JOURNALING FOR THE WORLD (WIDE WEB) TO SEE:
A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF DISCLOSURE IN BLOGS

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by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

From the genesis of the written language, people have used words to record their innermost thoughts and feelings. The act of journaling has since been popularized by children, teenagers, and adults alike. However, in the past few years journaling has taken a new turn – a turn to the World Wide Web. Weblogs (or blogs) represent a modern method of journaling (Herring, 2004); however, unlike the journals of old which were often kept hidden under lock and key, blogs can be published online for any Internet user in the blogosphere to read. The intent of this study is to test the usefulness of interpersonal and computer-mediated communication (CMC) theories in the context of blog disclosures. Specifically, the predictors of blog disclosures will be explored, as well as the relationships among dimensions of blog disclosures. This study will also investigate blogging motives as they affect disclosure patterns, and the impact of the target audience and individual characteristics in the conceptual model. Following, a description of blogs and bloggers is presented before explaining the research problem and rationale for this study.

Blogs are websites that are frequently updated and organized in reverse chronological order (Herring, 2004; see Figure 1 for a screenshot of a blog). Huffaker and Calvert (2005) identified four features of blogs that distinguish them from other modes of computer-mediated communication (CMC): blogging does not require advanced knowledge of computer programming; blog posts are easily archived; blog readers can interact with bloggers through comments; and blogs can be linked to other blogs, forming virtual communities through blogrolls (lists of linked blogs). Although many social

Figure 1

An Example of a Modern Blog

Most recent post at the top of the page

Blog entry

Blog Profile (full profile available when clicking this link)
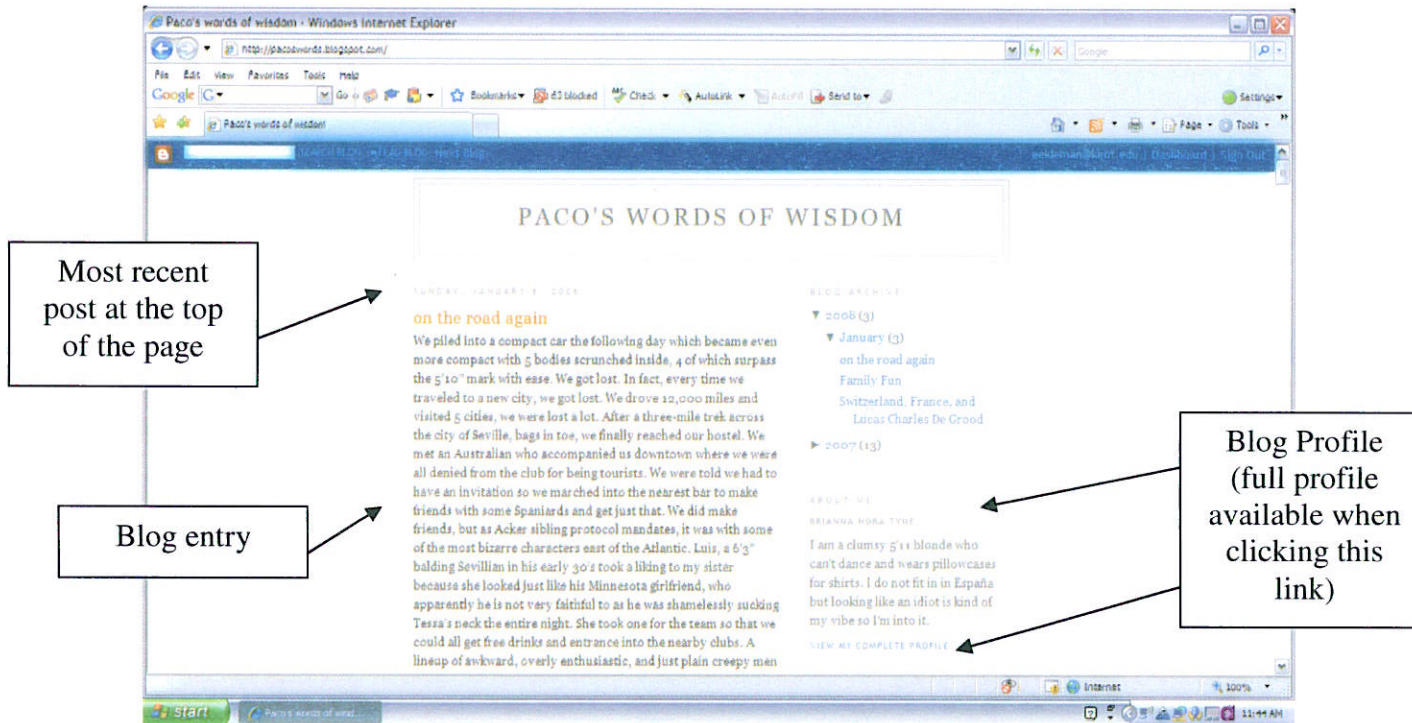
networking websites, such as MySpace, include a blog feature, blogs are not necessarily synonymous with these sites. For the purposes of this study, entries in blogs are dominated by text. Therefore, video or picture blogs are outside the scope of this project. (For more information on the anatomy of blogs, see Lenhart, 2005.)

The first blog was established in 1996, and the term "weblog" was first used a year later (Herring, Scheidt, Wright, & Bonus, 2005). Since their inception, three general types of blogs have emerged (Blood, 2002). *Filters* are devoted to external content; they provide links to and commentary on primarily news events or other topics. *Notebooks* contain long entries that resemble more of a series of short stories (either about musings or events). *Personal journals* are composed of short posts concerning the blogger's life and internal self (Blood, 2002). Personal journals tend to make up the majority of blogs. Herring et al. (2005) found that 70.4% of the blogs in their sample were personal journals. Similarly, 83% of Viegas' (2005) sample of 486 bloggers maintained personal journals. Due to their prominence and the focus of this paper (namely private disclosure), the remainder of this paper will center on personal journals.

With new advances of the Internet, multimedia applications are readily available to bloggers. Nevertheless, Herring (2004) noted that users still communicate on the Internet mostly through text, such as via blogs. Although text dominates blogs, 72% of bloggers report posting pictures on their blogs (Lenhart & Fox, 2006). About one-third of bloggers post audio files, and 15% post video files. A year earlier, Herring et al. (2005) and Trammell and Keshelashvili (2005) found more modest numbers for multimedia presence on blogs; perhaps with advances in user-friendly blogging services, bloggers are now more likely to take advantage of the multimodal potential of blogs.

According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, about 12 million adults in America maintain a blog (Lenhart & Fox, 2006); this number represents 8% of people who use the Internet, which was confirmed by a more recent nation-wide survey (Synovate eNation, 2007). However, this number may be modest, considering the large number of young people who blog are largely unaccounted for in Lenhart and Fox's (2006) and Synovate eNation's (2007) surveys. Over half of bloggers are 19 or younger (Lenhart & Madden, 2005; Perseus, 2005). A study by the Pew Internet Project reported that of children age 12 to 17 who use the Internet, 19% maintain a blog (Lenhart & Madden, 2005).

In terms of gender, Lenhart and Fox (2006) found that men and women are equally likely to blog. On the other hand, more men than women blogged in Viegas' (2005) sample. However, Herring et al. (2005) and Lenhart and Madden (2005) found that more women than men maintain personal journals, the blog of interest in this paper. Additionally, younger people are more likely to blog on personal journals than older people (Herring et al., 2005). Bloggers encompass a more diverse population than Internet users as a whole, and they are more likely to live in the suburbs than urban and rural areas (Lenhart & Fox, 2006).

A distinguishing characteristic of blogs is their ease of use. Additionally, the definition of blogs specifies that they are updated frequently. However, Lenhart and Fox (2006) found that most bloggers do not post as often as one may expect. Although 13% of bloggers do post at least once a day, 15% of bloggers post three to five days a week, and about 25% post one or two times a week. More than one-quarter of bloggers post

every few weeks, and 19% post less often than that (Lenhart & Fox, 2006). Bloggers

spend an average of two hours a week blogging (Lenhart & Fox, 2006).

According to Lenhart and Fox (2006), bloggers tend to be heavy Internet

consumers. They are online multiple times a day while at home and get their news from

the Internet more often than other Internet users. Thus, bloggers appear to be more

"wired" than other Internet users. Given the above description of blogs and bloggers, this

discussion now turns to the research problem at hand, as well as a rationale for this study.

Statement of the Problem and Rationale

Upon pursuing personal journal blog entries, it is clear that private disclosures are

at the forefront. Consider the following entry:

So, how about the dr. [sic] trip from hell! First of all, I waited for like an hour!

Then I went in, told my symptoms to like five people (at different times), then the

medical assistant had me lay down and take deep breaths and he keep [sic]

shoving his hand in my sides, I guess checking my ovaries, but it was both painful

and strange… So he [the doctor] was like, "Hmm well it's all pretty normal,

except, that they [menstruation periods] shouldn't be this long, and you shouldn't

have THIS much pain, and your moods shouldn't be this drastic"… So basically

they gave me a different pill for all my symptoms and told me they didn't know

what was wrong so they wanted to check my thyroid… So yea, all in all my day is

sucking. (Paula, 2007, para. 1)

The above information sounds like a conversation between close friends. In

reality, this is an entry in Paula's (2007) blog, which is available for anyone to read. In

choosing to disclose this private information, Paula (2007) has revealed a piece of herself

and allowed others to co-own that information (Petronio, 2002). This revelation, or private disclosure, was made to a mass audience. However, existing interpersonal communication literature would suggest that such intimate information would only be revealed in closer relationships (e.g., Altman & Taylor, 1973; Petronio, 1991). Private disclosure in blogs is the phenomenon of interest in this study.

Self-disclosure is the revelation of personal information, which may include thoughts, experiences, and feelings (Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis, 1993). The term *self-disclosure* is somewhat antiquated, as more recent theory (i.e., communication privacy management theory, CPM) expands the conceptualization of disclosure to include sharing private information that is about something other than the self (Petronio, 2002). Private information is that which is not readily accessible to others (Petronio, 2002). For example, blogging about one's sexual escapades is certainly *self*-disclosure, but this blog entry may also disclose private information about the blogger's sexual partners. Bloggers disclose private information about themselves, and they also are likely to disclose private information about named others (Viegas, 2005). The term *disclosure,* as opposed to *self-disclosure,* includes both revelations about the self and others (Petronio, 2002). Therefore, the term is more inclusive and representative of communication in reality.

Early research on disclosure resulted in the creation of the social penetration theory (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Social penetration theory assumes that people disclose information that varies in *depth* (intimacy level) and *breadth* (topic area; Altman & Taylor, 1973). This theory hypothesizes a positive relationship between the intimacy level of a relationship and the breadth and depth of information disclosed. In other words,

early stages of relationships are characterized by less intimate disclosure on less of a variety of topics. The less intimate disclosure during early stages of relationships is often more frequent, whereas disclosures progressively become less frequent and more intimate throughout the course of relationships (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Although Altman and Taylor (1973) originally proposed that disclosure must be examined in terms of its verbal, nonverbal, and environmental components, subsequent research on relationship development has focused on the verbal communication that is interchanged in disclosure (Burgoon & Hoobler, 2002). Therefore, this theory has not been fully utilized to account for a variety of communication contexts, such as mediated interpersonal communication.

The hypothesis that more intimate relationships are characterized by more breadth and depth of disclosure has received much support in communication literature (Chelune, Waring, Vosk, Sultan, & Ogden, 1984; Gore, Cross, & Morris, 2006; Laurenceau, Barrett, & Pietromonaco, 1998; Laurenceau, Barrett, & Rovine, 2005; Morton, 1978; Waring & Chelune, 1983). This finding may help explain disclosure patterns in blogs. Perhaps bloggers alter the amount or type of disclosure in their blogs as a result of who they believe is reading their blogs. If this prediction holds, social penetration theory would argue that bloggers would be more intimate in their disclosures when they perceive their target audience as more than a casual acquaintance. The intimacy of bloggers' target audiences may serve as a privacy rule, which CPM posits help manage disclosure patterns. In other words, perhaps bloggers consider the closeness of their relationships with target audience members when determining when and how to disclose private information.

Walther's (1996) hyperpersonal perspective is one CMC theory that has been employed in research on relating through new communication technologies. This theory was developed to explain instances in which mediated communication becomes more intimate than what would be expected in interpersonal contexts. However, the hyperpersonal perspective offers many competing predictions relative to social penetration theory, especially in terms of the relationship between anonymity and disclosure. These predictions will be tested in this study to conclude which approach – interpersonal or CMC – is more useful in the modern blogging context.

Another theory that has gained attention from the research community is communication privacy management theory (CPM; Petronio, 1991, 2002). According to this theory, people manage the ebb and flow of disclosure to protect themselves from risk. In doing so, they create rules to manage these metaphorical boundaries and subsequent decisions about disclosing private information. Three rule management processes help explain the process of managing private disclosure: the creation of privacy rules, the way boundaries are coordinated among and between people, and boundary turbulence (Petronio, 2002). This theory, influenced heavily by Baxter and Montgomery's (1996) dialectic of openness and closedness, has fueled a growing body of research. Although much CPM research focuses on FtF communication (Petronio, 2002), Child (2007) has recently applied the theory to privacy management in blogging disclosures. The nature of blogging, as well as other new communication technologies, makes this context a complex one to examine.

Blogs reflect a new communication technology, where the blurring and bending of the boundaries between interpersonal and mass communication is seen (Child, 2007).

Thus, the state of our current theoretical knowledge is being challenged. Although theories are often compartmentalized into FtF (e.g., CPM; Petronio, 2002) or mass communication contexts (e.g., uses and gratifications; Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974), the communication technology revolution is turning these traditional contexts on their heads and calling for a more integrated approach to the study of mediated communication. When examining the processes involved in blogging, it is clear that both interpersonal and mass communication connections can be made. When considering the blogging process – including bloggers' postings, audiences' perceptions, audiences' feedback, bloggers' responses, and blogging communities – one can see that this is a messy but fruitful area of research. Therefore, one study cannot fully examine all aspects of blogging. However, this study addresses the beginning stages of the process, namely the variables that affect bloggers' disclosure patterns with different audiences on their blogs.

Long a central focus of interpersonal research, private disclosure has more recently been examined in computer-mediated contexts. For example, Shaw, Hawkins, McTavish, Pingree, and Gustafson (2006) studied breast cancer online support groups. Shaw et al. (2006) found that women with breast cancer experienced positive emotional effects when they disclosed about their battles with breast cancer online. Leung (2002) and colleagues (Ma & Leung, 2006) examined private disclosure when using ICQ, an instant messaging system in which two or more people type messages to each other simultaneously. Another study of online disclosure revealed predictable patterns of disclosure in synchronous online chatting. As time progressed, participants provided more disclosure and supportive statements to others (Dietz-Uhler, Bishop-Clark, &

Howard, 2005). Although existing research does much to clarify the role of disclosure on the Internet, private disclosure in blogs specifically should be examined for at least three reasons. First, there are many possible ramifications of disclosure in blogs in bloggers' careers and social lives. Second, blogs are distinct when compared to other CMC channels. Thus, existing CMC research may not capture disclosure processes occurring on blogs. Finally, personal journal blogs dominate the blogosphere; however, research has largely focused on other types of blogs.

The most compelling reason scholars must address blogs is the possible ramifications of intimate disclosure in bloggers' offline lives. Bloggers who journal about personal issues disclose information to an audience that is often public and unknown. This situation may be problematic because bloggers are less able to control and manage their private information when it has been disclosed to a mass audience than when they disclose to an individual. Several authors have identified the potential threats blogging may have to bloggers' careers. Wagner (2006) warned that inappropriate disclosures in blogs about, for example, drunken escapades do not disappear during job searches. Potential future employers can easily retrieve that record, which may impact their decisions about job candidates. Case in point, Tribble (2005) outlined a faculty search at his institution in which candidates were eliminated when their blogs were discovered. According to an article in the *New York Times*, many potential employers are searching blogs and social networking websites for information about applicants (Finder, 2006). If applicants disclose parts of their identities that contradict the core values of a company, they may be passed up for interviews (Finder, 2006).

Once a job is landed, however, bloggers' careers still are not safe. Bloggers may post information that is sensitive to their jobs or could be construed as negative reflections of their employers. Matthew (2007), a blogger using MySpace, had this to say about his work situation:

> Today was one of those days where you could not help but get pissed off. I had to work today and our new clinical manager came in to see how the process worked. It started off okay and then she kept on telling me that I was not smart enough to make deicisions [sic] about which client should go into group. Hello! I have been doing this job for a while and know what to do. (para. 1)

Matthew, who lists his location and current employer in his blog profile, continued explaining the situation in detail, ending his post with, "I'm ready to scream!!!!!!!!!!!!" (Matthew, 2007, para. 1) and a picture of a child angrily thrusting his middle finger to the camera.

Participants in Viegas' (2005) study identified several instances where disclosure on their blogs resulted in punishments at work, from working weekends to suspension and even dismissal. Mark Jen, a former Google employee, was reportedly fired from his programming job when he blogged about his first week of work (Jelveh, 2005; Villano, 2005). Jen is not alone. Villano (2005) also detailed the dismissal of a graphic designer with a flair for describing office life. Explaining many corporations' positions concerning blogs, lawyer Daniel M. Klein said, "If your employer feels the blog makes you a poor representative of their corporate values, the executives have the freedom to disassociate themselves from you" (Villano, 2005, p. 10).

Aside from ramifications on bloggers' careers, disclosure on blogs may also negatively impact bloggers' social lives. Bortree (2005) identified several instances where her participants hurt their friends' feelings by posting information about them on their blogs. St. John (2003) reported about one blogger who insulted a friend without worry, thinking that the friend did not read blogs. Of course, there is an exception to every rule, as the friend did stumble upon the bloggers' negative post. Disclosing the negative opinions damaged the friendship (St. John, 2003). Other bloggers likely have similar stories to tell of the social implications of blogging, but these implications sometimes go to the extreme. In Bortree's (2005) ethnographic analysis of teenage girls' blogging activity, one participant identified a cyber stalker who kept tabs on her through her blog. Similarly, Hunter (2004) detailed her love rollercoaster that was fueled by information disclosed in her boyfriend's and another woman's blog.

Sometimes, revealing one's true opinions and attitudes can negatively impact relationships with others who may take offense to such disclosure. For example, Rachel (2006) disclosed her thoughts and feelings about politically correct language in the following blog entry:

> What is going on with this world and all this "P.C." bullshit? Oh I've about had it. People should stop wasting their lives trying to think of new ways to be offended. Call me a bitch, I really don't care, I am. Call me retarded, I don't care… sometimes I am. That doesn't mean that I'm actually mentally handicapped, its [sic] called slang. Soon they'll change the word DRUNK to Sobriety Impaired. I am not easily offended by any stretch of the imagination. Maybe this is why I have such a hard time understanding why people get so up in arms about stupid

shit. Let's not call the idiots idiots, lets [sic] call them "The Common Sense

Challenged." (para. 1)

It is possible that this disclosure may result in bad feelings from Rachel's friends who

may see the benefit in political correctness. Face-to-face, Rachel may not have disclosed

her opinions so freely, or she may not have disclosed her opinions at all.

Obviously, posting personal information on blogs can have serious ramifications,

both professionally and socially. Consequences are so great that some universities inform

incoming freshmen of the dangers of disclosure on blogs (Cohen, 2007). One

representative from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, said, "Many of us in the field

have put great time and energy into educating our students on the potential risks involved

with online communities and want them to realize how – once posted – that information

is out there for pretty much anyone to see and use" (Cohen, 2007, p. 26). Studying the

processes underlying disclosive blog posts – such as the impact of motives, audience

characteristics, and individual characteristics – may help explain and even predict future

problematic situations such as those discussed above.

Another reason researchers should study disclosure in blogs is that blogs are

unique from other forms of CMC. Their distinctiveness lies in two areas. First, bloggers'

audiences are less interactive than several other channels. In instant messaging, email,

chat rooms, and discussion boards, a response of some sort is expected. However, this is

not always the case on blogs. Although 87% of bloggers allow readers to post comments

on their blogs (Lenhart & Fox, 2006), each entry only receives an average of .30

comments (Herring et al., 2005). In other words, there is the potential for great

interactivity on blogs, but readers seldom seize the opportunity. In addition to being less

interactive, blog audiences are not well-defined. Bloggers write to an ambiguous audience which may include family, friends, coworkers, and strangers. As such, blogging is the epitome of what O'Sullivan (2005) called *masspersonal communication*. When bloggers post, they are communicating interpersonally to a mass audience. Although researchers have examined disclosure in one-to-one CMC (e.g., Leung, 2002; Ma & Leung, 2006; Peter, Valkenburg, & Schouten, 2005), this topic remains largely untouched when considering masspersonal communication.

A third reason disclosure on blogs should be studied is the apparent lack of scholarly attention personal journal blogs have received, despite the commonality of this practice. Research has shown that most bloggers write about their own personal musings. As discussed above, somewhere between 70% (Herring et al., 2005) and 83% (Viegas, 2005) of bloggers maintain personal journals, as opposed to filters or notebooks. In Viegas' (2005) study, 20% of the sample identified their blogs as a compilation of links (i.e., filters), whereas no one maintained a notebook blog. The 12 million American adults blogging today (Lenhart & Fox, 2006) have embraced this newer technology to communicate about their lives, resulting in a new interpersonal phenomenon that is ripe for study. However, research on blogs largely focuses on political and news blogs, with certain notable exceptions (e.g., Child, 2007; Huffaker & Calvert, 2005; Viegas, 2005). For example, Trammell, Williams, Postelnicu, and Landreville (2006) conducted a content analysis of the websites and blogs maintained by politicians in the 2004 Democratic primary race. They found that candidates often blogged about their supporters, thanking them for their efforts. Through these blogs, candidates were able to include readers in their campaign, publicize upcoming appearances, and request monetary

support (Trammell et al., 2006). Other research, such as Johnson and Kaye's (2004) study on blog credibility, examines the influence of blogs on the consumption of news. Although this line of research is fruitful, bloggers tend to write about their own lives more often than politics or news events. Person journal-type blogs should be explored further because of the discrepancy between the use of blogs in real life and the types of blogs that gain research attention.

Given the need for researching bloggers' disclosure behaviors, it is necessary to consider the possible predictors of disclosure in blogs. As previously discussed, the intimacy level of the target audience may affect bloggers' disclosure patterns. If social penetration theory holds true, bloggers' target audiences will influence their disclosure patterns in their blogs. Existing CMC research and theory supports a clear connection between the closeness of the relationship and disclosure (e.g., Dietz-Uhler et al., 2005; Valkenburg & Peter, 2007; Walther, 1992). However, intimacy and disclosure remains to be tested in the masspersonal context of blogging.

An early exploration of blogging should not ignore the underlying motives for this communicative behavior. In interviews with 23 bloggers, Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, and Swartz (2004) identified several reasons bloggers blog. Motivations included: "documenting one's life; providing commentary and opinions; expressing deeply felt emotions; articulating ideas through writing; and forming and maintaining community forums" (Nardi et al., 2004, p. 43). These motivations are supported by Lenhart and Fox's (2006) quantitative findings from a large, national sample. Expressing creativity and sharing personal experiences represent the two most prominent motivations for blogging. Other reasons were to share knowledge and skills, to motivate others, to

entertain others, to archive important information, to influence others, to network, and to earn an income (Lenhart & Fox, 2006). Apparently some of the most important reasons people blog include social functions that likely elicit disclosure. The uses and gratifications perspective (U&G) may help illuminate more about the motives for disclosing private information in blogs.

Other factors to consider when examining disclosure in blogs are the individual characteristics that derive from social and psychological origins. According to U&G, social and psychological antecedents, such as age, gender, loneliness, and unwillingness to communicate, affect the ways in which media channels are used and the subsequent effects of these channels (Katz et al., 1974; Rosengren, 1974; A. M. Rubin, 2002). Additionally, social penetration theory suggests that individual differences do contribute to social penetration processes (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Existing CMC research suggests that some of these variables impact peoples' disclosure in blogs (Bortree, 2005; Lenhart & Fox, 2006) and online disclosure as a whole (Leung, 2002; Ma & Leung, 2006; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Peter et al., 2005; Punyanunt-Carter, 2006; Strizke, Nguyen, & Durkin, 2004). Therefore, bloggers' individual characteristics are important to consider when studying disclosure in blogs.

It is important to remember that CMC channels are continually changing. In fact, it is possible that by the time the findings of this study are disseminated, blogs will have evolved into something different than they were at the time of this writing. Rather than focusing on the characteristics of new technologies, Herring (2004) called for scholars to "take a step back from the parade of passing technologies and consider more deeply the question of what determines people's use of mediated communication" (p. 34).

Regardless of the changing nature of communication technologies, it is expected that this study will reveal the underlying motivations impacting bloggers' disclosures and the effects of the target audience on disclosure behaviors. Although blogs serve as the focus of this study, findings will hopefully help explain online disclosure more generally, which may illuminate future studies.

New communication technologies such as blogging merit further research on existing interpersonal and computer-mediated communication theories, such as social penetration theory and the hyperpersonal perspective. Disclosure in blogs should be examined because disclosure can have negative implications for the real lives of bloggers, both in their careers and social lives. Additionally, blogging is unique from other studied CMC channels, including instant messaging, chat rooms, and discussion boards. Finally, personal journal blogs are most frequently maintained, yet scholarly research largely ignores this ubiquitous type of blog. Understanding disclosure processes in blogs – including the potential effects of the target audience, which motives predict disclosure patterns, and how individual characteristics affect disclosure – may further clarify the role of theory in CMC and have practical implications for bloggers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to develop and test a model predicting dimensions of disclosure in blogs (see Figure 2). Table 1 presents the conceptual definitions of the major variables of interest in this study, which have been introduced above and will be expanded upon in the literature review.

Table 1

Conceptual Definitions of Major Variables of Interest

Term	Definition
Blog	Privately-managed website that is frequently updated and organized in reverse chronological order (Herring, 2004). For the purposes of this study, only personal journal blogs will be examined, which are composed of short posts concerning the blogger's life and internal self (Blood, 2002).
Self-disclosure	Personal information about the self that is revealed, which may include thoughts, experiences, and feelings (Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis, 1993).
Private disclosure	Private information about self or others that is shared (Petronio, 2002). Private disclosure is a more inclusive term than self-disclosure because it encompasses more types of information that can be shared.
Motives	The reasons why people engage in communicative behaviors. Motives stem from people's felt needs, and they guide behavior (R. B. Rubin & Martin, 1998).
Audience characteristics	Aspects of the audience that may affect disclosure patterns in blogs. In this study, audience characteristics include two variables: perceived intimacy with the audience and length of relationship with the audience.
Individual characteristics	Aspects of the individual that may affect disclosure patterns in blogs. Specifically, individual characteristics will include loneliness, disclosiveness, age, and gender.

Figure 2

Proposed Model of Disclosure in Blogs
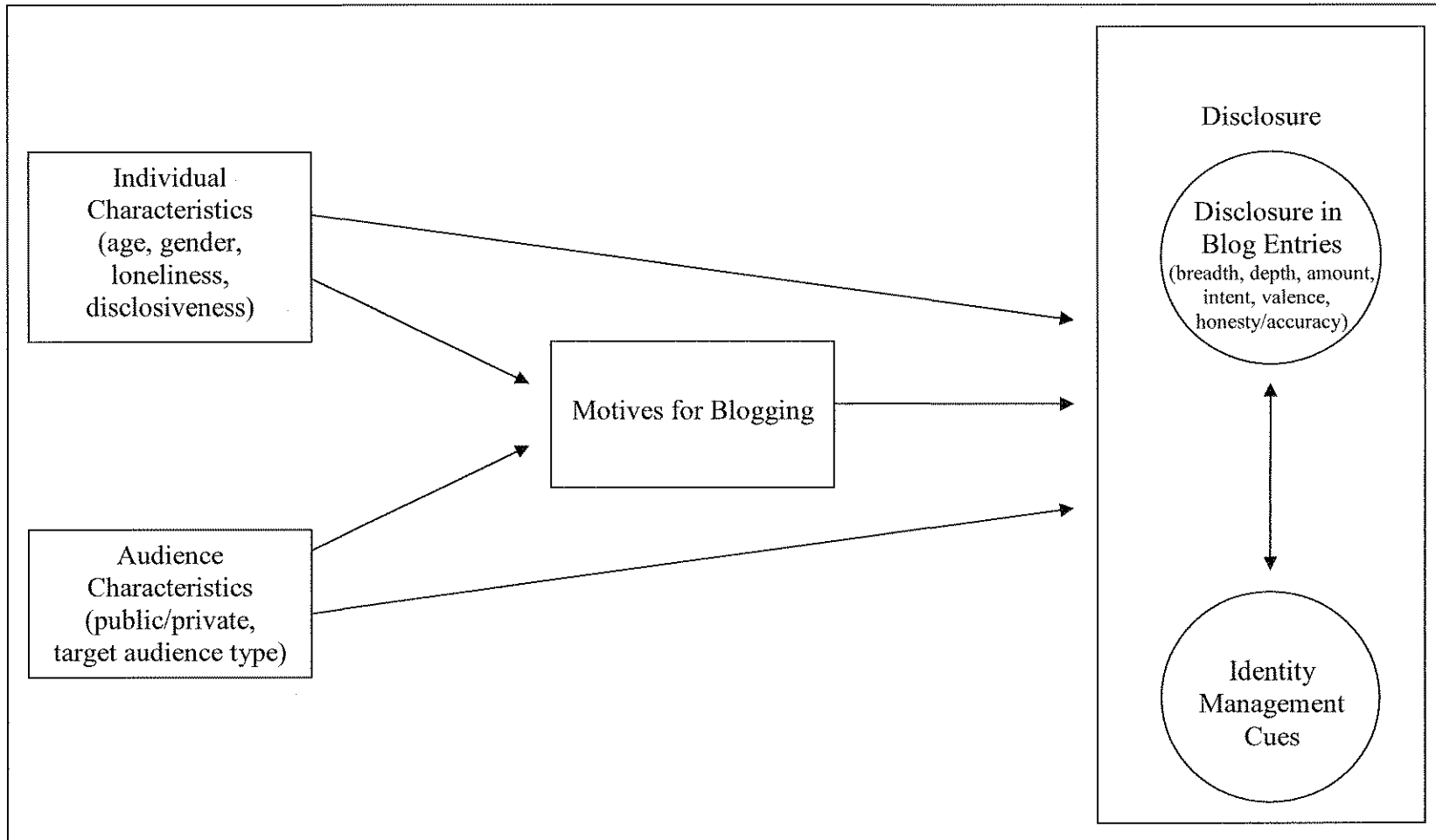
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to propose and test a model predicting disclosure

dimensions in blogs. Toward this end, the major tenets of CPM, social penetration theory,

and the hyperpersonal perspective are presented. Then the dependent variable –

disclosure in blogs – is discussed. Finally, the variables predicting disclosure patterns in

blogs are explored.

Theoretical Perspectives

Communication Privacy Management Theory

Influenced by Altman's (1975) boundary metaphor, Petronio (1991, 2002)

pioneered CPM as a practical theory explaining the process of privacy management. This

rules-based theory provides a framework for understanding the ways in which people

make decisions about disclosure, or privacy management. An underlying current of this

theory is the dialectical tension between openness and closedness (Petronio, 2002).

Bloggers have a desire to be open and disclose information, and yet they also need to

keep some information private. Five theoretical suppositions and three rule management

processes stem from these basic assumptions.

The first supposition states that private information is what makes up disclosures

(Petronio, 2002). When bloggers disclose their distaste for a particular professor, for

instance, that information is sensitive and not readily available to others. Second, people

construct metaphoric boundaries to distinguish public and private (Petronio, 2002).

Negative feelings about a professor are not typically disclosed to anyone and everyone;

instead, this information is protected within a boundary that defines this information as

private and sensitive. These boundaries may be around bloggers' information about themselves, which, according to Petronio's (2002) third supposition, makes this information owned by the bloggers themselves. There is a right to have this information private and controlled by the individual. However, some private information is about others, and thus these boundaries are co-owned. Therefore, the rules for privacy must be negotiated between the co-owners. For example, blogging about a friend's misfortune is information owned by the friend, too. When bloggers choose to reveal private information on their blogs, they are allowing others to co-own the disclosures (Petronio, 2002). When information is co-owned, there is less control over private information (Petronio, 2002).

The fourth supposition of CPM describes processes that underlie the way people make rules about how they will manage the private information to which they are privy (Petronio, 2002). The *personal management system* governs information that people alone have a right to. This is typically information about the self (traditionally called self-disclosure), which is managed through privacy rule foundations. However, a *collective management system* exists that directs decisions about co-owned information (Petronio, 2002). Co-owners must negotiate boundary coordination by establishing and adhering to rules. When coordination is not smooth, it is termed *boundary turbulence* (Petronio, 2002).

Petronio's (2002) fifth supposition describes the dialectical tension between openness and closedness, as previously described. In their blogs, people must struggle with the need to share information and the desire to keep information private. These five suppositions and three management processes (privacy rule foundations, boundary

coordination, and boundary turbulence) compose the bulk of CPM. However, this study

most clearly lends itself to only a few of these principles.

Boundary coordination, as identified above, is a rule management process that

describes the decisions people make about sharing information with others, managing

both personal and collective boundaries (Petronio, 2002). Petronio (2002) explained that

when managing their boundaries and making disclosure rules, they consider their

audience. In other words, bloggers' perceived audiences play a role in their decisions

about private disclosure. Social penetration theory offers predictions about how the

audience may affect bloggers' disclosure patterns, which is explained later.

Within the process of boundary coordination, the concept of *boundary*

permeability helps illustrate the impact of disclosures on people's personal and collective

boundaries. More permeable boundaries are those in which information is more freely

shared (Petronio, 2002). Permeable boundaries are more open, and the information that is

exchanged through these boundaries is characterized by more breadth and depth

(Petronio, 2002). Also, more information is exchanged through permeable boundaries

than non-permeable boundaries (Petronio, 2002).

In disclosing private information, bloggers engage in another boundary

coordination operation, *boundary linking*. Boundary linkages open boundaries and

include the audience into co-ownership of information. Rules for establishing linkages

with others are based on many factors, including the level of intimacy the discloser feels

with the audience (Petronio, 2002). Social penetration theory lends predictions to this

area of CPM; specifically, it is expected that disclosure with intimate audiences is

characterized by more depth and breadth (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Given the CPM

framework previously described, the following section turns to specific predictions about disclosing behavior in blogs by first reviewing the central tenets of social penetration theory.

Social Penetration Theory

CPM provides a structure for understanding the many processes underlying blog disclosures. However, clear predictions about disclosure in blogs can be made from social penetration theory. Although social penetration predicts relationship development through FtF communication, this traditional theory should be tested in the new media environment to determine its utility in explaining disclosure in blogs. Therefore, social penetration theory is used to derive predictions about disclosure behaviors on blogs.

Posited by Altman and Taylor (1973), social penetration theory examines the disclosure patterns that characterize relationship development. (For a review of disclosure research prior to social penetration theory, see Pearce & Sharp, 1973.) This theory "has been one of the most widely accepted descriptions of how disclosure functions in the development of relationships" (Derlega et al., 1993, p. 23). One major assumption of this theory is that everyone has a personality structure which includes all of a person's ideas, opinions, beliefs, emotions, attitudes, and values (Altman & Taylor, 1973). In other words, this is all of the information about oneself. In social penetration, people develop relationships by allowing others to see more varied and intimate parts of their personality structure (Altman & Taylor, 1973).

Using the metaphor of an onion, Altman and Taylor (1973) explained personality structure in terms of breadth and depth. Imagine chopping an onion into wedges, as one would cut up an apple. Each wedge represents a different topic and type of information

about the self, and the breadth of information is the different wedges or topics, such as academics, politics, and sex. Simultaneously, an onion also has layers, which illustrates the depth of information. Within each topic, there is more superficial information in the outer layers of personality structure, and the deeper the layer, the more intimate or personal the information is (Altman & Taylor, 1973). For example, the outer layer of the politics part of personality may include information about whether or not a person is of age to vote. For some, political party affiliation may be housed in the outer layers of personality. However, more intimate or deeper layers of information may include for whom one voted, opinions about particular issues, and personal ideology about how society should run.

One primary hypothesis of social penetration theory is that relationship development, fueled by penetrating the personality structure, is a gradual and systematic process (Altman & Taylor, 1973). It is posited that early exchanges are more superficial, such as those pieces of information in outer layers of the personality structure. As time progresses, the information disclosed is characterized by more breadth and depth (Altman & Taylor, 1973). This gradual process of increasing depth and breadth as time progresses had been supported by numerous studies at the time of the theory's inception (Altman & Haythorn, 1965; Taylor & Altman, 1975; Taylor, Altman, & Sorrentino, 1969; Taylor, Altman, & Wheeler, 1973). Disclosure patterns also differ depending on the intimacy of the relationship. Altman and Taylor (1973) assume that more intimate relationships are characterized by more breadth and depth of disclosure.

Another assumption of this theory is that disclosure is often reciprocal (Altman & Taylor, 1973). In other words, as one person discloses, the recipient will respond with a

similar type of disclosure. Although there are certain situational variables that may offset this norm of reciprocity, disclosure often occurs in a tit-for-tat fashion.

To determine whether or not penetration will continue, people assess the rewards and costs of the interaction. Drawing from social exchange theories, such as the one forwarded by Thibaut and Kelley (1959), social penetration theory assumes that people will be more likely to continue social penetration processes when they perceive more rewards than costs from that relationship, and additionally expect that there will be future rewards.

Even though penetration is gradual, social penetration theory posits that relationships develop at different rates at different times. Supported by earlier research (Taylor, 1968), Altman and Taylor (1973) assumed that typically, relationship development is more rapid in beginning stages of relationships, primarily because of the easy exchange of superficial information. Outer layers of the personality structure are easier to penetrate because there is less risk associated with the disclosure of peripheral information. On the other hand, relationship development slows down in later stages of relationships because people are more hesitant to reveal deeper information about themselves (Altman & Taylor, 1973).

Although Altman and Taylor (1973) admit that it is difficult to predict a linear set of stages, they assumed that most relationships go through four phases. In the first stage, *orientation,* superficial information is shared quickly with little risk associated. In the *exploratory affective exchange,* however, the information disclosed is characterized by more breadth and depth. Closer relationships in which more intimate information is exchanged more freely are in the third stage, *affective exchange.* At this stage, there is a

shared history. In the fourth stage, *stable exchange,* people in a relationship can exchange

the most intimate information, and they are able to both interpret and predict one

another's feelings and behaviors (Altman & Taylor, 1973).

<center>*Hyperpersonal Perspective*</center>

Interpersonal communication theories, such as CPM and social penetration

theory, may do much to explain disclosure processes in blogs. However, existing CMC

theory should also be employed in this study to determine which theoretical perspective

is most useful in the context of blogging. Walther's work on social information

processing theory (SIP; Walther, 1992) and the hyperpersonal perspective (Walther,

1996) is used to ground this study in CMC theory.

SIP tackles the criticism that the lack of nonverbal cues in CMC limits the

relational rewards people can gain through this medium. Walther (1992) argued that

Internet users adapt to the medium by expressing affinity through text, and one of the

primary ways affinity is communicated textually is through increasingly intimate, varied,

positive disclosure. As a result, when people wish to communicate affection online, they

are more likely to use disclosure than when they communicate FtF. This proposition of

SIP was supported in an experiment by Walther, Loh, and Granka (2005). Although

subjects expressing affinity in FtF settings primarily used nonverbal means (e.g., smiling,

gaze, laughing), those in the CMC condition adopted verbal means to communicate

affinity, such as revealing private information and explicitly stating positive feelings

(Walther et al., 2005).

SIP allows for relationships to be established via CMC, but Walther's (1996)

hyperpersonal perspective takes CMC a step further, explaining situations where CMC is

more positive and intimate than is to be expected. This perspective is one focus of this study. Hyperpersonal communication is that which is more personal than one would expect in interpersonal communication FtF (Walther, 1996). Specifically, hyperpersonal communication is characterized by more positive disclosures, emotional communication, and statements of affection (Walther, 1996). This perspective has been used to explain communication and relationship development in online dating (e.g., Gibbs, Ellison, & Heino, 2006) and friendship formation on the Internet (e.g., Henderson & Gilding, 2004).

According to the hyperpersonal perspective, four features of CMC amplify the possibilities for hyperpersonal communication. First, senders can present an optimized self (Walther, 1996). This ability to present a better-than-average presentation of oneself is due to two characteristics of CMC – reduced communication cues and asynchroneity of communication. Online communicators have fewer nonverbal cues than those who communicate FtF. In blogging specifically, bloggers are tied primarily to text, pictures, and sometimes video (Herring, 2004; Lenhart & Fox, 2006). The fewer cues present to tie a person to a specific offline identity, the freer that person is to portray an optimized self. In other words, bloggers may inflate themselves online if they do not believe their audience members can check that information against bloggers' offline identities. Asynchronous communication, in addition to reduced communication cues, lends itself to optimized self-presentation. If communicators have limitless time to construct messages about themselves online, there is time to edit their statements and ensure that they are portraying their best possible selves.

The second feature of CMC that sets the stage for hyperpersonal communication is the tendency for receivers to idealize their perceptions of senders (Walther, 1996). In

the context of blogging, this means that audience members reading a person's blog are more likely to believe and inflate the blogger's optimized self-presentation than a person meeting the blogger FtF. Third, asynchronous communication allows online interactants to edit their messages, spend more time thinking before typing, and communicate at a time most fitting for them (Walther, 1996). This feature of CMC results in more positive communication than one may expect FtF. The fourth factor contributing to hyperpersonal communication is feedback and its affects on the communication process (Walther, 1996). In online communication, receivers' idealization of senders' already optimized self-presentation is communicated to senders through feedback. Building off this feedback, senders and receivers continually build off the positivity of one another, until their messages are more affectionate and interpersonal than they would be FtF.

When all four of these features – senders' ability to optimize their self-presentation, receivers' idealization of senders, asynchronous communication, and an intensifying feedback loop – are present, interactants may engage in intensely intimate disclosure (Walther, 1996). When applied to blogging, the hyperpersonal perspective offers predictions that compete with those of social penetration theory. CPM, social penetration theory, and the hyperpersonal perspective serve as the theoretical perspectives of this study. The next section presents the conceptual model of blog disclosure presented in Figure 1, beginning with the dependent variable.

<div align="center">Disclosure in Blogs</div>

Long a topic of research in interpersonal communication, disclosure is considered to be integral in the establishment and maintenance of relationships (Derlega et al., 1993). Disclosure lends itself to relationship development (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Upon the

establishment of relationships, openness has been identified as a relationship maintenance

strategy (Stafford & Canary, 1991), and social penetration theory assumes that

relationship depenetration or dissolution is marked by less varied and intimate disclosure

(Altman & Taylor, 1973). Although traditional FtF research has focused heavily on the

intricacies of disclosure in relationships (Dindia, 2002), it is unclear whether or not these

findings hold true in a mediated context, such as blogging.

According to social penetration theory, the major dimensions of disclosure are

breadth and depth, as previously described (Altman & Taylor, 1973). However, another

frequently-used conceptualization broadens our understanding of disclosure to five

dimensions: intended disclosure, amount, valence (positiveness), depth, and

honesty/accuracy (Wheeless, 1978). Wheeless' (1978) five dimensions do not include

breadth, which theoretically is one crucial dimension of disclosure to consider; therefore,

this study will consider disclosure to have six dimensions: breadth, depth, amount, intent,

valence, and honesty/accuracy. Interestingly, blogs often include disclosure characterized

by a large amount and more depth, despite the masspersonal nature of this type of

communication (Bortree, 2005; Viegas, 2005).

When applied to blogging, disclosure is conceptualized to include two

components: verbal disclosure in blog entries and identity management cues. The first

component consists of the verbal disclosure made in the content of blog entries. Blog

content, the entries that are constructed on a regular basis, conform clearly with

traditional methods of defining disclosure. Much research on disclosure in blogs focuses

on this component of disclosure in blogs (e.g., Bortree, 2005; Hevern, 2004; Trammell &

Keshelashvili, 2005). However, some researchers have recognized that blog entries are

not the only way bloggers reveal themselves on their blogs (e.g., Herring et al., 2005; Huffaker & Calvert, 2005; Lenhart & Fox, 2006; Viegas, 2005). Identity management cues (Viegas, 2005) consist of information identified on bloggers' profiles that point toward a true offline identity. For example, a person's name, age, location, schools attended, and employer would be considered identity management cues. Additionally, any pictures of the blogger can disclose information about a person's offline identity. Identity management cues are more stable pieces of a blog, whereas disclosure in blog entries is more variable day-to-day. Regardless, both of these components should be considered when examining disclosure on blogs.

Verbal Disclosure in Blog Entries

Given the freedom to construct blogs around anything they wish, bloggers more often than not simply talk about themselves. In a content analysis of "A-list" (or most popular) blogs, Trammell and Keshelashvili (2005) found that over 80% of bloggers posted details about their day, almost 80% discussed thoughts and feelings, over 45% discussed politics, and over 40% discussed friends and family members. Teenage girls in Bortree's (2005) ethnography mostly shared the details of their daily activities, as well as disclosing the things that made them worried or upset. In another qualitative study of blogs, Hevern (2004) further categorized self-focused posts into narrations of daily life, self-colloquies disclosing internal thoughts and feelings, and lists of personal facts through online surveys or quizzes. It is clear that personal experiences dominate the content of most blogs.

Disclosure is especially characteristic of blogs when one considers the scope of this study – personal journals. This study is centered on personal journal blogs, which are

composed of short posts about the blogger's internal self (Blood, 2002). The focus of this type of blog is the self; therefore, it is logical that personal journals are characterized by private disclosures. In a content analysis of personal journals and filters (blogs concerning external content; Blood, 2002), Herring and Paolillo (2006) found that the genre of blogs significantly impacted the features of the blog entries. When gender was controlled for, personal journals were typically written about internal events in the first-person. On the other hand, filter blogs were usually about external events, written in the third-person (Herring & Paolillo, 2006). These findings suggest that a personal journal blog is an appropriate context for studying issues of disclosure, due in part to the personal nature of this blog genre.

One consistent finding in research is the large amount of intimate information that is disclosed in CMC relative to face-to-face (FtF) communication (e.g., Joinson, 2001; Parks & Floyd, 1996; Tidwell & Walther, 2002; Wallace, 1999). Tidwell and Walther (2002) tested the effects of CMC on disclosure as compared to FtF communication. They reasoned that people in initial interactions specifically engage in more intimate disclosure as a means of reducing uncertainty about the other person. Tidwell and Walther (2002) assumed that interactants understand uncertainty reduction theory's reliance on reciprocity of disclosure; if a person wants to reduce uncertainty about the conversational partner, he or she can self-disclose information, and the interaction partner should follow with a similar level of disclosure (Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

In an experiment involving 158 participants, Tidwell and Walther (2002) found that people communicating through CMC self-disclosed more than those in the FtF condition. In addition to differences in the amount of disclosure, CMC interactants also

disclosed more intimate information than FtF conversational partners. This tendency to disclose more information about themselves while online than offline may translate into self-disclosive blog entries, which become "a public record of one's private thoughts" (Mazur, 2005, p. 180).

Research has confirmed the existence of large amounts of intimate disclosure on blogs. For example, 25% of Viegas' (2005) respondents said they posted very personal information on their blogs fairly often. Less than 20% claimed they never posted intimate information on their blog (Viegas, 2005). The teenage girls in Bortree's (2005) ethnography disclosed very personal information. This information included despair and frustrations, as well as other feelings the respondents said they would not openly disclose FtF.

In addition to disclosure in blogs, research has explored disclosure through other modes of CMC. For example, Ma and Leung (2006) found that as people use more instant messaging (IM; synchronous one-on-one CMC), they self-disclose more information through IM. Another study by Leung (2002) found that those who use IM more are also more intimate, personal, open, and aware of their disclosure over this communication channel. Other research has explored disclosure practices in online dating (e.g., Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006; Gibbs et al., 2006), online support groups (e.g., Shaw et al., 2006), and chat rooms (e.g., Dietz-Uhler et al., 2005). A study of teenagers' online communication found that 30% of teens believe that the Internet is a more effective arena for disclosure than FtF communication (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007).

Attributes of the channel itself may allow for more disclosure than is typical in FtF communication, as described in the hyperpersonal perspective (Walther, 1996). This

disclosure may or may not be honest and accurate. Suler (2004) hypothesized that there is an online disinhibition effect that allows for more disclosure online than FtF. Online disinhibition can be divided into positive (benign) and negative (toxic) disinhibition. Benign disinhibition includes personal disclosure and unusual generosity or kindness shown online. On the other hand, the use of pornography and flaming (harsh, critical language) are examples of toxic disinhibition (Suler, 2004).

Suler (2004) explained that benign disinhibition may allow for a level of self-exploration, understanding, and development through disclosure that is otherwise stifled in FtF communication. Factors impacting disinhibition include anonymity, invisibility, asynchronicity, the creation of a conversational partner in one's mind, the creation of an online reality, and the equalization of status (Suler, 2004).

The above discussion reviewed research on online disclosure. When applied to blogs, the conventional understanding of disclosure most obviously refers to verbal disclosure written in blog entries. However, upon returning to the concept of disclosure, it is clear that bloggers also reveal information through more stable characteristics of their blogs. These identity management cues – such as name, age, gender, and occupation – are explored next.

Identity Management Cues

Although revealing private information in blogs is the type of disclosure most apparent in blog entries, studies have shown that bloggers also actively manage their identity management cues. Identity management cues are true characteristics of bloggers' offline identities that they may reveal in their blog profiles or biographies (Viegas, 2005). Perhaps the first cue bloggers must consider when creating a blog is their name. Bloggers

may choose to use their full name, part of their name, a pseudonym, or remain completely anonymous. Lenhart and Fox (2006) found that 43% of their national sample used their real name on their blogs and 55% used a pseudonym. Over 67% of the blogs Herring et al. (2005) content analyzed provided the bloggers' real names, and more than 28% of bloggers used a pseudonym (Herring et al., 2005). It appears, from research by Huffaker and Calvert (2005), that teenagers may be more willing to disclose their offline identities through revealing their names. Seventy percent of the 70 teen blogs examined provided a first name, and 20% used full names. On the other hand, the most popular bloggers were even more likely to disclose their full names. A content analysis of 209 A-list blogs revealed that over 83% use the bloggers' full names, about 8% used only a first name, and another 8% used a nickname (Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005).

Bloggers' real names signify a large part of their offline identities. However, other identity management cues also may be disclosed on blogs. Almost all bloggers disclose their gender on their blogs (Herring et al., 2005; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005), and a majority of bloggers reveal their age (Herring et al., 2005; Huffaker & Calvert, 2005) and location (Herring et al., 2005). Herring et al. (2005) found that 55% of bloggers disclosed their occupation. The majority of bloggers in their sample identified themselves as students, followed by employees in a technology-related field.

As the above discussion shows, bloggers appear to be quite disclosive of their biographical information. However, Herring et al. (2005) found that they are much less likely to post a picture of themselves. Only 17.5% of their sample included a picture of themselves on their blogs. Perhaps providing the nonverbal cues related to physical

appearance is too intimate for many bloggers; however, other identity management cues also link their blogs with their offline identities.

When establishing a blog, bloggers may be prompted to provide certain identity management cues. For example, when creating a MySpace account (www.myspace.com), potential bloggers are prompted to enter their name, age, location, occupation, schools attended, and other information. Although bloggers may choose to leave these blank, prompting them to enter such information may impact their decisions concerning identity management cues. On the other hand, people who choose Blogger (www.blogger.com) are given an open space to say whatever they wish about themselves. In this case, bloggers may feel freer to disclose or withhold identity management cues.

Identity management cues, as more stable components of blogs, communicate information about the blogger's offline identity. Therefore, examination of identity management cues is crucial in any study on blog disclosure. In the next section, the relationships between the dimensions of disclosure in blog entries and identity management cues are explored.

Relationships Between Components of Disclosure in Blogs

The possible relationships between the components of blog disclosure can be predicted using existing interpersonal and CMC theories and research. However, bloggers' perceptions of who their target audiences are may impact the relationships among the dimensions of disclosure in blog entries (amount, breadth, depth, valence, honesty/accuracy, intent) and identity management cues. For example, in the instance where bloggers believe their audiences are composed of mostly intimate others, one may expect that they would be willing to disclose more information about themselves in both

identity management cues and in blog entries (Altman & Taylor, 1973). However, social penetration theory predicts that bloggers will be more hesitant to disclose to audiences with whom they lack a close, established relationship (Altman & Taylor, 1973).

This prediction is grounded in the assumption of FtF communication. In CMC, however, there is one caveat: anonymity. If bloggers believe that strangers are reading their blogs, they may only disclose more intimate, honest information in blog entries under the protection of anonymity (i.e., less identity management cues disclosed; Bailenson, Yee, Merget, & Schroeder, 2006; Chiou, 2006; Joinson, 2001; McKenna & Bargh, 2000; Suler, 2004; Walther, 1996). Thus, target audience type should be controlled for to test the relationship between the number of identity management cues disclosed on the amount of disclosure in blog entries. The potential effects of the target audience are explored in a later section as independent variables. First, however, the relationships of identity management cues with each dimension of disclosure in blog entries are explored. Social penetration theory and the hyperpersonal perspective will offer competing hypotheses for these dimensions.

The tenets of social penetration theory can be used to explore how the number of identity management cues disclosed will relate to bloggers' amount, breadth, depth, valence, honesty/accuracy, and intent of disclosure in their blog entries. In this study, disclosure in blogs is conceptualized to include two components – verbal disclosure in blog entries and identity management cues. Each of these components may be utilized to disclose private information. In one study of bloggers, Viegas (2005) found that a high proportion of participants said they disclosed very personal information on their blogs. Additionally, 55% of their sample used their real names, as well as other identity

management cues. Although, it is unclear from this study whether bloggers who disclose identity management cues were more likely to disclose personal information, this relationship is likely. Social penetration theory does not make any distinction between these components, and if this theory holds true in this study, it is expected that bloggers will disclose a certain amount of information through both identity management cues and blog entries. Therefore, the amount of disclosures made in blog entries should be positively related to the number of identity management cues presented in bloggers' profiles or bios.

Social penetration theory assumes that amount, breadth, and depth of disclosure vary together as a relationship progresses (Altman & Taylor, 1973). In other words, an intimate relationship is characterized by more breadth and depth of disclosure. It makes sense, then, that at any given time in a relationship, the amount, breadth, and depth of disclosure should match one another.

In social penetration theory, valence is explained in terms of relationship development. Specifically, early stages of relationships are characterized by more positive disclosure about the self (Altman & Taylor, 1973). As a relationship progresses, people feel more comfortable to disclose even negative aspects of themselves, as well as the positive (Altman & Taylor, 1973). However, this tenet does not shed light on the relationship between identity management cues and disclosure in blog entries. Therefore, a research question is asked about this dimension.

In this study, disclosure in blogs is conceptualized to include two components – verbal disclosure in blog entries and identity management cues. According to social penetration theory, communicators may use several channels to disclose information,

such as the environment, nonverbal cues, and verbal cues (Altman & Taylor, 1973). In the context of blogging, blog entries and bloggers' identity management cues can both be utilized to disclose what the bloggers' wish. These two components should work in concert with one another to allow bloggers to disclose in ways they wish to disclose. For example, being honest in identity management cues (which is inherent in the definition of identity management cues) should result in honesty in blog entries, simply because these are two components of the same concept – disclosure.

The intent of disclosure is defined as how aware bloggers are of their disclosure in blog entries. A search of the literature and consideration of social penetration theory revealed no clear predictions of the relationship between this variable and identity management cues. Therefore, a research question is asked.

Although social penetration theory sheds light on the possible relationships between identity management cues and dimensions of disclosure in blog entries, the hyperpersonal perspective, a well-established perspective in the field of CMC, suggests competing hypotheses. Hyperpersonal communication is characterized by more socially desirable messages, such as positive disclosures, statements of affection, and messages with positive emotion (Walther, 1996). The hyperpersonal perspective relies on visual anonymity to explain instances in which individuals communicate more positively than they would FtF (Walther, 1996). Without visual anonymity, people would not be able to create optimal self-presentations; a part of their true selves would be present without anonymity. Additionally, the receiver would not be as likely to idealize the sender because there would be hard proof of the sender's offline identity. Although the hyperpersonal perspective focuses on visual anonymity, it is expected that other identity

management cues other than picture, such as one's name, age, occupation, and location, would also contribute to the overall anonymity of the blogger.

Suler (2004) also identified the impact of anonymity on CMC. Dissociative anonymity is one factor that contributes to the online disinhibition effect. "When people have the opportunity to separate their actions online from their in-person lifestyle and identity, they feel less vulnerable about self-disclosing and acting out" (Suler, 2004, p. 322). When anonymous, people are not held accountable in the offline world for their communication online; therefore, they are able to disclose more information, which is often more intimate, than they may disclose FtF (Suler, 2004).

CMC research has supported the predictions and explanations mentioned above. In a series of three experiments, Joinson (2001) found that people who tried to solve a problem through CMC spontaneously disclosed more information about themselves than those who communicated FtF. Additionally, people disclosed more information about themselves when there was visual anonymity than when they were shown pictures of their conversational partners. Joinson (2001) reasoned that under conditions of anonymity, a person's private self-awareness is salient and public self-awareness is diminished. Therefore, participants were less likely to consider others' reactions to their communication, and they were more likely to disclose intimate information.

Chiou (2006) examined sexual disclosure in a survey of 216 adolescents. The findings confirmed the relationship between anonymity and disclosure. Participants were more willing to disclose private information about sexual behavior under conditions of anonymity than when their identities were made apparent.

In another study linking anonymity with disclosure, Bailenson et al. (2006) examined the impact of avatars on disclosure behaviors. An avatar is a digital representation of a CMC user. In this experiment, unacquainted participants asked one another questions that were likely to elicit disclosures through CMC. Bailenson et al. (2006) placed their subjects into one of three conditions. In the voice-only condition, participants spoke to one another through audio software while viewing a blank screen. In the videoconferencing condition, they spoke to one another using the software while simultaneously viewing a digital image of their conversational partner. Finally, in the emotibox condition, participants again spoke through the audio software, but instead of viewing an actual image of the other person, they saw a changing avatar that responded to the emotions on the speaker's face. Results of this study showed that participants self-disclosed more information both verbally and nonverbally through their facial expressions in the voice-only condition (Bailenson et al., 2006). In other words, participants were more open when they were under conditions of visual anonymity.

Much of the research reviewed above tested the effects of visual anonymity. However, it is assumed that the effects of visual anonymity will also explain the impact of other cues contributing to anonymity, namely identity management cues such as name, age, occupation, location, and education. Given the tenets of the hyperpersonal perspective and existing research on anonymity and disclosure, several predictions are forwarded. Specifically, it is expected that when bloggers disclose more identity management cues, they will disclose less information in their blog entries. Additionally, disclosing more identity management cues should result in less breadth of disclosure, or variety of topics. Much of the research using hyperpersonal communication simply

measures the amount and depth dimensions of disclosure. However, it seems reasonable

that larger amounts of disclosure would be characterized by a greater breadth of

disclosure. The core assumptions of the hyperpersonal perspective would suggest that

when bloggers disclose more identity management cues, disclosures in their blog entries

would be less intimate and less positive.

Walther's (1996) hyperpersonal perspective also sheds light on the expected

relationship between identity management cues and honesty/accuracy of disclosure in

blog entries. Optimized, or less-than-honest, presentation of the self can occur under

conditions of anonymity, primarily because there is less accountability (Walther, 1996).

If bloggers' online identities, established through their selective disclosure in blog

entries, is not connected with their true offline identity through revealing identity

management cues, they have more freedom to be dishonest. Alternatively, if bloggers

disclose their age, location, occupation, and appearance on their profiles or bios, they

may feel compelled to be more honest.

Competing Hypotheses and Research Questions

Based on the theories and research reviewed above, several competing hypotheses

are presented. The first concerns the relationship between disclosed identity management

cues and the amount of disclosures in blog entries.

H1: The number of identity management cues disclosed will be associated with

the amount of disclosure in blog entries.

The second hypothesis tests the relationship between identity management cues

and the breadth of disclosure in blog entries.

H2: The number of identity management cues disclosed will be associated with the breadth of disclosure in blog entries.

Third, social penetration theory and the hyperpersonal theory suggest alternate predictions concerning the depth of disclosure in blog entries.

H3: The number of identity management cues disclosed will be associated with the depth of disclosure in blog entries.

Although the hyperpersonal perspective clearly suggests that bloggers' disclosures will be more positive in their blog entries when fewer identity management cues are disclosed, social penetration theory does not offer a prediction related to this dimension. Therefore, the following research question was posed:

RQ1: How will the number of identity management cues disclosed be associated with the valence of disclosure in blog entries?

Unlike the other dimensions, social penetration theory and the hyperpersonal perspective point toward the same prediction concerning the relationship between identity management cues and honesty/accuracy of disclosure in blog entries. Namely:

H4: The number of identity management cues disclosed will be positively associated with the honesty/accuracy of disclosure in blog entries.

Finally, neither social penetration theory nor hyperpersonal theory suggest what relationship exists between the intent dimension of disclosure and identity management cues. Therefore, a research question was asked:

RQ2: How will the number of identity management cues disclosed be associated with the intent of disclosure in blog entries?

Now that the two components of disclosure on blogs have been explained (identity management cues and disclosure in blog entries) and the relationship between each dimension of these components explored in accordance with social penetration theory and the hyperpersonal perspective, the section below describes possible motives for blogging that may predict the dimensions of bloggers' disclosures.

Motives for Blogging

To explore the predictors of disclosure patterns in blogs, it is important to consider the reasons people blog in the first place. Motives for blogging may impact communication behavior in blogs. The uses and gratifications perspective (U&G) is used to guide this examination of blogging motives as they relate to disclosure dimensions. The assumptions of this perspective, as well as a rationale for use in this study and its extension into interpersonal communication, are presented below.

Uses and Gratifications Perspective

Stemming from a collection of studies in the 1940s through the 1970s on media use, the uses and gratification perspective (U&G) has since emerged to be a helpful perspective for understanding how people use media to fulfill certain needs and motives. Early gratifications research focused on topics such as quiz programs (e.g., Herzog, 1940), radio music (e.g., Peatman, 1944), and newspapers (e.g., Berelson, 1949). According to Katz et al. (1974), these studies shared a number of commonalities, including methodology (open-ended and qualitative), in their attempts at understanding media use. However, this research did not investigate possible social or psychological variables that impact gratifications (Katz et al., 1974). The result was a loose collection of studies that did not clearly inform one another.

Following analyses of these research studies, Katz et al. (1974) and Rosengren (1974) outlined the concepts and assumptions in the first cogent presentations of U&G. This perspective was informed by a functional approach to communication, which poses that "an object is best defined by its *use*" (A. M. Rubin, 2002, p. 527). The foundational assumptions of U&G, presented as a list of steps by Katz et al. (1974), include: "(1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones" (p. 20). These principles have guided subsequent U&G research (e.g., Gantz & Wenner, 1995; Krcmar & Greene, 1999; Leung & Wei, 2000; A. M. Rubin, 1981; A. M. Rubin & Bantz, 1987; Weiser, 2001). More recently, however, A. M. Rubin (2002) advanced a contemporary view of U&G, which is adopted in this study and presented below.

Unlike the direct effects models of the mechanistic perspective, U&G is a more limited effects perspective that rests, in part, on social and psychological antecedents of media use (A. M. Rubin, 2002). From this perspective, media use is embedded in a host of possible influences. It is the U&G researcher's responsibility to flesh out what individual differences mediate the effects of the media on the individual (Rosengren, 1974). In other words, media effects are impacted by individual differences in media users, rather than the media affecting all people equally.

Before presenting the assumptions of U&G, it is necessary to define each concept in this perspective. *Needs* are those things that are lacking in peoples' lives, the fulfillment of which guides communicative behavior (R. B. Rubin & Martin, 1998).

These needs are often thought of in terms of Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs. Basic

needs, such as food and water, are necessary for survival. Once these needs are met,

people turn to satisfying less basic needs and desires, such as the need for security. Social

needs include the need for friendship, acceptance, and belonging, and self-actualization is

the need to fulfill one's potential (Maslow, 1954). These felt needs are translated into

motives, or reasons for action (R. B. Rubin & Martin, 1998).

Motives guide peoples' communicative behavior. According to R. B. Rubin and

Martin (1998), motives are more stable characteristics that result from needs. Rosengren

(1974) argued that motives result from an analysis of the perceived problems and

solutions inferred from one's needs. For example, people who need acceptance may

perceive the problem as a lack of acceptance. The perceived solution may be increasing

others' liking of them so others will accept them. This problem and solution may result in

the communication motive of affection.

Motivated by fulfilling needs, people use media, which results in particular

outcomes or consequences. These consequences are in the form of *gratifications* (when a

need is fulfilled) or *non-gratifications* (when a need is not fulfilled; Rosengren, 1974).

Therefore, media effects are in the form of the gratifications that audience members

obtain. Needs, motives, and gratifications are the major concepts in U&G.

There are five assumptions in the contemporary view of U&G. First, it is assumed

that communication is goal-directed; people have purposes in mind when they choose to

communicate (A. M. Rubin, 2002). In other words, writing a blog entry is not simply a

random activity. Instead, people blog for particular reasons, such as to express their

emotions, to connect with a community of readers, and to articulate their ideas (Nardi et al., 2004). Media use is functional in that it is purposeful (A. M. Rubin, 2002).

The second assumption of U&G, as outlined by A. M. Rubin (2002), is that people are active users of media. They select media and use it to satisfy their needs. However, scholars have found that audience activity can vary from one individual to another; therefore, audiences are considered to be variably active in their media consumption (A. M. Rubin, 2002). Audience activity has emerged as central to the U&G perspective (A. M. Rubin, 1993). Particularly, audience activity has been a common topic of discussion in Internet research (e.g., Charney & Greenberg, 2002; Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Morris & Ogan, 1996; Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Siraj, 2007). However, this conversation is largely outside the scope of this study because typically Internet research focuses on *consumers* of media content. In the present study, bloggers are considered to be very active users of blogs, primarily because they are *producers* of media content. This study takes advantage of the distinct characteristics of the Internet; users are able to both consume and produce content through using the medium of the Internet. Traditional mass media channels (e.g., television and newspapers) do not allow for such easy exchange of the role of producer and consumer as the Internet does. Therefore, this study represents an extension of U&G to the realm of media content producers, taking advantage of the uniqueness of the Internet. In using the medium of blogs, bloggers are both audience members (in that they use the medium) and actors (in that they create the content sent through the medium).

The third assumption of U&G is that social and psychological factors mediate the effects of the media on their audiences (A. M. Rubin, 2002). Audience members'

personality variables, relationships, expectations, environments, and cultures impact the ways they are affected by the media. This assumption may make it difficult to generalize conclusions across studies in which different contexts are explored because each context may affect people in unique ways. However, it also allows for a richer understanding of media effects as embedded in a context. Divorced from the individual variables, cultures, and environments surrounding media use, media effects research only paints part of the picture. Incorporating such variables into research reveals more of the intricacies of media uses and gratifications. Customarily, U&G research examines social and psychological factors as antecedents of media use, such as contextual age, loneliness (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000), voyeurism (Nabi, Stitt, Halford, & Finnerty, 2006), and extraversion (Krcmar & Kean, 2005), to name a few.

The fourth assumption of a contemporary view of U&G is that there are functional alternatives, or other media channels, that people can use to satisfy felt needs (A. M. Rubin, 2002). For example, FtF communication is one channel people may wish to use to satisfy their need to connect with others. If this channel is somehow blocked (e.g. as a result of geographical separation), blogging may be one functional alternative to FtF communication. In other words, if the best medium is unavailable, people can turn to a different medium to fulfill their needs.

The fifth assumption infers the powerful effects of the individual in this process. U&G scholars assume that people's social and psychological characteristics are often more influential than the media itself in explaining media uses and effects (A. M. Rubin, 2002). As a limited effects model, U&G puts much emphasis on the impact of individuals' characteristics and social situations on their media use, rather than simply

assuming that media content affects everyone in the same way. Again, this perspective is in stark contrast to the mechanistic view of a direct effects model of media effects.

Taking these five assumptions together, in essence U&G examines several areas, including the impact of social and psychological needs on peoples' motives for media use, how motives translate into particular media use behaviors and patterns, and what gratifications are obtained from media use. These basic linkages are housed within an understanding of the social and cultural factors that play a role in media, including dependency and life circumstances (A. M. Rubin, 2002).

Application of U&G to Blogging

U&G is an appropriate perspective to employ in the present study for a number of reasons. According to Ruggiero (2000), U&G has historically been applied to early research on a number of communication media channels, such as radio (Mendelsohn, 1964), television (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979), and VCRs (Lin, 1993). As this research has accumulated, U&G as a perspective has been refined into a more cogent statement (Ruggiero, 2000). Because blogs are still a fairly new medium, U&G may be useful for exploring the motives for blogging.

The central assumption of an active audience goes without saying in the blogosphere, especially when examining blogs from the perspective of the blogger. Bloggers actively use the medium of the Internet to construct a message. This activity implies goal-driven behavior, which is a necessary precursor to motives research (R. B. Rubin & Martin, 1998).

A. M. Rubin (2002), Ruggiero (2000), and Siraj (2007) argued that U&G is especially useful when studying new media such as the Internet. Three aspects of the

Internet make it ripe for U&G research: interactivity (exchanging the role of sender and receiver), demassification (increased control of media consumption through choice), and asynchroneity (the ability to send and receive messages in staggered time; Ruggiero, 2000). Blogging fulfills all three of these media characteristics. Bloggers are primarily senders of information; thus, they interact highly with the media in creating blogs and blog entries. Additionally, through the comments left by readers and subsequent comments or entries from bloggers, there is a strong sense of interactivity in blogging. As both producer (establishing and writing a blog) of Internet content and consumer of the Internet as a medium, bloggers maintain a level of control of the media. Finally, blog postings are not read in real-time. Instead, audience members read blogs in their own time, and bloggers must wait for feedback (if they receive any).

The present study considers the blogger as an individual whose psychological and social needs direct communication behavior. As presented above, U&G is grounded in a socio-psychological perspective, which is fitting for this study. Due to U&G's assumptions of people as active users of media, its applicability to new media such as blogging, and its foundation as a socio-psychological perspective, U&G is an appropriate theoretical framework for assessing the motives for blogging.

U&G in Interpersonal Communication

Traditionally, U&G has been used to study media channels such as radio (e.g., Armstrong & Rubin, 1989), television (e.g., Donohew, Palmgreen, & Rayburn, 1987), and VCRs (e.g., Lin, 1993). However, one line of research that has emerged from this perspective concerns motives for communicating interpersonally in dyads. As discussed above, blogging is argued to be a form of masspersonal communication (O'Sullivan,

2005). As masspersonal communication, bloggers communicate in ways characterized as interpersonal to a mass audience. Therefore, it is necessary to consider both media and interpersonal motives in the present study.

Although a number of functional approaches to interpersonal communication have been forwarded (e.g., Bochner, 1984; Schutz, 1966), R. B. Rubin and colleagues' (Graham, Barbato, & Perse, 1993; R. B. Rubin & Martin, 1998; R. B. Rubin, Perse, & Barbato, 1988) interpersonal communication motives mesh well with more traditional media motives found through U&G research. Additionally, these motives have been tested in recent research, especially in relation to Internet motives (e.g., Papacharissi, 2002; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Pornsakulvanich, 2005).

The interpersonal communication motives model (Graham et al., 1993) was first developed by R. B. Rubin et al. (1988) in response to A. M. Rubin and Rubin's (1985) call to examine interpersonal and mediated channels equally from the U&G perspective. Prior to this, interpersonal channels were typically seen as functional alternatives to media channels. However, A. M. Rubin and Rubin (1985) argued that to further U&G as a perspective and overcome the divide between interpersonal and mass communication, it is not productive to consider interpersonal communication as a functional alternative to mediated channels. As a result, U&G has been expanded into interpersonal communication to reveal motives for dyadic communication.

In an initial exploration of interpersonal communication motives, R. B. Rubin et al. (1988) outlined six motives for interpersonal communication: pleasure, affection, inclusion, escape, relaxation, and control. A test of this six-motive model revealed several outcomes predicted by these motives (Graham et al., 1993). People who communicated

for pleasure, affection, inclusion, and/or relaxation were more likely to talk with romantic partners, friends, and family members to gratify these motives. On the other hand, they were least likely to talk with strangers to gratify these motives. Relaxation was also related to talking with co-workers (Graham et al., 1993). Graham et al. (1993) also found significant relationships between motives and disclosure. Greater breath of disclosure was related to the escape, inclusion, pleasure, and affection motive. The escape, inclusion, and control motives predicted greater intimacy of disclosure (Graham et al., 1993).

These six interpersonal communication motives have informed much research on interpersonal communication (e.g., Hullman, 2004; Step & Finucane, 2002). However, this model has also informed U&G research on motives for using new technology, such as the Internet. In the following section, research on motives for using the Internet is reviewed.

U&G Research

As mentioned earlier, two studies have suggested motives for blogging. Nardi et al.'s (2004) ethnographic study of 23 bloggers revealed five motivations for blogging. Documenting bloggers' lives, expressing opinions, sharing emotions, articulating ideas, and establishing and maintaining community forums served as motives for bloggers in this study. Additionally, research from the Pew Internet and American Life Project revealed that expressing creativity and sharing personal experiences were the most common motives for blogging (Lenhart & Fox, 2006). Other motives found included sharing knowledge and skills, motivating others, entertaining others, archiving information, influencing others, networking, and earning an income (Lenhart & Fox,

2006). Although these findings help shed light on blogging, these studies were not conducted under the perspective of U&G. Therefore, the findings, although descriptive, do not significantly contribute to the larger body of knowledge organized around U&G.

A search of the literature revealed no U&G studies of blogging. However, research on Internet motives may inform the present study. Several studies have examined the motivations for using particular functions of the Internet, such as commercial websites (Eighmey & McCord, 1998), one-to-one chatting (Peter, Valkenburg, & Schouten, 2006), online relationship-building (Peter et al., 2005; Pornsakulvanich, 2005), online support groups (Wright, 2002), online advertising (Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005), and online news and political information (Diddi & LaRose, 2006; Kaye & Johnson, 2002). However, due to the restrictive scope of these studies, they are less helpful in informing blogging motives. These studies focus on particular functions of Internet use that are unlike blogging. For example, one-to-one chatting, online relationship-building, and online support groups are characterized by communication that is intended for a particular person. Subsequently, the communicator expects some type of interactive response. However, this is not always the case in blogging. Using the Internet for consuming commercial websites, news information, and political information does not speak to the role of the blogger as a generator of information rather than simply a consumer. Because the findings from studying these contexts do not inform blogging as a specific use of the Internet, research revealing motives for general Internet use and for personal homepages in particular are reviewed below.

Motives for Internet use. In one of the first U&G examinations of Internet motives, Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) surveyed 279 undergraduate students about their Internet use and motivations. They combined existing interpersonal, media, and Internet motives to extrapolate an updated typology of Internet motives. Information-seeking was the most salient motive found, followed by entertainment, convenience, pass time, and interpersonal utility. Ebersole (2000) found similar motives for Internet use among middle- and high-school students. Motives included research and learning, access to entertainment, social interaction, relieve boredom, access to information, technology support and product information, sexually explicit content and games, and shopping. Charney and Greenberg's (2002) exploration of Internet motives yielded eight reasons people use the Internet. The first motive, to keep informed, explained the most variance in the factor-analyzed motives scale. Other motives included diversion entertainment, peer identity, good feelings, communication, sights and sounds, career, and coolness (Charney & Greenberg, 2002).

Perhaps another way of examining motives is to reveal the functions of Internet use in general. Taking a U&G approach, Weiser (2001) factor-analyzed surveys from 984 undergraduate students to reveal two Internet functions. The first function, labeled socio-affective regulation, reflected the use of the Internet to make connections with other people. Specific uses included in this function were, for example, "chat on-line with others," meet and interact with new, exciting people," and "play interactive games" (Weiser, 2001, p. 727). The second function, goods-and-information acquisition, included the information-gathering and other practical uses of the Internet. This function included

such uses as "keep up with the world," "shopping," "research," and "stay informed regarding world news" (Weiser, 2001, p. 727).

In addition to revealing motives for Internet use, many studies also examine how motives predict particular types of Internet use. In the Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) study, information-seeking and entertainment predicted frequency of e-mail use, but there were no other significant predictors of other types of Internet use. Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) also found a compensatory role of the Internet. Participants who were anxious during interpersonal communication and found communication less rewarding were more likely to be motivated to use the Internet for interpersonal functions. For Charney and Greenberg's (2002) sample, keeping informed and communication were the only two gratifications that predicted Internet use, together explaining 36% of the variance in time spent on the Internet.

One unique aspect of the Internet as a medium is its multi-functionality (Flanagin & Metzger, 2001). Unlike more traditional media, such as the telephone, the Internet is not designed with just one use in mind. Instead, the Internet can be used for dyadic communication (e.g., e-mail, instant messaging), group communication (e.g., discussion boards, chat rooms), and mass communication (e.g., research databases, online newspapers, blogs). To examine Internet motives in a multimedia environment, Flanagin and Metzger (2001) surveyed 684 undergraduate students on the needs fulfilled by several media channels, including FtF, telephone, books/magazines, television, newspapers, e-mail, Internet information retrieval, Internet information giving, and Internet conversation. According to the U&G perspective, motives are derived from the

felt needs. Thus, even though Flanagin and Metzger (2001) did not study motives in particular, their examination of needs informs Internet motives.

Analyses revealed 10 clusters of needs that may be fulfilled in any one of the tested media channels: information, learn, play, leisure, persuasion, social bonding, relationship maintenance, problem solving, status, and gaining insight (Flanagin & Metzger, 2001). Information seeking and leisure were common functions for most communication technologies, including books/magazines, Internet information retrieval, Internet information giving, and television. Relationship maintenance was fulfilled by FtF communication, e-mail, and telephone. The Internet was often used for learning; Internet information retrieval and Internet information giving were used to fulfill the need to learn. E-mail, FtF communication, and the telephone fulfilled the needs of persuasion, relationship maintenance, and social bonding. Although FtF communication rated highly for most needs, it was less useful for fulfilling the need for leisure. On the other hand, the Internet's conversation capabilities were used for play and leisure. Flanagin and Metzger (2001) suggested that the Internet is distinguished from other conversation channels (FtF, telephone, and e-mail) by its ability to entertain through communication without necessarily connecting with specific others.

Flanagin and Metzger's (2001) study helps to integrate our understanding of motives across channels of communication. It is clear that different needs lead to different communication channel use. Another insight gathered from this study is that to understand how the Internet is used, we must partition out its different functions (such as blogging) and treat them as separate channels.

Personal homepage motives. Although studies of Internet motives inform the present study, blogging is distinct from general Internet use in that bloggers actively *produce* content when using the Internet rather than simply *consuming* content. Research on motives for maintaining personal homepages may be more relevant due to the less interactive and asynchronous nature of managing a webpage. A search of the literature revealed two studies that applied the U&G framework to study personal homepages.

In a survey and content analysis of participants' homepages, Papacharissi (2002) examined the motives for creating and maintaining a personal homepage. To construct her scale, Papacharissi (2002) combined existing interpersonal, Internet, and media motives with new motives elicited through an open-ended survey. A factor analysis of the results from 260 surveys revealed six motives for maintaining personal homepages: "passing time, entertainment, information, self-expression, professional advancement, and communication with friends and family" (Papacharissi, 2002, p. 356). Information and entertainment, traditional media motives, were the most salient motives found. On the other hand, the more unique motives of self-expression and communication with friends and family were also apparent. Professional advancement and passing time were weaker, but still significant, motives for managing personal homepages (Papacharissi, 2002).

In addition to revealing motives, Papacharissi (2002) also assessed the predictors of these motives. Results showed that people who were more anxious about FtF communication were less likely to use homepages for informational purposes. Those who were less satisfied with life, less mobile, and engaged in less interpersonal communication were more likely to use homepages to pass time. Participants were less

likely to be motivated by self-expression when they were more healthy, more satisfied with their lives, enjoyed interpersonal interaction, and, interestingly, more apprehensive about communication. Finally, people tended to use homepages for entertainment and communication needs when they were more mobile, socially active, healthy, and satisfied with their lives and interpersonal communication (Papacharissi, 2002).

Jung, Youn, and McClung (2007) used Papacharissi's (2002) motives scale in their examination of personal homepages on Cyworld (www.cyworld.com), a Korean-based web service. Upon further examination, it appears that Cyworld is similar to popular American social networking websites, such as MySpace and Facebook. Although blogs may be added to the webpage, these spaces more closely resemble personal homepages. Social networking websites typically include such features as pictures, interests, and comments from others. However, they do not always include a blog function in which bloggers post regular text-based entries. Therefore, these websites are not considered to be blogs, according to the conceptualization in this study.

Jung et al. (2007) conducted a survey and corresponding content analysis of 433 Cyworld users' homepages. In their results, five of Papacharissi's (2002) motives proved salient: "entertainment, self-expression, professional advancement, passing time, and communication with family and friend[s]" (Jung et al., 2007, p. 28). Information was not found to be a motive for hosting a Cyworld webpage in this study. Another relevant result from this study suggested a connection between motives and revealing one's offline identity through identity management cues. Participants who were motivated by self-expression were more likely than others to post pictures of themselves (Jung et al., 2007).

These results, when combined with Papacharissi's (2002), may further illuminate the possible intricacies of blogging motives.

Predictions Concerning Motives for Blogging

To understand why bloggers may choose to disclose intimate information in their blogs, the U&G perspective was adopted for this study. Although scholarship on U&G in new communication technologies, such as the Internet, has bloomed in recent years, research on the motives for blogging is sparse. Additionally, this study will reveal which motives predict a particular type of media use – disclosure dimensions in blog entries. Given the research reviewed above, the following research questions were posed:

RQ3: What are the motives for blogging?

RQ4: Which blogging motives predict disclosure dimensions in blogs (breadth, depth, amount, intent, valence, honesty/accuracy, and number of identity management cues disclosed)?

Audience Characteristics

According to Derlega et al. (1993), disclosure in relationships is affected by the state of those relationships. The type of relationship (e.g., casual or close) helps explain the characteristics of disclosure in any given relationship. Traditional disclosure literature focuses on FtF relationships; however, in the present study, this literature was expanded to a mediated context (blogging) in which a relationship is not always present in the traditional sense. However, from the bloggers' perspectives, a perceived relationship between themselves and the audience may exist. In the following sections, audience characteristics – including the public/private nature of blogs and the target audience – are explored as predictors of disclosure dimensions in blogs.

As they write, bloggers likely consider their target audiences. Who do they think reads their blogs? A central tenet of social penetration theory is that breadth and depth of disclosure varies with respect to the closeness and length of a relationship (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Closer, more established relationships are characterized by an increasingly diverse and deep exchange of information. Thus, one would expect different disclosure patterns depending on for whom bloggers are blogging. Therefore, two predictors of disclosure dimensions in this conceptual model are the public or private nature of blogs and the type of target audience. In this section, these predicted relationships are substantiated by existing theory and research.

Public/Private Nature of Blogs

Most blog services automatically make blogs public, or available to anyone surfing the Internet (Viegas, 2005). However, in some cases, bloggers may make their blogs private to only an approved group of people. For example, bloggers using MySpace may release their blogs to only those people who are approved "friends." Executing such control over one's blog may be rare. Viegas (2005) found that 76% of their participants said they did not try to limit access to their blogs. Men and women differ with regard to their concern for controlling private information. Specifically, in a study of young adults' privacy management processes on their blogs, Child (2007) found that women were more careful with sharing ownership of private information in their blogs.

Given the tenets of social penetration theory, it is expected that people who limit access to their blogs will demonstrate different patterns in their blog disclosures because they have established relationships with their audience members. Therefore, the following hypothesis was posed:

H5: Bloggers who limit access to their blogs will differ on the dimensions of

disclosure (breadth, depth, amount, intent, valence, honesty/accuracy, and number

of identity management cues disclosed) from bloggers who do not limit access to

their blogs.

Additionally, limiting access to one's blog may also impact blogging motives.

U&G assumes that individual and social variables (such as blog settings) influence the

motives people have for using media. For example, bloggers who release their blogs only

to their friends or family members may be more likely to blog in order to maintain these

relationships. Bloggers whose blogs are public may be more likely to blog as a form of

self-expression or simply to entertain themselves. Research has yet to explore the affects

of restricted access on disclosure dimensions in blogs. Thus, a research question was

asked:

RQ5: How does restricting access to blogs affect blogging motives?

Target Audience

Regardless of whether or not a blog is private, bloggers' *perceptions* of who the

audience is may impact their choices of what information to disclose. If bloggers believe

that primarily it is their close friends who are reading their blogs, their disclosure

behaviors may differ from those bloggers that believe their readers are relative strangers.

Even if a blog is made public, the owner may suspect that only certain people are reading

the blog. For example, Lenhart and Madden (2005) reported that bloggers under 19 years

of age tend to believe that the only people reading their blogs are those to whom they are

close offline. Because the intimacy of the relationship with the target audience may

impact disclosure behaviors, it is important to consider this variable in this conceptual model.

Altman and Taylor's (1973) social penetration theory predicts a direct relationship between the intimacy level of self-disclosure and the closeness of a relationship. In other words, closer relationships are characterized by more breadth and depth of self-disclosure (Altman & Taylor, 1973). When social penetration theory is applied to blogs, implications for disclosure emerge. Bloggers who think their audience is composed of only their closest friends may disclose more information in their blogs, as social penetration theory predicts. However, bloggers who think that there may be acquaintances and strangers that read their blogs may disclose information that is less in frequency, breadth, and depth. One question remains: Who do bloggers think their audiences are?

The most intimate audience a blogger may perceive is him/herself alone. If bloggers do not consider the fact that anyone else will read their blog, they may simply blog for themselves. One may expect the most intimate disclosure in this case. According to Lenhart and Fox (2006), 52% of bloggers write for themselves. These bloggers consider blogging to be a private endeavor. As Viegas (2005) explained, bloggers who see their blogs as an intimate space they have to themselves may not consider the public nature of their blog entries. One blogger commented, "I'm much happier when I forget there's actually an audience out there" (Trammel & Keshelashvili, 2005, p. 976).

Whereas some bloggers see blogging as a private experience, Nardi et al. (2004) found that most of their participants were aware of their readers. Almost half of bloggers say they know their audiences personally (Lenhart & Fox, 2006). Women and younger

people were more likely to claim that they know the members of their audiences. It is expected that bloggers who write for primarily their close friends and family members will disclose differently in their blogs than those who consider other target audiences.

The least amount of disclosure is expected when bloggers think their audiences are composed of strangers, as 35% of Lenhart and Fox's (2006) participants did. Another 14% thought their audience included both strangers and people close to them. In these cases, bloggers face the challenge of managing the dialectic of openness-closedness (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996) when considering the private and public nature of their audiences.

Findings from Bortree's (2005) study add support for these predictions. Most of the teenage girls in this study recognized that while they mainly wrote for their close friends, strangers may be a part of their audiences, too. When the girls were writing for their close friends, they disclosed intimate thoughts and feelings. However, when they were considering a broader audience that included strangers, they used less intimate disclosure and language in their blogs (Bortree, 2005). Given the tenets of social penetration theory and the research reviewed above, the following hypothesis was presented:

> H6: Target audience type will predict disclosure dimensions in blogs (breadth, depth, amount, intent, valence, honesty/accuracy, and number of identity management cues disclosed).

As another social antecedent in media use, target audience types should be explored as they predict blogging motives. However, extant research has not explored this relationship. Thus, the following research question was asked:

RQ6: How does target audience type affect blogging motives?

Individual Characteristics

In addition to motives, certain characteristics of bloggers themselves may predict both motives for blogging and disclosure behavior in their blogs. A fundamental assumption of U&G is that social and psychological antecedents – such as age, gender, loneliness, and disclosiveness – affect people's motives for using media and the subsequent effects of such use (Katz et al., 1974; A. M. Rubin, 2002). Additionally, research in CMC and blogging specifically has shown that particular individual characteristics, such as age (e.g., Ma & Leung, 2006), gender (e.g., Punyanunt-Carter, 2006), and loneliness (e.g., Leung, 2002), may impact the intimacy of disclosure online. Four individual characteristics that may affect motives for blogging and disclosure dimensions in blogs are presented below.

Age

Age is one individual characteristic that likely impacts disclosure dimensions in blogs, as well as motives for blogging. In traditional FtF literature, younger people are sometimes identified as more disclosive than older people (e.g., Sinha, 1972). Knapp, Ellis, and Williams (1980) tested people's perceptions of friendships of varying intimacy (lover, best friend, friend, pal, colleague, acquaintance). People younger than 22 years perceived each relationship to be characterized by more personal communication than those who were 41 years and older.

It seems that younger people would be more likely to disclose more intimate information in their blogs than older people. In instant messaging, younger people are more intimate and frequent in their disclosure (Ma & Leung, 2006). Also, Lenhart and

Fox (2006) found that younger people were more likely than older people to post about personal experiences in their blogs. Valkenburg and Peter (2007) found differences in children ages 10 to 16 years old. There was a curvilinear relationship between age and the perceptions of the Internet's appropriateness for intimate communication. Fifteen-year-olds were most likely to say the Internet is useful for intimate self-disclosure. Despite these findings, much still needs to be discovered about the impact of age on blog disclosure and motives for blogging, especially considering how young bloggers can be (Perseus, 2005).

Gender

Gender is studied with regard to disclosure more often than any other individual characteristic (Dindia, 2002). Gender differences in disclosure have emerged in both FtF communication and CMC. Studies have consistently shown that in FtF communication, women tend to disclose more information than men (e.g., Buhrke & Fuqua, 1987; Dolgin & Minowa, 1997; Jourard, 1971). Additionally, women tend to disclose more intimate information FtF than men do (e.g., Davidson & Duberman, 1982; Morton, 1978). Although certain variables, such as the target's gender (e.g., Hacker, 1981) and the method of measurement (e.g., Dindia & Allen, 1992) may moderate gender differences, a difference does appear to exist. This trend appears to apply in CMC, too.

In a general examination of students' disclosure behavior on the Internet, Punyanunt-Carter (2006) found that women disclosed more intimate information than men; additionally, women tended to be more aware, positive, and honest in their disclosures than men. Female participants in Peter et al.'s (2005) study also disclosed more information online than the males did.

However, when considering blogs specifically, findings are mixed. Using CPM, Child (2007) explored the privacy rules and boundaries that adolescents enact as they blog. Although teenage boys were more likely to link their blogs to others, there was no significant difference in the boundary permeability between boys and girls. In other words, women and men were equally likely to disclose information in their blogs (Child, 2007). On the other hand, women were significantly more concerned with who would co-own their disclosures when blogging than men (Child, 2007). Additionally, there is no significant difference between men and women in disclosing identity management cues (Huffaker & Calvert, 2005). However, teenage girls in Bortree's (2005) preliminary analyses did seem to disclose more intimate information in their blogs than teenage boys. Additionally, Lenhart and Fox (2006) found that women were more likely than men to be inspired to post to their blogs by a personal experience, which may suggest that they would disclose more in these posts. More research is needed to tease out gender differences in blogging; however, it is clear that gender does play a role in disclosure dimensions in blogs.

Although research reviewed above has examined the impact of gender on media use (i.e., disclosure in blogs), little is known about how gender may impact the motives for blogging. For example, if previous research on gender differences in online disclosure holds true, women may be more motivated to blog for self-expression and to communicate with others. However, this connection has not been clearly established in research.

Loneliness

The blogosphere may be a haven for lonely people. Loneliness is a psychological state in which people perceive their relations to be limited or deficient in terms of quantity or quality (Perlman & Peplau, 1981; A. M. Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985). When people are lonely, they have not achieved the level of intimacy, support, and interaction they wish they could (Canary & Spitzberg, 1993). Loneliness may be chronic or short-term (Bell, 1985). Self-disclosure has been found to be diminished in conversations between lonely people (Ayres, 1988). FtF, lonely people talk less, disclose less, and ask fewer questions than non-lonely people (Ayres, 1988). Additionally, women in steady romantic relationships who are lonely participate in less disclosure (Fitzpatrick, Feng, & Crawford, 2003). Despite what we know about loneliness in interpersonal communication, much research has been devoted to exploring the impact of loneliness on CMC.

According to the compensation hypothesis, people with less social contact will be more likely to use mass media (Davis & Kraus, 1989). Unsatisfied with their FtF lives, lonely people may flock to the media to fulfill their unmet needs. McKenna, Green, and Gleason (2002) have applied this idea to the Internet, arguing that the reduced cues of the Internet (e.g., visual anonymity) may help people who are socially anxious and lonely be more comfortable in their online communication. If this hypothesis holds true in blogging, it could be predicted that lonely people would be more disclosive in their blogs. However, existing research points to differing results.

A study on the impact of loneliness on CMC supports the notion that CMC reflects FtF communication. Leung's (2002) lonely participants were less likely to

disclose intimate information in instant messaging than those who were not lonely. Additionally, lonely people were less honest and positive in their disclosure than the control group. On the other hand, Valkenburg and Peter (2007) found contradicting results in their study. Lonely people were more likely to indicate that the Internet is appropriate for disclosure than people who were not lonely (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007). Participants in Caplan's (2003) study who were lonely expressed a stronger preference for online communication over FtF communication than non-lonely participants. Similarly, a study of middle school children's instant messaging (IM) behaviors revealed significant effects of chronic loneliness on IM use (Gross, Juvonen, & Gable, 2002). Children who felt lonely on a daily basis were more likely to IM people with whom they were not close friends, whereas non-lonely children were more likely to communicate with their friends on IM. As earlier argued, blogging is very different from other communicative uses of the Internet, such as email, instant messaging, and discussion boards. Therefore, it is possible that these findings do not hold true for blogging.

Loneliness has been explored in interpersonal communication motives (e.g., Downs & Javidi, 1990; Hosman, 1991), as well as motives for using more traditional mass media (e.g., Perse & Rubin, 1990). However, it is not apparent how loneliness affects people's motives for communicating online, and for blogging specifically.

Disclosiveness

Altman and Taylor (1973) assumed that personal characteristics affect people's disclosure patterns in FtF conversation. One variable in particular that they considered was general disclosiveness, or "a generalized characteristic or trait of the individual representing that person's predilection to disclose self to other people in general"

(Wheeless, 1976, p. 47). People higher in disclosiveness have a tendency, by definition, to disclose more information in any given situation. This assumption was tested and supported by Taylor, Wheeler, and Altman (1973), who found that high revealers (those high in disclosiveness) disclosed more information to their experimental partners than low revealers, even while in confinement.

Although scholars have yet to flesh out the impact of disclosiveness on blog entries, Stefanone and Jang (2007) explored the role of disclosiveness on the intent for people's blog use. High revealers in their sample were more likely to use their blogs to stay in contact with friends and family. Based on this research and the theoretical suppositions forwarded by Altman and Taylor (1973), it is expected that the personality trait disclosiveness will impact disclosure in blog entries and blogging motives.

Research Questions Concerning Individual Characteristics

Given the research reviewed above on the impact of individual characteristics on motives and online disclosure, two research questions were presented.

RQ7: What are the individual characteristics that affect disclosure dimensions in blogs (breadth, depth, amount, intent, valence, honesty/accuracy, and number of identity management cues disclosed)?

RQ8: What are the individual characteristics that affect motives for blogging?

Exploring the Conceptual Model

In the preceding discussion, relationships among each component of the conceptual model presented in this study were explored. However, it is necessary to examine the entire model to determine whether or not it is a sound representation of the reality of disclosure patterns in blogs. Therefore, one final research question was posed:

RQ9: How do audience characteristics, individual characteristics, and blogging

motives predict disclosure dimensions in blogs (breadth, depth, amount, intent,

valence, honesty/accuracy, and number of identity management cues disclosed)?

Summary

The purpose of the present study was to test the assumptions of interpersonal and

CMC theory in the context of blogging. Specifically, the tenets of social penetration

theory and the hyperpersonal perspective were applied to disclosure behaviors in personal

journal blogs. Each of these theoretical perspectives offer competing predictions, and it is

expected that this study will help determine which perspective is more useful for

examining blog disclosures. Toward this end, a conceptual model was proposed which

will test the relative contributions of individual characteristics, audience characteristics,

and blogging motives on disclosure dimensions in blogs (see Figure 1).

Disclosure was conceptualized to include two components – verbal disclosure in

blog entries and identity management cues. The tenets of social penetration theory

(Altman & Taylor, 1973) and the hyperpersonal perspective (Walther 1996) suggest the

following competing hypotheses and research questions:

H1: The number of identity management cues disclosed will be associated with

the amount of disclosure in blog entries.

H2: The number of identity management cues disclosed will be associated with

the breadth of disclosure in blog entries.

H3: The number of identity management cues disclosed will be associated with

the depth of disclosure in blog entries.

RQ1: How will the number of identity management cues disclosed be associated with the valence of disclosure in blog entries?

H4: The number of identity management cues disclosed will be positively associated with the honesty/accuracy of disclosure in blog entries.

RQ2: How will the number of identity management cues disclosed be associated with the intent of disclosure in blog entries?

The uses and gratifications perspective (Katz et al., 1974; Rosengren, 1974; A. M. Rubin, 2002) was employed to guide this examination of predicting motives for blogging. In accordance with U&G, bloggers are considered to be an active audience as producers of media content. They use blogs to fulfill some felt needs, and the motives that result from needs guide their media use. Existing research has done much to flesh out the reasons people use the Internet in general (e.g., Charney & Greenberg, 2002; Ebersole, 2000; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2002; Weiser, 2001) or for particular Internet functions (e.g., Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Ko et al., 2005; Peter et al., 2006; Pornsakulvanich, 2005; Wright, 2002). However, it is unknown what motivates people to blog and how those motives impact their communication behaviors in blogs. Thus, two research questions were presented:

RQ3: What are the motives for blogging?

RQ4: Which blogging motives predict disclosure dimensions in blogs (breadth, depth, amount, intent, valence, honesty/accuracy, and number of identity management cues disclosed)?

The target audience must be considered when examining disclosure patterns in blogs. Specifically, audience characteristics – including whether or not bloggers limit

access to their blogs and the type of person they consider their target audiences – are

likely to impact blogging motives and disclosure patterns. Therefore, these hypotheses

and research questions were posed:

H5: Bloggers who limit access to their blogs will differ on the dimensions of

disclosure (breadth, depth, amount, intent, valence, honesty/accuracy, and number

of identity management cues disclosed) from bloggers who do not limit access to

their blogs.

RQ5: How does restricting access to blogs affect blogging motives?

H6: Target audience type will predict disclosure dimensions in blogs (breadth,

depth, amount, intent, valence, honesty/accuracy, and number of identity

management cues disclosed).

RQ6: How does target audience type affect blogging motives?

Consistent with U&G and social penetration theory, individual characteristics

impact media use and motives. Therefore, several individual variables are considered

useful in this model predicting disclosure dimensions in blog entries, as presented in the

following research questions:

RQ7: What are the individual characteristics that affect disclosure dimensions in

blogs (breadth, depth, amount, intent, valence, honesty/accuracy, and number of

identity management cues disclosed)?

RQ8: What are the individual characteristics that affect motives for blogging?

To examine the model presented in this study, the following research question

was asked:

RQ9: How do audience characteristics, individual characteristics, and blogging

motives predict disclosure dimensions in blogs?

Figure 3 summarizes this study's hypotheses and research question.

Figure 3

Proposed Model of Disclosure in Blogs Outlining Research Questions and Hypotheses
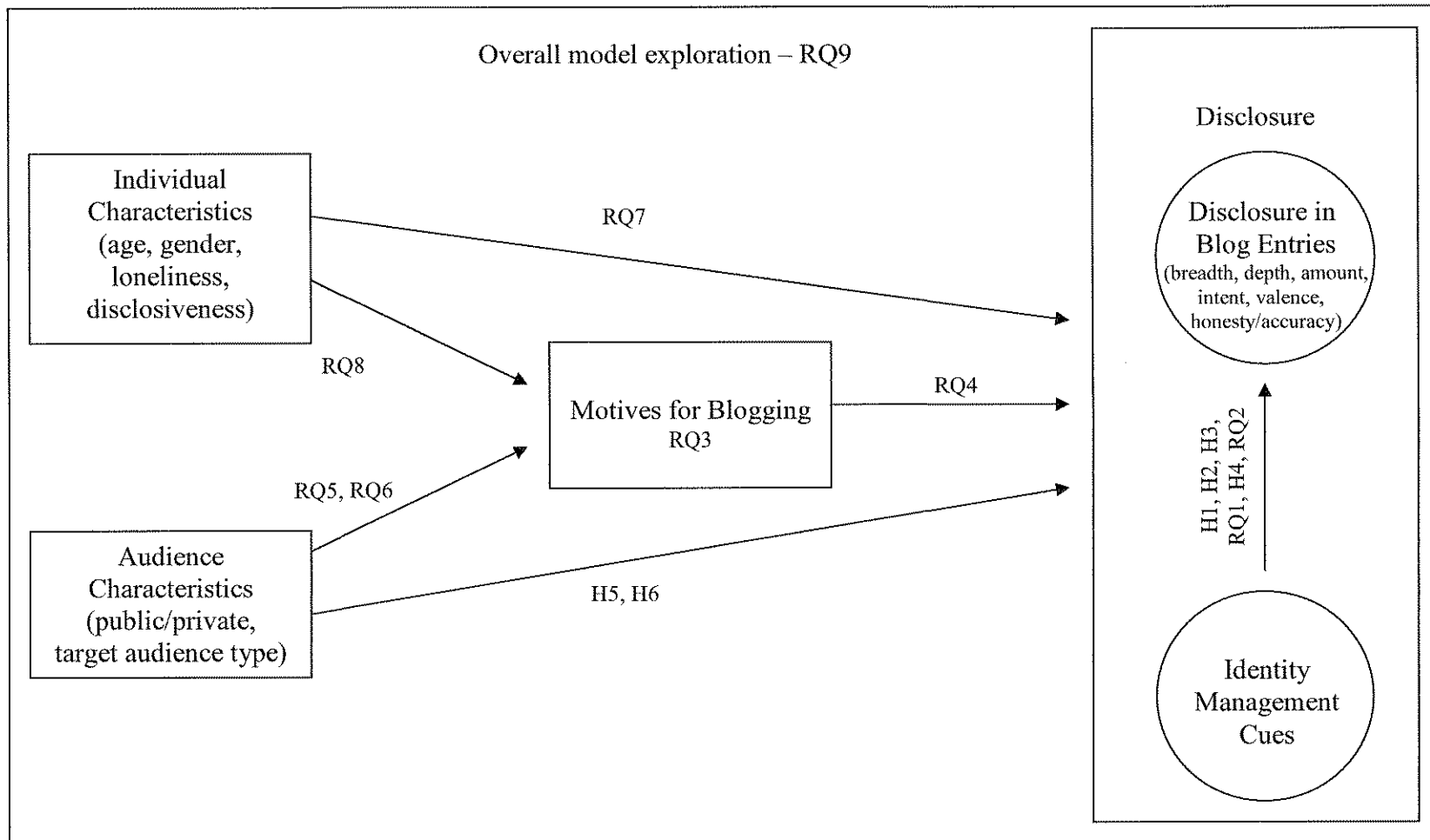
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to test social penetration theory and the hyperpersonal perspective in the context of blogging. Toward this end, a conceptual model predicting disclosure patterns in blogs was tested. Specifically, the disclosure patterns in personal journal blogs were explored as they relate to the motives for blogging, audience characteristics, and individual characteristics. Beginning with a discussion of the research method employed in this study, this chapter describes the participants, procedures, and data analyses that were used to test the proposed model.

Research Design

This study used a cross-sectional survey design. Survey research is especially useful for examining the relationships among sociological and psychological variables, such as the variables of interest in this study (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Also, self-report surveys are helpful for assessing the attitudes, behaviors, experiences, and psychological states of participants (Metts, Sprecher, & Cupach. 1991). Participants in this study completed an online questionnaire.

Participants

Participants were English-speaking bloggers who responded to a call for research participation. There were certain restrictions to participate in this study. First, participants must have maintained personal journal blogs, which were defined in the call for participation as blogs that are composed of short posts concerning the blogger's life and internal self (Blood, 2002). Second, only bloggers who posted to their blogs at least once a month were asked to participate to ensure that participants were active bloggers.

A total of 348 bloggers began the survey, posted on SurveyMonkey.com. However, 42 respondents did not complete a significant portion of the survey, and therefore were excluded from further analysis. One respondent blogged an average of zero times a month, and two were less than 18 years old. Given the criteria for participation, these participants were eliminated from the sample. The final sample included 303 bloggers and was primarily composed of women ($n = 230$, 75.9%; male $n = 68$, 22.4%). Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 70 years ($M = 30.24$, $SD = 10.84$).

A power analysis was calculated to determine the number of participants necessary in this study. For hierarchical multiple regression with six variables (four individual characteristics, eight audience characteristics) on the first step and an estimated eight (blogging motives) on the second, using an alpha of .05 and medium effect size (.15), 156 participants were needed. Multiple regression with individual characteristics and audience characteristics as the independent variables with the same alpha and effect size required 127 participants. Bryant and Yarnold (1995) explained that there should be at least five participants per item for a factor analysis. The Blogging Motives Scale (see Appendix E) contains 56 items. Therefore, a minimum of 280 participants were necessary for this factor analysis. As the factor analysis required more participants than any of the regression analyses, 280 was used as the minimum number of participants, which was retained in this study.

This sample represented a variety of ethnicities and locations. The most represented ethnicity was Caucasian ($n = 233$, 76.9%), with other represented ethnicities including Asian ($n = 40$, 13.2%), African American ($n = 9$, 3%), Hispanic ($n = 9$, 3%), Middle Eastern ($n = 4$, 1.3%), Native American/Alaska Native ($n = 4$, 1.3%), Pacific

Islander ($n = 4$, 1.3%), African ($n = 2$, .7%), and Caribbean ($n = 1$, .3%). Most

participants lived in the United States at the time of data collection ($n = 249$, 82.2%), but

other bloggers resided in Canada ($n = 19$, 6.3%), the United Kingdom ($n = 9$, 3%),

Australia ($n = 3$, 1%), Germany ($n = 3$, 1%), Singapore ($n = 2$, .7%), France ($n = 2$, .7%),

and the Netherlands ($n = 2$, .7%). Austria, Denmark, Hong Kong, India, Mozambique,

Poland, South Korea, and Switzerland were each represented by one participant (.3%) in

the sample.

Participants maintained anywhere from one to 35 blogs ($M = 1.81$, $SD = 2.21$),

posting an average of 15.31 times in a given month ($SD = 12.40$). Most bloggers did not

limit access to their blogs ($n = 247$, 81.5%), while 56 participants (18.5%) limited their

blogs' readerships. This number may not accurately describe the population of bloggers,

however, given the methods of recruitment.

Participants were recruited for this study in multiple ways. First, the researcher

contacted the authors of blogs that were featured as prominent on Blogger.com and

Xanga.com and requested that they post a call for research participation on their blogs.

This announcement contained information about the study, including the restrictions for

participation, university affiliation, and a subsequent raffle. Second, many bloggers were

contacted either through email or through a comment posted on their blogs by using the

random feature on Livejournal.com and Blogger.com. Third, announcements were posted

on multiple listservs and discussion boards. Fourth, many of the most recently updated

blogs on Wordpress.com were identified. These bloggers were emailed an announcement

for the study. Finally, bloggers linked to some of the most popular blogs identified were

contacted regarding this study. This study was announced to a total of 297 individual

bloggers, eight discussion boards, and six listservs. In all cases, bloggers were invited to participate in the study and to announce the study to their friends or blog readers. Participants were compensated by being entered into a raffle to win one of 10 Amazon.com gift certificates.

Procedures

Upon approval by the Human Subjects Review Board, an online survey was constructed for this study using SurveyMonkey.com. Because bloggers are Internet savvy, completing a questionnaire online should not be difficult for them. After providing informed consent, participants completed measures of loneliness, disclosiveness, blogging motives, verbal disclosure in blog entries, identity management cues, frequency of blog use, and demographic variables. At the completion of the survey, participants who wished to be entered in the drawing were directed toward another online survey in which they entered their email addresses. Another survey was used to submit email addresses to ensure that there was no connection between the participants' identity and their responses. A debriefing statement summarizing the main findings of the study was emailed to participants who entered their email addresses.

Instruments and Measures

Loneliness

Loneliness, the psychological state in which people perceive their relationships to be deficient (Perlman & Peplau, 1981), was measured using a shortened version of the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, 1996). This scale, as well as earlier versions of it, measures loneliness as a unidimensional state (Russell, 1982, 1996). Although loneliness can be long- or short-term (Bell, 1985), this scale measured how lonely

bloggers were at the time they participated in this study regardless of how long they have been lonely. This measurement was appropriate for a cross-sectional study, which assesses the variables of interest at one point in time (Babbie, 2004).

Russell's (1996) Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale consists of 20 Likert-type items. For this study, a shortened 10-item version of the scale was used (see Appendix A). This version was successfully employed in a study of stress and burnout among teachers (Russell, 1996, using data from Russell, Altamaier, & Van Velzen, 1987). The items in the shortened version were chosen based on their high inter-item correlation in previous applications of the scale. A shortened version was used because of the number of surveys administered in this study and the likelihood of dropout in an online survey if the questionnaire is too lengthy. Additionally, this 10-item scale was reliable ($\alpha = .89$; Russell, 1996, using data from Russell et al., 1987). Gross et al. (2002) also used only some of the 20 items from the scale.

The 10-item Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, 1996) asks participants to indicate how often they feel the way each item describes. Originally, this survey used a 4-point frequency scale. However, to maintain consistency among the measures in this study, a 5-point scale was used. This survey has been measured on a 5-point scale in existing research (e.g., Kang, 2007; Segrin & Flora, 2001). One of the items, "How often do you feel that people are around you but not with you?" was revised for clarification. The revised item, "How often do you feel that people are around you but not really *with* you?" added the word "really" and emphasized "with" to help distinguish being around people from people actually being mentally and emotionally present. Five of the items were reverse coded, and scores were summed and averaged. Higher scores represented

more loneliness felt by participants. The shortened version of the Revised UCLA

Loneliness Scale was found to be reliable in this study ($\alpha = .90$).

The third version of the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, 1996) evolved from

earlier scales. The first UCLA Loneliness Scale was presented by Russell, Peplau, and

Ferguson (1978). This scale included 20 items which, although reliable, were all worded

negatively. As Russell (1996) explained, scores on this scale may be affected by response

bias due to the wording of the items. Thus, Russell, Peplau, and Cutrona (1980) revised

the scale, including items that were reverse coded. Although this scale was found to be

highly reliable and useful in much research, according to Russell (1996), the revised scale

still suffered from problems with item wording. There was some confusion in certain

samples, such as the elderly and college students, with the word choice in certain items

(Russell, 1996). For example, answering "never" to the item "I do not feel alone" is

somewhat confusing. Russell (1996) also cited the use of the word "superficial" as

causing some confusion among college students. The third version of the scale was

constructed to simplify the wording of the loneliness scale. Additionally, the instructions

and items were rewritten for clarification. For example, in the Russell et al. (1980)

version of the scale, participants were asked to indicate how often each statement, such as

"I lack companionship," described them. In the Russell (1996) version, participants were

asked how often they feel the way described in questions like "How often do you feel that

you lack companionship?"

Evidence has accumulated suggesting the third version of the UCLA Loneliness

Scale is both valid and reliable. Recent studies found acceptable Cronbach's alphas for

the measure using a 5-point scale (e.g., $\alpha = .88$; Segrin & Flora, 2001), and, as previously

mentioned, the 10-item version used in this study was also internally consistent (α = .89;

Russell, 1996, using data from Russell et al., 1987). Comparing data from four studies of

college students, nurses, teachers, and the elderly, Russell (1996) found support for the

scale's validity. Loneliness scores were negatively correlated with several measures of

social support (e.g., supportive behavior, r = -.39, p < .001), self-esteem (r = -.60, p <

.001), and life satisfaction (r = -.36, p < .001), suggesting the scale has construct validity.

Additionally, loneliness was positively related to burnout in teachers and nurses (r = -.45,

p < .001), further contributing to the scale's construct validity (Russell, 1996).

Disclosiveness

Disclosiveness is "a person's predilection to disclose to other people in general –

his or her generalized openness in encoding" (Wheeless, 1978, p. 144). Disclosiveness, as

an individual characteristic, was measured in this study with several items from

Wheeless' (1978) Revised Self-Disclosure Scale (RSDS; see Appendix B). The RSDS

can be general or target-specific. To measure disclosiveness, three items were taken from

the amount dimension and two items from the depth dimension of the general version of

the scale. (A full discussion of the RSDS will follow in the section on verbal disclosure in

blog entries.) Items were chosen based on their face validity to measure disclosiveness as

a trait. Stefanone and Jang (2007) used a similar method in their study; however, they

only used three items to measure disclosiveness. It was deemed necessary to measure

disclosiveness with five items in this study.

Participants were asked to consider how they communicate with people in

general. Then, they indicated how much each statement reflected themselves by marking

a number from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Two items were reverse

coded. A score of disclosiveness was calculated for each participant by summing and averaging their responses to these five statements.

The RSDS as a whole has been shown to be a very reliable measure of disclosure. Existing research has found Cronbach's alphas ranging from .81 (Stacks & Stone, 1984) to .91 (Wheeless, Nesser, & McCroskey, 1986). This 5-item scale was reliable in the present study (α = .72).

Public/Private Nature of Blogs

Whether or not bloggers limit access to their blogs was measured with one item: "Do you limit access to your blog? In other words, is your blog set to 'public' or 'private?'" (see Appendix C).

Target Audience Type

Target audience type is the group of people for whom bloggers are writing as they blog. This variable was measured by seven items created to tap into the different audiences bloggers may intend to read their blogs (see Appendix D). Existing research (Lenhart & Fox, 2006) was consulted in compiling this list. For each of the seven types of audiences – ranging in intimacy from "myself alone" and "my romantic partner" to "acquaintances" and "strangers who I do not know" – participants were asked to indicate how often they intended for these people to read their blog entries. Each of these items assessed a different type of target audience. Essentially, this scale yielded scores for seven dimensions, assessed using one item each. Each dimension represented a different type of target audience.

Blogging Motives

To date, there have been no systematic explorations of the motives for blogging using U&G as a guiding perspective. Therefore, a new measure of blogging motives was constructed for use in this study (see Appendix E). Potential blogging motives were drawn from multiple sources, including blogging research, studies of personal home pages, Internet motives research, and data from a pilot study of undergraduate students. Items were created for each of the motives taken from these sources and compiled into a motives scale, which was administered and subjected to factor analysis. This method is similar to other U&G studies of new technology (e.g., Charney & Greenberg, 2002).

As presented in the literature review, two studies have yielded potential blogging motives. Nardi et al. (2004) conducted an ethnographic study of 23 bloggers, revealing five motivations: documenting bloggers' lives, expressing opinions, sharing emotions, articulating ideas, and establishing and maintaining community forums. Lenhart and Fox (2006) have also contributed motives for blogging, including sharing knowledge and skills, motivating others, entertaining others, archiving information, influencing others, networking, and earning an income.

Two studies used U&G to reveal motives for establishing and maintaining personal home pages. Papacharissi (2002) found six motives for using home pages: passing time, entertainment, information, self-expression, professional advancement, communication with friends and family. These motives, along with one that fell out in Papacharissi's (2002) factor analysis – new trend – were tested in a study of a Korean-based community of home pages (Jung et al., 2007). Significant motives in this study included self-expression, entertainment, professional advancement, communication with

family and friends, and passing time (Jung et al., 2007). The items from Papacharissi's (2002) motives scale were included in the initial version of the Blogging Motives Scale that was used in this study.

Internet motives were gathered from a highly-cited U&G examination of motives for using the Internet (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). In their scale, Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) combined existing media, interpersonal communication, and Internet motives. Testing this scale revealed five Internet motives: interpersonal utility, pass time, information seeking, convenience, and entertainment (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). These items were rewritten as necessary to reflect blogging rather than general Internet use. Certain items (e.g., "Because it is easier to email than tell people") were excluded because of they did not correspond with blogging.

Pilot study data represented a final source for blogging motives. In this open-ended survey, undergraduate students enrolled in the basic communication course at Kent State University were asked to list all of the reasons they blog. The researcher then gathered all of the statements from the 102 participants that communicated possible motives. Only one statement was included when there were duplicate statements, such as "My friends had one, so I made one," and "I only use blogs because my friends do it." Forty-six statements were retained from the pilot study data.

After collecting all possible motives from these four sources, the motives and items were imported into a matrix which allowed for comparison across sources (see Table 2). After weighing the motives side-by-side, 13 categories emerged: provide information, self-expression, community/networking, entertaining others, entertaining self, archiving information, influencing/helping others, convenience/practicality, pass

time, communicate with friends and family, get feedback, exhibitionism, and new trend. The preliminary version of the Blogging Motives Index included 60 statements drawn from these 13 categories (see Table 3).

To ensure the best possible scale, the preliminary version of the Blogging Motives Index was presented to a group of 22 undergraduate students. First, the students were asked to list all of the possible reasons why a person might maintain a blog. Then, they were given the 60-item scale and asked to check that all of their reasons were represented on the scale. Through group discussion, students suggested several additional motives to include in the scale: to gain fame or notoriety, to communicate about a special interest or issue you care about (e.g., video games, movies, celebrities, the environment), to gossip, and to flame (release hate anonymously). Subsequently, three items reflecting these motives were added to the scale. One item ("To share information about others") was rewritten ("To gossip about others") to better represent the additional motive suggested by the students. Because of the length of the scale, the researcher eliminated six items that seemed to already be well represented in the scale. One item ("To share a funny story") was rewritten ("To share a funny story or joke") to allow for the elimination of an additional item. Another item ("Because I have to for a class") was rewritten ("Because I have to for a class or job") to make it applicable to more participants. Therefore, the final version of the Blogging Motives Index included 56 items.

The Blogging Motives Index was used to assess participants' motives for maintaining blogs (see Appendix E). The 56-item scale asked participants to indicate how much each item describes their reasons for blogging by choosing a response from 1 (not at all) to 5 (exactly like their own reasons for blogging). Although there were 13 a priori

Table 2

Comparison of Motives from Four Sources

Blogging Research	Personal Home Page Motives	Internet Motives	Pilot Study Data
PROVIDE INFORMATION			
Documenting bloggers' lives	Information o To present information about my special interests		o To tell people what's new in my life o To document my day o To share my plans for the day
Sharing knowledge and skills	Information o To provide information o To share information that may be of use to others		o To share information about others
SELF-EXPRESSION			
Expressing opinions	Self-expression o To tell others a little bit about myself	Interpersonal utility o To express myself freely o To give my input	o As an outlet for self-expression o To share my opinions on issues o To get things off my mind o Because it makes me feel good to create something

Sharing emotions	Self-expression		o To vent my emotions
	o To provide personal		o To share my real feelings
	information about myself		o Because expressing my
			negative emotions makes
			me feel better
			o To blog about negative
			experiences
			o To release tension
Articulating ideas			o As a creative outlet
			o Because it helps me
			organize my thoughts and
			feelings

COMMUNITY/NETWORKING

Establishing and maintaining community forums	Interpersonal utility	o To facilitate discussions
	o To participate in	o To be a part of a blogging
	discussions	community
	o To belong to a group	o Because I enjoy reading
		other people's blogs
Networking	Interpersonal utility	o To meet new people
	o To meet new people	o To make new friends
		o So people can get to know
		me

ENTERTAINING OTHERS

Entertaining others		o Because people think I am interesting o To entertain my readers o To share a funny story o To tell jokes

ENTERTAINING SELF

	Entertainment o Because it's entertaining o Because it is fun to try out new things like this o Because it's enjoyable	Entertainment o Because it is entertaining o Because I just like to use it o Because it is enjoyable	o For fun

ARCHIVING INFORMATION

Archiving information		o To record my thoughts and feelings so I can reflect on them o Because I can read what I wrote in previous posts

INFLUENCING/HELPING OTHERS

Influencing others	Interpersonal utility
	  o To tell others what to do
	  o Because I want someone to do something for me
	  o To help others
	  o To show others encouragement

Motivating others	

CONVENIENCE/PRACTICALITY

| Earning an income | Professional advancement
  o To put my professional resume on the Web
  o To help get me a job | o To communicate to many people at once, rather than telling one at a time
o Because I communicate better through writing than talking
o So I don't have to tell people something face-to-face
o To enhance my writing skills
o Because I have to for a class |

PASS TIME

Passing time	Pass time	
o Because it passes the time away when bored	o Because it passes time when bored	o To pass time
o When I have nothing better to do	o When I have nothing better to do	o Because I have nothing better to do
o To occupy my time	o To occupy my time	

COMMUNICATE WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Communication with friends and family	Convenience	
o To communicate with distant friends	o To communicate with friends and family	o To communicate to my friends and family.
o To keep in touch with friends and family		o To share information with my friends and family who do not live near me.
		o To keep in touch
		o To share information with people that I don't talk to on a regular basis
		o To remind my readers of an upcoming event

GET FEEDBACK

	Interpersonal utility o To get more points of view	o	To get feedback from others who have similar experiences
		o	To get advice from my readers

EXHIBITIONISM

		o	Because I like when people read things about me
		o	For attention

NEW TREND

Passing time o Because everybody else is doing it o Because it is the thing to do		o	Because my friends have blogs, too
		o	Because it is cool

Table 3

Preliminary Version of Blogging Motives Index with Source Citation

Provide Information
- To present information about my special interests (Papacharissi, 2002)
- To tell people what's new in my life (pilot study)
- To document my day (pilot study)
- To share my plans for the day (pilot study)
- To share information about others (pilot study)
- To share information that may be of use to others (Papacharissi, 2002)
- To share my knowledge and skills (Lenhart & Fox, 2006)

Self-Expression
- As an outlet for self-expression (pilot study)
- To share my opinions on issues (pilot study)
- To provide personal information about myself (Papacharissi, 2002)
- Because it makes me feel good to create something (pilot study)
- To vent my emotions (pilot study)
- To share my real feelings (pilot study)
- Because expressing my negative emotions makes me feel better (pilot study)
- To release tension (pilot study)
- As a creative outlet (pilot study)
- Because it helps me organize my thoughts and feelings (pilot study)
- To articulate my ideas (Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, & Swartz, 2004)

Community/Networking
- To participate in discussions (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000)
- To meet new people (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000)
- To facilitate discussions (pilot study)
- To be a part of a blogging community (pilot study)
- To make new friends (pilot study)
- So people can get to know me (pilot study)

Entertaining Others
- Because people think I am interesting (pilot study)
- To entertain my readers (pilot study)
- To share a funny story (pilot study)
- To tell jokes (pilot study)

Entertaining Self
- Because it's entertaining (Papacharissi, 2002)
- Because it is fun to try out new things like this (Papacharissi, 2002)
- Because I just like to use it (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000)
- For fun (pilot study)

Archiving Information
- To record my thoughts and feelings so I can reflect on them (pilot study)
- Because I can read what I wrote in previous posts (pilot study)

Influencing/Helping Others
- To tell others what to do (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000)
- To help others (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000)
- To show others encouragement (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000)
- To motivate others (Lenhart & Fox, 2006)

Convenience/Practicality
- To put my professional resume on the Web (Papacharissi, 2002)
- To help me get a job (Papacharissi, 2002)
- To communicate to many people at once, rather than telling one at a time (pilot study)
- Because I communicate better through writing than talking (pilot study)
- So I don't have to tell people something face-to-face (pilot study)
- To enhance my writing skills (pilot study)
- Because I have to for a class (pilot study)

Pass Time
- To occupy my time (Papacharissi, 2002; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000)
- To pass time (pilot study)
- Because I had nothing better to do (pilot study)

Communicate with Friends and Family
- To communicate to my friends and family (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; pilot study)
- To share information with my friends and family who do not live near me (pilot study)
- To share information with people that I don't talk to on a regular basis (pilot study)
- To remind my readers of an upcoming event (pilot study)

Get Feedback
- To get more points of view (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000)
- To get feedback from others who have similar experiences (pilot study)
- To get advice from my readers (pilot study)

Exhibitionism
- Because I like when people read things about me (pilot study)
- For attention (pilot study)

New Trend
- Because my friends have blogs, too (pilot study)
- Because it's cool (pilot study)
- Because it is the thing to do (Papacharissi, 2002)

---

categories, responses were factor analyzed to reveal the latent factors of participants'

blogging motives. After the exploratory factor analysis, scores on items composing each

factor were summed and averaged to reveal how much that motive is true for each

participant. Higher scores indicated the increased presence of each motive. For example,

higher scores on self-expression meant that such participants were more motivated by this

particular factor in their blogging.

Reliability estimates were calculated on each factor that emerged from the

exploratory factor analysis. Great lengths were taken in constructing the scale to ensure

content and face validity. Namely, retrieving all possible items by examining four sources

contributed to content validity, whereas checking the preliminary scale with a group of

undergraduate students suggested the scale had face validity.

Disclosure in Blogs

According to Wheeless and Grotz (1976), "self-disclosure is any *message* about

the self that a person communicates to another" (p. 338). Wheeless (1978) conceptualized

five dimensions of disclosure: "intended disclosure, amount, positiveness-negativeness, depth, and honesty-accuracy" (p. 152). Breadth is another dimension of disclosure, as conceptualized in Altman and Taylor's (1973) social penetration theory. Disclosure, the variable of interest in this study, is conceptualized to include two components: verbal disclosure in blog entries and identity management cues.

Verbal Disclosure in Blog Entries. Blog entries contain one type of disclosure. This disclosure is embedded within the text of the blog entries themselves. A modified version of Wheeless' (1978) 31-item Revised Self-Disclosure Scale (RSDS) was used to measure five dimensions of verbal disclosure in blog entries – intent (4 items), amount (7 items), valence (7 items), depth (5 items), and honesty/accuracy (8 items; see Appendix F). This measure asked participants to assess their disclosure behaviors in blog entries by indicating on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) how much they agree with each statement.

The original scale and the instructions were modified to fit the context of blog entries. Additionally, "self-disclosure" was replaced with "disclosure" throughout the scale. Altering the RSDS to fit the study's context or a particular individual is a common practice in research (e.g., Lannutti & Strauman, 2006; Ma & Leung, 2006; Myers & Johnson, 2004). In fact, the RSDS's versatility is one quality that contributes to its usefulness in social scientific research (Graham, 1994). The beginning of one item, "When I wish, my disclosures in my blog entries are always accurate reflections of who I really am," was reworded to "When I want them to be" for clarity. Twelve items were reverse coded, and responses on this scale were summed and averaged to yield participants' scores on five dimensions of verbal disclosure in blog entries. Higher scores

indicated more of each dimension in blog entries. Higher scores on the valence subscale indicated more positive disclosure reported by participants when they blog.

The RSDS was developed in a series of studies by Wheeless and Grotz (Wheeless, 1976, 1978; Wheeless & Grotz, 1976, 1977). Wheeless and Grotz (1976) first established the RSDS to improve existing measures of self-disclosure. The RSDS was intended to be topic-free and multidimensional (Wheeless & Grotz, 1976). The 32-item measure, which initially assessed the dimensions of "frequency, duration, intimacy, honesty, accuracy, conscious intent to disclose (willingness), positive-negative (evaluation), and relevance to topic of discussion" (Wheeless & Grotz, 1976, p. 340) was administered to teachers and undergraduate students. A factor analysis revealed five dimensions: intent to disclose, amount of disclosure, positive-negative, honesty-accuracy, and depth-control (Wheeless & Grotz, 1976). Subsequent studies (Wheeless, 1976, 1978; Wheeless & Grotz, 1977) further refined the final 31-item scale and assessed its reliability and validity.

Reliability estimates in both initial analyses of the RSDS, as well as subsequent studies, showed the RSDS to be a reliable scale. Wheeless (1978) reported high Cronbach's alphas for each dimension of the scale (intended disclosure, $\alpha = .85$; amount, $\alpha = .88$; valence, $\alpha = .91$; depth, $\alpha = .84$; honesty-accuracy, $\alpha = .87$). More recently, a study of disclosure in ICQ instant messaging also found acceptable reliability estimates (intended disclosure, $\alpha = .85$; amount, $\alpha = .80$; valence, $\alpha = .82$; depth, $\alpha = .83$; honesty-accuracy, $\alpha = .79$; Lannutti & Strauman, 2006). In this study, one item ("When I want them to be, my disclosures in my blog entries are always accurate reflections of who I really am") was excluded from the intent subscale to increase reliability. Each dimension

of the RSDS was reliable in this study (intent, $\alpha = .73$; amount, $\alpha = .82$; valence, $\alpha = .83$; depth, $\alpha = .78$; honesty-accuracy, $\alpha = .83$).

According to Graham (1994), the RSDS has also been shown to be a valid measure of self-disclosure. The content validity of the RSDS is evidenced by the fact that Wheeless and Grotz (1976) found the hypothesized dimensions of self-disclosure after factor analyzing their data. Based on previous research and theorizing, the dimensions of self-disclosure include "frequency, duration, honesty, accuracy, intimacy, disclosive intent, positive or negative information, and relevance to other topics under discussion" (Wheeless & Grotz, 1976, p. 338). The resulting five factors reflect these dimensions found in previous research. Also, the construct validity of the scale is supported by its associations with theoretically and logically related constructs. For example, dimensions of the RSDS have been significantly related to apprehension (e.g., Stacks & Stone, 1984), interpersonal solidarity (e.g., Wheeless, 1976), trust (e.g., Wheeless & Grotz, 1977), loneliness (e.g., Leung, 2002), and UTC in instant messaging (e.g., Ma & Leung, 2006) in predictable ways.

A close examination of the RSDS showed that breadth – the variety of topics disclosed – is not represented in this scale. Therefore, five items were created to measure this dimension (see Appendix G). In writing these statements, a study of the breadth and depth of disclosure in online relationships was consulted (Parks & Floyd, 1996). These items utilized the same 5-point Likert-type scale as the RSDS. Two items were reverse coded before summing and averaging the scores to reveal how much breadth of disclosure participants' reported in their blog entries. The reliability estimate of this scale was acceptable in this study ($\alpha = .81$).

Identity management cues. In addition to the disclosure present in blog entries, bloggers may also disclose information about themselves through the identity management cues disclosed in bloggers' profiles. Identity management cues are pieces of information included in the profile or biography of bloggers that disclose bloggers' offline identities. Identity management cues were measured through a checklist compiled for this study (see Appendix H).

To gather all possible identity management cues, existing blog research and several blogs were explored. Cues gathered from research included name, gender, age, occupation, picture of blogger, and education (Herring et al., 2005; Huffaker & Calvert, 2005; Lenhart & Fox, 2006; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005; Viegas, 2005). The researcher viewed 10 blogs to garner additional identity management cues. Three blogs viewed were from www.blogger.com, two from www.livejournal.com, two were from www.myspace.com, and three were from www.xanga.com. From accessing these blogs, the following identity management cues were added to the checklist: heritage/ethnicity, birthday, sexual orientation, relationship status, height, weight/body type, religion, zodiac sign, if you have children, schools attended, hometown, organizations where you work, and where you live. The final checklist included 18 identity management cues. Participants scores were computed by calculating the total number of cues checked. Therefore, higher scores indicated more identity management cues disclosed.

Demographic and Descriptive Information

Several items assessed participants' demographics and blog use (see Appendix I). Participants reported their age, gender, ethnicity, and country of residence to describe the sample. Age and gender were also used to address Research Questions 7, 8, and 9.

Frequency of blog posting and number of blogs maintained were elicited in the

questionnaire to help describe bloggers' media use.

Data Analyses

Demographic information and frequency of blog use were analyzed using

descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts, means, and standard deviations.

Cronbach's alphas were computed for all scales and subscales to ensure reliable

measurement. Pearson correlations were conducted to test the relationships between

identity management cues and the six dimensions of verbal disclosure in blog entries,

represented by Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4, as well as Research Questions 1 and 2.

Research Question 3, which was posed to explore the motives for blogging,

required an exploratory factor analysis on the data from the Blogging Motives Scale.

Varimax rotation was used to extract the interpretable factors, or motives. Eigenvalues of

1.0 or greater were necessary to include a factor in the subsequent analyses. The

researcher used the 60/40 loading criterion to determine which items cleanly loaded on

each factor. In other words, items that loaded .60 or higher on one factor and less than .40

on all other factors were included in the final factor structure.

To test Research Questions 4, 7, and 9, as well as Hypotheses 5 and 6, seven

separate hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted to regress each dimension of

disclosure on audience characteristics, individual characteristics, and motives. Individual

characteristics (age, gender, loneliness, and disclosiveness) and audience characteristics

(public/private nature of blogs and target audience type) were entered on the first step.

Blogging motives that emerged from the factor analysis were entered on the second step.

Each of the six dimensions of disclosure in blog entries – breadth, depth, amount, intent,

valence, and honesty/accuracy – and identity management cues constituted the dependent variables for each of the seven analyses.

A final series of multiple regressions were conducted to test Research Questions 5, 6, and 8. Audience characteristics – public/private nature of blogs and target audience type – and individual characteristics – age, gender, loneliness, and disclosiveness – served as independent variables, which predicted each blogging motive. The number of multiple regression analyses needed was determined by the number of motives retained from the factor analysis, as each motive served as a separate dependent variable.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Two tables were created to help describe the data in this sample. Table 4 displays the means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alphas for all continuous variables. Table 5 presents bivariate correlations between all continuous variables in this study. The results of tests of each research question and hypothesis follow.

Relationships Between Components of Disclosure

The first set of hypotheses and research questions were posed to test the fit of social penetration theory and the hyperpersonal perspective relative to how people disclose in blogs. Specifically, several competing hypotheses and research questions were posed to determine which theoretical perspective is more helpful in explaining the relationships between the number of identity management cues disclosed and the dimensions of disclosure in blog entries – amount, breadth, depth, valence, honesty/accuracy, and intent of disclosure.

Bloggers in this study disclosed, on average, between eight and nine identity management cues ($M = 8.57$, $SD = 4.59$). Gender was the most common identity management cue disclosed ($n = 275$, 90.8%), followed by first name ($n = 222$, 73.3%), age ($n = 201$, 66.3%), and occupation ($n = 201$, 66.3%). Over half of the participants also disclosed where they live ($n = 188$, 62%), their relationship status ($n = 185$, 61.1%), and their birthday ($n = 173$, 57.1%). See Table 6 for the frequencies of all identity management cues reported in this study.

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, and Cronbach's Alphas for all Variables

	M	*SD*	*α* (reliability)
Disclosure Dimensions			
Identity Management Cues (summed, 0-18)	8.57	4.59	
Breadth (averaged, 1-5)	3.70	0.78	.81
Depth (averaged, 1-5)	2.50	0.80	.78
Amount (averaged, 1-5)	3.24	0.72	.82
Intent (averaged, 1-5)	4.12	0.62	.73
Valence (averaged, 1-5)	3.62	0.64	.83
Honesty/Accuracy (averaged, 1-5)	3.86	0.64	.83
Blogging Motives (averaged, 1-5)			
Helping/Informing	3.41	0.91	.86
Social Connection	3.34	1.21	.85
Exhibitionism	2.46	0.97	.70
Pass Time	2.51	1.15	.84
Archiving/Informing	3.99	0.79	.74
Professional	1.41	0.73	.73
Get Feedback	3.21	1.14	
Reporting Details	2.76	0.99	.70

	M	*SD*	*α* (reliability)
Audience Characteristics			
Limiting Access to Blogs (No 0, Yes 1)			
Target Audience Type (0-100)			
Self	43.82	34.58	
Romantic Partner	11.97	21.48	
Close Friends and/or Family	37.49	35.09	
Casual Friends	28.05	28.00	
Co-Workers (Non-Friends)	5.24	13.79	
Acquaintances	22.11	27.38	
Strangers	34.27	34.71	
Individual Characteristics			
Age (18-70)	30.24	10.84	
Gender (Male 0, Female 1)			
Loneliness (1-5)	2.59	0.68	.90
Disclosiveness (1-5)	3.01	0.71	.72

Note. In all Likert-type scales scoring from 1 to 5, higher scores represent more of the measured variable. Scores for identity management cues were computed by adding all of the cues identified by each participant. Therefore, there is no Cronbach's alpha for this scale. The blogging motive *get feedback* contained two items. Therefore, a Pearson correlation was conducted to determine reliability ($r = .52, p < .001$). Public/private nature of blogs and gender were measured as categorical variables. Therefore, they do not have meaningful means, standard deviations, or Cronbach's alphas. Additionally, target audience types were measured with one item for each dimension, so there is no Cronbach's alpha for these subscales.

Table 5

Correlations among all Continuous Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Identity Management Cues	---												
2. Intent	.03	---											
3. Amount	.12*	.06	---										
4. Valence	-.06	.25***	-.22***	---									
5. Depth	.25***	-.06	.59***	-.34***	---								
6. Honesty/Accuracy	.11	.52***	.18**	.26***	.21***	---							
7. Breadth	.10	.15**	.28***	.00	.25***	.16**	---						
8. Helping/Informing	.14*	.16**	.00	.16**	.10	.21***	.09	---					
9. Social Connection	.17**	.02	.03	.15**	.06	.11	.07	.19***	---				
10. Exhibitionism	.14*	-.07	.12*	-.00	.15*	-.14*	.14*	.26***	.12*	---			
11. Pass Time	.15*	-.18**	.03	-.18***	.16**	-.16**	.06	.04	.02	.20***	---		

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	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
13. Professional	-.02	-.06	-.14*	.10	-.05	-.09	-.19***	.25***	.02	.20***	-.07	-.09	---
14. Get Feedback	.18***	.03	.12*	-.05	.14*	.05	.20***	.44***	.26***	.27***	.16**	.32***	.18**
15. Reporting Details	.12*	-.01	.35***	-.04	.32***	.05	.15**	.15*	.34***	.08	.24***	.39***	-.06
16. Age	-.02	.06	-.07	.10	-.07	.02	.08	.19***	-.05	.03	-.14*	.01	-.06
17. Loneliness	.02	-.12*	.04	-.34***	.09	-.18***	-.00	-.02	-.16**	.11	.17**	.02	-.06
18. Disclosiveness	.16**	-.01	.33***	.06	.35***	.10	.13*	.09	.14*	.20***	.02	.02	-.02
19. Audience – Self	.01	.04	.23***	-.15**	.14*	.01	-.01	-.14*	-.14*	-.14*	.17**	.27***	-.09
20. Audience – Romantic Partner	.01	.04	.07	-.03	.09	.11	.07	.02	.11	-.03	-.04	.09	.02
21. Audience – Close Friends/Family	.02	.09	.02	.18**	-.11	.10	-.06	.09	.59***	-.01	-.05	.06	-.12*
22. Audience – Casual Friends	-.02	.11	.10	.11	-.06	.02	.07	.01	.27***	.08	-.04	-.00	.04
23. Audience – Co-Workers	.06	-.02	.01	.06	-.02	.06	-.05	.15*	.09	.12	-.04	-.02	.14*
24. Audience – Acquaintances	-.07	.06	.10	.03	-.03	-.06	.03	.09	.07	.14*	-.03	-.03	.04

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
25. Audience - Strangers	-.01	.04	.04	-.07	.03	-.03	.09	.20***	-.26***	.30***	.07	.03	.04

	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
14. Get Feedback	---											
15. Reporting Details	.20***	---										
16. Age	-.07	-.01	---									
17. Loneliness	-.00	-.04	-.07	---								
18. Disclosiveness	.10	.23***	.03	-.20***	---							
19. Audience – Self	-.15*	.23***	-.10	.10	-.08	---						
20. Audience – Romantic Partner	-.04	.03	-.03	-.12*	.04	.21***	---					
21. Audience – Close Friends/Family	-.04	.17**	.02	-.25***	.10	.04	.22***	---				
22. Audience – Casual Friends	-.01	.09	.06	-.20***	.12*	-.03	.20***	.45***	---			

	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
23. Audience – Co-Workers	-.07	.01	.09	-.09	.05	-.01	.19***	.16**	.23***	---		
24. Audience – Acquaintances	.12*	.06	.16**	-.15**	.11	-.17**	.10	.17**	.64***	.28***	---	
25. Audience - Strangers	.18**	-.09	.19***	.10	.07	-.14*	-.01	-.09	.19***	.09	.35***	---

*$p < .05$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 6

Frequencies of Identity Management Cues Disclosed

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	275	90.8
First name	222	73.3
Age	201	66.3
Occupation	201	66.3
Location	188	62
Relationship status	185	61.1
Birthday	173	57.1
Religion	140	46.2
Sexual orientation	132	43.6
Heritage/ethnicity	130	42.9
Children	127	41.9
Schools attended	120	39.6
Hometown	120	39.6
Last name	104	34.3
Organization	93	30.7
Zodiac sign	68	22.4
Weight/body type	60	19.8
Height	59	19.5

The first set of hypotheses and research questions, addressing the effects of identity management cues on disclosure dimensions in blog entries, was tested by a series of Pearson product correlations. The relationships between the number of identity management cues disclosed and each dimension of disclosure in blog entries were examined in six correlation tests. See Table 5 for a summary of the results for the first set of hypotheses and research questions.

Hypothesis 1 predicted a relationship between identity management cues and the amount of disclosure. Social penetration theory and the hyperpersonal perspective suggest this relationship will be in two different directions. There was a significant positive correlation between identity management cues and amount of disclosure ($r = .12$, $p < .05$). Participants who disclosed more identity management cues were more likely to disclose more private information in their blog entries. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported, finding evidence for social penetration theory. This finding should be interpreted with reservation, however, consider the small magnitude of the correlation between these variables.

Hypothesis 2 addressed the impact of identity management cues on the breadth of disclosure in blog entries. Specifically, social penetration theory predicted a positive association between these variables, whereas the hyperpersonal perspective predicted a negative association. The number of identity management cues was not significantly related to the breadth of disclosure in blog entries ($r = .10$, $p = .07$). Hypothesis 2 was not supported in this study. Thus, there was no evidence to support either social penetration theory or the hyperpersonal perspective related to breadth of disclosure in blogs.

The third hypothesis was presented to test social penetration theory and the hyperpersonal perspective with regard to identity management cues and the depth of disclosure. Social penetration theory predicted a positive association between these variables, and the hyperpersonal perspective predicted a negative association. The number of identity management cues disclosed was significantly related to the depth of disclosure in blog entries ($r = .25$, $p < .001$). Specifically, bloggers who disclosed more identity management cues in their profiles tended to disclose more intimate, deep information in their blog entries. This finding supports Hypothesis 3 in favor of social penetration theory. This theory was more useful in explaining the relationship between identity management cues and depth of disclosure in blog entries than was the hyperpersonal perspective.

Research Question 1 was posed to explore the impact of identity management cues on the valence of disclosure in blog entries. There were no significant findings regarding this research question ($r = -.06$, $p = .34$). Neither social penetration theory nor the hyperpersonal perspective was useful in explaining the relationship between the number of identity management cues disclosed and the valence of disclosure in blog entries.

Hypothesis 4 predicted a positive association between the number of identity management cues disclosed and the honesty/accuracy of information disclosed in blog entries. In this case, both social penetration theory and the hyperpersonal perspective suggested the same relationship between the two variables. This hypothesis was not supported in this study ($r = .11$, $p = .06$). There was no significant relationship between

the number of identity management cues disclosed in bloggers' profiles and how honest

and accurate they were in their blog entries.

Research Question 2 was posed to explore the impact of identity management

cues on the intent of disclosure in blog entries. These two variables were not significantly

related ($r = .03$, $p = .56$). Therefore, the number of identity management cues disclosed

did not significantly predict whether bloggers were intentional in disclosing private

information in their blog entries.

Overall, only the amount and depth of information disclosed in blog entries were

significantly predicted by the number of identity management cues disclosed. In both

cases, the predictions of social penetration theory held true in that bloggers who disclosed

more identity management cues in their blog profiles disclosed more private information

characterized by more intimacy than those who disclosed less identity management cues.

In this case, the hyperpersonal perspective was not helpful in explaining the relationships

between these two components of blog disclosure.

<div align="center">Blogging Motives</div>

To examine the motives for blogging, in response to Research Question 3, a

principal components exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted on

the responses from the 56-item Blogging Motives Index. Bartlett's test of sphericity [χ^2

$(1540) = 7264.92$, $p < .001$] suggested that there was a meaningful structure from which

to conduct a factor analysis. This initial factor analysis revealed 13 factors with

eigenvalues of at least 1. The scree plot was consulted, suggesting that only 10 factors

should be retained. However, because this was only the first analysis in a two-step

process, more factors and items were retained to allow for more items to be included in

the second factor analysis. The researcher examined each item's loadings, eliminating those variables that did not cleanly load on only one factor, using the 60/40 loading criterion. Items loading with at least a .59 on only one factor were retained for further analysis. Twenty items were eliminated following this process, and a second factor analysis was conducted.

A second exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted on the remaining 36 items. Bartlett's test of sphericity [χ^2 (630) = 4317.80, $p < .001$] again was significant. Therefore, this data was appropriate for a factor analysis. Factors with eigenvalues of at least one and with at least two cleanly loaded items were retained. The second exploratory factor analysis revealed nine factors in the rotated factor structure. However, one factor only contained one item. Therefore, an 8-factor solution was retained. The scree plot supported this decision. The final solution contained 28 items and accounted for 60.73% of the variance. See Table 7 for the factor loadings of the final 8-factor solution. Appendix J presents the final version of the Blogging Motives Index.

The first factor, *helping/informing*, accounted for 11.41% of the variance (eigenvalue = 4.11) and included six items. Participants who blogged for helping/informing did so because they wanted to motivate, help, and encourage others by sharing information, as well as share their knowledge and skills. A mean index was computed by averaging the items (Cronbach's alpha = .86; see Table 4 for means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alphas for all motives).

The second factor that emerged was *social connection* (eigenvalue = 2.92, α = .85). This factor consists of four items and explained 8.10% of the variance. This motive suggested that people blogged to share information with and communicate with friends

Table 7

Factor Loadings for Final 8-Factor Solution of Blogging Motives

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
To motivate others	.83							
To help others	.77							
To share information that may be of use to others	.76							
To share my knowledge and skills	.73							
To show others encouragement	.70							
To communicate about a special interest or issue that I care about	.64							
To share information with my friends and family who do not live near me		.88						
To communicate to my friends and family		.85						
To share information with people that I don't talk to on a regular basis		.79						
To communicate to many people at once, rather than telling one at a time		.70						
To gain fame or notoriety			.71					
For attention			.70					
Because I like when people read things about me			.61					
To pass time				.84				
To occupy my time				.83				

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Because I have nothing better to do					.81			
To record my thoughts and feelings so I can reflect on them					.81			
Because it helps me organize my thoughts and feelings					.68			
Because I can read what I wrote in previous posts					.64			
To articulate my ideas*					.59			
To help me get a job						.82		
To put my professional resume on the Web						.76		
Because I have to for a class or job						.63		
To get advice from my readers							.71	
To get more points of view							.71	
To provide personal information about myself								.70
To share my plans for the day								.69
To document my day								.68
Eigenvalue	4.11	2.92	2.78	2.76	2.66	2.42	2.24	1.98
Variance Explained (%)	11.41	8.10	7.72	7.66	7.40	6.72	6.23	5.51

*The 60/40 criterion was bent to allow for this item to be included in the factor.

and family members with whom they may not talk on a regular basis. Participants who

blogged for this motive also maintained a blog to send a message to many people at once,

rather than one at a time.

Exhibitionism, the third factor, was comprised of three items (eigenvalue = 2.78, α

= .70). This factor explained 7.72% of the variance. People who scored high on

exhibitionism blogged for attention, to gain fame, and because they thought people liked

to read things about them.

Pass time explained 7.66% of the variance (eigenvalue = 2.76, α = .84). The pass

time motive included blogging because there is nothing else to do, to pass time, and to

occupy time. The pass time motive was composed of three items.

The fifth factor was labeled *archiving/organizing* (eigenvalue = 2.66, α = .74),

and it included four items. This factor accounted for 7.4% of the variance in the final

solution. Blogging for archiving/organizing included blogging to record thoughts and

feelings for further reflection, to read what was written in previous posts, and to organize

and articulate thoughts and feelings.

Sixth was the *professional* blogging motive, which was comprised of three items

and explained 6.72% of the variance (eigenvalue = 2.42, α = .73). People who blogged

for this reason did so to help get a job, to put their resume on the Web, and because they

were required to for a job or school.

The seventh factor, *get feedback*, contained two items and explained 6.23% of the

variance (eigenvalue = 2.24). Because there were only two items in this factor, a Pearson

correlation was run to determine the factor's reliability ($r = .51$, $p < .001$). Participants

who blogged to get advice or more points of view from others were motivated by get feedback.

The last factor emerging from this analysis was *reporting details*. This factor consisted of three items, accounting for 5.51% of the variance (eigenvalue = 1.98, α = .70). Reporting details was blogging to provide personal information about the self and day-to-day details.

In sum, eight motives for blogging emerged from this analysis, in response to Research Question 3. These motives – helping/informing, social connection, exhibitionism, pass time, archiving/organizing, professional, get feedback, and reporting details – explained a total of 60.73% of the variance in the Blogging Motives Index. Mean scores were computed for each factor, which were used to address subsequent research questions and hypotheses.

The next set of research questions and hypotheses, addressing the impact of motives, audience characteristics, and individual characteristics on the number of identity management cues disclosed and disclosure dimensions in blog entries, was tested with a series of seven hierarchical multiple regressions. As depicted in the conceptual model (see Figure 3), audience and individual characteristics precede participants' blogging motives, which in turn precede the outcomes of media use, namely disclosure patterns in blogs. Therefore, audience and individual characteristics were entered on the first step of the hierarchical regressions, followed by the eight found motives on the second step. Each dimension of disclosure – breadth, depth, amount, intent, valence, honesty/accuracy, and number of identity management cues disclosed – served as a dependent variable in each regression. Results of these regression analyses are

summarized in Tables 8, 9, 11, 13, and 14. These results were used to address Research Questions 4, 7, and 9, as well as Hypotheses 5 and 6.

Research Question 4 was posed to determine which motives predict disclosure dimensions in blogs. To address this question, only the second step of each of the seven regression analyses was examined. Table 8 summarizes the results addressing this research question.

The eight blogging motives – helping/informing, social connection, exhibitionism, pass time, archiving/organizing, professional, get feedback, and reporting details – collectively explained 12.1% of the variance in breadth of disclosure in blog entries, above and beyond the effects of audience and individual characteristics, F $change$(8, 253) = 4.73, $p < .001$. The professional motive (β = -.22, $p < .001$) and get feedback motive (β = .17, $p < .05$) emerged as individual predictors of breadth. Participants who blogged for professional reasons discussed fewer topics in their blog entries than other bloggers. Additionally, participants covered a larger variety of topics in their blog entries when they wished to get feedback through their blogs.

In this study, 8.1% of the variance in depth of disclosure in blog entries was uniquely explained by blogging motives, F $change$(8, 252) = 3.54, $p < .001$. Archiving/organizing (β = .15, $p < .05$) and reporting details (β = .18, $p < .01$) individually predicted depth of disclosure. Therefore, bloggers who were motivated by archiving/organizing and reporting details disclosed more intimate information in their blog entries than other bloggers.

Table 8

Regressing Disclosure Dimensions on Blogging Motives, Controlling for Audience and Individual Characteristics

	Blogging Motives								
	Helping/ Informing	Social Connection	Exhibitionism	Pass Time	Archiving/ Organizing	Professional	Get Feedback	Reporting Details	
	ß	ß	ß	ß	ß	ß	ß	ß	R^2 change
Breadth	-.00	-.00	.11	-.05	.13	-.22***	.17*	.10	.12***
Depth	-.01	.05	.03	.02	.15*	-.02	.03	.18**	.08***
Amount	-.09	-.14	.10	-.14*	.16*	-.10	.06	.20**	.09***
Intent	.20**	-.07	-.05	-.20**	.02	-.11	.04	-.00	.08**
Valence	.23***	.11	.02	-.10	-.15*	.02	-.10	-.00	.07**
Honesty/ Accuracy	.27***	.05	-.16*	-.12	.02	-.15*	.02	-.02	.10***
Identity Management Cues	.06	.17	.05	.07	.01	-.06	.13	-.01	.07**

Note. All betas are final standardized betas from the second step of hierarchical multiple regressions.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Blogging motives explained 8.6% of the variance in the amount of disclosure in blog entries, holding audience and individual characteristics constant, *F change*(8, 252) = 3.94, *p* < .001. Three motives predicted amount of disclosure: pass time (β = -.14, *p* < .05), archiving/organizing (β = .16, *p* < .05), and reporting details (β = .20, *p* < .01). Participants who blogged to pass time disclosed less information in their blogs, whereas bloggers motivated by archiving/organizing and reporting details revealed more information in their blog entries.

Blogging motives significantly predicted the intentionality of disclosure in blog entries, *F change*(8, 252) = 2.72, *p* < .01. Collectively, blogging motives explained 7.6% of the variance of intended disclosure, when controlling for the effects of audience and individual characteristics. Helping/informing (β = .20, *p* < .01) and pass time (β = -.20, *p* < .01) emerged as significant predictors of intent of disclosure. Participants who were motivated by helping/informing were more intentional and aware of their disclosures in blog entries, and those who blogged to pass time were less deliberate in their blog disclosures.

Seven percent of the variance in valence of disclosure in blog entries was uniquely explained by blogging motives, *F change*(8, 252) = 2.90, *p* < .01. Specifically, helping/informing (β = .23, *p* < .001) and archiving/organizing (β = -.15, *p* < .05) individually predicted valence of disclosure. Participants who blogged to help and inform others were more positive in their disclosures, whereas bloggers who wished to archive and organize their thoughts through their blogs disclosed more negative information in their blog entries.

Blogging motives jointly explained 10.3% of the honesty and accuracy of blog entry disclosures above and beyond audience and individual characteristics, *F change*(8, 252) = 3.93, *p* < .001. Three motives – helping/informing (β = .27, *p* < .001), exhibitionism (β = -.16, *p* < .05), and professionalism (β = -.15, *p* < .05) – surfaced as individual predictors of honesty/accuracy of disclosure. Bloggers motivated by helping and informing others were more honest and accurate in their blog entries. However, participants who blogged due to exhibitionism and professionalism were less honest and accurate in their disclosures.

Blogging motives explained 7.1% of the unique variance in the last disclosure dimension, identity management cues disclosed, *F change*(8, 253) = 2.57, *p* < .01. However, none of the blogging motives significantly predicted the number of identity management cues disclosed.

<div align="center">Audience Characteristics</div>

The audience characteristics examined in this study included whether or not bloggers limited access to their blogs (whether public or private bloggers) and the target audience type for whom bloggers wrote. The majority of the participants in this study maintained public blogs (*n* = 247, 81.5%), and 56 bloggers (18.5%) limited access to their blogs. Participants who limited their blog readerships allowed anywhere from zero to 1,000 people to access their blogs (*M* = 81.09, *SD* = 165.34).

Hypothesis 5 predicted different disclosure patterns among bloggers who maintained public blogs relative to those maintaining private blogs. There was no support for this hypothesis (see Table 9). Limiting access to blogs did not predict any of the disclosure dimensions in blogs when the effects of individual characteristics and motives

Table 9

Regressing Disclosure Dimensions on Audience Characteristics, Controlling for Individual Characteristics and Motives

				Target Audience Type				
	Public/Private	Self	Romantic Partner	Close Friends/ Family	Casual Friends	Co-Workers	Acquaintances	Strangers
	ß	ß	ß	ß	ß	ß	ß	ß
Breadth	.05	-.05	.10	-.20*	.19*	-.02	-.18*	.06
Depth	-.10	.07	.09	-.14	-.08	-.02	.03	.05
Amount	.06	.16*	.00	.03	.00	.01	.09	.02
Intent	-.03	.11	-.04	.04	.12	-.04	-.01	.02
Valence	-.05	-.06	-.06	.01	.08	.01	-.07	-.06
Honesty/ Accuracy	-.02	.04	.05	-.01	.04	.08	-.13	.04
Identity Management Cues	.09	.05	.02	-.12	.03	.09	-.17*	.03

Note. All betas are final standardized betas on the last step of hierarchical multiple regressions.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

were controlled for. However, the public/private nature of blogs did impact blogging motives.

Research questions and hypotheses that explored the effects of audience and individual characteristics on blogging motives were tested through a series of eight multiple regression analyses. In each regression, audience characteristics (public/private nature of blogs and scores on seven types of target audiences) and individual characteristics (age, gender, loneliness, and disclosiveness) served as predictors of one of the eight blogging motives. Results from these multiple regressions are summarized in Tables 10 and 12, and were used to address Research Questions 5, 6, and 8.

Research Question 5 was asked to explore the effects of restricting access to blogs on motives for blogging. Whether a blog was public or private significantly impacted three blogging motives: pass time ($\beta = .14$, $p < .05$), get feedback ($\beta = .15$, $p < .05$), and reporting details ($\beta = .11$, $p < .05$; see Table 10). Bloggers who limited access to their blogs, making them private, were more likely to blog to pass time, get feedback, and report details than those who maintained public blogs.

Bloggers often write for specific audiences. In this study, bloggers wrote most often for themselves ($M = 43.82$, $SD = 34.58$), followed by close friends and/or family ($M = 37.49$, $SD = 35.09$), strangers ($M = 34.27$, $SD = 34.71$), casual friends ($M = 28.05$, $SD = 28$), and acquaintances ($M = 22.11$, $SD = 27.38$; see Table 4). Bloggers were least likely to write for co-workers who they did not consider friends ($M = 5.24$, $SD = 13.79$) and romantic partners ($M = 11.97$, $SD = 21.48$).

Table 10

Regressing Blogging Motives on Audience Characteristics, Controlling for Individual Characteristics

	Public/Private	Self	Romantic Partner	Close Friends/ Family	Casual Friends	Co-Workers	Acquaintances	Strangers
	ß	ß	ß	ß	ß	ß	ß	ß
Helping/ Informing	-.04	-.12	-.00	.16*	-.15	.12	.04	.16*
Social Connection	.01	-.18***	-.01	.54***	.09	.02	-.01	-.26***
Exhibitionism	-.03	-.09	-.03	.03	-.00	.09	-.01	.27***
Pass Time	.14*	.19**	-.11	-.00	-.03	-.01	.03	.12
Archiving/ Organizing	.06	.26***	.00	.11	-.08	-.02	.03	.07
Professional	-.03	-.08	.01	-.20**	.12	.14*	-.05	-.03
Get Feedback	.15*	-.10	-.04	.02	-.16	-.08	.18*	.18**
Reporting Details	.11*	.23***	-.09	.15*	-.05	.00	.15	-.10

Note. All betas are standardized betas.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

The type of target audience for whom bloggers wrote should predict disclosure dimensions in blogs, as presented in Hypothesis 6. Evidence was found to support this hypothesis (see Table 9). Specifically, people who blogged for themselves were more likely to disclose a larger amount of information in their blog entries ($\beta = .16$, $p < .05$). Blog entries were characterized by more breadth of disclosure when bloggers wrote for casual friends ($\beta = .19$, $p < .05$), and less breadth when bloggers wrote for close friends and/or family ($\beta = -.20$, $p < .05$) and acquaintances ($\beta = -.18$, $p < .05$). Bloggers writing for acquaintances also tended to disclose fewer identity management cues in their blogs ($\beta = -.17$, $p < .05$).

Research Question 6 asked how target audience types affect blogging motives. There were several significant relationships among these variables, excluding the effects of individual characteristics (see Table 10). People who blogged for themselves were more likely to be motivated to blog by passing time ($\beta = .19$, $p < .01$), archiving/organizing ($\beta = .26$, $p < .001$), and reporting details ($\beta = .23$, $p < .001$), and less likely to blog for social connection ($\beta = -.18$, $p < .001$). When bloggers' target audiences were close friends and/or family, they were more likely to be motivated to blog for helping/informing ($\beta = .16$, $p < .05$), social connection ($\beta = .54$, $p < .001$), and reporting details ($\beta = .15$, $p < .05$), and less likely to blog for professional reasons ($\beta = -.20$, $p < .01$).

People writing for co-workers who were not their friends were more likely to blog for professional reasons ($\beta = .14$, $p < .05$), and bloggers writing for acquaintances were more likely to blog to elicit feedback from others ($\beta = .18$, $p < .05$). Participants who blogged for strangers were often motivated to blog for helping/informing ($\beta = .16$, $p <$

.05), exhibitionism (β = .27, *p* < .001), and to get feedback (β = .18, *p* < .01). However, these participants were less likely to blog for social connection (β = -.26, *p* < .001).

Individual Characteristics

Two research questions were presented to explore the impact of individual characteristics – age, gender, loneliness, and disclosiveness – in the conceptual model. Specifically, Research Question 7 asked which individual characteristics would predict disclosure dimensions in blogs. Age did not emerge as a significant predictor of breadth, depth, amount, intent, valence, honesty/accuracy, or identity management cues above and beyond the effects of other individual characteristics, audience characteristics, and blogging motives (see Table 11).

These analyses also showed no significant relationships between gender and disclosure dimensions (see Table 11). Being a woman or a man did not impact the breadth, depth, amount, intent, valence, or honesty/accuracy of disclosure in blog entries, nor did it impact the number of identity management cues disclosed.

The relative effects of loneliness on disclosure dimensions were examined according to Research Question 7. When the effects of other individual characteristics, audience characteristics, and blogging motives were controlled for, loneliness significantly predicted the valence (β = -.27, *p* < .001) and honesty/accuracy of disclosure in blog entries (β = -.13, *p* < .05; see Table 11). Bloggers who were lonely were more likely to disclose negative information that was dishonest and inaccurate.

Disclosiveness predicted three disclosure dimensions: depth (β = .35, *p* < .001), amount (β = .29, *p* < .001), and identity management cues (β = .13, *p* < .05; see Table 11). People with higher scores in disclosiveness were more likely to disclose more

Table 11

Regressing Disclosure Dimensions on Individual Characteristics, Controlling for Audience Characteristics and Blogging Motives

	Age	Gender	Loneliness	Disclosiveness
	β	β	β	β
Breadth	.03	-.09	-.11	.09
Depth	-.06	-.01	.11	.35***
Amount	-.08	.10	.08	.29***
Intent	-.02	-.00	-.11	-.06
Valence	.04	.11	-.27***	-.02
Honesty/Accuracy	-.07	.07	-.13*	.07
Identity Management Cues	-.02	-.11	-.04	.13*

Note. All betas are final standardized betas on the last step of hierarchical multiple regressions.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

intimate information in their blog entries and more identity management cues in their

blog profiles. In response to Research Question 7, loneliness and disclosiveness impacted

disclosure dimensions in blogs.

Research Question 8 asked which individual characteristics affected motives for

blogging. Age significantly predicted the motives of helping/informing (β = .15, *p* < .05)

and pass time (β = -.12, *p* < .05; see Table 12). In other words, the older participants

Table 12

Regressing Blogging Motives on Individual Characteristics, Controlling for Audience Characteristics

	Age	Gender	Loneliness	Disclosiveness
	β	β	β	β
Helping/Informing	.15*	-.01	.00	.06
Social Connection	-.04	.09	.05	.07
Exhibitionism	-.02	-.06	.12	.20***
Pass Time	-.12*	.01	.07	.03
Archiving/Organizing	.04	.11	.02	.02
Professional	-.05	-.13*	-.07	-.03
Get Feedback	-.10	.09	-.05	.06
Reporting Details	.01	.17**	.06	.22***

Note. All betas are standardized betas.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

were, the more likely they were to blog to help and inform others. On the other hand, younger participants were more likely to blog to pass time.

Gender did impact blogging motives, in response to Research Question 8 (see Table 12). Men were more likely to blog for professional reasons ($β = -.13, p < .05$), whereas women were more likely to blog to report details about themselves and their days ($β = .17, p < .01$). These effects were above and beyond those caused by other individual characteristics and audience characteristics.

Loneliness did not significantly predict blogging motives above and beyond the effects of the other variables in this study (see Table 12). Loneliness did not appear to affect participants' motives for blogging.

However, disclosiveness was a significant predictor of blogging motives. Bloggers high in disclosiveness were more likely to be motivated to blog by exhibitionism ($\beta = .20$, $p < .001$) and reporting details ($\beta = .22$, $p < .001$) than those low in disclosiveness (see Table 12), supporting this hypothesis. These effects of disclosiveness on blogging motives were present when considering the relative impact of other individual characteristics and audience characteristics. Age, gender, and disclosiveness impacted blogging motives, in response to Research Question 8.

Overall Model Exploration

Research Question 9 was posed to explore the usefulness of the conceptual model in explaining the disclosure processes in blogs. Toward this end, hierarchical multiple regressions used in earlier analyses were examined for each of the seven dimensions of disclosure. Table 13 summarizes the results of this research question. The results are then transposed on the conceptual model in Figures 4-10.

Individual and audience characteristics entered on the first step of hierarchical multiple regressions explained a significant amount of variance in depth ($R^2 = .20$, $p < .001$), amount ($R^2 = .23$, $p < .001$), and valence of disclosure in blog entries ($R^2 = .17$, $p < .001$; see Table 13). The second block of predictors – eight blogging motives – contributed a significant amount of unique variance for all disclosure dimensions. Specifically, the conceptual model seemed to explain the most variance in amount of disclosure (final $R^2 = .31$, $p < .001$), depth of disclosure (final $R^2 = .28$, $p < .001$), and

valence (final $R^2 = .24$, $p < .01$). In all three of these dimensions, the first block of

predictors significantly explained variance in disclosure dimensions, and the amount of

unique variance explained by the second block of variables was significant. Therefore, it

is assumed that the conceptual model is helpful in explaining some, but not all of the

disclosure dimensions in blogs. Table 14 presents the betas for each variable in the

hierarchical multiple regression.

Table 13

Regressing Disclosure Dimensions on Audience and Individual Characteristics (Step 1) and Blogging Motives (Step 2)

	Step 1 (Audience and Individual Characteristics)	Step 2 (Blogging Motives)	
	R^2	R^2	R^2 change
Breadth	.07	.19***	.12***
Depth	.20***	.28***	.08***
Amount	.23***	.31***	.09***
Intent	.05	.12**	.08**
Valence	.17***	.24**	.07**
Honesty/Accuracy	.07	.18***	.10***
Identity Management Cues	.06	.13**	.07**

Note. Individual betas on the final step of regressions are reported in Tables 9-14.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 14

Individual Betas in Regressing Disclosure Dimensions on Audience and Individual Characteristics (Step 1) and Blogging Motives (Step 2)

	Breadth	Depth	Amount	Intent	Valence	Honesty/ Accuracy	ID Mgmt Cues
Step 1							
Age	.03	-.06	-.07	.04	.09	-.00	-.03
Gender (Male 0, Female 1)	-.02	.04	.15*	.01	.09	.10	-.08
Loneliness	-.09	.12*	.09	-.13	-.27***	-.14*	-.03
Disclosiveness	.15*	.40***	.35***	-.06	-.01	.06	.17**
Limiting Access (No 0, Yes 1)	.09	-.06	.08	-.05	-.10	-.04	.12
Self	-.00	.15*	.25***	.08	-.16**	-.00	.01
Romantic Partner	.08	.07	-.01	-.02	-.05	.07	.00
Close Friends/Family	-.13	-.06	.01	.06	.09	.08	-.01
Casual Friends	.12	-.10	-.03	.07	.08	-.02	.00

	Breadth	Depth	Amount	Intent	Valence	Honesty/ Accuracy	ID Mgmt Cues
Co-Workers	-.06	-.03	-.01	-.04	.05	.07	.08
Acquaintances	-.12	.06	.13	-.00	-.09	-.12	-.14
Strangers	.12	.05	.05	.04	-.08	.02	.04
Step 2							
Age	.03	-.06	-.08	-.02	.04	-.07	-.02
Gender (Male 0, Female 1)	-.09	-.01	.10	-.00	.11	.07	-.11
Loneliness	-.11	.11	.08	-.11	-.27***	-.13*	-.04
Disclosiveness	.09	.35***	.29***	-.06	-.02	.07	.13*
Limiting Access (No 0, Yes 1)	.05	-.10	.06	-.03	-.05	-.02	.09
Self	-.05	.07	.16*	.11	-.06	.04	.05
Romantic Partner	.10	.09	.00	-.04	-.06	.05	.02
Close Friends/Family	-.20*	-.14	.03	.04	.01	-.01	-.12
Casual Friends	.19*	-.08	.00	.12	.08	.04	.03

	Breadth	Depth	Amount	Intent	Valence	Honesty/ Accuracy	ID Mgmt Cues
Co-Workers	-.02	-.02	.01	-.04	.01	.08	.09
Acquaintances	-.18*	.03	.09	-.01	-.07	-.13	-.17*
Strangers	.06	.05	.02	.02	-.06	.04	.03
Helping/Informing	-.00	-.01	-.09	.20**	.23***	.27***	.06
Social Connection	-.00	.05	-.14	-.07	.11	.05	.17
Exhibitionism	.11	.03	.10	-.05	.02	-.16*	.05
Pass Time	-.05	.02	-.14*	-.20**	-.10	-.12	.07
Archiving/Organizing	.13	.15*	.16*	.02	-.15*	.02	.01
Professional	-.22***	-.02	-.10	-.11	.02	-.15*	-.06
Get Feedback	.17*	.03	.06	.04	-.10	.02	.13
Reporting Details	.10	.18**	.20**	-.00	-.00	-.02	-.01

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Figure 4

Overall Model Exploration with Breadth as Dependent Variable

Figure 5

Overall Model Exploration with Depth as Dependent Variable

Note. All betas are final standardized betas.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Figure 6

Overall Model Exploration with Amount as Dependent Variable

Step 1
$R^2 = .23***$

Step 2
R^2 change $= .09***$
$R^2 = .31***$

Individual Characteristics

Age: ß = -.08
Gender: ß = .10
Loneliness: ß = .08
Disclosiveness: ß = .29***

Audience Characteristics

Public/Private: ß = .06
Self: ß = .16*
Romantic Partner: ß = .00
Close Friends/Family: ß = .03
Casual Friends: ß = .00
Co-Workers: ß = .01
Acquaintances: ß = .09
Strangers: ß = .02

Motives for Blogging

Helping/Informing: ß = -.09
Social Connection: ß = -.14
Exhibitionism: ß = .10
Pass Time: ß = -.14*
Archiving/Organizing: ß = .16*
Professional: ß = -.10
Get Feedback: ß = .06
Reporting Details: .20**

Amount of Disclosure in Blog Entries

Note. All betas are final standardized betas.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Figure 7

Overall Model Exploration with Intent as Dependent Variable

Note. All betas are final standardized betas.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Figure 8

Overall Model Exploration with Valence as Dependent Variable

Step 1
$R^2 = .17***$

Step 2
R^2 change $= .07**$
$R^2 = .24**$

Individual Characteristics

Age: ß = .04
Gender: ß = .11
Loneliness: ß = -.27***
Disclosiveness: ß = -.02

Audience Characteristics

Public/Private: ß = -.05
Self: ß = -.06
Romantic Partner: ß = -.06
Close Friends/Family: ß = .01
Casual Friends: ß = .08
Co-Workers: ß = .01
Acquaintances: ß = -.07
Strangers: ß = -.06

Motives for Blogging

Helping/Informing: ß = .23***
Social Connection: ß = .11
Exhibitionism: ß = .02
Pass Time: ß = -.10
Archiving/Organizing: ß = -.15*
Professional: ß = .02
Get Feedback: ß = -.10
Reporting Details: -.00

Valence of Disclosure in Blog Entries

Note. All betas are final standardized betas.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Figure 9

Overall Model Exploration with Honesty/Accuracy as Dependent Variable

Step 1
$R^2 = .07$

Step 2
R^2 change $= .10***$
$R^2 = .18***$

Individual Characteristics

Age: ß = -.07
Gender: ß = .07
Loneliness: ß = -.13*
Disclosiveness: ß = .07

Audience Characteristics

Public/Private: ß = -.02
Self: ß = .04
Romantic Partner: ß = .05
Close Friends/Family: ß = -.01
Casual Friends: ß = .04
Co-Workers: ß = .08
Acquaintances: ß = -.13
Strangers: ß = .04

Motives for Blogging

Helping/Informing: ß = .27***
Social Connection: ß = .05
Exhibitionism: ß = -.16*
Pass Time: ß = -.12
Archiving/Organizing: ß = .02
Professional: ß = -.15*
Get Feedback: ß = .02
Reporting Details: -.02

Honesty/Accuracy of Disclosure in Blog Entries

Note. All betas are final standardized betas.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Figure 10

Overall Model Exploration with Identity Management Cues as Dependent Variable

Step 1
$R^2 = .06$

Step 2
R^2 change $= .07**$
$R^2 = .13**$

Individual Characteristics

Age: ß = -.02
Gender: ß = -.11
Loneliness: ß = -.04
Disclosiveness: ß = .13*

Audience Characteristics

Public/Private: ß = .09
Self: ß = .05
Romantic Partner: ß = .02
Close Friends/Family: ß = -.12
Casual Friends: ß = .03
Co-Workers: ß = .09
Acquaintances: ß = -.17*
Strangers: ß = .03

Motives for Blogging

Helping/Informing: ß = .06
Social Connection: ß = .17
Exhibitionism: ß = .05
Pass Time: ß = .07
Archiving/Organizing: ß = .01
Professional: ß = -.06
Get Feedback: ß = .13
Reporting Details: -.01

Identity Management Cues Disclosed in Blog Profile

Note. All betas are final standardized betas.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to propose and test a conceptual model of disclosure in blogs. Specifically, this study tested existing theories of interpersonal and computer-mediated communication in personal journal blogs. In doing so, the relationships between components of disclosure in blogs were explored. Additionally, this study revealed motives for blogging, as well as their impact in the conceptual model. Finally, the relative impact of individual and audience characteristics in the model was examined. In this section, the study's findings are summarized and implications are discussed. Limitations and directions for future research are also presented.

Summary and Implications

Relationships Between Components of Disclosure

Social penetration theory and the hyperpersonal perspective generally offered competing predictions concerning the relationships between disclosing identity management cues in blog profiles and disclosure dimensions in blog entries. This study provided partial support for social penetration theory. Particularly, disclosing more identity management cues was positively related to disclosing more private information in blog entries and deeper, more intimate information in blog entries.

These findings have theoretical implications that may be useful in future computer-mediated communication (CMC) research. Although newer CMC theories such as the hyperpersonal perspective have emerged, it appears from this study that traditional interpersonal communication theory, namely social penetration theory, was more appropriate for the blogging context. As newer technologies emerge, results such as these

suggest that existing theory and research should first be applied before developing new theories.

As discussed in the literature review, anonymity has an impact on people's disclosure when communicating via computers. Several studies found that under conditions of anonymity, online communicators are more intimate and disclosive (Bailenson et al., 2006; Chiou, 2006; Joinson, 2001), thus lending support for the hyperpersonal perspective (Walther, 1996). In this study, identity management cues were defined as pieces of true information disclosed in bloggers' profiles that disclose parts of their offline identities. By definition, disclosing fewer identity management cues would increase bloggers' anonymity, whereas disclosing more cues reveals bloggers' identities, decreasing their anonymity.

Although existing CMC research and theory would suggest more disclosiveness under conditions of anonymity, this study found the opposite. Less anonymity, in the form of more identity management cues disclosed, resulted in disclosure characterized by greater amount and depth. In other words, bloggers who disclosed more intimate information tended to do so using all available mechanisms on a blog – profiles and blog entries.

Regardless of why these contradictory findings emerged, they may potentially explain how some of the negative ramifications of blogging come about. If bloggers reveal a large amount of intimate, negative, dishonest, unintentional information in their blog entries under the cloak of anonymity, there is little chance that this information will be connected to them offline. Bloggers who disclose inappropriate or negative information about their companies cannot be terminated if it is impossible to find out who

they are. However, this study shows that the more likely outcome is disclosing sensitive

information on a blog with an accurate profile, revealing who the blogger really is. In

other words, bloggers who identify themselves through their blog profiles are more likely

to disclose private, sensitive information on their blogs. If the findings from this sample

are true in the general population, there is little doubt how bloggers can suffer negative

consequences from their disclosures.

Blogging Motives

The Blogging Motives Index (see Appendix E) was created to reveal participants'

motives for blogging. A series of two exploratory factor analyses revealed eight

interpretable blogging motives – helping/informing, social connection, exhibitionism,

pass time, archiving/organizing, professional, get feedback, and reporting details.

Participants reported the highest scores on archiving/organizing ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.79$),

helping/informing ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 0.91$), social connection ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.21$), and

get feedback ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 1.14$). Professionalism ($M = 1.41$, $SD = 0.73$) was reported

the least often of the motives.

Several of the motives found in this study align with existing research. For

example, passing time or relieving boredom has been found in many types of media use,

including the Internet (Ebersole, 2000; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). Passing time was

also a motive for maintaining personal homepages (Jung et al., 2007; Papacharissi, 2002),

a type of Internet use similar to blogging. Social connection is also an established motive

of Internet use (Charney & Greenberg, 2002; Ebersole, 2000; Papacharissi & Rubin,

2000) and personal homepages (Jung et al., 2007; Papacharissi, 2002). It is also well-

known that people use the Internet (Charney & Greenberg, 2002) and personal

homepages (Jung et al., 2007; Papacharissi, 2002) for professional advancement. It appears that blogs, too, can be used to further one's career. Additionally, bloggers may actually be compensated for maintaining their blogs, according to anecdotal evidence from this study.

Although passing time, social connection, and professionalism are established motives in other types of Internet use, the remaining motives are somewhat unique to the context of blogging. Reporting details is similar to the personal homepage motive of self-expression (Jung et al., 2007; Papacharissi, 2002), but in this study, reporting details was much more specific. In blogging, reporting details included documenting one's day-to-day activities – almost as a log of daily happenings. This practice is more detailed, specific, and arguably mundane than "tell[ing] others a little bit about myself" (Papacharissi, 2002, p. 357).

Information-seeking is one Internet motive that fits the content consumer role of Internet users well (Charney & Greenberg, 2002; Ebersole, 2000; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). Conversely, as content creators, bloggers instead create and share information in their blogs. Papacharissi (2002) found this motive among users of personal homepages. However, in blogs, there was also a helping component to this motive. Participants shared information to help others in some way, which may communicate a sense of caring and support for their audiences. Perhaps these personal journal bloggers served for audience members as a venue for social support.

Exhibitionism, archiving/organizing, and get feedback were new motives that were not found in existing literature. Some bloggers appeared to crave attention, and in so doing, they revealed private information that may entertain others and help them to gain

popularity or fame. Blogs were reported to also be useful for archiving and organizing bloggers' thoughts or ideas. This finding suggests that blogs serve as an online journal or diary for some bloggers. Finally, unlike other masspersonal functions of the Internet, such as personal homepages, people sometimes blogged to elicit feedback or advice from their readers. This motive points to the interpersonal nature of blogs, in which a community of bloggers may forge relationships through commenting on one another's blog entries.

Particular motives predicted different dimensions of disclosure in blogs. Participants who blogged for professional reasons reported less breadth in their disclosures, whereas those blogging to get feedback were broader in the topics covered in their blogs. Bloggers were more intimate in their disclosures when they were blogging to archive/organize and to report details. Participants blogging to pass time disclosed less information, and those blogging to archive/organize and to report details disclosed more information in their blog entries. Bloggers were more intentional in their disclosures when they blogged to help/inform others, and less intentional when they were motivated to blog by passing time.

Participants in this study reported more positive disclosure when they blogged to help/inform others and more negative disclosure when they blogged to archive/organize their thoughts. More honest and accurate information was reported among participants who blogged to help/inform others. However, dishonest and inaccurate information was more likely to be disclosed by people who blogged for exhibitionism and professionalism. Blogging motives significantly contributed to the variance in each disclosure dimension in blog entries. Nevertheless, motives did not predict the number of

identity management cues disclosed in bloggers' profiles. Taken together, these findings suggest that bloggers' motives for maintaining blogs must be taken into consideration when examining bloggers' disclosure patterns. These findings effectively display a snapshot of how motives impact disclosures in blogs.

Two general findings concerning motives can be drawn from this study. First, this study provides a detailed description of the motives of personal journal bloggers. In rather uncharted territory, this study has developed a thorough account for why bloggers maintain personal journal blogs. Not all bloggers blog for the same reasons, and being able to differentiate among these bloggers may help future researchers expand on these findings.

The descriptive component of this study was necessary for the second general finding, the predictive abilities of motives in blogging. Motives were powerful predictors of disclosive behavior in blogs. Particularly, bloggers were more disclosive when they blogged to get feedback, archive and organize their thoughts, and report details. They were less disclosive when blogging for professional reasons and to pass time. These findings may have practical implications for bloggers. Given the fact that restricting access to blogs did not affect disclosiveness, instead one can look to bloggers' motives to determine how disclosive they will be. It is assumed that bloggers motivated by getting feedback, archiving and organizing thoughts, and reporting details are in more danger of the potential negative ramifications of disclosing in blogs. These bloggers may be more likely to suffer vocational and social consequences of their blogging activity. On the other hand, the idle bloggers who simply wish to pass time or the bloggers who are intentionally pursuing professional advancement through their blogs are probably less

likely to lose their jobs, suffer relational problems, and gain cyber stalkers as a result of their intimate disclosures. Therefore, not all bloggers are equally likely to experience the dangers associated with blogging. These ramifications, threats of which are pronounced in popular culture (e.g., Cohen, 2007; St. John, 2003; Tribble, 2005; Villano, 2005; Wagner, 2006), are largely dependent upon bloggers' motives for using the medium in the first place.

Although this treatment of blogging motives and their effects on disclosure patterns was largely exploratory, it represents a beneficial foundation for future research on blogging. Even though there may be other motives for maintaining filter or personal notebook blogs, these motives denote an initial exploration into this context. Additionally, the Blogging Motives Index may be helpful in future research that includes a treatment of blogging motives.

Motives predicted certain outcomes of blog use, namely the disclosure patterns in blog profiles and entries. This predictive relationship supports the uses and gratifications' (U&G) assumption that people use media for a specific purpose. Furthermore, the motives for blogging helped explain disclosure in blogs, a specific type of media use. Given the usefulness of U&G in this study, this perspective should continue to be applied in future research exploring the benefits and outcomes obtained from blogging.

This study extended U&G into the realm of media producers. Traditional media research situates people as media consumers. However, bloggers take advantage of the unique characteristics of the Internet by becoming media producers. Results of this study suggested that U&G is useful for studying media producers, as well as consumers.

Audience Characteristics

Two characteristics of the audience were examined in this study – limiting access to blogs and target audience type. These variables were chosen because it was assumed that *who* the bloggers thought were reading their blogs would have important effects on their disclosure decisions. Whether or not participants limited access to their blogs did not impact their disclosure decisions. However, the target audience type did affect disclosure dimensions in blogs. Specifically, people who blogged primarily for themselves disclosed a larger amount of information than other bloggers. Writing for casual friends resulted in a wider variety of topics covered, but there was less breadth in disclosure when bloggers wrote for acquaintances, close friends, and family. Finally, bloggers disclosed fewer identity management cues when they wrote primarily for acquaintances.

Audience characteristics also impacted participants' motives for blogging. Restricting access to blogs (i.e., making them "private") resulted in the motives of pass time, get feedback, and reporting details. Target audience types also affected blogging motives. Participants who blogged for themselves were more likely to be motivated to blog by passing time, archiving/organizing, and reporting details. These participants were less likely to subscribe to the social connection motive, which is an intuitive finding. Bloggers who identified close friends and/or family as their target audiences were more likely to blog to help/inform, for social connection, and to report details, and less likely to blog for professional reasons. Participants who wrote for their co-workers were more likely to blog for professional reasons, whereas bloggers writing to acquaintances tended to be motivated to blog to get feedback from others. Finally, bloggers writing to strangers

were more likely to be motivated to blog for helping/informing, exhibitionism, and getting feedback. However, blogging for strangers resulted in less desire for social connection through one's blog.

Many of the findings presented above make logical sense. However, until now there was little empirical evidence toward these intuitive conclusions. It was valuable to explore bloggers' perceived audiences through these two variables. Clearly, the perceived audience has an impact on blogging behaviors, but it is unclear if the perceived audience is the actual audience. A discrepancy between the perceived and actual audience may point toward some of the negative consequences of disclosing private information in blogs, such as cyberstalking, arguments among friends, or losing one's job.

Individual Characteristics

The individual characteristics of age, gender, loneliness, and disclosiveness were examined with regard to their impact on disclosure dimensions and blogging motives. Age did not affect disclosure dimensions, but it did impact blogging motives. Specifically, older participants were more likely to blog to help/inform others, whereas younger participants were more likely to blog to pass time. Gender also had no significant impact on disclosure patterns in blogs. However, women were more likely to blog to report details, and men were more likely to be motivated to blog for professional reasons.

Participants who scored higher on loneliness disclosed more negative information that was dishonest and inaccurate than those lower in loneliness. Previous research had found that loneliness was linked with a number of Internet motives (Papacharissi &

Rubin, 2000), as well as motives for using personal homepages (Papacharissi, 2002).

However, in this study loneliness had no significant effects on blogging motives.

Bloggers who scored higher on the personality trait of disclosiveness disclosed more identity management cues in their blogs. Additionally, they disclosed a larger amount of information that was intimate. These participants who were more likely to be disclosive as a part of their personality tended to blog for exhibitionism and reporting details. Little research has explored the effects of disclosiveness as a personality trait on media use (c.f., Stefanone & Jang, 2007). However, interpersonal theory and research has recognized disclosiveness as a contributor to people's decisions about disclosure in FtF communication (e.g., Altman & Taylor, 1973). The link between disclosiveness and reported disclosure behaviors was supported in a mediated context in this study. Perhaps blogging as a form of mediated communication more closely mirrors interpersonal, FtF communication than mass communication.

Overall Model Exploration

When looking at the total model and each significant predictor in the model, one can identify profiles for particular types of blogger. For example, the more disclosive blogger – disclosing more identity management cues and blogging with more amount, breadth, and depth of disclosure – is more likely to have the personality trait disclosiveness. Additionally, the disclosiveness blogger is more likely to be writing for casual friends and the self, but not acquaintances. Disclosive bloggers are motivated to blog by getting feedback, archiving and organizing their thoughts, and reporting details, but not for professionalism or to pass time. Bloggers who disclose more positive information on their blogs are not lonely, and they blog to help and inform others, but not

to archive and organize their thoughts. Honest bloggers are also not lonely in their everyday lives. They are not likely to be motivated to blog for exhibitionism or professional reasons, but do tend to blog to help and inform others.

Hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted to investigate the usefulness of the conceptual model in describing blog disclosure processes. Findings from these analyses suggested that the conceptual model presented in this study was especially successful for explaining the depth, amount, and valence of disclosure in blog entries. In each of these three instances, both steps of the regressions – including individual characteristics, audience characteristics, and blogging motives – significantly contributed to the variance in the identified disclosure dimension. The predictor variables explained 31% of the variance in the amount of disclosure in blog entries. The model also explained 28% of the variance in depth and 24% of the variance in valence of disclosure in blog entries.

When considering the entire conceptual model, motives appeared to have the most significant impact in bloggers' disclosure processes. Although audience and individual characteristics did play a role, blogging motives most clearly affected the dimensions of disclosure. This conclusion was evident in the fact that blogging motives as a whole explained a significant amount of variance in each of the seven dimensions of disclosure. Despite the study's findings and implications, there were some limitations to consider when interpreting these conclusions.

Limitations

The limitations of this study concern the theoretical choices, research design, measurement, and sample. Based on the results, the hyperpersonal perspective might be

criticized for its lack of predictive ability. Instead of predicting future events, the power

of this perspective lies in its ability to explain unlikely patterns of behavior in CMC. The

majority of CMC is not, in fact, hyperpersonal (Walther, 1996). Instead, Walther (1996)

has labeled hyperpersonal communication as a "phenomenon" – the exception rather than

the rule. Hyperpersonal communication is not typical in CMC, but when it does occur,

the hyperpersonal perspective helps to explain why. Therefore, it is not entirely surprising

that predictions drawn from this perspective did not hold true in this study. Instead,

perhaps another more powerful CMC theory, such as the social identity model of

deindividuation effects (Lea & Spears, 1992; Spears & Lea, 1992) or social information

processing theory (Walther, 1992), should be tested in the blogging context before

assuming that this body of knowledge is not useful in blogging. At the same time,

existing interpersonal communication theories should be tested in blogging research to

uncover the truths embedded in this context.

The application of U&G in this study presents another theoretical concern. Critics

argue that the typologies of motives and gratifications yielded in U&G research may be

too compartmentalized and medium-specific (A. M. Rubin, 2002; Ruggiero, 2000). The

researcher attempted to build on existing typologies of Internet and personal homepage

motives in the present study to address this criticism. However, a new typology was

created that related to a specific type of blogging use – personal journal blogs. It is

hopeful that future blogging research will employ the Blogging Motives Index, again

overcoming this criticism. On the other hand, it seems necessary to first explore the

unique motives for new media use before scholars can build upon that knowledge to

discover the gratifications and effects of media use. Finally, U&G assumes that people

are aware of their motives for using particular media (A. M. Rubin, 2002). Swanson

(1977) criticized this assumption, arguing instead that people may not be completely

aware of their motives or active in their media selection to gratify specific motives. As a

result, Blumler (1979) and A. M. Rubin (1984) devised and tested audience activity as a

variable to be included in U&G research. Unfortunately, that variable was not

incorporated into this study. Perhaps in future blogging research, audience activity should

be assessed and incorporated into the conceptual model to determine how this variable

interacts with motives to affect blog use.

Another limitation of this study is inherent in the cross-sectional, survey research

design. These results assume that certain variables predict others. However, a cross-

sectional study represents just one point in time in which participants report their

attitudes, traits, and behaviors. Therefore, it is not possible to truly determine time-order

and causality without the rich data of a longitudinal study or the controlled observations

of an experiment. Additionally, using self-report instruments resulted in another

limitation. Although it is possible that participants were dishonest or inaccurate in their

responses, self-report instruments were used because they are one of the best ways to

access people's inner states, traits, and motivations (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

There were two additional limitations related to measurement. Consistent with the

current research climate, this study examined disclosure rather than the more specific

variable of self-disclosure. Disclosure includes revealing private information about the

self or other that is not readily accessible (Petronio, 2002). However, the Revised Self-

Disclosure Scale (Wheeless, 1978), a very well-known and often-used scale, specifically

measures dimensions of disclosure about the self. In future tests of private disclosure,

measurement should be adjusted to assess a broader definition of disclosure than the traditional views of self-disclosure. Another measurement limitation was inherent in the measure of disclosiveness. Although some research uses a shortened scale to measure disclosiveness (e.g., Stefanone & Jang, 2007), other studies have used the general version of the 31-item RSDS to assess disclosiveness on all disclosure dimensions (e.g., Wheeless et al., 1986). In the present study, a shortened version of the disclosiveness measure was used to reduce the size of the questionnaire. However, this may have not been the most accurate and complete way to assess disclosiveness as a personality trait.

Study participants were recruited from a diverse population. However, the sampling technique was convenient and participants self-selected into the sample. Also, participants who may not have fit all of the criteria could have participated in the study, introducing error to the data set. Therefore, it is possible that this sample may not be an accurate representation of the population of personal journal bloggers. Additionally, the method of recruiting participants could have resulted in proportionally more public bloggers than actually exist in the population. The limitations of this study point toward several suggestions for future research.

<div align="center">Future Research Directions</div>

Scholars should continue to explore blogging through research on blogging motives, the interpersonal stages of blogging, additional applications of U&G to blogging, the ideal intimacy level bloggers wish to communicate, multi-media applications available through blogs, social networking websites, and other interpersonal communication theories. This study in many ways represented a foundation for future research on blogging disclosures. As previously discussed, the Blogging Motives Index

may be a useful tool for scholars studying blogs. Motives were shown to be crucial in the overall disclosure processes in blogs. Therefore, future research on blogging should incorporate motives, utilizing the Blogging Motives Index.

The present study was largely intrapersonal. Bloggers must begin by making intrapersonal decisions about what they will write about in their blogs, which was the focus of this study. A logical next step in this line of research would be to examine the interpersonal effects of blog disclosures that follow. Namely, future research could explore how bloggers affect one another, perhaps as demonstrated in the discussions following blog entries. Although commenting on blogs is not common (Herring et al., 2005), commenting on a blog entry is one way to connect with bloggers, creating a presence in their lives and psyches. Another interpersonal implication concerns the effects of disclosures in bloggers' offline lives. Perhaps future researchers could build off of this research to predict further when certain types of disclosure may have positive or negative implications in bloggers' personal lives, such as reinforcing or damaging offline relationships.

Results of this study were contrary to many of the findings in CMC literature regarding anonymity and disclosive behaviors. In this study, bloggers disclosed more intimate information when their offline identities were made known on their blogs. In other words, people who disclosed more personal information were also more likely to disclose identity management cues like their real name, age, location, occupation, and gender. It is unclear why this connection was made in this sample between identity management cues and the amount and depth of disclosure in blog entries. Perhaps future research should explore the ideal level of intimacy bloggers wish to communicate with

their audiences. According to the intimacy equilibrium model (Argyle & Dean, 1965), ideal intimacy level should mediate the relationships between the channels of communication used to communicate intimacy. Traditionally, the intimacy equilibrium model is studied in nonverbal, face-to-face communication. However, this theory may be useful in future research when applied to blogging.

With advancing technologies, the Internet is becoming a multi-media environment (Soukup, 2000). However, Soukup (2000) argued that most CMC theories focus on the textual aspects of the Internet. Future research should examine the nonverbal aspects of blogs, such as videos, pictures, design, and layout. These components also disclose information about bloggers and their social networks, so they should be examined in future studies of blog disclosure.

In this study, the chosen definition of blogs excluded very popular social networking sites, such as Facebook. Approximately 70 million people have Facebook profiles (Swartz, 2008). Although in this study social networking sites were not considered blogs, future research should explore disclosure processes on social networking sites. In many cases, these sites supply users' real offline identities through identity management cues. The lack of anonymity, in conjunction with linkages through "friends" lists, may have interesting implications for the effects of disclosure in people's lives in- and outside of cyberspace.

This study showed that traditional interpersonal communication theory, namely social penetration theory, was more powerful than CMC theory in predicting particular dimensions of disclosure. Therefore, a final suggestion for future research concerns additional applications of other interpersonal communication theories, such as the

communication privacy management theory, uncertainty reduction theory, and the goal-plan-action model. Communication privacy management theory (CPM; Petronio, 2002) should be tested with regard to blog disclosures, as this theory is gaining in notoriety and provides a rich area for exploration. For example, disclosing private information in blogs opens up the boundary of the blogger and engages the audience in co-ownership. This co-ownership in blogging is shared with an audience that may or may not be known. One may wonder whether removing the FtF accountability in blogging results in less desire to take co-ownership seriously. Perhaps there is a feeling that bloggers' disclosures require less privacy management when they are disclosed online. This potential link could be explored in future research. Also, whether or not the bloggers know their audience members may have an impact on privacy management.

Berger and Calabrese's (1975) uncertainty reduction theory (URT) argues that people's primary concern in interaction is to reduce uncertainty. Although there are several ways to reduce uncertainty in conversation, one way that has been explored in FtF communication and CMC is through disclosing private information about the self (e.g., Tidwell & Walther, 2002). URT could be applied to blogging in future research in several ways. First, the central assumption that people wish to reduce uncertainty should be tested in blogging. Is reducing uncertainty about audiences so central to bloggers? Perhaps instead, bloggers who write to archive and organize their thoughts blog to reduce uncertainty about themselves, instead. Additionally, future researchers should explore whether disclosing private information serves as an uncertainty reduction tactic. In FtF communication, disclosure is reciprocal (Altman & Taylor, 1973). When one person discloses information, the other person feels compelled to do the same. However, a

physical, dyadic presence is removed from blogging. Instead, bloggers often do not know to whom they are writing. Therefore, this well-established prediction of URT should be tested in the blogging context.

Lastly, cognitive communication scholars may have much to say about the processes associated with blogging. Specifically, Dillard's (1990) goal-plan-action model (GPA) is a framework for examining the goals that motivate our communicative behavior. The GPA model is an alternative to the motives of U&G that could be tested in blogging. In the GPA model, people have primary goals that serve as the reason for interaction, and secondary goals that are simultaneously pursued (Dillard, 1990). Secondary goals often concern the relationship between interactants. In blogging, many of the motives found in this study may serve as primary goals. However, at the same time, bloggers may be guided by secondary goals, such as creating a favorable impression or appropriately managing co-owned private information. Dillard's (1990) GPA model may provide another fertile area for future blogging research. Although some questions have been addressed in this research, more questions have surfaced as a result of this study. Disclosure processes in blogs are ripe for future research.

Conclusion

This study explored the predictors of seven dimensions of blog disclosures – blogging motives, audience characteristics, and individual characteristics. Additionally, the relationships between identity management cues and disclosure dimensions in blog entries were explored. Results of this study support social penetration theory, a traditional interpersonal communication theory, in blogging. The uses and gratifications perspective was also evidenced in this study. Blogging motives - helping/informing, social

connection, exhibitionism, pass time, archiving/organizing, professional, get feedback, and reporting details – predicted specific dimensions of disclosure. Audience and individual characteristics also impacted blogging motives and disclosure.

The rich information garnered in this study serves as evidence to the utility of existing theories in new media contexts. In this study, U&G gave structure to the conceptual model, which included individual and social antecedents, motives, and media use. Additionally, many of the predictions and assumptions of social penetration theory held true in this study. On the contrary, a newer CMC theory, the hyperpersonal perspective, was not supported in the blogging context. Therefore, future research on new media, and blogs specifically, should turn first to existing theories and research before fashioning new theories from scratch.

To make any considerable headway, scholars should build upon the foundation created by previous scholarship. This conclusion is especially necessary considering the rate at which new media technologies are evolving. Without this reliance upon past theoretical work, each new communication technology would leave scholars scrambling to develop new theories – flashes in a pan that would disappear upon the extinction of each medium. In this study, disclosure processes that underlie the use of communication technologies – blogging, in particular – were examined more closely to shed light on future mediated communication research. In essence, this study found that blog disclosures were made most often without the cloak of anonymity, motives for media use are central to explaining how each medium is used, and the perceived audience has a stronger impact on disclosive behavior than the actual audience. These findings may

inform future research on mediated communication about disclosure and other types of communicative behavior.

Findings from this study have both theoretical and practical implications. Although this study does build a foundation of understanding of blog disclosures, there are many directions for future research that should be addressed. In so doing, scholars will be closer to understanding fully the intricacies of human behavior as people interact through CMC. This study is situated in the messy, shadowy space between mass and interpersonal communication, where so much of our future communication is likely to occur. The traditional gap between mass and interpersonal communication research must be spanned and even filled with present and future research theory on the uses of new communication technology. It is the researcher's hope that this study has taken a step in that direction.

Appendix A
Shortened UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, 1996)

Instructions: The following questions describe how people sometimes feel. For each item, please indicate how often you feel the way described by choosing a number from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). Here is an example:

How often do you feel happy?

If you never feel happy, you would respond "never." If you always feel happy, you would respond "always."

never	rarely	sometimes	often	always
1	2	3	4	5

1. How often do you feel that you lack companionship?
2. How often do you feel that you have a lot in common with the people around you?*
3. How often do you feel close to people?*
4. How often do you feel left out?
5. How often do you feel that no one really knows you well?
6. How often do you feel isolated from others?
7. How often do you feel that there are people who really understand you?*
8. How often do you feel that people are around you but not really *with* you?
9. How often do you feel that there are people you can talk to?*
10. How often do you feel that there are people you can turn to?*

*Items were reverse coded.

Appendix B
Disclosiveness Scale (from Wheeless, 1978)

Instructions: Please mark the following statements to reflect how you communicate with other people *in general.* Indicate the degree to which the following statements reflect how you communicate with people by choosing a number from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Work quickly and just record your first impressions.

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral or unsure	agree	strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. I do not often talk about myself.*
2. I usually talk about myself for fairly long periods of time.
3. Only infrequently do I express my personal beliefs and opinions.*
4. Once I get started, I intimately and fully reveal myself in my disclosures.
5. I often disclose intimate, personal things about myself without hesitation.

*Items were reverse coded.

Appendix C
Public/Private Nature of Blogs

Much of the remainder of this survey deals with your blogging behaviors. Please think about your blog. If you maintain more than one blog, choose the blog that you most frequently update and respond to the remainder of the survey according to that blog.

1. Do you limit access to your blog? In other words, is your blog set to "public" or "private?"
   ☐ Public
   ☐ Private

2. If you limit access to your blog, approximately how many people have access to read your blog?

Appendix D
Target Audience Type

Instructions: For the following questions, please think about the person(s) you identify as your blog's target audience. In other words, these are the people you write for in your blog. Please indicate the percentage of time you intend for each of the following groups of people to read your blog entries by choosing a number from 0-100. Your answers need not add up to 100. It is likely that at any given time, you may be writing for more than one audience.

For example, if you almost never blog *just for yourself*, you might answer "5%" for the first question. If you blog *just for yourself* about half of the time, you might answer "50%."

1. Myself alone
2. My romantic partner
3. Close friends and/or family members
4. Casual friends
5. Co-workers that I do not consider friends
6. Acquaintances
7. Strangers who I do not know

Appendix E
Blogging Motives Index

Instructions: The following statements are some reasons why people may blog. For each statement, please indicate how much these statements are *not at all* (1) to *exactly* (5) like your reasons for blogging. Here is an example:

I blog to tell people what's new in my life.

If that is definitely why you blog, you would respond "exactly" (5). If that is definitely NOT why you blog, you would respond "not at all" (1).

Please use this scale:

not at all…	not really…	neutral or unsure…	somewhat…	exactly…
1	2	3	4	5

…like my own reasons for blogging

I BLOG…

Provide Information
1. To tell people what's new in my life.
2. To document my day.
3. To share my plans for the day.
4. To gossip about others.
5. To share information that may be of use to others.
6. To share my knowledge and skills.

Self-Expression
7. To share my opinions on issues.
8. To provide personal information about myself.
9. Because it makes me feel good to create something.
10. To vent my emotions.
11. To share my real feelings.
12. Because expressing my negative emotions makes me feel better.
13. As a creative outlet.
14. Because it helps me organize my thoughts and feelings.
15. To articulate my ideas.
16. To communicate about a special interest or issue that I care about.
17. To express hate or anger.

Community/Networking

    18. To meet new people.

    19. To facilitate discussions.

    20. To be a part of a blogging community.

    21. So people can get to know me.

Entertaining Others

    22. Because people think I am interesting.

    23. To entertain my readers.

    24. To share a funny story or joke.

Entertaining Self

    25. Because it is fun to try out new things like this.

    26. Because I just like to use it.

    27. For fun.

Archiving Information

    28. To record my thoughts and feelings so I can reflect on them.

    29. Because I can read what I wrote in previous posts.

Influencing/Helping Others

    30. To tell others what to do.

    31. To help others.

    32. To show others encouragement.

    33. To motivate others.

Convenience/Practicality

    34. To put my professional resume on the Web.

    35. To help me get a job.

    36. To communicate to many people at once, rather than telling one at a time.

    37. Because I communicate better through writing than talking.

    38. So I don't have to tell people something face-to-face.

    39. To enhance my writing skills.

    40. Because I have to for a class or job.

Pass Time

    41. To occupy my time.

    42. To pass time.

    43. Because I have nothing better to do.

Communicate with Friends and Family

    44. To communicate to my friends and family.

    45. To share information with my friends and family who do not live near me.

    46. To share information with people that I don't talk to on a regular basis.

    47. To remind my readers of an upcoming event.

Get Feedback
    48. To get more points of view.
    49. To get feedback from others who have similar experiences.
    50. To get advice from my readers.

Exhibitionism
    51. Because I like when people read things about me.
    52. For attention.
    53. To gain fame or notoriety.

New Trend
    54. Because my friends have blogs, too.
    55. Because it's cool.
    56. Because it is the thing to do.

Appendix F
Revised Self-Disclosure Scale (Wheeless, 1978)

Instructions: Please indicate the following statements to reflect how *you* communicate *in your blog entries.* Indicate the degree to which the following statements reflect how you communicate in your blog entries by choosing whether you (5) *strongly agree,* (4) *agree,* (3) *are neutral or unsure,* (2) *disagree,* or (1) *strongly disagree.* Work quickly and just record your first impressions.

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral or unsure	agree	strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

Intent
1. When I want them to be, my disclosures in my blog entries are always accurate reflections of who I really am.
2. When I express my personal feelings in my blog entries, I am always aware of what I am doing and saying.
3. When I reveal my feelings about myself in my blog entries, I consciously intend to do so.
4. When I am disclosing in my blog entries, I am consciously aware of what I am revealing.

Amount
5. I do not often talk about myself in my blog entries.*
6. In my blog entries, my statements of my feelings are usually brief.*
7. I usually write fairly long blog entries about myself.
8. My blog entries are shortest when I am discussing myself.*
9. I often write about myself in my blog entries.
10. I often discuss my feelings about myself in my blog entries.
11. Only infrequently do I express my personal beliefs and opinions in my blog entries.*

Valence
12. I usually disclose positive things about myself in my blog entries.
13. On the whole, my disclosures about myself in my blog entries are more negative than positive.*
14. I normally reveal "bad" feelings I have about myself in my blog entries.*
15. I normally express my "good" feelings about myself in my blog entries.
16. I often reveal more undesirable things about myself in my blog entries than desirable things.*
17. I usually disclose negative things about myself in my blog entries.*
18. On the whole, my disclosures about myself in my blog entries are more positive than negative.

Depth

19. I intimately disclose who I really am, openly and fully in my blog entries.
20. Once I get started, my disclosures in my blog entries last a long time.
21. I often disclose intimate, personal things about myself in my blog entries without hesitation.
22. I feel that I sometimes do not control my disclosure of personal or intimate things I tell about myself in my blog entries.
23. Once I get started, I intimately and fully reveal myself in my disclosures in my blog entries.

Honesty/Accuracy

24. In my blog entries, I cannot reveal myself when I want to because I do not know myself thoroughly enough.*
25. I am often not confident that my expressions of my own feelings, emotions, and experiences in my blog entries are true reflections of myself.*
26. I always feel completely sincere when I reveal my own feelings and experiences in my blog entries.
27. In my blog entries, my disclosures are completely accurate reflections of who I really am.
28. In my blog entries, I am not always honest in my disclosures.*
29. My blog entries about my own feelings, emotions, and experiences are always accurate self-perceptions.
30. In my blog entries, I am always honest in my disclosures.
31. I do not always feel completely sincere when I reveal my own feelings, emotions, behaviors, or experiences in my blog entries.*

*Items were reverse coded

Appendix G
Measure of Breadth

Instructions: Please indicate the following statements to reflect how *you* communicate *in your blog entries.* Indicate the degree to which the following statements reflect how you communicate in your blog entries by choosing whether you (5) *strongly agree,* (4) *agree,* (3) *are neutral or unsure,* (2) *disagree,* or (1) *strongly disagree.* Work quickly and just record your first impressions.

1. My blog entries are limited to just a few specific topics.*
2. My blog entries range over a wide variety of topics.
3. Once I get started writing in my blog, I move easily from one topic to another.
4. My blog entries address a variety of subjects.
5. My blog entries tend to center around one subject of interest.*

*Items were reverse coded.

Appendix H
Identity Management Cues Checklist

Instructions: Many bloggers have a profile, or some other more permanent component of their blogs which may or may not disclose information about themselves. Think about your blog. If it helps, you may want to open a new window, access your blog, and look at your profile or bio. Sometimes profiles appear on blogs themselves, and sometimes readers are linked to bloggers' profiles on another page. Either way, consider the TRUE information you present in your blog. Please check ALL of the pieces of information that you *truthfully* disclose in your blog profile. For example, if you use your *real* first name on your blog, you would check the first box. However, if you have created a *fake* name you use on your blog, please do not check the first box.

- ☐ First name
- ☐ Last name
- ☐ Age
- ☐ Birthday
- ☐ Gender
- ☐ Heritage/ethnicity
- ☐ Occupation
- ☐ Organizations where you work (or have worked)
- ☐ Location (where you live)
- ☐ Hometown
- ☐ Sexual orientation
- ☐ Relationship status
- ☐ Height
- ☐ Weight/body type
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Zodiac sign
- ☐ If you have children
- ☐ Schools attended
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

Appendix I
Demographics and Descriptive Information

Instructions: Answer the following questions about you and your blogging frequency. When questions ask for an amount, please make your best guess and write down one number (e.g., 15).

1. How many blogs do you currently maintain? _____

2. Approximately how many times in a typical month do you post to your blog? (If you maintain more than one blog, please answer with regards to the blog you use most frequently.) _____

3. If you maintain a public blog, available for anyone to read, please enter the blog's web address.

4. How old are you, in years? _____

5. Are you male or female? _____

6. In which country do you currently reside?
    _____Australia
    _____Canada
    _____Ireland
    _____New Zealand
    _____Singapore
    _____South Africa
    _____United Kingdom
    _____United States
    _____Other (please describe)_____

7. What would you say is closest to your ethnic/racial background?
    _____ African
    _____ African American
    _____ Asian
    _____ Caucasian
    _____ Hispanic
    _____ Middle Eastern
    _____ Native American/Alaska Native
    _____ Pacific Islander
    _____ Other (please specify) _____

Appendix J
Final Blogging Motives Index

Instructions: The following statements are some reasons why people may blog. For each statement, please indicate how much these statements are *not at all* (1) to *exactly* (5) like your reasons for blogging. Here is an example:

I blog to tell people what's new in my life.

If that is definitely why you blog, you would respond "exactly" (5). If that is definitely NOT why you blog, you would respond "not at all" (1).

Please use this scale:

not at all…	not really…	neutral or unsure…	somewhat…	exactly…
1	2	3	4	5

…like my own reasons for blogging

I BLOG…

Helping/Informing
1. To motivate others
2. To help others
3. To share information that may be of use to others
4. To share my knowledge and skills
5. To show others encouragement
6. To communicate about a special interest or issue that I care about

Social Connection
7. To share information with my friends and family who do not live near me
8. To communicate to my friends and family
9. To share information with people that I don't talk to on a regular basis
10. To communicate to many people at once, rather than telling one at a time

Exhibitionism
11. To gain fame or notoriety
12. For attention
13. Because I like when people read things about me

Pass Time

    14. To pass time

    15. To occupy my time

    16. Because I have nothing better to do

Archiving/Organizing

    17. To record my thoughts and feelings so I can reflect on them

    18. Because it helps me organize my thoughts and feelings

    19. Because I can read what I wrote in previous posts

    20. To articulate my ideas

Professional

    21. To help me get a job

    22. To put my professional resume on the Web

    23. Because I have to for a class or job

Get Feedback

    24. To get advice from my readers

    25. To get more points of view

Reporting Details

    26. To provide personal information about myself

    27. To share my plans for the day

    28. To document my day

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