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## Disclosure, Concealment, and the Issue of Privacy among Selected Facebook Users

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### ABSTRACT

More than ever, our media landscape has significantly changed, bringing about significant changes, as well, in our communication patterns and practices. Undeniably, individuals from different age ranges have incorporated social media into their day-to-day activities, and the others, into their lives. These significant changes, however, have brought forth crucial issues along privacy and usage, considering social media's scalability, replicability, persistence, and searchability. Hence, this study entitled "Disclosure, Concealment, and the Issue of Privacy among Selected Facebook Users" attempted to answer the following research questions: (1) Is disclosure a practice among the respondents? If so, what do they disclose about themselves? (2) How do they disclose? Do they disclose freely or selectively? (3) What do they conceal? (4) Why do they practice concealment? (5) Is privacy a concern among the respondents? If so, what are their privacy practices? In an attempt to answer the aforementioned questions, the author utilized a qualitative interview questionnaire. However, due to time constraints, the interviews were conducted online. The respondents were selected using purposive sampling. Specifically, those who were observed to be active on Facebook were chosen. There were six (6) female respondents and one (1) male respondent, six (6) of whom are working, though not all of them indicated their specific jobs. It was found that disclosure is, indeed, a practice. However, the respondents disclosed rather selectively. Thus, there were certain information that they did not disclose/chose to conceal. Privacy was also found to be a concern among the respondents and this is reflected in their privacy practices.

### INTRODUCTION

This article attempts to answer the following research questions: (1) Is disclosure a practice among the respondents? If so, what do they disclose about themselves? (2) How do they disclose? Do they disclose freely or selectively? (3) What do they conceal? (4) Why do they practice concealment? (5) Is privacy a concern among the respondents? If so, what are their privacy practices?

On the other hand, it attempts to examine the following theoretical inquiry: In SNS usage/interactions, disclosure and concealment are processes that are intertwined, meaning, whenever SNS users disclose about themselves, the process of concealment happens, as well. The author was also guided by the following arguments: (1) Disclosure is a practice among the respondents; (2) The respondents disclose selectively; (3) Though disclosure is a practice, the respondents practice concealment as well; and (4) Privacy is a concern among the respondents.

This study will hopefully enhance the awareness of SNS users on emerging privacy risks/challenges as well as shed light on disclosure and concealment practices which could help them uphold their privacy. As privacy has become a complex issue (considering the nature of online information and as well as the fact that marketing industries and the government have taken custody of SNS users' personal information), privacy management is vital in SNS usage.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Defining Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure is communicating "previously unknown

information about oneself so that it becomes shared knowledge, the process of making the self known to others." (Kisilevich, Ang, and Last, 2011, p.611) In this study, the author examines disclosure in the context of what had been disclosed in the respondents' profiles (the respondents' demographics), as well as in their posts. Specifically, such disclosure involves online disclosure of information through the Social Networking Site Facebook.

#### Selective Disclosure

Chen, Pan & Cai (2013) note that the "process of self-disclosure inevitably involves privacy." Thus, the aforementioned authors elaborate that individuals will "set up privacy boundary during the privacy information management process and disclose selectively." Chen, *et al.* (2013) based this on Petronio and Durham's Communication Privacy Management Theory. The theory posits that the processes of disclosure and concealment are intertwined. This means that when SNS users disclose about themselves, they observe the process of concealment as well (Petronio & Durham, 2015, p. 336). Thus, they do not disclose everything. Those that they choose not to disclose then are the concealed part of their story.

In the study, the respondents practice selective disclosure for their safety, for better self-presentation, to help them manage their identity, and because they observe sensitivity with respect to their friends' political and religious views. Essentially then, the practice of disclosing selectively is not done merely for privacy purposes or for

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the respondents' benefit, but as a sign of respect to their friends' views. This means that the respondents do not merely try to protect their own interests. They care about their friends' wellbeing too. Indeed, this is understandable as Facebook is a social medium and was built primarily for social purposes. It is surprising to find at the moment though how the medium is being utilized for many other purposes.

Still in line with selective disclosure, Petronio (2002, cited by Bazarova, 2015, p. 2) notes that "people make deliberate decisions about disclosure, including what to disclose, with whom, where, and when." This was likewise observed in the study. In their profiles, for instance, though they had disclosed personal information, there were other information that they did not disclose/ chose not to disclose. On the other hand, based on the author's analysis of the respondents' posts, though they disclosed things about themselves (home/family activity, activity with friends, food/dishes, even personal matters), the respondents observed certain limits/boundaries, meaning, they practiced concealment. This is discussed further in Table 8.

#### Disclosure and Concealment as Intertwined Processes

Petronio & Durham suggest in their Communication in Privacy Management Theory that the processes of disclosure and concealment are intertwined (Petronio & Durham, 2015, p. 336). The said theory looks at the "process of disclosure as inherently dialectical, meaning when people disclose, they manage a friction – a push and pull – of wanting to reveal and conceal private information." (Petronio & Durham, 2015, p. 337). Jurgenson & Rey (n.d., cited by Martos, 2013, pp. 2-3) and boyd (2011, cited by Martos, 2013, pp. 2-3) are also one in this argument, in which they had asserted that "privacy and publicity are intertwined..." As an example, Martos (n.d., p. 3) states that "when someone shares part of a story publicly through a SNS, there is always a part of the story that is not told..." Considering Jurgenson & Rey (n.d., cited by Martos, 2013, p. 3) and boyd's point (2011, cited by Martos, 2013, p.3), the privacy aspect then is that which remains untold, based on Martos' example (Martos, 2013). This untold part of the story is then the concealed part of the story while the public part is that part of the story which is disclosed.

The main theoretical inquiry of the study is then based on the argument that disclosure and concealment are processes that are intertwined. Though essentially, Petronio & Durham's point is similar to that of Jurgenson & Rey (n.d., cited by Martos, 2013, p. 3) and boyd's (2011, cited by Martos, 2013, p.3), the author chose the former as it elaborated on the "push-and-pull" act, meaning, "when people disclose, they manage a friction – a push and pull – of wanting to reveal and conceal private information." (Petronio & Durham, 2015, p. 337) The author likewise applied Martos' point (Martos, 2013, p.3), which suggests that "when someone shares part of a story publicly through a SNS, there is always a part of the story that is

not told..." Specifically, the author used the untold part of the story aspect to refer to that which is not disclosed by the respondents --- the concealed part of the story.

#### Disclosure and Concealment among SNS Users

Christofides, Muise, and Desmarais (2009, p. 341) found that SNS users were "very likely to have posted information such as their birthday and e-mail address, ... pictures such as a profile picture, pictures with friends, and even pictures at parties and drinking with friends." (Christofides, *et al.*, 2009, p. 341) However, "most were unlikely or very unlikely to post pictures of them or their friends doing something illegal or pictures of themselves naked or partially naked." In such case, it can be seen that while SNS users disclose certain information/something about themselves, there are information/things that they choose to conceal as well. This was likewise observed in the study --- in the respondents' profiles, posts, as well as in their confessions. And as mentioned above (in Selective Disclosure), the respondents practice concealment for their safety, for better self-presentation, to help them manage their identity, and because they observe sensitivity with respect to their friends' political and religious views. These affirm the theoretical inquiry of the study which suggests that the processes of disclosure and concealment are intertwined. This is based on Petronio & Durham's Communication Privacy Management Theory.

Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010, p. 408) also found that the "15 most consistently disclosed/provided pieces of information described personally identifying information (i.e., birth date, gender, profile pictures, photo albums, tagged photos and general photos of the user) as well as social connections (i.e., groups joined, and friends viewable)." Other personal information revealed were on education (college/university attended) and "regular" updates (status, wall and mini-feed). "Playful communications such as acceptance of pokes, messages, and gifts, and applications" were likewise provided (Nosko, *et al.*, 2010, p. 408). The 15 least disclosed items, on the other hand, include "key personal information (zip/postal code), phone numbers (both land line and mobile), home address, city or town, website and former name." (Nosko, *et al.*, 2010, p. 408) Limited information was also provided with regard to "some aspects of educational experience" (i.e., school mailbox, courses, degree, awards, and room). Lastly, "optional wall features (i.e., Super Wall and Advanced Wall), market place listings and Events as described in the mini-feed were also infrequently included." (Nosko, *et al.*, 2010, p. 408)

As in the literature by Christofides, *et al.* (2009, p. 341) and the findings of this study, the aforementioned literature (Nosko, *et al.*, 2010, p. 408) shows that the processes of disclosure and concealment are intertwined. Indeed, though disclosure is a practice among the SNS users, they likewise practice concealment.

Though the respondents' concern for their Facebook friends and other reasons (identity management and better self-presentation) were mentioned above in

the context of selective disclosure and concealment, essentially, these boil down to the issue of privacy, which is the act of withholding information, or any personal details in an effort to protect an SNS user's account. Thus, the aforementioned discussion on disclosure, selective disclosure, and concealment suggests that privacy matters to SNS users and of course, to the respondents of this study. Indeed, this surfaced in the findings and analysis of the study. This is specifically discussed in Tables 6-7. The complexity of the issue (privacy) though is tackled in the analysis in Table 1.

### Privacy as a Crucial Concern among SNS Users

Privacy challenges such as “database marketing” or “government surveillance”, and (Gandy, *et al.*, cited by Liu and Fan, 2015, pp. 2142-2143) “the persistence, replicability, searchability, and scalability” of online information (Ocadlikova, 2015, pp. 12-13) faced by SNS users has led them to adopt certain privacy practices. Some users control their friend lists, manage several Facebook accounts, use pseudonyms (Wisniewski, *et al.*, n.d., p. 1 and Goldie, 2010, pp. 1-4), there are also some who conceal certain personal information i.e. phone numbers, email addresses, (Lenhart and Madden, 2007, cited by Liu and Fan, 2015, p. 2143) family life, and sexual orientation (Goldie, 2006, cited by Liu and Fan, 2015, p. 2143), deactivate their accounts, delete posts just after posting (boyd & Marvick, 2011, cited by Liu and Fan, 2015, p. 2143), do “weekly wall cleanings”, remove photo tags (Goldie, 2010, pp. 1-4), prune friends, and make their profiles private or partially private (Madden, 2012, p. 2). The analyses of this study's findings also confirm that the respondents care about their privacy and along this line, they have adopted certain privacy practices (modification of privacy settings such as controlling posts that appear in their timeline, controlling friend lists, concealment of political and religious views, disclosure through private messaging, disclosure of merely positive statuses, posting only events that “are not that private”, posting only “decent pictures) These can be seen in Tables 6-7 as well as in Table 6. Examination of their profiles and posts also shows that they practice concealment. Based on their confessions in Table 6, it was likewise found that they practice concealment for their safety, for better self-presentation, to help them manage their identity, and as a way of observing sensitivity with respect to their friends' political and religious views.

### The Privacy-Publicity Dichotomy

The basic argument here is that such dichotomy is a problematic one as putting a boundary between what is private and public has become a difficult task. Nissenbaum (2010, cited by Martos, 2013, p. 3), for instance, argues that “the activities and interactions through SNSs cannot be clearly categorized as either public or private...” As Ford (2011, cited by Martos, 2013, p. 3) also acknowledges the “problematic traditional privacy-publicity dichotomy” in SNS usage, he suggests a model of “privacy as a

continuum.” As such, he points out that “users can experience different levels of privacy in function of the control to the access to their information.” In line with these, the author argues (in Table 1) that even if privacy and publicity were categorized, SNS users cannot be guaranteed of their privacy considering the “persistence, replicability, scalability, and searchability of online information (as pointed out by boyd, 2010a, cited by Martos, 2013, p. 3). Due to database marketing and government surveillance, we know for a fact that marketing industries and the U.S. government have access to SNS users' personal data. The author points out the following in Table 1: With respect to database marketing, users can at least control the ads (advertisements) that come in and at least, we know that what they are after is sales. But when we talk about government surveillance, it's another story. Indeed, the U.S. government can easily spy into users' cyber activities and can keep track of their whereabouts. Actually, one former employee of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Edward Snowden, once divulged that the U.S. government can “wiretap” all communication channels used by individuals anytime they want to. Is this the kind of privacy that we imagined? Are we comfortable with the thought that individuals (authorized by the U.S. government) could actually be spying on us? Considering this, SNS users should always be on guard, not only with their disclosure of sensitive issues (especially those concerning the U.S. government), but with their communication activities, and even other activities, if they want to remain safe. Indeed, the sanest and the safest thing to do would be to delete one's account or not to maintain any account at all. The decision though lies in the hands of the SNS users.

### The Polarized Public Debate on Privacy

With respect to this polarized debate, there are two emerging camps: the privacy-is-dead camp and the other, claims that SNS users still care “deeply about privacy online...” (Madden 2012, pp. 1-3) Adherents of the former camp argue that “if people are willing to share all manner of personal details about their lives on social networking sites - their physical location, photos of their children, intimate accounts of personal struggles and triumphs - then surely they must have abandoned any reasonable expectation of privacy.” (Madden 2012, pp. 1-3) Some researchers, on the other hand, note that SNS users are “uniquely unconcerned about privacy; that over time, regular use of social media without any major negative experiences may lessen their concerns about sharing information.” (Madden 2012, pp. 1-3)

The latter camp, on the other hand, contend that SNS users still care “deeply about their privacy online but those sensitivities have been ill-served by technology companies that stand to profit from more widespread sharing and availability of personal information.” (Madden, 2012, pp. 1-3)

The results of this study definitely affirm the argument that SNS users care about their privacy and this is apparent

in their privacy practices. However, amidst these privacy practices, a serious issue that beset SNS users nowadays is that privacy is no longer completely guaranteed due to the emerging privacy challenges. Indeed, if nobody dares to raise these issues and do it in bolder ways, this privacy issue will remain unresolved. The question is, who would take courage to question what the U.S. is doing?

More current literature on the subject matter (from 2019 to 2023) are rather scarce. Additionally, these are quantitative in nature, and are therefore, non-descriptive (Ostendorf, S., Meier Y. & Brand, M., 2022; Vu, T.V., Ha, H.T., Nguyen, H.T., Dam, A.T.V., & Vu, H.T.T., 2022; Hollenbaugh, E.E., 2019; Chou, H., Liu, Y., & Chou, C., 2019) While there are qualitative studies, these do not focus on disclosure, concealment, and privacy issues (Winstone, L., Mars, B., Haworth, C., & Kidger, J., 2021; Masrom, M., Busalim, A., Abuhassna, H., & Mahmood, N., 2021; Brown, A., 2020; Aljasir, S., Bajnaid, A., Elyas, T., & Alnawasrah, M., 2017; Russett, J. & Waldron, L., 2017) Other qualitative studies on disclosure, on the other hand, examine the users' disclosure in relation to their health issues. In light of the forgoing, this study has been undertaken.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study applied the qualitative approach. Specifically, the author conducted online observation of the respondents' disclosure and concealment practices and thereafter, utilized a qualitative interview questionnaire. However, due to time constraints, the interviews were conducted online. The respondents were selected using purposive sampling. There were six (6) female respondents and one (1) male, six (6) of whom are working, though not all of them indicated their specific jobs. The first part of the data was obtained through the selected users' profiles and posts while the second part was gathered through online interview. Observation of the respondents' disclosure in their profiles as well as in their posts was done to determine what they disclose and what they do not disclose/what they conceal. Their profiles and posts were likewise analyzed to determine how they disclose ---

that is, whether they do it freely or selectively. Questions in the online instrument attempted to examine what the respondents did not disclose/tried to conceal based on their confessions, whether or not they consider privacy as a concern and the accompanying reasons, and whether or not they had modified their privacy settings and the accompanying reasons as well. As in the profiles and posts, the respondents' confessions were likewise analyzed to determine what they disclose, what they conceal, how they disclose (whether they disclose freely or selectively), as well as to determine their privacy practices. The respondents' profiles were examined first, followed by their posts, and their confessions in the online interview. Moreover, the data gathered in the study participants' profiles and posts were categorized before these were analyzed. As for the data gathered through the online interview, the texts (from the respondents' confessions) were analyzed to deduce/determine what they conceal, why they practice concealment, and to determine their privacy practices. The rest of the data were organized into matrices before analysis. A total of eight (8) posts for each respondent were recorded. Since the dates of posts vary for the respondents, the data were not gathered on fixed dates but rather, irregularly.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Respondents' Disclosure Based on Their Profiles**

The blocked areas in Table 1 show what the respondents disclosed in terms of demographics: work, education, home details, birth details, religion, gender, languages spoken, relationship, family, other details, and contact details. It can be seen from the data, however, that the respondents did not indicate complete demographic details for each category (as seen in the white areas of the table), which their profiles tried to elicit by default. Thus, while the blocked areas show what the respondents disclosed in terms of demographic details, the white areas, on the other hand, show what the respondents did not disclose. In other words, these are the demographic details that they withheld.

Respondent 1 disclosed about work, education, and

**Table 1:** Demographics

	Work		Education				Home details			Birth details		Reli-gion	Gender	Lang-uages Spoken	Relation-ship	Family	Other details			Contact details			
	1	2	3	4	5a	5b	6a	6b	7	8a	8b	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
R1	█	█			█	█										█							
R2		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
R3					█					█			█		█						█		
R4			█		█		█			█			█		█	█							
R5	█	█	█		█					█			█		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
R6	█	█	█		█					█			█		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
R7			█		█					█			█		█							█	

*Legend:*

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1 – Past workplace         | 9 – Religion                              |
| 2 – Current Workplace      | 10 – Gender                               |
| 3 – Work/occupation        | 11 – Languages spoken                     |
| 4 – Course                 | 12 – Relationship                         |
| 5a – Alma mater            | 13 – Family members                       |
| 5b – Address of alma mater | 14 – Name of partner                      |
| 6a – Home                  | 15 – Other name                           |
| 6b – Home address          | 16 – About self (Facebook-given category) |
| 7 – Home town              | 17 – Interests                            |
| 8a – Birthday              | 18 – Cellphone number                     |
| 8b – Birth year            | 19 – Yahoo/Google messenger accounts      |
- R1-R7 – Respondents 1-7

family. On the other hand, she did not disclose about home details, birth details, religion, gender, languages spoken, other details, and contact details. These personal details (the latter) then are the concealed information or the “untold part of the story”, using Martos’ term (Martos, 2013, p. 3).

Respondent 2, on the other hand, disclosed about work, education, home details, birth details, religion, gender, languages spoken, relationship, family, and other details. She did not disclose her contact details, however.

Respondent 3 disclosed about education, home details, birth details, gender, relationship, and other details. On the other hand, he did not disclose about work, religion, languages spoken, family, and contact details, which constitute the untold part of the story.

Respondent 4 disclosed about work, education, home details, birth details, gender, and family. She did not disclose about religion, languages spoken, relationship, other details, and contact details.

Respondent 5 disclosed about work, education, home details, gender, relationship, family, and other details. She did not disclose though about her birth details, religion, languages spoken, and contact details.

Respondent 6 disclosed about work, education, home details, birth details, religion, languages spoken, family, other details, and contact details. On the other hand, she did not disclose her gender and relationship.

Respondent 7 disclosed about her work, education, home details, birth details, gender, relationship, and contact details. She did not disclose, however, her religion, languages spoken, family, and other details.

The aforementioned results suggest that there is a conscious attempt on the part of the respondents to withhold or protect certain personal information in their profiles. This is likewise shown in their responses both in Tables 8 and 9, where they had confessed that privacy is a concern and that they had modified the privacy settings of their Facebook accounts. Besides these, the respondents’ reasons as to why they consider privacy a concern and as to why they had modified their privacy settings can also be seen in the said tables (8 and 9). On the other hand, it can be deduced from the findings in Table 1 that the process

of disclosure also involves the process of withholding certain information, that is, concealment of personal information, which is the main theoretical inquiry for this study. This is further supported by the Communication in Privacy Management theory which posits that the processes of disclosure and concealment are intertwined. (Petronio & Durham, 2015, p. 336) The said theory looks at the “process of disclosure as inherently dialectical, meaning when people disclose, they manage a friction – a push and pull – of wanting to reveal and conceal private information.” (Petronio & Durham, 2015, p. 337). Jurgenson & Rey (n.d., cited by Martos, 2013, p. 3) and boyd (2011, cited by Martos, 2013, p. 3) are also one in this argument, in which they had asserted that “privacy and publicity are intertwined...” As an example, Martos (2013, p. 3) states that “when someone shares part of a story publicly through a SNS, there is always a part of the story that is not told...” Though the respondents’ profiles in themselves reflect that untold part of the story (in the personal details that the respondents did not disclose or chose to withhold/conceal), this aspect will be tackled further in Table 6 (The “Untold Part of the Story” --- What is concealed in the respondents’ posts as reflected in their confessions) and its discussion.

Amidst this discourse on disclosure and concealment, however, other authors (Nissenbaum, 2010 and Ford, 2011, cited by Martos, 2013, p. 3) note the complexity of the issue. Nissenbaum (2010, cited by Martos, 2013, p. 3), for instance, argues that “the activities and interactions through SNSs cannot be clearly categorized as either public or private...” As Ford (2011, cited by Martos, 2013, p. 3) also acknowledges the “problematic traditional privacy-publicity dichotomy” in SNS usage, he suggests a model of “privacy as a continuum.” Along this line, Ford (2011, cited by Martos, 2013, p. 3) points out that “users can experience different levels of privacy in function of the control to the access to their information.” However, even if privacy and publicity were categorized, can users be assured/guaranteed of their privacy? Indeed, how private is “private?” With the persistence, replicability, scalability, and searchability of online information (as pointed out by boyd, 2010a, cited by Martos, 2013, p. 3), users cannot be assured that what they deemed private will really stay private. In fact, Gurses & Berendt (2001, p. 2) cite about an empirical analyses (which supports the view that “SNS play an active role in the general privacy nightmare of the Internet”), which has shown that “vast amounts of data are collected, often without a clearly defined purpose, that privacy settings are cumbersome and their use poorly communicated, and that privacy setting defaults reveal a lot of information...” Gandy, 2007; Turow, Feldman, & Meltzer, 2005 (cited by Liu & Fan, 2015, p. 2142) also note that as a large part of “social life is conducted online, individual control of personal information often loses out to database marketing or government surveillance.” Where does this leave us then? Though the issue on the use of privacy settings (being “cumbersome” and that “their use” is poorly

communicated as noted by Gurses & Berendt, 2001, p. 2; and that such settings “often appear ambiguous to users” as stated by Livingstone, 2008, cited by Liu & Fan, 2015, p. 2143) is likewise being raised in this complex discourse on privacy, the author believes that the more serious matter that merits important attention from users is the fact that marketing industries and the government (the U.S, government, in particular) have access to SNS users’ accounts.

With respect to database marketing, users can at least control the ads (advertisements) that come in and at least, we know that what they are after is sales. But when we talk about government surveillance, it’s another story.

Indeed, the U.S. government can easily spy into users’ cyber activities and can keep track of their whereabouts. Actually, one former employee of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Edward Snowden, once divulged that the U.S. government can “wiretap” all communication channels used by individuals anytime they want to. Is this the kind of privacy that we imagined? Are we comfortable with the thought that individuals (authorized by the U.S. government) could actually be spying on us? Considering this, SNS users should always be on guard, not only with their disclosure of sensitive issues, but with their communication activities, and even other activities, if they want to remain safe.

**Table 2:** Respondents’ posts for the month of November (6, 15, 29, 30)

Posts	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Activity (home/family)							
Academic activity							
Places visited							
Food/dishes							
Courtship							
Christmas							
Travel							

Legend: R1-R7 – Respondents 1-7

**Respondents’ Disclosure Based on Their Posts**

Common post for the month of November was on home/family activity. The respondents’ posts on this category include decorating the house for Christmas, lechon-tasting and ordering, weekend camping, eating with family members, and movie-watching. Apparently, the emerging theme in the respondents’ posts is Christmas. This is understandable as it was the month of November and thus, Christmas was fast approaching.

The respondents’ posts also include the following categories: academic activity, places visited, food/dishes, courtship, Christmas, and travel.

Respondent 1 posted about home/family activity.

Respondent 2 had the following posts: home/family activity, places visited, and travel. It has to be noted that the latter posts (places visited and travel) were not grouped into one category as these posts were different in terms of form. The last category, travel, for instance, was in the form of a quote (“Travel is my therapy.”) The category, places visited, on the other hand, were in the form of pictures with captions.

Respondent 3 posted about academic activity, courtship, and Christmas.

Respondent 5 posted about home/family activity and food/dishes.

The respondents’ posts, however, were consolidated into categories, as reflected in Table 2. Thus, the posts under the given categories should not be regarded as single posts, meaning, there could be more than one post in each category.

The respondents’ posts were essentially for general readership as these were not in any way personal except

for one post from Respondent 3, which was rather a personal thought/reflection about courtship “For sure ‘pag sinagot niya ako, wala na ‘kong time mag-FB!” Along this line, the author believes that while a person can talk about such matter in his/her circle of friends, it is not for general consumption. The author though tried to examine the respondent and his friends’ comments underneath such post and found that the respondent did not in any way elaborate on the post. In short, though such post may appear to be a personal post, the respondent did not disclose any further with respect to the post. Thus, it can be deduced in this case that the respondent only discloses to a certain point. Thus, there are things that he tries not to disclose as well. This “push-and-pull” act is further confirmed in Table 6. In the said table (Table 6), it can likewise be seen that the rest of the respondents also practice this “push-and-pull” act. Indeed, while the respondents disclose about themselves, there are things that they try to conceal as well. This supports the theoretical inquiry of the study which posits that the processes of disclosure and concealment are intertwined. While the other respondents had no posts for this month (November), their posts were obtained from the other months. It should then be noted that equal number of posts were obtained for each respondent. Hence, while there may be respondents who did not post in a given month, same number of posts (as the other respondents) were obtained from the other months of the data gathering period.

Common posts for the month of December were on home/family activity and activity with friends. These posts include the following: lunch with family, family

**Table 3:** Respondents’ Posts for the month of December (1, 6, 8, 19, 23, 25, 29, 31)

Posts	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Activity (home/family)							
Activity (with friends)							
Food/dishes							
Gifts							
Self and loved ones							
Accepting friend requests							
Respondent’s character							

Legend: R1-R7 – Respondents 1-7

get-together, family and whereabouts, preparations for Christmas, lunch with friends, and sem. ender party with friends/colleagues.

Other posts include food/dishes, gifts, self and loved ones, accepting friend requests (graphics downloaded from a web site, explaining the gesture of accepting a friend request --- “when a girl accepts a friend request” from a guy), and respondent’s character. As in the month of November, the theme of the respondents’ activities is Christmas. The category, self and loved ones were separated from the category, home/family activity as the former was in the form of thoughts/reflections while the latter was in the form of pictures with captions. The category, respondent’s character was likewise regarded as a separate category as this was in the form of graphics (this was taken/downloaded from a web site), describing the respondent’s character, though this was rather portrayed in a light manner meaning, in a rather funny way.

Respondent 1 had the following posts: home/family activity, activity with friends, and food/dishes.

Respondent 5 posted about home/family activity and activity with friends.

Respondent 6 posted about self & loved ones, as well as about her character.

Respondent 7 posted about gifts and accepting friend

requests.

As in the respondents’ posts for the month of November, their posts for the month of December were for general readership as well except for one post from Respondent 6, which was a thought/reflection about herself and her family/loved ones. This was rather a personal confession, depicting her sad feelings about her situation, saying that perhaps, it is time to leave her loved ones. In such confession, she was likewise contemplating on going abroad as according to her, if she remained with her loved ones, “sasaktan ka lang nila.” Again, as in the case of Respondent 3 in the previous table (Table 2), the author tried to examine the comments underneath this post and found that although Respondent 6 had this personal post, when her friends asked her about the situation/tried to elicit more information about her situation, the said respondent did not answer her friends’ questions. Thus, it can be deduced that although the respondent’s post may seem personal, there’s a part of it which she chose not to disclose --- a part which she attempts to conceal and that is, the details of her confession/post. Again, this supports the theoretical inquiry of the study. This aspect of concealment is also discussed further in Table 6, not only for Respondent 6 but for the other respondents as well.

**Table 4:** Respondents’ posts for the month of January (1, 3, 5, 31)

Posts	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Activity (home/family)							
Activity (with friends)							
Academic activity							
Personality (Character, Kindness)							
Groom and bride							
Food/ dishes and place							
Gifts							
Weather							
New Year (Coming year, New Year greetings)							
Vacation							
Current events/issues (MRT-LRT fare increase)							
Mother and daughter							

Legend: R1-R7 – Respondents 1-7

Common posts for the month of January, as shown in Table 4, were on home/family activity; food/dishes and place; and gifts.

Other posts include activity with friends, academic activity, personality, groom and bride, weather, New Year, vacation, current events/issues, and mother and daughter. The category, mother and daughter, was separated from the category, home/family activity, as the former was merely a picture with hashtags. It was not an activity, which the category, home/family activity depicted.

As in the posts for the months of November and December, the respondents' posts for the month of January were for general readership as nothing was

observed to be personal in their posts. However, their confessions in Table 6 show that there is that "untold part of the story" meaning, that part of the story which the respondents try not to disclose/try to conceal. Thus, though disclosure is a practice among the respondents, based on their posts and what they had disclosed in their profiles, they, too practice concealment. In the process of disclosure then, another process is observed as well that is, the process of concealment where the respondents choose not to disclose a part of themselves/their story. Again, this supports the theoretical inquiry of this study: The processes of disclosure and concealment are intertwined.

Common posts shown in Table 5 include the following

**Table 5:** Respondents' posts for the month of February (1, 3, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17)

Posts	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Activity (home/family)							
Activity (with friends)							
Academic activity							
Valentine greetings							
Food/Dishes							
Love							
God							
Philippines (as a retirement haven)							
Age and appearance							
Grammar							
Reading							
Encounter with toxicologist							

Legend: R1-R7 – Respondents 1-7

categories: home/family activity and academic activity.

Respondent 1 had the following posts: home/family activity, valentine greetings, and food/dishes.

Respondent 2 posted about love, God, and the Philippines as a retirement haven of foreigners.

Respondent 3 had the following posts: grammar, reading, and encounter with a toxicologist.

Respondent 4 posted about activity with friends, God, and age & appearance, particularly on an app ("Do you look your age?").

Respondent 5 posted about an academic activity.

Respondent 6 posted about home/family activity and academic activity.

The respondents' posts, as in their posts for the months of November, December, and January, were for general readership as their posts depicted nothing personal/sensitive except for one post by Respondent 3. In such post, he talked about his encounter with a toxicologist and what the latter shared about himself: that "the reason he has gotten to where he is right now is to avoid dementia." However, though it is rather a personal/sensitive matter, the respondent's post did not disclose further details on the toxicologist that he was discussing about. That part of the story which the respondent did not disclose, the author believes, is the "untold story", or the story which the respondent is trying to

conceal. Indeed, the respondents' confessions in Table 6 confirm that although the respondents' disclosure in their posts and profiles suggest that disclosure is a practice, they undergo the process of concealment as well. Again, this supports the theoretical inquiry of the study which suggests that the processes of disclosure and concealment are intertwined. In other words, the respondents go through a "push-an-pull" act whenever they disclose information since in the said process, they too observe another process that is, the process of concealment.

The respondents' confessions in Table 6 reflect what the respondents do not disclose or choose to conceal. While a number of their confessions do not really say outright what they choose to conceal, such statements imply or suggest that there are things/issues that they would rather not talk about/post in their statuses. Thus, this is the "untold part of the story", what the respondents attempt to cover up/conceal about themselves. A number of their confessions though say outright what they choose not to talk about or conceal, for instance, their political views and religious views. These too, form part of that "untold story". While the respondents' posts (in Tables 2-5) and what they had disclosed in their profiles then show that disclosure is a practice, (though part of the discussions in Tables 2-5 also suggest that there was

**Table 6:** The “Untold Part of the Story” (What is concealed in the respondents’ posts as reflected in their confessions)

The “Untold Part of the Story”	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
She posts, mostly, travel pictures as this is her passion; discloses minimal religious views; does not disclose political views; “Revealing too much can put one in a very compromising, often dangerous situation”							
“...there are things that I communicate/discard about myself or anything only through private messaging or the FB messenger application.”; “I have only disclosed personal information in such a way that it contributes to project what identity I want my FB friends to know. It is enough that I disclose personal information that other FB users generally disclose. FB is not my life. If some FB friends need or want to know something more about myself then they just have to actually meet me in person so we can talk.”; “...disclosure of my political and religious views depends largely on the current and arising political and religious issues. I don’t disclose my full views considering that my FB friends have varying religious denominations and political affiliations.”							
“Even with its security settings, FB is still a social medium. It’s not my nature to freely show off what I have by posting photos every now and then.”; “Most of my status is positive as I don’t want my family and relatives to worry about me.”; does not disclose her political and religious views; “I believe FB is not the proper avenue for me to do it. I live in a country where Islam is the main religion, and I don’t want to offend them as many of my FB friends belong to Islam.”							
“...I only post important events which I do not find that private so that I could prevent criminal activities” from happening in “my account”							
She posts more on her “family pictures”; “I love to show their pictures to my friends.”; “It is always important to choose pictures which are decent to see.”; “I choose to disclose myself to my friends and friends of friends only for security purposes.”							
Did Not Answer the Question							

that part of the story which was not disclosed/which was concealed based on the examination done in the comments indicated by the respondents and their FB friends concerning the posts), their confessions in Table 6 further confirm that they practice concealment. These confessions will be examined in detail in the succeeding paragraphs.

Examining the first statement of Respondent 2 where she confessed that “mostly, (she posts) travel pictures as this is her passion”, such confession implies that the respondent has a certain bias when it comes to posting travel pictures as this according to her, is her passion. Thus, this is what she posts about “mostly”. Her statement then further suggests that she could be posting on other things rather in a limited manner as her posts mostly “talk” about her travel pictures. As such, there may be things that she tends to leave out in her posts --- the “untold part of the story/ what is concealed in the respondent’s story. Her second confession that she only discloses “minimal religious views”, also implies that she does not disclose her full views with respect to religion. Thus, the views that she does not disclose are the “untold part of the story” --- that part of the story which is concealed. Lastly, her third confession, where she said that she does not disclose her political views, say outright that this is another “untold part of the story” ---what is concealed in the respondent’s

posts.

Looking into the confessions of Respondent 3, his first statement, “there are things that I communicate/discard about myself or anything only through private messaging or the FB messenger application”, suggests that he discloses rather selectively. Thus, what is depicted in his posts does not constitute the whole story. This then is the “untold part of the story” --- what is not disclosed/what is being concealed in the respondent’s story. His second confession, “I have only disclosed personal information in such a way that it contributes to project” the identity he wants his “FB friends to know” suggests that in the process of disclosure, the respondent tends to filter out certain information as he only discloses information which he thinks contributes to project his desired identity. Such information being filtered out in the process then is the “untold part of the story” --- that which is being concealed in the respondent’s story. His third confession, “It is enough that I disclose personal information that other FB users generally disclose” also suggests that he limits his disclosure to that which qualifies for general disclosure. Thus, it follows that he does not disclose things which are not fit for general disclosure. These things which are not disclosed are the “untold part of the story” --- that which is concealed in the respondent’s story. His fourth confession, I don’t disclose my full views considering that my FB friends have varying religious

denominations and political affiliations” suggests that the respondent only discloses partial views with respect to religion and politics. The views then that are not disclosed in such process of disclosure are the “untold part of the story” --- the concealed part of the respondent’s story.

Examining the confessions of Respondent 5, her first statement, “It’s not my nature to freely show off what I have by posting photos every now and then” implies that she tends to limit her posts/the pictures that she posts. The fact that she limits her posts and that it’s not her “nature” to “freely show off” what she has mean she does not post on everything. Thus, what she tends not to disclose is the “untold part of the story” --- the concealed part of the respondent’s story. Her second confession, “Most of my status is positive as I don’t want my family and relatives to worry about me” implies that she discloses selectively as she rather chooses to disclose mostly, things that are positive. Thus, the things that she tends not to disclose are the “untold part of the story” --- that which is concealed in the respondent’s story. On the other hand, her last confession that she does not disclose her religious and political views say outright that “untold part of the story” --- the respondent’s political and religious views. This the concealed part of the respondent’s story.

As for Respondent 4, her confession, “I only post important events which I do not find that private...” implies that she discloses selectively as well. It also means that she does not disclose things which she finds to be “that private”. Thus, the things that are being left out in the process are the “untold part of the story” --- those that are concealed in the process.

For Respondent 6, her confessions that she posts more on her “family pictures” and that she loves “to show their pictures” to her friends imply that she has a certain bias in posting her family pictures. Thus, if she tends to post more on her family pictures, it also means that other posts are depicted rather in a limited manner as these do not receive the same attention as that of her family pictures. As such, the posts may not tell the whole story. This part of the story that is not disclosed in the process is the “untold part of the story” --- the concealed part of the respondent’s story. Her second confession that “It is always important to choose pictures which are decent to see” also implies that she discloses pictures selectively. This means that there are pictures that she chooses not to disclose. Thus, this is the “untold part of the story” --- what is being concealed in the respondent’s story.

Overall, the aforementioned findings and analyses of the respondents’ statements/confessions support the theoretical inquiry of the study: that the processes of disclosure and concealment are intertwined. But what does this tell us? Why all these concealments?

Examining the respondents’ confessions in Table 6, it can be deduced that concealment is practiced because they care about their safety, they observe sensitivity with respect to their friends’ political and religious views, for better self-presentation, and to help manage their identity. With respect to safety, Respondent 2 remarked:

“Revealing too much can put one in a very compromising, often dangerous situation.” Respondent 4, for instance, confessed: “I only post important events which I do not find that private so that I could prevent criminal activities” from happening in “my account.” Respondent 6 likewise remarked: “I choose to disclose myself to my friends and friends of friends only for security purposes.” On the other hand, in their observance of sensitivity with respect to their friends’ political and religious views, Respondents 3 and 5 gave the following remarks, respectively: “I don’t disclose my full views considering that my FB friends have varying religious denominations and political affiliations.”; I live in a country where Islam is the main religion, and I don’t want to offend them as many of my FB friends belong to Islam.” In terms of better self-presentation, Respondent 6 confessed that she loves to share her family pictures to her friends and that “It is always important to choose pictures which are decent to see.” In relation to identity management, Respondent 3 remarked: “I have only disclosed personal information in such a way that it contributes to project what identity I want my FB friends to know.”

It can be seen from the aforementioned confessions of the respondents that they have their own personal reasons for not disclosing certain views or a part of themselves. Indeed, considering privacy challenges as database marketing, government surveillance, identity theft, etc., even compounded by how complex privacy has become, and with the persistence, replicability, scalability, and searchability of online information (boyd, 2010a, cited by Martos, 2013, p. 3), which had been examined in Table 1, safety should be a crucial concern among SNS/Facebook users. Apparently then, the respondents observe the process of concealment for the aforementioned reasons. Though these per se are ways of managing their privacy, the following tables (Tables 6 and 7) specifically examine how the respondents regard privacy as a concern in their Facebook usage. Table 7 shows that the respondents consider privacy as a concern. Indeed, this is apparent, considering the reasons they had indicated. Also, if we refer to Table 1 (Respondents’ disclosure based on their profiles, particularly demographics), it can be seen that although the respondents had disclosed certain information, apparently, there is an attempt to withhold certain information as well, which in itself is a privacy practice. This concern for privacy likewise surfaced in the previous analyses of the respondents’ disclosure (Tables 1-5: disclosure based on their profiles and disclosure with respect to their posts), in their confessions in Table 6, as well as in Table 8 where they confirmed that they had indeed modified their privacy settings. Thus, these are not mere claims by the respondents as such concern for privacy could be observed in the information that they did not disclose in their profiles, as well as in their posts. Though a number of the respondents’ privacy practices already surfaced in the author’s analyses of their disclosure and confessions, Table 8 further confirm their regard/concern for privacy.

**Table 7:** On privacy as a concern among respondents

Privacy is a concern	Why privacy is a concern/Reasons	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Yes								
No								
Did Not Answer the Question								
Did not indicate reason								
	"...for my safety"							
	"Because at the end of the day, SAFETY is still the #1 PRIORITY; Revealing too much can put one in a very compromising, often dangerous situation."							
	"I do not want to become a victim of internet crimes."							
	"...concerned about personality spies who may just be fishing out information for whatever reason"							

**Table 8:** On privacy as a concern among respondents

Modified privacy settings	Privacy practices/Why the respondents modified their privacy settings	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Yes								
No								
Did not answer the questionnaire								
	"Because I control who I add to become my friends; I screen who becomes part of it and prune every so often if I don't feel comfortable with the person I am friends with anymore"							
	"Because aside from posers, there are FB friends who can't help but make fun of you; I turned on the setting that I have to approve a post in my timeline first before it gets actually posted in it. I did this after a certain FB friend before wrote a foul or below-the-belt comment in my timeline."							
	"Because I'm a concerned netizen"							
	"As an OFW, there are many things that can draw different opinions from other users. It's really important for me that only my FRIENDS are the ones who can see my posts."							
	"I think I am a more responsible netizen if I do that."							

Table 8 shows that the respondents modified the privacy settings of their Facebook accounts. The reasons indicated by the respondents (which also reflect their privacy practices) do not only show the respondents' concern for the issue (of privacy) but also suggest that they are in touch with privacy concerns/issues (so with the reasons they had indicated in Table 7). These also show the respondents' efforts to uphold their privacy.

With respect then to what Madden (2012, pp. 1-3) had noted about the "polarized public debate" where on one side lies the "privacy-is-dead" camp and on the other side, the claim that the "public still cares deeply about their privacy online...", this study definitely supports the latter camp. Based on the findings and analyses, apparently, the respondents care about their privacy. Thus, it disproves the other claim that privacy is dead.

As in the public-private dichotomy that had been pointed out in the author's analysis in Table 1, however, the claim by authors and scholars that privacy matters to SNS users (Madden, 2012, pp. 1-3) also comes with the issue that although SNS users deeply care about their privacy, Madden (2012, pp. 1-3) notes that they "have been ill-served by technology companies that stand to profit from more widespread sharing and availability of personal information." Such personal information being compromised in the process of disclosure was likewise noted by Gurses & Berendt (2001, p. 2), Gandy, 2007; Turow, Feldman, & Meltzer, 2005 (cited by Liu & Fan, 2015, p. 2142). Despite this, however, the respondents of this study are apparently exerting efforts to maintain their privacy, trying to balance the processes of disclosure and concealment --- the "push-and-pull" act pointed out by Petronio & Durham (2015, p. 336). While they practice disclosure, they observe the process of concealment as well. Thus, their disclosure is a conscious attempt to disclose information but in the context of selective disclosure. In such disclosure, they choose to disclose only certain information/details about themselves, they choose to disclose more on the things that they love/love to do (their passion), they choose to disclose only to chosen friends, they choose to disclose through a more private Facebook feature (for instance, private messaging). Thus, as they practice such process of disclosure, they likewise practice the process of concealment where the respondents try to withhold certain information. The author referred to such information being concealed as the "untold part of the story" based on Martos' point (2013, p. 3).

The findings and analyses of the study also support Petronio's point (Petronio, 2002, cited by Bazarova, 2015, p. 2) that "people make deliberate decisions about disclosure, including what to disclose, with whom, where, and when." As in the study, though it was found that disclosure is a practice, the respondents practice selective disclosure. In their profiles, for instance, though they had disclosed personal information, there were other information that they did not disclose/chose not to disclose. On the other hand, based on the author's analysis of the respondents' posts, though they disclosed things about themselves (home/family activity, activity with friends, food/dishes, even personal matters), the respondents observed certain limits/boundaries. For instance, as mentioned in the author's analysis on the posts (Tables 2-5), when they posed about a personal matter, despite their friends' prodding, the respondents did not elaborate/give further details on the post. Also, based on what they had disclosed in their confessions (as reflected in Tables 5a and 7), they decide on what to post, even on where to discuss certain matters (like when they choose to discuss a certain matter only through private messaging), and with whom they intend to share their posts (like making sure that their friends are the only ones that would see their posts). With respect to when they would post, the author observed that the respondents

likewise have a say on this as it was observed by the author that the time in which they posted varied. Thus, they certainly decide on the opportune time to post. Also, they took the opportunity to post greetings and pictures during Christmas, New Year, and Valentine's Day. These though do not merely depict the respondents' disclosure but apparently, their disclosure practices suggest that there is something that they do not disclose. That despite their disclosure, there is that part of the story that is untold/remains untold --- the concealed part of the story. Again, this brings us back to the theoretical inquiry of this study which asserts that the processes of disclosure and concealment are intertwined, which was likewise posited by Petronio & Durham (2015, p. 337).

While Facebook has become an alternative means of socialization (virtual socialization) among individuals and while it has revolutionized the means of communication (not to mention its other uses in society: marketing, politics), the issue of privacy has also become a complex one because amidst the fact that SNS/Facebook users have become concerned about their privacy, they cannot escape the eyes/scrutiny of database marketing and government surveillance. And although other users may already be aware of this, there may still be users who are unaware. With this issue then, as it is a given fact that the U.S. government and marketing industries have access to SNS users' accounts, more stringent privacy practices should be adopted. Indeed, we know what we are dealing with (the U.S. government) and we know as well that we cannot lean on our very own government. Opening other accounts can be considered but this will not resolve the issue as SNS/Facebook system was built in such a way that elicits information by default (as in the Facebook profile) or makes disclosure a practice by default. In fact, a more radical view would be to delete all accounts or not to have an account at all. This is probably the safest thing to do because in cyberspace, it has become quite difficult to build boundaries considering its given nature which makes online information persistent, replicable, scalable, and searchable (boyd, 2010a, cited by Martos, 2013, p. 3). However, the decision ultimately lies in the hands of the users.

## CONCLUSIONS

While some demographic data were disclosed by the respondents, there were other demographic details that were not disclosed. This means that there is a conscious attempt on the part of the respondents to withhold or protect certain personal information in their profiles.

Overall, the findings and analyses of the respondents' statements/confessions support the theoretical inquiry of the study: that the processes of disclosure and concealment are intertwined. It can be deduced that concealment is practiced because they care about their safety, they observe sensitivity with respect to their friends' political and religious views, for better self-presentation, and to help manage their identity.

It can be deduced from the confessions of the respondents that they have their own personal reasons

for not disclosing certain views or a part of themselves. Indeed, considering privacy challenges as database marketing, government surveillance, identity theft, etc., even compounded by how complex privacy has become, and with the persistence, replicability, scalability, and searchability of online information (boyd, 2010a, cited by Martos, 2013, p. 3), safety should be a crucial concern among SNS/Facebook users. Apparently then, the respondents observe the process of concealment for the aforementioned reasons.

The findings and analyses of the study also support Petronio's point (Petronio, 2002, cited by Bazarova, 2015, p. 2) that "people make deliberate decisions about disclosure, including what to disclose, with whom, where, and when." As in the study, though it was found that disclosure is a practice, the respondents practice selective disclosure. In their profiles, for instance, though they had disclosed personal information, there were other information that they did not disclose/chose not to disclose. On the other hand, based on the author's analysis of the respondents' posts, though they disclosed things about themselves (home/family activity, activity with friends, food/dishes, even personal matters), the respondents observed certain limits/boundaries. For instance, as mentioned in the author's analysis on the posts, when they posed about a personal matter, despite their friends' prodding, the respondents did not elaborate/give further details on the post. Also, based on what they had disclosed in their confessions, they decide on what to post, even on where to discuss certain matters (like when they choose to discuss a certain matter only through private messaging), and with whom they intend to share their posts (like making sure that their friends are the only ones that would see their posts). With respect to when they would post, the author observed that the respondents likewise have a say on this as it was observed by the author that the time in which they posted varied. Thus, they certainly decide on the opportune time to post. Also, they took the opportunity to post greetings and pictures during Christmas, New Year, and Valentine's Day. These though do not merely depict the respondents' disclosure but apparently, their disclosure practices suggest that there is something that they do not disclose. That despite their disclosure, there is that part of the story that is untold/remains untold --- the concealed part of the story. Again, this brings us back to the theoretical inquiry of this study which asserts that the processes of disclosure and concealment are intertwined, which was likewise posited by Petronio & Durham (2015, p. 337).

Privacy is a concern among the respondents. As such, they had modified their privacy settings and have adopted certain privacy practices (modification of privacy settings such as controlling posts that appear in their timeline, controlling friend lists, concealment of political and religious views, disclosure through private messaging, disclosure of merely positive statuses, posting only events that "are not that private", posting only "decent pictures").

While Facebook has become an alternative means of socialization (virtual socialization) among individuals and while it has revolutionized the means of communication (not to mention its other uses in society: marketing, politics), the issue of privacy has also become a complex one because amidst the fact that SNS/Facebook users have become concerned about their privacy, they cannot escape the eyes/scrutiny of database marketing and government surveillance. And although other users may already be aware of this, there may still be users who are unaware. With this issue then, as it is a given fact that the U.S. government and marketing industries have access to SNS users' accounts, more stringent privacy practices should be adopted. Indeed, we know what we are dealing with (the U.S. government) and we know as well that we cannot lean on our very own government. Opening other accounts can be considered but this will not resolve the issue as SNS/Facebook system was built in such a way that elicits information by default (as in the Facebook profile) or makes disclosure a practice by default. In fact, a more radical view would be to delete all accounts or not to have an account at all. This is probably the safest thing to do because in cyberspace, it has become quite difficult to build boundaries considering its given nature which makes online information persistent, replicable, scalable, and searchable (boyd, 2010a, cited by Martos, 2013, p. 3). However, the decision ultimately lies in the hands of the users.

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