IDENTITY-RELATED CONTEXTUAL CONSTRAINTS
AND NON-INTENDED NON-PROPOSITIONAL EFFECTS

POSITIVE / NEGATIVE CONTEXTUAL CONSTRAINTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE USE OF AN INTERFACE

1. Familiarity with the interface. Effort or lack of effort from using the links, frames, etc.

   techno-competence was a feeling based on such basic emotions and experiences as determination, vigilance, pride, excellence, and efficacy. Together, all these emotions express a mental state that people have when they can use technology to reach what they need to reach (Saariluoma & Jokinen 2014).

   the user’s familiarity with the interface, even if it is not user-friendly, and also the user’s intuitive ability to interact with the interface also affect the balance of cognitive effects and mental effort involved in processing information from this interface, generating multiple outcomes of (in)efficient interpretations. And frequency of use is a parallel variable affecting relevance (Yus 2011).

2. Expertise in using web-mediated discourses. Mastery of oration, combinations of text and image, editing and upgrading sites, etc.

   E.g. tagging (Barton 2015).

   A person’s perceived efficacy of his/her respective self-presentation is likely to influence frequency and style of status updates. [...] Subjective beliefs in one’s own competencies can be seen as prerequisites of subsequent behavior: only individuals who perceive themselves as capable of a specific task are likely to engage therein, while individuals who perceive lower degrees of self-efficacy will try to avoid the specific task (Winter et al. 2014).

3. Web page usability. Good arrangement of text and image, good structure of links, leads to being able to access content without unnecessary effort.

4. Site affordances.

   links, leads to being able to access content without unnecessary effort.

   The rigid profile structure encourages the user to present him or herself in a way that is partly constructed by the application, not the user [...] Social networking sites limit identity presentation to a singular, fixed profile, and most services do not provide users with configuration or customization options to choose their own particular representation strategies (Marwick 2005).

   The range of resources for constructing the self is restricted by the platform designers’ decisions about relevant information categories, as opposed to the user’s own notions of what is relevant (Vasquez 2014).

   Socially advanced functions invented for social networking sites allow users to customize and reveal their personal profiles by manipulating their timeline banner and providing a potentially fancy profile picture (Cheung et al. 2015).

5. Demographic factors (sex-, age-related differences).

   The youth have very clear expectations of the aspects and qualities a person must have in order to become popular among the SNS users. [...] In other words, previous knowledge of the expectations and norms of the reference group is a necessity for a successful “performance” (Sibak 2010).

   Through creating and updating their profiles, teens and pre-teens conform to socially shared rules of self-presentation, to social expectations regarding the size and nature of social connections, the kind and amount of personal information disclosed, and privacy settings (Mascheroni et al. 2015).

POSITIVE / NEGATIVE CONTEXTUAL CONSTRAINTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE INTERACTION WITH OTHER USERS

1. Personal traits, personality. User’s feelings/emotions, attitudes (influence eventual quantity and quality of use of Internet-enabled interactions).

   Our results show that an individual who is satisfied with his life will be more motivated to use Facebook because of the perceived social pressure to engage in this behavior. In other words, if everybody is posting happiness and good times, I must share mine as well. Additionally, it seems that sharing personal satisfaction would increase it, considering that this satisfaction is determined in part by the social ties of the individuals that are narrowed through social networks (de Oliveira & Zuniga Huertas 2015).

   Neurotic users are inclined to share personally identifying information and extroverts have significantly more Facebook friends than introverts [...] neurotic and introverted persons are more successful in gaining social supports and had interactions with many of their Facebook friends (Shen et al. 2015).

   SNs represent a valuable refuge for many users which provides opportunities to escape from daily stress, demands, and frustrations. The SNS environment provides a plethora of potentially valuable gratifications that may contribute to psychological health and well-being. Paradoxically, however, the same gratifications that represent the central benefit of SNS use are also significant risk factors for the development of excessive and addictive SNS use (Masur et al. 2014).

   higher degrees of narcissism led to deeper self-disclosures and more self-promotional content within these messages. Users with higher need to belong disclosed more intimate information in status updates, while perceived efficacy of self-presentation was negatively related to the mass suitability of postings (Winter et al. 2014).

   Those with lower self-esteem were more more likely to spend time on Facebook and feel a stronger emotional connection to the social network […] participants with lower esteem were found to post more negative information in their status updates (Hollenbaugh & Ferris 2015).

   Extraverts benefit the most from using SNS since they are able to extend their networks and pursue their communication needs with these technologies [rich-get-richer hypothesis]. In contrast, introverts using SNS have been assumed to benefit more since these platforms allow for a compensation of their communicative deficits in the management of interpersonal contacts in a comfortable way (social compensation hypothesis) (Winter et al. 2014).

2. Other users’ quality and quantity of content uploaded.

   Information that others have can constrain individuals’ self-presentation because the person has a low probability of creating an alternative impression. Hence, self-presentation online is likely to be guided by the expectations of acquaintances in order to avoid embarrassing discrepancies between the chosen self-presentation and the social image of a person (Krämer & Haferkamp 2011).

   Previous research showed that Facebook users who saw more of their friends’ photo uploads were motivated to upload more photos themselves. Furthermore, highly Neurotic users possibly manage their online impressions more effectively by keeping in line with the Facebook popular culture that is visual communication via photo uploads and generating more visual content (Effekhar et al. 2014).

3. Other users’ comments on the user’s profile.

   Other-generated information is regarded as more truthful on social networking sites because it is perceived to be unsanctioned by a profile owner. Experiments find that when drawing conclusions about a profile owner’s likeability and attractiveness, evaluators prioritize peer commentaries over self-statements on the profile (Manago forthcoming).

4. Social norms and expectations of group conformity.

   The youth have very clear expectations of the aspects and qualities a person must have in order to become popular among the SNS users. [...] In other words, previous knowledge of the expectations and norms of the reference group is a necessity for a successful “performance” (Sibak 2010).

   Through creating and updating their profiles, teens and pre-teens conform to socially shared rules of self-presentation, to social expectations regarding the size and nature of social connections, the kind and amount of personal information disclosed, and privacy settings (Mascheroni et al. 2015).

5. Demographic factors (sex-, age-related differences).

   Females tend to use Facebook more for entertainment and interpersonal motives such as to maintain relationships, whereas males were motivated to use Facebook to initiate new relationships and to develop romantic
1. (Dis)satisfaction from being (un)able to use the interface appropriately and obtain/produce the expected information.

The user experience of poor usability activates negative emotional contents of different types, whereas good usability generates positive feelings. (...) poor usability has essential emotional costs, and this explains why people are often poorly motivated in using technologies with poor usability or that are difficult to learn (Saariluoma & Jokinen 2014).

Nowadays web pages include text, pictures, flash animations, graphics and videos, among other elements. The combination of these elements has an impact on the user’s satisfaction (and the user’s desire to return to the page in the future), and also on the eventual relevance (Yus 2011).

If customers find a site or interface difficult to use, there is a good chance that they will not persist in using it. Examples of difficulties include complicated and lengthy forms, disoriented navigation systems, and technical error messages (Yus 2014).

Users become more creative and thoughtful until a certain tipping point of interface complexity is reached. At that point, creativity and thinking suffer, leading to significantly less discussion (Spiekermann & Korunovska 2014).

Cyber-based information overload, when cognitive demands exceed an individual’s ability to process content, was predictive of higher levels of perceived stress, which interferes with concentration and self-reflection. Social networking sites create unrelenting demands to manage social information and needs (Manago forthcoming).

2. Individuation / personalization vs. social connectedness. Users expect information in a highly personalized way, adapted to personal profiles and preferences.

E.g. personalised travel plans generated by travel apps.

User involvement in the news content depends on the social affordances of the site, particularly those that allow for audience customization and those that drive network feedback (Oeldorff-Hirsch & Sundar 2015).

3. Effects of dealing with information processed: information overload, multitasking, etc.

As digital technologies are undergoing a paradigmatic shift from user-centered to techno-centered, its effects are also changing. Individuals not only tend to look for information that reinforces their previous beliefs, but digital applications are increasingly suggesting contents and actions based on previous behavior and usage profiles. This results in the redundancy of both contents and social networks, i.e. ‘infosaturation’ (Dias 2014).

Social media usage levels continue to climb generating copious amounts of content. As more people crowd social media (e.g. Facebook), and create content, some research points to the existence of a concept called social media fatigue. Social media fatigue is defined as a user’s tendency to back away from social media participation when s/he becomes overwhelmed with information (Bright et al. 2015).

1. Feeling of connectedness. Social awareness, feeling of being part of the interactions and friendships.

35% of our respondents said they like to use Skype to hangout with someone (...) a significant portion of Skype users are engaging in this form of interaction. Over half of our survey respondents said that they felt closer to someone after Skyping with them. (...) it can be a powerful tool for allowing people to share lives in the mundane everyday along with the more exciting eventful moments (Katz & Crocker 2015).

Analyses of participants’ usage behavior and their experiences revealed that the more time users spent interacting with other users (e.g., commenting on updates), the closer they felt to other people. Interacting with others also predicted users’ positive emotional states after Facebook use; this effect may be explained by the perception of social closeness (Neubaum & Krämer 2015).

Positive and entertaining self-disclosures increase the feeling of connection, especially when reading friends’ updates (Utz 2015).

The trivial nature of the posts makes conversations accessible while fulfilling a socially meaningful experience for users, and often in real time. This type of almost constant communication between users has never been available to society in another way, and if anything intensifies the requirement for relationship building -we are now in each other’s spaces all the time (Hollywood 2015).

Individuality is both fostered and dependent on the network since we most likely would be ignored without network visibility with references to other users. Hence, it seems that negotiating individuality through connectivity and network visibility are important rationales behind contemporary practices of online social networking. Being part of social networks and putting one’s network connections on display become vital aspects of self-presentation, personality, and identity negotiation (Svensson 2014).

The human desire for affiliation: we exist within communities of other voices with which we wish to connect. The stances we adopt and observations and evaluations we share all exist relative to the meaning-making of the other members of our social network and to all other potential networks of meaning. In other words, we perform our online identities in order to connect with others. (Zappavigna 2012: 38, in Locher 2014).

2. Feeling of being noticed by others, by the user’s community.

Fear of ostracism and need to belong were positively related to perceived obligations to answer and expectations toward chat partners [on Facebook] (Mai et al. 2015).

The practice of retweeting enables users to signal lister, provide feedback, and spread the tweet to a new audience of potential recipients (Spilioti 2015).

Participants also acknowledge that displaying their self-portraits make their web pages and blogs more appealing, as people ‘like snooping on others’. Moreover, they affirm that the presence of personal portraits increases trust, either in online dating, social network sites or professional blogs and webs. They also realize that uploading a self-portrait raises substantially the number of visits, compared to other kind of photographs (Lasen 2015).

Comments by users affect perception of quality of information (Ballantine et al. 2015).

Engaging with friends through tagging activity and third-party application use is associated with higher levels of personal Facebook usage and a stronger emotional attachment to Facebook (Wisniewski et al. 2015).

When positive expressions were reduced, people produced fewer positive posts and more negative posts; when negative expressions were reduced, the opposite pattern occurred. (...) results indicate that emotions expressed by others on Facebook influence our own emotions (Kramer et al. 2014).


The community of practice framework seems especially important for understanding self-praise. Many self-praising strategies are rooted in indirection and can be recognised as self-elevation solely by the members of relationships (Hollenbaugh & Ferris 2015).
in-group. (...) Additionally, invoking these attributes serves to establish solidarity by inclusivity and may offset the face-threatening effects of self-praise in interaction (Dayter 2014).

perceived benefits, namely convenience of maintaining existing relationships, new relationship building, self-presentation, and enjoyment, generally have strong and significant positive effects on self-disclosure in social networking sites (Cheung et al. 2015).

4. Generation of bridging and bonding social capital. Since, ‘tagging’ is a very common strategy in which profiles link together, it could be that the profile owners use the tag feature to create and maintain bridging and bonding with friends in SNSs and demonstrate their relationships with other people within and outside of their networks (Eftekar et al. 2014).

actively engaging with one’s Facebook network—both through responses to Friends’ requests and posting content directly on a Friend’s wall—is positively linked to higher levels of bridging social capital. (...) engaging in specific practices related to Facebook use have the potential to shift perceptions regarding access to social resources, even within a more general (not just Facebook-specific) context (Ellison et al. 2014).

while relational closeness is positively correlated with engagement in relationship strategies, specific types of Friend dyads are more likely to use these strategies and, consequently, benefit from their engagement. Specifically, those who rely on Facebook as their primary communication channel and those who live farther away both engage in these strategies to a greater extent and view Facebook as having a greater impact on their relational closeness and stability than those who communicate through other channels, and those who live close to each other (Vitak 2014).

The frequency with which one posts requests is a significant predictor of social capital, but (there’s) importance of factors such as the extent to which individuals try to respond to others’ posts and the extent to which they value different aspects of the site, such as the ability to see content from Friends of Friends (Ellison, Gray, Lampe & Fiore 2014).

5. Feelings of social isolation and dissatisfaction. The use of social networking sites, such as Facebook, provides ample opportunities for the pursuit of interpersonal connection but may also bring to mind one’s social isolation. Two studies revealed that receiving few responses from one’s Facebook friends threatens the needs for belonging, self-esteem, control, and meaningful existence. These effects were observable over and above the impact of general social connection to others (i.e., total number of Facebook friends) and tone of responses (Greitemeyer et al. 2014).

6. Feeling of well-being through emotional display of one’s and other users’ feelings. Facebookers draw on “expressive resources associated with affective discourse” to mark their contributions as worth telling. These resources are explicit appraisals (i.e. the stance taking of a Facebooker through the expression of affect, judgment or appreciation), and more implicit stance taking, expressed in “nonverbal displays of affective style” (e.g., emoticons, kisses or laughter) (Locher 2014).

An analysis of 339 adult participants revealed a positive relationship between supportive interaction and positive affect after the interaction. A path model revealed positive associations among the number of SNS friends, supportive interactions, affect, perceived social support, sense of community, and life satisfaction (Oh et al. 2014).

users frequently use the environment to communicate routine as well as intimate information to peers. The number of intimate disclosures observed (...) indicates that Facebook is used as a forum for disclosure that is independent of the psychosocial status of the individual (Jordán-Conde et al. 2014).

7. Feeling of increased mutuality of information among friends and acquaintances. The amount of information provided in a profile has been positively correlated to the number connections that an individual has, suggesting that the establishment of common ground and signals are important elements to achieve trust and legitimacy within communities of users (Quinn & Papacharissi 2014).

[Comments] work within various sets of connotations and significations that may be understood by the friends of the friends, or certain jobs and users: common experiences, shared amusements, in-jokes among a close inner circle [...] perform certain types of belonging in the space of the social networking site (Cover 2012).

8. Feeling of enhanced self-esteem and generation of positive emotions. Individuals may use Facebook to be recognized and have reputation among their peers by sharing posts, photos, or news. Therefore, their ultimate goal is to enhance their own self-esteem by portraying their lives. Similar to status seeking, entertainment motivates individuals to continue to use Facebook for fun purposes. Thus, it may be interpreted that users are interested in having a pleasurable time while using Facebook (Basak & Calisir 2015).

Gratifications that Chinese adolescents receive from use of the online social network Qzone, such as socializing, information-seeking, and entertainment are found to have a significantly positive influence on their positive mood (Apaolaza et al. 2014).

Social networking sites create enhanced opportunities for adolescents to gauge the desirability of their self-presentations through feedback from friends, adjust accordingly, and thus feel better about themselves. [...] Simply seeing oneself projected to an audience may heighten the awareness of one’s self-image and, if it is crafted in a flattering way that realizes a desired self, increase self-esteem (Manago forthcoming).

9. Feeling of reduced self-esteem and generation of negative emotions. SNSs provide people with ample opportunities to compare themselves to others, which has the potential to contribute to depression. For instance, if a person sees that many of her/his friends are getting jobs and s/he is unemployed and having a difficult time getting a job, then s/he might feel inadequate in that domain. When comparing oneself to others, perceiving oneself as inferior (referred to as negative social comparison) can maintain and exacerbate negative self appraisals, and lead to increases in negative affect (Feinstein et al. 2015).

Results demonstrate that although Facebook users often experience negative emotions, they feel pressured to access the site frequently due to the fear of missing out and to keep up with relationship maintenance demands. Some participants reported privacy violations due to Facebook’s visibility, connectivity, and persistence. These features also afforded constant social comparison to other network members, which triggered jealousy, anxiety, and other negative emotions (Fox et al. 2015).

The more time college students spend on Facebook and the more casual acquaintances on their Facebook friend lists, the more likely they are to believe that other people have better lives than they do (Chou & Edge 2012).

Consuming other people’s profile information elicits feelings of envy which in turn diminishes the experience of life satisfaction. People even actively employ Facebook to manage their mood by engaging in less selective exposure to portrayals of upward comparison targets and more exposure to downward comparisons. Overall, self-esteem has been shown to be negatively associated with a person’s social comparison frequency on Facebook (Greitemeyer 2016).

10. Feeling of control over privacy and information disclosure. The option of not using real names online allows people to control what they reveal about themselves and who they reveal it to, opening up possibilities for identity exploration, exhibitionism, and connections with people who share different interests without being limited by the social factors that routinely shape everyday life (van der Nagel & Frith 2015).

perceived benefits associated with the disclosure of personal information and interacting with ‘strangers’ online may outweigh the perceived risks associated with these behaviours as the result of the importance of peer relationships and the exploration of identity during adolescence (Bryce & Fraser 2014).
11. Reduced feeling of inhibition (plus increased self-disclosure). Participants said they feel that it’s easier to express certain things about themselves online (...). This self-disclosure typically occurs when close friends are communicating through private online channels [...] These youth appear to feel less inhibited online because they don’t have to contend with the discomfort of confronting their friends in person (Davis 2014).

Text-based communication was more important for self-esteem than face-to-face or phone communication, (...) the psychological benefits of text-based communication stems from enhanced self-disclosure (Gonzales 2014).

Social influence is the factor which exhibits the strongest effect on self-disclosure in social networking sites, followed by perceived benefits. Surprisingly, perceived privacy risk does not have any significant impact on self-disclosure. The results suggest that users focus on the benefits as well as social influence when they decide to reveal personal information in social networking sites, but pay less attention to the potential privacy risks (Cheung et al. 2015).

12. Feeling of community or group membership. The management of social identity usually involves feelings of group or community membership, or being acknowledged by others as part of the network of friends or relatives. The information users share about one another can have significant impacts and receive enthusiastic replies or praise (Lee et al. 2014a).

Users’ social needs is essential to an individual’s continued participation. Fulfilling SNS users’ social needs appears to be fundamental when users consider whether to revisit a particular SNS website. Namely, gratifying SNS users’ social needs is essential to an individual’s continued participation. Should interaction and/or arousal arise during a visit to an SNS website, these online experiential states are likely to play a role in determining whether a revisit occurs (Huang et al. 2014).

Analyses conducted (...) suggest that trust, an element of the relational cluster, holds the strongest correlation with the sharing and pooling of resources by users over Facebook. Experiential value is found to be most significant, indicating that the interactions between users on Facebook occur mostly to fulfill a psychological need, such as sharing the useful information and receiving enthusiastic replies or praise (Lee et al. 2014).

The information users share about one another can have significant impacts on impression formation, and at times this other-generated content may be face threatening, or challenging to one’s desired self-presentation. (...) Results suggest that many face threats result from other Facebook users neglecting or misunderstanding a target’s audience and/or self-presentation goals, as well as a target’s fear of creating an unwanted association with another Facebook user (Litt et al. 2014).

Instead of inferring certain type of information and deriving conclusions about other people from the information they exude, the users on the Net intentionally inform their followers about these activities. This uploading creates a kind of “proximity in the virtual” or at least an awareness of its existence. Today, the Net makes it possible to form strong and weak ties that hybridize or intersect with those that the person manages in offline scenarios (Yus 2014).

Two intrinsic motivational factors – expectations of positive social outcomes and sharing enjoyment – are significant factors in determining the proclivity to share information on SNSs. These findings suggest the motivation to seek social recognition and strengthen relationships among social networks leads to more frequent sharing activities. The results also show that intrinsic rewards such as self-esteem or self-respect enhanced by altruistic efforts may encourage information sharing activities on SNSs (Kim et al. 2015).

Those who are actively contributing through leaving comments (...) do so by submitting voices and opinions, seeking recognition, challenging institutional authority and expressing emotion. The analysis suggests many within the audience (...) are actively forming a virtual community, fuelling their own sense of identity through the submission of comments and the dynamic played out through established relationships within that community (Barnes 2015).

Knowledge contribution can directly affect social identity, at the same time, social interaction tie and membership esteem play significant mediating roles in the relevance between knowledge contribution and social identity (Cheng & Guo 2015).

Content contribution is more often driven by extrinsically oriented motivations, including reciprocity and the need for self-development, while community participation is more often driven by intrinsically oriented motivations, including altruism and a sense of belonging to the community (Xu & Li 2015).

Sharing is conceptualised here not as something accomplished by a ‘sender’ but as an interactive accomplishment that involves both the sharer and responding members from their audience, whose feedback encourages and at times shapes future sharing activities. (...) By making particular representations of themselves available to their networked audience and by selecting particular modes and media for their entextualization, participants construct the shared moment as part of their social reality (Androutsopoulos 2014).

College students who use Facebook for social motives (e.g., sending messages, tagging photos, and updating status) may be willing to provide more personal information, even “highly sensitive” information (Chang & Heo 2014).

The most influential factors affecting the knowledge-sharing intentions of posters are intrinsic motivational factors (i.e., enjoyment in helping others and knowledge self-efficacy). (...) Intra-community factors, such as perceived moderator’s enthusiasm, offline activities, and enjoyability, also affect the knowledge-sharing intentions of posters (Lai & Chen 2014).

Facebook users with denser networks disclosed more positive and negative emotions, and the relation between network density and emotional disclosure was mediated by stronger need for emotional expression. Facebook users with larger networks on Facebook disclosed more positive emotions, and the relation between network size and emotional disclosure was mediated by a stronger need for impression management (Lin et al. 2014b).

We found that internal motivation, gain of prestige, quality and quantity of content and procedural fairness are the strongest motivational factors supporting participation, whereas time and effort requirements for contribution and fear of personal feedback are the strongest factors hindering contribution (Matschke et al. 2014).

Self-writing can be employed as a way for people to understand and work on themselves and their relationships to others. It is one particular activity through which individuals make meaning of their existence in the world and navigate its complexities. Self-writers do not simply present or perform a self that already exists within them. They form relations to self and others by exposing themselves to others and obtaining their feedback (Sauter 2014).

While social networking sites offer diverse features, people are drawn to these sites primarily for personal connections and sharing of activity with a growing number of “friends.” Social networking sites respond to youth’s need to belong (Seo et al. 2014).