

“Navigating Self-Disclosure on Social Media: Risks and Benefits in the Digital Age”

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Abstract

People are more likely to show their personalities to coworkers via their personal profiles and informal postings on social media, in addition to their business accounts. By doing so, they want to "stand out from the crowd" and demonstrate qualities that would be awkward to highlight on the job. Since personal postings seen in a professional environment might endanger impression management efforts, existing research have tended to approach them as a problem. In these narratives, the protagonists try to keep their personal and professional lives apart on social media. Contrarily, we provide the stories of Indian IT professionals who, in an effort to stand out to their employers, purposefully blur the lines between their personal and professional lives. In this article, we use Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical vocabulary to examine how people deal with the rising amount of personal information shared on social media. They draw parallels between their performances and postmodern works that aim to blur the lines between performer and spectator. These more informal postings reveal aspects of the author's character that would be missing from a more formal presentation. To better evaluate the content to share on social media, performers in these kinds of performances frequently enter a liminal mental state, which is made possible by the lack of clear borders between the more serious front-stage and more casual backstage areas.

1 Introduction

Previously unimaginable ways of presenting oneself professionally are now within reach, all thanks to social media. Sharing information that would otherwise remain hidden is possible with the help of well-crafted social media accounts and postings (Leonardi 2014). To increase their visibility and open doors to new opportunities, individuals may use this kind of content to highlight their skills, social networks, and project affiliations. People carefully consider their social media posts in light of these ends to make sure they promote positive conclusions. Multiple approaches exist for evaluating profiles and postings, and these evaluations may have far-reaching effects on their professional paths (Roth et al. 2016).

Some are worried about the increasing scrutiny that companies are giving to infrequent postings made on personal accounts. More and more, people are drawing conclusions about a person's skills and character based on their casual postings in addition to their professional information. Personal profiles, postings about non-work related hobbies, and other people's information or photos might

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influence one's judgement. Information flows freely across many areas of people's lives due to the internet's pervasiveness and the interconnection of social media networks, which blur the lines between their professional and personal lives. Controlling the perceptions fostered by social media becomes more challenging as information spreads across digital networks. Richey et al. (2016) found that both people and businesses might suffer greatly as a result of the unfavourable conclusions drawn from personally unsuitable postings that are not fit for the given environment. For example, while Justine Sacco was getting on a plane to South Africa for a vacation, she made a disgusting joke on her personal Twitter account, which later became public. Her message had already "gone viral" and her employer had dismissed her by the time her aircraft arrived eleven hours later. It was seen as a sign that she was racist, even though her tweet had nothing to do with her professional identity; this went against her work at a public relations business.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, the availability of supplementary personal information sources presents an opportunity for image management. People may be more creative in communicating their work identities when they include personal information in their professional social media footprint. This allows them to stand out and distinguish themselves. Keeping tabs on these less formal sources may be challenging since they often include user-generated content that might damage one's professional reputation. Are some of the recent social media studies that have focused on people's attempts to distinguish between their personal and professional social media interactions. This research adds to the existing literature by investigating how professionals demonstrate good personal traits via the coordinated use of several professional and personal social media platforms. We found that people are aware of the impression management issues that may arise from trying to get a competitive advantage via social media accounts, but they are also eager to discover innovative ways to do so. Disrupting the boundaries between their personal and professional lives might be difficult, but they manage by entering liminal states of consciousness where they can assess what information is suitable to share with their coworkers. By seeing this style of self-presentation as a sort of postmodern self-performance, we add to the social media literature.

Following this introduction, the study is structured as follows: first, we re-evaluate the research on the pros and cons of using social media to promote one's professional identity. Specifically, we highlight the widely held belief that people want to keep their personal and professional lives apart on social media. We contend that social media may also be used by people to challenge established domain boundaries. To provide a theoretical overview of how individuals communicate in a manner that encourages conclusions in the minds of others, the second portion of the literature review focuses on sociological theory. We lay out our strategy for collecting data and analysing it in the techniques section. What follows is a section of the results that detail the participants' experiences with using social media to expose personal details that are typically not shown in an organisational context. Using a comparison to postmodern theatrical performances aimed at engaging an audience in new and meaningful ways, we discuss the ramifications of such conduct and how it relates to hybrid self-presentations. We talk about the theoretical and practical consequences of people's greater openness to sharing personal information on social media.

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2 Professional Self-Presentations on Social Media

According to Leonardi (2014) and Ollier-Malaterre et al. (2013), more and more people are using social media to make a good impression in their work lives. When profiles are made public, allowing professional contacts and coworkers to access various pieces of personal data, this process begins. An individual's social media footprint often includes data from many accounts rather than just one. People in the same company may be members of the same wiki or network, have LinkedIn and Facebook connections at the same time, and read each other's tweets and blog entries. It is possible to draw conclusions about a person's traits and personality from all of these sources. Decisions about employment and promotion may be influenced by such assumptions in the workplace. Because of this, people take great effort to organise their social media profiles in a way that showcases their knowledge and makes them more likeable. A kind of self-disclosure, letting professional contacts access social media postings may have positive and negative effects on professional relationships. According to Eisenberg and Witten (1987), a large number of social media studies embrace the philosophy of openness, which states that successful communication depends on having as much transparency as feasible. Organisations may gain a lot if actors are open about sharing information about themselves and their job. A social media presence may be both a strength and a weakness in a business context, depending on how you use it. According to Leonardi (2014), the main premise of social media research is that users may influence their professional networks' perceptions of them via these platforms.

The ability to thoughtfully evaluate and change offered information gives people extra control over what is communicated, which is a huge benefit for professional users. Thorough discussion becomes even more critical when discussion threads and postings are accessible for a long time after an engagement has ended, allowing many people to see them. Posts' long-term viability is particularly useful in the business world, as they may be seen by both expected and unanticipated audiences for quite some time (Leonardi 2014). These networks have enabled linkages and partnerships to flourish in big, geographically scattered companies that could not have happened otherwise. In addition to allowing people to break free of traditional geographical and temporal constraints, the many sources of data also bring to light personal traits that may be awkward to discuss in a business context. Characteristics that may be considered positive individually do not always mesh well when together. As an example, according to Ollier-Malaterre et al. (2013), one can want to be seen as kind and competitive simultaneously. Some of the pressure on people to openly display conflicting features may be lifted when they use social media to convey attributes indirectly via inference.

Because it might be hard to manage the sorts of information made accessible via social media, the obstacles of communicating in this manner arise. Sharing content on social media platforms does not only happen between individuals. Additional users may tag them in photos or posts. What may be seen is also carefully chosen by algorithms. According to Richey et al. (2016), these factors raise the likelihood that data from one area of life could influence another. Taken together, these pieces of data allow us to make assumptions about a person's character. Several studies have shown that managers research prospective and present workers by perusing their personal social media profiles. Snooping

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on someone's social media accounts becomes troublesome when the information shared with professional connections changes their positive impressions of them. Many workers have lost their jobs because their employers discovered what they had posted on private accounts. The old adage goes something like this: "When one employee complains about their boss online, their boss finds the posts and fires them". It is difficult for people to predict how their postings will be evaluated since different cultural and organisational circumstances make some actions improper (Richey et al. 2016). Coworkers' impressions of a person may be skewed if social signals that govern interaction and conduct are either not visible or incorrectly assessed, leading to the exposure of inappropriate postings (Richey et al. 2016; Spottswood and Hancock 2017). It is true that in a fragmented, electronically mediated society, it might seem as if many, seemingly conflicting identities exist.

In response to these possible dangers, people use a variety of coping mechanisms. In an effort to keep their private lives separate from their work lives, people use a variety of boundary management strategies (Ollier-Malaterre et al. 2013). Some examples of these practices include creating many profiles, changing privacy settings, and self-censoring. Up until now, research has paid little attention to the deliberate use of personal social media information in a professional context, instead concentrating on attempts to regulate social boundaries and distinct life domains on social media. To stand out, people are become more creative with their online personas, according to our argument. Our results demonstrate the integration of personal and professional social media profiles to convey positive traits to coworkers. Our theoretical framework for understanding how people draw conclusions from social media postings, which in turn influence the social judgements that impact daily life, comes from the sociological literature, building on previous social media research.

3 Inferences and Social Judgements

The use of inferences is crucial for the actors' comprehension of one another and their social environments. To infer is to draw a judgement or opinion from observable evidence. The observer's mind draws inferences based on data supplied by the object of observation. When information is lacking or inadequate, people rely on inference to guide their social interactions. Inference is a common tool in all aspect of running a business. Someone may report unwell but then show up to work looking tanned, which might make it seem like she went to the beach. A coworker's desire for advancement may be seen as a result of her staying late, complimenting the boss, and taking on more work. Llewellyn and Hindmarsh (2013), have all studied inference in organisational contexts, and they all agree that one side has to "read between the lines" to understand the other and respond appropriately. Since inference is mostly dependent on subtle signals that elude simple classification, the skills that are believed to be essential for it are interpersonal and social rather than cognitive and individual (Llewellyn and Hindmarsh 2013). Age, race, and familial position are some of the more obvious characteristics that could influence a person's perception, but intangibles like body language and vocal intonation can also play a role. Although these traits are difficult to decipher in person, they may be even more so when communicating via technology. (Hampson and Junor 2005). Everyone involved in a conversation has to put in some inferential effort because there are so many information asymmetries in these contexts. Teams working in different locations and who may never meet in

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person must draw conclusions from the data made accessible via social media. Social media posts may supplement ordinary social performances even for those who work in the same physical location. So, social media inferences are created when one uses the information found on a person's profile and postings to build opinions about their personality and skills. Many studies on professional self-presentations have shown that the audience plays a pivotal role in shaping these presentations. Actors consider the audience's power, attractiveness, knowledge, and quantity, among other aspects, while developing their public persona (Schlenker and Wowra 2003:873). What kind of impact the audience has on the actor's future self-presentation is dependent on their standing in relation to the actor. Because of the importance of making a good impression on a high-status audience, actors often try to hide facts that may undermine their portrayal. People in managerial and executive positions sometimes have a disproportionate amount of influence on the careers of people in lower-level positions within their organisations. These powerful spectators have an impact on the performers' careers by shaping public perceptions of their performances. Many different social signals, both deliberate and accidental, could lead someone to make assumptions (Goffman 1959). Therefore, there is a discernible shift in the actors' actions to conform to acceptable and desired social standards. These standards may change considerably depending on the setting, and they are influenced by strong cultural norms and society institutions. It is crucial for actors to comprehend the local social order and the implicit norms that make it up, as well as their role in the wider social life performance, in order to thrive in their organisational environment (Goffman 1959; Swidler 1986). Local opinions about what professionals may and cannot reveal are shaped by these macro and micro cultural norms .

Our empirical parts shed light on the fixation with inferences in professional self-presentation by presenting stories regarding social media's vast, multiple inference capabilities. According to the stories, these inference sources may be a powerful instrument for professional growth, but they also pose a threat since they are hard to manage. Rather of establishing clear borders between different areas of life, our approach focuses on how actors manage this conflict by integrating data from many domains.

4 Methods

We embraced an interpretivist perspective, which emphasises the intricacy of human sense-making in response to emerging situations rather than defining dependent and independent variables in advance (Klein and Myers 1999). From this vantage position, the same physical object, human action, or organisation might have several interpretations depending on the observer (Lee 1991). We researchers worked closely with the participants throughout the procedure.

Information technology (IT) experts in India with a master's degree or above provided the data used in this qualitative research. In order to maintain their identities, people have been assigned pseudonyms in the parts that follow. The study setting was selected because it exemplifies a highly competitive and congested business where individuals face immense challenges in standing out and gaining attention. Indian IT workers were our primary focus since we believed they would need innovative social media strategies to advance in their careers. We thought they would be making

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great use of social media given the technological aspect of their expertise. At first, we sought for individuals who would most likely be using social media for work-related reasons using purposive sample methods. In order to get others to suggest us, we employed snowball sampling methods. The social media accounts that the respondents were already following were also utilised to disseminate the call for volunteers. Participation from IT experts at MNCs and Indian IT firms was something we aimed for. Field notes were also created throughout the procedure, in addition to the interviews. Managers (with over ten years of experience), Programme Analysts (with seven to ten years of experience), Associate-Projects (with three to seven years of experience), and Human Resource Managers (with five years of experience) make up the four main groups.

The interviews, which were held in English, lasted roughly an hour and consisted of participants answering questions on their professional usage of social media. Colleagues, customers, and other professionals with whom respondents interacted on social media were the subject of much discussion. They thought about how it may affect their jobs, how their coworkers would see them, and how it would affect their reputation at work. Respondents also mentioned worries, anxiety, and cognitive demands associated with online interaction. The participants' concern while dealing with professional connections on social media was intensified by the desire to control management involvement, which was a dominating topic.

The data analysis and transcribing processes operated concurrently throughout the data collecting period, in accordance with a qualitative inductive procedure (Gioia et al. 2013). By the end of this procedure, we had reached theoretical saturation; no new themes had arisen from the supplementary data. In order to find commonalities in the data, we started by reviewing and summarising all of the interviews. All we took was a string of whole phrases to form a single semantic unit, which we called a coding unit. We started off with a huge list of codes, but we were able to narrow it down when we merged codes that meant the same thing and removed ones that weren't related to our study issue. The codes that were established during this procedure are summarised in the second column. The final column summarises the more abstract interpretive notions that emerged from our open coding efforts after we had created these themes. Using these ideas, we were able to theorise on how to utilise social media correctly, the risks of doing so, and how to harness the inferences made by social media.

We arrange the theme codes in the results section that follows using the interpretative notions as subheadings. The attendees discussed how they may use social media to make a good impression on their professional coworkers and stand out from the crowd (CREATING IMAGES). For this, they turned to social media, where they could build detailed profiles, share photos, and connect with coworkers. For the purpose of making an impression on powerful people—some of whom they had never met—they made these attempts (FORMING IMPRESSIONS). As more and more information about the participants appeared on social media, they continued to cultivate these perceptions. Since the information on the participants came from a range of sources, it was not always possible to moderate the impressions being created. Some coworkers got their hands on photos and information that shouldn't have been seen in the workplace (SOCIALLY UNACCEPTABLE). When people let their

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guard down and slipped up, this usually happened. Other people's postings about the participants might likewise be seen as harmful to their professional reputations, leading to negative conclusions (DAMAGING ASSOCIATIONS). Some introspection over the optimal usage of social media was prompted by the fact that social media has the ability to improve or harm their professional reputations. The participants tried to stay away from harmful errors by using self-reflection and creative methods that provided feedback (SELF REGULATING). They were able to assess the professional impression they were giving off via their social media accounts during these times of reflection. Other people's responsibilities in socially regulating the introduction of personal aspects into the workplace were also brought up.

5 Findings

5.1 Using Inferences from Social Media

For the technically savvy IT workers surveyed, the concept of online self-promotion was already well-established. To promote their knowledge and work, the majority of them used a broad range of online platforms, including blogs, forums, and social media. Taken as a whole, these data points painted a picture of the individuals' abilities and character from a professional perspective. In particular, they hoped that by drawing the attention of powerful people via their postings, they may improve their professional standing.

If you're seeking for other prospects and want to let them know that you're valuable, knowledgeable, and knowledgeable about this stuff, then they should come to you. Another reason you post online is to simply acknowledge that you are an expert. This is Ankit.

Since many of their competitors were using similar strategies, this was not an easy feat to do. This led to an oversaturated internet where standing out was next to impossible. In such a setting, the players evolved into a little more imaginative, using material from other sources that might bolster their online persona. They drew on these sources in their personal lives rather than in their professional ones. Incorporating these supplementary materials into their professional profiles helped participants stand out.

Making Pictures

Since everyone in the business was already saying what they thought and sharing what they knew, the participants thought it was futile to strive to stand apart. In order to entice potential employers, they discussed how they used social media to create a more complete picture of themselves.

People may learn more about your character via your social media accounts. Concerning it, I am rather self-aware. As a result, I let others know who I am as a person by the opinions I share on Twitter, which are reflective of my personality (Raghav)

The majority of respondents cited the freedom to be yourself on social media as an important benefit. Not only did they have a hard time getting their names out there, but they also expressed concern about the widespread perception that programmers are dull. The advent of social media allowed

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them to reveal more facets of their life. Even if they weren't directly related to their job, they did showcase positive qualities in their personalities that may be attractive to coworkers. Their hobbies and leisure activities outside of work were freely discussed. Employees might also share details about their connections and the nature of their talks with coworkers. They thought these supplementary resources reflected well on them and contributed to the general perception that they were pleasant to collaborate with.

One place where individuals may write elaborate stuff is in the "about me" section. Everyone has their own unique set of interests, hobbies, and musical preferences. Everything from the content you comment on and like to the articles you create for yourself says a lot about who you are. As for Rajeev, The interviewees acknowledged the possibility of narcissism, even if these social media platforms were not specifically related to work. They saw that sometimes coworkers would make a lot of effort to create a "cool" social media presence. They highlighted their interests, offered commentary on current events and pop culture, and incorporated media from their free time. A lot of them felt that this helped them connect with their coworkers on a more personal level. Sharing this amount of information allowed them to provide a complete picture of who they were, they thought. They had expanded their roles beyond that of mere programmers to include things like running marathons, photography, and side companies. They were hoping that others would notice them because of these aspects of their personal life. They invited their coworkers to connect up and changed their social network privacy settings, exposing these private details to their coworkers.

When you add someone as a connection, they get to see more of you beyond what you've previously shared with them (Aalia) Since their profiles provided hints about their lifestyles that suggested good things, they didn't have to spill the beans in person. According to the participants, their coworkers' perceptions of them changed after learning more about them on social media. They also noticed that several of them were happy about the decreased formality in their interactions with their supervisors. They reasoned that by giving management access to their social media accounts, they had won over the management. By opening up about other parts of their life on social media, they were able to make a good impression on their coworkers.

Making a First Impression

The participants said that making a good impression on their coworkers was their primary goal in creating a social media presence that was suitable for a professional setting. They were self-aware enough to know that they learned more about other people via social media, and they also anticipated that other people would do the same. According to them, it's very uncommon for coworkers to peek at each other's personal social media accounts, but these investigations often lead to problems at work.

A coworker becomes a friend on social networking after you meet them at work. Simply said, people are more likely to enjoy, draw closer to, and appreciate your work after they see more of your personal things on Facebook.

They sought to make a good impression on their coworkers by gradually sharing personal details.

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They wanted to highlight that despite their dedication to their job, they were multi-faceted individuals. They published about job-related issues, but they also included photos and writings about their personal hobbies to demonstrate that they were creative and had a lot going for themselves outside of work. Given the challenges they faced in meeting and in order to get acquainted with all members of their vast, geographically scattered organisations, they often turned to social media to cultivate impressions with those they were unfamiliar with.

Many individuals from other places can't meet you in person and must rely on your written or spoken word to build an opinion of you.

Others were more likely to judge others by their online profiles, according to the participants, because social media had become so pervasive. Since social media may facilitate image creation that would not be possible without it, they saw this as a benefit in certain cases. It was very improbable that they would really meet coworkers in other places, but they may get acquainted via their mutual social media connections. It seemed like everyone wanted to connect with them, even people they had never met, as social media grew more and more integrated into their professional life. This made public not only their own posts but also the comments made about them. The benefits of using the various inference methods offered by the platforms were apparent to them.

When others talk about you, your coworkers will hear it. Therefore, it is more honest than a CV would be up until that point. It is Aalia.

Being linked with favourable postings and comments from others was beneficial, but it also brought some uneasiness. It became clear to them that they couldn't manage everything linked to their social media accounts.

Possible Difficulties

Inappropriate in Public

Participants acknowledged both the benefits and drawbacks of being so open about their life on social media, despite their hopes for the former. They had to be more careful about the topics they discussed in their postings, for instance, since it became more difficult to conceal their comments.

Without naming the employer, one of my coworkers made a disparaging comment regarding pay rises on Facebook. However, such behaviour is not tolerated since everyone is aware of your employer.

Someone named Nick

Everyone knew every element of your life, and the participants commented about how oppressive it may be at times. Leaving the workplace without a trace, coming up with justifications for conduct or to express sincere viewpoints. Since starting to utilise their personal accounts for work-related goals, they found it more challenging to express themselves freely on social media, which was a change from their past habits. Keeping their superiors from seeing their posts was no picnic. Criticising one's employer was just not done in a socially acceptable way. The participants had the impression that upper management was monitoring their social media accounts in an effort to find incorrect content

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to condemn them.

I was summoned for expressing my disapproval of a policy that was affecting both my training cohort and myself. One of the people that phoned us personally wanted to know whether we were worried about losing our jobs. After being genuinely worried, I altered the style of my postings. It is Gagan.

The idea that social media may be used for monitoring made the participants feel uneasy. They were anxious about what their supervisors might think if they knew about their comments or habits. They were well aware that they may be quickly replaced in such a cutthroat industry. Their personal social media postings, which they had granted access to coworkers, were less assured of their appropriateness than their professional blogs and work-facing sites. Because other people might publish things about them on social media, the dread of being exposed was much greater. They deliberated for quite a while about how to keep their bosses from becoming irritated or offended.

I just took a trip and was terrified to ask my manager for time off. My mind was racing with the possibility that she may see this on Facebook. My pals might still tag me in the photos even if I don't share them. Worst case scenario: she spots the tag in the brief interval between when I tag it and when I remove it. I couldn't help but think about all of this. I just requested permission to go. That's a really risky item. Her name is Ankita.

Despite being able to tweak their privacy settings and social media settings, they were still somewhat worried that the ever-changing nature of social media might cause them to miss anything that would undermine the personas they were attempting to cultivate. They were aware of the many ways in which the people and things they were associated with on social media may bring shame onto themselves.

Associations that Cause Harm

As far as the participants were concerned, their social media connections would not be used to deliberately undermine their careers. Attempt to control one's professional reputation. What really worried them were the little things that might be used to draw conclusions. It may not be harmful for pals to post photos of themselves having fun while they're not on the clock, but if these photos ended up in the hands of a professional contact via social media, it might cast a shadow that goes against the image the participants were going for.

You probably wouldn't want your boss to form an opinion about you based on a single insignificant photo... It may appear on someone else's profile rather than yours. This is Vasavi.

They stressed that it would be easy to ruin other people's impressions of them. They had a hard time predicting all the many ways that harm of this kind may happen. There were a lot of people who thought about all the ways an image or statement may be seen by their management in a negative light. Their employers may be able to deduce relationships between workplace events and social media posts, they reasoned.

Assume, for the sake of argument, that you have not been performing up to par for the last three to

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four months. He can see your lack of open-mindedness as an indication that you are not paying attention since your thoughts are wandering. It seems like people are making snap decisions based on Facebook. There are indirect links to everything. This is Vasavi.

They acknowledged that social media information was a basis for many people's opinions. Their main concern was that the lack of context provided by social media made it impossible to make informed decisions. Even if the connections between social media postings and causes are only superficial, they might have far-reaching consequences for people's careers.

People are going to assume the worst of you when they see you at work after seeing an image of you smoking or drinking or behaving ridiculously on social media. Someone named Nick If the participants wanted their professional colleagues to take them seriously, the photos and postings they made public had to adhere to the standards of conduct. They wanted to reveal a different, more captivating aspect of themselves on social media, but they felt constrained in what they could share. There was a limit to how far their online personas could go in terms of what was deemed acceptable. It was especially unattractive to be linked with smoking, drinking, and partying in their culture. Their awareness of this and made efforts to incorporate such conduct into their own social life. They put in a lot of mental energy to fix the potential reputational harm that may happen if their bosses found out about these activities.

Forming Opinions

Self-Controlling

Due to the complexity of managing one's professional image on social media, the participants learned to exercise care. They were committed to enhancing their internet reputations using this method, but they were unsure of how to mitigate the hazards involved. With the knowledge that their coworkers may now access information of their personal life, individuals were less impulsive as they amassed more social media contacts at work.

Both your friends and coworkers are likely to be active Facebook users. A result is that you start to watch your words and actions extremely carefully (Ganapathy)

In light of their worries about the dangers they may face, they were hesitant to respond. There was time for much-needed contemplation during these breaks. In each case, they independently evaluated the social media data linked to them. They thought about how their friends may understand certain photos and postings. This type of thinking frequently turned into a drawn-out process due to the vast, linked structure of social media.

Before I tweet anything, I make sure I'm really confident about it (Raghav)

It was obvious to several of the participants that the length of time they spent reflecting ran counter to how people typically use social media platforms like Twitter. It was clear to them that the purpose of many of these social media platforms was to facilitate quick and easy communication. But they discovered that in order to feel in charge of their social media personas, it was crucial to give

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themselves time to prepare. From a variety of ethical and social vantage points, they questioned the substance of their postings.

I think it's helpful to take stock of one's own feelings and thoughts, practise introspection, and ask oneself whether one's current interpersonal style is appropriate. The first What people put in their online personas was dictated by their belief in absolute right and evil. Part of their evaluation process included considering how well a post complemented the image they had already decided to portray. One may argue that they were successful if the image or statement did not disprove the intended meaning.

Depending on the social circles to which they belonged, the limits of what might be considered "right" or "wrong" also changed. They had a more difficult time keeping track of this as various coworkers liked different kinds of articles. There has to be a lot of creative thinking put into overcoming this obstacle.

Institutionally Controlled

It seemed like hundreds of people were "watching" the participants via social media at their big companies. For them, this represented both a threat and an opportunity. They used this concept as a cognitive tool to manage the social pressures associated with social media interactions. Some even went so far as to say they "road-tested" their messages by imagining several possible audiences.

Put yourself in the shoes of your audience, where you are well-known, and deliver your speech. Good day, The participants were able to predict the reaction to their social media postings just by visualising their target audience. The method of personalising social media messages became more concrete with this approach. Through creative thinking, they were able to transfer their knowledge of how to engage with managers and coworkers in person to their interactions on social media. While interacting with their bosses on social media, several participants noticed that the conversational tone changed, allowing for more casual exchanges. Still, they came to terms with the fact that, for the most part, they had to follow the laws and conventions of real-life society. They said that they reached this conclusion after being both helped and corrected by others on social media.

Helping individuals learn to monitor their own behaviour is the key. That's the norm on sites where people write on what's okay. Even on the company intranet, it acts as its own policeman; otherwise, it won't do its job. This might make or break your career, so please don't behave irresponsibly; you are not on a random network. If they don't, most people will pick them up and teach them.

The participants sensed an acceptance of the possibility of error as coworkers assisted to control one other's actions. We expected individuals to learn and adapt, so we were tolerant of little mistakes. Graver errors might spell the end of one's professional life. Major violations of the organization's long-standing social norms were engaged in these. The participants remembered these unspoken guidelines throughout their reflective times, keeping in mind that postings about "Bunking off" work or acting in a way that goes against the company's principles may get them fired. Whatever you do, bear in mind that the company's reputation is on the line, and that's fair. Remember

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that you are always speaking on behalf of the company, even when you aren't mentioning them by name. You wouldn't do certain things if you used your excellent discretion.

They relied on their knowledge of the organization's principles throughout their times of reflection. Some people have come to terms with the fact that their online personas should either support or enhance the reputation of their companies. As the members of the groups envisaged other societal standards to which they were obligated, their organisations grew into powerful entities in their own right. They were more confident in their ability to foresee the consequences of their social media postings and maintain control over the impressions they generated by creatively interacting with social actors and values.

Discussion

Our research demonstrates that people may utilise social media to their advantage by drawing positive conclusions that boost their professional standing. The deliberate blurring of these boundaries has only lately been recognised (Neeley and Leonardi 2016), despite numerous sociological studies describing the steps taken to separate personal and professional social media accounts (French and Read 2013). These trends indicate that social media users are becoming more sophisticated and intelligent in their pursuit of profit via innovative usage of these platforms. By rethinking social media performances and expanding on the cognitive foundations that sustain them, our results supplement these previous research and offer more complexity.

We argue that social media presentations are more accurately described as post-modern performances, drawing parallels to types of theatre that intentionally muddy the lines between the stage and the audience's perception of what's happening onstage. Similarly, our participants infused their social media performances with material that would normally be reserved for their companies. They showed their coworkers that they were more than just a number by incorporating their hobbies and experiences into their job. Our junior team members came over and remarked that BI had no idea you were so entertaining, as one participant joked, when they saw an old picture of me with a ponytail that BI had shared. Therefore, it's all about assisting others in seeing the broader aspect of your true identity (Gagan). Public personalities' social media pages are rife with this kind of performance. Take former US President Barrack Obama as an example. On his official Twitter account, he posts casual photos of himself and his family with the caption BDad, husband, President, citizen^. Bertolt Brecht's (Brecht 1964) work provides a good example of a boundary-spanning performance; Brecht used a number of strategies to get people to consider the bigger picture and how a performance connected to their life. Specifically, he would use a plethora of tactics that purposefully dissolved the line between the traditional front and backstage realms, such as performers addressing the audience as themselves, explanatory placards, stage instructions read aloud, and more. Our participants were able to mimic comparable performance methods on social media, letting their guard down for a while—just like a postmodern troupe—but they were still putting on a show. Although it was still meant for an official audience, this performance took a different approach by letting the audience in on secrets from the backstage in order to let them come to their own conclusions. Although these glances were not often linked with the world of front stage

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self-presentations, they did feed into them. Social media presentations, according to Llewellyn and Hindmarsh (2013), can be seen as post-modern types of performance where performers purposefully blur the lines between onstage and offstage in order to imply meanings that might not be achievable in more conventional organisational performance spaces.

It was a huge challenge for the performers to take part in these hybrid performances. They lost some control over what their official audience could see most noticeably when they blurred the lines between front stage and backstage information. Because their target audience's standing was often higher than their own, they were very cautious about using this approach. Despite the fact that they were able to communicate in ways that would have been impossible without this kind of social media performance, it was not without its limitations. It was important to them that what happened on social media not entirely derail their social lives at work. Some participants, for example, brought up politically or religiously charged or otherwise socially sensitive topics, which might lead to friction between coworkers. The consequences of starting such a conversation at work may have been disastrous. In their physical work environments, they were always aware of the social conventions and regulations. According to the widely-accepted affordances theory of social media, the platform's potential applications are entirely up to the users' creativity and the capabilities of the underlying technology (Treem and Leonardi 2012; Leonardi 2014). The relevance of the real-world setting in which postings are read is emphasised once again in our research. Despite the fact that social media users may blur the lines between backstage and frontstage performances, the social order that controls conduct nonetheless takes centre stage in these environments.

It took a lot of concentration to keep from losing sight of the social norms and becoming too engrossed in what others were saying (Richey et al. 2016). The personal sphere for unrestrained expression is shrinking as both official and informal content become components of the continuous performance of self. There is a substantial risk of stress for participants since they see these performances as high-stakes events. Our participants dealt with the stress by establishing a third mental space, which was neither a rigid front stage nor an entirely relaxed backstage, rather than removing their personal posters and returning to their tightly segregated behaviour patterns. The participants either made themselves think twice or thrice about the topic they were about to publish or anticipated the possible audience for their postings. Quite a few

Some of them said that they required "introspection" time and mental space to perform well on social media. The performers entered what seemed like a liminal state of mind as they were ready to perform. Similar to mental warm-ups, this transitional period gives performers the chance to try out material, contemplate its suitability, and approach their audiences imaginatively. Facilitating actors' adaptation to a performance venue without physical boundaries requires the establishment of a transitional prepared environment. In the split second that Goffman mentions, our data records the actor's journey from the backstage to the frontstage state. Recent research (Richey et al., 2016) has brought attention to the possible difficulties that could occur when many social domains collide on social media. The schism between more official and less formal settings, as well as between social media postings, has contributed to these problems. According to our research, these categories are

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starting to lose some of their absoluteness in this era of social media, where individuals and groups may use these platforms to their advantage to challenge and change them (Neeley and Leonardi 2016). As a matter of fact, it seems like performers are choosing to become more open and honest while participating in these postmodern displays of the self, rather than feeling forced to do so. We argue that dealing with the growing amount of openness that organisations and people expect requires mastery of a transitory liminal condition.

Concluding Remarks

Study after study has shown that people use social media to keep their personal and professional lives apart, and this article adds to that body of evidence. The results point to a higher propensity for willingly revealing one's identity in a hybrid performance style that was previously conceived of as a sort of postmodern performance. This change in performance style opens up a lot of intriguing new research directions. Richey et al. (2016), Neeley and Leonardi (2016) all suggest that in the future, researchers may want to investigate "performers" operating in a place with less physical boundaries. Research on how "one-man teams" maintain and evaluate their own performances may take centre stage when multi-member teams are no longer used to plan or execute presentations. They may also provide light on the reception of postmodern acts by those who use social media.

By adding the significance of a liminal mental state in handling the elevated degrees of self-disclosure linked to these performances, this research adds to the ongoing conversation around social media self-presentations. In this era of social media, when the "ideology of openness" has become the norm, professional self-presentations are ever more important. Organisational standards around self-disclosure are being shaped by the merging forces of a more competitive job market and the limitless presentation space provided by social media. While social media are being used as a wealth of inference in practice, our research suggests that people may stay disciplined while performing on these platforms by preparing for them in a liminal frame of mind. Actors may purposefully divulge too much information, contrary to our participants' use of these cognitive, socially informed mechanisms, which kept them from crossing a perceived boundary. Consider President Trump's statement on his controversial tweets: "I wouldn't be here if it weren't for the tweets". While this study does recognise the role of social order in drawing "a line" between suitable and inappropriate social media exposure, it suggests that future research could benefit from investigating professional decisions to deliberately cross that line.

It is intriguing to observe, from a management standpoint, that people seem to be willingly participating in this hybrid performance and the accompanying self-disclosure. Research has shown that bringing more casual conversation and revealing personal details into the workplace may improve information exchange and lead to other organisational advantages (Neeley and Leonardi 2016). It seems that organisations are not making enough of an effort to tap into or encourage this sort of social self-performance. Managers should take a keen interest in such performances.

Our data came from a very competitive job market where people were trying to find methods to stand out by using social media to make a lot of assumptions. We are cognizant of the fact that this level of

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candour may not be required in less cutthroat environments. Some of our participants did had the option to not participate in these hybrid presentations. We contend, however, that in a global economy, marketplaces are expected to become more competitive, not less so, and that employees across a variety of sectors will need to be innovative if they want to stand out. Furthermore, we cannot determine whether there is a gradual increase in the level of creativity and risk-taking seen in social media behaviours over time since our data is not longitudinal. An intriguing area for future research is the extent to which social media self-disclosure standards encourage more daring and imaginative self-presentations.

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