**Broad Goal**

Social Networking Sites (SNS) like Facebook and Google+ have introduced methods of “friend grouping” that theoretically afford users fine-grained control over with which of their “friends” users share their posted content. However, it remains unclear whether or not users can effectively utilize these friend groupings to partition the content they share in a way that respects their true intentions. Indeed, we suspect that users cannot and do not correctly anticipate the groupings they want prior to posting content. The ramifications of this lack of clairvoyance are two-fold: first, users might undermine the purpose of the grouping mechanisms; and second, users might devalue the utility of these grouping mechanisms. As a result, users either share sensitive content with unintended audiences or do not share the content at all—both undesirable results for users and the SNS.

As a first attempt at solving this eminent problem, we propose to run a study to empirically find a set of ideal default groupings that users can utilize to effectively share different types of content with different parts of their social graph on the SNS. To achieve our goal, we attempt to better understand the factors that prevent users from sharing content on SNS and identify the commonalities between groups of people with whom users do and do not want to share specific types of content. We believe that understanding these factors will help us determine an ideal set of default “friend” groupings and inform the design of tools that help users create better access control groups that respects their true intentions.

**Research Questions**

* What type of content do SNS users choose not to share? Why?
* What groups of “friends” discourage SNS users from sharing different types of content?
* Do the answers to the previous two questions inform a pattern that we can utilize to create better default groupings and/or build tools to help users self-generate better access control groupings?

**Approach**

We propose to run a 10-15 subject diary study of Facebook users who share a variety of content (posts, photos, messages) with their “friends.” We will recruit participants who post frequently on Facebook, but who also choose to not share some content because of privacy concerns (e.g. post at least once per day and choose not to share content at least once per day). Over the course of a week we will ask participants to keep a paper-based diary of all content they consider posting on Facebook, with an emphasis on content they do not post. Additionally, we will ask participants to record what stops them from posting—was it the thought of someone or a group of people seeing the content that stopped them?

At the end of the study, we will interview each participant and ask them detailed questions about the content of their diary entries, to obtain finer granularity insights into the participants’ thought processes as they chose not to share content. We will use this data to determine the underlying factors behind why Facebook users choose not to share content, which we hope will inform a set of default friend groupings that users would find useful to create better privacy policies with regards to targeted content sharing.