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Men, women, and Web 2.0 writing: Gender difference in Facebook composing

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Abstract

While the nature of composition on Facebook has become a common topic of interest in composition journals, how gender identification affects Facebook use has not been studied. This study gives an overview of differences between women and men in Facebook usage based on a large-scale survey of first-year composition students about their Facebook use. Among the findings of the survey are that women tend to have had Facebook profiles for longer, use Facebook more, and are more thoughtful about their Facebook use. The researcher uses these findings to suggest drawing on previous studies related to gender and composition in the study of Web 2.0 technologies in computers and writing literature. The findings also suggest an exploration of gender and other identity markers may be fruitful when using social network sites in first-year composition classes.

Keywords: social network sites (SNSs); social networking sites (SNSs); Facebook; composition; first-year composition (FYC); college writing; gender; social media

Gender studies is an important part of the field of composition. Studies that deal with gender and writing have been very influential to the field (see Shari J. Stenberg, 2013, for an overview). Gender and other aspects of identity are frequently mentioned in scholarship in computers and writing journals, and collections relevant to computers and writing often include several chapters related to gender (see, for example, Kristen L. Arola & Anne Frances Wysocki, 2012). In recent years, however, explorations of gender difference have tended to be integrated into larger arguments instead of being a separate subject of discussion. One consequence of this is that gender differences have not been explored in detail in computers and writing literature since the advent of Web 2.0. Multiple recent studies outside of composition studies have showed that there are several differences in the ways men and women use the internet (Linda A. Jackson, Kevin S. Ervin, Philip D. Gardner, & N. Schmitt, 2001; Tanja Carstensen, 2009; Eszter Hargittai, 2010; Mariea Hoy & George Milne, 2010; Victoria J. Rideout, Ulla G. Foehr, & Donald F. Roberts, 2010), but few recent studies in composition studies took up this subject. A more detailed look at Web 2.0 technologies—such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or Pinterest—may demonstrate that men and women are *composing* in different ways on these platforms and may serve to join the conversations of gender difference and composing in digital spaces.

Past work in composition studies and computers and writing scholarship has shown such a difference. Elisabeth A. Flynn (1988) pointed to the differences in composing practices between men and women 25 years ago in her article "Composing as a Woman." While this article has occasionally been "criticized for being too essentialist, for suggesting

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that all women share a common essence" (Lance Massey, 2003, p. 239), Flynn did point out ways in which gender might be a significant factor in how women and men approach composition, potentially contributing to patterns of difference in composing practices, even if individual women or men might not conform to a single gender stereotype. There may be reason to believe that differences in composing practices between men and women are common in online composing as well. This is supported by Gail E. Hawisher and Cynthia L. Selfe (2003) as they explored writing in distance learning classes. They found that men and women wrote differently as they approached the online composition assignments. Cynthia L. Selfe and Gail E. Hawisher (2004) again reiterated this point when they found that the women in their study tended to use computers for work-related activities whereas men more often used computers as "toys" (p. 219-220). Nancy K. Baym (2010) put it very succinctly when she wrote, "gender differences persist online" (p. 67). A return to questions of gender difference in how men and women are composing online may show that how such differences continue to persist and join these previous conversations. Such a return may also demonstrate how differences in identity construction more broadly affect the ways in which users compose in newer digital technologies.

This study looks at one particular online space to explore these potential differences across gender in composing practices online. The study draws on data from a 2011 survey of first-year composition (FYC) students about their Facebook use. This survey showed that male and female FYC students do not use Facebook in the same ways. This finding demonstrated the importance of gender when composing on Facebook, but it also had two larger implications. The first is that research about Facebook and FYC may not be fully exploring aspects of identity and how these aspects shape composing practices when integrating social network sites (SNSs) into FYC classes. The second implication is that gender continues to be an important consideration when exploring composing done online. Future research may find it useful to consider gender specifically when looking at composing practices in Web 2.0 technologies.[1]

Composition scholars should draw on past scholarship to acknowledge the importance of composing practices in Web 2.0. In the data that follows, Facebook is used as an example of how gender may affect composing practices online.

1. The Importance of Facebook in FYC

Facebook is a ubiquitous communication medium for modern American students, much like telephones, email, chat, and cell phones have been in the past. Facebook has more than "a billion monthly active users" (Facebook, 2013), and some studies have suggested that as many as 99% of college students use Facebook (Reynol Junco, 2012). Considering the potential for Facebook as a rhetorical space, to overlook instructional possibilities for Facebook in FYC classes would be truly unfortunate (Stephanie Vie, 2008; Amber Buck, 2012; Courtney Patrick, 2013).

There is substantial reason to believe that Facebook can be an important tool in FYC classes. Facebook usage involves a number of literacy practices. These literacy practices are part of a complex constellation of skills called the "literacy of the screen" (CCCC, 2004). Together the "literacy of the screen" and the more traditional "literacy of print" work together to "enhance learning" (CCCC, 2004). That is to say that students must learn to write both in print and digital environments to be fully literate. There was clear support for the importance of digital literacy in the CCCC statement and support for the use of Facebook in particular across many publications related to composition (Vie, 2008; Jane Mathison Fife, 2010; Gina Maranto & Matt Barton, 2010; Deb Balzhiser et al., 2011; Kevin Eric DePew, 2011; Jean Reid, 2011; Ru-Chu Shih, 2011; Buck, 2012; Timothy J. Briggs, 2013; David T. Coad, 2013; Patrick, 2013; John Alberti, 2013). The main argument for using Facebook in composition classes was that Facebook served as a good example when developing critical (Vie, 2008; Maranto & Barton, 2010; Buck, 2012; Coad, 2013; Patrick, 2013) and rhetorical (Kevin Eric DePew & Susan K. Miller-Cochran, 2010; DePew, 2011) literacies.

Even if this support did not exist, there is one point that the teachers of writing should not overlook: our students are using Facebook to compose. As noted above, Facebook use is nearly ubiquitous among college students. Facebook is, at least partially, a space of composition: students are composing profiles, status updates, comments, and various multimodal texts that include pictures and links in addition to alphabetic text. While the written products may look very

[1] It is important to note here that the results of this study are not meant to represent all men or all women or to suggest that men or women "are" a certain way on Facebook. The results that follow are how a group of people are "doing" being a man or a woman on Facebook. That is to say, this is how first-year composition students are engaging in a specific kind of gender performance in a specific online space (Judith Butler, 2007). These results suggest a part of these students' identity construction online—a construction that would also include race, age, nationality, economic status, sexual preference, and so on—and what follows should be read in that context.

different than the texts traditionally produced in composition classes, previous research has showed that students do engage in a form of process writing on Facebook and that students are very aware of things like audience and rhetorical purpose on Facebook (Ryan P. Shepherd, 2015). This connection between Facebook and composition may serve as an entryway into discussions about process, audience, or purpose and, in turn, exploring these concepts in class may help students engage more critically with digital literacies on sites such as Facebook (Patrick, 2013; Coad, 2013). Drawing on students' various uses of Facebook may enable students to think more broadly about what they write, how, and for what purposes.

With this information in mind, Facebook was chosen as an example of the "literacy of the screen" for use in this study. It is ubiquitous among FYC students, has been previously studied in the literature, and offers several different types of digital literacy practices.

1.1. Review of literature

There is a wealth of research on both Facebook and composition and Facebook and gender. While there is not yet any overlap between these two topics, both bodies of literature offer useful background for this study.

1.2. Facebook and composition

In the past five years, Facebook became a relatively popular topic of discussion in scholarly publications related to composition. The authors of these publications generally took three approaches (with a great deal of overlap) when looking at Facebook: the authors looked at Facebook from a theoretical perspective, explored constructs or processes such as identity construction; they looked at Facebook as a tool to build assignments in composition classes; or they looked in depth at literacy practices on Facebook.

One of the earliest articles connecting Facebook and composition was Vie (2008). Vie put forth the idea of a new digital divide in composition: one between teachers and students. She suggested that teachers may not be as tech savvy as their students in certain areas, but that teachers could use platforms that students were using as a means to teach important critical literacy skills. She focused on SNSs generally, but Facebook was one of her primary examples. Maranto and Barton (2010), Coad (2013), and Patrick (2013) followed closely in Vie's (2008) footsteps, calling for Facebook as a site to explore critical literacies. Patrick (2013) ended her article with a suggestion for classroom activities related to Facebook: analyzing profiles and friends lists, exploring posting processes, and looking at how audience plays into posting. Several other articles also explored similar activities as they played out in the composition or writing classrooms. Fife (2010) took an early look at using Facebook to teach rhetorical analysis, Reid (2011) looked at using Facebook as an informal space for writing in a writing class, Shih (2011) explored the use of Facebook as a space for peer review with second-language writers, Balzhiser et al. (2011) gave an in-depth account of a multi-year study of an assignment to study Facebook pages in composition classes, and Coad (2013) detailed using Facebook in composition classes to teach critical literacy.

DePew and Miller-Cochran (2010), DePew (2011), and Buck, 2012 all explored literacy practices on SNSs and all three touched on Facebook in particular. DePew and Miller-Cochran (2010) interviewed several high-level college students who were second language writers about their literacy practices on SNSs and found that they engaged in a great deal of complex rhetorical choices as they engaged with others on SNSs. DePew (2011) extended the previous study by conducting similar interviews with "developmental" second-language writers and found that these students were engaging in similar complex rhetorical movies. Buck, 2012 documented a single student's literacy practices, noting that "Viewing this rich literate activity as part of students' everyday lives will give us a greater understanding of the literacy experiences they bring with them to the classroom" (p. 35).

1.3. Facebook and gender

The significance of gender in Facebook use has not been touched on in composition journals, but it is a question about which a wealth of research has been published in other fields such as psychology (Tiffancy A. Pempek, Yevdokiya A. Yermolayeva, & Sandra A. Calvert, 2009; Francis T. McAndrew & Hye Sun Jeong, 2012; Reynol Junco, 2013), education (Bernadett Koles & Peter Nagy, 2012), gender studies (Carstensen, 2009), sociology (Hargittai, 2010), and advertising (Hoy & Milne, 2010). There were also several articles that dealt with gender and SNS use or internet

use more broadly that are relevant to this study (Jackson et al., 2001; Mike Thelwall, 2008; Shanyang Zhao, Sherri Grasmuck, & Jason Martin, 2008; Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010; Jessica Rose, Susan Mackey-Kallis, Len Shyles, Kelly Barry, Danielle Biagini, Colleen Hart, & Lauren Jack, 2012). This research both informed and reinforced the wide range of uses Facebook has.

Jackson et al. (2001) stated that men and women have had differences in general internet use since the inception of the Web. Their study of college-aged men and women found that both genders tended to spend the same amount of time online, but women tended to email and men tended to surf. The authors attributed this to women tending to be more "interpersonally oriented" and men tending to be more "information/task oriented" (p. 368). While this generality may not hold true for all men and women, of course, this tendency may be reflected in differences in Facebook use.

Carstensen (2009) found that the significance of gender has changed in the era of Web 2.0, but there are still clear differences. Hargittai (2010) came to a similar conclusion. She noted that originally, differences online could be attributed to access: men had more access to internet use through their jobs early on. This is no longer the case, but generally, men still spend more time online than women. Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts (2010) found that this is the case even among children and adolescents. Generally, men started spending more time online in their teen years. However, the researchers also found that generally teenage women spent more time on SNSs than teenage men, despite the fact that both went to the sites regularly.

Other studies found that women spend more time on Facebook than men (Hoy & Milne, 2010; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012). There were also several studies that showed other differences in usage. Hoy and Milne (2010) found that women disclosed more personal information in the "about me" section of Facebook and were a bit more concerned than men about privacy on the site. McAndrew and Jeong (2012) found that women were "more likely to use profile pictures for impression management" and "engaged in more online family activity" (p. 2359). Rose et al. (2012) found that men and women approached Facebook profile pictures very differently. They found that men tended to show active, dominant, independent, and sentimental styles in their photos while women tended to show more attractive and dependent styles.

Junco (2013) presented research that is probably the most relevant to the purpose of the current study. He found that women were "more likely to post photos, tag photos, view photos, comment on content, and post status updates" on Facebook (p. 2333), but he used gender differences to argue that in general, faculty needed to proceed carefully when using SNSs, as some students may struggle and may be at a disadvantage. He encourageed teachers who used SNSs in the classroom to take time to explain them, make profiles in class, discuss social moves on the sites used, and discuss class expectations for use.

Facebook has been studied extensively in composition journals, and Facebook and gender have been touched on in several disciplines outside of composition. However, the importance of gender in influencing composing practices on Facebook has not been addressed in composition studies.

2. Methods

The development of the survey of FYC students about their Facebook use began in the fall of 2010. The purpose of the survey was to learn about FYC students' composing practices on Facebook, what activities they were engaged in most often on Facebook, and whether or not they saw a connection between Facebook and FYC. The initial questionnaire was based on scholarly research into Facebook and was reviewed by three prominent composition scholars. A pilot of the survey was conducted in Spring 2011 with 30 FYC students. The survey was revised based on student responses and was piloted again in the Summer 2011. This second pilot was slightly different than the first. In this pilot, the survey was only given to three FYC students, but the researcher sat beside the students as they took the survey and asked the students questions about what they thought the questions meant, where they were confused, and how they interpreted the answers to the questions. The survey was again revised based on these student responses. Before the survey was distributed online for full-scale data collection, it was again reviewed by three prominent scholars.

The full-scale survey (see appendix) was sent out in September 2011 to FYC students at the researcher's institution. Additionally, the survey was circulated at other institutions through contacts at those institutions and through the national listserv for writing program administrators (WPA-L). When the survey was closed at the end of October 2011, 474 completed responses had been collected. Most of the respondents were from large, doctoral-granting institutions (75.05%). All of the respondents were currently enrolled in an FYC class. The students were largely freshmen in their first semester (75.3%), and many of them had not taken a composition course before the one in which they were currently enrolled (75.9%).

Table 1
General Facebook use.

Question	Response		% of group	χ^2 value	p value	Cohen's d
Had a Facebook profile	Women	More than 1 year	94.4%	4.142	.042	0.187
	Men	More than 1 year	89.3%			
Facebook use per day	Women	More than 1 hour	58.6%	9.868	.002	0.298
	Men	More than 1 hour	43.9%			
Feeling about time spent on Facebook	Women	Too much time	68.3%	20.010	.000	0.425
	Men	Too much time	47.7%			
Posts per day on Facebook	Women	Twice per day or more	28.8%	8.158	.004	0.273
	Men	Twice per day or more	17.3%			

FYC may mean many things at different institutions. While it would be impossible to clarify which type of FYC each of the respondents was taking, the survey did collect data about their classes, so some general information is known. Slightly more than half of the students were either in the first part of a two-part composition sequence or a single stand-alone composition course (55.84%). In addition, many of the students were in the second part of a two-part composition sequence (22.29%) or an accelerated or honors composition class (14.07%).

To allow for simple chi-square analysis, questions with more than two responses had the responses divided into two response groups. Each of these response groups was analyzed against the survey question regarding gender, and the number of responses for each gender was compared to determine if there was a statistically significant difference.

3. Findings

Gender was shown to have a statistically significant effect on more questions and often with more significant differences than any other independent variable. Students who self-identified as men and those who self-identified as women differed in a statistically significant way on 28 of the 78 items dealing with Facebook use from the survey[2]—more than any other demographic question. In the tables that follow, only items with statistically significant p values are reported.

Table 1 shows that general Facebook usage tended to be different for men and women. There is a slight but statistically significant difference in how long students have had their Facebook profiles. Women (94.4%) in the study were more likely than men (89.3%) to have had their profile for more than one year. Women (58.6%) were also much more likely to use Facebook for more than one hour per day on average currently than men are (43.9%). The third question shows that women (68.3%) were also much more likely than men (47.7%) to believe that they spend too much time on Facebook, although both groups have a high percentage of people who believed that they use Facebook too much. Far less than a majority of both men and women posted to Facebook twice a day or more, but women (28.8%) were more likely to do so than men (17.3%).

Table 2 shows general posting practices on Facebook. While both men and women in the study were fairly likely to post immediately after an event has occurred, women (55.5%)were statistically more likely to do so than men (42.3%). Women (54.9%) were also more likely than men (39.2%) to think about posting later if they cannot post to Facebook immediately after an event and to think about posting to Facebook more often per day. While exactly half of the men said that they thought about posting at least once per day, 61.3% of women said that they did so. Women were also much more likely to write status updates in their heads than men. Well over half of both groups stated that they wrote status updates in their heads before posting at least sometimes, but a much higher percentage of women (72.2%) stated that they did so than did men (57.8%).

When asked about the frequency at which they did certain activities on Facebook (see Table 3), women in the study were more likely than men to make status updates, read friends' pages, and post self-made media content to their

[2] All measures of significance were calculated using a Pearson Chi-Square test in SPSS version 20. There were 474 respondents total to the survey, but individual questions varied from a high of 468 responses to a low of 437 responses. All of the questions from the survey are included in the appendix.

Table 2
Posting on Facebook.

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
Post immediately after an event has occurred	Women	At least sometimes	55.5%	7.901	.005	0.265
	Men	At least sometimes	42.3%			
Think to post later when I cannot post immediately	Women	At least sometimes	54.9%	11.074	.001	0.317
	Men	At least sometimes	39.2%			
Think about posting on Facebook	Women	Once per day or more	61.3%	5.863	.015	0.227
	Men	Once per day or more	50.0%			
Write status updates in head before posting	Women	At least sometimes	72.2%	10.121	.001	0.306
	Men	At least sometimes	57.8%			

Table 3
Frequency of activities on Facebook.

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
Making status updates	Women	Half the time or more	37.3%	4.124	.042	0.195
	Men	Half the time or more	28.2%			
Reading friends' pages	Women	Half the time or more	79.9%	6.644	.010	0.247
	Men	Half the time or more	59.2%			
Posting self-made media content to your profile	Women	Half the time or more	28.6%	12.680	.000	0.351
	Men	Half the time or more	14.4%			

Table 4
Profile pictures.

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
Consider various options for profile picture	Women	Agree	93.1%	21.123	.000	0.434
	Men	Agree	78.2%			
Frequency of changing profile picture	Women	At least monthly	52.7%	20.434	.000	0.445
	Men	At least monthly	31.2%			

Table 5
Importance of photo features.

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
How flattering or attractive the picture is	Women	Very important or Important	81.4%	33.300	.000	0.569
	Men	Very important or Important	56.0%			
How well the picture represents personality	Women	Very important or Important	80.6%	14.346	.000	0.367
	Men	Very important or Important	64.5%			

profile. Women stated that they made status updates half of the time they were on Facebook or more (37.3%) in higher numbers than did men (28.2%). Women (79.9%) were also much more likely than men (59.2%) to read friends' pages. Women (28.6%) were more likely to post self-made media content, such as videos or photos, than were men (14.4%), but both groups had relatively low percentages of people who engaged in this activity at least half of the time they logged into Facebook.

Women and men in the study had different attitudes toward choosing and changing profile pictures on Facebook (see Table 4). Women (93.1%) were more likely than men (78.2%) to say that they considered various options for their profile pictures when selecting which one to use on Facebook, although it should be noted that both groups agreed that they did this at a very high rate. Slightly more than half of women (52.7%) of women stated that they changed their profile picture at least once a month, while less than one-third of men (31.2%) stated that they did so.

Men and women in the study also had different reactions to the features of pictures (see Table 5). Women (81.4%) were more likely than men (56.0%) to consider "how flattering or attractive" a picture was to be "important" or "very

Table 6
Privacy settings.

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
Adjust privacy settings to limit who can see profile	Women	Yes	93.5%	20.994	.000	0.430
	Men	Yes	79.0%			
Adjust privacy settings to exclude Facebook friends from seeing certain material	Women	Yes	41.1%	6.225	.013	0.242
	Men	Yes	29.6%			

Table 7
Importance of post content when deciding whether or not to post.

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
How personal the information is	Women	Very important or Important	82.6%	14.496	.000	0.368
	Men	Very important or Important	66.8%			
How funny/ interesting the information is	Women	Very important or Important	66.9%	7.451	.006	0.269
	Men	Very important or Important	78.8%			

Table 8
Audience.

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
Importance of potential employers as an audience	Women	Very important or Important	70.1%	6.678	.010	0.250
	Men	Very important or Important	58.2%			
How often close friends view content	Women	At least sometimes	98.4%	4.150	.042	0.189
	Men	At least sometimes	95.1%			

important" to whether or not they chose to upload the picture. Women (80.6%) were also more likely than men (64.5%) to consider how well a pictured represented their personality to be "important" or "very important" to their decision to upload the picture.

There were statistically significant differences in the ways that men and women in the study handled privacy settings as well (see Table 6). Both men and women were very likely to state that they adjusted their privacy settings, but the percentage was much higher for women (93.5%) than men (79.0%). Women (41.1%) were also more likely than men (29.6%) to state that they adjusted their privacy settings to exclude some of their Facebook friends from seeing certain content as well.

Question 40 in the survey asked students to rank the importance of various concerns when "deciding whether or not to include something" on their Facebook pages (see Appendix). Many of the possible responses did not have statistically significant differences for men and women, but two did (see Table 7). Women (82.6%) were more likely than men (66.8%) to consider how personal information was to be "important" or "very important." However, men (78.8%) were more likely than women (66.9%) to consider how funny or interesting something was to be "important" or "very important."

There were two main differences across gender with regards to Facebook audience (see Table 8). The first was that women (70.1%) were more likely than men (58.2%) to believe that how potential employers would react to their content on Facebook was an "important" or "very important" factor in deciding whether or not to post content. The second difference was small but statistically significant. Women (98.4%) were more likely than men (95.1%) to believe that their close friends viewed their Facebook content at least sometimes.

Table 9
Types of composition.

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
Writing a comment online	Women	Is type of composition	18.4%	13.511	.000	0.354
	Men	Is type of composition	33.7%			
Making status updates and wall posts on Facebook	Women	Is type of composition	16.4%	12.170	.000	0.335
	Men	Is type of composition	30.4%			
Making a profile on Facebook	Women	Is type of composition	16.4%	10.511	.001	0.311
	Men	Is type of composition	29.3%			
Manipulating a photograph	Women	Is type of composition	32.0%	5.485	.019	0.226
	Men	Is type of composition	42.9%			

Table 10
Categorization of Facebook.

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
Formal writing	Women	Is a type of	9.8%	4.834	.028	0.209
	Men	Is a type of	16.8%			
Composition	Women	Is a type of	11.7%	8.828	.003	0.283
	Men	Is a type of	22.3%			
Argument	Women	Is a type of	24.2%	9.743	.002	0.301
	Men	Is a type of	38.0%			

While women were more likely to do or believe certain things about Facebook in much of the above content, the percentages shifted when questions began comparing Facebook to composition. Men were more likely to see connections between Facebook and composition generally. Table 9 looks at question 46 from the survey (see Appendix): "Which of the following activities do you consider to be a type of 'composition'?" The question asked students to select each category that corresponded with their definition of composition. Men were more likely than women to see writing an online comment (33.7% vs. 18.4%, respectively), making a status update or wall post on Facebook (30.4% vs. 16.4%), making a Facebook profile (29.3% vs. 16.4%), and manipulating a photograph (42.9% vs. 32%) as being a type of composition.

When the question was flipped (see Table 10), the results were similar. Men were more likely than women to categorize Facebook as a type of formal writing (16.8% vs. 9.8% respectively), composition (22.3% vs. 11.7%), and argument (38% vs. 24.2%).

4. Discussion

The fact that men and women in this study used Facebook differently was something that should not have been surprising. This has been shown directly in relation to Facebook in several articles in the past (Pempek et al., 2009; Hoy & Milne, 2010; Koles & Nagy, 2012; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012; Junco, 2013). However, this difference has not been explored in articles in composition studies. The results from the tables above offer several interesting suggestions about gender and Facebook use that may be relevant to compositionists. In particular, men and women seem to be approaching Facebook with different rhetorical purposes, a different view of audience, and with a different rhetorical stance.

5. Rhetorical purpose

Speaking broadly, women have had Facebook accounts for longer and use their accounts more often (see Table 1). These findings echo previous research on Facebook and SNS use (Hoy & Milne, 2010; Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012; Junco, 2013). But this alone does not suggest much about how men and women are using Facebook for different rhetorical purposes. The data in Table 2 begin to offer a clearer view of the difference:

women in the study were more likely to think about (and possibly reflect on) their Facebook activity. Women may think about posting more often than men and consider what they post more carefully. This point is of particular use to composition teachers who may be interested in reflective writing or writing about writing models. Facebook may serve as a useful example of past writing for both women and men in first-year composition classes—although it appeared that it would be more likely to resonate with female students than male simply because women tended to spend more time on Facebook. But the data in Table 2 also has a deeper suggestion. The fact that women appeared to think about their Facebook use more often implies that they are likely to take their use more seriously than men. There seems to be a deeper need to consider their activity before posting among many women using Facebook than among many men. These data offered a suggestion of a different rhetorical purpose, but they do not suggest what that difference may be.

According to the survey results, women also appeared to engage in a wider array of activities on Facebook more often than men. Again, this echoes previous findings about Facebook (Pempek et al., 2009; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012; Junco, 2013).The survey results show that women post status updates, read friends' pages, and upload self-made media (such as videos and pictures) more often than men. It's important to note here that there were no activities that men engaged in more often than women at a statistically significant rate in the survey. Obviously, this furthers the point above about women spending more time on Facebook and being more active when they are on, but I believe that some other conclusions can be drawn here. The three main forms of written communication on Facebook are status updates, comments, and chat. Men and women did not differ at a statistically significant rate when it came to the frequency of posting comments or engaging in chats. Perhaps this is due to the nature of the *kind* of writing. A status update is more akin to traditional forms of writing: it is an announcement, sending out information to a large group of people at one time. A comment is more akin to a conversation: the writer is replying to one person (or a small group who have also replied). A chat is even more intimate: it is a *private* one-on-one conversation with another person. Women in the study posted status updates but did not post comments or chat more often than men. These data may suggest that a higher percentage of women are using Facebook as a platform to communicate broadly with many people (more akin to a blog). This is, of course, in addition to the more intimate conversations one would get with comments and chatting. These data offer a clearer picture of how the rhetorical purposes of men and women differ on Facebook. They suggest that women tend to use Facebook as a means of communicating with a broad audience in addition to more personal communication, whereas men tend to use Facebook primarily for the personal communication.

The importance of broad social connection on Facebook to the women in this study is further demonstrated in Table 3. These data show that the women surveyed read one another's Facebook pages more frequently than men, which suggests a higher engagement with friends on Facebook for a higher number of women. Men may not see a need to read friends' Facebook pages if they see direct, personal communication as the primary purpose of Facebook.

The final activity that women in the study engaged in more frequently than men is posting self-made media content, such as pictures and video. This is particularly interesting when considering Facebook as a site of multi-modal composition. More pictures and videos suggests that women may be using Facebook as a more visual medium than men may be, and perhaps this may allow some students to connect with ideas of multi-modal composing more easily. Tables 4 and 5 reiterate this point by showing that women in the study were more mindful about posting pictures on Facebook than men were. The women surveyed were considering more options for pictures, changing pictures more frequently, and considering both the visual appeal and the representation of the photos more than the men were when posting. Similar findings were also reported in McAndrew and Jeong's (2012) study. These data seem to suggest that many women may be making visual arguments with their photos. This could be an effort at "controlling their own images online" because of "experiences with web sites designed to objectify rather than personify the female image" (Christine Tulley & Kristine Blair, 2003, p. 58). Gail E. Hawisher and Patricia A. Sullivan (1999) also explore gender construction complexities that women face when crafting a visual identity online. Jen Almjeld and Kristine Blair (2012) further demonstrate the complexity of visual gender construction in SNSs. These complexities could be explored in the context of Facebook and similar sites by first-year composition students as a means of exploring how images are used rhetorically.

Table 7 suggested an additional difference in rhetorical purpose on Facebook: women in the study were trying to be more personal and men were trying to be funnier. A look at the actual posts themselves may show a different perception than what the students perceive they are doing when posting content. It could be that these are simply two ways of connecting with friends through Facebook.

One possible reason for the differences in rhetorical purpose may be partially explained by Jackson et al. (2001). The authors state that women tend to be generally more "interpersonally oriented" online while men tend to be more "information/task oriented" (p. 368). This may help to explain why it appears that women in the study attempted to appeal to a wide social network in addition to personal interactions, while men tended to focus more on personal interactions alone.

6. Audience

It appeared that women in the study were much more aware of audience on Facebook. Table 6 demonstrates differences between men and women in regards to privacy settings on Facebook. Women were more likely to adjust their privacy settings and were more likely to do so to exclude some of their Facebook friends. This is in line with Hoy and Milne's (2010) study that found women were more concerned with privacy on Facebook. A greater awareness of audience may encourage a greater awareness of how, why, and when shared information may be viewed. This may also tie into Jackson et al.'s (2001) view that women are more "interpersonally oriented" online. If this is the case, it would make sense that women would be more guarded about their more personal information. Interpersonal interactions were more likely to be sensitive than information distributing or task-focused activities. As noted before, women were posting more text and media content on Facebook. Perhaps posting a larger amount of information may have also made them more guarded about that information. It may also be that because women spend more time on Facebook, they were simply more familiar with the settings.

A more direct representation of the differences between men and women in regards to audience is shown in Table 8. Women in the study stated that they are more concerned with potential employers as an audience for their Facebook content than men were. This seems to show that women tend to have a greater awareness of people beyond the immediate audience of Facebook friends than men do. This may also help to account for adjustments to privacy settings above in Table 6. This difference in audience could also simply be due to the fact that women post more often on Facebook: posting more often (and posting more personal information) may put women at a higher risk of posting something inappropriate.

7. Rhetorical stance

Men and women in the study appeared to approach Facebook with different rhetorical purposes, but they also appeared to view Facebook through the lens of a different rhetorical stance. Tables 9 and 10 show a very interesting and drastic reversal in responses from previous data. The majority of responses above show that women in the study were more likely to engage in certain activities or to think about Facebook activity. But when it comes to directly tying Facebook to composition, men in the study were more likely to see the connection. Men were more likely than women to see an online comment, a Facebook status update, a Facebook profile, and manipulating a photo as types of composition. They were also more likely to see Facebook as a type of formal writing, composition, and argument. Among the options for these two questions, the options in which men were more likely to see the connection are those which are most closely related to Facebook and composition: Men were more likely to see a Facebook status or a Facebook profile as a type of composition and were more likely to say that Facebook falls into the category of composition generally. This is particularly interesting when considering that women in the study wrote more often on Facebook and thought about what they were writing more often. This difference may be related to what women actually *do* on Facebook. As noted above, women in the study were more likely to spend more time posting and thinking about photos and other non-textual media content. While many see a connection between this type of content and composition, this may be a larger stretch than seeing a connection between only written content on Facebook and written content in composition classes. It appears that men and women in the study were viewing Facebook from a different rhetorical stance—one that results in fewer women connecting Facebook with composition.

As noted above, women in the study tended to spend more time on Facebook than men did. Because women generally spent more time on Facebook than men, some people may conclude that spending more time on Facebook might make a user less likely to see Facebook and composition as connected. The results in the survey do not suggest that this explanation is the case. A comparison of those who spend more than one hour

on Facebook per day and those who spend less than one hour shows that there was no statistically significant difference in their responses to the above questions with one exception. Students who spent more time on Facebook were less likely to see Facebook activity as a type of argument. The reasons why gender affects perceptions of Facebook as composition are not entirely clear. Future research may be able to clarify the reasons that this is the case.

8. Conclusion

Men and women in this study tended to use Facebook differently. This is not surprising and has been shown to be the case in several places outside of composition (Pempek et al., 2009; Hoy & Milne, 2010; Koles & Nagy, 2012; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012; Junco, 2013). Gender has been an important part of composition studies for several decades and has been a fixture in computers and writing journals since the early age of the internet. Scholars should draw on this scholarship as they approach Web 2.0 technologies and explore how gender affects composing practices in social networking environments.

This article has implications beyond the expanded study of gender and composing in Web 2.0. There are likely to be differences in other demographics and identity markers as well when it comes to composing on Facebook and other SNSs. As composition teachers, it is essential for us to keep differences in usage in mind—even differences across individuals—when attempting to bring Facebook into the composition classroom. While the focus here is on the diversity of usage across gender, there are also differences in usage across age, year in university, language, and attitude toward writing within the survey data. Certainly, other factors also affect usage—many of these factors may be very individualistic and not tied to a certain group. Students may not have been aware that not everyone uses Facebook in the same way that they do. Exploring these differences can facilitate an entry point into discussion of critical literacies as discussed in Vie (2008), Maranto and Barton (2010), Coad (2013) and Patrick (2013). This discussion of critical literacies is crucial to implementation, not only to further illuminate differences in Facebook usage but also to begin a conversation about rhetorical purposes, attention to audience, and rhetorical stance. Students may not be aware of the rhetorical choices they are making in their Facebook use and how these choices relate to the audience that they have crafted. Exploring these choices is absolutely paramount to understanding Facebook use in the context of composition.

Junco (2013) provided a good general overview of recommendations for Facebook use in college classes, and several authors have provided examples of how Facebook might be used in composition classes in particular (Fife, 2010; Shih, 2011; Reid, 2011; Balzhiser et al., 2011; Coad, 2013; Patrick, 2013). These are good starting points when considering how to use Facebook in a composition class. As teachers move forward when considering using Facebook in their classes, they should keep in mind potential differences across gender and consider that there may be many other differences in usage as well.

First-year composition teachers should take into account how gender is constructed and how gender may influence a writer's rhetorical purpose, perception of audience, or rhetorical stance when considering how to include new or different types of writing in the classroom. Facebook is an important part of the "literacy of the screen" (CCCC, 2004) and can serve as a useful starting point to conversations about critical computer literacies (Vie, 2008; Maranto & Barton, 2010; Coad, 2013; Patrick, 2013). Including gender as an explicit part of the critical computer literacy discussion is important to ensure that the needs of first-year composition students are being met.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2015.11.002.

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