Supplementing access to social capital over time: Computer-mediated communication competence for social-resource development / Brandon C. Bouchillon

Abstract: Social capital has been declining in America for the better part of a century, as citizens now find themselves connected to fewer people and resources. But computer-based modes of social contact have at the same time opened up new frontiers for expanding and developing personal relationships online. A two-wave U.S. web survey was used to examine the importance of computer-mediated communication (CMC) competence for social-resource development, measured in terms of occupational prestige. CMC competence related to acquiring more total resources over time. It also contributed to accessing a wider range of resources, and having more valuable connections on average. When CMC competence was broken down into subscale measures, computer-based motivation contributed to total resources and range in resources, while computer-based attentiveness related to developing better resources. Findings speak to the value of CMC competence for social capital, and the waning influence of interpersonal competence in general.

I ought to put down that phone but I phub nevertheless: Examining the predictors of phubbing behavior / Frank M. Schneider & Selina Hitzfeld

Abstract: Smartphones are ubiquitous and frequently used in co-present interactions. This behavior is often seen as inappropriate and thus has been termed phubbing, compromising the words “phone” and “snubbing.” Although being a worldwide phenomenon, little is known about what predicts phubbing behavior in the first place. Drawing on injunctive norms (i.e., what ought to be done), the study’s aim was to shed light on the relationship between mobile phone norms (MPN) and phubbing behavior. Furthermore, the role of being permanently online/permanently connected (POPC) and fear of missing out (FoMO), reflecting approach and avoidance orientations respectively, as additional predictors and moderators was investigated. As expected, the findings of an online survey (N = 278) supported the assumption that MPN were negatively related to phubbing behavior. Moreover, results showed that both FoMo and POPC were significantly positively connected to phubbing behavior but did not play significant moderating roles concerning the norm–phubbing relationship.
“This gig is not for women”: Gender stereotyping in online hiring / Hernan Galperin
   Abstract: This study examines gender segregation in the context of the so-called gig economy. In particular, it explores the role that stereotypes about male and female occupations play in sorting men and women into different jobs in an online freelance marketplace. The findings suggest that gender stereotypes are particularly salient in online hiring because employers typically contract for short-term, relatively low-value jobs based on limited information about job applicants. These conditions trigger the use of cognitive shortcuts about intrinsic gender characteristics linked to different skills and occupations. The results corroborate that female candidates are less likely to be hired for male-typed jobs (e.g., software development) but more likely to be hired for female-typed jobs (e.g., writing and translation) than equally qualified male candidates. Further, the study investigates three mechanisms predicted to attenuate the female penalty in male-typed jobs. The penalty is found to be self-reinforcing, as it perpetuates gender imbalances in worker activity across job categories that strengthen the sex-typing of occupations.

Technological addiction in context: The influence of perceived neighborhood social disorder on the extensive use and addiction to the smartphone / Juan Herrero, Andrea Torres, Pep Vivas, & Alberto Urueña
   Abstract: After more than a decade of research on Smartphone addiction, there is currently empirical evidence on the main sociodemographic, psychological and psychosocial correlates of this type of behavioral addiction. However, research in this field has not yet paid sufficient attention to the influence that the social context may have on Smartphone addiction, an aspect that has been frequently pointed out by investigations on both substance and behavioral addictions. The objective of this research was to analyze the influence of the social context - through the perceived social disorder in the neighborhood - on the extensive use and addiction to the Smartphone in a representative national sample of 3619 Spanish users. The results of the multiple linear regression analyses showed that, after statistically controlling for a set of sociodemographic, psychological and psychosocial correlates, a specific contextual effect was detected: higher levels of perceived neighborhood social disorder were associated with higher levels of both Smartphone extensive use and Smartphone addiction. These results highlight the need to incorporate the influence of the social context as a relevant explanatory element of Smartphone extensive use and addiction.

Measuring Twitter use: Validating survey-based measures / Michael Henderson, Ke Jiang, Martin Johnson, & Lance Porter
   Abstract: An important challenge for research on social media use is to relate users’ activity on these platforms to user characteristics, such as demographics. Surveys allow researchers
to measure these characteristics, but may be subject to measurement error in self-reported social media use. We compare survey responses to observed behavior in order to assess the validity of self-reported frequency of posting to Twitter, retweeting content, sharing photos, sharing videos, and sending direct messages. Additionally, we examine correlations between self-reported and observed behavior across a range of timeframes, from one month to 114 months before the survey. We find variation in the quality of self-reports across types of Twitter activity. We also find that self-reports about posting and retweeting tend to reflect recent activity, while self-reports about other activities tend to reflect behavior over a longer span. Furthermore, we find that two characteristics of experience with the platform – the length of time that a person has been active on Twitter and how much their activity on the platform changes over time – predict individual-level discrepancies between survey response and observed behavior, but these discrepancies cancel out when averaged across individuals. Nevertheless, other sources of bias remain. Taken together, our results indicate that while surveys are quite useful for collecting characteristics of social media users, relying on self-reported social media behavior distorts inferential results from what is found when relying on observed social media behavior.

Beyond the in-person interview? How interview quality varies across in-person, telephone, and Skype interviews / David R. Johnson, Christopher P. Scheitle, & Elaine Howard Ecklund

Abstract  Conducting qualitative interviews in-person is usually presented as the gold standard, with other modes being seen as inferior. There have been arguments, however, that remote interviews, such as those conducted using the telephone or video conference technologies, should be seen as equivalent to or even superior to in-person interviews. Evaluations of these claims have been limited by the small number of interviews used to compare modes. We analyze over three hundred interviews conducted using three modes: in-person, telephone, and Skype. Our analyses find that in-person interviews have clear advantages when it comes to producing conversation turns and word-dense transcripts and field notes, but do not significantly differ from the other two modes in interview length in minutes, subjective interviewer ratings, and substantive coding. We conclude that, although remote interviews might be necessary or advantageous in some situations, they likely do often come at a cost to the richness of information produced by the interviews.

Improving the use of voice recording in a smartphone survey / Melanie Revilla & Mick P. Couper

Abstract: More and more respondents are answering web surveys using mobile devices. Mobile respondents tend to provide shorter responses to open questions than PC respondents. Using voice recording to answer open-ended questions could increase data quality and help engage groups usually underrepresented in web surveys. Revilla, Couper,
Bosch and Asensio (2018) showed that in particular the use of voice recording still presents many challenges, even if it could be a promising tool. This paper reports results from a follow-up experiment in which the main goals were to: 1) test if different instructions on how to use the voice recording tool reduce technical and understanding problems, and thereby reduce item nonresponse while preserving data quality and the evaluation of the tool; 2) test if nonresponse due to context can be reduced by using a filter question, and how this affects data quality and the tool evaluation; and 3) understand which factors affect nonresponse to open-ended questions using voice recording, and if these factors also affect data quality and the evaluation of the tool. The experiment was implemented within a smartphone web survey in Spain focused on Android devices. The results suggest that different instructions did not affect nonresponse to the open questions and had little effect on data quality for those who did answer. Introducing a filter to ensure that people were in a setting that permits voice recording seems useful. Despite efforts to reduce problems, a substantial proportion of respondents are still unwilling or unable to answer open questions using voice recording.

Completing surveys with different item formats: Testing equivalence / Arne Weigold, Ingrid K. Weigold, Stephanie A. Dykema, & Naomi M. Drakeford

Abstract: Studies examining the similarity of online self-report survey responses using different item formats have yielded inconclusive results. Additionally, no studies have used appropriate methods for thoroughly and correctly examining equivalence across conditions. We examined the comparability of survey responses across four item formats—horizontal radio button, text box, dropdown menu, and vertical radio button—in two studies. The second study added two response categories: optional responding and forced responding. Participants were college students at two institutions of higher education who were randomly assigned to conditions. They completed measures of computer self-efficacy, personality, and social desirability. Results of both studies indicated quantitative (mean scores) and qualitative (internal consistency estimates and scale intercorrelations) equivalence. However, there were notable differences in auxiliary equivalence such that participants in the text box condition had lower amounts of missing data than those the other conditions, those in the horizontal radio button condition completed the study in the shortest amount of time, and participants across conditions generally preferred to use dropdown menus compared to other item formats.

New data sources in social science research: Things to know before working with Reddit data / Ashley Amaya, Ruben Bach, Florian Keusch, & Frauke Kreuter

Abstract: Social media is becoming more popular as a source of data for social science researchers. These data are plentiful and offer the potential to answer new research
questions at smaller geographies and for rarer subpopulations. When deciding whether to use data from social media, it is useful to learn as much as possible about the data and its source. Social media data have properties quite different from those with which many social scientists are used to working, so the assumptions often used to plan and manage a project may no longer hold. For example, social media data are so large that they may not be able to be processed on a single machine; they are in file formats with which many researchers are unfamiliar, and they require a level of data transformation and processing that has rarely been required when using more traditional data sources (e.g., survey data). Unfortunately, this type of information is often not obvious ahead of time as much of this knowledge is gained through word-of-mouth and experience. In this paper, we attempt to document several challenges and opportunities encountered when working with Reddit, the self-proclaimed “front page of the internet” and popular social media site. Specifically, we provide descriptive information about the Reddit site and its users, tips for using organic data from Reddit for social science research, some ideas for conducting a survey on Reddit, and lessons learned in merging survey responses with Reddit posts. While this paper is specific to Reddit, researchers may also view it as a list of the type of information one may seek to acquire prior to conducting a project that uses any type of social media data.