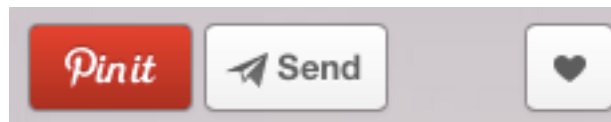




## Occupying Social Media: *Pinterest*

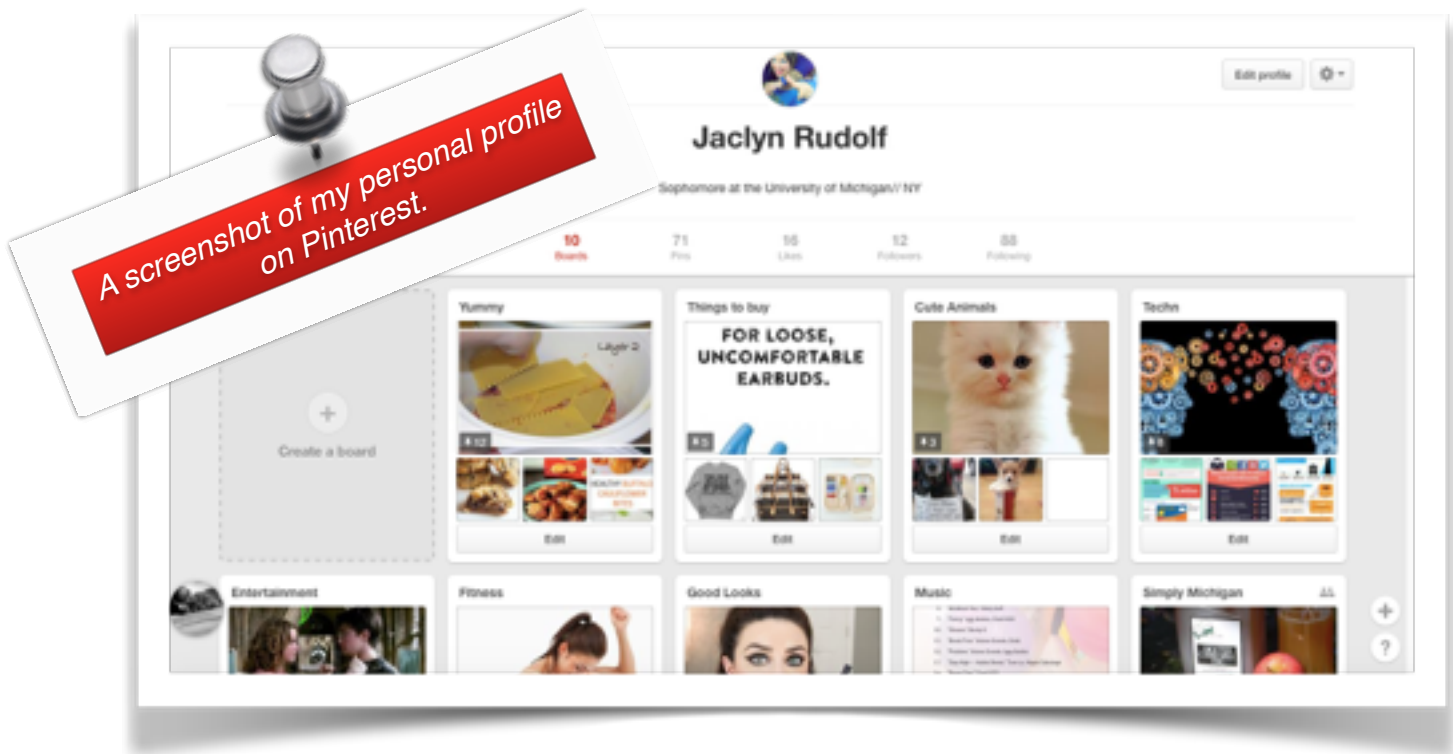
“The visual bookmarking tool that helps you discover and save creative ideas.”



### Introduction

Before engaging with Pinterest for the purpose of this assignment, I was for the most part unaware of what Pinterest consisted of. I have always heard a lot of buzz about it, as it is generally a popular social media platform, however, none of my friends use this site, so I did not have any incentive or real desire to create an account of my own. Now that I know what Pinterest entails, I have realized that whether or not your friends have Pinterest accounts as well is unimportant to the enjoyment of using this site. Different than many of the sites that I often utilize, interactions with people you do not know face to face are equally if not more purposeful, as you mainly browse the content on this site based on interests and specific topics. Prior to using Pinterest, I always mentally categorized social media as an outlet to create a certain persona for a person, group or a company. Although this use is still evident on Pinterest, it is definitely not as prevalent, and I would not consider it to be the main focus of this site, adding to its uniqueness.



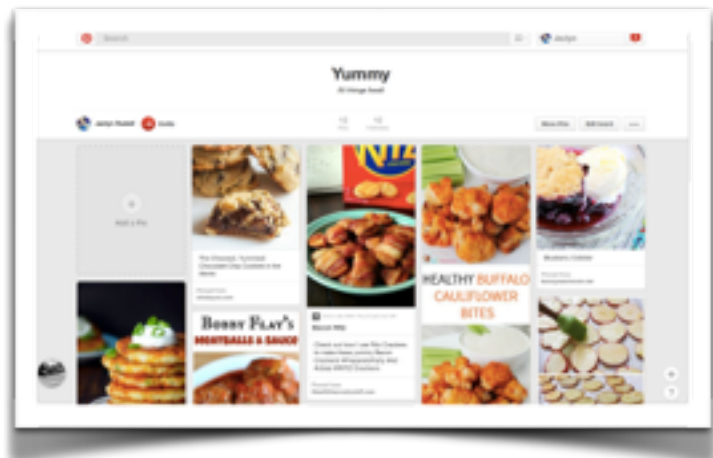


## Contributions

In utilizing this site, I have created 10 individual pin boards. On Pinterest, boards are defined as categorized web pages that I can pin posts to. For example, one of my boards is titled “Entertainment,” and here I have compiled articles, quizzes, pictures, and other various forms of media relating to my favorite movies and television shows. I find this separation of pins by a specific board to be very useful; it makes a lot of sense that I do not keep my recipe for chocolate fudge brownies in the same place as my exercise tips for weight loss. Additionally, these different boards also allow for separation of leisure and work. While I have multiple boards that collect pins just for fun articles and posts about movies and makeup tips, I also have boards pertaining to more serious topics including technology, in which I have gathered a collection of pins which explore the field of using technology in the business world.



In 2014, Pinterest was the fastest growing network!





## Collaboration

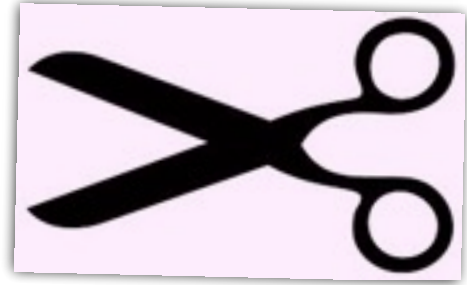
One important aspect of social media is collaboration, or in other words cooperation of posts and ideas. (Newman, 2015) Pinterest allows for collaboration in the form of collaborative boards. In addition to these individual boards which I have described, I have created two collaborative board. The first one I created with other students enrolled in the University of Michigan titled “Simply Michigan,” as it consists of all things pertaining to student life at the University of Michigan and in Ann Arbor in general. We are hoping that as the board grows, other students will use it as a resource for things to do on campus, or just to spread cool ideas for how to spread Michigan spirit. Later on in the span of my time spent on Pinterest, I joined a collaborative board called “Sorority Life.” In addition to creating and expanding these boards, I have followed 88 other users and pinned 71 posts total. As I continue with this project, I want to expand my pins on each board, as well as follow a wider variety of people to expose myself to different types of posts.



## Perceptions

Through spending extensive time on Pinterest, I observed that it serves the purpose of exposing yourself to new ideas, products, and other sources of information. This is unique from other social media sites including Instagram and Facebook, which typically focus on building a single profile page, creating a certain image of that person. Pinterest focuses less on the individual, and more on the collaboration of different people’s hobbies, interests, and ideas. I find it very useful that you can customize your home feed based on categories that you want to see more of. According to Pinterest users in “Perceptions of and Initial User Experience with Pinterest”, Pinterest is a place where you go to “browse things that relevant to you” and “save them for later.” (Miller, 2015) This aligns with my experience as I found myself browsing through different ideas, recipes, and articles that interested me, and then collecting them on my boards in an organized way. In contrast with people that have Pinterest accounts, when asked about its

purpose, non-users mentioned public or sharing content with others 50% of the time. (Miller, 2015) This additionally pertains to my experience as before creating a personal Pinterest account, I was unknowledgeable about the ways in which the site was used. This data presented in “Perceptions of and Initial User Experience with Pinterest” based off of their GroupLens Research, in combination with my personal experiences, makes me question Pinterest’s advertising and marketing strategies. (Miller, 2015) I think it would be beneficial and Pinterest would gain more of a presence amongst social media users if they found a way to inform people of exactly what Pinterest is and why it is unique to other social media platforms that they are already using.



## Intended User

One significant element of design is quality; as it is a social media site, Pinterest’s information is geared toward a huge variety of people of all ages, demographics, and occupations, in contrast with industrial media which is mediated by a publisher and focuses on a more narrow market. (Newman, 2015) Another element of Interactive Design that Pinterest displays is usability. (Newman, 2015) Pinterest is attractive for a wide range of users as it does not require any specialized skills, but rather is pretty much self explanatory and only requires creative thinking rather than the need to gain new knowledge. While there is no specific targeted user for Pinterest, and rather it has something to offer for everyone, there has been evidence to support that certain types of people do make use of it more than others. According to surveys in “Everyday Ideation: All of My Ideas are on Pinterest,” there is evidence to support that people who use Pinterest are more often those considered creative, people who are crafty and enjoy things that are considered DIY, and female. (Linder, 2014) Amongst all of the popular social media sites, Pinterest has the most skewed gender distribution. The study shows that women are four times more likely to use Pinterest than men. (Linder, 2014) While it is understandable to have the distribution skewed slightly in one direction, this is an extreme comparison. The site has potential to engage males equally, as there is an overwhelming amount of content on all topics, which made it interesting to learn that the skew was so extreme.



Key:  
Male  
Female



## Obstacles

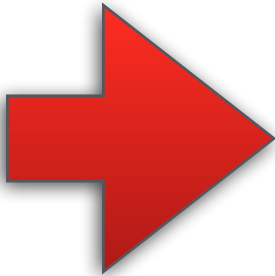
An aspect of my Pinterest experience that was very unexpected is my lack of followers. On Instagram and Twitter, I have easily built up a large following base, and have over 1,000 followers on each platform. However on Pinterest, I have been challenged with the obstacle that I was only able to accumulate a total of 12. This struck me as surprising as it is a social media related issue that I have never dealt with in the past on other platforms. It was reassuring as well as extremely intriguing to learn in “Do I Need to Follow You?” that data supports that the vast majority (approximately 88%) of users who interact with an average users content are non-followers. This supports that users most often discover and repost content from outside of their follow network. (Gelley, 2015) Unlike many social media sites, Pinterest is an open network, which means that users are not limited to interacting with their friends or those who they follow, giving less of an incentive to follow than on a site like Twitter or Instagram, where it is necessary to view and comment on their posts. (Newman, 2015)



## “Occupy Social Media”

Continuing with the understanding that it is not necessary to have a wide following base to have an influential presence on Pinterest, if it is not a large following that creates this presence, then what is it? From my experience with this platform, occupying Pinterest and having a meaningful presence on the site means compiling an interesting, engaging, and meaningful collection of pins and boards that provide purpose for yourself as well as others. One participant explained that he utilized Pinterest to plan daughters Mickey Mouse Club House themed birthday party. He used Pinterest as a resource to compile different ideas regarding decorations, foods, activities and party favors. Pinterest is not definitive. One participant in an experiment (17) used Pinterest to plan a trip to Italy with her daughter. This had a practical purpose as she used it to find sites to see, hotels to stay at, places to eat, and just in general things to do. (Miller, 2014) Afterward, the participant did not delete board as it accumulated a new meaning and value in a different way. After the trip, it served as a place of memories from the trip with her daughter.

Filters:



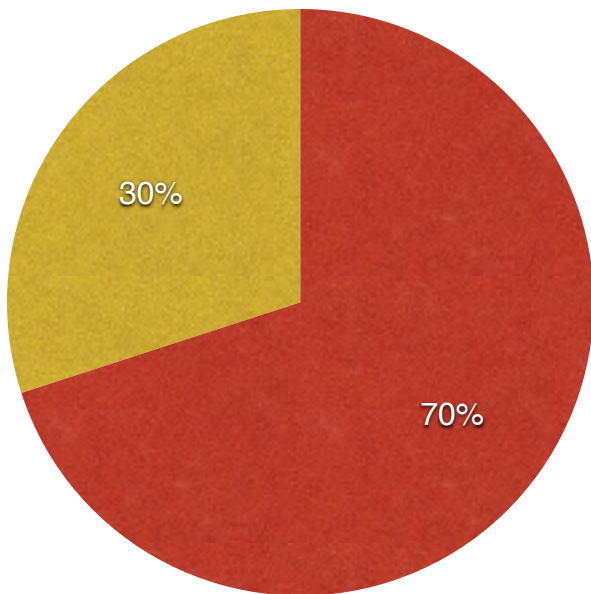
Home feed	History
Popular	Holidays and events
Everything	Home decor
Gifts	Humor
Videos	Illustrations and posters
Animals and pets	Kids and parenting
Architecture	Men's fashion
Art	Outdoors
Cars and motorcycles	Photography
Celebrities	Products
DIY and crafts	Quotes
Design	Science and nature
Education	Sports
Film, music and books	Tattoos
Food and drink	Technology
Gardening	Travel
Geek	Weddings
Hair and beauty	Women's fashion
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## Information Overload

One strength of Pinterest is its ability to compensate for issues that come about when searching articles online because of information overload. (Newman, 2015) When I first set up the account, the site provided me with a list of options to follow initially. This saved me the struggle of building up my profile from nothing, which I have struggled with when using other sites in the past, as well as the opposite, having my initial newsfeed flooded with things I am not interested in viewing. In addition to this initial filtering mechanisms, every time you follow someone, or often repin something, the site provides a recommendation with who you may want to follow. This is a unique advantage that Pinterest provides, as it not only limits your feed to what you want to see, but provides ways to expand the resources within the given field or category of interest. Filters often serve to define your consumption experience, and in the case of Pinterest it does an efficient job of doing so.

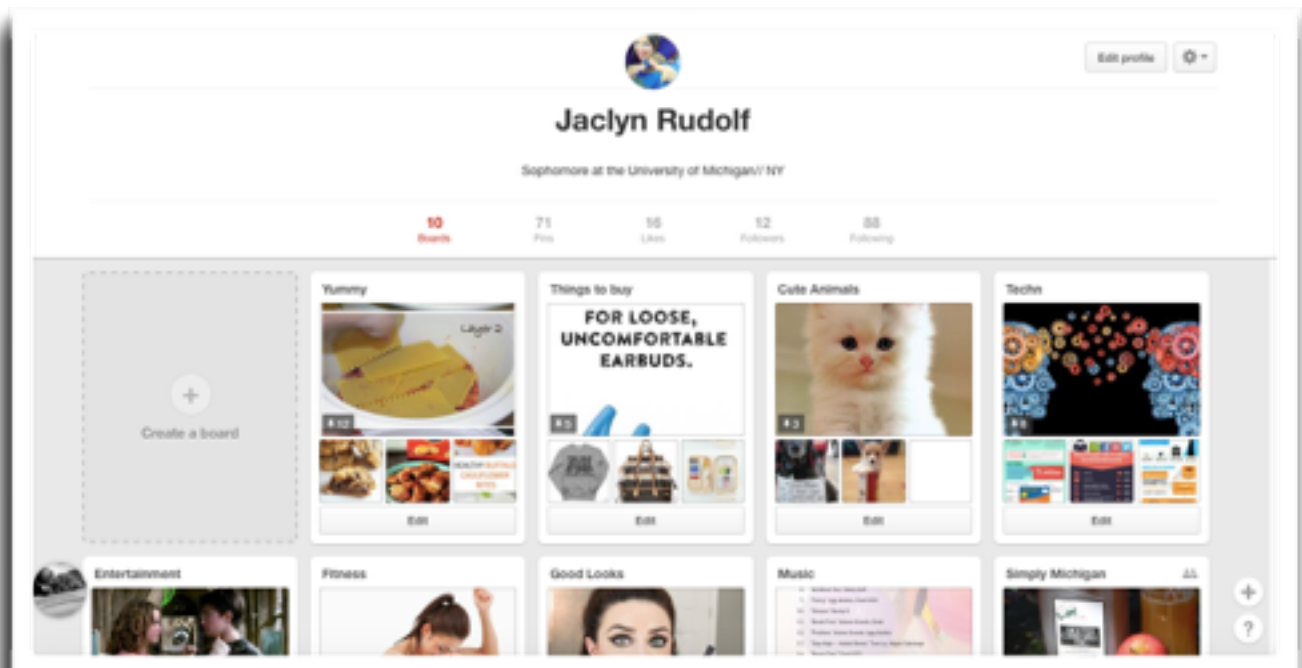
*Pinter***\$t**



**“70 % of social users  
turn to Pinterest  
specifically for  
inspiration on what to  
buy”**

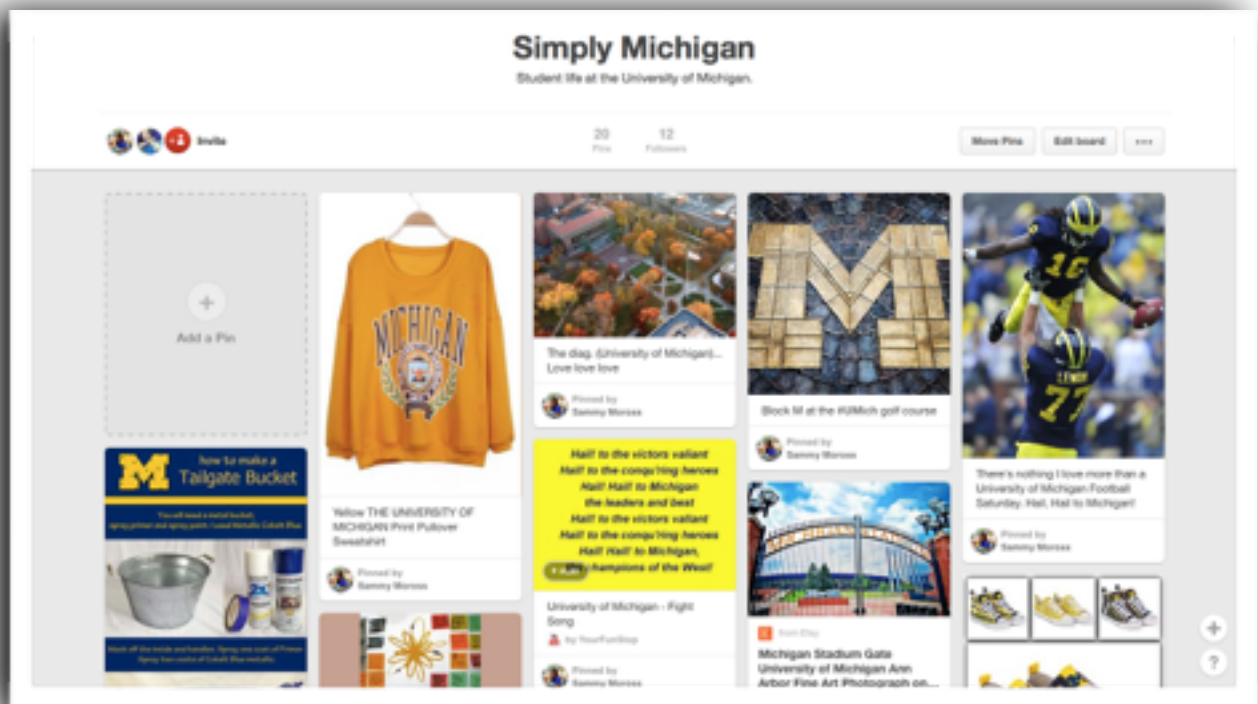
## **Pinterest With Business**

Pinterest is widely used in the business world, especially with marketing and advertising. Consequently, I was intrigued with joining Pinterest not only as a platform for enjoyment and making social connections, but to gain an understanding for the business aspect of how it is used, and hopefully use this knowledge in the future. Specifically, a local bag and jewelry store in my hometown (Bellmore, New York) uses a Pinterest account. While I have never used Pinterest in the past, I know a lot of people who have followed this store’s Pinterest account to keep up with sales, specials and new inventory. I am sure a lot of stores and small businesses use this as well, and having an account will give me easy access to this “hidden” information. As I progressed with my account on Pinterest, I became interested in the access and insight it provides so easily to technology in the business world. Unlike my past experiences with trying to learn about this field online, which mainly consisted of Googling and resulting in boring articles, Pinterest has a ton of infographics and interactive blog posts that not only are more engaging and attractive, but provide the same information that a regular article would.



## Goals

My initial goal for this project was to follow a ton of other people's pin boards that I like, appreciate and will gain something from. In addition, to build up my own board to the point where it not only reflects my interests, but attracts followers, hopefully even people I can make valuable connections with. I strived to browse the Pinterest world and find accounts that I can relate to and that interest me, and then follow these accounts. While I additionally hoped to accumulate a following, and did not reach this goal, I am still extremely satisfied with my interactions with Pinterest. I built up my own boards, and followed many other boards, both of which served to satisfy my hopes of taking away something meaningful from the site. Additionally, I was not left unsatisfied with the result of minimal followers, as my research from this report gave insight that that is typical of a Pinterest user with evidence to back it up (Gelley, 2015).



## Conclusion

Overall, my interactions with Pinterest were rewarding and meaningful. I will for sure continue to use Pinterest on my own time, both for leisure and practical purpose.



By: Jaclyn Rudolf



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