social media insinuates strong attachment.

Generally between the ages of 21-39, the *Preps* are often students or IT and marketing professionals. They have profiles on *network*, *content* and *service* based sites and are active on *mobile* services, that demand instant updates and frequent activity.

4.2.4.3 The *Preps* vs. the Early Adopters

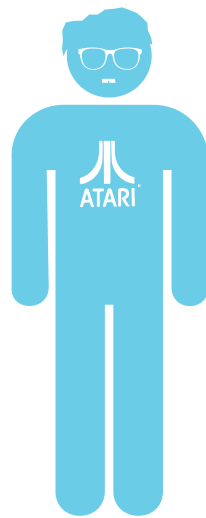
The *Preps* can most easily be compared to the ‘Early adopters’ (Rogers, 2003, p. 283); considered an important catalyst in the diffusion of an innovation. Moore (2000, p. 36) refers to these users as the ‘visionaries’, as they are willing to experiment with new products and will assign them the seal of approval, that the proceeding groups depend on. Both theorists (Rogers, 2003; Moore, 2000) define this group as driven by the quest to uncover fundamental breakthroughs and as they are respected by their peers, they can decrease uncertainty about a new idea (Moore, 2000, p. 33). Thus, according to these theorists, they have a high degree of opinion leadership (Rogers, 2003, p. 283).

While many of these traits are also apparent in the *Preps*, the results of this study show that the *Preps* do not actively try to convince others to join a medium, and thus they do not use their opinion leadership actively as argued by Rogers (2003) and Moore (2000). Having said that, the *Preps* still demand the presence of their networks to guarantee continued use (as do the other groups), but are not discouraged to remain active in the interim of waiting for others to join. They believe that “*if the platform is [...] interesting, then [their] kind of people will migrate towards it*” (ER, 2012, app. 1.2.2.1). The *Preps* can, through open and active use of new platforms, unintentionally be deemed opinion

leaders to recipients of their 'passive advertisement'. They are open about their communication and lack any reluctance in sharing content to the public space, however, this is not in an effort to recruit others to join (ER, 2012, app. 1.2.2.1). They simply thrive off the novelty and ability to satisfy needs unmet by existing technology and easily accept new innovations.

4.2.5 The Nerds aka Group 5

Fig. 12 - The Nerds



THE NERDS

EXPLORATIVE

TALENTED

INNOVATIVE

SEGREGATED

4.2.5.1 Profile

The *Nerds* often isolate themselves from other groups, by only interacting with other *Nerds*. Amongst one another, they feel comfortable in opening up and sharing ideas and will express their innovative character in a protected, closed and safe environment of like-minded individuals. They are curious by nature, and combined with their talent and knowledge, they aim to build prestige and status within their network.

4.2.5.2 Findings

The *Nerds* have accounts on a vast amount of social networks, though many are inactive or rarely used. However, they will extensively use up to five accounts on a daily basis, on which they are widely connected and interact with friends, strangers, companies and high-profiled people. While the *Nerds* create content on all platforms on which they are

active, and often share content across them, the novelty and quality of the content they create is carefully considered prior to sharing. They are highly aware of the impact their communications can have on their digital identity.

Further, while the *Nerds* are likely to join new networks, they rarely invite friends to join them unless they are convinced the new medium will be sustainable and successful. New social media sites are therefore also scrutinised by these users, in a professional and organised manner, before being put into use. As these users are frequently exposed to new social media, they are highly aware of competing products and are likely to try them out, if they offer a service of superior, technical quality. While the *Nerds* approach social media in a professional manner and are only moderately attached to it, their engagement is of high-emotional quality, because of the importance they assign to their image in order to gain the respect of others.

Due to their extensive knowledge of social media, these users are aware of privacy issues and comfortable taking any necessary measures to secure their profiles. While they do not worry about privacy, they rather embrace the advantages online communication enables.

The *Nerds* are between the age of 21-29 and employed in technology or IT related jobs; they often work for companies producing social media sites or for firms that produce a web-based product. These users have profiles on *network*, *content*, *service* and *mobile* drives sites.

4.2.5.3 *The Nerds vs. the Innovators*

Rogers (2003, pp. 282-283) identifies these 'technology adept' users as part of the 'Innovators', perhaps even better explained by Moore (2000, p. 28) as 'technology enthusiast[s]'. However, despite their different titles, they both regard these innovative adopters as venturesome, with a great interest in new ideas and technology. These qualities also make this the first group to adopt, as they are driven by curiosity and therefore "*the ones who first appreciate the architecture of your product*"; whilst they are forgiving of slow performance and lack of functionality (Moore, 2000, p. 29). According to Rogers (2003, p. 283), these users are not highly respected by the other

user groups and thus do not have a great ability, to persuade others to adopt a product. However, Rogers (2003) regards them as critical carriers to bring a new product into the adoption 'system'.

The Nerds are also highly venturesome and will try new technology for the sake of it, preferably early on in the product life-cycle. JA (2012, app. 1.2.1.1) explains: "*If I think that [a social media] might be useful, I'll sign up and try it out*". This approach is further supported by AR (2012, app. 1.2.1.2), whose curiosity is enough for them to "*sign up for so many new services every week*". Yet the *Nerds* are not natural leaders, as their consumption is generally based on testing, rather than full use and adoption. The *Nerds* are often invited as beta-testers on various new social media platforms and thus a proportion of their accounts are likely a result of their involvement with the industry. When discussing new innovations amongst other *Nerds*, these users often form exclusive clusters. This can also explain why these users are so conscientious of how their online communications impact their image, as this often defines their status amongst their fellow *Nerds*.

Lastly, while Rogers (2003, p. 282) believes the 'innovators' curious nature drives them "*out of their peer networks*" to experiment with new social media, the *Nerds* are dependent on their peers, as continued use will not persist, unless they are eventually joined by their network. For JA (2012, app. 1.2.1.1) personal adoption of social media "*is really dependent on the social side of it*" and "*adoption in [their] network*". They also go on to explain, that a social medium can instantly become part of their routine, if their network is already active upon it.

5.0 DISCUSSION

We acknowledge that the reader may perceive some repetition throughout the discussion. This is a consequence of the vital element of interrelation, that is naturally inherent in all the discussion points in this thesis. Further, it represents the interdependence of the elements in social media. To provide clarity for the reader, and to generate a sense of continuity, we summarise primary and fundamental findings throughout the discussion, hereby identified as 'generalisations'.

5.1 ADOPTION AND THE DECISION PROCESS

Rogers (2003, p. 21) defines adoption as the '*decision to make full use of an innovation*'; though he acknowledges that adoption is not an instantaneous act, but rather a process of actions (2003, p. 169), the nature of his theory and the bell-curve still demands that the conclusion to this process, be it adoption or rejection, can be connected to a specific moment in time defined by the individual's actions. However, there are conflicting messages and lack of clarity that pinpoint precisely what Roger constitutes as a user making full use of an innovation. Whilst he acknowledges that the innovation needs to be put into use by the adopter and not simply purchased, it is not clearly defined to what extent, or for how long, this consistent usage must persist to constitute adoption.

This ambiguity complicates the application of Roger's theory to social media, as it becomes clear that the actions carried out by the adopter and even more so, the intentions underlying these, can not be as clearly defined as with a traditional, physical product. To gain further insight into this issue, we turn to another closely related industry: the

service industry.

One can argue that social media is a hybrid between a service and a product; while product-like elements are important, the medium on which it is consumed also deems social media an intangible service and experience. This means that the quality of a social medium, for the individual user, cannot be evaluated before the product has been put into use or the service has begun (Normann, 1991, p. 17). Furthermore, this means that the user is not merely a consumer, but is rather a participant and the perception of quality is thus appreciated on an individual basis. Thus it becomes difficult to pinpoint at what point adoption takes place. Regard for this is fundamentally unaccounted for in Rogers' (2003) diffusion theory, largely due to the nature of the products used in the theory's creation.

A further factor that makes the identification of adoption difficult, is the lack of adoption barriers. The products employed in both Rogers' (2003) and Moore's (2000) diffusion theories are often restricted by extensive adoption barriers, mainly cost, but further aspects such as the practicalities including the seeking out, purchasing and transporting of the product in question, can affect adoption. Yet in the case of social media, these restrictions are to a large extent abolished as the products are available through online channels; a channel that all potential adopters have access to and easily make use of on a regular basis. However, one must also acknowledge that an exchange of data takes place at the point of sign-up, as the user hands over personal details to be able to set up their account. For the sake of comparison, we thus acknowledge the point of purchase of a product in Rogers' theory, as equivalent to the decision to sign-up and create an account on a social medium.

The decision process is thus defined by ease and the lack of risk and monetary cost (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). This means it is a much faster and fluid process in comparison to that outlined by Rogers (2003, p. 169), where extensive steps must be carried out by adopters, even before arriving at the point of sale. Consequently, anyone can 'enter the process' by creating an account at any point in time. Thus, while the number of signups for a medium can act as an accelerator for new signups or to attract investment, this number does not necessitate true representation of actual *adopters*, as it fails to acknowledge the difference between inactive and active accounts. The action of signing up can

therefore not be defined as a final commitment to the product, and thus the main difference between the adoption process in social media versus that of Rogers (2003) becomes evident.

Generalisation 1:

Adoption can not be defined based on a perceivable action by the adopter carried out at a specific point in time.

5.1.1 Rogers' Innovation–decision Process

To fully understand the concept of adoption one must also understand the series of steps leading up to it. The innovation–decision process by Rogers (2003, p. 20) is explained as *'the process through which an individual go from first knowledge to implementation'*, and consists of five stages; 1) *Knowledge*; 2) *Persuasion*; 3) *Decision*; 4) *Implementation* and ultimately 5) *Confirmation*; the final decision to adopt or reject.

This process in many ways resembles the one we have uncovered. However, whilst Rogers (2003) perceives the moment of adoption as the conclusion to the decision process (and thus the point where the adopter becomes of greatest value to a company), we recognise that this point can not be as easily defined in social media. Our research shows that 25% of the accounts owned by the users in our study are never used or only used yearly (Table 14, p. 57). Users are therefore highly likely to create accounts on mediums on which they will never return, and all accounts created can thus not be accounted for as bringing equal value to a social media company.

Corrocher (2011, p. 548) supports this idea; *'Investigating the intensity of usage is particularly important in this context, because it allows gauging some hints on the economic viability of the services, insofar as the associated revenues are increased by a more intensive usage. For example, more banners are likely to be clicked and more applications/products are likely to be purchased.'* As social media is much like a service or experience product, it is difficult for users to evaluate the product before actually putting it into use (Corrocher, 2011). Unlike in Rogers (2003, p. 169) theory, where *"an individual (or other decision making unit) engages in activities that lead to a choice to adopt or reject the innovation"*, the 'acquiring' of the product (in this case creating an account) happens before the user can properly assess and evaluate the quality of the

product. Although one would rarely encounter a customer spending money on a physical product, without the intention to unpack, utilise, or consume it, this is exactly what social media users do on a frequent basis. Given the ease, lack of commitment and minimal effort involved in gaining access to a social media product, social media can be acquired frivolously compared to the products presented in Rogers' (2003) theory. For this reason we acknowledge a difference in the decision process of a social media user, compared to that of a potential adopter in Rogers' (2003) theory;

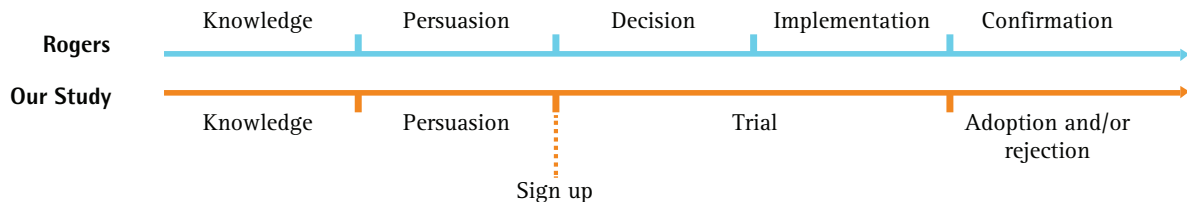
Generalisation 2:

The innovation-decision process for social media users does not mimic that of Rogers (2003).

5.1.2 The new innovation-decision process

Consequently, we introduce a new stage in the decision process, where the user has signed up for a platform, but not yet adopted it. We thus suggest an amendment to Rogers' (2003, p. 170) innovation-decision process with the addition of *trial*.

Fig. 13 - Social media decision process



Whilst Rogers (2003, pp. 177-78) argues that adoption takes place at a point in the decision process, a user adopting a social medium will experience this in a much more fluid and undefinable way. So, during the trial stage, which replaces Rogers' (2003, p. 169) decision and implementation stages, adoption of a social media can occur.

5.1.2.1 Knowledge

Knowledge is the stage within which the individual user becomes aware of an innovation, how it works and how to use it. This stage can be either passive or active; *passive*, when the potential user is exposed to an innovation by accident or coincidence; and *active*, when a user gains insight through a behaviour or action they have initiated themselves (Rogers, 2003, pp. 171-172).

However, in the case of social media, users can sign up to a medium prompted by an invitation sent by another user, allowing the new user to create their profile immediately. If this happens, a user can essentially bypass the knowledge stage entirely, as the invitation becomes a means of persuasion and possibly even implementation. This can be especially effective for those users who are unlikely to explore a platform on their own accord, and can simultaneously entice them by clearly showing the presence of their friends on the platform. This approach is highly common given the sign-up flow of most social media platforms, whereby a new user is encouraged to send invitations to contacts, immediately after signing up.

A user's participation in the knowledge stage does not necessitate their graduation to the following stages and even if they advance, this can take a considerable amount of time. Many of the interviewees in our research, express that they are aware of an extensive amount of the platforms proposed in our questionnaire. However, they have no further opinion about the products or intention to sign up; thus they have never left the knowledge phase for those specific products. The same hold true for every participant enlisted in our attempted Pinterest case study, as they express awareness of the platform, yet have not pursued it further.

A lack of perception of value, especially by the less advanced groups, can be due to selective exposure and perception, as presented by Rogers (2003, p. 171). Here it is argued, that due to lack of comparison, users with no point of reference or knowledge of the specific subject, are likely to dismiss information about it or fail to acknowledge its importance. This is especially problematic when a user communicates with someone from another group, as they may not understand the value of the product as explained by someone who is more technologically adept. Our study confirms that this problem is often prevalent within the *Outsiders*, given that these users rely solely on their network to inform them and guide them through the initial steps of the decision process. This insufficient technological appreciation is additionally reflected by the *Outsiders*, in their absence of a perceived need; their need for social media is only recognised when presented with the solution and its application.

5.1.2.1a The groups in the knowledge stage

For the *Outsiders*, the knowledge stage is defined by existing users of the platform

(typically from more advanced groups) educating them about the new medium. Due to their lack of technical proficiency, these users rely solely on others to decode and relay the value, that is relevant in their situation.

The *Wallflowers* also depend highly on existing connections in the knowledge stage. However, their knowledge typically only progresses them further in the innovation decision process after, they experience a fear of missing out, stimulated by the majority of persons in their network having already joined.

The *Cliques* are slightly more perceptive in the knowledge stage, largely from their stronger understanding of technology. Nevertheless, like the *Wallflowers*, they depend highly on the majority of their friends having joined, before they feel pressured to leave the knowledge stage.

Our results show that the *Preps* and *Nerds* are considerably more likely to be active participants in this process; either by consciously seeking out new products or by purposely being connected to and following people who can expose them to these products.

For social media companies, this means that the *Preps*, and in particular the *Nerds*, are far easier to reach, as these users demand far fewer marketing efforts to generate awareness of a product. The mere novelty of a new social medium is adequate incentive in itself for the *Preps* and *Nerds*, whilst the *Outsiders*, *Wallflowers* and *Cliques* are far more dependent on existing users and the transmission of their experience to motivate departure from the knowledge into the persuasion stage. The *Preps* and *Nerds* are therefore active in the knowledge stage, whilst the *Outsiders*, *Wallflowers* and *Cliques* are passive.

5.1.2.1b Knowledge summary

Generalisation 3:

The *Outsiders* are very slow to enter, explore and depart the knowledge stage.

Generalisation 4:

The *Wallflowers* and the *Clique* are fairly quick at entering the knowledge stage, slower at exploring and very slow at departing it.

Generalisation 5:

The *Preps* and the *Nerds* are quick to enter, explore and depart the knowledge stage.

5.1.2.2 Persuasion

This is the stage in which the potential user forms a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the product in question. Rogers (2003, p. 175) argues that this opinion is created by the user actively seeking out information about the product from peers or mass media. According to Rogers, this is a rather enduring stage in the formation of a user's beliefs, making it all the more critical to ensure that a user be subjected to messages, that support a positive representation of the product, thus making its adoption more likely. However, our research shows that this process is often non-existent or imperceptible for most groups.

5.1.2.2a The groups in the persuasion stage

It is difficult to differentiate at what point a user from the *Outsiders* progresses from the knowledge to the persuasion stage. As these users will never find a social medium on their own and rely solely on peers to inform them about the products, persuasion often happens simultaneously with the knowledge stage. Due to their passive approach and reluctance towards social media, the *Outsiders* will never be thought-leaders, nor will they try to adopt early or persuade those around them. Rather, they depend on other individuals, often those who are close to them in real life (KR, 2012, app. 1.2.5.1).

Generalisation 6:

The *Outsiders* are not thought-leaders and persuasion is thus reliant on members of other groups.

The *Wallflowers* are generally reluctant in their approach to social media, in particular with respect to privacy and are thus likely to spend a great deal of time in the persuasion stage, actively seeking out information. Two interviewees explain the deliberation they experience in the face of a new social medium; '*I would read one of two newspaper articles about it, and then decide if I want to join or not*' (BT, 2012, app. 1.2.4.2) and '*I was aware of [Foursquare] for a very long time, but almost resisted it. I wasn't sure why I should use it [...] I guess I wait to see if enough of my friends join it and if it's worthwhile*' (BC, 2012, app. 1.2.4.1). The most valuable information the *Wallflowers* gather,

allow them to make the required assessment as to whether *enough* of their friends are actively engaging on the platform, in order to join. Thus, unlike the *Outsiders*, who depend on specific individuals to convince and guide them, the *Wallflowers* are influenced by the masses and will follow where the majority of their ‘real-world’ connections go.

Generalisation 7:

The *Wallflowers* rely on the decision of the majority of their connections in the persuasion stage.

The *Cliques* are to some extent similar to the *Wallflowers*, given the high priority they place on the presence of their network. As they mostly interact with people they already know, it is important to them that their friends are present on the same platforms. However, the *Cliques* are more likely than the *Wallflowers* to take a ‘chance’ on a product and attempt to convince their friends to follow. So, as the *Cliques* are likely to go through the persuasion stage sooner than some other groups, they are often an important part of the majority, that will later persuade the *Wallflowers* to follow. Should the *Cliques* fail to convince or find peers on a medium in this stage, they are likely to fail to adopt it.

Generalisation 8:

The *Cliques* rely on the majority of their connections being on a medium and are likely to be the persuader of others within their network.

Lastly, although the *Preps* and *Nerds* possess very different traits, both go through the persuasion stage very rapidly. Whilst the *Preps* will often turn to the *Nerds* for platforms to join, they are likely to begin using a service quickly and independent from the majority of others in their close network. This is an attempt to participate in the discussions happening within the *Nerds*’ community in order to enhance their image (ER, 2012, app.1.2.2.1).

The *Nerds* take a minimal amount of time to progress through the persuasion stage, as their curiosity instantly leads them to sign up, especially should they hear about a medium through one of their fellow *Nerds*. This is to ensure that they are a first mover on the platform; PL (2012, app. 1.1.2.2) explains: ‘*[if] a lot of people [are] talking about*

it and trying it out, I want to be one of the earlier people to pick it up and try it out'. Additionally, these users are likely to consult their network when hearing about a product, often by using other social media platforms (mostly Twitter), to measure how much attention and momentum a new product is gaining. Another interviewee explains how quickly the decision process happens: *'if they have a serviced sign-in tool, where you can sign in with Twitter or Facebook, I don't really hesitate to click that button'* (AR, 2012, app. 1.2.1.2).

Generalisation 9:

Both the *Preps* and *Nerds* require minimal persuasion and are likely to sign up for a medium based only on their own curiosity.

Rogers (2003, p. 176) argues that the formation of a favorable or unfavourable opinion towards a product does not determine whether it will be adopted or rejected; this is the 'KAP-gap'¹. This trend is apparent in some, but not all, of the user groups in our research. The *Nerds*, and to a certain extent the *Preps*, will often sign up for a medium, even if they have formed an unfavorable opinion (AR, 2012, app. 1.2.1.2), due to their strong curiosity and technical interest. However, the *Wallflowers* in particular, and at times the *Cliques*, often halt in this stage despite intentions to join. Several of the respondents explained that they intended to sign up for a social media platform, but *'had not gotten around to it'* (NC, 2012, app. 1.2.3.1).

Rogers (2003, p. 176) asserts that this gap can be overcome, if a user is regularly exposed to cues-to-action. However, not all cues can be regarded as having the same effect on a user, and user groups vary in their responsiveness. On social media, Rogers' (2003) assertion is somewhat true, as notifications and reminders can better the chances of continuous usage. However, the pressure from the potential adopters' network is much more effective, due to the 'fear of missing out' on the social events and communications occurring on the medium. These cues might be as direct as an actual invitation to a platform from a friend; this method taps into effect friends have, and is frequently used

1 KAP: Knowledge, attitude, practice

by social media companies. With this direct approach, a potential adopter might entirely skip the knowledge stage and possibly the persuasion stage too, as discussed earlier.

Generalisation 10:

A user's existing social network is the most powerful attractor in the persuasion stage.

5.1.2.2b Persuasion summary

Generalisation 11:

The *Outsiders* often enter the persuasion stage while simultaneously entering the knowledge stage.

Generalisation 12:

The *Wallflowers* and often the *Cliques* frequently become caught in the persuasion stage, unless they experience cues from their network.

Generalisation 13:

The *Preps*, and especially the *Nerds*, enter, explore and exit the persuasion stage very rapidly.

5.1.2.3 Sign up

Though there are no financial barriers when signing up for social media, an exchange of information takes place. Sign-up requires that users divulge personal data to gain access to a medium, as this information is what makes a medium social and allow users to connect with existing friends or relevant strangers. The exchange of personal details can therefore to some extent be considered equivalent to a financial trade, as information is exchanged to gain access to the medium.

In our study, most people value a sum of money more highly than they do their privacy. This does however vary within the diverse social media user groups. The *Nerds* in particular, and to a large extent the *Preps*, have little reservation about this. They understand the potential privacy issues such an exchange can ensue, but also have the knowledge to take the necessary steps to prevent them. This contributes to the accelerated speed at which they move through the decision process (PL, 2012, app. 1.1.2.2). Having

said that, the *Clique*, *Wallflowers* and *Outsiders* have a tendency of being more concerned about this exchange, which explains their reluctance and slower rate of moving through the decision process. Interviewee BC (2012, app. 1.2.4.1) explains: *'I think I am getting a bit more paranoid about it now, and I don't like signing up for new stuff all the time and giving my email address out everywhere'*.

Whilst the exchange of privacy can invoke reluctance for some groups, it does not prove to deter in the same way a monetary exchange can. The exchange of privacy can thus delay some user groups from joining, but there is no single group that is dissuaded entirely from the collateral. We therefore conclude that the act of signing up for a social medium is in itself, a rather insignificant stage in the decision process.

5.1.2.4 Trial

Rogers (2003, pp. 177-80) claims that the persuasion stage is naturally followed by the decision and implementation stages, in which the user decides to utilise and thereby adopt a product. Our research however, shows a much more inconsistent process.

Social media products are built so that sign-up is both fast and easy, often by the click of button. As these sites often require an account before a user can access any of the existing content, a user's natural and most frequent next step to uncover more information, is to create an account almost instantaneously - even if it is not their intention to put the product into active use.

We therefore suggest that a user can not commence usage of social media platform, without entering into a trial stage. Regardless of their intent and willingness to engage with the product, it is not before the user has learned how the site works, which friends are already present and if the product can provide them with value, that they can finally decide if they want to continue use. JA (2012, app. 1.2.1.1) explains that he is quick to sign up for new platforms, as *'you won't get much out of the public website [...] It's next to impossible to know what it does from the marketing bull****'*. Thus, creating an account on a social media site can not be regarded as 'implementation', but rather an action to enable evaluation by *trialing* the product.

The concept of trial is not absent in the original diffusion theory. However, Rogers (2003,

p. 258) discerns ‘trialability’ as a perceived attribute², that can *encourage* a user to adopt; this provides a chance for the adopter to assign meaning to the innovation, while learning how it can be implemented and used. We, on the other hand, regard trial as a *stage* in the innovation-decision process. As we argue that the nature and design of social media creates a process in which the user must go through a trial, it can not be perceived as an exclusive attribute only applicable to some products. This concept is also apparent in the earlier referenced service industry (Normann, 1991) where a user’s own assessment of the product will overrule any marketing efforts the company can implement. Furthermore, when looking at the frequency of use for the platforms in our study (Table 14, p. 57), we see that a large proportion of accounts remain unused or are only used rarely. This concludes that signing up, or ‘implementing’, does not necessitate usage or adoption, and thereby confirms the need for a new stage in the decision process;

Generalisation 14:

All users enter a stage of trial upon signing up for a social media product.

5.1.2.4a *Networks in trial*

As we have concluded the initial stages in the decision process are fairly insubstantial for most user groups, the trial stage becomes the most significant and crucial stage, as it is quick to progress to, but difficult and demanding to successfully complete.

In addition to the need for a social group to interact with, two other factors, related to the user’s network, affect their likelihood to continue use. 1) If the user has a large amount of connections on a medium, it is more likely that automatic prompts will be sent, when relevant activity has taken place. These notifications function not only as reminders of the medium’s existence, but also as indicators that the user’s connections are active on the platform; thus encouraging further use and engagement, by the trialling user. 2) Furthermore, as a user’s network is responsible for creating relevant content for the individual to interact with, the presence of these content creators is essential, as the product will otherwise be empty. As the user is motivated to interact with content, they

2 Perceived attributes: Characteristics of a product as perceived by the individual, affecting the rate at which an adoption takes place (Rogers, 2003, p. 15).

will learn more about the tools functions and features, and in doing so will derive further reward and gratification from use. With an increase in activity users are less likely to reject a platform, even if the rejection is due to simply forgetting to use the service. Thus we can conclude that the trial process is heavily influenced by one's peers not only online, but also offline.

Generalisation 15:

The greater the presence of a user's network during trial, the lesser chance of rejection.

5.1.2.4b *The groups in the trial stage*

The trial stage is particularly challenging for the *Outsiders* to overcome. While these users are challenged in becoming aware of new mediums and in perceiving any relevance, they struggle even more so to actually commence use. So, as with the other stages in the decision process, the *Outsiders* rely heavily on their close peers in this stage. As these users only connect with people they know offline, it is essential exactly *who*, and not just how many users are present on a new medium. In the trial stage, the *Outsiders* depend on their connections for encouragement and content (as is the case with most other groups), but they also rely on them for technical support and guidance. If they fail to receive this guidance, it is likely they will abandon a product, as they simply do not understand how it works.

The *Wallflowers*' dependency on their network is different. They do not depend on social media in their daily life, and are thus only likely to join a platform when the vast amount of their friends have proved that it is worth their while. They are therefore more motivated by the possibility of being left out, than they are with actively engaging with, and consuming content.

The *Cliques* are motivated purely by the communal aspect of social media. Friends presence and activity take precedence in the trial stage, and features, product quality and design are not considered as important. Though this group might experiment occasionally with new media, they ultimately depend on the opportunity to connect with their offline contacts during the trial. WE (2012, app. 1.2.3.2) remarks that "*it makes a big difference if you have friends using it*". The *Cliques* are thus highly likely to attempt persuading friends to join them during the trial stage, in an effort to generate a greater

appeal. They must succeed at this in order to make continuous usage both plausible and attractive.

A member of the the *Preps* argues that the presence of a community enhances the attractiveness of a medium in the trial stage (ER, 2012, app. 1.2.2.1). However, a number of other factors affect how positive this stage is for a user. The *Preps* are likely to evaluate exactly what value a new medium can generate, and may assess how well the platform will enhance them professionally, or broaden their current network. These users are much more patient in the trial stage, and likely to spend some time actively using the medium before casting their judgement.

The *Nerds* derive pleasure from a new medium during the trial. While highly curious about the architecture and functionality of a new site, they will sign up with the intention to trial so to learn about a new service. According to JA (2012, 1.2.1.1), provided he '*thought it might be useful, [then he'd] sign up and try it out.*' Their critical eye and extensive knowledge on technology however, makes them difficult to win over or even remotely impress, and it is likely they will explore competitors and abandon a product instantly should they find a better alternative.

It becomes apparent that the *Nerds*' and the *Preps*' evaluation differ in that of the three other groups. Whilst the presence of a community is as essential for these groups as the less adept, these two advanced user groups always evaluate social media as a *product*. Due to the *Nerds* technological knowledge and the *Preps* professional approach to the media, they are both likely to place a greater emphasis on the functionality and idea of the product, rather than solely its social aspects. The extent of value that a medium will provide the *Preps*, and especially the *Nerds*, is significant. Due to their extreme presence on social media, they may lack a need for new social tools, but driven by curiosity, will likely experiment with unique new social media.

5.1.2.4c Trial summary

Generalisation 16:

The *Outsiders* depend on close connections to help them through the technical aspects of the trial.

Generalisation 17:

The *Wallflowers* depend on the masses' presence in the trial stage, and are thus late to enter. They do not care about design or functionality.

Generalisation 18:

The *Clique* require their offline network to be present, and thus will work at convincing them to join a platform to enhance their own experience in the trial.

Generalisation 19:

The *Preps* evaluate products during the trial, based on the value they can derive. They are not timid when developing new connections online.

Generalisation 20:

For the *Nerds*, trial in itself is an attraction; they are experts in evaluating, and highly critical in their assessment.

5.1.2.5 Adoption

Rogers (2003) identifies adoption as the point '*at which an adopter puts a product into use*'; with a traditional, physical product, this would be assumed to be at or close to the point of purchase. However, in the case of social media, and with the introduction of the trial stage, the point of adoption cannot be so easily defined. Not only are there a series of layers in both behaviour and activity; such as browsing, creating content and engaging with other users, that must be accounted for. Moreover, the introduction of the trial also proves, that merely putting a product into use does not constitute full adoption, as usage is often constrained to a short period, and not only determined by the user itself, but also by the behaviour of the user's network.

5.1.2.5a Adoption of interactive products

In the case of interactive products, a user cannot gain value if they are the only user with an account; the reason being, there will be no other users with whom to interact. The magnitude ensued from the presence of others, became evident when analysing

patterns and opinions from our questionnaires. As argued by Markus (1987, p. 506), one cannot measure a user's true attitude and behavioural predisposition towards a product, before universal access has been achieved, because only then can a user reach all members of their community upon it. Thus, only at the point of universal access does an interactive product truly perform and create the intended value for the individual user, making it possible for them to decide if they want to continue their use.

Whilst Markus' (1987) theory applies well to technology with a physical component or those where various versions of an innovation can work together³, social media presents a unique set of problems:

- ◆ There is no physical component for the user to acquire a sense of attachment;
- ◆ Users can only communicate with another individual on a particular social platform under the condition they are using the same site.

The users who opt for an alternative medium can become isolated from their network and are likely to discontinue use, leaving the platform behind and migrating to the widely adopted alternative. For this reason, a substantial enough mass of individuals must adopt a product fairly simultaneously, before it can deliver any value and utility for the average user. Steinfeld (1986) argues that *'the benefits to an individual from using an interactive medium appear proportional to the number of medium users with whom the individual communicates'*. This is the concept of positive externalities (Easley & Kleinberg, 2010, p. 449); *'the benefit to you from a social networking site is directly related to the total number of people who use the site'*. To fully understand this concept in social media and in relation to the adoption process, we present the decision process graphically;

3 Such as different email providers still allowing for communication in between.

Fig. 14 - The social media innovation-decision process



The starting point of the decision process is fluid; as a result, it does not necessarily begin at the same point for each of the groups or the existing members within. This process incorporates a wide variety of factors, that gradually crystallise and solidify the user's experience and opinions, as they move further towards adoption. It also becomes clear how the various groups move through the decision process at varying speeds. However, all groups benefit from the positive value they derive from their network's presence.

We can therefore conclude that the more people who enter the stage of trial, and thereby become part of the various communities that the individual user can interact with, the lesser the risk of discontinuance. It is this '*bandwagon*' effect that is the foundation for the fertile environment required for further adoption and user-base growth to persist. The emphasis on community in adoption is also clearly visible in our interview results. When asked what aspects of a social media service are most important, BT (2012, app. 1.2.4.2) responds: '*Definitely how many people I know on that network or social media page and apart from that, not really that much*'. The interviewee goes on to explain that they are more likely to choose a service that has poor functionality, yet where their networks are present, over a service with good functionality, but with fewer community members. Though the *Nerds* have proven independent when signing up for a social media service, the existence of their community or network is as essential for their continued use of a product, as is the case with the lesser adept groups. When asked at what point

a social media service becomes integrated in their online routine, JA (2012, app. 1.2.1.1) explains that; *“It might take a year for my friends to join, and that’s where it will become very useful for me. [...] So it’s really dependent on the social side of it”*.

5.1.2.5b Definition of adoption of social media

Therefore, we deduce that a user can only gain the full benefits of a social medium when their network is present, at which point adoption can occur.

Generalisation 21:

Adoption evolves as a community process.

To define adoption, we depart from Rogers definition of *‘when an adopter puts a product into use’*. Based on our findings we therefore extend the definition to accommodate social media adoption:

‘when consensus to use a specific medium is achieved within an adequate representation of connections, resulting in the individual user achieving benefits from the medium that they could not achieve before a community was present.’

Through this definition we acknowledge that adoption of social media does not occur at a particular point in time, but is rather a fluid process that occurs during the various user groups’ trial. As people communicate both about and upon the platform, a community is gradually built through the users’ activity. When the user-base has reached a threshold, substantial enough to justify use and give an incentive to stay present on the platform, users are less likely to cease use or seek alternatives; thus adoption transpires.

It also becomes apparent, that adoption of social media is subjective compared to the adoption process pertaining to the products used in Rogers’ (2003) theory. For social media products, adoption is not necessarily a decision made by *everyone* online. It is rather a *sense*, perceived by the individual when specific networks and communities are made accessible to them. When a user gets a sense of belonging to a community and thereby gains value from the social media product, that they would not have achieved otherwise, adoption for that user has happened.

Should an adequate amount of one’s network fail to actively participate on a social medium, users will fail to derive the value that can motivate them to continue use; this becomes a stimulus for active or passive rejection of the medium.

5.1.2.6 *The rejection stage*

Rogers (2003) argues the ‘implementation’ stage is followed by ‘confirmation’; the stage in which the individual adopter can reverse their decision to adopt and thus discontinue use. However, as with adoption, we suggest that an individual’s rejection of a social medium occurs as a consequence of other users’ reactions or lack thereof to the medium. The decision process undertaken by other users can degrade a platform’s perceived value, resulting in a stage in which individuals may actively or passively reject a social medium. Our research shows that a user rarely rejects a social medium, unless their network does. This can occur during the trial stage before communal adoption subsists, or after a product has been adopted by the majority of their connections. On the basis of this, we present the four types of social media rejection:

Fig. 15 - Social media rejection

	Passive	Active
Pre-adoption	Very common	Very rare
Post-adoption	Common	Rare

5.1.2.6a *Active rejection*

Active rejection, involving the user actively deleting their account on a social medium, is rare. None of the interviewees in this study indicate they have actively deleted an account. KR (2012, app. 1.2.5.1) explains that she would “probably consider adding [accounts], rather than deleting,” while JA (2012, app. 1.2.1.1) expresses that he will rarely deactivate an account, but will rather fail to return.

Typically, social media providers make account deletion difficult, by hiding the “delete

account” feature in an effort to dissuade users from terminating their accounts. If a company can maintain a user’s account, regardless of a lack of activity, the high number of registered user act as leverage when attracting investment and advertising revenue. However, this figure of accounts fails to acknowledge the most vital representation of a social medium’s subsistence; users’ ongoing activity.

We therefore conclude that *active pre-adoption rejection* is rare. This happens when users decide to actively delete or deactivate their account on a social media service, that has yet to be communally adopted. Often early users will keep their accounts on sites that have not yet gained a sufficient community, in case this will happen in the future.

Active post-adoption rejection, depends on a user deciding to actively delete or deactivate their account on a social medium,. after the community has adopted. This occurs even more rarely, than does pre-adoption rejection. The likely reason for this is, that such action will exclude the user from the existing value gained from access to a community. However, if carried out, such rejection can be interpreted as a statement of the user wishing to differentiate themselves from the masses or to provoke a reaction. If the masses decide to delete accounts post-adoption, it is often because they have already migrated to other services, and want to protect their privacy on desolate platforms.

Generalisation 22:

Active rejection of a social medium is rare.

5.1.2.6b Passive rejection

Passive rejection is common, as users are likely to forget about a social medium if they do not receive notifications or prompts. In the early stages, when a user has not formed a strong attachment to a social medium, visiting it is neither second-nature nor routine; thus *passive pre-adoption rejection* can occur. This is when the user discontinues use of a social media platform, without deleting or deactivating their account, before communal adoption has taken place. This is the most common type of rejection we have identified and can happen any number of times during the trial stage, if the user makes continuous attempts to implement the medium.

Passive post-adoption rejection is not as common, but can still transpire. For social media

that has reached critical mass, such as Facebook, users typically log in to their accounts multiple times per day, to access activity in real-time. Due to this habitual behaviour, users are very unlikely to passively reject a product that has become ingrained into their daily routine. However, this type of rejection can become more common in the community over a longer period of time, if users gradually migrate to other platforms.

Case 1 - Myspace

MySpace was launched in 2003 by eUniverse, who operated a series of community-based websites that collectively engaged 18.5 million daily, active users (Evans & Schmalensee, 2010, p. 8). Two months after launch, MySpace obtained 4-6000 daily sign-ups and dominated the social network market by the age of five with 56 million users (Evans & Schmalensee, 2010, p. 6). MySpace remained strong, until Facebook entered the market in 2008 and took over the role as the leading social network, through a long-term mass migration. Despite several rebranding attempts (Hulpoch, 2012), Facebook left a stark MySpace climate that is now dominated by US female youth (ages 15-17) and temporary and sporadic users (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 2321). While perusing MySpace profiles today, one will encounter a huge amount of abandoned, undeleted and idle accounts

Generalisation 23

Passive rejection of a social medium is common.:

5.1.2.6c Reasons for rejection

Based on our findings and the above discussion, we have found three primary reasons that can result in one of the four types of social media rejection. In no particular order, the reasons for discontinuance most identified by our respondents, are;

- ◆ Lack of **network**
- ◆ Lack of **content** and thus utility
- ◆ Forgetfulness due to lack of **activity**

Whilst any of these can be a cause for discontinuance in their own right, they are all closely connected. The lack of network is likely to occur because the user's network has yet to join, or due to their network having migrated to an alternative. However, as the user gain value and utility from a product when their network is present, the lack of network can be a direct cause for absence of content and utility; ultimately leading the user to reject the product. Few prompts induced by a lack of activity, can further contribute to a user's failure to return to a platform.

Generalisation 24:

Rejection of a social medium is mostly a result of the absence of network, content or activity relevant to the individual user.

Subsequently, to understand how the adoption patterns and behaviour of social media users differ from those in Rogers' (2003) theory, we address the effect that the three concepts of 1) *Activity*, 2) *Network*, and 3) *Content* have on social media users.

5.2 ACTIVITY, NETWORK AND CONTENT

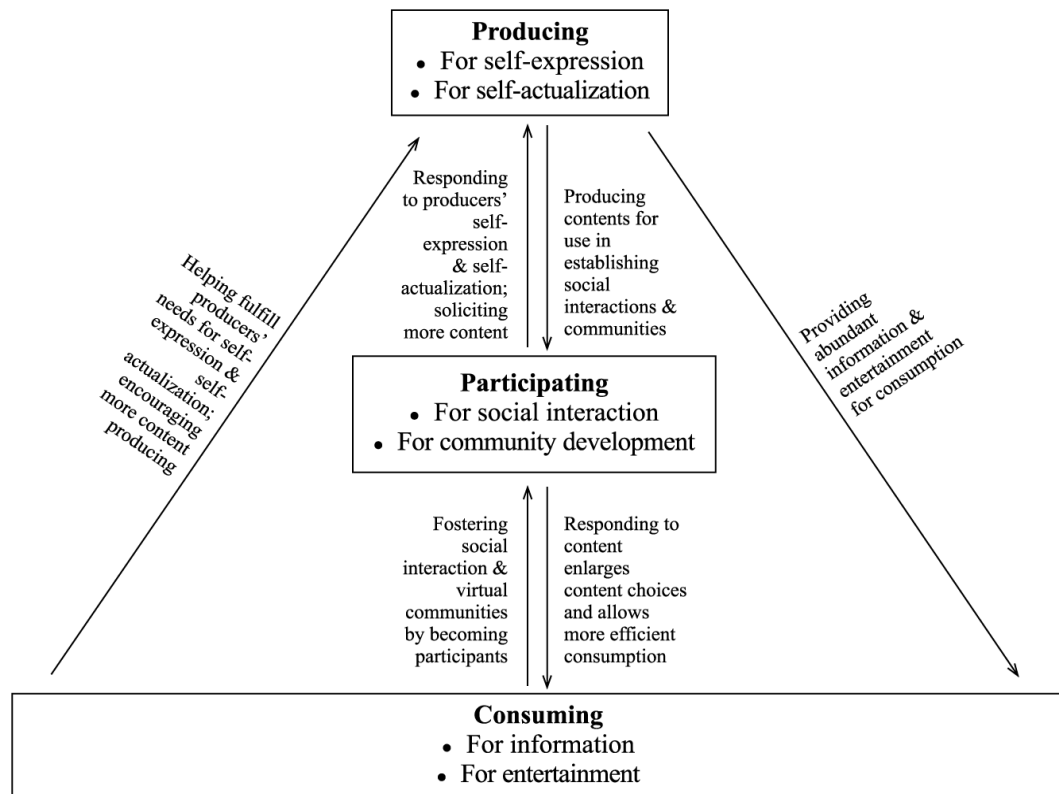
5.2.1 Activity

According to Cowles (1989, p. 83) the internet and other new media “*possess attributes not possessed by the traditional media, in particular interactivity*”, defined by Markus (1987, p. 492) as ‘*a vehicle that enables and constrains multidirectional communication flows among the members of a social unit with two or more members*’. This interactivity and communication flow means that any social media user “*can be a communications source as well as a receiver*” (Williams, Phillips & Lum, 1985 p. 247). Subsequently, any user has the opportunity to create content, thereby acting as a communication source should they wish. This focus on user-generated content (Shao, 2009) sharply differentiates social media from other media formats, such as publishing and television in which consumers have a considerably more passive role.

Shao (2009, p. 13) argues that there are three forms of interaction with user-generated media (UGM); consuming, participating and producing. *Consuming* refers to watching, reading or viewing content created by others. *Participating* includes user-to-user

interaction as well as user-to-content interaction, for example ranking, sharing, or commenting on content. Lastly, *producing* covers the act of creating and publishing one's personal content (Shao, 2009, p. 9).

Fig. 16 - UGM Interdependence model (Shao, 2009, p. 13)



Though Shao (2009), and our research, support that all three types of interactions are essential for long-term success, we identify the act of *producing* as most important; here, content is created, enabling the two other actions to exist. The user-generated content also plays a critical role to attract the attention of new potential users (Shao, 2009, p. 16). Again, we draw parallels to the service industry, where Norman (2000) discusses how the consumer actively participates in the experience, through co-production. Norman (2000, p. 131) interestingly also points out, that when allowing for the consumer to participate in the production of the experience, one must also consider the various ways different consumer types understand and participate in the process.

Whilst the *Nerds* produce an average amount of content, this is for the most part on sites where they connect with other *Nerds*, however on some platforms they struggle to find value and resultantly produce less. Shao (2009, p. 14) argues that users generating social media content do so, for needs related to self-expression and self-actualisation. This entails '*working on one's own identity and reflecting on one's own personality*' (Trepte, 2005, p. 170). As the *Nerds* are particularly conscientious in how they present themselves to other *Nerds*, they prefer to restrict their behavior to '*Nerd*' platforms to achieve self-actualisation. PL (2012, app. 1.1.2.2) explains "*I rarely really post on Facebook anymore...Maybe because my contact list has been clogged up with people I don't really want to share with*". The *Preps* however, are very active in producing content, like the *Clique* who do so slightly less. Lastly, the *Wallflowers* and the *Outsiders* are passive when it comes to producing and gain far more satisfaction from consuming content created by others.

As with producing, the *Nerds* participate and consume content more readily on networks where they communicate with other *Nerds*, but less so on generic platforms. The *Cliques* more actively carry out these, than do the *Preps*, as they thrive off the insights and knowledge of others' behaviour they may gain when consuming their content. Again, the *Wallflowers* and the *Outsiders* are passive and do not participate with, or consume content often.

Based on our results, we support the argument that the three activities of user generated media "*support one another directly or indirectly, by helping people fulfill their respective social and psychological needs*" (Shao, 2009, p. 19). Thus we conclude that social media platforms function in a highly organic way. Though the act of producing is the core of social media and essential for the existence of the other two types of activity, we assert all types of activity are necessary. Whilst some groups behavior is predominantly concerned with production, some prefer consuming content, while others favor participating with it. Further, the motivations of the groups differ, and the three forms of interaction enable all groups to act in such a way that they can derive value. Consequently, the diversity of needs can be satisfied, when the '*ecosystem*' connects all user groups in the construction and endurance of an interactive medium. If users are to only produce, a medium and its community will not prevail, as the lack of interaction will discourage

the producers. This will also be the case on a platform whereby users only consume, as no content will be generated for them to interact with. Interactivity, and thus the interdependence of the five user groups on social media, enables unification of the community, regardless of different forms of use and individual needs.

Generalisation 25:

All users have an impact on one another, regardless of the user group they are categorised within.

Generalisation 26:

Producing, participating and consuming behaviours are all integral to a social media platform; however none of these behaviors are of value if expressed in isolation.

Considering that the activity carried out by the various user groups plays an important role in the organic structure of a medium (Shao, 2009), interdependence between the various user groups, regardless of their adeptness or varied levels of participation, exists.

5.2.2 Networks

5.2.2.1 Dynamics

The presence of their network is essential for all user groups, however each group receives value from different sources of people within these networks. The *Outsiders'* network is defined by their closest friends and family; while the *Wallflowers* and the *Cliques* have networks that extend beyond these, they only connect with people they know or have encountered offline. The *Preps* and the *Nerds* however, are adventuresome when building their network and are comfortable making new friendships online, which they may later solidify offline (ER, 2012, app. 1.2.2.1). This can make the adoption process somewhat easier for these two groups, as there is a much broader range of possible connections, than there are for the groups focused solely on real-world friends. Their willingness to connect with new people online, lends itself to greater motivation to remain active on a platform, than will reconnecting with the same friends, on several platforms.

Generalisation 27:

What is constituted as a whole network varies within in each user group.

Based on this finding, it is also apparent that networks are not always composed solely

of an individual's '*real life friends*', as networks in social media can also be defined by interest, geographical location or age group (Smith & Kollock, 1999; Wellman & Gulia, 1999; Preece, 2000).

Generalisation 28:

Online networks are not restricted solely to real world friendships, but can also be defined by interest or other common denominators.

Just as important is the orientation of the site; so whilst a social network site is fueled by relations between real life friends, a travel site is powered by people's interest, and a mobile check-in service by geographical location. The less adept social media users (the *Outsiders*, *Wallflowers* and *Cliques*) are likely to connect only with friends and therefore favor network driven platforms, while they are rarely found on alternative mediums. Comparatively, the advanced users (the *Preps* and *Nerds*) are likely to favor interest fueled sites. Therefore, for the advanced users in particular, we find that a user's network does not necessarily consist of the same people on all platforms. A user might connect solely with friends they know in real life on a social network (such as Facebook), while finding greater value in strangers, with whom they share a niche interest, on a content based site.

Generalisation 29:

A user's network does not consist of the same people on all social media platforms.

While social media attempts to replicate offline communication, where friendships and relations are not restricted by differentiating traits such as technological knowledge, social media users are free to communicate across user groups. So, whilst Rogers (2003) views the five user groups as separate entities, who will communicate only with those groups who have previously adopted an innovation, social media differs in that it is built upon networks that are by nature interconnected. For instance, though the *Preps* find the greatest value in communicating with other *Preps*, they are also connected with members from the other four groups. These can be a combination of friends, family, colleagues and peers, especially on social networks. Markus (1987) argues that communication is multi-directional when interactive products diffuse. Unlike Rogers

(2003) who claims that user groups only communicate in a sequential manner when adopting, users of interactive products create relationships with and gain value from people from all user groups, despite any barriers the groups may create.

Generalisation 30:

Communication on social media is in most cases, not restricted to members of the same user group.

Unlike all the other groups, the *Nerds* share not only in their technological adeptness, but also in their interest in social media and technology itself. Whilst the four other groups are likely to work in a variety of different jobs and have varying and diverse hobbies, the majority of the *Nerds* work in technology related jobs. This strong interest connects them in online communities, in which they can discuss their particular interest. However, the *Nerds* still connect on more generic social networks, on which they will communicate with others regardless of user group.

5.2.2.2 Importance

The various user groups use social media to gratify different needs (Charney & Greenberg, 2002, p. 384), but our research also shows that the most dominant reason for joining a medium, second to the users own wish to use a product, is the presence of friends (Table 21, p. 62). Moreover, when comparing the reasons for joining platforms used daily, with the entirety of all responses that indicate the reason for joining, we see that network plays an integral role.

Table 22 - Comparison of reasons for joining a social medium

	I had read about it in the press	Work purposes	I was invited by a friend	I had a need for the service offered	My friends use it	I was curious
Overall	7%	10%	13%	14%	23%	33%
Daily	8%	8%	14%	10%	32%	28%

When looking at all platforms, regardless of frequency of use, 36%⁴ of accounts are created for reasons related to the users' network. However, for the accounts used daily, thus the platforms the respondents use most frequently, reasons related to friends are of much greater importance; 46%⁵. Thus, we find that users are more likely to visit platforms frequently, when friends have played an important role in their decision to join. To further support this argument, we turn to Google, who despite of the company's status as the world's leading online company, failed gaining a regular user base for their social network G+, let alone reaching mainstream audiences with the product;

Case 2 – Google+

Google+ is a social networking service, owned and operated by internet giant, Google. After having been launched in 2011 as a competitor to Facebook, the site remained invite-only for a mere few weeks, before opening to anyone, due to intense pressure from potential adopters. After a high profile launch, Google+ experienced one of the fastest growth-rates in social media history, and currently has amassed a staggering 400 million registered accounts (Gundotra, 2012).

However, a Google+ profile is automatically assigned to any owner of a Google-account, allowing for the company to advertise a high number of accounts. Whilst this number has helped the company advertise great success, actual use of the platform paints a very different picture. Insights project that 75% of all Google+ accounts are unused, whilst the other 25% is only used on average for 3 minutes per month, compared to 7.5 hours for Facebook (Wasserman, 2012).

Thus, regardless of how technically and functionally superior a social media product is, friends and community are still the strongest attractor. Whilst Google+ managed to

4 I was invited by a friend (13%) + My friends use it (23%) = 36%

5 I was invited by a friend (14%) + My friends use it (32%) = 46%

create intense hype, on account of their functionally superior product, they missed the true essence of social media: community. Most users who actively attempted adoption of the product and to convince their friends to join, have returned to Facebook; as a social network simply has no value without others present.

Generalisation 31:

The presence of one's network is essential to the continuous use of a platform, for all user groups.

Consequently, individual users depend on both present and potential users, not only when signing up, but also in the value they can gain from them after joining or adopting. Simply put, a user of a social medium can only gain value if others choose to use the same product. So unlike in Rogers (2003) theory, where interaction between users is only important prior to adoption, communication between users on social media after the point of joining, and even post-adoption, is just as important, if not more so. Consequently, social media networks become much more complex and multilayered than those relationships portrayed in Rogers (2003) theory. Each user group can therefore not be seen as an isolated entity, but rather is an active fragment in a web of intertwined networks; all influencing one another during all stages of the product life cycle.

Markus (1987, p. 492) argues that someone considering use of an interactive product are very unlikely to do so, unless a sizable number of their connections are already existing users. Our results also puts forth, that while some users are willing to sign up for a platform where none of their friends are present, *all* users are likely to discontinue use, if none of their friends join the platform.

Generalisation 32:

Rejection by an individual may happen if user comes to acknowledge that their networks or communities of interest are not active, fail to join, or reject a medium.

5.2.2.3 Effect

On account of the above discoveries, we find that any adopter, regardless of their time of joining or technical ability, have the possibility to affect any number of potential or current users of a social medium, through their use and behaviour. This does not

necessarily happen in a direct or conscious way, but can occur as a result of consumption or participation with others' content. The user can thereby contribute to the organic structure of a successful social medium and influence users within their close or distant communities to continue use.

We thus deduce that the acknowledgement of interdependence between adopter groups, as well as individual adopters, is vital to the launch, marketing and sustainability of a social media product.

Generalisation 33:

Creators of social media must acknowledge its interdependent structure to achieve commercial success.

5.2.3 Content

Content is essential both for the creation of identity of a medium, as well as for the people who adopt it (Shao, 2006); be it updates on users' personal life, content imported from other sites or productions made by the users themselves. The commonality of this content is that it is always chosen or created by the users. Therefore, for a social media to appeal to any number of users, care must be taken to prevent some user groups from hijacking the site and overcrowding it with specific content. This can make it a homogenous environment, and act as a deterrent for other users. The most successful social platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, manage to provide an environment, where various interest groups can subsist alongside one another. Such platforms also entertain an environment, where users can communicate outside segregated communities and interact with other users, who they differ from significantly.

Content therefore plays an essential role in the success of social media, and benefits it when of superior quality. Agichtein et al. (2008) argues that quality content on social media is determined on the basis of three factors;

- ◆ **Intrinsic content quality**

Characterised by for example strong spelling and grammar in any formulated text, and high-quality recordings of sound and movie clips.

- ◆ **User relationships**

Characterised by the most appropriate people having produced the content, and the best fit recipients having received it. A mutual exchange in value between the various participants denotes this factor contributes to high quality content.

- ◆ **Usage statistics**

Characterised by the extent to which content is interacted with through comments, likes and/or shares, and thus the degree to which it is consumed by others.

On the basis of this and our findings, we suggest that content, when of high quality, has the ability to travel across group barriers, and is not only relative or of interest to users from their own group. Our study shows that the *Nerds*, traditionally targeted by new technology products (such as social media), are likely to generate content that is heavily associated with their primary interest: technology. As this content does not necessarily appeal to a wide variety of users or encourage interaction (important characteristics of high quality content (Agichtein et al., 2008)), the *Nerds* do not appear to be attractive early users of a product. Whilst these technology savvy users are easy to win over in the early stages of the product lifecycle, an overabundance of them can disservice a product gravely. They are likely to create content that can be deemed unattractive by other user groups, if they are left unrestrained.

Case 3 - Kinetik

Created through the collaborative innovation camp 'Startup-weekend', Kinetik provides a mobile (and tablet accessible) platform for users to recommend and reviews apps. Through the close and tech-savvy network in attendance at Startup-weekend, Kinetik gained a following overnight. Now a full-time project for the four-man team, a large part of their success can be attributed to the well-connected advisors, who helped drive further interest and attention towards the product.

However, despite its initial success the team has for some time plateaued in user growth, and are struggling to gain access to a mainstream following. As the platform has built an image based on advanced users,

the content within it has now created an identity, with which the average user struggles to identify. Instead of providing a service on which the average mobile user can search for recommendations and ideas for applications to download, the platform has evolved into a forum solely for *Nerds* to promote and share apps they have created themselves, or which are highly specific to their own personal demographics. When released to the mass market, curious and less advanced users have therefore found recommendations for apps that they are unable to identify with, thus limiting the potential audience to other *Nerds*; a group not likely to recommend products and very likely to discontinue use (RM, 2012, app. 1.1.1.1).

Therefore, as the *Nerds* are so engulfed in their interest for media and technology, and often use social media to discuss and share their passion with other *Nerds*, they can quickly overpopulate a medium and create an identity for the product, different than that which was originally intended by its creators.

Generalisation 34:

An over-abundance of advanced users in the early stages of a product's life-cycle, can weaken its likelihood of spreading to a mainstream audience.

Conclusively, diverse content plays a critical role in the evolution and success of a social medium and platforms should thus provide a fertile environment for various communities to subsist. Pinterest, where users can bookmark pages and share the content they find interesting, took on a surprising identity, by targeting users outside the traditional tech-savvy type.

Case 4 - Pinterest

Pinterest, the social-visual bookmarking platform, is a strong example of a generic platform that can be used by virtually any user with any number of interests. Their mission statement explicitly states that the site can be used to browse content created by other users, and 'to discover new things and get inspiration from people who share your interests,' (Pinterest, 2012). This depicts the company's mission to provide a service

that is customisable and useful to any user - regardless of their interests.

However, the platform began its course towards attracting a wide user-set, based on a strategy that sought out a narrow user base in its early stages. After the site launched, users were required to submit a request to join, which allowed the company to screen applicants and award accounts to the highly specific user type, they had determined as a target (McNair, 2012). The majority of accounts were awarded to females within a general age range, and with an appreciation for design and aesthetics; early on in the platform's life-cycle, their content branded the site. However, this content was also highly ambiguous and heterogenous in its appeal, to a very broad range of demographics beyond those initial users. Their propensity to share their experiences on social media and offline through word-of-mouth, activated interest from a vast number of new user groups (Buck, 2012). As the fastest growing site to date (McNair, 2012), the platform now continues to attract users, who are far different than the ones targeted in the platform's early stages.

Subsequently, users' content assigns meaning and collectively creates an image that assigns an either relatable or unrelatable brand to the social medium. Too narrow an image can prevent new users from joining the platform, while a broad image can help build a following if successful. However, while certain groups may be attracted to or deterred by existent content, the versatility of social media allow users to control the service to best suit their needs and filter to exclude undesirable content. This makes it possible for different communities to coexist, and feel equally welcome on the same platform (Shao, 2009, p. 19).

5.3 LEAD USERS AND THE BELL CURVE

5.3.1 The Bell Curve

The curve created by Rogers (2003, p. 272), that plots users onto a graph depicting adoption of an innovation, follows a “*normal bell-shaped curve when plotted over time on a frequency basis*”. Moore (2000) refers to the adoption curve as the ‘*technology adoption life cycle*’, and proposes that a company should approach it from left to right; conquering one user group after the next (Moore, 2000, p. 13). He also posits that “*it is important to gain momentum and thereby create a bandwagon effect that makes the next group buy in,*” as there is a ‘*small window of opportunity*’ which if lost, can result in the position in the market being overtaken by a competitor (Moore, 2000, p. 13).

Consequently, both theorists argue that dependence between user groups follow a sequential pattern. Thus, a laggard (the last group to join, and in our case referred to as the *Outsiders*) is highly influenced by earlier groups, as these play a significant role in the laggards decision process. In contrast, an innovator (the first group to join, and in our case referred to as the *Nerds*) cannot be influenced by a laggard, as the laggard simply does not know about the product, at the time of the innovator’s adoption. Both Moore (2000) and Rogers (2003) consequently argue, that in order to promote adoption, user groups should be approached based on their level of innovativeness, starting with the most innovative user group. Existing diffusion theory therefore asserts, that the strategy to attract users should be tailored individually to each group. This is based on the assumption that groups will fall into a coherent pattern, and that a company must refocus marketing efforts, as the curve progresses sequentially. If applying this to social media, marketers will be required to convince the *Nerds* to join a product first, and once successful, continue to the *Preps*, the *Cliques*, the *Wallflowers* and finally the *Outsiders*;

Fig. 17 - Traditional approach for diffusion of an innovation



However, we assert that this is an entirely invalid approach, in the context of social media. Because social media users are highly diverse, it is unfitting to approach users in sequence, and arguably impossible, as users from each of the groups are likely to join sporadically and inconsistently compared to adopters of non-social, offline products.

Thus, based upon the findings within the three pillars of social media; activity, network and content, as well as the characteristics assigned to our various social media user groups, users should not be approached in the same sequential manner as posited by Rogers (2003) and Moore (2000), because:

Generalisation 35:

The five social media user groups do not adopt in a sequential pattern

Generalisation 36:

The five social media user groups do not lead in a sequential pattern.

5.3.1.1 Adoption patterns

Our data uncovered an inability to fit social media user groups into a pattern, solely on the basis of time at which they adopted, due to the fluid process that is character of social media adoption. As it is possible for the earliest joining account-holders to fail to use a service, late-joining users may use it in a very dedicated and continuous manner; thus, it is inappropriate to categorise social media users as either 'early' or 'late'.

Generalisation 37:

The bell curve, as proposed by Rogers (2003), is not an accurate depiction of how social media users join or adopt a new medium.

Though the concept of time is not entirely arbitrary, when categorising users within the five user groups, it is not the utmost dominant factor. We acknowledge that the more advanced users are likely to learn about, and try out, a new medium earlier than will less advanced users, due to their curious nature and technological knowledge. However, we also find that more advanced users will not adopt, until their community is present; thus we cannot assume that the advanced groups are first to adopt.

Due to the ability to intermittently trial a social media product, time of sign up, or the act of signing up itself, can not be used as a measurement tool, as this does not necessitate that the site will be continually used. Rather, a user's activity, understanding of, and relationship to a service must be analysed in the context of their community. As we define community as '*a group of any size, consisting of persons already united or with the possibility of connecting through communication, on the basis of a commonality*' (app. 4.2), we put forth that adoption has the potential to occur simultaneously in various communities at different rates. So, whilst one community may only have attracted a small group of users, another can be much further in the adoption process. Thus, we argue that the adoption process can occur in staggered patterns, where one community might be farther in the process, whilst others are premature in comparison.

Generalisation 38:

Innumerous staggered adoption processes can occur simultaneously on a social medium.

5.3.1.2 *Leading patterns*

As all social media users are in some regard interconnected, they have the opportunity to interact with others. However, this does not mean that they are capable of *leading* them.

Whilst the *Nerds* are not natural-born leaders and are unlikely to make any efforts to convince their peers to join a medium, they are often revered by others. The *Nerds* are capable of leading other *Nerds*, as they are likely to join mediums they can see others are using. As the *Preps* often look up to the *Nerds*, they are indirectly affected by these and thus likely to join mediums used by them. However, as the *Preps* rarely recommend media to others or try to convince their friends to join, they resultantly are not thought-

leaders to any other group. The *Wallflowers* and *Outsiders* are naturally lead by the *Cliques*, but the *Cliques* only feel comfortable joining new media after members of their own group have joined. Thus, the *Cliques* are active leaders of the less advanced groups, but have no one to lead them.

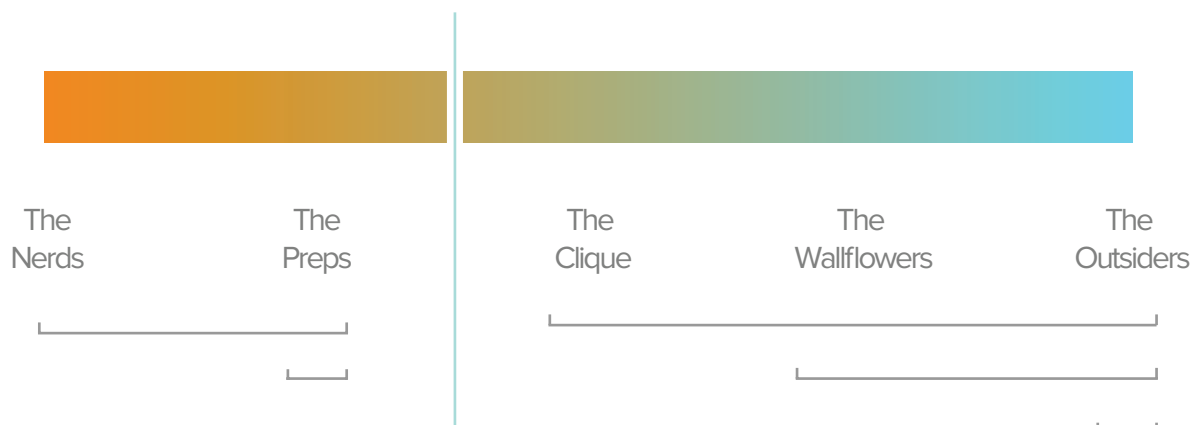
Generalisation 39:

Though social media user groups are able to interact with one another, they are not all capable of leading each other.

So, if one was to attempt converting one group at a time as suggested by Rogers (2003) and Moore (2000), a chasm would present itself as no group bridges the *Preps* and the *Cliques*.

5.3.2 The Chasm

Fig. 18 - The Social Media Chasm



Moore (2000, pp. 16-19) argues that *the adoption life-cycle*, and the user groups that are used in its assembly, are separated by cracks and chasms, that creates a diverse set of challenges, which must be overcome to achieve critical mass. Though Moore's (2000) model is mirrored on Rogers' bell-curve, which portrays the adoption life-cycle on the basis of time, it is still to some extent applicable to our findings. However, rather than sorting the various user groups by their innovativeness, and thus their time of adoption, we categorise them based on their level of technological adeptness and acknowledge

that adoption does not necessarily happen in the order in which they are presented. When portraying how the various users can act as thought-leaders, and affect each other's likelihood of adoption, we still find that a type of 'chasm' hinders further adoption of social media. Whilst Moore (2000) believes that there are smaller 'cracks' to overcome between 'innovators' (in our study referred to as the *Nerds*) and 'early adopters' (in our study referred to as the *Preps*) as well as between the early and late majority (the *Cliques* and the *Wallflowers*, in our study), the real challenge lies between the early adopters (the *Preps*) and the early majority (the *Cliques*).

According to Moore (2000), this chasm exists as a result of the differing motivations of the two groups. Early adopters demand revolution and extreme novelty, whilst the early majority insist on gradual evolution and relativity as an integral quality of the innovation. Secondly, early adopters are comfortable dealing with software-related bugs and risks, while the early majority is heavily averse to both these aspects of the early stages of a product. Moore (2000) thereby presents a paradoxical situation that was left unaccounted for by Rogers (2003); a member of the early majority will not listen to recommendations from an early adopter, as their motivations are simply too foreign. For a member of the early majority to commence use of a new innovation, another member of the early majority must already have done so. This same issue becomes apparent in our study, as the *Preps* can not lead the *Cliques*, as they simply will not listen to them.

Generalisation 40:

The *Preps* are unable to lead any of the other user groups onto a new social medium.

If the *Clique* will only trust other users in their group, who will be the first to bring a new product into their closed circle? Moore (2000, p. 64) argues that the way to do this, is by '*focusing an overabundance of support into a confined market niche*'. By centering efforts on a smaller segment of the early majority, creators of social media can effectively build up trust and collateral, that can later be used to entice the rest of the group to join. As Moore furthers Rogers' (2003) theory, by identifying the existence of a chasm, he *also* argues that users should be addressed in a sequential manner. However, he also introduces the idea of overcoming the chasm, by focusing on winning over smaller segments within the groups.

5.3.3 The Community Layering Approach

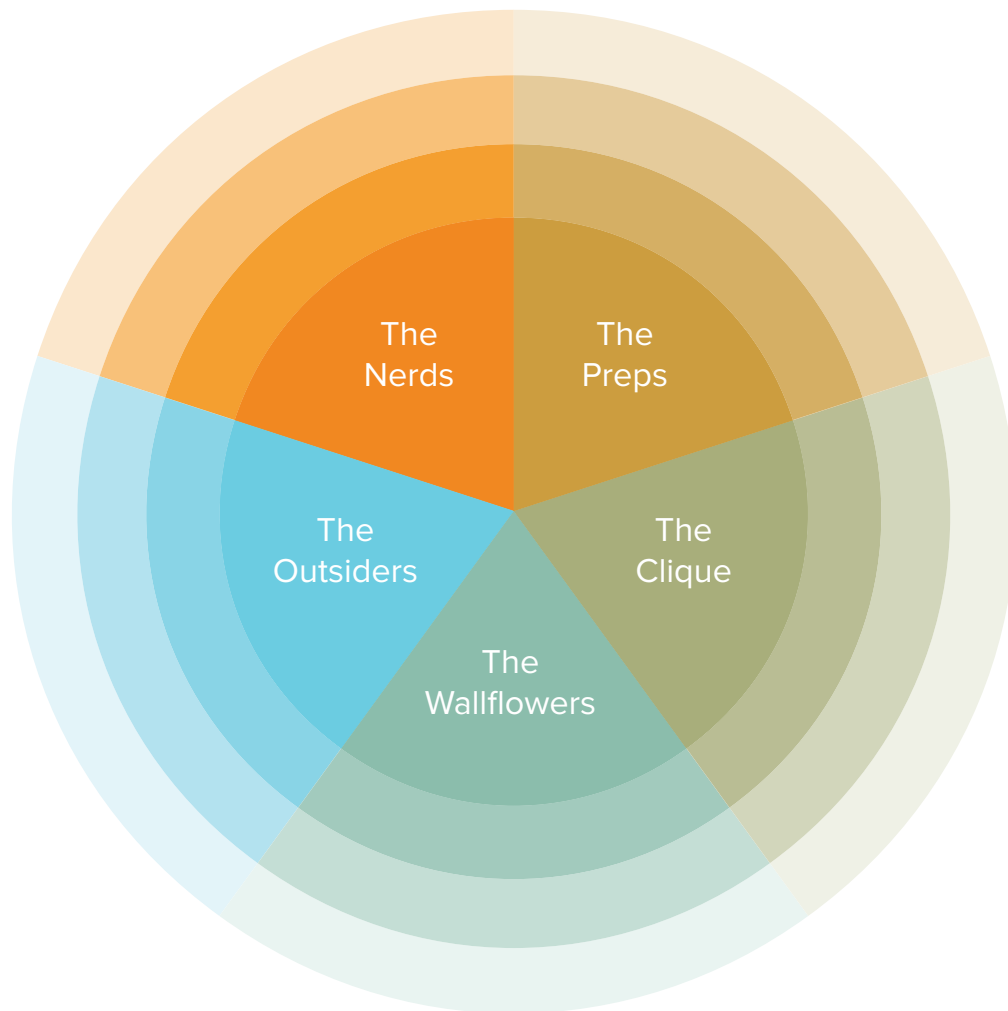
The products used to create the theories of Rogers (2003) and Moore (2000), are evaluated according to their technical ability, the practical problem(s) they are suited to address and their ability to be employed in a professional setting. Social media is not evaluated by adopters according to any of these facets; as users do not consider, nor do they choose products, based on how technically advanced other users on the platform are. These products function as platforms for communication, and their perceived value depends on successful communication with others; thus evaluation of social media is subjective. Further, as argued by our interviewees, the presence of friends is of considerably greater importance, than is functionality. So we posit, that the primary reason for any user group to consider putting a social media product into use, is the presence of their connections. With that in mind, we then postulate why these relationships exist? The people forming them, simply share in a common attribute, be it interest, age, location or relation; just as in traditional, offline relationships.

Generalisation 41:

Relationships based on common attributes are the key drivers of social media adoption.

As community and communication span across user groups, so must the strategy of social media creators. It cannot focus solely on attracting users who possess the same technical ability as each other, but should rather focus on the users' primary motivation for use: having access to a community united by commonality, similarity, and familiarity. Companies must appreciate the interconnected dynamics of the offline, social environments that mimic themselves on social media, and thus should not approach users in a sequential pattern. Rather, a social media company should approach all user groups simultaneously.

Fig. 19 - The Community Layering Approach



So, instead of trying to reach an entire user group such as the *Nerds*, based on the presumption that the *Preps* will then follow, we suggest an alternative to target potential adopters of social media platforms; by attracting communities of commonality. These smaller communities possess users from each social media user group, and have a distinct common denominator that defines them, aside from their technical ability; such as age, location or interest. Thus, to diffuse a social media innovation, so that all user groups can coexist, we present the '*Community Layering Approach*'. When the first community layer has been built, through a community of commonality, and adoption has occurred for those users within it, marketing efforts can be focused on the next layer of users.

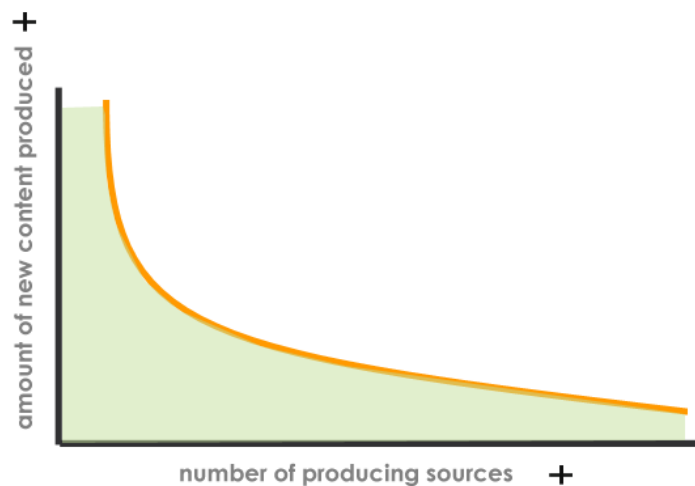
This new layer consists of another community of commonality, that can bring additional value to the platform and increase the user base.

Generalisation 42:

All user groups should be simultaneously recruited based on a common denominator, rather than their technical ability.

This approach resembles that of Anderson's (2006) 'long tail', in which it is suggested that marketing efforts should focus on targeting smaller, less established consumer groups, who together can accumulate to a large and profitable group.

Fig. 20 - The Long Tail (Anderson, 2006)



In his theory, Anderson (2006) acknowledges that while the mass market might appear profitable, it is also the market with the greatest competition and thus the highest barriers for entry. Anderson recognises that smaller markets are easier to tap into, and more cost efficient, than is competing for the mass market. However, by focusing on small, overlooked groups, whose needs are not satisfied by other products, it is likely a customer base, equivalent to that of the mainstream market, can be created over time (Anderson, 2006). Furthermore, these customers can influence the mainstream market. This focus on smaller, quality groups is exactly what we suggest in the '*Community Layered Approach*', as social media marketers can create a strong foundation for future growth by using

smaller groups, to slowly create value for the larger market.

Generalisation 43:

Smaller communities should be approached, to gradually create quality content that has the potential to travel across user groups and encourage diffusion.

This approach was successfully implemented by the largest and most well-known social network to date, Facebook;

Case 5 – Facebook

Facebook, the world's leading social media platform, launched in 2004 when it was founded by three Harvard students. Initially, membership was limited to other Harvard students, controlled by allowing only those with Harvard student email addresses to create an account. Quickly the tool expanded to include colleges in the Boston area, Ivy League universities and Stanford University. As the site gained popularity and positive word-of-mouth, it was gradually further opened to integrate international university students, and later high school students, onto the platform. In 2008, when demand was significant, the company invited anyone from the age 13 and over, to join (Carlson, 2012). A short four years, characterised by excessive user growth, lead to the celebration of the site having reached a record high of 1 billion monthly active users worldwide, in 2012 (Facebook, 2012).

Developing an elite community for those within a highly localised demographic, by only permitting sign-ups from users with a specific email domain, Facebook managed to create an attractive medium for advanced users. However, simultaneously they provided a localised and 'safe' environment for the less advanced users to explore and connect. Users automatically possessed a clear connection to each other, and thus were able to identify both with people and conversation, despite their lack of technical knowledge. Members of the *Cliques*, as well as the even less advanced users, were thereby made comfortable in their embarking into new terrain.

The inclusion of users from all user groups, improves the likelihood of content being

created, that will appeal to a broad range of users. A broad user base also affects the overall quality of the content, as defined by Agichtein et al. (2008). By having all user groups involved, online platforms can mimic the organic structure of an offline social network. When all five groups are present on a social platform, the activities carried out by the various users, support one another and create a content-enhancing synergy. Whilst the *Nerds*' desire to participate in critical discussions can be met, the *Preps* are satisfied in their freedom to produce various content. The *Clique*, can interact with content and also discuss it with their friends, whilst the *Wallflowers* and *Outsiders* may consume or carry out a variety of responses to the content. This assures the quality evaluation criteria, as identified by Agichtein et al (2008), is satisfied.

Furthermore, the synergy created by the presence of all groups, prevents a single user group from hijacking the site and create content, that will only encourage like users to join. Instead it ensures cross-group communication, that is necessary to encourage further growth and enhance the prospects of reaching critical mass. Thus, with the goal of converting small communities that contain users from all groups simultaneously, it is possible to fulfill and meet the varying values and needs of all the groups. Furthermore, quality content creation, hype and virality, created by the already active users, invoke a desire for non-users to join.

5.3.3.1 Exclusivity and the bandwagon effect

The 'fad bandwagon effect', by Meyer & Rowan (1977), explains how information about *who* has adopted an innovation, rather than the functionality of the innovation itself, can have an influence on potential adopters. As users adopt an innovation, the more likely it is that others become aware, that they too should adopt. Further, a potential adopter's perceived risk reduces as the number of adopters increases; this is likely to provoke skeptical or potential adopters, to finally take the 'leap of faith' to adopt an innovation.

As users adopt, a social pressure to conform ensues, encouraging people to commence use of a product, thereby reinforcing the bandwagon effect (Abrahamson & Rosenkopf, 1997, p. 292). This effect is particularly apparent in the inherent 'fear of missing out', expressed by the majority of the social media users in this study. By convincing a large enough proportion of a community to join a medium, a company can encourage others

to do so as well, as the fear of losing legitimacy or being left behind by the majority, can work as an effective motivation (Pennings & Harianto, 1992). Thus the bandwagon effect is extremely powerful in encouraging adoption of a social medium, as user growth reduces insecurities of hesitant persons; leaving few other significant barriers for further adoption.

Generalisation 44:

Exclusive, strong communities can have a bandwagon effect of attracting non-adopters.

Pinterest (case 4, p. 112) successfully undertook this method, by launching their platform on an invite-only basis. Current users were rewarded a quota of invites to share with friends, who could alternatively request an invite through the platform, in hopes of becoming selected as a privileged early user. This approach had a series of effects on the platform, that depicts the various positive outcomes that a company can derive from an interest-focussed, exclusivity model, rather than one based on technical ability. In no particular order, these four elements can be obtained, when building a platform using the '*Community Layering Approach*';

- ◆ **High Quality Content**

As users are specifically selected, either by the social media company or by existing users, new users are more likely to have a close relation or need for the specific offering of the platform. Users will therefore be likely to create content, or engage with existing content, in a way that provides quality to the platform and thus helps it diffuse across user groups;

- ◆ **Appeal Across User Groups**

As the community in which the users interact is both focussed and intimate, it is not solely the technologically advanced users, who are made to feel comfortable in trialing a new product. In such an inclusive environment, users are likely to become more active and loyal, than they would on a platform, where both content and community can overwhelm, intimidate and thus deter a new user;

- ◆ **Active New Users**

As new users are invited by trusted connections, they are likely to feel a degree of responsibility towards these connections, to prove their worth and appreciation. As a result, they are also much more motivated and likely to create content and regularly visit the platform, than had they joined the platform on their own accord;

- ◆ **Sub-communities**

As users join and gain value from the platform, they will become more motivated to encourage others to join too. As such, a web of interconnected users, who have the potential to derive value from one another can flourish; thus bringing all members closer to the previously identified concept of communal adoption.

To summarise; instead of approaching users on the basis of their technical ability, they should be approached based on a common denominator, on one or more of the following: 1) interest; 2) location or 3) demographic. By focussing efforts on gaining the interests of one community, to create an initial loyal base of users, these users will gain a sense of attachment, that is pertinent in enlightening them to demand the presence of others, thereby enticing them to promote or create new communities. These communities become the foundation of the layers, that develop and compound a platform's users base in the '*Community Layering Approach*'.

5.3.3.2 Building the layers

Building the layers of a social medium is a delicate balancing act, but one that closely resembles offline relationships and interactions. Take a real life example; if a hundred strangers are to congregate in an enclosed space, and asked to network with one another, numerous small groups will likely form. It is likely that these groups will be arbitrary, and based on proximity in the room. Some may not even find a group, thus leaving them isolated and unable to gain value from the crowd. Such a situation will overwhelm most individuals; making it likely for only a few and strong characters to succeed in connecting with others. Weaker and passive people, will probably resign and give up, resorting to the periphery of the space. A similar circumstance is likely to be the result of a social media platform, whose strategy in the onset of a product's life-cycle, is

focussed on attracting a too large group, that has too broad a range of interests.

Generalisation 45:

Social media platforms that are too broad at the onset, will be unable to connect people and create social bonds.

However, using the same analogy, but with a smaller group of users bearing a recognised common denominator, the result is likely to be more positive. Insecure people will deem it less intimidating, if they can directly relate with a smaller selection of people. This encourages relationships to form. Furthermore, as people create bonds, they are able to create synergies larger than themselves as individuals, and thus gain confidence in connecting with others. This same situation can occur on a social medium, when the '*Community Layering Approach*' is integrated.

Generalisation 46:

Small communities of commonality can create safety, quality and synergy.

If successful, social media platforms can become viral. This can also generate great value for *existing* users, as the community might otherwise become saturated with users, who no longer deliver novelty. Burt (1992, p. 49) argues that "*contacts are redundant to the extent that they lead to the same people, and so provide the same information benefits*". If the focus remain too narrow and new communities are not incorporated, a social medium is in danger of becoming flooded with users, who connect solely with people, they are already somehow related to. The introduction of the next layer, should thus be done in such a manner, so to ensure gradual growth. When opening up the platform to new communities, the strong foundation of content and relationships built by the initial community, acts as a catalyst for growth of the new layer. The existing users will welcome the fresh ideas and content, while the new users will encounter novelty in pre-existing content and a sense of collective. Thus, there is an ultimate need for several communities to co-exist, so users can transfer knowledge and content between these; creating a web of value exchange and non-redundant relationships (Burt, 1992, p. 47). It is the responsibility of the social media company, to evaluate when the existing community is becoming saturated and thus open it up to the next layer. We foresee that adoption by the initial

layers and their subsequent communities, can further organic and natural growth without interference or efforts by the company.

Generalisation 47:

By gradually layering smaller communities onto a platform, organic growth can eventually occur.

5.3.4 The New Lead User

With the ‘Community Layering Approach’, the ‘lead user’ can no longer be defined as the most technologically advanced; the *innovators*, reminiscent of our social media group the *Nerds*. Rather, it is the individuals users comprising the communities of commonality, that span all of five user groups. It will be particularly difficult to find these users within the more reluctant user groups, making this approach by no means an easy method, but one that can serve as a sustainable solution, to encourage long-term success.

While Rogers (2003) suggests that the most advanced and knowledgeable first-movers, the *Nerds*, must be targeted by marketers, we have proven this strategy as unsuitable for social media. Rogers (2003) also argues that these users can both afford and are willing to spend money on an innovation, that may demand absorption of high levels of risk. As social media products incur no monetary cost, we have also concluded that companies are not restricted in targeting people from any demographic or group, on the basis of affluence or personal finance.

Rather, what users to target should be determined on the basis of who will create the most widely appreciated content, and who will advocate for other users to join them on the platform. Thus, creators of social media must identify a community, whose individual users can later promote the product to *new* communities. With that said, we assert that the concept of ‘the new lead user’ for social media, demands recognition as a collection of users, who include members of all five groups, and are not delimited by technical ability. We therefore identify the new lead user not as an individual, but as a community.

Generalisation 48:

The lead users of social media are not individuals, but are rather communities.

A company that has managed to successfully identify their lead user community, and thus build a sustainable user base, is Everplaces;

Case 6 – Everplaces

Everplaces is accessible as a mobile application, and online platform, and encourages the search and documentation of physical places around the world, that one has visited or is interested in. Since the launch of its beta in 2011, the company has made conscious efforts to understand their users, and encourage the ‘right’ users to get involved. While the idea of the product was fostered at ‘Startup Weekend’, which initially lent access to a technologically advanced community in Copenhagen, the team took a series of steps to exclude these *Nerds* from the product in the early stages of its life-cycle. By targeting the product towards an international selection of younger females, with a propensity for travel, food and culture, they managed to encourage the development of a community of commonality. Efforts including the removal of the option to mark a location with the tag ‘sport’, Everplaces was successful in subtly excluding the demographics, that would encourage the *Nerds* to join; namely younger men. They further stimulated the interest of the lesser-able user groups, through restriction of product features in its early stages, while gradually introducing complexity at intervals.

Having recently launched a new version of the platform, Everplaces is gaining international recognition, and due to its efforts to cautiously and systematically introduce new features, the platform has succeeded in fostering a network, that creates quality content, contains passionate users and has fostered strong relationships through sharing. Such a strategy has enabled Everplaces to continue to succeed in attracting passionate users, whose content denotes the product a competitive edge, in the cluttered marketplace of travel and geolocation, bookmarking services (TT, 2012, app. 1.1.1.2).

The above case illustrates the valuable learning, that rapid growth on a social medium often triggers rapid failure. Though the bypassing of the *Nerds* admittedly demands a

lengthier process, such a strategy can build a stronger community, on the basis of quality rather than quantity. By understanding that content and quality can drive user sign-ups while enhancing the product, Everplaces successfully identified a community, that possessed a specific need for such a product. Once identified, Everplaces customised and communicated *their* product to target precisely the people they *wanted*, and not those who would be the *easiest* to reach. To accommodate the various levels of adeptness in this community, they took great care to avoid overwhelming the users with functions, and provided the ability to streamline the depth of the product's features, as per the individuals' needs.

To better understand who the new 'lead-users' are, the following recurring factors continue to show prominence as being key qualities, that can help ascertain users fit to further a platform's growth. These characteristics can be used to identify an ideal *community*, rather than a selection of individuals, to initially target.

- ◆ **Loyalty**

The users must dedicate themselves to the site in question, in that they will both continue use post sign-up and avoid seeking an alternative. This quality can be found in a community that identifies with an unmet need, where no market leader, nor array of alternative solutions, has succeeded in providing an environment for such.

- ◆ **Connectivity**

The users must be moderately connected, either on- or offline, with members of the target community or with other potential communities, that can later be encouraged to join. This quality can be found in offline communities, where people actively share in a specific subject of interest, or online on non-social sites, where thought-leaders on the subject are to some degree related to other persons, with whom they share a commonality.

- ◆ **Interest**

The users must have an interest in communicating about the identified commonality, that can motivate production, interaction or consumption of related content. This quality can be identified in potential users with

professions related to the subject, or in people who may already participate in related online activities, that depicts an interest in a commonality.

Together, these three factors can aid in seeking out a community of users, made up of members of the five user groups, who when unified by a commonality, can be used as a driver to build the first layer of a social medium's user base. Such a community, if adequately nurtured, can allow for a company to triumph in broadening the user base, thus successfully incorporating diversity. Such a community, as well as the process of its identification, is highly subjective. A series of individuals cannot be arbitrarily selected to compose an initial community; rather a company must identify a market, in which they can provide value for an existing community of commonality, that has a need for the product in question. Such a community, containing members of all five user groups, will inaugurate the nucleus of a social network, so that it can continue to grow with committed and loyal adopters.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 RESEARCH SUMMARY

Like Rogers (2003), we categorise social media users into five adopter groups, or as referred to in our study, user groups. Due to the community aspect of social media, we find inspiration for the naming of our groups in a prominent offline community; the high school. This permits the categorisation of the user types, and allows us to reflect their characteristics and results in the following titles; the *Outsiders*, the *Wallflowers*, the *Cliques*, the *Preps* and the *Nerds*.

These five groups share several common features with those of Rogers (2003). However, whilst innovativeness, and thereby time of adoption, plays an important role in the categorisation by Rogers (2003), *point* of adoption is almost undefinable in social media, due to the inconsistent behaviour and joining patterns of the various groups. *Time* is therefore not of utmost importance, when categorising a social media user. Instead we turn to qualitative features, such as behaviour, emotions and technological adeptness, as key factors that assist in determining the appropriate group in which a user is member.

In the analysis of the social media decision process, we identify a new stage, the trial, which we incorporate. This stage occurs post sign-up, and is the most integral stage in the social media decision process; users often remain affixed in the trial, given a tendency to return to a platform intermittently. Friends are an essential element, that have a significant impact on a user's decision process, in that their presence can solidify a user's allegiance to a product. Regardless of how a product's features compare to those of an alternative platform, friends still take precedence. Thus, the successful completion of the trial stage, whereby a user adopts, is dependent on a their friends and online connections having a presence and being active on a medium. On the basis of this

finding we conclude that adoption is not an individual decision in social media, but is rather a stage, dependent on the presence of friends, and thereby occurring within a community.

Due to a lack of adoption barriers, such as monetary cost, and with the incorporation of the trial stage, users are highly likely to reject a social medium, either before or after adoption. We therefore introduce four types of rejection; these are likely to transpire if *network*, *activity* or *content* is lacking. We identify the presence of these three elements, as essential for the success of a social medium.

On account of our discoveries, including the fact that *time* cannot be a determinant for user categorisation, joining patterns are not sequential on social media, and adoption is communal, we also re-evaluate the concept of the traditional lead user, and assess its validity in relation to social media. Rogers (2003) and many theorists, who have studied how innovations diffuse through networks, argue that the most innovative users must first be converted, to successfully diffuse an innovation, whereby all user groups subsequently adopt. However, this is not relative for social media. Our results prove that all users are interconnected and interdependent across user groups, both before and after creating an account on a medium. We therefore conclude that all social media user groups play an essential role in the diffusion of a platform. This is supported by the fact that the various groups have a propensity to produce, interact and consume content differently.

While we identify a chasm between the *Preps* and the *Cliques*, where there is no identifiable user to further diffusion by leading others to join; we go on to suggest an alternative approach for creators of social media, to diffuse a product. We present the 'Community Layering Approach', whereby all user groups are approached simultaneously, by attracting smaller communities of commonality, that include members of all the social media user groups. Identifying users on the basis of a commonality, rather than on their technical adeptness, is vital when determining the initial users to approach. We thus conclude that there is a need for social media companies to undertake this long-term strategy, based on communities rather than user/adopter groups, to ensure that the needs of the various users are satisfied and to encourage sustainable growth.

6.2 UNPREDICTED FINDINGS

6.2.1 Lack of commitment

Given its widespread popularity, it came as a surprise to learn that users' attachment to social media is typically insubstantial. Many of the user groups expressed they would be rather unphased, if unable to access social media. Furthermore we found that after signing up for, and even adopting a medium, users are likely to discontinue use. On the basis of these two findings, we determined that 'amount of accounts' its not an accurate measurement for determining how advanced a user of social media is, nor can the total number of accounts on a platform depict its success or likelihood of attracting future signups. Lastly, this also requires that creators of social media must assign significant resources to retain current users, whilst implementing strategies that serve to attract further users to join.

6.2.2 Time as an arbitrary factor

Already during the process of coding our data, the concept of time began to surface as as an arbitrary factor, when attempting to categorise social media users. However, even after defining our user groups on the basis of their behavior, we were still unable to identify patterns related to time that differentiated the groups; such as time of joining, time of adoption, and time spent on a platform. This is a particularly prominent finding, as creators of social media continue to refer to users, and categorise them, on the basis of being 'early' or 'late'. Further, it was unexpected that adoption could not be determined as occurring at a definitive point.

6.2.3 Differentiating adoption processes

One of the key factors differentiating the five user groups in our study, are their varying processes of adoption. Though the groups were created on the basis of other findings, clear patterns emerged in regards to how the individuals within them adopt. The speed at which these users adopt is distinctively different, and some stages are completely bypassed by some user groups. This is a factor that is non-existent in the original diffusion theory by Rogers (2003).

6.2.4 Lack of a lead group

When using Rogers' (2003) theory of diffusion as a foundation for our study, we assumed

we would succeed in suggesting an alternative group of lead users. However, after uncovering the complexities that are inherent in interconnectedness, we learned this is not possible in social media. Instead, the group classification serves in helping to better understand how the various users behave, so to effectively reach members of each simultaneously. Approaching communities, rather than users on the basis of their group classification, should thus be the focus. This came as a novel finding from our research, that could also serve to guide the creators of social media, so to prevent the saturation of new products with technology-focused content, that can occur when applying Rogers' (2003) theory.

6.2.5 Importance of communities

In identifying the importance of communities of commonality, we unearthed a series of surprising findings. Whilst social media naturally lends itself to the coexistence of communities, it was unexpected to find they are the most reliable source to promote long-term success of a platform. We found that an understanding of how to best approach and accommodate these communities, is key in unlocking the complex web of users on social media. While less advanced users, both in past and at present, are continually overlooked, we have proven that this predisposition is both damaging and unfit in its application to social media.

6.2.6 Challenges in the market

As social media has gradually become mainstream, many have attempted to create a product in hope of achieving prosperity in the likes of Facebook. Due to the low production costs, programmers and designers can easily create novel and functional social media products. Yet, we have found that the attraction is not dependent on a superior product, but rather on the people using it and dynamics between them. We therefore suggest that creators of social media, avert their primary focus from a product's features, to understanding users and accommodating communities of commonality.

6.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

6.3.1 Social media platform categorisation

We categorise the 31 platforms posited in our study, on the basis of the platform's purpose.

These fall within four categories; *mobile-*, *network-*, *content-*, and *service-driven* platforms. However, as social media becomes increasingly mainstream, its span also widens. Where early platforms were focused on *network*, consumers today rely on social media as a means for both entertainment, organisation, communication and even as a human-centric replacement for search engines. Defining the various types of social media would therefore bring considerable value, and serve to further expand our research, by providing a more advanced comprehension of the nuances of behaviour. We thus put forth a need for further research into the categorisation of social media platforms; to understand the differences of both the platforms themselves, and how users' behaviours and motivations vary on each type.

6.3.2 Varied value of behaviour and connections

While social media naturally lends itself to the ability to communicate with others, the social nature of a product can be very subtle and unobtrusive. As such, we assert that the *ability* to make, or communicate with, connections on social media is what sets it apart from other technology. However, it is the *action* of communicating with a connection that deems a medium social, and thus creates value for the user. That said, each individual connection has a different impact on a user. A richer knowledge of how the different types of interaction impact both a medium and each individual user, can further the understanding of what behaviours should be particularly encouraged, to gain and sustain users.

6.3.3 Varied types of connection

Social media platforms often refer to connections between people as “friendships”. One could argue that most individuals constitute a friend as someone they know on a intimate and personal level. However, social media allows users to form relationships with people they might know, but would not communicate with, on a regular basis, if at all; such as old school friends, neighbours or friends of friends. Social media platforms even facilitate relationships between strangers. On these grounds, we anticipate that all connections do not hold the same value for a user, and put forth that further research into the definition of relationships on social media is necessary. This can assist creators of social media in determining the value of connections made on a platform, and if applied, could strengthen the typology put forth in this thesis.

6.3.4 Communities of commonalities

Users may participate in any number of communities on social media; these communities of commonality are highly complex in the various forms they may take. Further study on the types of communities can advance the understanding of the impact these have on users, and serve to help companies better understand how to create an environment fertile for them to flourish.

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APPENDIX

DIFFUSION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

An empirical study of user groups and adoption

MASTER THESIS IN

Management of Creative Business Processes, Copenhagen Business School

HAND IN

4th of January, 2013

SUPERVISOR

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1.1 PRELIMINARY INTERVIEWS

1.1.1 Companies

1.1.1.1 Raul Moreno

Interviewee: Raul Moreno, CEO Kinetik (RM)

Interviewer: Rikke Østergaard (Q1), Julia Judge (Q2)

Format: Skype

Date: 12/04/2012

RM: How are you?

Q2: Great, how about yourself?

RM: I'm doing great thank-you.

Q2: Good! Thank you so much for meeting with us this is excellent.

RM: Are you guys in Copenhagen?

Q2: We are yes, so it's three thirty for us, and I guess it's ten thirty for you.

RM: Yes exactly.

Q2: I guess I was mistaken because I thought that you were in San Francisco, so that was my mistake.

RM: Yes, we were in San Francisco but we are now in Buenos Aires. We have been here since January. We moved here because most of our team is from here, and we are actually part of an incubator here in Buenos Aires.

Q2: Perfect. So we will just start off with a quick bit of information about ourselves. I am Canadian, Rikke is Danish. We are both studying in a program called Management of Creative Business Processes, and that is at the Copenhagen Business School. I still work part time at Podio while we write our thesis, and Rikke has been working at a company called Umloud, and you can explain what that is.

Q1: Yes. It's a branded mobile app agency where I've been doing an internship for the last six months, and have finished now to focus on my thesis. And just to get you up to speed about what this is about, this is a kind of early exploratory interview. We have a good idea of what we'd like our thesis to be about, but wanted to talk to some companies to see if the problems that we've identified actually matches with what people are experiencing. So it might not be directly used in the thesis, but we can discuss that depending on what information you give us, and we may even look to use you, as an actual case in the thesis later on. So we are writing about the adoption rate of new users for social technology products, so products like yourself, where its either an app or a website, where it evolves around some kind of community with user generated content or sharing of sites etc. And obviously also about the relationship of different users, the type of users and how they affect the product.

Q2: So that is the basic background on what we are trying to write about, but we are trying to narrow our problem formulation and that is where this conversation comes in, to give us some insight into how to further narrow because we will be using use cases, and if you would be interested, we would love to talk further about using Kinetik as a case in the thesis, however for right now we are just looking to identify exactly where to take this given the general idea that we have.

RM: Sure. Let me tell you a bit about us so you have a better understanding. So how we started was actually in Copenhagen at Startup Bootcamp. We wanted to create a place where developers could cross promote their apps, because what we found out is that it is really challenging to find

out about these apps, and in terms of marketing it is very costly to promote their apps, so we developed a cross-promotion network and the problem with that was, I am not a developer, I don't develop, so I was having a really hard time trying to sell this code to developers to implement so the adoption rate of the code to implement in their app takes a month, and for Apple to review it takes another week so it just wasn't scalable for us. Then we had another idea, which was to make a social network for apps where people could share their apps and other people could discover it --something very similar to what Instagram or Soundtracking were doing with apps but Soundtracking does it with music, Instagram with photos, and what we wanted was to do something similar for apps. So that is why we started, we really believe – we strongly believe that people are a very important component in the social discovery of content, in our case its apps. We have seen it work very well in Twitter, that is where the idea comes from, of social discovery and the model of following people that you think is interesting regarding what is interesting to you, is what we thought is important and so that is how we started. Our first iPhone version we released on October of last year so for us it's been quite a learning experience. Version one of the app had a lot of problems. It was good but had a lot of problems, we were doing a lot of experiments, and now I think we are actually releasing our new version of the app which just shows we have evolved from the experiments we have been doing in the past few months.

Q1: Great, all right well that is perfect. That was the first question already. Just to make you aware of it, we are recording the conversation, is that alright with you? We will obviously not use any of the data or information without asking you first, but just so you know you are being recorded.

RM: Ok.

Q1: Great, so I think you've answered the first question. So what kinds of people use Kinetik?

RM: So what we did, we had a strategy, we wanted to, we knew that not a lot of people like to share content, especially apps. So what we thought was a good idea was to start with people that were mostly interested in sharing apps, which are the app developers, designers, and the people that work with apps. And reviewers, app reviewers- people that blog about and write about apps, so right now we have a community of about 25,000 people, and mostly I would say its people within the community more specifically within the app development community. So that's our initial user base. 90% of the people. And we did it on purpose, because we knew that their content is a higher standard than a normal user, and they would understand the experimentation that we were going to go through better than a normal user would do, so that's why.

Q1: So if you had to give your typical user a sort of persona, example what gender would they be, their age, where would they be from, do you have some kind of idea of who the most typical users are?

RM: At the moment, I would say it's a male between 18 and 28 years old. iPhone user, that has something to do with development and is interested in tech. That's the typical user, but obviously there are also some other examples.

Q2: And was that the goal as well when you started out with the product? Is that who you anticipated to be the first to pick up use, or did it take a mind of its own and attract a different group. Is this 18-28 year old male user someone you did not anticipate to be the primary user group to initially adopt?

RM: It was actually anticipated by us, but we wanted control this experiment as much as we could. What we did was we took communities that already existed. One is Dribbble, and the other is Frost. So we wanted to control as much as we could in the experiment. But we think our audience would be any iPhone user, its very broad. And we think that with the new product we are releasing, with version two of the app, it already has content, and we are already releasing app recommendations, based on the content the users have generated so that's a thing that I think is much more appealing to a broader audience, so not only the people that like to share but

also the people that like to receive -- which if you study social networks, 80% don't share anything, and only 20% of the people share information. So those 20% for us is basically developers, designers, and app fanatics. Now it's all very broad, the app community. And the product that they are interested in is app recommendations, so that is what we are releasing in a few weeks.

Q1: So if you go back to when you started building and testing the app, how did you go about creating content and testing it in the really early stages of it? Did you have beta testers or anything like that?

RM: Right. So we had about 100 beta testers. And then we just released the app in the app store, and had some press cover it, and some users download and then they just started generating content. We didn't do much.

Q2: And these particular beta testers, were they in your own community, of you and the rest of your team members? Or how did you select the initial beta testers that you used?

RM: The good thing was that we were part of the incubator in Startup Bootcamp, so we knew some people and then just meeting people, going to meet-ups and meeting people interested in what we were doing. We had been developing the app for three, four months, and we already had some contacts, so we were talking to some people about it and that's how. We started sharing mock ups of what we were doing, with people, and if we thought they were interested in what we were doing we would share the beta.

Q1: Was it easy in that stage? An app like yours is all about the community and the fact that there is content on there, and a community of users. So how easy was to get those early people before there was a lot of people on there?

RM: Right. I think that people are very knowledgeable that there is not going to be a lot of content, so they don't expect the best experience in the beginning. And secondly, I think most of the users are pretty tired of social networks, and they think, "Oh, I have to create an account," and "oh, I have to share this." It's just like almost a normal process which is what a lot of people have become used to at this point and a lot of it has to do with novelty. People say "Oh, let me check it out, and share this one thing," and then they leave and never come back. And this happens with a lot of apps and a lot of services. The real challenge is for us and for all developers doing networks and social stuff, is that people come back and recommend their friends. People have become used to the process of signing up for a network and inviting five friends, and then you don't see a lot of content, you share one thing and then you never come back. So it's a very bad first experience, and there's nothing you can do about it, it's just the way it is. But if you are able to find a small community of people that do like to share stuff then you have something that's sticky, right?!

Q1: So how do your users hear about Kinetik? Is it normally word of mouth? Do you think they hear it from their friends or previous users?

RM: I think at the moment, the first version was mostly from the press in the release. And we don't have yet, a very social part of the product. We have a lot of features about bringing friends and inviting people into the network. And for version two I think it's going to be a lot about word of mouth, that's really how you build the community.

Q1: Great. Again, to go back to the beta testers. If you started off with these 100 beta testers -- did you do anything active to try and get them to share the app, or did they just naturally participate in that?

RM: Yes. We actually didn't do anything. We just wanted to see how they acted. So it was all natural. We wanted to see what they were doing. One thing I would have done differently is that we weren't looking at how and where they were installing. So we were in San Francisco, and we got some beta testers from Copenhagen, and some beta testers from New York, Buenos Aires. So in

some regards it was good, because it helped us to build a very international community, but in other regards it wasn't that great because we couldn't see what they were doing. We couldn't see the experience, with the phone in their hand. So if I was to go back, and if I was to get beta testers for version two, I would want to see how they use it, so that's one thing I would change – but I would let them do whatever they want to do [on the tool].

Q2: What exactly was the reaction when you launched the product to the public? Did you see a massive surge in users once the app was in the app store? What was your experience in that respect?

RM: So I think one of the things I like about Kinetik, is that it was a very big risk from our part. There were times where we thought it was a pretty stupid idea, like we were basically thinking: who's going to share an app? Why would you share an app? – it doesn't make sense. So we were developing something that was a business, but it was also a fun project, an experiment that might be a very stupid idea, or maybe some people would think it's interesting. Luckily enough, the second thing happened so people thought it was interesting, and people used it, so it was a big risk and we were expecting people to think it was really stupid. Those were the two outcomes we were expecting. When we launched the press, we had a very good feel about it, they liked the design, the concept, the idea, it was a new concept, so I think it was well received by the users and by the people. That's why we are continuing doing it.

Q1: So let's talk about the users and how they kind of behave on the platform. I use the app myself, but I'm curious to hear how your normal users use it – what kind of features do they use the most, how do they interact, do that share, do they just use the information on there?

RM: That's actually an interesting, that's a good question. There's been a few use cases, for instance there's been one or two users that are fanatics right! They share 1,000-2,000 apps. They just like to share, share, share! There's other users that don't like to share, they don't have a lot of contacts – they just want to receive. And there's also the normal user that sees an app, and they get reminded of Kinetik once a month and check it. So there's basically three scenarios. One scenario is a very active user daily, I would say 1-2% of the users. And there's the not so active... which I would say is 80% of the users at this moment. And then there's the other 10% that says ok: Useful, I use it once a month, and I'll give some tips once in a while when I remember to use it. There's a limited time, and a lot of apps, so even in your phone you might search for apps and get reminded for using Kinetik. But I think right now we don't have a very engaging part but I think that will change, hopefully soon. You have to have the attention of your user at least twice a week to keep it interesting. If not it will just get lost in a folder, it will get lost, you don't remember about using it.

Q1: So you say you have around 10% that aren't so active, but do you have people who get the app and then never use it? Or do you see people sign up and then are never active on it?

RM: That's a good thing and a bad thing about the press right – when you go to the press, a lot of people read about it, and they go, "Oh, let me download it." And then they just check it out and they delete it. They just want to see it. So those are the users that don't use it because they read it on a blog, and they don't really understand it. It takes some time to really understand a network. It takes energy to engage in a social network, right. It just takes time. And not a lot of people are willing to give that time. So that's the hard part about making a social network.

Q2: So that's the way you see it. You want users to be creating dialogue on the platform, as opposed to just using it as a resource base for new apps. Is that right? Your fundamental goal, and especially with the version two being launched soon, is that you want people to engage more in dialogue with one another on the actual platform as opposed to using it as a resource just for sharing.

RM: Exactly. Actually, what we think about for the version two is about receiving contents. It's about receiving, and just a small percentage would give out content. That's what we think most people want to have at the moment. Just in terms of apps, not photos or music or whatever. For our

segment, apps, people want to receive more than share. And the problem was, we knew this from day one. We always knew this, but we didn't have anything to give them because we needed first for people to share, and map their relationships. So these four months, we've been gathering data but now we have a recommendation algorithm that's based on social interactions, and that's what we're going to release. So it's been four months of gathering data, and now the next step is to be, ok, I share an app, and then this is what we recommend. I like an app, then this is what we recommend. We know about you, and about your apps. Probably more than the users know. And we have a lot of data we can give them very simply, and say, "these are the five apps you should have in your phone."

Q1: So I guess you can say that you're starting to try and encourage people to share more. With adding this feature, you're pushing them by adding an incentive to share.

RM: Exactly. Exactly, and also another thing that we're doing is sharing, but also giving you, this is an app that I recommend, and you telling us, or telling the network, "I like it, or I don't like it." So that's another type of sharing.

Q1: Is there anything else you do to encourage people to engage. I know you've had a monthly user, or something like that. You've rewarded people when they've shared some apps – is that correct?

RM: Yes. I think we have to do a better job, some user services, like on Foursquare, they give you badges for sharing your locations. They give you a free or credits, like virtual currency. So those are ideas that we have, but it's just that we are a very small team so it takes a while, a very long time to implement.

Q1: Just to go to a more broad area. Have you identified any specific competitors? Is there anyone you think you're competing with specifically?

RM: Yes, in app discovery, in our segment I would say, there's AppsFire, and Chomp. I think those are the two main competitors. But Chomp was acquired by Apple recently, and AppsFire, I don't know. Actually the main difference with the competitors is that they are not social. I don't know what my friends and people I care about too – for us that is a very important part and it is really hard to do it right. But once you do it right, it is magic. And no one has done a good job in terms of apps, but that is what we are trying to do.

Q2: So right now obviously it is free to use the platform. So what was the thought behind this and will it continue to remain free, or do you plan on charging a fee at some point? What is the thought behind the pricing model, or lack of.

RM: We made it free because we didn't want to have any friction with the pricing. We knew we weren't going to have a million dollar user-base, so we didn't want to have any friction. The ideas we have, we were thinking of charging for unlimited app recommendations, like so we give you value. And then we will save you time, and give you the best app recommendations, if you are willing to pay a dollar value for this. And I think some users will. And I think that is how we can add value. Also we want to contact the developer users. If you want to complain, or want to give them feedback or want to talk directly to a developer about an app, the developer can pay for that feature. So we are thinking about monetizing with the developer and user relationship which we think is important. Those are some ideas. We have ideas of where to make money.

Q1: On a practical level, it sounds like you have been collecting a lot of data since the launch. How do you practically measure this stuff? Do you have a tool you use, or how do you keep track of all these numbers?

RM: We have a panel that we have all the KPI's, key performance indicators. And we just keep track of all those. We have around thirty indicators that we measure daily. And we just measure them everyday, to see what has happened.

- Q2:** How do you measure, in terms of the activity of your users?
- RM:** If they open the app, that's one activity. If they share content, that's another one. If they like a share, or they like a comment – those are the main activities that you can do at the moment.
- Q2:** And that's how you were able to create that breakdown – like you mentioned the 1-2% that are extremely active and generate a lot of content, versus the 80% that are a bit more dormant, but still present, and then the last 10% that you mentioned. That's sort of the way of building those three categories, is monitoring that activity, or the amount of activity?
- RM:** Exactly.
- Q2:** Is there a particular system of tool that you use to monitor that?
- RM:** No, we haven't seen anything interesting in that regards. But there might be something, but we haven't yet found anything. We use it internally. It's easy to get it from the server and we just make our own. We use also some analytics firms like Flurry, but I don't know, we are always checking our data.
- Q2:** What are the features that are most popular and what are the features that are used the most on the platform? And has any of this surprised you? Do people tend to use Kinetik in a way that is quite different than when you first developed the product?
- RM:** The thing about our product is that there are not a lot of features. There's basically one main feature, which is sharing apps. There's actually sharing apps, and then you can like or comment. We wanted to maintain our features so that they are very minimal so we could measure if that is working or not. So we didn't have any surprises. So you can share and someone likes it, that's basically it. There is not a web part where you can have a lot of feature-reach products. For us it's just very minimal, and we are trying to simplify it even more. We have a lot of feedback on just the sharing. People say, "why don't you pop up the apps that I have on my phone, and make the sharing faster, and use just apps?" Most Apple stuff, we've been surprised not by how they used the product, but the feedback that we got from the users. So they want to use it a certain way – they told us, "I would like to use it this way, I would like to use it that way, I would like to have this feature," – so that's been surprising, how much the users know what they want, the power users right. And how they give us this feedback, and a lot of what they detail makes a lot of sense to us.
- Q1:** I've been surprised using it. I guess I'm in that 80%, so I've shared apps a couple of times, I've checked it out. I'm not super active, but I go in once in a while and I think you know there's the follow feature- I think I follow 9 people and I've shared like 12 apps, but I have over 50 followers and I often on a regular basis get followers. The one thing that surprised me, compared to a lot of other social networks where you have to work for it to get followers is that people here are very willing to follow each other, and I guess that gives them more recommendations as well. But I guess that's one thing that surprised me as a user.
- RM:** Yes, exactly. And that's why we thought that a new feature, that suggests new people to follow, we are actually making it easier for people to follow, based on a lot of data that we already have. So we can say, you like these types of apps, you are in Copenhagen, and ok, here are five Podio users who already have Kinetik, and you share those apps. So making it really simple for the user to connect is really important. Our idea is that it has to feel like magic. Like, "Wow, how do they know that I work at Podio, how do they know that I am in Copenhagen". So our goal with the next version is that it has to feel like magic. And that is the hard part. It takes time, and it takes data. It takes time to make it really smart. But we think that with the next version (and tell me your feedback) our goal is to make it feel like it's magic.
- Q2:** Do you find a lot of users end up deleting Kinetik from their phones? How do you measure the loss of users?

- RM:** We measure the loss of users by the monitor of the daily active users, weekly active users and monthly active users. So we are not 100% sure that they have deleted the app – Apple doesn't tell you that information. But we know that you haven't been to the app in a month. There's probably a high percentage of them that have deleted the app.
- Q1:** So what is your vision for Kinetik? Of course there is a new version coming out. But looking broadly in the future, what do you think and hope will happen?
- RM:** So basically our vision is that given now there's 500,000 apps in the app store. In the next two or three years there's going to be five million probably, and that number is not going to decrease, it's only going to increase. And also finding the right apps for people is going to be a very important problem. It is a very important problem and it's only going to get worse. So basically our idea is to be the main reference so people come to Kinetik, and go, "oh, these are the main five apps, great," and then they go back to lunch. So we want people to see Kinetik as the main referencing place for apps, and we that's important.
- Q1:** You mentioned before there was things you would have like to do differently. Is there things that you would have changed, or wished you had known before you started, that you have learned on the way? They are mostly thinking in the way that the users have joined, not so much in the business sense, etc. But more how you engage with the users and how the users use the apps.
- RM:** Right, I think our sign up flow -- we didn't put a lot of attention to the sign up flow. I think that is very important and we are making changes in that regards. I also think that it's really difficult to make changes fast because you have to get the information and process it very fast. And if you don't have a team that works fast, it's really hard to maintain the users engagement. Also, another thing that is really important...[undecipherable] . In our regards, version one was like an experiment, our investors didn't want us to release the app, but we chose to release it knowing that it wasn't finished, just because we thought that we would learn much more from the users than from us. So I think going back, we've learned a lot from the users, but I feel we have learned a lot more than if we just made prototype and prototype, within a hundred people.
- Q2:** And when you said it was part of the strategy to keep the functionality very minimal, and very simplistic, is that something that you want to change, or do you want to increase functionality, or rather do you want to just create that magic that you were talking about, so that it comes from your end, to have more of a predictive interface? Is that more of what you have been using as a basis for this version two, or are you trying to provide more functionality for the users?
- RM:** That's a good question. We are actually fans of Apple, and how Apple designs products, they have an Apple user experience guidelines, human interface guidelines. For example, build your app with only three features in mind. And you if you can choose one main feature, then do that feature. Most successful apps have only one basic feature. And our idea is to follow Apple. We appreciate the concept of simplicity and minimalism, so we are going to keep with that mind-set. We don't want to add features. We want to make the one or two features that we have feel like magic, and that's our goal.
- Q1:** And how do you think your user base will develop in the future? Will they continue to be app tech-savvy people or will you go out to a more mainstream audience?
- RM:** I think that version two is targeted mostly to mainstream audience, people that don't like to share, but want to receive and want to feel the magic. We couldn't give magic in day one, because there was nothing to give, but now I think we have enough data to do it.
- Q2:** The last thing is, you have started to create these categories for apps, but you also have categories for users. What was the motivation behind this, trying to gather various demographics of users together, and do you anticipate or expect that that will take off? In general what was your thought process behind that?

- RM:** Kinetik is based on inquiries. For example if you're interested in tennis, you follow people that are tennis related, if you are interested in tech, you follow people that are in tech and that type of thing. So we were looking at how Twitter does the categories, and also trying to make it our own. And also when we were approaching these different communities of people – app reviewers, designers, developers, and we said ok, if this is how our excel looks, why not put it on an app to basically help find people. Now it's about making that smarter. Another interesting concept that we use Twitter for is that we can take the text that people have up to describe themselves, then we can take that data and categorize people based on how they categorize themselves. So that's another idea of how we do it, and use data to make it easier for people to find other people. That's our goal.
- Q2:** I think that's it. This has been fantastic.
- Q1:** Really helpful. Thank you so much for your help. And would you be interested in the future when we have identified our question further, and might want to use Kinetik as a case, is this something you might be interested in?
- RM:** Sure sure! Any way we can help.
- Q1:** And obviously you would get some interesting information out of it hopefully. Of course you can read the thesis when it's done if you are used as a case.
- RM:** All right, great thank you, I appreciate it!
- Q2:** Excellent!
- Q1:** Thank you so much!
- Q2:** Perfect, thank you so much and I guess we will be in touch.
- RM:** Yes, and good luck with your thesis.
- Q2:** Thank you, and good luck to you too! Bye.

1.1.1.2 Tine Thygesen

Interviewee: Tine Thygesen, CEO and Co-founder of Everplaces (TT)

Interviewer: Rikke Østergaard (Q1), Julia Judge (Q2)

Format: In person

Date: 25/04/2012

Q1: Thank you for letting us talk to you!

TT: Of course!

Q1: Just to kind of explain to you what it is we are writing about, we are still in the stages where we are trying to explore a little bit more and find out exactly what our thesis question is. But we know we are focussing on how social media products, so any product where you are in a social setting and you start sharing with others, how users join and why they join. Obviously the fact that their friends are on a social media product is a reason for them to join, and the word of mouth, and that's kind of what we are working around, but we want to see how they behave and what kind of groups of users you can have on a social media tool. We think it's a little bit different than normal products. For things like lead users, we believe you identify a bit differently than you do on other products. So we are interested in hearing about Everplaces and how you feel it has developed and what kind of users you have. We are not going to be necessarily using it directly in our thesis, it is very much for our own sake at this stage. But of course if there is anything that you don't want to answer or that you tell us but do not want us to quote you on it, just say so and of course it will not be included. And we are also recording it. So tell us about Everplaces.

TT: Everplaces is like a two-prong product. One side is bookmarking for locations, so whenever you stumble upon something that you would really like to do kind of like a wish-list, but it can also be places that you would love to remember so that later you can recommend them to your friends. That is the one side of it and the other side is that people can use that stuff they have saved themselves, to help other people find the cool parts. It's kind of common knowledge that you don't find the really cool places in the guide books, because someone has to have been there or someone knows someone there, so essentially we are trying to make a digital version of exactly those things, exactly what you would do, like when you write an email to someone and you get an email back and you go through all those links and you try and figure them out and then try and see where they are on the map. All of that information sharing is just really cumbersome today. And we are trying to do more of a one-click 'bing' and then I know why you like that. Because maybe it's a great brunch place, or maybe it's a great place because it's open late, or maybe it's really great at night but avoid it on the weekends because it's filled with people – those little pieces of information are the difference between somewhere you just eat and somewhere that you have a great experience.

Q1: And what about Everplaces the company? The team, the history of it?

TT: So there's six of us working in it. Me and my co-founders, it started with my co-founder Angelica, we started it last year, we've worked together before in another couple of companies, and then my other co-founder, my third co-founder Chris came on a little bit later in May or something like that he came on, and then in May we also got Joshua our first employee who's been extremely important in building all of this. And then we started building in May, and the output came out in last December. And we are still in beta, but we just opened the beta so that people can come in and use it in March, so that means that the amount of attention and the amount of usage of the service has gone from fairly ok for where we were, to really good. For me this is much more exciting. Rather than at the stages in the beginning where it is really slow.

Q1: So what kinds of people use Everplaces? Do you have a typical user?

TT: Ya, I think we do. Especially as I said, there's two sides to it: one side is to keep track of places, for yourself, a little bit like Evernote, and the other side is the recommendations. The keeping track was the part that was released first, already from December. There was a tendency to attract people who are already fairly organized. Like these people, they didn't start doing this with Everplaces, they were already having a list in their mobile or they already wrote it down, or they already collected the cards, or they already cut out articles from magazines. So we call them *collectors*, that personality type, and we have mostly those. And most our users live in a big city because if you live in a big city, then you also need it in your everyday life, whereas if you live in a small town you only need it when you travel. And most people use it where they go as well. And I wouldn't say it's a mobile product because a lot of people only use it on the web, but it's definitely for the mobile generation. And so there's an age group that matches smartphone users.

Q1: Is it fairly tech-savvy people in these early stages?

TT: We tried not. We thought it was quite important not to get caught in the early adopter, and were a little helped when Fast Company went out and called us "Pinterest for the real world," And we've actually not gone for a Pinterest reference, because I think it's a little lame, but they did it anyway and actually it worked really well. So it shows again what I know. And that meant that a lot of people who are visual, and who are just interested in places and who wanted to be inspired – you know, like the same reason you would buy a travel magazine or an interior design magazine, those are the kind of people we are interested in. And compared to the average start-up, I think we are doing really well and reaching those normal people. Because we are trying not to use tech words-

Q1: Which is often what happens.

TT: Exactly, like, it's a geo-location service that focuses on content on the interest graph.

Q1: So are they geographically placed? Are they not only placed in big cities but also in the world?

TT: We can definitely see a concentration in the Western world. Our biggest users are in the States, the second biggest place is in Germany and then here with the recent launch, we've had a lot of surge of interest from Brazil and the U.K., and to some extent also from China. So those are the biggest ones. Especially Brazil, Germany and the United States.

Q1: And can you see that the users are quite clustered or is it just that these are the biggest ones?

TT: We don't always know where in the country people come from because we can just see in which app store it has been downloaded. That's the easiest way to really see it. Then we can also see where they are saving places, so from between those...In the States, I think New York is by far the biggest city, San Francisco was also quite big. Rolando, Dallas, some of the Southern ones are also doing quite well. And in Brazil it is very much Rio (di Janeiro) and Sao Paulo. But I think in Germany it is much more spread.

Q1: So if we go back to the early stages, when you released the product originally or started testing it, how did you go about testing it and creating content so early on?

TT: Well we were a little bit lucky because we didn't need to create content early on because early it was a like a bookmarking service, so you created your own content. So that was definitely an advantage. We test everything; we probably use eight different softwares. We can see where you hover when you go into the site, we know which pages you click to after one another, we know how many seconds you spend per page and then we do A/B testing. So we try, and if we send this link to there or to a different place on the page would you use it differently? We do A/B testing with the landing page with the words, and we do Google adword campaigns for different words with the sole purpose to see what people will click on most, what works. And it's just a test, it is not even meant to get us any users. So we test everything and we put that in place from the beginning, how we contract the metrics...

- Q1:** So was it conscious that in the beginning you chose to do it as a bookmarking service, you wanted to start it off where people create content, or was it a lucky coincidence?
- TT:** It was on purpose, we were very aware of this concept of the *Chicken or the Egg*, that if you go out and say, 'Now you can go out and find all the cool places in Berlin', but you first need all the content in there, it is very hard to get both at the same time. So we knew that if we created a product that can create value before there is any content in there, then we can build a user base, and a base of ambassadors, that will help us get the product out when the second part is released. And to some extent it has also built up a fairly big database for us, but I do not think it is very hard to build a database these days, if you know your way around the Internet. But of course there is a different amount of quality in the databases that you can build, when you build it yourself. Because we obviously prompt people to put it in a category, to put in comments, to add a photo, and one of the things we are looking at now, is we also need to integrate with all of the other services like Foursquare, because users are saying I would like to keep my Foursquare check-ins somewhere, and that could be on Everplaces. And we are doing that, but all the time you have data quality issues where you can do that, but it will look very boring on Everplaces because it doesn't have any information, so just people import it, right now we are building part two to go onto Google MyMaps in the beginning to prove that people want it, and to test that people want it or just want it improved. But I don't think we will ever finish on the data improvement. I think if you ask me in five years, there will still be something we are not happy about with the data that we are trying to fix.
- Q1:** It is so interesting that you use the whole *Chicken and Egg* metaphor because we have been using exactly that. That is one of our questions- as one of the first users, you go onto a tool, and like it, but there is nothing there, no content, so what is the fun aspect of being the first. What is the circle, where does it start? Who is that first person who starts posting and creating the necessary content?
- Q2:** And there is obviously some people who's motivations are very different when they use a tool, such as Everplaces, so that they don't depend on pre-existing content necessarily at the beginning, they just use it for their own personal purposes as a bookmarking type of tool. Or perhaps they are interested in generating content for the future users, so we are really interested in looking at and understanding what is behind the different motivations.
- TT:** Yes exactly. But I think it also depends on what you are saying right. Because personally, we didn't think that to create something for us that we can use for the future was a very strong proposition. So we always went in and said you are doing it for yourself. You can set all your places to private- you don't have to share. And I think that sometimes new social networks are hidden- I don't think we are a social network, but there's an element. They think that people are going to do it for them, but I don't think that's the case, it's a little bit naïve, like you will have to find a reason why people should want to do that. However there is a very strong motivator for being the first, and if you understand marketing well enough that you can work with that, then some people- for example you can use leader boards and stuff to say, 'oh my God, you are the first of your friends. There are persons who have connected to their friends, the first 42, do you want us to connect you to your Facebook friends and see how many you can get in. So I think there are mechanics that are totally honest, where we know you are an early adopter. We know that we are going to lose you, or the smart start-up knows that those people are going to go again.
- Q1:** Did you guys use any of those tactics in the beginning to attract lead users?
- TT:** No, and we don't always agree on whether we should use them or not but, I think we just try to air in the side of caution in terms of not getting spammy. So maybe we could have gotten born faster, if we had, but we didn't. We always said you can sign up here for an invite, and then we'll approve it, but we don't have any leader boards or game mechanics. We have added just last week that you can invite your Facebook friends, and we decided that it could become easy. And I don't know if we're growing fast. But I've always said we are building a company and not a product and we have got to be able to make decisions fast that will hurt us in the short run in order to build for the long run. Because for example one of our competitors is a company in Sweden called Trip-perts, and I

am quite good friends with the founder of it, so we follow each other and we also help each other. The big competitor is in the big world, not some Swedish start-up. And they have chosen to go with the other strategy, and I decided to play with it, and it said Tine is going to Jeddah on my Facebook wall, do you have any recommendations. And I did not. I thought I was playing with something safely in my own time. So I really felt there was a violation of trust, and I only found out because one of my colleagues replied on Facebook saying, I didn't know you're going to Jeddah? And I said, what do you mean I am going to Jeddah? And then I was having to explain that. And now I have disconnected that from my Facebook. And I will never give them access to my Facebook data ever again. And I also had that with Six WunderKinder who are normally some of the best marketing people in the web- I mean they are not great for Podio, but they are really really good. But they were like that as well- I signed up, and they sent an email to all of my friends who have signed up and said, "now Tine is on", and I was like, whoa that is not illegal, but it made me feel uncomfortable. So there are some cowboy tactics, and I'm sure they work in the short term, but we have chosen to believe that if you what you think is right, then people will trust you in the long term much more.

Q1: Do you think that your users are still sharing your product on their own terms now?

TT: Well we can see that as we are building in some social features, they are sharing it more and more. For example we just made it way easier to share a place when you save it. Before you had to save it, and then go into edit to share it- now if you press save like on Instagram, you can press a button and it will go to Facebook and to Twitter. And that's definitely made a huge difference on the stuff that's being tweeted. And we can also see that people are starting to recommend it to their friends, and people are following other people in there. So we know that we haven't done any press really in the last three weeks and we are still growing at a nice rate. Of course it's not as fast as what they call the "Tech-Crunch Spike", but it's totally without relation to reality when you have that. So that is coming from that, because there is no other way to find out about it.

Q1: So in the early stages with these users, I know that I tested for you, but how did you go about finding these beta testers- were they all people you knew?

TT: The very very early ones, like the group you were in, was a group of about 20 people that we thought had some sort of....so we tried to go in and see, like in your case, you're international minded, and you're interested in food, so you would have profile of someone we'd be interested in. We also tried to get some women in general, people who are away from technology. So all those twenty people used the tool back when it was really crap- so all those were friends so we could really, its ok that things cracked. But as soon as we launched it in December, that's when it was real people using it. Today it is used in 76 countries, so for those, we don't know. It's amazing how the Internet spreads something. Imagine twenty years ago, it would have taken so much more to spread it.

Q1: So did you use those early users later on? Did you bring them back in?

TT: Well we have a lead user strategy, which means there are some people that we can see have a particular passion, so we can see now that we have built the explore feature, those are the people that you see in there, they are also the people we feature on our blog posts. So we have a group of people that we keep much closer to our chests, and these people are told stuff much earlier than other users.

Q1: I guess then they are used as a part of your marketing as well if you use them...

TT: We never tell them to do anything but given that they are picked because they are passionate, they feel a bit a part of the family, it's cool that they are the first to know, and we always write to them personally. So on their own accord they go out and they market it for us.

Q1: So how do you think the typical average user, uses Everplaces?

- TT:** I have no idea. So far we still have a lot of people who have come through in that media wave when we launched. So we think that's not sustainable, and if a lot of people are coming from that in the future, it needs to come from social recommendations. That's the only way to get big in the web, is to build something so great that people come back, and they send their friends to it. There's no short cut. You can't get it through advertising or some other sort of...
- Q1:** And you think your users do tell their friends about it.
- TT:** Yes, and I think that we also, well they are already doing it now, but we have a lot of buttons we can still push if you know what I mean. There's a lot of tweaks in the logic engagement that simply hasn't been built yet. So there is probably still 30% of the product to be built, so we are very happy with the level of engagement we are getting now, considering there is so much stuff that doesn't work yet.
- Q1:** We spoke to Kinetik, and they told us that their users were divided into three groups. So there is a group that use the product all the time, and then they have a group that maybe use it once a month, a couple times a month, and then they have a group of users that never use it but have signed up. Is yours the same?
- TT:** Yes, I guess everyone is that same; it's just a matter of where the percentages of users are. We definitely have some that use it all the time, and have got the bug, and now suddenly they stop, and said oh wait, I have to send this to my collection, I have a photo. We got my dad to test it for example. And if you know your parents can use it then you know it's simple. And it drives my mom crazy my dad stops all the time to save stuff. And we definitely have a group of people who are like that and who are extremely active. And then we have another group that finds it very valuable but uses it much more rarely. And that's mostly people who see it as a travel product. So they've kept stuff in there, and for example, my boyfriend thinks it's really great, but he only has fifteen places. Don't you think you could use it, is what I always say, and he really replies that he doesn't want to save that much stuff- these are the ones that I want on there! And yet I am a really happy user! I am not a frequent user, but I am a really happy user! So we still have a big job in finding out can we really activate those really, or can we activate them, or should we stay out of their face? And then of course we have some that never use it. Especially the ones that come in through the media.
- Q1:** And I guess it's very easy with apps and that kind of thing as well, to download it and try it out and then maybe quit usage.
- TT:** Yes there's a surprising amount of people that download the app and then never log in. I would say as a rule of thumb, 50% of people have never logged in.
- Q1:** Do you lose a lot of users after they have tried it out? It might be hard to tell.
- TT:** It is a little bit hard to know which users use it everyday. We know how many people used it yesterday for example, but I don't know which, if they were the same ones that used it the day before. I just know the number. And I don't know who it is. So we will collect all those metrics, but right now we have bigger issues to deal with.
- Q1:** Is there a particular feature on there that people use a lot? Of course people add places, but is there some kind of interaction that has perhaps surprised you a bit?
- TT:** I think integration surprised us a little bit. For instance our integration with Goala so you could input your history, and also the Google MyMaps. The Goala integration was hugely popular. We got lots of emails saying, I want these things to be my memory of best locations, I want this to be the best things I've taken pictures of. That is bigger than we were expecting I think. We were expecting that people would have shared more from the beginning that they have had. So it's been more of a personal tool than we thought. But I guess we also just implemented social, so compared to our assumptions, yes.

- Q1:** So you integrated it so you can input your Facebook friends? Is that what you mean?
- TT:** Yes, so from the last three weeks ago, we had it so that you could email someone an invitation, but it didn't integrate with your contacts. So how many peoples email addresses could you really remember!? No one right! (laughs). So it was hugely cumbersome. It was there but last week started that you could see which of your friends on Facebook were already on, and you could follow them. We started a couple days ago that you could invite.
- Q1:** And have you seen a reaction to that?
- TT:** I think it is a little bit too early to tell. We are getting a lot of comments, and tweets, and we know that people are happy with it- but it is still too hard to see where they are coming from. Because people have to be in there to find it. So it takes a while, and that's the future, and there's a lot of stuff like that, that we haven't done. But we just have to do one thing at a time.
- Q2:** And do you plan on tracking the amount of people that come on board based on recommendation?
- TT:** Yes, we are really passionate about data, so we would like to know where people come from, and we would like to know also what keeps them there.
- Q1:** I know you said you try and avoid leaderboards, but do you do anything to try and encourage people to create content?
- TT:** No. No. And I don't know if we will, but I kind of think that it is a good idea, and in another sense it's a terrible idea. It's not a game. And it's never going to be a game, it won't ever be like Foursquare and about badges. But I think that it's quite fun to see that you have fifty wine bars in Copenhagen, and your friend has sixty. I mean, I would like to know that. My family, we have travel competition, about who has been to the most countries and stuff. So I think there's a lot of innocent stuff that would be fun, so I think we will be able to persuade everyone to put some stuff in. But it won't change the focus...it won't take over the product. And it would kind of be something where if you go into your own profile, you can see some stats on what you are doing. Like already now you can see the overall world map of where there are Everplaces, and so many are in certain towns, and I think people really like that. But a lot of the new stuff you should see on the website because the app is about two months behind the website. But for example if you go to Everplaces.com/tine, you can see my collection all over the world, and what do I like, and that has been shared quite a lot, those profile pages that have a lot of content.
- Q1:** Is there a difference, can you see how many people use the app compared to the website?
- TT:** We know that 69% of all users also have used the app, and my feeling would be that the most active are the ones that use both.
- Q1:** So you mentioned a few competitors before. Are there any more that you can identify as being a threat?
- TT:** I think there's a huge amount of competitors, it's a really busy space. We have a competitor of the day joke because every day we come up with someone new who is potentially a threat. Everyone is pivoting into this, where we started last year, there was only like one or two companies- no one was doing this, but there's a lot of people doing something similar now in location, travel, and now there's a tonne of competitors. So we take that as a confirmation that there is a need. But Gogoba just started going this way and they're quite a big company, and Wunderfly just pivoted and came this way, and even Tripperts was something totally different when they started and now they are doing exactly the same, and Whatsit just came around and said they are doing it, to some extent some will do half of it, like pin-drop- they do just a bookmarking part, others do the sharing. There's a lot.
- Q1:** And then what do you think then, differentiates you from them? Or will differentiate?

TT: Sometimes it's just UX stuff right, we're trying to solve the same problem, but we are just doing it a different way. So there is a huge battle now in communication and my thought is that in 18 months, most of these will be weeded out, and there will be a couple left, and in three years there will be one company that's very strong in a leader position. So it's very much about finding a way to put it, that really hits people's pain. So it really dares a lot of media work in it. I am a total digital traveller, and that is the reason why I started this company. And a lot of them, I will go into, and I can't find a reason to go back. And we use it also to push ourselves further. Like f*** that looked beautiful, and then ten minutes later it's like, would I ever go back – no, and we have to make sure that we are more of a utility than that. But yes, there is crazy competition, and I don't know what separates us always. Because I think no one has quite found a golden- sometimes I think that all of us communicate a little bit wrong. And I think that we found those words that make it seem like a problem. Others it seems very fluffy and very airy-fairy. So those that are strongest in their communication I think will get quite far.

Q1: The product is free.

TT: Yes, and it will always be free.

Q1: Can we ask where you make your money?

TT: There's actually a multitude of revenue streams, but there's the most obvious one- is affiliates. We are never going to push stuff to you, we are never going to send or put anything in your face, there is never going to be any ads, but if you happen to find a hotel in Nice anyway through someone you trust on Everplaces, then it would be possible to book it through there.

Q1: But that's in the future?

TT: Ya, that's in the future. It will probably happen in the next 12-18 months. Right now we are focussing on getting the product finished and then later on user acquisition. I think that if you are in consumer Internet, if you can get the people then you can get the money.

Q1: You have maybe just answered this, but what is the plan for continuing to get bigger?

TT: I think the original plan was probably quite different, the big ambition is to be the new Lonely Planet, how would Lonely Planet look if it was built in 2012. I think that it would be personal, it would be dynamic, it would be all the stuff you see all the time, and you would be able to use it wherever you want, and you would be able to use it in your pocket. So that is the expectation to be the go-to place for everything that has to do with recommendations. And the plan is for the next couple of months, to finish the product...it will never be finished, but to get it to a place where we take out the data and then user acquisition.

Q1: You mentioned earlier that you don't think that you are a social network.

TT: I think that there is a social element to our product, but I think you have to be very careful if you consider yourself a social network. I think there's a lot of social networks out there and I think that a lot of people won't feel that they need any more, so I think one of our competitive advantages is that a lot of our competitors are for example, want everything to be put into their platform in order to take it in. I don't care, if you prefer to put it in on Foursquare, or take photos on Instagram then put them in later, we are happy with that. We don't have to be the centre of your attention. We are happy to run a little bit more in the background- very much more like Evernote, you know it is very rare that I open it, but I send stuff to it all the time and I get a deep sense of satisfaction knowing that it is there, and if I have to send something to other people, I know where to find it. And I think the focus on integration as opposed to moving them onto our platform, I think is very much the right decision because I think people are sick of the more stuff they have to maintain.

Q1: So what role do you think that the social aspect plays in Everplaces?

TT: I think it ensures trust .I mean this competition for us is thought on the points of trust and relevance, and I want to know who says that there is a good restaurant. And that's where the social comes in.

Q1: Right, so I guess you can differentiate the social, in that you have this one type of social where you are interested in exactly what your friends are doing, and for example with Foursquare, they are at that place now. And then the other kind, where you maybe just want to know the content.

TT: Yes, kind of like Instagram where you follow people because they are doing something you would like to follow. For example I follow a lot of great photographers on Instagram, but I am not interested in them as human beings to be honest. And we are the same! I would love to be able to follow Rene Redzepi of Noma if I could see what are his favourite restaurants, even though we are not friends. And I promise you that a lot of my Facebook friends, I would not like to follow, because I don't think necessarily that they have great taste in something, or some of them are really into sports for example. I don't want sports places in my stream.

Q1: Yes that's an interesting way of grouping them actually- makes me think about it in a different way.

TT: It's more of an interest graph as opposed to a social graph. I think that one of the things that, one of the reasons that people are missing the boat here, and the whole first wave of social travel fail, is that people thin that social is a business area, and I think that is a total misunderstanding. It's 2012 where there must be a social aspect of any web company, its not a business area. And neither is mobile and location, these are just aspects of the product, and it is only when you start putting multiple aspects together that you get to some sort of intersection where you can create value .

Q1/2: *Thank you. That was great. Really perfect. Thank you!*

1.1.2 Users

1.1.2.1 AP

Interviewee: AP

Interviewer: Rikke Østergaard (Q1), Julia Judge (Q2)

Format: Skype

Date: 26/04/2012

Q2: When did you start using social media?

AP: I think I started 2 or 3 years ago. If you don't count blogging. Microblogging like Plurk and Twitter I started using 2 or 3 years ago, I think.

Q2: And what was your motivation to start using these different tools?

AP: It's basically to connect with people easily. Because I moved to Sweden and most of my close friends and relatives are in other countries. Basically it's a way to help me, not calling people, but still stay updated with my friends.

Q2: And what is your main reason for using social media now?

AP: I guess it's a habit. If you've been using it for a while, you might as well continue.

Q2: How advanced with social media would you say you are, compared to your friends that you are in connection with?

AP: Advanced.

Q1: Do you think you use it more or in a different way than your friends?

AP: I do think so. Because most of them usually just microblog, post something or post a status. Versus, I'm a student, and sometimes we utilise these type of tools to collaborate as well, which doesn't happen for other people, who are just a normal user.

Skype disconnects.

So yeh, we use it as a collaboration tool, which does not really happen for normal users, I guess.

Q2: Looking at your questionnaire. Are you only active on a daily basis with more traditional social media tools, you mention Plurk and Facebook are the ones you use on a daily basis?

AP: Yeh. Those are the only two I use on a daily basis.

Q1: Why is it those compared to the other ones?

AP: Most of my friends use them. I tried to shift over to Twitter, but most of my friends says I should choose to stay with Plurk and they are very similar systems.

Q1: Okay! So tell us a little bit more about Plurk.

AP: Plurk is actually identical to Twitter. But I guess it started in Asia, and most Asians use that. But there is another difference that is that they have it in different languages as well.

Q2: And what do you think are the strongest points about Facebook and Plurk that attract you to use them on such a frequent basis?

AP: Again, it's the function of connecting with people.

Q1: Do you think that's why you signed up for them originally as well? To have a way to stay in contact with your friends or because your friends were already on it?

AP: Yes. Even though it's a little bit annoying sometimes.

Q1: Okay. What do you mean with that?

AP: Sometimes you get a lot of unnecessary information, and people send you game invitations. You see a lot of unnecessary information that you actually don't want to see.

Q1: You seem to have signed up for a lot of other social media sites. You mention several in your questionnaire that you have an account on, but that you don't use. Why is it that you don't use them or why did you sign up originally?

AP: Some of them because it was new. And I wanted to see how it works. I am a little bit curious about these things, so I go in and I check it out. And most of it is because not many of my friends are using them, so I sort of let it lay there.

Q1: So you do that quite often? If a new social media comes out, you will sign up just to try it out?

AP: Yes.

Q2: And how long typically does it take you to evaluate whether if you will continue to use it or whether it's just something you want to take a look at out of curiosity?

AP: A few days. About 3 or 4 days. And basically you notice how many of your friends are using it, and any value. And also if a system is annoying, after you've tried it then you know.

Q1: So it obviously means a lot to you if your friends are on it or not. What if there was a product that was really cool and you really liked the service, but none of your friends were on it. Would you be likely to use it?

AP: Yes. Then I'd probably mobilise my friends to start using it as well.

Q1: Oh yeh? So you'd try to bring them over?

AP: Yeh.

Q1: And what if it was the other way around. So there was a social media site that all your friends were on, but you didn't really find it very useful. Would you still use it?

AP: Probably. But it has to be a lot of them.

Q1: You say you use Facebook and Plurk a lot. Can you talk us through what your typical activity would be on one of those? What would you be doing if you logged on?

AP: Status update of course. And recently I've been uploading a lot of photos and videos from my daughters competitions. I'm admin on my daughter's page on Facebook, so I would check that out and see how many people had been there and checked the links. Basically.

Q1: So you do quite a lot of sharing and creating content on there?

AP: Yes.

Q1: Do you browse other people's content and what other people have posted?

- AP:** Yes. If it interests me.
- Q2:** What would you regard as your top 3 criteria, that you believe are the most important things when you evaluate a new social media tool and consider signing up?
- AP:** Cool design. User friendly. And also, my friends are using it.
- Q2:** So we noticed that you have signed up for Google+. I guess in comparison to Facebook, I'm sure you recognise this point I'm about to make, because you've signed up and seen it and compared it to Facebook. But it has a lot more to offer in terms of the product, in comparison to what Facebook can do, and it's obviously similar in the way it seeks to connect you with your network of friends. I guess also, given that you mention that you, if you like the service enough, you would consider trying to migrate your friends over from one tool to another, or at least have them sign up as well. So what was your reason for never, after those few days you tried Google+ out, continue to use it instead of Facebook?
- AP:** I have a very ridiculous reason. I don't like Google products. But also, not a lot of my friends stick to them. The only thing I use Google for is for Gmail.
- Q1:** Why don't you like Google products?
- AP:** It's a scary thought that Google has put in a lot of research into DNA. They have set up a DNA bank and so on and so forth. So I am thinking, someday Google will be owning everything human being has. And I want to prevent it to happen to me.
- Q1:** So it's a bit of a privacy thing? And you think it's worse than for example Facebook, who has had a lot of criticism for their privacy settings?
- AP:** Of course. I feel more like I am in control of that, on Facebook than on Google. Because Google has that face identification theme, that Facebook also integrated. But on Facebook you have the control, and you can choose not to identify the face. But on Google, they would do that anyway. So in the near future, anyone can search for the person, and they will get all the photos you have online. I don't like that.
- Q1:** Do you think it has something to do with the fact that Google has so many different products, and they are all connected. So whatever you do one place will be recorded in the other. Does that bother you as well?
- AP:** It actually gives me a better platform, because everything is in one place. But again, I just wonder why Google do all these things for free. It just somehow creeps me out.
- Q1:** So how would you describe yourself in general as a user of these social media tools? You say you are quite advanced, but if I give you 3 different categories, which one would you kinda identify yourself with the most.
- You can be an observer; so someone who just looks and keeps up to date with what's happening. Or you can be a creator; so someone who generates a lot of content. Or you can be an inactor; so someone who likes to comment and like other people's stuff, but not post so much of their own.
- AP:** I think most of the time I'm an observer. But sometimes, I love food and obviously I care about my daughter's gymnastics, so with those I actually create quite a lot of things.
- Q2:** When you create content, do you do it with the anticipation that a lot of people will interact with the content you create? Is that a big motivator for you?
- AP:** Not quite. Actually, it's more a way to record my life.

Q2: So you don't mind if you make a post or uploaded a video of one of your daughters...and it's not so important for you that you don't get a lot of likes and comments, but rather that it's recorded and people can see it as they choose?

AP: I don't mind at all.

Q1: Would you like to use social media more than you do now? Or do you think that maybe you use it too much?

AP: I think I use it too much. It's taking a lot of time. A year ago I had 2 blogs, and I had a Plurk and I have Facebook to update, and it's taking most of my freetime.

Q1: And you didn't feel you got enough back from it, compared to the effort you put in?

AP: Well, I don't care about comments. But still to read them is interesting, however after a while you feel like it's annoying, that you don't have time to do anything else.

1.1.2.2 PL

Interviewee: PL

Interviewer: Rikke Østergaard (Q1), Julia Judge (Q2)

Format: In person

Date: 22/04/2012

- Q1:** The interview is build on your questionnaire. But we will remind you what you filled out, so don't feel like you have to remember what you filled out. So tell us, when did you start using social media?
- PL:** I guess MySpace was the first social media. So that will be in 2007, I guess. If you count LastFm as social media, I started using that in August 2005 – it tells you when you log in. So music sharing and MySpace.
- Q1:** So 5 to 7 years ago, depending on how you define it.
- PL:** Yeah.
- Q1:** Why did you start using social media? What was it that attracted you?
- PL:** I am interested in web design, and all of these were modern websites that were doing something new, so that interested me. And it was the new way for the web, where people were talking to people rather than people talking to machines, so that kinda interests me a lot. A lot of people were talking about it and trying it out – I wanted to be one of the earlier adopters to pick it up and try it out.
- Q1:** So why do you use social media now, compared to back then?
- PL:** One would be keeping in touch with friends on fx Facebook. Another part is branding – the community I am part of, the design community is quite involved in certain networks. So by being involved myself I get recognised more and my work gets to more people, so in return it benefits me as a freelance designer, so I get more business. It adds personality to a side that can often be quite impersonal; instead of a webpage they get to interact with me, become a friend.
- Q1:** You say you share a lot because it's good for business, but would you share just for the sake of sharing?
- PL:** Things like Facebook is fine, because you share whatever regardless of what your profession is. But with Twitter I think, if I wasn't a designer I'd find it hard to get into, because there wouldn't have been that instant community. For me there was designers sharing about design, so I could easily fit into that and share my thoughts and designs. But if I wasn't into anything specific, I don't think I would have picked it up as much. Not Twitter at least.
- Q1:** You use the word 'early adopter' yourself, but how advanced would you say you are with social media compared to your friends?
- PL:** It's different on different networks. There's a lot of designery things I use that people I talk to don't use. The core ones, the Facebook's and the Twitter's – I'd probably say on Facebook I'm a bit behind, I don't use it as much as some people I know. And on Twitter I am kinda in front, because I use it a lot more than a lot of people I know.
- Q1:** So when I ask if you are 'advanced' you see it as how much you use it?
- PL:** Yeah.
- Q1:** So are you likely to start using a social media product really early?

- PL:** Depends what it is offering and who is using it really. Like the whole Google+ thing – everyone kinda signs up and no one really uses it, so therefore I don't really use it anymore, as there is nothing there for me to read. People crosspost between Twitter and Google+, there are maybe 1 or 2 people I know who use it, but others just use it as Twitter. That's how I started using it too, and then I just kinda gave up.
- Q1:** Would you like to use social media more than you do now, or do you maybe think you use it too much?
- PL:** From a branding perspective, I don't think there can ever really be too much. The more information you share, as long as its the right information you share that people want to see, it will get spread and more people will follow me and be interested in what I do. You can always argue that you should spend less time on Facebook and more time talking to people, and I agree with that, but I don't speak to the people on Twitter in real life anyway – they are all part of my design network. The more time you spend there, the more of a personality you are.
- Q1:** But you are kinda saying that the more you use it, the more stuff happens and therefore you use it more. It's like a circle?
- PL:** Yeah. You see posted results, and then you want to use it. There are 1000's of designers who would never set a foot in social networks, but they are still world famous. But for smaller designers, I think it is a good way to get your name out there and you just don't want to lose that again. You can fall behind pretty quickly, and get unfollowed by people if you are not posting anything or posting irrelevant content. People will unfollow you, so you can feel the effect of not using social media or using it the wrong way.
- Q1:** I guess this kind of leads on from that, but we looked at your questionnaire, and there seems to be a pattern of the more friends you have on a specific social media, the more you use it. How do you think those are connected? Do you think you use it so much because your friends are there, or do you think you have so many friends because you use it?
- PL:** It varies depending on the network. For the stuff you adopt early on, you take a risk and a gamble on the idea that this is something other people might want to use. So you sign up and you become part of that community that shapes it, and other people will join it because they are interested. But I think for the services that has been running a long time that you were never really interested in at the time, because they didn't really seem to offer anything new. Like the competitors to MySpace at the time, the Bebo's – you would only ever venture there because your friends were there, because it never really seem to offer anything above what you were already using. And all your friends were back on MySpace anyway, so you would just kinda stay there. There was a lot less things you had to crosspost, like now with all the services around that helps you post to Twitter and Facebook, are there because you want to have a wide spread.
- Q1:** Basically, it seems to be, both in your questionnaire and what you are saying now, that there are two main reasons why you would join a social media. The one is that your friends use it, and the other is that you really like the service. And now it seems a bit like you mostly follow the friends?
- PL:** No. A lot of my friends love LinkedIn and they use Quora, I'm on there and I follow them, but I don't really do anything there or check it. The offering it had just did not really appeal to me as much as other services.
- Q1:** So say you have a social network with a really good service, but none of your friends are on it. And then you have a social network with a really bad service, but all your friends are on it. Which one would you pick?
- PL:** I'm the kinda guy who would probably be on both. Mainly because I am interested in technology, and it interests me what a service does and why if something is so much better, does no one use it. I think Google+ is a better software, website and better everything than Facebook.

I look at Google+ from an inspiration point of view and explore its patterns and things like that, but no one is really there, so I stick to Facebook. I know Facebook as a product is slightly broken, but if I'm broadcasting I want to broadcast to people who are gonna listen, I don't wanna say something and then nobody are ever going to respond. You never get a like or a +1 on Google+ for posting stuff, because nobody is there. But I can say any old shit on Facebook and people interact with it. And I don't feel I have the necessary klout to go to a network and say 'this is the best thing ever, you should all use it'. I feel it would take up too much of my time to try and convince people to use this better way. I prefer to see the crowd shifting and people leaving this other place, and then go 'ok, I'll go with it'. So I don't think I will be the first mover to convince people to try out a new service, but then again it kinda depends what it is, because Google+ is kinda similar to Facebook. It didn't really offer anything for me to say 'Yeh, you should use Google+ instead, because it has a different interface'. It needs to have something *different* about it.

Q1: So if you ultimately had to choose between those two; one with all your friends and a bad product, and one with no friends and a great product, and you *had to* pick one?

PL: It would have to be the one with all my friends but a bad product.

Q1: Taking Facebook out of the equation. Your questionnaire shows that you visit Dribbble and Instagram a lot, every day. What do you do typically do when you go onto Dribbble and Instagram? Talk us through a visit.

PL: I'd say I'll be daily browsing atleast. I might not interact with stuff. Dribbble, I'd go on there and see what my design friends have uploaded, and if something takes my eye I'll like it or comment on it. Or just kind of flick through and see if there is someone new to follow, but it won't take more than 10 minutes of the day. The same with Instagram. I'll browse through the stream and check out what people are doing. If there is something I like, I'll like it or comment. And then on Dribbble, once per month or every 2 weeks, I'll actually do something of worth, like upload something and get comments myself. Same on Instagram – maybe once per week I'll have a good enough photo to post. That's kind of the extent of it.

Q1: Take Instagram. Why do you put things on there? It's not professional, that's personal.

PL: It partly is professional for me, because it links up with my Twitter account and everything that's personal is my personal brand, so I wouldn't really post things on there that's private or for friends only, because I know that so many people follow me from my Twitter account, because it's linked. So in that way it is kinda an extension of my brand and I attempt to live up to this aura of being a designer, and I'll be more conscious of posting to designers so they will like and give me more followers. And my name will get out there even more.

Q1: Then try and take Facebook as an example, because Facebook is personal for you. You post as Pete there, and not your design. So why do you post on Facebook? What is the appeal of sharing information there?

PL: I rarely really post on Facebook anymore. I don't know why. Maybe because my contact list has been clogged up with people I don't really wanna share with, and I need to set up all the sharing permissions. Like my mum is on there, so you don't wanna post too much stuff. It's the same circle of friends that you generally see in real life, at least the ones that interact with the content you post. So a lot of the stuff that is going on there, they kinda know about anyway, so there isn't really much to post. And a lot of what I think about is my work, and I don't wanna spam my friends with thoughts about design when a lot of them don't really care at all.

Q1: On a questionnaire you click a lot of boxes for sites you have an account on, but you don't use. Like Pinterest, MySpace, Bebo, Everplaces. Why don't you use them?

PL: I guess I liked what the service offered when I signed up, but it was too much of a hurdle or change in routine for me to actually get into it. It was a lot of work for me to adjust to use these

services instead of other services or as a new thing in my life to do. And some of them just died, like Bebo, because no one used it. And Pinterest, even though there's a massive explosion of users, for me personally I just couldn't find a way to fit it into the way I do things. And Everplaces I was just checking out because a friend made it. While I think the service is still pretty cool, it's just time consuming and it didn't really fill a hole in my life. I guess I gave up using it.

Q1: Do you often sign up for a social media service and not use it?

PL: Yeh. Quite a lot. I check out competitors to Podio, different interaction people and what they have been working on. And often if they have a serviced sign in tool, where you can sign it with Twitter or Facebook, I don't really hesitate to click that button. Because it gives you access to the application and to just try it out. I rarely deactivate my account, I just never come back.

Q1: But you sign up for them as a mean of research? Out of interest from a professional point of view?

PL: A lot of them, yeah.

Q1: Is there any kind of value in it for you, to be the first one on there? Is that a factor, or do you not care at all?

PL: Not really. It was a factor on Dribbble to be in this cool club, because it was founded by really good designers and all the early people on there were really good designers, like the industry names. And to be part of that smaller club, was quite exciting. And as it has gotten bigger, that effect has kinda lessened. But I can't say I have had that feeling on a lot of other stuff, because at the time when you are using it, you don't know if it's gonna be big or not. If it's not extremely social, it provides a service other than just connecting with friends, it would be photosharing or designsharing. It's not entirely reliant on all these people being there, so you would use it for the service and if it escalated and millions of people started using it, you'd be like 'Okay cool, I used this in the early days'. Like with LastFM, I've had my account since 2005 and that feels kinda cool to have that on my profile page. Because that's a long time looking at it now.

Q1: But that's not the main reason why you would join?

PL: No.

Q2: If there is a service out there that you sign up for, or you find out about and you wanna try it out, how you explain it is that if there is not a migration of people from your other networks over there, there is kinda no point in posting or using it?

PL: It kinda depends what the offering is. If it's 'I can add 20 friends and share status updates and photos with them', it's not very interesting anymore. But if I can go on there and it's completely tailored to for example 'watching movies together', which has never existed before, you can argue that even though only 4 of my friends are using it, the service it provides is actually pretty cool, so I will use it and then other people might pick it up further down the line.

Q1: How would you describe yourself in general as a user of social media?

PL: I'd say I was quite savvy. I like to try out a lot of things and see how things work. And I'm quite interested in how it works for certain people with certain methods.

Q1: If we give you a few examples of a type of person you could be, would you try to think in general what kind of user you would be. You can be an observer, so someone who just looks and keeps up to date with what's happening. Or a creator, so someone who makes content and enjoys getting feedback on that content. Or the third, an interactor, so someone who goes and observe and like other people's stuff but don't really post themselves. Who would you be?

- PL:** I'd probably be the interactor. Even though I do post content now and again, in terms of design and status posts, a lot of it is kinda fed on from other conversations and there's definitely a higher percentage of me commenting on other stuff than there is me posting original stuff. It's not that I don't wish to be that way, I do wish to post more original content, but it's a time thing.
- Q1:** But on Twitter you are very active?
- PL:** But that's reactional. It's reacting to what other people have said or a certain situation in the community. It's rare, other than the occasional fact about a badger, that it's strictly original content.
- Q1:** So, say you sign up for a social media site. If you had to give 3 criteria that would be important in the way you evaluate and decide if you want to use it, what would they be?
- PL:** It has to offer something new that is useful to me. I have to see a value in spending my time learning how or why to use it, or how to change something and use that instead. I have to see longevity, so I don't spend my time on something that will be shut down in a year or gets bought out or ruined.
- Q2:** And how would you evaluate if a product has longevity?
- PL:** It's kinda hard, but I know a lot of people, especially designers who these young companies has been founded by. And I know these people and I respect them and I trust their decisions, so generally a lot of the services I sign up for now has someone I know involved in creating it. So there's a certain trust aspect that this guy or girl would do the right thing to make this product. That kinda hooks me in a bit.
- Q2:** So it's referral-based? Communicating within your own networks and existing networks to see if it's worthwhile?
- PL:** If there was a product where I didn't know anyone behind it, or where everybody came from, it would have to be the offering, it would have to be offering, so this is so unique and gamechanging, that this thing would be around for a long time. And even if it was a short time, the offering would be so good that it would be worth it.
- Q1:** But how would you know that the product is good and is gonna be around for a long time? Of course it's something we look at also when we buy a product in a shop, we want to know that it's gonna function for a long time and not break. But what are the things you look at to make sure those factors are fulfilled?
- PL:** It's the unique offering. And just the overall quality of the product; does it help itself by being easy to use or does it forget all that stuff and make itself complicated? In which case it will never catch on and no one will want to use it, only the hardcore geeks would use it. In which case, at some point it will probably die, because it wasn't picked up and didn't get funded. But if the offering is good and it's a quality product.
- Q1:** So you trust your own evaluation in that aspect?
- PL:** You shouldn't judge a book by it's cover, but a lot of this stuff you have to, as there is so much stuff appearing. You have to make a judgement call if this is worth my time, or was it designed in Microsoft Publisher and bad to use and the interaction is terrible. As a designer, I judge thing from how easy it is or how certain things work. I can give and take a little bit, so I can say 'that's not perfect, but it's fine', but if there is stuff that infuriates me I would just say 'forget it'.

- Q1:** You use Twitter a lot. So on Twitter, if the people you are following are saying something positive or negative about a new social media product, how does that affect your opinion? Say, you think something is really cool, but all your Twitter network say 'this is so bad?
- PL:** A lot of stuff that comes out seems 50/50 as to who says it's bad and who says it's great. There hasn't really been anything that everyone agreed that it was really good or really bad; there's always the critic and the believer. And I try to judge it on my own values, but obviously certain people influence me more than other people. If they rate it highly as a service and they use it, then maybe I'd check it out and then form my own opinion based on that.
- Q1:** I think that's it. Anything else you'd like to add.
- PL:** I don't like the word 'social media'.
- Q1:** Okay. Why not?
- PL:** Because it doesn't describe what a lot of these things are. It doesn't feel right for some of these. Facebook, yeah – atleast the branding side of it is social media, but the network side is different. When I use Facebook I wouldn't say I am using social media, I would say I am using a social network. But when I am using Facebook as 'chopeh' I'd say I am using social media, because I am posting media about me and trying to gain from it.
- Q1:** So you see the stuff that you share as the media part of the word, instead of the actual product itself?
- PL:** Yeah. On Dribbble the social media is the images, but the network is the people. I wouldn't say Dribbble is a social media site, I'd say it's a social network for designers. I just think it's a word that gets used a lot, but it's not really clear what it actual is.

1.2 INTERVIEWS

1.2a Interview guide

1. What is your opinion about and relationship to social media in general?
2. How would you define yourself as a user of social media?
3. How long do you spend on social media per day? How often do you check your accounts?
4. What is your primary purpose of using social media?
5. How long does it take for a tool to become a typical part of your online routine?
6. How do you learn about the features on a tool you sign up for? Is there anything you are hesitant to do?
7. How do you assess if a tool is working for you? (eg. what are your first initial attractors to a new tool- aesthetics, design, purpose, existing networks, website, reviews, related media. Or does it all come down to friends and function?)
8. How do you feel about changes to the interface of a tool?
9. Are there any other tools you have considered signing up for?
 - Do any of these replace current tools you are using?
 - Why would you switch? What would hold you back?
10. Are there any tools you would not sign up for? Would the marketing or image of a tool deter you?
11. Do you feed other social media platforms into any of your social media accounts?
12. How does it affect your opinion or likelihood of signing up for a new tool, if you can see on a social medium, that your friends are using another platform?
13. How much time do you spend in front of a computer per day?
14. When are you most active on social media? (eg. weekends, evenings, at work, while travelling etc. Why do you think this is?)
15. If you are out of routine for a period of time (on holiday for instance), does your activity on the tools you use change? How so?
16. Has your communication with strangers and friends changed at all since you started using social media?
17. If you were unable to use social media anymore, how would that affect you?
18. Does your privacy on social media concern you? Have you ever adjusted your account settings? If so, in what ways?
19. Are you cautious to make sure you are portrayed or represented in a certain way on the different tools you use? (eg. do you untag, think carefully before composing statuses, or edit photos of yourself before posting?)
20. Are you very open with your communication or do you prefer to keep it within chat or private messages?
21. What would you say is the greatest benefit you have experienced since you began using social media?
22. Would you ever consider deleting some of your social media accounts?
23. How do you find new social media? Do actively seek it as a solution to a problem or do you passively become exposed to it through peers and other channels?

1.2.1 The Nerds

1.2.1.1 JA

Interviewee: JA

Interviewer: Rikke Østergaard (Q1), Julia Judge (Q2)

Format: In person

Date: 10/08/2012

Q1: What is your relationship to social media?

JA: Not sure. I think I have used it like most people I know. I don't have a specific relationship, it's just a way of organizing my life.

Q1: What would you say is the main thing you use it for?

JA: Each social medium has a separate purpose. LinkedIn is for keeping track of business contacts, for checking out peoples resumes, whereas Facebook is very much for keeping in touch with friends and organizing social events, and Twitter is much more for searching for information and updates. I think it really depends on the media.

Q1: Would you say you are quite reliant on social media in your life to get these things?

JA: Yes, I'll have to admit that. Yes. The way I structure my professional life, and the way I keep track of professional contacts. It's how I organize my running and training.

Q1: So how would you consider yourself as a user of social media? Would you say you're advanced, not advanced?

JA: Because I come out of a community that is really techy, in that context I am not at the forefront. But in a sense I am very advanced in most social media. I won't be the first guy to sign up. I'm not the first mover. I was on Yaiku before Twitter- it was a micro-blogging service and about at that point Twitter was really dull and sluggish. So I thought Yaiku was going to win this, and so I used it continually for a year, until it was really empty and I realized I have to get a Twitter account.

Q1: So do you think you sign up for a lot of social media just to try it out and see how they work?

JA: Yes I would. If I thought that they might be useful, I'd sign up and try it out. Take Pinterest for example, I signed up, and I haven't "pinned" anything, it's just like why would I do that, it's useless to me. I don't have to spend time building up a network and integrating it with all the rest of my stuff, that's not the way I want to share my content. But I still checked it out and I have a profile. But that didn't prove very helpful. I'll leave that to people with aesthetic desires.

Q1: How much time do you spend on a computer in a normal day?

JA: Including iPads, and iPhones, it's a lot. Including the time I spend at work, that's a total of ten hours at least so I would say including the hour I spend at home, about 12 hours.

Q1: And how much of that time are you on social media?

JA: It's not like you spend time on social media. It's a channel that you open and it's just there. You interact with it whenever. It's hard to say, one hour of social media. I just react to it every once in a while periodically. The only time I'm not connected to it is when I'm out running, and even then I have a GPS tracker that I'll sync with my Endomondo account and post it on Facebook. So I am always connected. It doesn't make sense for me to make that distinction between "on" and "off".

- Q2:** You mentioned you usually have your social media accounts open on your browser during the day. Does it usually take a prompt, for instance a notification to go check it, or will you get the urge to go and update yourself on what's been happening after a certain amount of time has elapsed.
- JA:** I have turned off push notifications for most of them, so I can just check it on my own, otherwise I get so many prompts all day that I wouldn't get anything done. I get easily distracted, so I need to have one window open, and just work on that and then maybe I'll check it once in a while, until I really get stuck on what I'm doing.
- Q1:** Say you've been introduced to a new social media site. What would it take for you to go check it out. For example, design, the purpose of it, your friends are on it, you know who made it. How do you assess it?
- JA:** Definitely first impressions, and the design of the product, what is the purpose? Are they on point with what I want to use it for? Social media in the startup scene, where it is just three students in a dorm room who have started a company, and they don't know what their business value is for their end user. And you can see if that communication is slightly off- that would be the first gauge. And the second would be, if you sign up and the product is really ugly, and sluggish, and doesn't really feel nice. Then obviously if you get past that, you would consider, can I use this for a particular purpose on a long term basis.
- Q1:** If you sign up and create a profile, are you very likely to do that? Will you just try it out and sign up?
- JA:** Yes, because you won't get much out of the public website, especially if it's a service, or social tool. Or work related tools, it's next to impossible to know what it does from the marketing bullshit.
- Q1:** And if you get onto the site, what is the first thing you do. How do you learn about what it can do? Are you hesitant, or do you just click around and try it out?
- JA:** Yes, I will probably have an idea of what I want to do on there. So I will create a mock-up project of what I would want to do on there. I would probably add friends if I'm asked to do it, I'll do it right away. Otherwise that will come if I've found a use for it. And when I have something to day.
- Q1:** So after you have used the tool, how long would it take before it becomes a part of your routine?
- JA:** I think that's where the social comes into social media. It also depends on adoption in my network. Because if it's a social tool, the question is, can I work with anyone else. It might take a year for my friends to join, and that's where it will become very useful for me. Or they might already be there, and I'll be the last guy out, and then it will be instant after I join [that it becomes routine]. So it's really dependent on the social side of it.
- Q1:** How do you feel if there are changes to the interface or look of a site you use regularly?
- JA:** I am slightly neurotic, so it can be a devastating experience if they change the color. I'll get completely disoriented and wonder if I'm in a different site. When I get my neurotics under control it's ok. I feel the same way about social platforms, design changes as I move in the physical environment. If there is suddenly a plant in the corner, or the seating changes, it will distract me a lot for the first few minutes, and then it will fade into the background.
- Q1:** Are there any sites you definitely wouldn't sign up for?
- JA:** Except for x-rated or offensive sites, I can't really think of anything.
- Q1:** So the fact that Pinterest is very female oriented, that wouldn't put you off?

- JA:** No, because there is still a lot of interesting stuff on Pinterest I'd like to see, like architectural design for instance, but the barrier for getting to that content was too high for me, because what they were asking me to do, in order to build this relationship with this group of people around a topic was too much hard work. You invest something in a social tie, and it gives the illusion it's easy, but every time you connect to a new person you invest in the time it takes to maintain that relationship. So you need to look at it and decide where that time and energy is worth the effort given the benefits you will get out of it. IN the case of Pinterest, it is just not worth it for me. I can get that content from a million other places. I don't really need a social filter on it.
- Q1:** Do you feed any other social platforms that you're on into Facebook?
- JA:** I do, but I have Tumblr blog and my Endomondo for training and running, I feed those into Facebook. Not my Twitter because I tend to use Twitter more for easy digest, which I don't think would be important to anyone on Facebook.
- Q1:** Do you communicate differently on Twitter than you do on Facebook?
- JA:** Yes I do. Facebook is more like...There are two ways of communicating: one is within a close group, for instance my running group and we all discuss things in a very focussed manner. On my public Facebook page, updates are more for connecting to all my social networks. I try to limit the amount of personal information there.
- Q1:** Do you worry about privacy on social media in general?
- JA:** No not really, it's just you have to think about what you communicate. People use Facebook like a directory for looking people up. I don't have a need for problems at home, or a night out with the guys to be on Facebook.
- Q1:** So are you conscious about the way you present yourself online?
- JA:** Yes you have to be. It's just like in real life where there are limits and boundaries. Social media, it's like saying media for living people. Of course we need to be social just the same way we would anywhere else.
- Q1:** Have you adjusted your privacy settings on social media?
- JA:** No I haven't. And not on Facebook either. I haven't closed it down. I don't believe in that. If people want to go in there, I'm not that interested in keeping it private. As long as I don't post anything I'm embarrassed about.
- Q1:** When are you most active on social media?
- JA:** Probably a couple of times during the day when I take a break and check what's going on.
- Q1:** And at the end of the day when you are watching a movie at home for instance, will you check social media?
- JA:** Only if I know something specific is happening.
- Q1:** What about if you are out of routine? Holiday, ill. How does that affect your use of social media?
- JA:** Then it goes way down. I have no problem being totally completely offline for two weeks. I almost did that when I went to France for two weeks.
- Q1:** Is that conscious, or do you get distracted?

- JA:** No. When there's other stuff to do, really important stuff like going to the beach, drinking cocktails, going to the pool, I won't bother. I don't have that urge like some people to take a picture of me poolside and document it. Maybe it is because I am old.
- Q1:** Do you think the way you communicate with your friends has changed since you started using social media?
- JA:** When I was a kid and you wanted to see your friends, you would call them up a day before and arrange a time to meet, so your parents could pick you up. One great revolution was cell phones. And you could actually just text, so then it became a bit more fluid, and I think that social media has accelerated that, so now it is omnipresent so you can just poke in and out of your different social communities and groups.
- Q1:** What about strangers? Do you communicate with any now in the advent of social media?
- JA:** Yes, obviously you connect in a different way. Before it was very geographically valued. Now you have certain interests, and you Tweet that out into the world, and people will respond from all over the planet, so the whole structure of the network of people you know got bigger.
- Q1:** Have you ever met anyone you didn't know before social media? In the offline world?
- JA:** Yes.
- Q1:** Are you quite open on social media, or more reserved and keep communications more private.
- JA:** I tend to keep it private, PM style. I think that has more to do with me as a person. At a huge party I wouldn't yell across the room to someone, I would go sit next to them.
- Q1:** What would you say is the greatest thing you have achieved from using social media? The one benefit?
- JA:** I have a blog that no one reads except for five guys. And incidentally they are the right guys that like systems theory and social network analysis and how to connect those things. And I've had some really nice conversations with those guys over the years. Some professor from somewhere in England, and America, and an analyst, Krups, some really interesting people who picked up on it and share the same interest.
- Q1:** What do you think would happen if you couldn't use social media anymore?
- JA:** I would go back to the opposite way, as a principal of organizing our lives.
- Q1:** Would you feel lost?
- JA:** I wouldn't, as much as I think some others might. I tend to wait a bit longer. You hear the guys at work, joking when I have to write something because it is always so long and it will take forever. So I might be a bit more old school. It will make lots of things more difficult, but the convenience of it is amazing.
- Q1:** Would you ever delete any of your social media accounts?
- JA:** I have. Well I don't know if it is social media. But I deleted my PayPal account when they stopped and froze money for WikiLeaks. So if they're idiots then I don't want to use it.
- Q2:** What about the alternative to Twitter. Did you delete that?
- JA:** No, I still have it, but I think the whole site shut down. I kept the account running. I normally just keep all my accounts. I still have my MySpace account, I have been in there from time to time, and it is like reliving the past. The last update was in 2007.

1.2.1.2 AR

Interviewee: AR

Interviewer: Rikke Østergaard (Q1), Julia Judge (Q2)

Format: In person

Date: 10/08/2012

- Q1:** What is your opinion of and relationship to social media?
- AR:** My relationship is probably easier. I think it's a really important part of staying in touch with people, that includes both friends, not so much family so primarily friends and acquaintances and news and discovering stuff on the web.
- Q1:** So basically everything you do online is somehow social media connected?
- AR:** A huge part of it at least.
- Q1:** How would you define yourself as a user of social media?
- AR:** I'd probably say advanced-average.
- Q1:** And how long do you spend on social media everyday?
- AR:** Actively participating is probably only twenty minutes to half an hour. Most of my time I spend reading or checking out the stuff I came across via Twitter or Facebook, which is probably at least another half hour.
- Q1:** Do you always have it open in the background during the day?
- AR:** No because that would conflict too much with my work. I take specific time slots where I check out what's going on.
- Q1:** If you had to choose one specific reason you use social media what would it be? The professional side...
- AR:** No, it would be the news and friends aspect, I know that's two things but it's not so much the professional aspect.
- Q1:** Imagine you find a new social media product- you get introduced to a new site, What are the kind of things you look at to assess the tool for your own use? Design, your friends being on it, the purpose?
- AR:** Design definitely plays a big role, and whether I can instantly try out the new service. I sign up for so many new services every week, and most don't even get back to me with their beta-launch email because they never launch. No, I would say the only important tool I joined with respect to friends was Facebook, and then all the other things I tried out because, well not many people were already there so...
- Q1:** So you signed up for a lot of things just for fun. What is it you want to see when you sign up for the sake of it?
- AR:** I am just curious to see what is in there, and see if I can get something out of using it. Also getting a little bit of inspiration from the news trends, how other people try to solve problems.
- Q1:** Do you go and find those types of sites yourself, or do you get exposed to them through other networks?

- AR:** I would say always through other networks [I found out about new sites]. Sometimes I have people that start something that I am also connected to in my network.
- Q1:** So is it right to assume that you don't need a lot of push or encouragement to sign up for something? You are quite like, ok I will try that out just to test it out.
- AR:** Yes that's how it is now. It was interesting that back then, it took me quite a while to get on Facebook because I refused it. We had a similar network in the German speaking area, and everyone was on there, and I only signed up to Facebook in the end because I was on exchange and I met so many people who were in other countries and were on Facebook. So that gave the push, but that is the only time I remember I needed to be pushed.
- Q1:** So when you sign up for one of these sites, how do you learn about what it can do? Is there anything you are hesitant to do or do you just get right in there?
- AR:** I would say I scan it briefly, if it is a really well done tour that takes you through it in easy steps, then I do that. But if it's too much information than I just tuck it away, and see what it does and just by clicking around and seeing what happens is how I'll learn about it.
- Q1:** Will you fill out your profile or add friends that early on? Or will that come later?
- AR:** No, only when I have already heard about the service and I know I am going to use it will I do that. I don't want to spam my friends with something I don't know.
- Q1:** Say you really like a site, and you think I am definitely going to use this- how long before it becomes a natural part of your online routine? For example a check in tool, how long does it take for you to automatically just use it?
- AR:** It probably needs either an offline trigger. For Foursquare, I was on a trip, and I wanted to check in and then you get hooked in Foursquare for using the game. And in other tools it's probably dependent on how good they are at getting you back, because unless I see very clear usage for it right away, it's difficult to remember, and primarily the other tools take up so much time- Facebook and Twitter.
- Q1:** How do you feel when a site changes the look of a tool, the interface for instance? Does that annoy you?
- AR:** No. Sometimes with the privacy settings I have realized after six months, that I should check that it is still on the right settings, and then you get a little bit annoyed that they try to hide them. But normally I am quite pleased by the interface changes.
- Q1:** Are you concerned about your privacy on social media?
- AR:** I am on Facebook because there I have pictures, and some private information I only want to share with certain friends, so I have a friends circle, and an acquaintance circle. And I have switched off anything for people who don't know me or my friends. But you can see my profile picture if you're not my friend [on Facebook].
- Q1:** So you have changed your settings on Facebook. Have you don't it on any other sites?
- AR:** No.
- Q1:** Is there any site you wouldn't sign up for?
- AR:** No, I would always sign up probably. I really don't feel very enticed by Google+ because it is more about conversations that are really long, about really nerdy stuff. I do have a profile on there though.

- Q1:** What about some sites that have a very specific demographical image. A lot of people think Pinterest is for moms, and recipes for muffins- would that deter you, or are you still quite interested to try it out?
- AR:** No, I would try it out. Pinterest is actually an interesting example because I signed up, and I started a board, but then you forget to use it again. My theory is that it appeals more to people who like to re-share things for the greater good instead of trying to stand out.
- Q1:** So you like to post things that make you stand out? Do you try and portray yourself a specific way on social media?
- AR:** Yes, definitely. I want to share certain stuff, and I want to share really cool stuff, interesting news and I try to always share stuff that is a little thought-provoking or gets people to think about that they should do something environmentally friendly for example. I'm not sure it is working, but...
- Q1:** Would you ever delete or untag something you thought put you in a bad light?
- AR:** I would delete a Tweet where I misspelled something, I sometimes untag myself from Facebook pictures that look really horrible.
- Q1:** Do you feed any of your other social media platforms you are on into Facebook?
- AR:** No because I see it as very different things.
- Q1:** So how do you feel about it when other people do that?
- AR:** It gets sort of noisy if people do it with Twitter, feeding it into Facebook and the other way around, it gets cut off most of the time so it's kind of annoying. I do like the Instagram-Facebook integration though, that's a great thing, because it fits better with Facebook.
- Q1:** How long do you spend in front of a computer everyday?
- AR:** From 8:30 in the morning to 7:30 in the evening, so 12 hours I'd say.
- Q1:** And when during a day like that are you most active on social media?
- AR:** Probably after lunch, in the morning a little bit and in the evening after work. So in breaks. Sometimes in between those if I stumble across something or get mentioned by someone. I just get the urge to check sometimes as well.
- Q1:** So do you get notifications from your phone for different sites?
- AR:** Right now it is not working on my phone. But I always have Tweetdeck running in the background.
- Q1:** So you always see those as they come in?
- AR:** Yes, but not for Facebook, but for Twitter yes.
- Q1:** What about if you are out of your routine, if you're away on holiday or off from work. How will that affect your time on social media?
- AR:** If I do a holiday where I really make a point about being offline, I don't spend any time. But I might check in, or post a picture. If it's more like a being off from work, not really a holiday situation, then I would spend a lot more time there trying to catch up with friends and skim through all the interesting stuff that's being shared, checking photos and so on.

- Q1:** Do you think the way you communicate with your friends has changed since you started using social media?
- AR:** Yes probably. I send a lot less text messages than I used to, to get updates instead I'll send a Facebook message. Some people are in the same web-tech world, where you start out with Twitter and then you get more personal and switch over to Facebook, or other services.
- Q1:** Do you think you talk more with your friends now, or is it just through different channels?
- AR:** Back then I only had a certain number of friends, and I moved away from my home country. For me it is really important to stay in touch. I am really bad at it, but without- well maybe I would be better because I would have to make more of an effort to actually find out what they are doing. Because now I can kind of see it without actively reaching out.
- Q1:** What about strangers? Do you talk to strangers more now than before?
- AR:** Definitely. I for example have a really good relationship with one guy I have never met, just via Twitter. He wanted some feedback early on, on his first blog, I gave him some interview questions there, and since then we are connected on Twitter and on Facebook.
- Q1:** Have you ever met anyone who was a stranger, through social media in the offline world?
- AR:** Yes, a few people at meetups.
- Q1:** What do you think would happen if you couldn't use social media anymore? How would that affect you?
- AR:** I would feel disconnected and would search for different ways to satisfy my need of information both in private and news related.
- Q1:** But you think you would be ok?
- AR:** No I don't think...I hope I wouldn't be affected seriously. I would really try and spend a lot of time to compensate by finding alternative ways [to connect].
- Q1:** What would you say then is the greatest benefit you have had since you started using social media?
- AR:** You get exposed to a lot of interesting stuff on the web that can range from fun videos, images, art to world moving events and really interesting or important stuff for work. So that is one aspect and the other is that you feel more easily connected. You feel you can reach out anytime to people you have met only one or two times, and you know via this channel it still gives it a very personal note to reach out and you can get up to speed on what they are doing very easily, and reconnect on what they are doing very easily. So I feel I could go to many cities and countries in the world by reaching out to those people if I wanted.
- Q1:** So you think you have a better or more easily accessible network now?
- AR:** Yes.
- Q1:** Do you think you would ever delete any of your social media accounts?
- AR:** I don't think so. I feel like I am responsible myself for what I share and what I put on [social media]. If ever any employer would use that information, then I wouldn't want to work there any way. And I am not intending to go into politics. That's me and my personality and there is nothing to hide.
- Q1:** So if you would do it in real life, you would do it there.

- AR:** It's me. And obviously I wouldn't put stuff on there that I don't want to be seen by other people then I wouldn't put it on there.
- Q2:** You mentioned in relation to Pinterest how you have this theory that people are just re-sharing content across their own networks. Do you think you are more the type to want to represent yourself on social media by providing more original content, or to share a newly released story?
- AR:** Yes, that is probably true. I also re-share a lot of stuff. But I do think often that I hope to share that stuff to my followers if we are talking about Twitter, first so that they get a value out of following me.
- Q2:** And what about your reaction when you provide content on social media. Do you hope to get a lot of likes, or someone sharing or re-tweeting your content?
- AR:** Yes. And sometimes I am really surprised when I share for instance really cool art content, really interesting articles I don't get any comments, and then just from a really stupid picture of me, or just a stupid comment, Or people complaining about still being at work for example, really ordinary comments get a lot of comments, but then I guess that is something they can relate to that is me, that is very personal, whereas the other stuff that is written by someone or done by someone else and I am just sharing it and it doesn't trigger them to react to it.
- Q2:** Facebook and Twitter are the more dominant networks you are committed to-
- AR:** Well it depends if you also consider Spotify as a social media. I know a lot of people who have really good taste in music and they are going the same direction so I check out their playlists and see what they are listening to.
- Q2:** Do you use Facebook and Twitter very differently?
- AR:** Yes, I use Facebook primarily for friends, and Twitter for news and I try to be more engaged, trying to get some conversations going, reaching out to strangers, but it is still primarily for news on a professional level.

1.2.2 The Preps

1.2.2.1 ER

Interviewee: ER

Interviewer: Rikke Østergaard (Q1), Julia Judge (Q2)

Format: Skype

Date: 31/07/2012

Q1: So tell us a bit about your relationship to social media in general. How do you use it, what is it to you?

ER: Social media- well it's a daily habit for sure. I've been smartphone addicted for almost four years. So Twitter is probably the one I use the most, but Facebook I post less, but I definitely observe and read more, and then blogging sites- Wordpress, Tumblr, Blogger, Tumblr especially; it's just a way to stay connected, as opposed to just a snapshot. It's also really interesting for me to see who prefers which social media. So I really like Twitter, because I'm more of a word person- I'm usually pretty wordy, so trying to be succinct, I like that challenge of it.

Q1: So how would you define yourself as a user of social media? Do you think you are very advanced, very engaging? What kind of words would you use to describe yourself?

ER: I would probably say, I am pretty advanced. I am breaking into PR, so I know the ideas behind social media, and the strategy that drives it and whatnot. It's not more than a few hours that I go without checking into a social media. Be it Foursquare, or checking my Twitter lists.

Q1: So how long would you say you spend on social media everyday?

ER: It depends on the day.

Q1: We won't judge (laughs).

ER: It can be, 90 minutes a day, and that's if I am working, to well it depends for instance if I am working on social media for a client, then I'll be on social media. But just personally, I would say it's pretty lowballing it at 90 minutes of constant use of just being on a site.

Q1: So what is your primary purpose of being on social media?

ER: I use it as documentation, to see what I have been up to and what I have done. So I will go back and look through my Twitter feed, and look through my timeline or my Tumblr's and see what I was up to that day. So I kind of see it as a documentation and a way to interact with people as well. Twitter I really like, especially during elections, because then you can have debates as to what's happening and speculate with hashtags and so on.

Q1: So imagine that you have just found a new social media site. How will assess if the site is something for you to use in the future. Do you look at design, aesthetics, if your friends are on there- what are the factors that play in?

ER: Definitely design and aesthetic, also what it does. Pinterest, people are still trying to get me onto Pinterest. I've finally slowly dipped the baby toe into the wading pool, but collecting images isn't something that I go on line for so it doesn't meet my needs. So how would I be able to integrate it into my daily routine? Foursquare for instance, I check in when I get on the bus, it's what you do- I have to show my bus pass anyway. So how simple is it to integrate and what is the community going to add? Am I going to learn something from it? Am I going to be entertained? I think more stuff from a community aspect is the biggest thing.

Q1: So does it play a big role to you if your friends are on there already?

- ER:** It would definitely be a big role, probably more so than say a celebrity.
- Q1:** Say you decide that this site is for me and I can definitely get something out of it, how long does it take for you before it becomes a part of your typical routine, something you remember to check regularly?
- ER:** I would say anywhere from 2-4 weeks, depending if its mobile or not makes a big difference. I am a relatively new iPhone user as well, so I am still finding that a lot of sites are available as apps, as opposed to when I had a Blackberry, so that's also still a learning curve. If it's mobile, and how easy and fast is it going to be for me to set up an account.
- Q1:** So what do you do when go onto the site, how do you learn about what you can do. Do you click around, is there anything you are hesitant to do in the beginning?
- ER:** Not usually. Usually I'll complete profiles, put up a photo. I recently went through and closed down I don't know how many dormant accounts this year that some were probably six years or older. And that was just after searching and being like, "Oh, my photo is still connected to this." Usually I am pretty complete. Usually I won't link to Facebook right away, but usually I'll link to my Twitter or to my blog. So I'll poke around, view other profiles, often before I'll make connections, sync that process. So I'll complete my profile, then observe dive into the community probably.
- Q1:** So you say this year that you went and deleted some profiles. Is that something that you do often, actually delete accounts from sites you don't use?
- ER:** Not regularly. But it is something I am starting to do now, to streamline a little bit. I think I deleted a MySpace, and a Bebo account I don't even know. Some sites like blogs, where I was just a forum member on. Some things that haven't been relevant to me in the last 3-4 years that maybe once were, but that I don't need cluttering up my digital footprint.
- Q1:** So how do you feel when a site changes the function, the design or the interface of a site? How do you feel about the change that happens on some social media sites?
- ER:** It depends if it has been forewarned and if it is for the sake of functionality or just the sake of doing something different. Facebook is notorious and probably the most primary example. And often it tends to be more confusing and cluttered versus other stuff. When Tumblr did their last design it was a lot more streamlined, aesthetically it was a lot more polished, which I don't mind. It's nice to know up front what is going to be happening and to see it work better than to regress. And also to maintain the control over what I own and what I can put together. I mean on Facebook I now have nearly all but stopped posting photos, unless it's of a major event. Because just to go in and change the individual settings as to who can see what, its difficult to manage with so many different groups of people that have added me. So through various workplaces, and schools it's a little bit trickier to navigate who gets what. Typically I am open to the change, I initially don't resist it. Timeline, I didn't really care, I think I clicked ahead, rather than getting it later. And it's fine, with everything I'll adapt. Sometimes sticking points might annoy me, but usually the masses will speak out for the change and it will eventually speak out so that it is made for what works best.
- Q1:** So you mentioned the privacy settings. Is privacy in general something that concerns you in social media? Do you often adjust your settings?
- ER:** It depends on the network. I tend to be a little conscious as to what network I choose to post what content. So Tumblr, I rarely ever post original content. It is rather things I find entertaining, or that I want to document or just offer really brief comment on. So what I like is having the control or the option that I choose what gets displayed. I think that is the most important thing.

- Q1:** So are you cautious or do you think about the way that you portray yourself as a person on the different sites?
- ER:** Absolutely. On social media I definitely particularly if it is linked to something that could be used in my professional life. Being on what social media, and where you post and guest post is highly scrutinized, so I swear a lot less on social media than I do in real life for example. And I will be cautious if I am out drinking, I think should I really be on social media- if I'm thinking of sending that Tweet, should I really send that Tweet. So something I might save something as a draft, and if it's still funny in the morning...
- Q1:** So in general do you think you communicate quite openly? Would you for example if you were to contact a friend would you write it on their wall or profile, or would you go through a closed chat?
- ER:** It depends on what it is. For the most part I will post on a wall. It depends if it something that is intended for that person. If it is something that could be incriminating, embarrassing, or sensitive in any way, that's one thing. It also depends if it is something that other people can be invited into conversation about. You know if it's a link to show pandas being cute, or a link to a study that others might find interesting, or if it's checking in about how their great Aunt's chemo is doing, that's something that is a little bit more private.
- Q1:** Is there any sites that you have considered signing up for but you for some reason have not gotten around to doing yet?
- ER:** Probably 8tracks and Soundcloud. This might also sound weird, but I have also been without Internet access other than my phone. So it's been a lot of library and cafes. So I haven't been able to use the full breadth of social media. So I definitely want to get back into more music sharing sites. Because I used to have an account on Moog, which is a music sharing site before it became a US only site. That was back when it was in beta I think in 2003. And I did that for year until I was notified that I couldn't log back into the account because it's a US only now.
- Q1:** Ok. So would you be likely to switch from something you are currently using and then change to something better instead? Or why wouldn't you switch if there was a better alternative?
- ER:** I would probably switch to something else. It depends too, that with mobile apps some are better than others, and some have third party apps which I'll use and test out to see which works best for my needs and how I like to interact with social media.
- Q1:** And I am sure that you are familiar that some social sites take on quite a personality on their own. Instagram is kind of being known for being part of hipster territory, Pinterest is associated with women and recipes and that kind of stuff. Would those images that these sites get, would they deter you or would you not sign up for them because they have a certain image that you might not associate with?
- ER:** Not really. If the functionality seems like something that would be interesting to me, then I'll check it out. Usually its the platform that is more interesting, and if platform is more interesting then my kind of people will migrate towards it.
- Q1:** You said earlier that when you sign up for a tool, you sometimes change the settings so that it is not associated with Facebook. Do you in general feed things into Facebook from your other social media sites?
- ER:** I keep Facebook fairly separate- I tend to silo most of the sites and Facebook is mostly because I see other people just feeding everything in through Facebook. It's like, I don't follow you on certain social media sites for a reason, so depending on what they're posting and where it's coming from, sometimes I'll hide them completely from my feed, because it's like this is not why I am connected or have you on this particular platform. Once in a while I'll cross-pollinate, but usually I'll keep it fairly siloed.

- Q1:** And if you saw one of your friends for example posting or streaming from another social media site that you weren't on, would that make you curious to visit it, or annoyed and deter you from visiting it?
- ER:** If it was something new, I might be interested to see what it is. That's kind of how I want to get back into music sharing sites, mixtape sites, was through seeing other people post that content. So it's kind of a double-edged sword I guess.
- Q1:** So it sounds a bit like if you find a product or servicing that you are needing, you are actually likely to go look for it rather than just be passive and see what gets sent towards you through friends, etc.
- ER:** That seems to be the case.
- Q1:** So you are likely to say like, here's a problem, I think there might be a social solution to it out here, and then actually go and search for it.
- ER:** Ya, or talk to other people and see what they recommend. Right now I am hating Blogger as a platform, so I am talking to friends who are developers to see what could be the way to fix what I want to get a platform that does what I want it to do. So for the platform to work for me, rather than vice-versa.
- Q1:** Do you for example send a question like that out on your Twitter profile?
- ER:** Yes, it's definitely what I would do.
- Q1:** So you are using social media to find social media?
- ER:** Yes. Which is actually interesting because I did a bit of freelance work for a social recruiter, and they mostly work with tech and developers. So they get contracted out by a company to hire people and they usually take to social media to find these new hires.
- Q1:** How much time do you use in front of a computer per day?
- ER:** Well it depends where I am working. I actually just started a 3 month marketing contract so the whole day is in front of the computer. And for the PR agencies I've been at, it's all day in front of computer, so on average that's at least 7 hours in front of the computer. And then if I go home to watch a movie, then spend some time on social media it can be anywhere between 9-18 hours in front of the computer during the day.
- Q1:** And when would you say you are most active on social media? Is it while you are at work, or on the weekends, evenings?
- ER:** Probably evenings and weekends. While at work I'll try not to go on social media, because then I'll get stuck in a loop, a refresh loop. So to stay away, it'll be there when I come back. It's easy to get sucked in especially if there's a conversation I want to be a part of, sometimes it's just best to step away, and ignore it.
- Q1:** So if you're out of routine for a period of time, say you're on holiday or now for example you don't have internet access or you're off ill from work. If something happens and you become out of your routine, does your activity on social media change?
- ER:** It either increases greatly or it decreases greatly. I think the last time I was out sick for a week and I barely went on social media at all, and the time before that, the last time I had strep, it was just constant social media feed. So it's either all or nothing, there's no middle ground.
- Q1:** But there's definitely a change?

ER: Oh there is definitely a shift.

Q1: And what would you say if you were not able to use social media anymore? How would that affect you?

ER: That would be interesting. I would probably journal a lot more, as a different way of documenting. And maybe I'd find myself in larger groups of people. Lately I keep running into people I follow on social media, and then I have met them at a party or an event, it has just added another dimension to knowing people. I've met people on social media and then ended up going to another event with them and ended up meeting them. It would definitely change how I interact, and how my social groups run. I'm not sure how but it would.

Q1: Would you say that after you started using social media, that the way you communicate with friends and strangers has changed? And in what way?

ER: Absolutely. It has been interesting, because I'll be more likely to go up to someone and say, hey, we were part of whatever Twitter chat, it's nice to meet you. As opposed to, hey that person looks interesting but I don't if I am comfortable to just go up and talk to them. So it adds this ice breaker. I know you know me from social media as well, so lets just chat in dialogue in real time.

Q1: In general, what would you say is the greatest benefit you have got from using social media.

ER: It is definitely an exchange of information- the ability to read about and follow events as they happen in real time. My journalist friends can decry and praise at the same time the whole advent of the citizen journalist, but I've found it just fascinating to see how everyone actually really does have a story, now has the ability to share their stories relatively inexpensively. So I think that's been really great.

1.2.2.2 GS

Interviewee: GS

Interviewer: Rikke Østergaard (Q1), Julia Judge (Q2)

Format: Skype

Date: 09/08/2012

- Q1:** Tell us a bit about your relationship with social media.
- GS:** Basically I found it much easier to stay in touch with my friends because of social media. But also to contradict myself, I think it has made me a bit lazy. I don't necessarily hang out with my friends as often as I would if I didn't have social media.
- Q1:** And how would you define yourself as a user of social media? Would you say you are quite advanced or not very advanced in your usage?
- GS:** I'd say in between. I am not super advanced, but I am advanced. If that makes sense.
- Q1:** How long would you say you spend on social media every day?
- GS:** Too long. 8 hours per day.
- Q1:** So how often will you check your accounts in a day? Will you be on them all the time or will you go a couple of times to check it?
- GS:** It really depends. Sometimes I leave it open and I'll look at it if I'm bored of working. But sometimes I can easily shut it down. But I will never log out.
- Q1:** So when you say you will never log out, is that things like Facebook and Twitter or is it every social media you are on?
- GS:** Every social media.
- Q1:** Do you use it on your phone as well?
- GS:** Yeah, I do. And my tablet.
- Q1:** So if you are on the go you will check it regularly as well?
- GS:** Yeah, or if I'm downstairs I'll use my mobile when I'm making a couple of tea. You are making me realise how obsessed I am, and that I need to stop.
- Q1:** So what would you say is your primary purpose of using social media?
- GS:** To stay in touch with friends and for sharing pictures.
- Q1:** Say you've found a new social media site and you like the service it offers, how long do you think it takes before it becomes a regular part of the media you visit when you are on social media?
- GS:** It will probably take me quite a long time. Google+ I signed up for an account, but just because I was so used to Facebook I didn't really give it enough time. I've just come back to it now and I really like the interface, so I've given it a go again. So, it will probably take me a couple of weeks.
- Q1:** So say you have found a site you think could be something for you – what kind of things do you look at to see if it works for you? Is it the design, the functionality, if your friends are on it, do you read in the media about it? What do you look at to see if this could be something for you?

- GS:** Mainly if there is a lot of my friends already on it. Because there is no point being on a social network if no one is there. The interface, if it's friendly to use and also if my photos look good on it.
- Q1:** And how will you learn about what a site can do? If you sign up an account, will you click around or is there anything you are scared or hesitant to do?
- GS:** No, I will have a look around. Also, I tend to take the virtual tours as well, which always help me.
- Q1:** And how do you feel if a site goes and change the look or the interface? How do you react to that?
- GS:** It's quite frustrating, but to be honest I'll get over it.
- Q1:** Do you adapt to it quickly, you think?
- GS:** Yeah, I do.
- Q1:** And what do you think is frustrating about it? Is it learning a new tool or is it because you don't really see the point?
- GS:** Sometimes I don't see the point, other times it can be frustrating just because things are moved around. But because I am quite used to computer, I'll get used to it.
- Q1:** Are there any social media sites you've thought about signing up for, but that you haven't got around to do for some reason?
- GS:** I don't really know of any others, to be honest. No.
- Q1:** Would you ever sign up for a tool that for example replaced something you were using – so say a new photosite, and you'd stop using one you are currently using?
- GS:** That's the thing. I got various photo site accounts, but I never stop using the other ones. I just sort of weign myself of it, if that makes sense.
- Q1:** And the other one will slowly integrate itself, and you might use the others less but you will still have an account there?
- GS:** Yeah. On Flickr at the moment, I have about 100 pictures, but I haven't really used it very much recently.
- Q1:** And what do you use instead?
- GS:** I still use Flickr, but I will like to move on to something else. For me, I never want to close any of my accounts, so I end up with so many accounts that it gets a bit frustrating and a bit much really.
- Q1:** Is there any social media sites that you wouldn't sign up for?
- GS:** Do you have any examples?
- Q1:** Sure. You know Instagram has an image for being hipsters and people taking pictures of their food and Pinterest is known to be females, mums and recipes. Would the marketing or the image of a site make you not want to sign up for it, or do you believe you could still be a part of it and make it your own?

- GS:** Yeah, I've signed up for Instagram but I don't really use it. Pinterest is something I really enjoy using. But I can't really think of any that I wouldn't. Bebo, I guess? Years ago I had an account, but not anymore.
- Q1:** So, take your Facebook account and you have all these other sites you also have accounts on. Will you feed in content from the other sites onto your Facebook or do you try to keep them separate?
- GS:** It depends. Sometimes I do, and sometimes I don't. But mainly I'll just keep Facebook as Facebook.
- Q1:** And what do you think when other people feed stuff into their Facebook profile?
- GS:** It's cool. It's just a way of sharing more information, and to be honest Facebook is just full of 'Myspace-type stuff' now, so anything different like a good read is always interesting.
- Q1:** You say you spend around 8 hours on social media per day. How long would you say you spend in front of a computer every day?
- GS:** Probably 8-10 hours.
- Q1:** And when do you think you are most active on social media? Is it when you are working, weekends, evenings?
- GS:** It's during the week and when I'm working.
- Q1:** What about if you are out of routine, so say you are out travelling or off ill? Does your activity on social media change in those periods?
- GS:** Yeah, it will. If I'm travelling I won't use it. And if I'm ill, I will use it because it just takes my mind of things. When I'm out and about, I won't really update my status or check in or anything. I'm not really into that.
- Q1:** What about posting pictures from trips?
- GS:** I do. But not so much.
- Q1:** Do you think the way you communicate with your friends has changed since you started using social media?
- GS:** Yes, definitely. I don't text on my phone so much anymore.
- Q1:** And do you think you speak to them more or less than you did before?
- GS:** Less. I actually find that quite upsetting really. I am very much a 'facetime' person, so it kind of sucks that everyone has been drawn into social media. But it is handy, but there's drawbacks.
- Q1:** What about connecting with strangers? Do you talk with people you didn't before?
- GS:** Yes. Too many.
- Q1:** And how do you connect with them and meet these people?
- GS:** If they add me because of photography or interests I'm into. Then we'll connect and start chatting. Some of them I've met, but not many.
- Q1:** Okay – so you will take the friendship into the offline world?

GS: Yes.

Q1: What do you think would happen if you were unable to use social media anymore? How would that affect you?

GS: I'd have to acutally go out and talk to people. It would be a big change.

Q1: Do you think it would be difficult to adapt to?

GS: Yes, very difficult.

Q1: Would you miss it?

GS: Yes, I would.

Q1: When you post on social media sites, do you think a lot about how you portray yourself? For example will you untag yourself from pictures, or think about how you compose a status or what you say before you do it?

GS: Most of the time I do, mostly because I'm a professional. Other times, I don't really care, but most of the time I'll probably untag myself from statuses or pictures etc. I'm a bit sensitive.

Q1: And why do you think it's important to think about that from a personal point of view?

GS: Because, all these people I don't know who I've added, will just end up judging me for something that might not be a result of something I've done, if that makes sense.

Q1: Will you ever try and post something that will make you look cooler or funnier, than you might actually think you are in real life?

GS: I don't think so, no. Though I have edited pictures of myself.

Q1: Are you generally worried about privacy on social media?

GS: It's a bit frustrating actually. The ticker. If I like a page or I comment on someone's stuff that's public, the ticker now makes it a lot more obvious for people to see what I'm doing. That really annoys me.

Q1: Are you worried about strangers seeing your content or having access to your information?

GS: Yes, I do clamp down on that. So if anyone adds me that I don't know, I make sure they can only see a limited profile.

Q1: So you've adjusted the privacy settings on your accounts?

GS: Yes. Probably not on all of them, but most of them I have.

Q1: How about in general when you communicate on social media – will you be open about it, for example by writing on people's walls or will you try and keep it in private messages and chats?

GS: Most of the time I'll use private messages.

Q1: And why is that?

GS: Just because I don't think people need to know your business all the time. Or if I am talking about places I've been to, I don't want to put it on peoples wall. No one needs to see that, really.

- Q1:** You use social media a lot for your photography. Do you go out and actively find the sites to post things on yourself, or do you just get exposed to them from friends and other social media sites?
- GS:** Well I found Facebook through a college friend – I didn't know anything about it. That was years ago. Same with MySpace. I tend to follow the crowd really.
- Q1:** Would you ever think 'I'd really like to know what movies my friends are watching, I'll go see if there's an app or site that can help me do that'? Or will you just let it come to you?
- GS:** Sometimes – most of the time I'll research it myself.
- Q1:** What would you say is the greatest benefit you've got from social media?
- GS:** For my business it has basically gotten me 85% of my work, the last few years. Other than that, the greatest benefit has been...I don't know, just sharing what I'm up to visually with my friends. I think that's what's interesting, instead of just talking about it. Also, sharing articles. I've been exposed to things I wouldn't have heard of if it hadn't been for social media.
- Q1:** So are you likely to, when you find an article or picture on the internet, share it on social media sites?
- GS:** Yes, I am.
- Q1:** Would you ever consider deleting any of your social media accounts?
- GS:** Yes. I would perhaps consider deleting Facebook, but only if I found something I could use equivalent of and if my friends were on it.
- Q1:** And why Facebook in particular?
- GS:** Just because I spend far too much time on it and it sucks the soul out of me.
- Q2:** You mention that you are not likely to create statuses or check into places when you are not home. However, do you engage a lot with that type of activity of other people?
- GS:** Yeah, I am.
- Q2:** And is it a conscious choice that you don't create that kind of content or is it more that you are busy when you are out?
- GS:** It's because I'm busy, and lack of signal most of the time. When I'm abroad, it's the cost.
- Q1:** So say you are at a train station, or somewhere where you'd be killing time on the go, would you then be likely to go onto your mobile and check Facebook etc?
- GS:** Yeah, when I am killing time, definitely.

1.2.3 The Cliques

1.2.3.1 NC

Interviewee: NC

Interviewer: Rikke Østergaard (Q1), Julia Judge (Q2)

Format: Skype

Date: 06/08/2012

Q1: What is your relationship to social media?

NC: I use social media a lot. I love Facebook and Twitter. I use it to connect with my friends all the time, because I'm 18 and that's how everyone keeps in touch.

Q1: How would you define yourself as a user? Would you say you are very advanced? What kind of words would you use to describe yourself?

NC: I feel like I am very advanced, but some people are more so. I am kind of in the middle I guess. I know more than some people, but as much as other people already know.

Q1: How long do you spend on social media in a normal day?

NC: It depends on if I am busy during the day or not. If I'm bored, I could spend all day on Twitter or Tumblr, but if I'm out, I'm always on Instagram. So a lot!

Q1: How often would you say you check your Facebook in a day?

NC: 4-5 times per day. I don't spend much time on it every time I check it, but if I put it altogether, I spend an hour and a half I guess.

Q1: But you just check up on it quite often and keep updated on it during the day?

NC: Yes.

Q1: What is your primary purpose of using social media?

NC: To keep in touch with my friends, and if I was using Twitter for example, I creep on celebrities. And to keep in touch with my friends.

Q1: So imagine you have just found a new social media site. How do you learn about how it works and all the features on there. Is there anything you're scared of doing? Or will you just jump right into it?

NC: I'll just jump right into it. And try to figure it out for myself.

Q1: Ok, so do you click around on the page and try and see how everything works?

NC: Yes. I click on everything to figure out what I have to do, and what the purpose of the site is for.

Q1: Will you add friends at that point, and create your profile, or will you wait until later?

NC: I will wait until later. I would get a feeling for it, and then figure out what I would do on there, and then I will add friends.

Q1: Say you do really like something, like a site you sign up for. How long will it take before it becomes a typical part of what you do online. Something that becomes part of what you do, and that you will check on several times during a day.

NC: Maybe a week just so I get a feel for it and actually figure out if I like it and if I will continue with it or not.

Q1: How do you assess if it is the right thing for you- do you look at the design, function, read about it in the media? What are the factors you take into account when assessing if it's something for you?

NC: To see if it's fun, and "me" in a way, if it catches my eye, and I've read about it, and my friends have told me about them, and if they are interested in it, usually I will be interested too. Just the way someone describes it to me is really important.

Q1: Will you sign up only if your friends are on it, or would you sign up for a tool even if your friends are not on it already?

NC: I would sign up for something that my friends are not on too, if it is the right type of site and has good functionality.

Q1: How would you feel if the interface or the look of the tool changes. For example Facebook changes the design often, how do you react to that?

NC: I don't like it. Because with Facebook, I could be getting used to the way it looks and I like how everything is, and then it changes to Timeline for instance- I just don't like Timeline. I don't have it yet. It's not confusing, it's just irritating I guess.

Q1: Is it the look of that specific feature or is it just that it is then different from what you are used to?

NC: It's different from what I'm used to.

Q1: So it's the effort of learning it and getting into a new site.

NC: Yes. But I get used to the new layout after a while, but then they change it always so quickly.

Q1: Is there any social media sites you've considered signing up for but you haven't got around to for some reason?

NC: Yes. Pinterest. Because my Mom is on it all the time.

Q1: And why do you think you have not signed up for it yet?

NC: I don't really know. I guess I'm just lazy. I guess it is kind of boring, because all you do is re-pin stuff. I want to sign up for it, but I don't at the same time because I feel like I would get annoyed with it really easily.

Q1: Do you use anything similar to it at the moment?

NC: Tumblr.

Q1: So do you think if you started using Pinterest that you would stop using Tumblr?

NC: No. I definitely like Tumblr better.

Q1: Are there any sites you definitely would not sign up for, that you feel like they are definitely not for you?

NC: Not any I can think of.

- Q1:** Some sites have a certain image attached to them. Instagram for instance is known to be for hipsters taking pictures of their food, and Pinterest is very associated with mothers and cakes and recipes- does that deter you, or do you feel you can still use these kinds of sites even though you may not fit into the stereotypes?
- NC:** I would still use them, just because it is fun.
- Q1:** Do you feed any of the other social media sites you're on onto your Facebook account?
- NC:** No I don't. I just find it so annoying when people attach their Twitter to their Facebook account. Keep Twitter on Twitter, and keep Tumblr on Tumblr. If I wanted to see what someone was doing on another website, I would go there and look it up. I don't want to have that on my newsfeed [on Facebook] if I am looking for other things.
- Q1:** So what if one of your friends is feeding in something from a social media site you haven't heard of before. Will you be more likely to look at it, or will it deter you from it?
- NC:** It would probably deter me from it, because every time I see when people connect things to their Facebook, I just ignore it.
- Q1:** How much time do you spend in front of a computer every day?
- NC:** Maybe 3 hours, or less depending on how busy I am.
- Q1:** Is that all for fun, or do you use it for some kind of school or work purposes?
- NC:** I usually just watch movies online.
- Q1:** While on the computer, when are you most active on social media? Is it in the evenings, or when you are watching movies or on the weekend- what time in your life are you most active?
- NC:** Definitely at night. Because I am using it to get in touch with my friends and figure out what we are doing. Not really on the weekends, because I am mainly with my friends at that time. Mainly at night because either I am really bored, or I just got home from work or school and I want to talk to my friends.
- Q1:** Will you be on social media while you are doing other things, such as watching a movie?
- NC:** Yes.
- Q1:** What if you are out of routine, for instance are on holiday or up at the cottage. Would your activity on social media during this time change?
- NC:** Yes. Say I go to my cottage, I don't use it as much when I come back because I don't usually don't bring my computer with me, so I feel like I am doing other things and keeping busy and don't need to check it all the time. I feel like it is not a necessity in my life then. But a few days after I return I get back in the routine of checking it frequently.
- Q1:** Would you say the way you communicate with your friends has changed since you started using social media? Do you talk to them more or less?
- NC:** In a way I feel it has changed a bit because I can keep in touch with people I haven't seen in a while, so I talk to them a lot. But the friends I see everyday, I don't talk to them a lot, because I see them every day I don't have the need to. But it's better when I can keep in touch with people I don't see as often.
- Q1:** Do you think you have made any friendships that you didn't have before social media?

NC: Definitely. So I have a friend who lives across the street that I have known for 16 years, and we stopped talking when I started high school. But then recently she followed me on Twitter so we started talking a lot more, and now we hang out all the time.

Q1: So you made a whole new friendship with her.

NC: Yes.

Q1: What do you think would happen if you couldn't use social media anymore?

NC: I would get over it. If all the sites shut down, I would feel devastated at first, because I have put so much time into them, but I would get over it eventually. I would just still want to check something.

Q1: What do you think the alternatives would be? How would you communicate with friends and find the things you find on Tumblr?

NC: I would probably text or call my friends all the time. But for finding things on Tumblr...I don't really know. I find interesting things on Tumblr so, I would be a little lost in that sense, I guess.

Q1: How do you normally find a social media site? Do you have a need and search for something, or do you just bump into something and then, oh, I have a need for this too?

NC: I think I would just bump into something. I'll be on another site and bump into something, or my friends tell about it, and then I'll go from there.

Q1: But you would think, 'Oh I really need something that does this', and then go search for it?

NC: No I wouldn't do that.

Q1: On social media, are you cautious about how you represent yourself? For example will you untag yourself from pictures, or think about how you write status messages for instance?

NC: I definitely untag myself in pictures if it's really bad. For example I don't want to be known as that random girl who's face looks fat in a picture. But when I'm writing something, I don't really care. I'll just be myself, but when it comes to pictures I'll untag it if I don't like it.

Q1: Will you ever post something because you think it might represent you in a good light? Something you did or bought, that you think people will think you are cool if you tell them this?

NC: Yes. I am pretty sure I have done that before.

Q1: In regards to privacy on social media, is that something you worry about?

NC: Not really, no. I don't really care who is looking at my profile. But say if it's my Twitter I don't really care, but on Facebook I usually block my stuff from strangers.

Q1: So you have adjusted the privacy settings on Facebook?

NC: Yes.

Q1: Have you done that on any of the other sites you're on?

NC: No I haven't.

Q1: How do you use social media to communicate? Will you write on your friend's walls? Or would you rather send them a private message?

- NC:** I do both, but it really depends on the message. If I just want to say hi to a friend I haven't seen in a while, I will just write it on their wall, but if I'm having an intense conversation, I'll inbox them, because I don't want other people reading it.
- Q1:** So I guess it is a little bit reflective of how you communicate in real life- you will yell hello to someone across the street, but you won't tell them your biggest secret.
- NC:** Yes.
- Q1:** What would you say is the greatest benefit you have received since you started using social media?
- NC:** It basically gives me something to do. When I'm bored, I always know I can go check my Twitter, Facebook or Instagram. But it helps me also to keep in touch with people, and learn about celebrities I guess (laughs).
- Q1:** So is there an entertainment factor to it?
- NC:** Yes.
- Q1:** Do you think the entertainment factor is more important than the communication with friends? Which one would you rate the highest?
- NC:** I would say the entertainment. Because sometimes I can just look at what my friends are doing and that entertains me. And keeping in touch with my friends is also a plus too!
- Q1:** Do you think you would ever delete any of your social media accounts?
- NC:** Yes.
- Q1:** What would have to happen if you were to do that?
- NC:** I want to say yes I would be able to delete, but I am not too sure.
- Q1:** What if you have an account you never use, would you delete it?
- NC:** I would delete it. Say if I had a Flickr account and it had all my pictures on it and I didn't use it, I would want to delete it so people couldn't find me on that.
- Q1:** And why wouldn't you want them to find you? Because you don't think it represents you in the right way?
- NC:** I guess I would not want people to look at my pictures all the time without me knowing. And knowing that my pictures are out there somewhere and someone could be looking at them scares me, if I'm not using it anymore.

1.2.3.2 WE

Interviewee: WE

Interviewer: Julia Judge (Q2)

Format: Skype

Date: 14/08/2012

Q2: What is your opinion about and relationship to social media in general?

WE: I think it has good and bad sides to it. It's really shaping the way we are changing our communication and it has a lot of advantages if you want to speak with people who are far away or keep in touch with family. As far as things like Twitter and the news, if you work in the newsfield its really helpful to get information right away. But I also think there is a negative side to it as well. It takes away our everyday social contact and ability to communicate on a more personal level. And as far as privacy is concerned, your information is business whether you want it to be or like it or not. As much security you put on Facebook and Twitter, anything you put on the internet is still being communicated to a lot of different people. So, good and bad.

Q2: With that in mind, is your privacy on social media a concern?

WE: A little bit. I really try to keep as much of my own information to only the people I know. I'm a lot more conscious about what I put anywhere especially what concerns my life, as I'm teaching – so I have to be a bit more cautious about my outward appearance, in a way.

Q2: Have you ever adjusted your account settings in terms of privacy?

WE: Yeah, I go and update it regularly. I try to check, because I know with every interface change things are switched and automatically default settings are made on Facebook. Every few months I always go and make sure that I am still where I wanna be and check people I don't want to see my stuff.

Q2: Would you regard yourself as being quite cautious about the way you portray or represent yourself on social media? Are you fx likely to untag photos and when you post statuses are you really cautious in terms of how you craft them, edit photos of yourself before posting them, and that kind of thing.

WE: I think so. A lot more than I used to be. The last couple of years, I have changed what I put up there, just because as you get older and you go more and more into the business world, you want to keep your private life private, right? I have a lot of family on social media, and I don't like them to see everything all the time. Especially as my younger family gets older, I have cousins between the age of 9 and 12, who has started to check out Facebook. So I try to keep it PG13.

Q2: In terms of how you communicate – do you prefer to keep your communication in private chat or are you quite open when you post messages to other people on social media?

WE: It depends on the content. If its just regular, everyday catch up I'll post it in public places. But if it's certain things I want to talk about or if we're making plans or exchanging phonenumber or emails, then there's a bit more of a personal element to it. Then I'll do it in a private chat.

Q2: How long does it take for a new tool to become part of your online routine?

WE: A while. I feel like I'm already that 'older person' who doesn't know how to use the Internet. I pretty much stick to the basics. So unless it's really easy to use and super helpful, I still hesitate to expand my horizon.

- Q2:** And how do you learn about new features on the tool you sign up for? Or just features in general. Is there anything you are hesitant to do upon signing up for something? Or will you just go and click buttons?
- WE:** I'm a self-explorer. I check stuff out that's around. I am always hesitant to give my email or sign up for things, because I hate receiving newsletters. So most of the time I will just go and explore it myself and do a tutorial – unless it's not too in-depth and quick. If it's user-friendly, often I can go through the trial really quick for sure.
- Q2:** How do you assess if a tool is working for you? So what initially attracts you to a site, like the aesthetics, the design, the purpose or if your friends are on there? Do you read media sources, that will tell you about a new site and make you curious? What are the most important things when you are assessing if a service is for you?
- WE:** Definitely, if other people are using it and if it is going to be helpful to me. Not that I am super busy all the time, but with school and all, you don't have time to sign up for things that aren't going to be productive for me. So if other people are using, that means I can use it to communicate with friends, and it serves a service for me, that's the main things really. I'm a little bit of a sucker for marketing, so if it looks cool I will go and check it out, but it has to have usefulness for sure. And – easy to use. If it's not easy to use and I can't go to it and figure it out right away, I will probably not check it out.
- Q2:** If a new social media site launches, and it's better than something you already use for a certain purpose are you likely to migrate over to it, even if your friends aren't there? Or do you feel like you would be the first mover and bring people over to a new tool or is it highly important that your connections are already there?
- WE:** I think it depends what the use is. I'd definitely be open to using something if it's new and easy to use or more compact or helpful. Then I would have no problem moving over to it as far as friends are concerned. Unless it is something where if I'm the only one on it, it's obsolete. If it was a new kind of Facebook and no one was on it, then there is no point of me using it. But if it was something productive for school or business, that was still going to have some use, I would definitely try and get other people to use it and be willing to switch.
- Q2:** How do you feel about changes to the interface of a site? Does it confuse you or do you like it or does it bother you?
- WE:** Yeah. If the way it's working is working well, then it bugs me. If it's a switchover for the better...nobody likes change, it's a part of human nature. That's why everyone is usually pretty annoyed when having to relearn how something works, but if in the long run it is going to be more productive and easier, then I get used to it pretty quick. I don't like when something is being changed really frequently, so when you just learned it they are changing it again. Then it can get really frustrating, because it just makes me want to stop using it. But if it's a productive switch and it's not happening super regularly, then that's when I can keep up with it and use it for whatever I use it for.
- Q2:** You say you consider yourself an explorer, so you wouldn't have an issue when those changes are made to pick it up quite quickly and how to relearn the tool. You adapt quite fast to it?
- WE:** Yes. As long as they're not making it super complicated. I mean, time is of the essence, so if I can learn it in a short amount of time or get the gist of it over a couple of days, then yeah – I am willing to check it out and use it.
- Q2:** Are there any sites that you've considered signing up for?
- WE:** At this point, not really. I don't use too much social media, because I have limited time, so if it's not directly useful for me... I try to avoid things like Twitter, because you can get lost in Twitter

for hours, and then one things lead to another and everything is really connected which is cool, but if you are procrastinating it's not. So I try to stick to one or two media, that I can use quickly and that does not overlap with my other duties in the day.

Q2: In terms of replacing a tool, what would be the biggest factors that would motivate you to switch to a similar product, replacing something you are already connected to?

WE: As long as it has a good use to it and that I think is really cool or interesting, or a new twist on an old idea, then I'll be really into it. But then... I'm not a huge social media person, so. If it was something different or unique, I'd be really into it.

Q2: Are there any sites you definitely wouldn't sign up for? And if so, why? Because of the marketing of the tool or if its branded more for someone of a different demographic or image? Would that deter you in any way?

WE: I think so, yeah. I don't know a ton of social media, but I like the idea of Facebook and Instagram and things that are quite of different. I stear away a lot from Twitter, I don't want to ever sign up for it. I think if you are somebody who are like a reporter, Twitter is really helpful for her as she can find out information really quick. She wants to catch the latest gossip or break, so she can write about it. But I find there is a lot of garbage on there, and no one needs to know what everyone's thinking every minute of every day. You get that on Facebook too, where people are vomiting their thoughts onto their status. I just find that a big waste of time in my own personal opinion. I am not much of gossip person, so that is things I really shy away from. Something that is going to explore art or photography, or has some real useful information to it or interested article, I am really into. Any kind of blog.

Q2: Do you feed any of the other social media platforms you are on, into your Facebook?

WE: I've signed up for Instagram, but I don't really use it as much as I could, but that is connected to my Facebook. A couple of things on Yahoo I connect to my Facebook, so I can read the news and have updated information that way. So a couple of things, but I am pretty sparce. Soundcloud is a big one, that I've connected to my Facebook and I really really like being on Soundcloud as you can find some interesting music that way and keep updated with people you follow and like.

Q2: Does it bother you when people feed a lot of other tools into their Facebook account? Do you feel like it clouds up the stream on Facebook or are you happy to learn about new sites or places they explore, through that feed?

WE: I don't mind it so much. I always just glance through, so if it's something that looks really cool and they're on it, I'll check it out. If it's excessive then yeh, but I think it's fine that people are exploring as much as they need to.

Q2: And how does it affect your opinion or likelihood of signing up for a new tool if you know your friends are on there?

WE: It makes a difference, I think. If someone tells me about something, I'll think it's interesting and want to check it out. Your friends tends to have similar tastes to you, so I'm always open to doing that. And I think it makes a big difference if you have friends using it.

Q2: Would you ever be likely to sign up for a new site based on something you can see they are using on Facebook?

WE: Yeah, definitely.

Q2: How would you define yourself as a user of social media?

WE: As an occasional user?

- Q2:** Do you think you are very advanced?
- WE:** No, definitely not. I guess I am pretty sparse as to what I use. I don't want to say I am technologically challenged, but I choose to keep it minimal so I am more involved in things that aren't Internet or computer based.
- Q2:** How long do you spend on social media per day and how often do you check your accounts?
- WE:** I just got an iPhone, so I check my Facebook way more than I need to, definitely. Probably like an hour a day. If you include using things like Soundcloud and Hypemachine, I'll probably say I am on it 3 hours per day because I am streaming of there. I have the interface for those kind of things open quite frequently, just to listen to music or explore things. I might just let it flip from follower to follower, so I can hear music non-stop. So, 1-3 hours, I'd say.
- Q2:** What is your primary purpose of using social media?
- WE:** To stay connected. I have a lot family and friends all over the place, so it is really helpful for me to be able to communicate with them, see what they are up to. And just explore new things there are happening.
- Q2:** How much time do you spend infront of a computer per day?
- WE:** In a reguarly year, a lot of time. Probably 5 hours per day. In a school year, anything from 5 to 8 hours per day.
- Q2:** In that regular routine, if you use that year you are in school and in that mode, when are you most active on social media? Is it weekends, evenings, at work, travelling?
- WE:** Probably in the evening, when I get home from school. And in the weekends, probably a lot more as well.
- Q2:** If you consider during the schoolyear your routine-mode, when you are out of routine, for example right now during the summer or on holiday, does your activity on social media change and how so?
- WE:** I think so, it probably goes up. Because I have more personal time. I think I am probably on Facebook a lot more. I am definitely on anything music based a lot more, because I have more time to explore those and a little bit more time to check out new things. So as far as going into news and checking new social media, it will probably be in the summertime when I have downtime, where I'll actually be like: ok this looks cool, I am gonna explore it. Where as in my regular routine, when I have less time I probably skip that more because I don't have time.
- Q2:** Has your communication with strangers and friends changed at all since you started using social media?
- WE:** I don't know about strangers, but I guess I am pretty private as far as that is concerned. I definitely have more open communication than I would if I didn't use social media, with friends and family.
- Q2:** On Twitter for instance, it is very easy to get into a conversation with someone you've never met before because you follow the same story or hashtag. You obviously don't use Twitter, but will you never meet strangers online in a similar fashion that have a similar interest?
- WE:** I think very occasionally. But it would be pretty brief.
- Q2:** If you were unable to use social media anymore, how do you think that would affect you?

- WE:** I think it would probably have a big effect on me, because I wouldn't be communicating with a huge, core group in my life. We can email, but it's definitely not as userfriendly and communicative as using something that has the ability to upload photos and share a lot more – more daily use. I think it would have a huge impact on me. I would probably not be as frequent with communication with a lot of people in my life.
- Q2:** So you think it would be very difficult to substitute that with more 'old-fashioned' ways of staying touch, even texting or calling or mail?
- WE:** I think, either way, the pro's to social media is that it's really instantaneous and informative. You get a lot of information, pictures and people are always updating. It could be negative in that way, that you'd learn less about people, but the other way it could go is that you have to put a little bit more effort in. I think with social media a lot of the times, people are browsing and check out what people are doing, but they don't really engage as much. But if you went back older methods, you'd actually really have to engage with a person on a more personal level and direct connection. I think it could go either way.
- Q2:** And what would yo say is the greatest benefit you've had since you started using social media?
- WE:** I think it's way more informative about a lot of things. You are getting way more information about people who live away from you, and in general about society and what's going on – not a lot of it is concrete, but some of it is. The ability to explore new ideas and things, music, art and all that in a much faster way.
- Q2:** Would you ever consider deleting any of your accounts?
- WE:** Yeah, I would. It's pretty frequent that people take breaks. And I haven't as of yet done that, but I think about it a lot. But I just got an iPhone and it's really hard. I spend way too much time playing around on it. It's really engrained in society now, so it's really hard to detach yourself from that.

1.2.4 The Wallflowers

1.2.4.1 BC

Interviewee: BC

Interviewer: Rikke Østergaard (Q1), Julia Judge (Q2)

Location: In Person

Date: 31/07/2012

Q1: So first, explain to us what your opinion about social media, and what kind of relationship do you have with it?

BC: My relationship with social media was fairly casual, until up to this year where I started actually working in the area. So it has become a lot more intense and a day-to-day thing where I am constantly on multiple platforms and managing social media for companies. In that sense it has grown a lot in the last few months. Still – personally, it's something I am more someone who views content than someone who posts content all the time. Maybe because I publish a lot for work, I don't really use it myself personally. I am more a viewer than a creator, possibly.

Q1: So that leads into my next questions – how would you define yourself as a user of social media?

BC: I guess it's kind of almost like a voyaire – that I am more someone who has Facebook open all day, on one screen on my computer, and I might check it occasionally. I guess some platforms I am more active on than others, like Foursquare I seem to use a lot more. Maybe because of its pointsystem, it's kind of competitive. Where as something like Facebook is only for if you have something to share, or something like that. Maybe I am more a consumer of social media, than someone who really is out there everyday putting content up.

Q1: Would you say you're advanced?

BC: I'd say probably in some aspects, because it is part of my job. My whole job is in that area, so I have a lot to do with insights and trends and obviously telling people how to use social media. So in that sense, yes. But I don't think that really counts, as it has to do with 'pages' and companies. I'm probably not so much advanced in a personal. It's just something I am very much aware of and might see stuff for work more than personal.

Q1: So you say you have Facebook open during work, but how much would you say you actually spend on social media during a day? How often do you go in and check?

BC: I guess in a normal day, I'd probably check it in the morning; news, check Facebook atleast and obviously anytime I get a notification on my phone, I'd view that very quickly, as soon as I see I have a notification. But actually viewing Facebook, probably adds up to probably 2 hours per day on my personal profile. It might vary more on weekends and less on busy workdays, where it will be in the background more than anything.

Q1: What is your primary purpose of using social media? Why are you actually on it from a personal point of view?

BC: I think maybe it's to keep in touch with people, but it's more as a consumer of social media. I am just seeing what people are doing and keeping myself up to date, rather than share trending topics or breaking news. It's there in the background and I'll scroll down the page and look at it. Something like Foursquare is becoming a habit, I just do it out of force of habit.

Q1: Okay, so it's very friend-connected and seeing what other people are doing and keeping up to date that way?

BC: Yeah. That's probably why I use Facebook most, or why it's the most used or most popular. It's the easiest way of getting an overview of your friends. And say you're into video games or

something you are interested in, than you are more likely to see updates in there than on the news. It's more of a personal thing, a way to keep up to date.

- Q1:** In recent time, and I'm sure in relation to your job, you've signed up for a lot of new tools. And you have a profile on a lot of different sites that you might not use that much. How long would you say it takes for you for a tool to become a part of your routine? You discover something new, what happens then?
- BC:** I think it's different for different tools or different platforms. For something like Foursquare, I was aware of it for a long time but almost resisted it. I wasn't sure why I should use it, if it would last. Facebook I signed up for very quickly and Twitter very late, so it's different for different stuff. I kind of sit in the background and look if it becomes popular, and if it's widely used... Something like Google+, that I signed up for because I already had an existing account on Google and it was very straight forward, but because the use of it has dropped and not many of my friends use it, it's now just something in the background. I guess since they are all free as well, there is no reason not to. But I guess I wait to see if enough of my friends join it and if it's worth-while.
- Q1:** So you'll often sign up for something if you hear about it, but then you might just stay in the background until you see that others are using it as well?
- BC:** Yeah. If you have to create a profile or create content, I might sign up for the basic account and then just wait and see if it gets used. It was a bit like that for Instagram; I signed up, but didn't post anything. Just watching what came in. I'm not jumping on the bandwagon with a lot of the new stuff. For example Pinterest, I am just seeing what people are using it for and whether it is of any use or relevance in relation to what I do, and whether it is anything that is interesting to me. Sometimes it takes less time, like with Facebook it seemed more immediately obvious that this was a big thing. But with Path, I signed up for and immediately because of the lack of people on it, I haven't even gone back to it. I can be quite quick to judge on some, and on others I won't jump on it immediately. I think it depends on people I know being on there as well.
- Q1:** Imagine you've just signed up for a new tool. What things do you 'assess' to see if it's something for you? Is it the design, is it the purpose, what kind of friends are on there, what the media says about it? How do you evaluate it?
- BC:** I guess it's probably mainly other people I know being on it and using it, and maybe recommendations. Design is quite important, but I also think with a lot of social media tools now, there has to be some key feature or function. And obviously that then depends how that relates to me and my social media usage, as to whether it's even anything I am interested in. I think some things like design can definitely be secondary, if all your friends are on it and using it constantly, design or function might not be the best, but you overlook those things just to be part of it. But I'd probably say that it has to be the 'unique selling point' of that particular tool, and why should I use it instead of something else. There are so many different social media choices outthere, and I know I keep coming back to Facebook, but it almost has everything else in one place. And you have to think, how many other accounts do you really want and need? It really has to be something special to make me create a separate account and be on that.
- Q1:** So when you sign up for a tool, how do you learn about what it can actually do? Is there anything you are scared of doing, or do you just get straight in and create your profile and post loads of stuff?
- BC:** Sometimes I can be a bit more cautious, and the time I spend watching other people using them, I'll probably pick up a lot of stuff. What is possible? What is good or bad about a certain tool? I am definitely not afraid to do something and press all the buttons. I don't think there is anything I'd be scared of, unless I am using the tool for business. I think it can be part of the fun to really get your teeth into it and try out all the functions and see what does what. With something like Facebook that adds features all the time, that is something you have to stay on top of all the time, to make sure you are getting the most out of these tools.

- Q1:** So how do you feel when a product adds features or changes its interface? Are you fine with it or do you get confused?
- BC:** Sometimes there can be confusion, but it's never anything that is so radical it seems to change the face of the whole product. Obviously there are a lot of people, for example when Facebook changed to Timeline, who was outraged. And you have to think that this is a free tool, and they have to do what's best for them and hopefully the users. I don't see a problem with that – it might take time to get used, but it's usually worth it. I don't get personally agitated if some feature is removed or added, I don't think I rely on social media that much, apart from a work perspective. Sometimes that can be annoying or frustrating from a work perspective – if something changes overnight and you then have to react to that and know everything about it for the clients, sometimes that can be frustrating. But on a personal level, because I'm not so much pushing the boundaries, I'm more someone who sits behind and watches stuff, it doesn't affect me that much.
- Q1:** Is there any tools you've considered signing up for, but you haven't? Or maybe you've seen something that replaces or is better than something you are using now?
- BC:** I am trying to think of any examples. Normally I will sign up for an account, it just might stay dormant. I don't think I have really replaced anything recently. A lot of them have been new to me, like Foursquare and Pinterest. I guess Path was more like a Facebook for mobile, and I tried it and discarded it.
- Q1:** And why did you discard it?
- BC:** It just didn't seem to be as popular and not many people were on there. And since it was mobile only, if you have friends or family that don't have a smartphone, they are excluded. Something like Facebook where anyone with PC or a phone can get into it, it's very accessible, while others might be more closed off. That might not be something I look for. I am trying to think of something I never really used. I guess there is something like Picassa or Google+, where I already have something else like Flickr and deviantArt. When you have something like photos, you don't want to be uploading them to multiple sites, you just want to keep them in one place. Maybe that is something that discourages me, that I'll have to start again from scratch. When some tools are very similar, I think 'why am I bothering with this' when this already exists another place. I can't think of anything I haven't tried, though I am sure that is.
- Q1:** But not something you have consciously decided not to try?
- BC:** No, like I say – Foursquare and Instagram I probably resisted for a long time, but there is no clear reason. I just wanted to see if it was something that was gonna die out in a few months, or if it was something that would actually be longterm.
- Q1:** We kind of pushed you into signing up for Pinterest, which has a very female profile. Is there any tools you would not sign up for, or where the marketing and image is not for you? Would that deter you, if something had a very strong profile, you did not feel fit with you?
- BC:** Yes, I am kind of aware that Pinterest has this look and feel and a reputation of 'mothers posting recipes' – like you say, quite female oriented. But looking at it objectively, it's not like it's bright pink and actively discouraging one person or another. And I think that's obviously something social media platforms are very keen to avoid, they want to have the widest audience available. I think if there was something that was really targeted to specifically women or really young people or really old people, I'd think there was no point in me signing up for that or that it's actively targeting people different from my demographic. There is not gonna be much in that system designed for people like me, because that's their demographic and target audience. But I don't think I can think of any existing examples that are like that. I think the reason for not signing up for Pinterest originally, was just that I did not quite see the use for it for me

personally. It was something I'd seen people use, but I just wasn't quite sure if it had any use or function for me.

Q1: So you talk a lot about Facebook being the center and the one you keep returning to. Do you also feed things from your other social media sites into Facebook?

BC: I think I am doing that less with Instagram. When I first started with Instagram, and probably Foursquare as well, whenever I uploaded something to that, I'd upload it to Facebook as well. Or if I saw a link somewhere, I would then share it on several social media sites. And I guess it does evolve around Facebook, because if I see something outside of Facebook that I haven't seen anywhere else, I would maybe share it. But that is quite infrequent for me, to share something or try and be a viral content create and try and be someone who gets the most likes or comments, that has not been my aim. I did that a lot more in the beginning, but not so much now and obviously there is an increased tendency for apps to be tied into each other; the Twitter hashtags being on Facebook, Instagram and Foursquare being able to post to all the other social media. I just think that, I keep them kind of separate for some reason. Instagram and Foursquare I can keep self contained when I check in or upload picture. Maybe because I want to share stuff with just those people or because with Facebook you sharing everything with everyone, unless you actively choose not to. A lot of the time, that's not an option when you upload something through Foursquare or Instagram – you can't choose who to share it with. And maybe you don't want your mum to see a certain picture, and Instagram and Foursquare as mobile apps you keep them out of that. But of course I am aware that some people, once they post something, they post it to everything – the shotgun approach. But I think, I don't wanna see the same thing if I check Twitter and Instagram. I don't want to see the same thing over and over again. And I have kind of taken that approach to my own content.

Q1: So how does it affect if you see someone feed into Facebook what they post on fx Pinterest? Does it make you more curious to visit it or does it deter you?

BC: If I hadn't seen it before, I don't think it would deter me. But if I've seen something posted by 5 people on 5 different platforms, I guess it would raise my curiosity about it, but I'd also be slightly annoyed that I'm seeing it so many times. Why not just keep it in one place?

Q1: Is it like an annoyance factor?

BC: I guess. But not so much. When stuff goes viral, and you see it everywhere – that can have a negative effect on me sometimes. I like to see unique stuff, rather than the same stuff recycled. I've seen an image today that was posted months ago, and someone is just reposting it or someone has only just found out about it. That can be quite annoying, for no apparent reason. I don't know why it would annoy me, but I think 'this isn't new and this is a place for new stuff', and now this old stuff coming is just annoying.

Q1: So to talk a bit about your internet behaviour in general. How much time do you use in front of a computer per day?

BC: Well obviously there are the 8 hours at work. And if you count mobile, I'll use that from the very start of the day. It's my alarm and when I shut the alarm off I'm checking Facebook and news and the weather. So in the half an hour before I go to work, I'm on that or on my laptop. Then the 8 hours at work. And then pretty much the second I get home, I might not be on the internet all the time, but I will be on and then watch a film or a TV-show. I would say...probably an unhealthy amount. 10 to 12 hours per day. Probably less on the weekends. I guess then I want to get out and away from that.

Q1: So when would you say you are most active on social media? Is it on the weekends, evenings, at work, while you're travelling?

BC: Different things for different times and places. Foursquare, when I'm travelling somewhere new, that's obviously the best time to get points. I'll be using that more than anything else, as well as

Instagram, especially towards the end of the trip, I'll be using that quite heavily. Facebook I use during work. Because I'm not really posting content, but rather watching it, I will mostly post it when I'm at and look at it later. But as the day goes on I look at it less and less. From the evening to the morning, you'll see all this new stuff. Then it's just dripping in during the day, so I check it less and less frequently as the day goes on. Probably during weekdays, rather than weekends.

Q1: What if you were out of your normal routine? Say you were away on holiday, you had visitors, you were ill. Something that breaks that normal routine. Do you think you'd be more or less on social media in those periods?

BC: Probably less on social media. I am happy to put it down and walk away from it. Sometimes that can be better, because when you come back to it there is more to look at. When there's a notification you get this buzz; 'oh, there is something new for me to look at', and it's quite nice to be away from that. Initially yes, it can be quite hard to let go of it and if you're talking with your family and your phone goes off, it's a conscious decision that you know there is something there, but you have to put it to one side. It's not the be all and end all of my life and I try not to let it control me. I am conscious that I see people, for example when you have a meal, that everyone has their phones out. I try to put it away and make sure I am there in the moment, rather than on Facebook, talking about how I am having a meal with these people. I like to actually be there. I think that's something that might be a personal bug-bearer. When you see these people on the train or families together all on their own phones, that can be annoying and I try to not do that.

Q1: So if you were unable to use social media anymore, how would you think that would affect you?

BC: I think it's hard to see what we did before. There was obviously texting, that we would have to go back to. But I think it's a huge step back. It's such a convenience to have something like Facebook to get all your friends' information in one place, for free, updated in real time. So that's something I think would be hard to go without initially, but it would probably get easier and easier. I wouldn't have huge withdrawal symptoms. I don't really look at it when I'm on holiday, and yes it can be hard to be without to start with, but you get more and more used to it. Like on my recent holiday, it was so expensive to have internet that I don't really use it. At the beginning, everytime there was a wifi hotspot, I'd use it immediately and get my latest email and Facebook check-ins. And then towards the end of the trip, even if there was wifi available, I might not use it or I choose not to use it. I think that's the same with computer use generally. Because it's so much part of everyday life, it would be hard to go without, but we've managed before computers and internet. It would be very hard to lose it, but I wouldn't break down.

Q1: Do you think the way you communicate with friends, and strangers for that sake, has changed since you started using social media?

BC: I think there was a bigger change when I started using email for communicating with strangers. Maybe Facebook and other sites, can be too much sometimes, because there is so much available to look at. People posting every little thing about their lives. You can either turn that person off completely, but you can't just get the most important stuff from that person. You have to look at everything and then select yourself what is important. I guess it was nice with email, you would be more selective with what you put in it rather than listing everything that happened in your day. It's so convenient and available... 'Oh, I just bought a piece of bread', taking a picture of it, putting it on Facebook. That's something you'd think twice about in an email. I think, yes – it can be very good for communicating with people, a lot faster than something like email. But it can also be a hindrance.

Q1: Do you think you've created networks or relationships with people you wouldn't have met otherwise?

BC: Yeah. I'm not sure how solid or dependent on those relationship and networks I am. It is very easy to join a group of people who like the same thing, but you might not have anything real to do with them or meet them in real life. But I guess it can be a way of you finding out about someone and then when you actually meet them, help you solidify that relationship. But I

wouldn't say I've created any lasting relationships using something like Facebook. It's more keeping in touch with people in existing relationships. Within gaming, where you meet people online you'll never meet in real life, it's a good way of keeping in touch with them and finding out more about them. However I wouldn't say anything has changed my life, using Facebook or any social media for networks and relationships.

Q1: Do you think about how you portray yourself on social media? Are you cautious about what you post and how it will portray you?

BC: Yes. Because I post fairly infrequently, I really think about what I'm posting. When you see someone posting chainletters, you think 'what an idiot' – you have a negative feeling towards that. So you think 'how am I gonna be judged if I post this content'. I guess it's the same in anything, but especially with Facebook which is available to a much wider audience, you might have to think a bit more about what you are posting and why. If you want to come of in a certain way, you have to think a couple of times about what you're posting and how to post it. Something that is very shocking or controversial, you can't help but think that 'my high school teacher is gonna see this, my mum is gonna see this. Is this appropriate for everyone in this audience?'. I think you really need to be careful, unless you don't have a fear of offending people.

Q1: Do you think you're the same person on social media as you are in real life? I'll admit to posting a picture of something I bought, because I know my friends will think I'm a little bit cooler because I bought it. Will you think that something can make you look cooler or similar, than you actually are?

BC: Yes, I guess we like to think about that as something subconsciously, that we don't think, oh what I've got is better than what you've got. But I guess that sometimes it does come down to that, and if you've got something impressive, or had a big achievement, then you want people to know about it. But it can come off that way that it is a type of bragging. It's hard to honestly convey your emotion with that, saying that any kind of internet communication without being face to face, you can't know if someone is saying that because they are proud, or because they are trying to one-up someone else. I think it is something that I do not as subconsciously as maybe it should be. But I guess it's rare that I do that, but maybe its not. Just trying to think about it (laughs), objectively- do I do that, and I am sure I do it occasionally and I won't go oh my god, I bought a new pair of shoes, and I have to let everyone know about this, and try and impress people. It happens occasionally, or when you go on a holiday it's nice to let people know that, and get that kind of feeling.

Q1: Does your privacy on social media concern you? Do you set your settings to private often?

BC: Yes, I think it is something that is getting increasingly important. Especially with things and knowing through work about Facebook privacy settings for applications, that they can now do all sorts of things like posting messages, and gathering data is something that I was very careless about before. I just thought it doesn't really matter what I put on here, and then you think that all that stuff is going to be stored on their servers for years, and you will get all kinds of targeted ads because of the information that you give. And I think that I am more and more careful about what apps I give permissions to and what information I post and I think that it is more that you just don't know what they are doing with it. Big companies like Google, their whole business is about data that they're gathering all the time. Who doesn't have a Gmail account, it's hard to resist the free things they are providing, and you think if all I am giving up is this bit of data, then it's not so bad. But when you think of all the things that come in on your email, and the information that they are having access to, it's a bit scary. But I think I am getting a bit more paranoid about it now, and I don't like signing up to new stuff all the time and giving my email address out everywhere, and I think that is something happening to everyone where they are getting a bit more cautious about scams, and I think that will be more in the public focus and in years to come that anything you do is, if you posted a picture of yourself naked, if you delete it, someone could have already downloaded it, and you can't get rid of it- it is very hard to undo something like that on the internet. So it is certainly something that makes me a very cautious poster on social media and it will remain that way.

- Q1:** Do you ever keep your communication in private? Like instead of writing on someone's wall, or commenting on a picture, you will do it in private, either outside of social media, or in a message.
- BC:** Yes, but I am not sure that anything I am willing to say to their face, I would probably be able to put on Facebook. It is probably that I might not find it necessary to say something like that on Facebook, and I would rather talk to them about it in person. Its more that I just prefer to do it in person, rather than on Facebook, not for privacy reasons. For instance if someone bought a new car and you want to have some long threaded conversation about that one thing, I'd rather go to someone and talk to them about it in person. Its just the way I think I use social media.
- Q1:** So you have a couple sites you have never used, and then you have some that you have signed up and maybe use yearly, and check once in a while, would ever consider deleting your account on there?
- BC:** Yes, I am sure I have. I am trying to think of some examples. Recently I was thinking about the Twitter account that I have, because the whole point of Twitter is about posting content frequently, and if you don't do that it is almost a negative, and people following you will disappear, and if you are involved in social media as a job, and a prospective company looks at that, and you are not really using the social media very well, that I would rather not use it than use it badly. So I've been thinking of getting rid of my Twitter account, and DeviantArt that I don't really update anymore. I think because even though you are not paying for them and there is no real reason why I would get rid of them, I think it is something that I am not afraid to do – I will happily delete stuff, but I think that stuff like MySpace, I used to have an account that I deleted, and social media is not everything about my life. I don't care if my Facebook profile was deleted, it wouldn't upset me. I am not afraid of losing any of my social media accounts really. Probably Flickr being the worst in that it has photos that you can't really replace and everything else is pretty replaceable.
- Q1:** It's interesting you say that if it doesn't cost anything, say it were to cost you \$2 for each of these accounts, would you be on as many accounts as you are now? If there were a price, how would you then feel about signing up for something? Or would your thoughts be differently than they are now?
- BC:** I'd say I would have to research stuff even more than if you know I would be paying per month, then I would have to make sure it has that value. But if any of them were so expensive that I had to think about that decision, I don't think I would get that much benefit from them that anyone that I want to keep in contact with, I can through email, and anyone who would want to keep in contact with me likewise, I hope that there is still enough methods of getting in touch, texting, emails, writing letters, that I don't think that there is anything that valuable in social media that I would be able to pay large sums of money for. And if it was fairly cheap, then I would be more likely to sign up, but the cost would affect the amount of accounts I have.
- Q1:** How do you find new social media? Do you sit and think, oh I really need to know what movies my friends are watching, I am going to see if there is something to solve that, or do you just passively get exposed to it and then get curious?
- BC:** I am definitely a lot more passive about it. If I hear something at work about a new app or page or something, or see on a post on a wall, I am a lot more likely to look into it. But it isn't something that, I don't think that I think, oh my god, how am I going to find out the times of a film, yes there is Google search or something and I might ask around, that I would go straight to social media. I think I might ask around a bit but I wouldn't dive into social media expecting to find all the answers. I think it's good that on social media when you find an existing solution in social media, but I can't think theres anything I use on a regular basis that is part of my daily, solving a problem or finding out information. We build some of those things at work that are like, this is a good way to rate a film trailer or write a comment about a film and see what films my friends like. But I guess that is not so much a reason why I use social media.

- Q2:** Some of the tools you use, for instance DeviantArt, Flickr, and Kaboodle, you signed up for because you had a need for the service. And those are more purpose driven apps as opposed to say Facebook or Twitter, or a general social network. Do you feel differently about those tools than you do with say Facebook for instance?
- BC:** I think some of them I signed up for, or had an account that existed before Facebook. For DeviantArt it was one of the easiest ways to upload and share pictures, and get comments on my pictures, and that was something that was really targeted to that tool. Whereas Kaboodle was because the only way to see the content on there was to sign up. So I think they have different uses, but as Facebook has become so popular, I use them less and less and it has solved some of those needs. Now I would consider deleting those accounts because I can do that all on Facebook, and I prefer to have everything in one place rather than scattered all around.

1.2.4.2 BT

Interviewee: BT

Interviewer: Rikke Østergaard (Q1), Julia Judge (Q2)

Location: Skype

Date: 06/08/2012

- Q1:** So just to remind you, the questionnaire was essentially about your relationship to social media, and your usage of different social media. Tell us a bit about your relationship to social media.
- BT:** I am pretty much on once per day on Facebook, and talk to friends on the chat. That is pretty much it for social media.
- Q1:** So you would say you use it for keeping in contact with friends.
- BT:** Yes, I would say it's just to keep in touch with friends.
- Q1:** How would you define yourself as a user? Do you think you're advanced or not very advanced in your usage?
- BT:** Probably not very advanced.
- Q1:** Because you don't use it often?
- BT:** Because I just use the standard things that are on there, I don't really get into it too much.
- Q1:** How long would you say you spend on social media in a day?
- BT:** Probably approximately half an hour per day.
- Q1:** And how many times would you check your accounts per day?
- BT:** Twice a day I will check.
- Q1:** So imagine you are being introduced to a new social media site. How long would it take for the site to become a part of your typical online routine?
- BT:** Really fast, because I always would only use a new social media if my friends were there. I use it to keep in touch with my friends overseas so I would use whatever the main tools my friends used.
- Q1:** Say you have signed up for a new tool- how would you learn about how it worked? Is there anything you would be scared or worried about doing?
- BT:** I don't think so, I would try to get to know how the tool worked, and just click around and try to understand it.
- Q1:** If you sign up for a new site, would you just go in right away, and complete your profile and add friends, or would you wait a bit on that?
- BT:** I would go ahead right away and fill in my profile and check for friends.
- Q1:** So what would be the kind things you would look for to see if this is something for you? Would it be design, functionality, what other people are saying about it? What would you look at to assess it?

BT: Definitely how many people I know on that network or social media page, and apart from that, not really that much, just about how you can read about your friends and stay in contact with them.

Q1: So do you think the aspect of your friends being on there, rather than what the site can actually do or how well it's made is more important?

BT: Yes.

Q1: How would you feel if the site changed a lot? The interface of it, or the look of it?

BT: I don't like it really. I don't like that I got forced into a timeline on Facebook. I would rather keep it original.

Q1: What don't you like about it?

BT: Just the change, that now I have to put in a new picture, I don't like the layout as much.

Q1: So it is the fact that you have to make changes to fit into the new structure, that is frustrating to you, rather than just the fact that something is changing?

BT: Right.

Q1: Is there any sites you have thought about signing up for, that you have not yet signed up for? Any you can think of?

BT: Not really...maybe LinkedIn.

Q1: Why haven't you signed up yet for it?

BT: Because right now I am starting my job, and I already have my job. I am probably going to sign up in the next couple of months.

Q1: And what has held you back? Is it that you haven't had the need for it, or the time?

BT: Mostly because I didn't have the need for it until now.

Q1: And now you find it is time for you to be represented there as well.

BT: That's it.

Q1: Are there any sites you would not sign up for, that you feel as though they are definitely not for you?

BT: I couldn't think of any.

Q1: What if a site had some kind of image that was not for. For example, some people think that Instagram is for hipsters, or Pinterest is for Moms. If they had an image that you didn't think was related to you, would you not sign up for it, or would you just go ahead and do it anyway?

BT: I would go ahead. I don't really care about the image. If I like it, I like it! If not, then I just wouldn't sign up.

Q1: If you are on other sites, do you feed the contents from them into Facebook? Or do you try and keep different sites separate?

BT: I definitely keep them separate. I just don't feel I have a need to post that much on Facebook, so I don't really use it.

- Q1:** And what do you feel when other people feed everything from Instagram and Pinterest for example into their Facebook?
- BT:** I don't mind it. It is fun sometimes, but sometimes it is annoying because it is just too much information.
- Q1:** How much time do you use in front of a computer in a day? Is it part of your job or studies?
- BT:** It will be part of my job, but right now, about 1.5-2 hours. It always depends.
- Q1:** And when do you think you are mostly on social media? Is it in the evening or weekends, while you are at school or work?
- BT:** Probably during the day when I don't have anything to do.
- Q1:** So at school, or work you wouldn't be likely to check your social media?
- BT:** No.
- Q1:** What about if you for example are out of routine- if you are on holiday or off ill, would you be more or less on social media than normally?
- BT:** Less.
- Q1:** So if you are distracted by better things, social media will take a lesser role in your life?
- BT:** Yes most definitely.
- Q1:** Do you think the way you communicate with people has changed since you started using social media?
- BT:** Yes a little bit. I talk to some of my friends, where we used to talk on the phone a lot and now we talk a lot on Facebook. It's more convenient.
- Q1:** Do you talk more or less with people now?
- BT:** Less in person, and with people abroad less on the phone, but in general it is pretty much the same that I talk to the same people for the same amount of time.
- Q1:** So have you made any new friendships through social media that you wouldn't have made otherwise?
- BT:** Yes I did.
- Q1:** In what sense, were they friends, or professional connections?
- BT:** Just friends. That I didn't speak to before, and now we talk a lot.
- Q1:** What do you think would happen if you couldn't use social media anymore?
- BT:** It would be a little weird because I don't think I would talk to as many people in a daily or weekly basis from abroad, so that makes it a lot easier.
- Q1:** But do you think you would get on in life, survive without it?

- BT:** Yes definitely. The important people, I would talk to on the phone or by email even if they live abroad.
- Q1:** When you post on social media, are you cautious about how you portray yourself? Will you ever for instance untag yourself from pictures, or not swear?
- BT:** Yes definitely. I only have three pictures online.
- Q1:** Why is that?
- BT:** I just don't like that everybody in my friends lists can see all my pictures and what I am doing currently. So I keep it a little more private. Same with the information I display on Facebook.
- Q1:** So would you say that privacy on social media concerns you, or is something you are very careful about?
- BT:** Yes definitely.
- Q1:** Have you corrected your privacy settings?
- BT:** Yes.
- Q1:** And how do you communicate? Say you wanted to write someone on Facebook. Would you write on their wall, or rather send them a private message that no one else can see?
- BT:** I would rather write a private message.
- Q1:** So in general, what would you say is the greatest thing you have got from using social media?
- BT:** Probably the connections and keeping friendships alive from all over the world, that is probably the most important thing to me. That is what I gain, so I talk to a lot of people on a daily and weekly basis, as I mentioned before, that I probably wouldn't if Facebook wasn't around.
- Q1:** And how do you find out about things like Facebook and other social media sites? Where do you hear about them?
- BT:** Mostly on the internet, like on websites that recommend pages like that.
- Q1:** And if you read about something, would you go and check it out? Or would you just acknowledge that it existed?
- BT:** It would depend on the social media network, or the page, but I would read one or two newspaper articles about it, and then decide if I want to join or not.
- Q1:** Can I ask, you are a recent graduate. What did you study?
- BT:** Logistics.
- Q1:** Would you ever delete your Facebook account?
- BT:** I thought about it. But I don't think I would, at least not right now, because it is just so convenient to stay in contact with all your friends. So right now I don't think about deleting it.
- Q2:** Last question. You mentioned when the Facebook timeline came along, you were a bit frustrated because you were forced into that change. But despite the fact that when tools change, the companies behind them add changes in order to add functionality to the tool. Do you find this comes more as a nuisance as opposed to excitement for the new features, and it's rather something that is frustrating because you have to re-learn how to use it?

BT: I would say it is frustrating, because then you have to check all your privacy details again. You have to spend more time getting to know the tool than I would like to.

1.2.5 The Outsiders

1.2.4.1 KR

Interviewee: KR

Interviewer: Rikke Østergaard (Q1), Julia Judge (Q2)

Format: Skype

Date: 04/07/2012

Q2: What is your opinion about and relationship with social media in general?

KR: I have a number of answers. I'd say I'm a little concerned about it, privacy issues. But I think it's an incredible tool for marketing, for staying in touch with people. I think it has excellent potential, but I am concerned about the privacy.

Q2: So have you ever adjusted your account settings in terms of privacy, and if so in what way on the different tools you are on? Has that been something you've done or recruited others to do?

KR: Yes, I've recruited people [laughs]. I've done some things for myself, like deleted people. Let me give you an example; When my dog Ben passed away, my friend's son saw that it had happened on Facebook. But we are not friends on Facebook, so I was wondering how that happened. Her son has had a few brushes with the law, so that was a bit worrying.

Q2: So I guess that leads into the next question. Are you cautious to make sure you are portrayed or represented in a certain way on the different tools that you use?

KR: Yes. Absolutely.

Q2: Are you cautious before writing a message to someone – for example being cautious about doing this publicly on the tool, or when people write you a message would you for example delete it?

KR: I have untagged, but I have never deleted a message. However, I am cautious.

Q2: Are you open with your communication on social media or will you send private messages to people?

KR: I do a lot of private messaging.

Q2: How would you define yourself as a user of social media? Use any words you think would describe yourself well.

KR: I think it's best to put it in terms of how much time I spend on it. I'd say I never use more than 30 minutes to an hour every day.

Q2: And do you check your accounts daily?

KR: Except on the weekends. Monday to Friday, daily. Sometimes 3 times per day.

Q2: What is your primary purpose of using social media?

KR: Communication and staying in touch with people. But also to keep up to date with current events, what happening globally, different global issues. I follow social-political things that are going on.

Q2: In respect to using a new social media site – how long does it take before that site becomes a typical part of your online routine?

KR: A long time. I'm not quick to adapt. It takes a lot of encouragement from other users.

Q2: How do you long about the features on the sites you sign up for?

KR: Mostly verbally from another user. I'm not very good at reading the direction or following instructions, but if someone tells me verbally how to do it, then I will more readily do it.

Q2: So you typically only use a function if you've been told how it works and what it will do?

KR: Yes. And what the benefits are of using it.

Q2: How do you assess if a site will work for you? What are the things that will attract you? Fx aesthetics, design or purpose?

KR: I'd say it has to be easy to use. And I would probably stretch myself out of my comfort zone if it had interest professionally – then I will play around so I can use it.

Q2: What about in terms of what's written in the media? Does that influence your decision to try something out?

KR: Yes, absolutely.

Q2: How do you feel about changes to the interface – fx an update, a design change or buttons are moved around?

KR: It's confusing. I have a client who is into social communication. She always send out posts about what Facebook and Google are doing. I find that very confusing. I have to call her and ask what it means. 'Thanks for the update, but I have no clue what you just told me'.

Q2: Are there any sites you've considered signing up for?

KR: I sign up for a lot, and then tend not to use it. I got TEDTalks on my iPad, but maybe it's a time thing more than anything else. I got a whole bunch of podcasts that I need to listen to, but I never get around to it. I guess I need to be more efficient in using it.

Q2: And have you ever downladed an app or signed up for a site that replaces another that served the same purpose, because you learned it might be better?

KR: No. I'm not that sophisticated.

Q2: Is there anything you wouldn't sign up for?

KR: I don't know the answer to that. Because I'm not really familiar with a lot of them.

Q2: If you were presented to a certain tool, do you think there might be some marketing or image that could deter you? Say it seemed to be more popular with certain other demographics.

KR: Yeah, I guess. As I am cautious. I won't sign up for online dating, if that's the question. [laughs]

Q2: Do you feed any other social media platforms into your Facebook?

KR: Such as?

Q2: For example signing up to another site using your Facebook profile?

KR: No, I didn't know you could do that. But that would save time.

Q2: So how much time do you spend on the computer per day in general?

KR: Atleast 3 hours.

Q2: And when are you most active on social media?

KR: On Mondays I catch up, but definiately during the week. Not so much on the weekends.

Q2: And is it more in the evenings or will you do it during the day?

KR: Probably afternoon and evening.

Q2: Why do you think that is? Is it to wind down?

KR: It's kind of the time of the day where I have time. So I have things I have to do first and then check on other things later. And evening definitely.

Q2: If you are out of routine for a period of time, for example on holiday, does your activity on the sites you use change?

KR: Yes, definetely. A holiday would be like a weekend, so you'll have to get back into the routine. But sometimes when holiday is upcoming, I'll be like: 'Okay, I'll have to get through these 5 TEDtalks. I really want to make that.'. So it could be the other way, where I'll just make the time.

Q2: Has your communication with strangers and friends changed at all since you started using social media?

KR: More with friends than with strangers. But definitely with friends and family. I feel more connected. It's a really good way of staying in touch.

Q2: If you were unable to use social media anymore, how do you think that would affect you?

KR: I guess I'd have to make phonecalls or write letters. I don't know what I'd do. It would be difficult.

Q2: So you'd feel a sense of loss?

KR: Yes, absolutely.

Q2: What would you say is the greatest benefit you've experienced since you've started using social media?

KR: Just staying connected and reconnecting with people. I guess also being able to be there when you can't physically be there, to support or encourage.

Q2: Would you ever consider deleting any of your social media accounts?

KR: Not right now. I would probably consider adding some, rather than deleting.

Q2: And would you ever go search for a new social media tool or app, that might serve a specific purpose for a need you have?

KR: I do a lot of looking in the Appstore for things that relate to my clients' needs, more so.

Q2: What are the typical things you will do in a normal visit to Facebook?

KR: If there is somebody I need to send a message to. Or just check up and see, or chat with friends. So I check in with friends and see how they are doing. Check the social-political sites I follow, as I often don't have time to read the newspaper, I use social media for that. And then the rest is just family and friends.

2.1 QUESTIONNAIRE

Introductory note:

Thank you for participating in this survey for Rikke's and Julia's master thesis on social media usage!

The survey will take approximately 5-20 minutes to fill out, depending on how active you are on social media sites. We would appreciate that you answer each question as accurately as possible. All of your answers and information will remain entirely confidential.

If you should have any questions or would like to get in contact with us, please email us at: rikke_oestergaard@hotmail.com or julia.judge@gmail.com

Introduction

Please tell us some more about yourself.

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

How old are you?

- ☐ 17 or younger
- ☐ 18-20
- ☐ 21-29
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-59
- ☐ 60 or older

What is your profession?

Where do you live? (city and country)

Which of the following devices do you own?

- ☐ Desktop computer
- ☐ Laptop computer
- ☐ Tablet/iPad
- ☐ Smartphone
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

How tech savvy would consider yourself to be?

Not tech savvy at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very tech savvy

Which of these social media sites do you use, or have used in the past?

If you have an account you have never used or do not use any more, please answer YES. If you had an account but have deleted it, please answer NO.

- ☐ 8tracks
- ☐ Bebo
- ☐ Delicious
- ☐ deviantART
- ☐ Digg
- ☐ Dribbble
- ☐ Everplaces
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Flickr
- ☐ Foodspotting
- ☐ Foursquare

- ☐ Fribi
- ☐ Goodreads
- ☐ Google+
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Kaboodle
- ☐ Kinetik
- ☐ Last.fm
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ LiveJournal
- ☐ MySpace
- ☐ Orkut
- ☐ Pinterest
- ☐ Quora
- ☐ Reddit
- ☐ Soundcloud
- ☐ StumbleUpon
- ☐ Tumblr
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Vimeo
- ☐ Yelp
- ☐ YouTube

Please answer these questions in relation to your usage of (platforms on which the user indicates they have an account):

When did you join this site/service?

- ☐ Within the last week
- ☐ Within the last month
- ☐ Within the last 6 months
- ☐ Within the last year
- ☐ Within the last 1-2 years
- ☐ More than 2 years ago

Why did you join this site/service?

- ☐ My friends use it
- ☐ I was invited by a friend
- ☐ I liked the service
- ☐ I had read about it in the press
- ☐ I was curious
- ☐ Work purposes
- ☐ Other

How many people are you connected to on the site/service?

'People' includes friends, followers, following etc.

- ☐ 0-10
- ☐ 10-50
- ☐ 50-100
- ☐ 100-200
- ☐ 200-400
- ☐ 400-1000
- ☐ 1000+

How often do you use the site/service?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Yearly

☐ I have an account, but I have never used it (please skip the next questions).

How do you use the site/service?

☐ I browse friends' content

☐ I like friends' content

☐ I comment on friends' content

☐ I share friends' content

☐ I browse strangers' content

☐ I like strangers' content

☐ I comment on strangers' content

☐ I share strangers' content

☐ I browse high profile people's/celebrities' content

☐ I like high profile people's/celebrities' content

☐ I comment on high profile people's/celebrities' content

☐ I share high profile people's/celebrities' content

☐ I browse companies' content

☐ I like companies' content

☐ I comment on companies' content

☐ I share companies' content

☐ I create my own content

☐ I share things I find online

☐ I act upon things I see on this site, for example buy a product, go to events, take part in competitions etc.

Please rate the following statements, based on the extent to which you agree.

One of the following answers could be selected for the below questions:

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Indifferent

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly agree

The site/service is a natural part of my typical use of the internet.

I would be likely to switch to a competing product if it offered a better service, even if my friends did not.

I have recommended the site/service to my friends.

I would miss the site/service if I could not use it anymore.

I have the site/service bookmarked on my computer/tablet/smartphone.

I rely on using the site/service on a regular basis.

I feel a sense of loss if I do not have access to the site/service for a period of time.

I notice if changes are made to the site/service.

Closing remarks:

Thank you for taking part in our research! Your help is greatly appreciated, If you are interested in

helping us further by taking part in an interview, please provide your name and email address beneath, and we'll contact you.

What is your name?

What is your email address?

URL to questionnaire: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/socialmedia_julia

2.2 PINTEREST EMPOWERMENT PACKAGE

Hello Pinterest test bunny!

We're really excited to get started with you! Thank you so much for taking part in our little experiment. The data you provide us will play a very important role in our thesis about adoption of social media products!

If you did not already have a Pinterest account, by now you should have received an invitation in your inbox. Activate it and get started :)

If you already had an account, all you have to do is sign in and get pinning!

About Pinterest:

If you're still thinking, "Pint-er-who?", don't panic. Here's what the makers of the product say about the tool:

"Pinterest lets you organize and share all the beautiful things you find on the web. People use pinboards to plan their weddings, decorate their homes, and organize their favorite recipes."

Best of all, you can browse pinboards created by other people. Browsing pinboards is a fun way to discover new things and get inspiration from people who share your interests."

(<http://pinterest.com/about/>)

Pinterest tips:

1. The rules are, there are no rules!

Enjoy the ride - Pinterest is different for everyone. Use it for what feels right: hobbies, planning for a vacation, documenting recipes, collecting workouts, redecorating your house, choosing a new car, dog, or future...well not quite. But really, Pinterest is your oyster.

2. Connect with Facebook. Or not...

If you connect your account to your Facebook, you can easily follow all your Facebook friends who have already signed up or get off the grid and pin independently from people in your close network. You decide.

3. Change your account settings.

For tips on pinning & information on your account settings (email notifications, etc.), go to:

<http://pinterest.com/about/help/>

4. Have a particular interest?

Search for it in the Search feature in the top left corner.

5. We won't judge.

Have a thing for [Obama](#), [Tori Spelling](#), or [Oprah](#)? If you have a penchant for particular influential people, celebrities and quirky folks, give them a search. You'll be surprised how many are pin-fanatics! Follow their boards so that their pins show up in your home stream.

6. Get social like a butterfly.

There are some great features that make the tool social! Create a private board and invite friends and family to collaborate on it, click on the image in the pin to check out the site where the pin graphic lives for more info, or comment on a pin you find interesting. The ball is in your court - pin as you wish!

What is important in relation to our research:

- Use the tool as often as you remember or feel like! Once you sign up, try it out and make as much effort as would come naturally. We want you to use it, but don't force anything - we gain the most value from your *honest* experience.

- Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions during the process.
- In short, we will gain knowledge and learn from your experience.
- We will contact you for a quick chat a week after you create your account.
- After a month of use, we will conduct an interview with you over Skype, at which point we'd also love to have a look at your Pinterest by you sharing your screen with us online (we will explain this when we come to it). After which point, you can keep on pinning in the free world!

Summary of what we need from you:

1. Create your Pinterest account
2. A brief, informal chat after you have used the tool for one week
3. A final interview of maximum 1 hour
4. Your honesty about your experience, whether it be good, bad, or ugly!

Final thoughts:

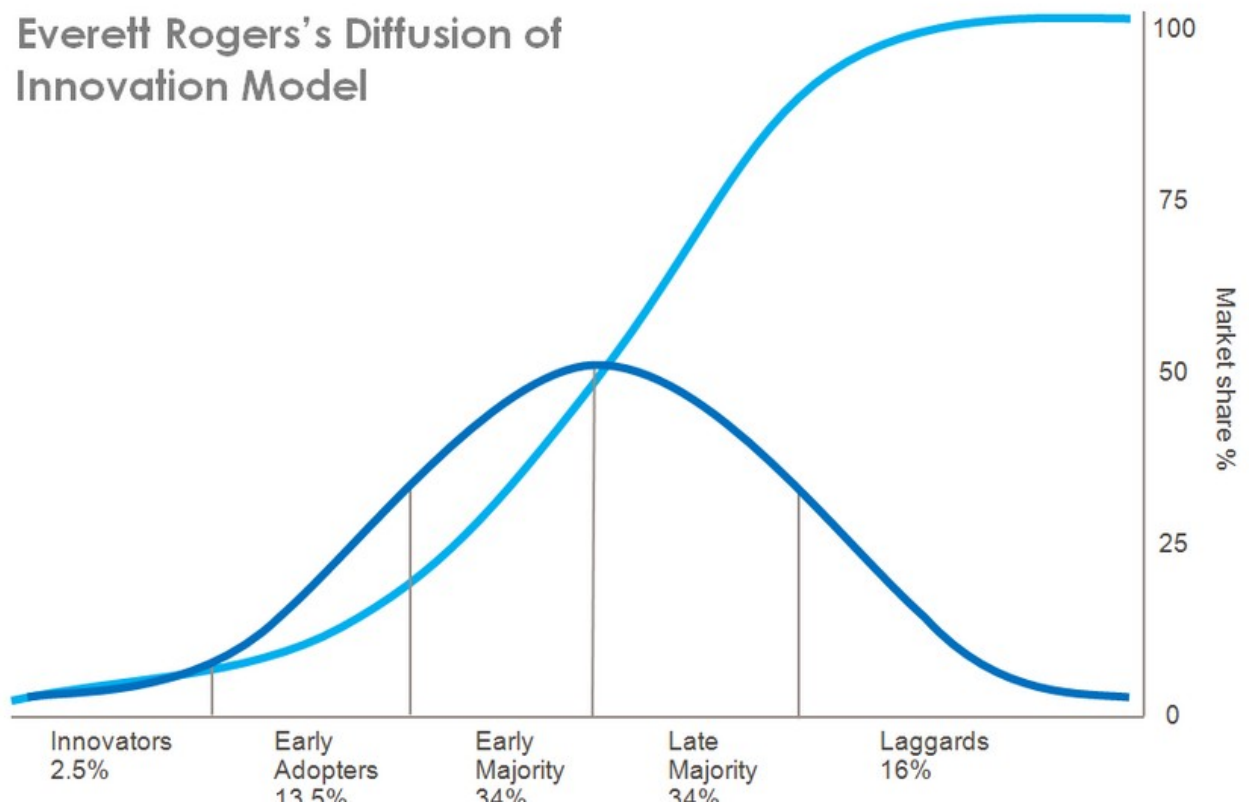
The folks at Pinterest have created the tool to *connect everyone in the world through the 'things' they find interesting*. So with that, happy pinning and we will be in touch shortly!

Best regards,

Julia & Rikke

3.1 Rogers Bell-Curve

Everett Rogers's Diffusion of Innovation Model



4.1 GENERALISATIONS

Generalisation 1:

Adoption can not be defined based on a perceivable action by the adopter carried out at a specific point in time.

Generalisation 2:

The innovation-decision process for social media users does not mimic that of Rogers (2003).

Generalisation 3:

The Outsiders are very slow to enter, explore and depart the knowledge stage.

Generalisation 4:

The Wallflowers and the Clique are fairly quick at entering the knowledge stage, slower at exploring and very slow at departing it.

Generalisation 5:

The Preps and the Nerds are quick to enter, explore and depart the knowledge stage.

Generalisation 6:

The Outsiders are not thought-leaders and persuasion is thus reliant on members of other groups.

Generalisation 7:

The Wallflowers rely on the decision of the majority of their connections in the persuasion stage.

Generalisation 8:

The Cliques rely on the majority of their connections being on a medium and are likely to be the persuader of others within their network.

Generalisation 9:

Both the Preps and Nerds require minimal persuasion and are likely to sign up for a medium based only on their own curiosity.

Generalisation 10:

A user's existing social network is the most powerful attractor in the persuasion stage.

Generalisation 11:

The Outsiders often enter the persuasion stage while simultaneously entering the knowledge stage.

Generalisation 12:

The Wallflowers and often the Cliques frequently become caught in the persuasion stage, unless they experience cues from their network.

Generalisation 13:

The Preps, and especially the Nerds, enter, explore and exit the persuasion stage very rapidly.

Generalisation 14:

All users enter a stage of trial upon signing up for a social media product.

Generalisation 15:

The greater the presence of a user's network during trial, the lesser chance of rejection.

Generalisation 16:

The Outsiders depend on close connections to help them through the technical aspects of the trial.

Generalisation 17:

The Wallflowers depend on the masses' presence in the trial stage, and are thus late to enter. They do not care about design or functionality.

Generalisation 18:

The Cliques require their offline network to be present, and thus will work at convincing them to join a platform to enhance their own experience in the trial.

Generalisation 19:

The Preps evaluate products during the trial, based on the value they can derive. They are not timid when developing new connections online.

Generalisation 20:

For the Nerds, trial in itself is an attraction; they are experts in evaluating, and highly critical in their assessment.

Generalisation 21:

Adoption evolves as a community process.

Generalisation 22:

Active rejection of a social medium is rare.

Generalisation 23:

Passive rejection of a social medium is common.

Generalisation 24:

Rejection of a social medium is mostly a result of the absence of network, content or activity relevant to the individual user.

Generalisation 25:

All users have an impact on one another, regardless of the user group they are categorised within.

Generalisation 26:

Producing, participating and consuming behaviours are all integral to a social media platform; however none of these behaviors are of value if expressed in isolation.

Generalisation 27:

What is constituted as a whole network varies within in each user group.

Generalisation 28:

Online networks are not restricted solely to real world friendships, but can also be defined by interest or other common denominators.

Generalisation 29:

A user's network does not consist of the same people on all social media platforms.

Generalisation 30:

Communication on social media is in most cases, not restricted to members of the same user group.

Generalisation 31:

The presence of one's network is essential to the continuous use of a platform, for all user groups.

Generalisation 32:

Rejection by an individual may happen if user comes to acknowledge that their networks or communities of interest are not active, fail to join, or reject a medium.

Generalisation 33:

Creators of social media must acknowledge its interdependent structure to achieve commercial success.

Generalisation 34:

An over-abundance of advanced users in the early stages of a product's life-cycle, can weaken its likelihood of spreading to a mainstream audience.

Generalisation 35:

The five social media user groups do not adopt in a sequential pattern.

Generalisation 36:

The five social media user groups do not lead in a sequential pattern.

Generalisation 37:

The bell curve, as proposed by Rogers (2003), is not an accurate depiction of how social media users join or adopt a new medium.

Generalisation 38:

Innumerable staggered adoption processes can occur simultaneously on a social medium

Generalisation 39:

Though social media user groups are able to interact with one another, they are not all capable of leading each other.

Generalisation 40:

The Preps are unable to lead any of the other user groups onto a new social medium.

Generalisation 41:

Relationships based on common attributes are the key drivers of social media adoption.

Generalisation 42:

All user groups should be simultaneously recruited based on a common denominator, rather than their technical ability.

Generalisation 43:

Smaller communities should be approached, to gradually create quality content that has the potential to travel across user groups and encourage diffusion.

Generalisation 44:

Exclusive, strong communities can have a bandwagon effect of attracting non-adopters.

Generalisation 45:

Social media platforms that are too broad at the onset, will be unable to connect people and create social bonds.

Generalisation 46:

Small communities of commonality can create safety, quality and synergy.

Generalisation 47:

By gradually layering smaller communities onto a platform, organic growth can eventually occur.

Generalisation 48:

The lead users of social media are not individuals, but are rather communities.

4.2 GLOSSARY

GENERAL SOCIAL MEDIA TERMS

- Web 2.0:** Refers to the way in which developers and end-users interact with the Internet today; enabled by real-time interaction, collaboration, creation, modification, and dialogue.
- User-generated content:** Refers to the content created and shared online by the general public, rather than corporations. This can be anything from updates on social media sites, to news reports, blogs and comments on traditional content.
- New media:** Refers to content that can be accessed on-demand at any time, mainly through digital platforms or devices, as well as the interactive user feedback and participation formed around the media content.

SOCIAL MEDIA USERS

- Community:** Refers to a group of any size, consisting of persons already united or with the possibility of connecting through communication, on the basis of a commonality; such as demographic, location, interest or other shared motives.
- Connections:** Refers to individuals with whom a user is directly connected to online or offline. Online these exists so that users can stay updated and gain access to the content and interactions created by such persons. The connection depends on the individual platform, but can be in the form of for example 'friends' or 'followers'. Offline these connections are people with whom the individual has some type of relationship with.
- Friend:* Refers to people with whom an individual has a personal connection either online or offline, as well as persons with whom they have indicated a connection with on social platforms that use this specific term to identify relationships. It will be indicated within the context, which of these terms that is referred.
- Followers:* Refers to the users of an online medium who have chosen to track the activity related to another individual profile on the said medium - thus any user can be both a follower or have followers.
- Please note that the act of connecting varies depending on the platform, as some platforms allow for anyone to follow the activity of anyone, whilst others demand mutual agreement for these relationships to exist.

- Network:** Refers to the entirety of an individual's connections. Networks can differ for the individual depending on the platform, and sometimes include people with whom the user is connected offline but not yet online. Throughout the report, both online and offline networks will be referenced, and differentiated on the basis of each individual case.

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