

HOSPITALS ON FACEBOOK — UNCOVERING FANS' USES AND GRATIFICATIONS

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This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Meghan, who encouraged me to finish what I started; my parents, Rich and Cindy, who have always been my biggest supporters; and to my little Brynn — you were always there to lift my spirits.

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# HOSPITALS ON FACEBOOK — UNCOVERING FANS' USES AND GRATIFICATIONS

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis uses qualitative analysis to discover what uses and gratifications fans are receiving from hospital Facebook pages. The research centers on the fan page administered by Boone Hospital Center, located in Columbia, Mo.

Using a series of 18 semi-structured interviews, this research discovered that hospital fans seek hospital information and self-expression from their Facebook interaction with hospitals. They report obtaining entertainment, hospital information, job satisfaction, reinforcement of existing beliefs and social interaction. These gratifications vary depending on whether the participant was a community member or hospital employee. This research also shows that hospital Facebook pages largely do not alter fans' impressions of the hospital and have little influence over future health care decisions. Other findings include a description of a typical hospital Facebook fan and information about the best times to reach different fan groups.

The research also includes a list of practical tips hospital Facebook administrators can use to help engage their fans.



## INTRODUCTION

Facebook was launched on Feb. 4, 2004. The website, created by student Mark Zuckerberg, was originally called TheFacebook.com and was only open to students at Harvard University.

But growth came fast. Facebook's own company timeline reports that by 2005 the website had spread to 800 college networks and had 5.5 million users by December of that year. Facebook opened itself to the general public in December of 2008. A period of rapid growth followed this decision, with the website passing 500 million active users in July of 2010 (Facebook, 2011).

As the most successful website inside the category of social network sites, Facebook is home to a new kind of social interaction. This includes interaction between individuals as well as interaction between organizations and individuals.

Hospitals are just one type of organization working to adapt to this new kind of communication. And many hospitals are trying. Like other businesses, hospitals want to use social media as an additional method to reach out to potential customers. Hospitals also have a need to understand successful social media techniques to present important health information to the community.

As of June 2011, a survey conducted by an influential health care blog found 1018 hospital Facebook pages in this country (Bennett, 2011). While there is a strong marketing argument for hospitals becoming adept at communicating socially online, hospitals are also bearers of critical health information and have a public duty to help

report health messages to the masses. Thus, it is important that hospitals become strong communicators on social network sites such as Facebook.

This thesis will seek to help hospital Facebook page administrators better connect with their audiences by determining who uses hospital Facebook pages and what they want from these pages. The research will focus on the users of one particular Facebook page, [facebook.com/boonehospitalcenter](https://www.facebook.com/boonehospitalcenter), operated by Boone Hospital Center in Columbia, Mo.

The central research question is: What are the gratifications fans get from hospital Facebook pages? Secondary research questions include:

- Research question 2: What kind of people are fans of hospital Facebook pages?
- Research question 3: When are the best times of day to reach hospital Facebook fans?
- Research question 4: How does the Facebook page impact overall impressions of the hospital?
- Research question 5: What influence does the Facebook fan page have on future patient health care decisions?
- Research question 6: Do the gratifications received by health care workers from these pages differ from other community members?

This research will be approached from the uses and gratifications model, which will allow individual users to voice their gratifications. The resulting qualitative data will help illustrate who uses hospital Facebook pages, the range of gratifications they expect

and obtain from hospital Facebook pages and how such pages impact individual health care decisions, if at all.

### **Goals of this study**

There is no shortage of opinions about how hospitals should utilize their presence on Facebook. Many health care marketing conferences today feature sessions with trade experts, consultants and companies sharing their thoughts on what hospitals need to be doing to reach out to people using social media.

Despite these many expert opinions, very little academic research has turned to the actual users of these pages. The goal of this study is to illuminate the gratifications sought and received by the users of one hospital Facebook page and allow them to give voice to their opinions. This will aid hospitals in their use of Facebook for marketing as well as distributing important health information to social network site users.

### **Justification**

Why is it important to understand who uses hospital Facebook pages and what gratifications drive users to those pages?

In addition to the need to market hospital services to health consumers, there is a deeper purpose behind understanding these users. Administrators of hospital Facebook pages have a public duty to communicate important health alerts to their community. With a better understanding of their users' gratifications, hospital Facebook page administrators can better tailor their messages to their audiences and thus expect greater use of their content (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979). Being able to effectively communicate using Facebook is critical as hospitals are a key provider of health

information in their communities and need to be able to efficiently share information about health risks and positive preventative health measures using all available methods.

This study will add to a small, but growing, body of existing academic knowledge about the impact of social network sites on health care communications.

The greatest quantity of research currently focuses on laws and ethics regarding patient privacy and how they come into conflict with the ease of sharing personal information online via social networking sites (Thompson, 2011; Chretien, Greysen, Chretien & Kind, 2009). Another study specifically examined Facebook as an information-sharing tool for patients (Greene, Choudhry, Kilabuk & Shrank, 2010).

There have been studies in the existing academic literature that specifically look at uses and gratifications of social network sites (Leung, 2001; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). Leung used gratifications discovered in previous electronic media studies to create a survey he could apply to chat software. His work uncovered that online chatters were using chat software to seek out deeper social interactions such as affection, while light users saw value in chatting as more of a fashionable fad. Quan-Haase and Young later modified Leung's survey and used it to study gratifications of users of social network sites, uncovering that amusement and finding information about other people were prominent gratifications for Facebook users.

This research builds on this previous work and applies it to hospital Facebook pages. This work will lead to a greater understanding of the people who choose to become fans of hospital Facebook pages and will thus help administrators of these

pages better connect with their fans. Toward this goal, this research will apply the uses and gratifications framework, which researchers have often used to uncover how people interact with new communications tools.

## THEORETIAL FRAMEWORK

### **Uses and gratifications**

While in existence since the late 1950s, the theory of uses and gratifications has helped researchers gain insight into new media tools as they have developed over the last several decades (Ruggiero, 2000) and has begun to shed light on people's use of social network sites (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010; Dong, 2008; Nyland 2007; Foregger, 2008).

Traditional mass media research and the related theories focus on the actions of content creators — news outlets, marketers and others (Katz, 1959, pp. 1-2). Uses and gratifications theory turns the table and instead focuses on how media consumers use content to fulfill their needs and gratifications.

University of Chicago sociologist Elihu Katz was not the first to formulate this approach. But Katz's 1959 editorial in *Studies in Public Communication* is widely cited as the work that helped establish uses and gratifications as an accepted scholarly theory in mass communication. In his editorial, Katz argues that the emerging uses and gratifications research provides a new bridge into understanding how consumers are utilizing media (Katz, 1959).

The goal behind uses and gratifications research can be stated as “an attempt to explain something of the way in which individuals use communications, among other resources in their environment, to satisfy their needs and to achieve their goals ... ” (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974).

Toward this goal, five elements are established as guideposts for uses and gratifications researchers. Those conducting studies in this fashion are to see audiences as active in their media choices and give credit to audience members for autonomously seeking gratification through their choices. Researchers are also to recognize that media content is just one avenue toward gratification fulfillment and that consumers themselves can provide insight into media goals. Finally, those conducting uses and gratifications research are to suspend their personal value judgments (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974).

By recognizing that media consumers are active participants in how content is used, Katz and the subsequent researchers opened the door to a broad field of new communications studies. Thus it should follow that gratifications received from hospital communications via Facebook should show the hospital's fans as active participants in the consumption of and interaction with the content of the page. The social network site realm offers even greater opportunity for observing gratifications as participants are able to leave behind records of what posts met their needs by clicking the "Like" button or leaving behind comments indicating their feelings about posts by their friends or organizations with whom they choose to network.

An important distinction in uses and gratifications studies is whether the researcher is attempting to examine gratifications sought, obtained or both. Sought gratifications are those that people expect to experience upon consuming their chosen media. In contrast, obtained gratifications are those that the person actually receives from the media. It is important to note that sought and obtained gratifications do not

always align. Some researchers have attempted to compare how well sought and obtained gratifications match up as a way to predict satisfaction (Quan-Haase & Young 2010).

While uses and gratifications has seen criticism over the years for being overly broad and lacking testable outcomes, the theory has seen a resurgence with the development of the Internet and new communication methods that seem particularly well suited to the uses and gratifications approach. This research will strive to build on the strengths of uses and gratifications applying it to a very narrow topic — studying a Facebook page’s audience — and generating very practical knowledge that hospitals can put to use immediately.

### **Emerging media**

Similar to its application in this research, researchers in the past have routinely turned to the uses and gratifications model as they sought to explore how consumers were using emerging media and new technologies to fulfill their needs. Because no matter what the communication type, uses and gratifications continues to seek answers to the same question: “Why do people become involved in one particular type of mediated communication or another, and what gratifications do they receive from it?” (Ruggiero, 2000).

In the 1970s, researchers applied the uses and gratifications approach to refute ideas at the time that television viewing was primarily an escape from real life. By assessing motivations and gratifications people were receiving, the new research found television viewing to be a goal-directed activity. Rather than being a one-way



conversation, television watchers were using the programs selectively to fulfill specific needs of: self-rating, forming the basis for social interaction, excitement and education (McQuail, Blumler & Brown, 1972).

The model was also used to analyze how the Stanford University community was using an electronic bulletin board system called BBOARD (Rafaeli, 1986). At the time, bulletin boards were an emerging communication tool. The study found that people were utilizing BBOARD for recreation, entertainment, as a diversion and to learn what others think. Only a minority of users was going to the board to learn about computing, for educational purposes or to meet with friends (Rafaeli, 1986).

The uses for television have been widely studied using this model. Some researchers have applied uses and gratifications to uncover how certain program types, such as romance, affect participant's belief systems (Rehkoff, 2004). Another study investigated what people are doing during passive television viewing — talking, playing, eating and reading (Schmidt, Woolf & Anderson, 2003).

Researchers have also turned to uses and gratifications in their efforts to understand how people are using the Internet as a communications tool. While the Internet serves many of the same roles for individuals looking to consume and interact with content, it also serves the purpose of allowing people to find social interaction gratifications in a new way (Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004). In one broad analysis of Internet usage, seven factors were identified: social escapism, transaction-based security and privacy concerns, information, interactivity, socialization, non-transactional privacy concerns and economic motivations (Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999). The same

factors were later used in studying how Hispanics in south Florida were using the Internet, yielding insights for marketers hoping to target this segment (Krogaonkar, Silverblatt & O'Leary, 2003).

The more recent blogging trend has also been analyzed by researchers through the uses and gratifications lens. Seeking to aid businesses communicate their brand messages, one researcher identified five motivations behind why people choose to blog: self-expression, life documentation, to comment, forum participation and to seek information (Huang, 2007). Another study found similar blogging motivations: self-documentation, to improve writing, self-expression, medium appeal, information and socialization (Li, 2007).

### **Uses and gratifications and social network sites**

This research also follows a growing body of work utilizing uses and gratifications theory to directly study Facebook and other social network sites.

For some segments of users, social network site usage has become almost ubiquitous, with little difference between male and female users (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). As users adopt these new communication tools, such as Facebook, they don't necessarily displace existing tools. Rather, the new tools are incorporated into a person's communication repertoire (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010).

Facebook and other social network sites are also offering individuals new tools and abilities (Dong, 2008). Social network users have the ability to become content creators and broadcasters to a self-defined audience. But rather than seeking to influence others with their broadcasted messages, the social network users are instead

seeking reinforcement and support themselves. Some users find these tools useful as they seek to create virtual identities and idealized images of themselves (Dong, 2008).

Uses and gratifications has uncovered a number of expected gratifications from sites such as Facebook and MySpace: efficient communications, convenient communications, curiosity about others, popularity and relationship formation and reinforcement (Dong, 2008). Another study of Facebook gratifications found that young adults were using it as entertainment and as a diversion. They also found it to be a convenient way to “hang out” when not able to spend time with their peers in the real world (Nyland, 2007).

Gratifications obtained from Facebook include: killing time, entertainment, showing affection, keeping up with modern technology, sharing problems, making friends and meeting people of the opposite sex (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). Other obtained gratifications include keeping in touch with friends, looking at and posting photos, making new friends and locating old friends (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008), as well as passing time, making connections with peers, sexual attraction, relationship upkeep, maintaining ties, accumulating friends and social comparison (Foregger, 2008).

The social interactions described in these studies have emerged as commonly cited uses and gratifications from social networking sites. One study found that people who used a social network to connect with political candidates were actually seeking to interact with other like-minded people more than to find out information about that specific candidate (Ancu & Cozma, 2009). However, another study found that while social network site users did focus on social interaction, that interaction does work as a

conduit for passing political information across friend networks during an election (Raine, 2008).

Even the basic structure of Facebook included a number of innovations in the social network site category. Facebook's structure includes a "wall" to showcase posts from connected users. The website also sells virtual items, allows third-parties to create applications that operate within Facebook and has a number of tools allowing users of outside websites to interact with their Facebook accounts without actually visiting Facebook.com. The "like" function on Facebook, which allows users to indicate their approval of content, was launched in February of 2009 (Facebook).

These Facebook innovations have ties back to some of the technology-enhanced social behaviors described in mass communications literature. The concept of interactivity has been addressed by a multitude of researchers as a communication component that is greatly enhanced by technology (Ruggiero, 2000). To accomplish this, Facebook breaks down the walls between communicators and audiences and allows direct interaction. The ability to respond to communication needs such as playfulness, choice, connectedness, information collection and reciprocal communication is key to this interactivity (Ha & James, 1998).

Researchers have utilized the uses and gratifications model for decades as they have sought to understand the reasons behind consumers' interactions with developing communication methods. Facebook, as a social network site, is a developing communication tool that many hospitals are working to understand and use to their benefit. For hospitals, there are many benefits to knowing how users want to use

Facebook to interact with their organizations. Effectively communicating using Facebook could potentially enhance marketing efforts to positively sway opinions and health care decisions. It could also be used in times of crisis or health scares to better inform users about important health information. However, no matter how hospitals will utilize this knowledge, these previous studies have shown that the uses and gratifications approach is well suited to discovering people's preferences and desired interactions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Facebook belongs to a category of websites called social networking sites. There are three basic functions required of a social networking site: Users must be able to create a profile, establish connections with other users and view lists of connections between other users (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Looking beyond the uses and gratifications theory, there is a growing body of literature that helps illuminate social networks and their crossing point with health care.

### **Social and business opportunities**

The rapid adoption of social networking sites by a wide variety of users has been a compelling reason for businesses to join the conversation on Facebook and other social networking sites. Nielsen research found that 67 percent of the people in the United States who are online now belong to member communities like Facebook. In addition, Americans spend more time on Facebook than any other website (Nielsen, 2009).

Just as social network sites have opened up new ways for individuals to interact with each other, they have also created opportunities and avenues for communication that businesses and non-profit organizations can utilize.

In 2008, Eyrich, Padman and Sweetser described the struggle of public relations professionals to adapt to the new model of social networking site communications. One online survey found that public relations practitioners were using electronic

communication tools, but were biased more toward traditional, non-social tools such as e-mail (2008).

Non-profit organizations have also begun to incorporate social media websites into their practices with mixed results. One study of 275 non-profit organizations found that while many use social networking sites, they are not using them to their organization's greatest benefit (Waters, 2009). However, a separate study found that the American Red Cross has had success in social networking site usage. A study of the model being used at the American Red Cross found that the American Red Cross public relations professionals use social media tools such as Facebook to reach out to people with whom they already have relationships with as well as find new audiences (Briones, Kuch, Liu & Jin, 2011). Some of their primary goals are finding new volunteers, informing the community and sharing news story ideas with traditional media reporters.

For hospitals specifically, existing research shows that large hospitals using social networking sites, such as Facebook, are more apt to have large bases of potential users than smaller hospitals. However, that does not mean large hospitals have an edge when it comes to having more online conversations. The length of time a hospital has had a page on Facebook can also affect other measurable Facebook page factors, such as number of likes and pages (Leung & Pasupathy, 2011).

There is initial evidence suggesting that a strong social network presence is important for business and marketing. One recent survey found that 57 percent of health consumers said that a social media connection with a hospital would have a strong impact on their decision to choose that hospital for treatment. Likewise, 81

percent of respondents said having a strong social media presence would indicate to them that the hospital has stronger technology and is cutting edge (YouGov, 2011).

### **Relationship building**

Such profound usage has prompted some researchers to examine what this means for communication and traditional social ties. For health care public relations professionals, it has been critical to consider how use of social networking sites fits into established communication methods and relationship-building tools.

Golder, Wilkinson and Huberman suggest that social network users are using the sites as a tool to communicate across networks of people they already know. This study examined a broad sample of messages sent between Facebook users as a comparison to see how well friend networks mirror the traffic of messages shared. In large part, they do, showing that the traditional communication needed to maintain a traditional friendship is still required of a digital friendship (2007).

Another study also delved into the communication benefits Facebook users get from the website. One core use of the website is keeping in touch with old friends, acquaintances and colleagues. In this way, the site can, for instance, be an aid in establishing and maintaining social capital between individuals (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007). From the perspective of a hospital seeking to establish a stronger tie to potential health consumers, this previous research could indicate that Facebook is a new tool that can help strengthen existing relationships and reinforce social capital that has been built during in-person hospital visits.



Cheung and Lee looked into social interaction on social network websites and found that people are using these websites to keep up with the subjective norms of their peers and to help form their social identity (2010). They surmised that understanding how people use social media is critical as companies seek to utilize social networking sites as a means to achieve business goals. They also note how the social media structure places organizations and individuals on an equal plane:

Customers will probably treat them as 'friends.' As shown in our study, users are greatly influenced by subjective norms. Thus the indirect results of this mutual understanding will likely be increased sales for companies and enhanced customer relationships (Cheung and Lee, 28).

In research more specific to health care, investigators have also looked at Facebook as a communications tool for patients as well as health care companies (Geoghegan, 2011). While not specifically designed for health communications, Facebook differs from other online health communities because it offers, with its unprecedented user base, the tools to network with a far greater base of other people. Sharing health information through social websites like Facebook is also increasingly common with 23 percent of social networking site users having used the sites for updates on a friend's health condition. In addition, 17 percent have utilized the websites to post memories of a friend who suffered from a health condition and 15 percent have found health information on a social networking site.

One study found that some patients use Facebook to form disease-specific groups and exchange information. These patients willingly shared their personal information online, swapped disease management strategies and provided emotional support to one another. When the content of these messages was analyzed, the health

information shared in this way was found to be largely accurate even though there was no accuracy checking method in place (Greene, Choudhry, Kilabuk & Shrank, 2010).

### **Privacy concerns**

With such public sharing of health information online, some researchers have begun to investigate how free online sharing meshes with strict health care privacy laws and regulations.

In studies of individual usage of social networking sites, young people, in particular, have taken to posting their public information on these networks and seem unaware of the potential negative consequences (Taraszow, Aristodemou, Shitta, Laouris & Arsoy, 2010). While personal information directories, such as phone books or other public records, have existed for decades, social networking sites are built around the concept of individuals sharing information online. Thus, Facebook, in comparison to traditional informational directories, such as a phone book, allows disclosure of a much greater variety of personal information. Stutzman found that a typical user disclosed his or her name, academic classification, gender, email address, network, picture, major, birthday, hometown, high school, relationship status, address, interests, political views and job (Stutzman, 2006).

Such free sharing of information becomes a concern for health care organizations that strive to keep such data tightly sealed. The federal HIPAA law requires explicit written authorization for a health care organization or representative to release any private information about a patient, including the person's name or image (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003).

Several studies have examined the conflict between the free sharing of information on social networking sites and the need for privacy online. One study analyzed Facebook profiles of medical students and residents looking for potential ethical or legal lapses. It found 12 potential violations spread across more than 1,000 student Facebook pages. The violations largely consisted of photographs of the students providing care during overseas mission work. The photographs included identifiable images of patients receiving care (Thompson, 2011).

Chretien, Greysen, Chretien and Kind looked into medical students posting unprofessional content on Facebook. Their study, conducted via a survey of school administrators, found that 13 percent of the schools had dealt with the issue of patient confidentiality issues. Greater percentages of schools reported their students using profanity, posting depictions of intoxication and sexually suggestive material on social networking sites such as Facebook (2009).

In contrast to these existing studies, which largely highlight problematic issues with health care and social networking websites, this study seeks to identify positive opportunities to help hospitals communicate more effectively on Facebook. The goal is to be able to provide usable instruction to hospital Facebook page administrators, which will help them understand how to use Facebook as a tool to reach health consumers and employees.

## METHODOLOGY

### **Data collection**

In-depth interviews were the central data collection method used to identify uses and gratifications in this study. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured method, allowing for unscripted follow-up questions. This format was selected to ensure participants were given an open format to voice their opinions and provide insight into their gratifications (Stokes, 2003).

The interviews utilized an interview schedule, available in the appendix, ensuring all the critical information was collected. The interview schedule was broken into three segments: expected gratifications, obtained gratifications and secondary questions.

The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for the project. All names and identifiable information were removed and omitted from the transcribed interviews. This was done to ensure all participants' identities were kept confidential, an important step given that many participants chose to discuss personal health information. Thus, it was critical that this medical information was kept private (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003).

### **Interview design**

To uncover expected gratifications, the interview questions focused on the actions and thoughts that led to the participant to originally become a fan of the hospital's Facebook page. The researcher sought to have the participants describe their decision process for becoming a fan and how they first discovered there was a hospital

fan page. These questions were intended to uncover what process led to them becoming a fan. For example, it was expected that some participants chose to become fans through the social interaction on Facebook, such as they saw a friend was a fan of the hospital, so the participant decided to become a fan too. The researcher also asked participants what they were expecting to obtain for themselves when they first became a fan of the hospital's Facebook page. This illustrated participants' expected gratifications.

To discover the fans' obtained gratifications, the researcher asked a series of questions which allowed participants to describe what they receive from the hospital's Facebook page. Participants were also able to share their overall impression of the Facebook page. Another important question dealt with how often fans click on the hospital's Facebook posts to get to the full content that was posted. This was intended to investigate whether the gratifications they are obtaining come from the short Facebook posts themselves or from the longer content to which the Facebook posts link.

The interviews also included a section of questions aimed at uncovering other information such as the participants' age and gender. In addition, the research also culled information from Boone Hospital's Facebook insight tab, which has charts showing demographic information about the fans of that page. This demographic information is useful as it can help hospitals determine what services are most effectively communicated using Facebook. The interviews also delved into what times of day participants were using Facebook. This is a valuable question as it could help hospital Facebook fan page administrators better reach their intended audiences. The

researcher also sought insight into whether the Facebook fan page held enough sway to actually influence the participants' opinions about the hospital overall. In addition, there was a question aimed at discovering whether this hospital's Facebook page could influence participants' health care decisions in the future. These final questions are important as they show how powerful of an influence a hospital Facebook page could have over people's opinions and actions.

Of the 18 interviews, 10 were conducted in person. Seven interviewees indicated a preference to conduct the interview over the phone. One other participant lived outside the continental United States and thus a phone interview was required.

### **Sample**

Interviewees for this project were drawn from the fans of one hospital: Boone Hospital Center. Boone Hospital Center is a 400-bed hospital located in Columbia, Mo. The hospital serves a 26-county region and is a referral hospital that offers services in a number of specialty areas. The hospital is owned by the citizens of Boone County and is operated by St. Louis-based BJC HealthCare. During the time of this research and the proceeding months, the hospital was in the public eye as it opened a \$120 million expansion and also marked its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of service. These events were noted in television commercials and in media stories around the time of this research.

As of Sept., 2011, Boone Hospital Center's Facebook fan page has 1,550 fans. It is an active Facebook page with multiple posts each week by the hospital as well as other Facebook users. The Facebook page regularly hosts videos, contests and links to stories on the hospital's website and blog. During 2010 and the first part of 2011, the hospital's

Facebook fan page was used as part of an advertising campaign for the hospital's obstetrics services. People in the community were invited to share pictures of the children that were born at Boone Hospital on the hospital's Facebook page. These pictures continued to be submitted during the time of this research.

Fans of the page often comment and push the "like" button on shared content. The author of this research is one of three administrators of the page and is an employee at Boone Hospital Center.

Boone Hospital does not allow employees to use Facebook or other social networking sites through the hospital's network or hospital-owned smart phones. If an employee attempts to access a social networking site, they receive a message that the site is blocked. However, the hospital does not strongly encourage or discourage employees from interacting with the hospital on Facebook from home computers or personal devices, such as employee-owned smart phones. Many employees have become fans of the hospital's Facebook page.

For this research, the author sought 18 current fans of the hospital's Facebook page for interviews. Potential participants were screened for having had at least two previous interactions with the Boone Hospital Center Facebook page. These interactions could include pushing the "like," "share" or "comment" buttons on a post as well as sharing a photo or a comment on the hospital's Facebook page. It was important to screen for active participants to ensure the interviewees had some knowledge and interest in the hospital's Facebook page to share for this research.

The participants in this study displayed a similar gender ratio to what is reported on Facebook's insights page for Boone Hospital Center. However, the participants here did skew older than the actual fan population.

The 18 participants were subdivided into two groups, hospital staff members and community members. It was anticipated that these two groups would have different motivations for using the hospital's Facebook website. Staff members may be seeking out news about their employer or connecting socially with coworkers. Community members, on the other hand, are more likely to be seeking out general health information and other information regarding services they can use at the hospital. Thus, dividing the participants into two groups of nine allowed the researcher to look at responses from staff and community members as separate groups and compare the differences and similarities between the two groups. This also helped in preparing suggestions for hospitals based on whether they want to reach out to staff members or community members using Facebook.

To find 18 interview volunteers, the researcher first sought to identify potential interviewees using the Facebook page to ask for interested participants. The goal was to find a mix of people including hospital staff, former patients and community members. When not enough people volunteered to be interviewed, the researcher then analyzed posts by the hospital on Facebook to look for active participants. These participants were then pre-screened to ensure they had two interactions with the hospital on Facebook. These people were then contacted directly using Facebook's messaging system to request an interview. At the conclusion of a successful interview, the



researcher used the snowball method, asking volunteers for suggestions of other people who might also be willing to participate in an interview (Priest, 2010).

### **Data analysis**

Once the interviews were collected, they were analyzed using grounded theory and the constant comparative method. Through this technique, similar points were identified in the interviews and broader trends of uses and gratifications were seen across the population of participants. This technique allowed the research to be driven by the data collected in the interviews (Priest, 2010).

## RESULTS

After conducting the interviews, the transcribed interviews were analyzed through the lens of each of the research questions. The results of this analysis are below, organized by research question.

### **Research question 1: What are the gratifications fans get from hospital Facebook pages?**

During the course of the 18 interviews, the interview subjects identified eight uses and gratifications they expected to receive upon becoming fans of Boone Hospital's Facebook page. They also identified eight uses and gratifications they obtained during their time as fans of the hospital's page.

**Table 1. Expected gratifications**

<b>Expected gratification</b>	<b>Times expressed by a fan</b>
Hospital information	17
Self-expression	9
Professional advancement	2
Gaining a different perspective	1
Entertainment	1
Health information	1
Job satisfaction	1
Social interaction	1

Of the eight expected gratifications, only two were regularly mentioned during interviews. These dominant gratifications were hospital information and self-expression. What follows is a closer look at each of these expected gratifications, beginning with the dominant gratifications.

The most common gratification people expected to receive upon becoming a fan is information about Boone Hospital Center. This general information included a desire to learn about upcoming events, educational classes and service offerings.

Employee 1, a part-time staff member, expected that the Facebook page would assist in keeping up with updates about the hospital. "I work at Boone Hospital so I liked the page so I could get updates and information ..." Employee 1 said. "When I only work three days a week, sometimes I feel like I miss information."

Likewise, Employee 5, who works at a building outside the hospital, said she expected that the hospital Facebook page would help keep her more up to date about what was happening at the main campus. “Working off site and not in the hospital, we feel a little bit disconnected from the hospital because we spend most of our time here,” she said.

Other participants also said they also expected news and information from the hospital. “[I expected] general information about the hospital and what services the have to offer. That kind of stuff,” Employee 6 said. Employee 9 voiced a similar expectation, saying, “[I expected] news about programs at the hospital and events that are happening. I don’t always know everything happening here. It’s like I miss things sometimes, so I thought I might get updates through this.”

A subsection of this group was specifically interested in the hospital’s addition. The Boone Hospital Center new patient tower was the largest expansion in the hospital’s history and became a high-profile project in the community. “I was expecting updates on the new addition and that kind of thing,” Employee 3 said. Several people said the information they expected to receive from the Boone Hospital Facebook page related specifically to this construction project. “They’ve had so much construction going on and I just thought I’d get more updated from the Boone Hospital page,” Community member 2 said.

Many participants said their decision to become a fan of Boone Hospital’s page came from a desire to express some aspect of themselves. Commonly, people said their desire to become a Facebook fan reflected their existing positive feelings toward the

hospital or a desire to publicly show their status as an employee at the hospital. “I wanted to see what they had on there and just to show that I work there,” Employee 2 said. Employees 6 and 9 voiced similar thoughts, saying, respectively, “Basically because I’ve been a fan of Boone Hospital the whole time I’ve been around” and “I just wanted to show everyone that I work here.”

Several community members also said they became fans to express their status as fans of the hospital. “I became a fan because I truly am a fan of Boone Hospital. I believe Boone Hospital is the best hospital around,” Community member 1 said. Another participant, Community member 4, had a similar comment, “I’ve had good experiences there in the past. So, yeah, I was a fan anyway.”

Outside of these two commonly cited expected gratifications, a number of other gratifications were mentioned by participants. These included: entertainment, gaining a different perspective, health information, job satisfaction, professional advancement and social interaction.

Regarding entertainment, Employee 5 mentioned expecting to enjoy the entertaining content posted to the Facebook page, saying, “... Honestly, the stories that have come out of the marketing department are so good and so personal and I really, really like them,” Employee 5 said.

Employee 4 expected that becoming a fan of the hospital’s Facebook page would provide a different view of the hospital’s communications that was not previously available. “Sometimes, I just like to see what the public sees. It’s like I pretend I’m not

an employee and I just see what's out there. See the face that Boone is putting out to the world," Employee 4 said.

Community member 4 expected that Boone Hospital's page would provide usable health information, saying, "I basically thought that I would get periodic updates of interest, not only on the hospital itself but also health tips," Community member 4 said.

One person said they expected receiving Facebook posts from Boone Hospital would help them feel additional job satisfaction. "I like to read the feedback stories about the patients and it makes me feel good about what I do," Employee 3 said.

Other respondents thought that the hospital's Facebook page would help them professionally. "I work at a local college in alumni relations and we have a lot of alums that work at the hospital. So I try to keep an eye out for any updates on any nurses from our nursing program," Community member 2 said.

Another respondent reported that they expected to gain information about other people that could be socially useful in the real world. "[I expect] find out what is going on with fellow employees and stuff like that," Employee 2 said.

**Table 2. Obtained gratifications**

<b>Obtained gratification</b>	<b>Times expressed by a fan</b>
Social interaction	9
Hospital information	9
Entertainment	5
Job satisfaction	5
Reinforce existing belief	5
Health information	2
Prizes	2
Professional advancement	1

Of the eight obtained gratifications participants said they gained from Boone Hospital’s Facebook page, five gratifications were mentioned in several interviews and were identified as dominant: entertainment, hospital information, job satisfaction, reinforcing existing opinions and social interaction.

Several participants mentioned that they found a fun entertainment value in the posts Boone Hospital put online. Among them was Employee 5, who said, “I loved seeing all the advertising for the tower which just stirred me to no end. I just loved that.” Employee 9 shared similar thoughts:

“I think it’s mainly just a fun diversion for me. When I’m on Facebook I use it more to see what my friends are doing. For companies and places like the hospital, I like more when they do things that are, you know, fun or entertaining. That’s what I’m looking for.”

Several people mentioned that hospital information was one of the things they obtained from being a Facebook fan. Of these, many people said they were most informed about the hospital's events and activities in the community. "I've just obtained information about what's going on at Boone," Employee 2 said. Some participants said that they didn't feel like they would have access to this information outside of the hospital's Facebook presence. "I think it's just an awareness that I know if something is going on and if it's noteworthy to the Boone Hospital world, then I'm going to catch it," Community member 8 said.

A number of participants, all of whom were current hospital employees, also said that the Facebook page had increased their job satisfaction. "I think I remember seeing patient stories and I enjoy those. It makes me feel good that we're doing the right thing. We're making the patient feel good. They will come back," Employee 4 said. These employees said that the positive stories about the hospital, especially the testimonials from former patients, made them feel good about the hospital's work. "It makes me feel good about what we do, like I know we're taking good care of people," Employee 8 said. They also said that learning about the positive work happening in areas where they didn't work improved their job satisfaction.

A large number of participants also said that the hospital's Facebook page helped reinforce their existing beliefs. "[I obtained] stories and personal reflections on people's experiences at the hospital. They're interesting to read and can, kind of, back up my own feelings that Boone is a top-notch hospital," Community member 2 said.



Several people also found that Boone Hospital's Facebook page served a social function. For some people, this meant that they were able to use the page or content on the page to reach out to their existing network of friends. "I might have done the like button on a few posts where someone I know has taken care of that patient in the past, maybe." Other participants, such as Community member 5, said that the page allowed them to discover socially valuable information about other people, "I also looked at a couple of the Boone Stories because I've known the people who have submitted those, so I clicked on them to read the whole thing." Some participants also reported using Facebook's "like," "comment" and "share" functions to provide support and feedback to people they know who are mentioned in the hospital's posted content.

Participants also noted three gratifications they obtained that were not shared by a large number of their fellow participants: health information, prizes and professional advancement.

Regarding health information, more than one person mentioned that they found use in the hospital's health-related posts. "[It is] another source for health-related information and just information on a choice that I personally use myself," Community member 4 said.

Some fans said they had actually obtained prizes, specifically tickets to events, from their decision to be hospital Facebook fans. "I can tell you I obtained Providence Bowl tickets and then I saw another concert, it was a jazz concert of some sort a year ago. I've actually obtained things rather than just information," Employee 2 said.

Another participant, Community member 7, said the hospital’s Facebook page is a source of valuable information that she believes could help her advance in her marketing job because it could open up ways for her organization to collaborate with other local organizations. “I probably use social media differently than most people do,” Community member 7 said. “A lot of people use it as a social setting. But I use it more to be able to do my job better.”

**Research question 2: What kind of people are fans of hospital Facebook pages?**

This question can, in part, be answered using data collected by Facebook on Boone Hospital Center’s fan page insight tab.

**Table 3. Boone Hospital Center fan age and gender**

	13-17 years old	18-24 years old	25-34 years old	35-44 years old	45-54 years old	55+ years old	Total, by gender
Female	14 fans (.9 %)	154 fans (9.9 %)	482 fans (31%)	264 fans (17 %)	155 fans (10 %)	93 fans (6 %)	1162 fans (75 %)
Male	9 fans (.5 %)	45 fans (3 %)	137 fans (8.9 %)	75 fans (4.9 %)	37 fans (2.4 %)	37 fans (2.4 %)	340 fans (22 %)
Total, by age	23 fans (1.4 %)	199 fans (12.9 %)	619 fans (39.9 %)	339 fans (21.9 %)	192 fans (12.4 %)	130 fans (8.4 %)	

Source: Facebook.com, 2011.

The fans of Boone Hospital Center’s Facebook page skew heavily female. The largest age bracket for both female and male fans is 25-34 years old. In both genders, the second largest age bracket is 35-44 years old. About three percent of the hospital’s

Facebook fans did not report a gender. Compared to this hospital’s page, Facebook users, in general, are younger and are more evenly split between the genders.

**Table 4: Participant age and gender**

	13-17 years old	18-24 years old	25-34 years old	35-44 years old	45-54 years old	55+ years old	Total, by gender
Female	0 fans (0 %)	0 fans (0 %)	3 fans (17 %)	5 fans (28 %)	5 fans (28 %)	1 fans (5 %)	14 fans (77 %)
Male	0 fans (0 %)	0 fans (0 %)	2 fans (11 %)	0 fans (0 %)	1 fans (5 %)	1 fans (5 %)	4 fans (22 %)
Total, by age	0 fans (0 %)	0 fans (0 %)	5 fans (28 %)	5 fans (28 %)	6 fans (33 %)	2 fans (11 %)	

The insights page also reports that the vast majority of the hospital’s fans are in the United States (1469 fans). The hospital also has a small number of fans in Canada (12 fans) with a few additional fans scattered in countries around the world, such as the Philippines (6 fans), France (4 fans), India (4 fans) and 14 other countries with three or fewer fans.

Of the cities where fans reside, the most commonly reported city was Columbia, Mo., (400 fans). Following Columbia were St. Louis (226 fans), Kansas City (187 fans), Chicago (69 fans), Dallas (44 fans) and Atlanta (33 fans).

The fans also reported speaking American English (1,477 fans) with British English coming in second (35 fans). There were also 11 other languages spoken by three or fewer fans.

Beyond this demographic information, a few general themes describing the fans of the page emerged from the interviews. Each person interviewed reported having some prior experience with the hospital in the past. No one had signed up just because this was an institution in his or her region. Rather, each interviewee said they had had a very personal experience with Boone Hospital Center because they work at the hospital, they had received care at the hospital or both.

Community member 2 shared that his wife had nearly died at the hospital, but that hospital caregivers had saved her. The relationship continued after she recovered when the couple later purchased a home from one of the caregivers they met at the hospital. Community member 4 reported having been a cardiology patient at the hospital since 1998 and having undergone many procedures at the hospital. Community member 6 used to work at the hospital as a physician until moving away to Hawaii. Seven participants said their children were born at Boone Hospital. Two participants said they had been born at Boone Hospital.

Another common theme is that the interviewees had a positive impression of Boone Hospital formed in their minds before they decided to become fans on Facebook. Every person interviewed said that some real experience in the past had led them to form a positive impression in their mind of the hospital before becoming a fan online. Thus, the fact that Facebook describes these people as fans is more than just an

arbitrary term, the hospital's Facebook following truly are fans of the hospital in real life.

In addition, another interesting observation was that many people said they would like to see additional content posted by the hospital that caters to their individual interests. For example, the physician wanted to see more posts about physicians, the person who sits on the board for the Boone Hospital Foundation wanted to have donors recognized on the page, a nurse wanted more information about other nurses and a person who has family members with health problems wanted more relevant health tips.

In summation, if a general picture can be drawn as to what kind of person is a fan of Boone Hospital's Facebook page, it is this: a woman between the ages of 25-54 years old who speaks American English and lives in Columbia, Mo. Additionally, she has had a personal experience with Boone Hospital in the past and that experience has left her with a positive impression of the hospital. She would like to see more content catered specifically to her personal interests and activities.

**Research question 3: When are the best times of day to reach hospital Facebook fans?**

Timing of Facebook posting is critical to how large of an impression the post will make on the audience. The Facebook newsfeed operates in a timeline fashion with the newest and most relevant posts listed at the top of the page. If a hospital posts a message hours before a fan logs in, that fan may have to scroll down for pages to find the post, making it less likely the post will be seen at all. The more friends a person has, the more posts will be sent to the newsfeed, making it even more competitive to have a

post timed correctly to ensure it is near the top of newsfeed when the fan logs in.

Community member 9 describes this challenge.

“Have you looked at my page yet? Have you seen it? I have every intention of following these pages, but because I end up with so many friends on my personal page and then I have 3,000 and some odd on my company page, I can barely keep up with my stuff, not to mention look at anyone else’s.”

This participant had interacted with Boone Hospital’s Facebook multiple times in the past, but, due to the speed of the newsfeed, did not recall ever seeing a post from the hospital.

“This is terrible, but never. If you look at my page, I have almost 3,000 Facebook friends. I’m 14 people away from having 3,000. Do you know how fast it goes? The feeds go so fast I can’t keep up with anybody. And yet, you know what, I honestly know all those people.”

A quick view of the times people report to be using Facebook does not offer much help. Participants identified roughly different Facebook checking habits. Some people checked in the morning or before noon. Others logged in during afternoon and evening hours. Another group reported being on Facebook all day long. Some people reported using Facebook at two general times and thus they were counted twice. When tabulated, approximately equal numbers of people report using Facebook at each time.

**Table 5: Time of day for Facebook use**

Morning/before noon	Afternoon/evening	All day long
6 fans	7 fans	8 fans

However, when the times of day are categorized into age groups, more useful data emerges.

**Table 6: Time of day for Facebook use, by age**

	13-17 years old	18-24 years old	25-34 years old	35-44 years old	45-54 years old	55+ years old
Morning/ before noon	0 fans	0 fans	0 fans	4 fans	2 fans	2 fans
Afternoon/ evening	0 fans	0 fans	0 fans	2 fans	4 fans	1 fans
All day long	0 fans	0 fans	6 fans	2 fans	0 fans	0 fans

This analysis shows that different age groups of people have somewhat different Facebook usage habits. People in the 25-34 years old group as well as a couple fans in the 35-44 years old age group report being on Facebook generally all day long.

Employee 7 provides a good description of this habit:

“It’s something I do right before I go to bed. It’s something I do when I’m bored. It’s just there. I have it on my iPhone so it’s always with me. I just pop it open. I’ll be like, ‘Oh look, let’s see what’s been going on on Facebook in the last half an hour,’ just because I have it available. If I didn’t have it on my phone, I don’t think I’d use it as much.”

For age groups representing some fans between the ages of 35-44 and all fans over the age of 45, the participants identified that the best times to reach these groups is either in the morning/before noon and in the afternoon/evening categories.

While the distinction is still not entirely clear-cut, this data is valuable because it can help hospital Facebook page administrators time posts with greater precision. For

posts about services that are generally used by younger people, any time of day is fine. However, posts with information targeted at people over 45 years old are better posted either at the beginning or end of the day. It appears that Facebook messages targeted at people over 45 years old and posted in the middle of the day could potentially risk being buried in their newsfeeds.

**Research question 4: How does the Facebook page impact overall impressions of the hospital?**

Interview participants soundly rejected the idea that Boone Hospital's Facebook page had impacted their impressions of the hospital. All but three of the participants said their impressions had not been changed at all. When questioned why their impressions had not changed, participants said that they already had positive view of the hospital before becoming fans of the page. The page had done nothing to add to that impression or detract from it. "It hasn't really changed my opinion. I have had a really high opinion since the first time I walked through their doors. I really give them two thumbs up," said Community member 1.

Two of the three participants who reported that their impressions had changed said that the page had reinforced their existing beliefs or made them stronger. "It just reinforced my positive opinion," said Community member 4.

Another participant, Employee 7, said her opinion was changed as the hospital's Facebook page made the institution look more modern and in line with current social trends.

"It's like, 'Oh cool, they're trying to keep up with the times,' I guess. I think that people were resistant to Facebook at first, but now it seems like every business



has a Facebook page. It's like they are trying to stay on track. It makes it seem a little more active and young."

However, these were minority opinions. By and large the group of participants said their Facebook interactions had not changed their impressions of the hospital.

**Research question 5: What influence does the Facebook fan page have on future health care decisions?**

Participants also largely rejected the idea that Boone Hospital's Facebook page could influence their future health care decisions. Again, this opinion was largely based on the idea that their previous experiences with the hospital had left them with positive impressions. "I'd say my preference has really been decided already by my experience at Boone. It always has and always will be the hospital I go to," Community member 1 said. Thus, when it came to future health care needs, their minds were already made up. "Being born there and having my daughter born there, the page isn't really going to change the way I make decisions about health care at all. They've already proved themselves, if that makes sense," Community member 8 said.

However, some individuals within this group of participants said the hospital's page would not influence their decisions and also said they thought the page could potentially influence the thoughts of others. "If I didn't work here, maybe. But no, it won't influence my health care decisions," Employee 5 said.

Of the few participants who said the hospital's page could influence their future health care decisions, two said they were not sure why they thought that. "I certainly imagine that would be possible. I'm not even sure how, exactly," Community member 4 said. Likewise, Employee 2 said, "I suppose it could. I can't say for sure, but maybe."

Two other participants said they thought Boone Hospital's Facebook page was a source of information that could potentially persuade them when it came time to make future health care decisions. "Yeah, I think learning what new services the hospital has and learning what WELLAWARE is offering, for sure," Community member 5 said.

But overall, these opinions were largely in the minority. The consensus among this group was that Boone Hospital's Facebook page would not impact their future health decisions because they had already made up their minds. In this case, their minds were set that they would seek future health care at Boone Hospital.

**Research question 6: Do the gratifications obtained by health care workers differ from other community members?**

While an earlier analysis uncovered the uses and gratifications obtained by the participants in this study, it is also important to see if there are any differences in the uses and gratifications obtained by the community members versus the employees.

**Table 7: Uses and gratifications for community members versus employees**

<b>Obtained gratification</b>	<b>Times expressed by a community fan</b>	<b>Times expressed by an employee fan</b>
Social interaction	4	5
Hospital information	3	6
Entertainment	2	3
Job satisfaction	0	5
Reinforce existing belief	4	1
Health information	2	0
Prizes	0	2
Professional advancement	1	0

When obtained uses and gratifications are divided into these two groups, trends of agreement between both populations emerge along with areas of differences. This analysis shows that roughly similar numbers of employees and community members have obtained social interaction, hospital information and entertainment from the hospital's Facebook page.

Differences are seen in how only employees report obtaining job satisfaction and more community members than employees said the page reinforced existing beliefs. The job satisfaction difference is easy to understand, as that gratification is only applicable to employees.

However, no clear reason was identified to explain why more community members said that the Facebook page reinforced their existing beliefs. The community members who expressed this gratification said that their positive feelings about Boone Hospital are what the Facebook page reinforces. One possible explanation is that employees do not look to Facebook to reinforce their positive feelings about the hospital as they have experiences with the hospital every time they work and those experiences are what reinforce their existing beliefs. Community members would, thus, be more likely to use Facebook to reinforce their beliefs because it is their only regular interaction with the hospital when they are not physically at the hospital receiving treatment or visiting a loved one.

Beyond these two differences, this analysis does show other contrasts between employees and community members. For example, only community members reported obtaining health information. Perhaps this is because employees are more readily able to access health information on the job and do not look to Facebook for this information.

Employees were also the only group to report obtaining prizes from the hospital's Facebook page. One possible reason for this is there have been relatively few prize giveaways on the Facebook page and thus community members who had won prizes simply were not part of the sample. It's also possible that the act of offering prizes seems out of character for a hospital from a community member's perspective, and thus they could be less likely to engage with these Facebook posts.

While the samples are small, this analysis shows that there are some similarities between the uses and gratifications obtained by employees and community members. At the same time, they remain two separate populations seeking distinct information and gratifications from Boone Hospital's Facebook page.

## DISCUSSION

Through this research, a much clearer picture has emerged of what kinds of people utilize hospital Facebook pages and why they are utilizing these pages.

One useful finding regarding the people who become fans of hospital Facebook pages is that these people truly are fans of the hospital. All participants reported having positive feelings about Boone Hospital Center. Each person also said that these feelings did not originate from the page itself, but from a real-world event that happened before the decision to even seek out the hospital on Facebook. So, rather than coming to Facebook to research a future health decision, these fans have already made their decisions. They come to the Facebook page to find reinforcement for these pre-set beliefs and to socially interact with the hospital community.

This finding may be an unwelcome surprise for hospital Facebook page administrators who use their pages primarily for marketing purposes. These marketing-oriented attempts to convince Facebook users to use a specific hospital's services would likely fall flat as the users they are reaching out to are already fully convinced. They are, as the saying goes, preaching to the choir.

These findings have major implications for how hospitals use their Facebook pages. It's possible that many hospitals see their fan bases as comparable to their general market in their community. Thus, these hospitals could attempt to market to their fans in hopes of building positive impressions in this group and thus gaining market

share. However, the results of this study show that these efforts would likely be unsuccessful.

Rather, hospitals should see their Facebook fans as a group of individuals who are already intimately familiar with their organizations and are already sold on returning for their future health care needs. With this realized, entirely new hospital Facebook strategies become possible. For example, rather than marketing to their fan bases, hospitals should seek out ways to empower their fan bases to share their positive feelings about the hospital with the broader online community. Hospital fans could potentially be transformed into brand advocates working on behalf of the hospital to help improve community perceptions and deliver important public health messages to a much broader audience. This strategy would greatly broaden the hospital's potential Facebook reach from the hospital's fans to all the friends of their fans and perhaps beyond.

Another important realization for hospital Facebook page administrators is that the pages do not exist in a vacuum. Just as fans choose to join a hospital's Facebook page following a real-life experience, their expectation is that they will continue to receive updates that relate to the actual people and activities at the hospital. Thus, a strategy where a hospital simply links to health-related news stories likely would not fulfill people's expectations for the kind of information they want to receive from the hospital on Facebook. The same can be said for a hospital that chooses to outsource its social media work to the any number of companies that post then generic health information to a hospital's Facebook fans. Rather, these fans are seeking a connection

with the hospital itself that mirrors their previous experiences there and reinforces their existing feelings about the hospital.

The differences between expected and obtained gratifications are also worth noting in this study. In the uses and gratifications tradition, when content creators are able to successfully match expected and obtained gratifications, that is a predictor of satisfied viewers and leads to greater use of their content (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979). In this study, participants voiced having only minimal expected uses and gratifications when they signed on to become fans of the hospital's Facebook page: hospital information and self-expression. Yet they named five uses and gratifications they said they obtained during the time they had been fans: entertainment, hospital information, job satisfaction, reinforcing existing opinions and social interaction. In general, this shows that participants said they largely got what they expected — hospital information — but also obtained much more. Perhaps the best explanation for this is that Facebook interactions with hospitals are still so new that people aren't sure what they will receive when they first sign on to become fans.

Hospitals should also be mindful that the vast majority of their fans are likely women. However, this should not be a surprise to most health care institutions, which have long recognized that women in the age range identified in this study mirror the typical American health care decision makers. Thus, highlighting women's health services could help in engaging a broad set of fans. In addition, it may be wise to address health services for men through an appeal to women. For example, rather than creating a Facebook post telling men about the benefits of prostate screening, the post could



instead encourage women to share important prostate screening information with the men in their lives. However, hospital Facebook page administrators should not entirely neglect men, as they do make up a sizeable minority of the fan base.

Facebook page administrators may also be surprised to learn that health information was not identified as a dominant use for hospital pages. While a few people did indicate they wanted health information from the pages, the majority indicated they were coming to hospital pages seeking other things. This finding could mean that hospitals may find it difficult to use hospital Facebook pages to spread the word about important health topics or health emergency. One suggestion would be to try to package important health information in a way that would better suit the gratifications identified by Facebook users. For example, one idea would be to ask people to share an important health message with their Facebook friends. In such a way, it would engage their desire for social interaction and also spread an important health message.

One major challenge identified in this study is the difficulty of reaching out to the different populations present inside a hospital's Facebook fan base. The two populations studied here, community members and employees, displayed some differences in the gratifications they obtained and the types of content they sought. However, the interviews in this study show that the challenge actually goes beyond the differences between employees, community members and any other population subsets. These interviews showed that people's gratifications on Facebook are also somewhat idiosyncratic, with many individuals requesting content tailored to their own specific interests. Since it is likely impossible for a hospital to create content for each

individual fan, another strategy would be to focus on the gratifications that appear to appeal across a large group of fans. In this study, the three gratifications that strongly appealed to both of the two groups were hospital information, entertainment and social interaction. Focusing on creating posts that seek to fulfill gratifications in these three areas would seem to be one way to keep a fan base engaged despite their wide set of diverse individual interests.

Yet another strategy would be to create a variety of specialized fan pages administered by the hospital. For example, the hospital could establish a fan page especially for its cancer service or cardiology service and then these pages would deliver content that specifically targets those fans. Such a strategy would greatly increase the time and effort required to administer a hospital's Facebook presence. The hospital's single page could easily balloon to a dozen or more specialty pages, which could prove unwieldy for the administrator.

## CONCLUSION

At the outset, the goal of this research was to help Facebook page administrators better communicate using Facebook. The findings of this study do have the potential to greatly inform and improve how hospitals use this new tool.

One of the most important lessons to learn from this research is that a hospital's Facebook community and real community are one in the same. People choose to interact with a hospital on Facebook as an extension of a real world relationship that already exists. Thus, when they sign on to become a hospital fan, people want to experience a connection with the actual hospital and the community that exists there. Hospital Facebook page administrators would do well to help people make this connection with the actual facility.

There are many ways to accomplish this. The most basic way to do this would be ensure the hospital's website and Facebook are as integrated as possible. For example, the content and service descriptions available on the website should be easily accessible from Facebook as well. In addition, any events calendars or public notices should also be included on Facebook.

A more sophisticated approach would involve encouraging the hospital staff and physicians to become even more engaged participants in the hospital's Facebook strategy. This would require a culture shift for some hospitals, including the hospital at the center of this study. Boone Hospital, like many other hospitals, disables Facebook on work computers and has done little to encourage staff members to interact with the

hospital's social networking site presence. Part of the explanation behind this is likely that hospitals fear that greater social network usage could lead to breaches of private patient information and potential violations of the federal HIPAA law. With such restrictive information sharing federal policies, hospitals are naturally uneasy about new communication methods built around freely sharing personal information. However, if a hospital were to properly educate its employees about how to interact on Facebook and still abide by HIPAA, a much broader employee base could become active online. This would lead to more experts and more specific information being available to the online community, thus better fulfilling Facebook fans' desire for information catered to their individual needs.

In addition to providing content that people want to use, hospitals must also consider when to provide that content so that the appropriate fans will even see it. For content aimed at younger users, such as information about birthing or pediatric services, truly any time of day is appropriate as these younger users are on Facebook at any time during the day.

However, posts that would interest older users, such as information about cardiac health or health screening procedures for seniors, are better left to the morning or evening. It is during these times when the majority of older users are active on Facebook. Because of how Facebook works, content posted in the middle of the day would likely be far down on the page by the time an older user logged on to check their wall. This is a critical point because the user groups can't possibly interact with and receive gratifications from content they never even see.

Regarding the impact that these pages are having on consumers, hospital Facebook page administrators may be disheartened to learn that their pages are not influencing their fan's future health decisions or altering their general opinions about the hospital. However, there are likely still ways to market the hospital to the broader community using the committed group of fans who are members of the Facebook page. For example, the administrator could encourage the existing fans to share the hospital's messages with their friends. In this way, hospital messages could reach beyond the committed fan base to the broader community, where there is greater opportunity to change opinions and influence future health care decisions.

The uses and gratifications obtained by the participants in this study do bear some similarity to those outlined in earlier Facebook research. Several previous studies described relationship maintenance as an important use people were obtaining from Facebook (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Foregger, 2008; Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007). This desire for relationship maintenance is reflected in this study's finding that social interaction and hospital information were often cited as obtained gratifications. In the interviews, these gratifications were often stated in the context of wanting to continue a relationship with the hospital, even when not present there. This was especially pronounced in former patients and former employees who wanted to keep up to date with activities and news at the hospital so they could continue to feel like part of the hospital community. Entertainment is also a Facebook gratification that was identified in earlier research (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010; Nyland, 2007) and also reflected in this study.

This study also identified social interaction as a dominant obtained gratification, which is similar to gratifications identified in other social networking site studies, (Ancu & Cozma, 2009; Raine, 2008).

Yet a number of other uses and gratifications identified in earlier studies were not voice here. Those included meeting people of the opposite sex, sexual attraction, affection and making new friends (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). Likewise, this study uncovered new uses and gratifications not identified in earlier research, such as job satisfaction and hospital information. These differences are likely explained because the earlier studies focused on interpersonal relationships on Facebook whereas this study looked at the relationship between individuals and an organization.

This findings of study also contrast sharply with research performed by consulting company YouGov that was conducted during a similar time frame. The YouGov study found that 57 percent of health consumers said a hospital's social media presence would strongly impact their decision whether or not to choose a hospital. However, the participants of this study largely rejected the idea that Facebook could impact that exact choice. The participants of this study said that their hospital choice had already been decided by previous experiences. More research is required to determine why the findings of these two studies differ so greatly. One possible explanation is that the population for this study focuses on one particular hospital and it is plausible that this hospital's Facebook fans are more set in their future health decisions than the population surveyed in the YouGov research.

To help Facebook administrators apply this research to their daily work, this research will conclude with a short list of practical tips for hospital fan page administrators. Following this advice should help hospital Facebook page operators communicate more effectively on Facebook.

- Don't market to your Facebook fans. They already love your hospital. Rather, encourage them to help you share your messages with their friends.
- Focus your Facebook content on your own hospital. Let people know what your hospital is doing and help them feel connected to the hospital community.
- Encourage hospital staff members to become fans of your hospital. It can increase their job satisfaction. They can also help share hospital messages to their own groups of friends.
- Cater many of your Facebook posts to women, as they make up a majority of your fans. But don't entirely forget about men, as they still make up a portion of your fans.
- Timing is important to get your posts read. If you want an older crowd to see your Facebook content, post it either in the morning or the evening. Content aimed at younger fans can be posted at any time during the day.

### **Limitations and future research**

There are a few limitations to this research that should be considered along with the findings. Future research into this topic should help further clarify these gaps and determine if the findings of this study can be verified.

One limitation is that this entire project focused on the Facebook fans of one hospital, Boone Hospital. To ensure the results are applicable to other hospitals, this study should be duplicated across a variety of health care institutions. A broader sample from different hospitals would provide interesting data as to whether the results of this study are applicable to other hospitals.

Another potential limitation of this study is that it was limited to people who had interacted with Boone Hospital's Facebook page at least two times. This screening was intended to help ensure the sample of interviewees had some knowledge of the page to contribute to this study. However, such a sampling measure may have also colored the data. It would be interesting to see if another study, without this screening method, would reinforce the findings in this study or lead to different conclusions.

As this was the first study specifically seeking to uncover the uses and gratifications for hospital Facebook pages, the qualitative design for this research was appropriate and allowed for an open inquiry that was largely guided by the participants. However, it would be interesting to design a quantitative study, perhaps with a larger sample size, and see if a different methodology would lead to similar results.

Another potential study would be to have Boone Hospital create a new social media strategy based on the suggestions in this research. A follow-up study would then seek to learn if the changes suggested in this research led to a more engaged fan base and what kind of feedback the fans had about the changes.



## APPENDIX

### Interview schedule

#### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?
- Why did you decide to become a fan?
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?

#### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts?
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?
- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?
- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?
- What is your overall impression of this page?
- Is there anything else you would like to share?

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age?
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?
- How often do you use Facebook?
- What times of day do you use Facebook?
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?
- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?

## Interview transcripts

### Community member 1

#### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
I become fans of pages that I like to read and hear about from other people. I think I saw it on someone else's page.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
I became a fan because I truly am a fan of Boone Hospital. I believe Boone Hospital is the best hospital around.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?  
I wanted news and updates about the hospital. Just to know what is going on there. That is important to me because I have had some experience with them and I just felt like I wanted to keep up with what's happening there.

#### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts? As much as possible. So, that means once or twice a week.
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?  
The things that the hospital accomplishes and the awesome news that patients share. Like when there is a story about a patient getting better or a family posts a picture of their new Boone baby. Those are always fun to see and it reminds me of my own experiences there and how Boone is such a good hospital.
- Do you comment or like posts on this page? Yes.
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?  
I like congratulations and celebrations of patients, giveaways and any new news. I like to see the happy things going on there. I like these because it makes me happy to see good things happening to other people. It's fun to read and, I think, it just reminds me of the care I had there and how I feel about them.
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends? I do.
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?  
I share the ones that are special news clippings when they talk about patients. I like to share happy things like this with my friends. I also sometimes repost the ones they have about giveaways and prizes.

- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?  
I feel like I am in the know about what is happening at the hospital, and that makes me feel like I am a part of everyday, day-to-day events that happen at Boone Hospital.
- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
It would be nice to see more health tips and research stories. Information from doctors about staying healthy and things like that would be nice.
- What is your overall impression of this page?  
I really just see the page as part of Boone Hospital and I love Boone Hospital. They have such great respect for anyone that walks through their doors.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?  
When I was there the hospital was clean, the staff was friendly and they were all very knowledgeable. I just feel very glad to have this hospital in our city.

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Female, 45 years old.
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?  
Boone took excellent care of my father before he passed away there and they were all very support to me and my family.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
I use it daily.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
Pretty much any time during the day. But mostly in the morning.
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?  
I don't remember, but it has been a while. More than a year.
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?  
Not every day, but it seems like more and more each day.
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?  
It hasn't really changed my opinion. I have had a really high opinion since the first time I walked through their doors. I really give them two thumbs up.

- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?  
I'd say my preference has really been decided already by my experience at Boone. It always has and always will be the hospital I go to.

## Community member 2

### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
My wife was being treated there and I decided to follow their page. She went in for a hernia fix and a gallbladder removal and ended up having internal bleeding and basically bled out two times. They had to open her up three times over a 24-hour period and she was in the ICU for 10 days. The nurses were unbelievable in the ICU and we ended up buying a house from one of the nurses who helped us out while we were in there. It was crazy how it all worked out.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
We are big fans of the hospital. I work at a local college in alumni relations and we have a lot of alums that work at the hospital. So I try to keep an eye out for any updates on any nurses from our nursing program.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan? Oh, stories about the new tower opening and patients that had gone in and used Boone. That sort of thing I guess. Just updates on what is going on with the hospital

### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts? I'd say 50-75 percent of the time.
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?  
Stories and personal reflections on people's experiences at the hospital. They're interesting to read and can, kind of, back up my own feelings that Boone is a top-notch hospital.
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?  
Definitely.
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?  
Comments, not so much. But I will like something if it's something I'm interested in. Mainly those personal stories are the ones I'd like.
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?  
Not sharing so much. Maybe I've done one or two, but I haven't done a lot of them. Mostly I just read them and then like them.
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?
- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?  
Just a way to stay connected and know what's going on at the hospital. We've

had both our kids at the hospital. My wife has been there several times. We think it's just top notch.

- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
Just updates on what's going on and what the latest in. Profiles on nurses and people who make the hospital go are always entertaining.
- What is your overall impression of this page?  
I think it's just really good. After all that went on, I have a soft spot for the medical people who help take care of people.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?  
I appreciate you asking me to participate. You guys do a great job.

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Male, 33
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?  
It's just like I said before with my wife being treated there and my kids were born there.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
Everyday. It's part of my job, so maybe 10 times a day.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
Pretty much anytime. I think the peak times for Facebook posting are 10-11 a.m. and 2-3:30 p.m. or something like that.
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?  
Yes, it was March 16, 2011. Yes, my wife was in Boone for 10 days at the time. I knew the new tower was opening. I just wanted to keep up with what is going on. I posted her story on there, I don't think it ever made it onto the page, but I posted what happened to her.
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?  
Whenever, they post something, I'm on it quite a bit.
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?  
If anything, it's made it stronger. It's just another way to stay connected.

- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?  
Not really. We know where we're going to go. It's not really a question of where we would go.

### **Community member 3**

#### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
I think it was in the recommendations or it was somewhere else, probably a friend had liked it.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
I had had good experiences there in the past as a patient and there was a lot of things happening there that I wanted to stay in the know about.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?  
I'm guessing it was just what was going on at Boone Hospital. They've had so much construction going on and I just thought I'd get more updated from the Boone Hospital page.

#### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts?  
I'd say probably once a week if I see a story that interests me.
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?  
The stories where patients talk about how they love the people that work there. There was that one story where they were talking about how wonderful the nurses were and I've been there a few times and I agree. That drew my attention.
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?  
Yes, I do that often. I do the like button.
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?  
It's those same ones about the patients talking about their nurses. The more personal ones are the ones I'm more likely to do that.
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?  
Yes, I do.
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?  
There was the one a few days ago about the lady and her husband who had cancer, I think he had brain cancer, and they were praising the nurses. I had shared the story and had my own little paragraph about the hospital and the nurses there.
- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?  
Probably that there are people that feel the same way I do about the hospital.



My family and I adore it. And see a lot of other people feel the same way. That's probably the biggest thing.

- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
No, I can't say off hand of anything I can think of.
- What is your overall impression of this page?  
I love it. I love that I have it in my feed and it's always there and updating me and sharing stories.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?  
I don't think so.

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Female, 33
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?  
With my second pregnancy, a little girl, they had to put a PIC line in. I was at home with an IV for my whole pregnancy. So I was admitted probably six different times total during my whole pregnancy. I also had my gall bladder and appendix removed. I've had too much experience there. Haha, but I absolutely adore it. The people, the nurses there, just made the experience a lot better than it could have been.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
Every day.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
I have a daycare so I'm on there a lot communicating with the parents, so all during the daytime hours.
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?  
That's a good question, it's probably been a years since I noticed they've been on there.
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?  
Several times a week.
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?  
No, not at all.

- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?  
I don't think so. I'll always go there and I'll recommend Boone Hospital to everyone I know. But I don't see it every influencing me in the opposite direction. I love it there.

#### **Community member 4**

##### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
I actually just did a search to see if they had a Facebook page and found out that was the case and went from there.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
I've had good experiences there in the past. So, yeah, I was a fan anyway.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?  
I basically thought that I would get periodic updates of interest, not only on the hospital itself but also health tips. That type of thing.

##### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts?  
I know for a fact I just did probably yesterday or the day before on the post about the new magazine and then read through that. If they have something there I would normally go ahead and click through the link.
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?  
The new magazine. I like the articles and I like the layout.
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?  
I believe I did do the like button on the magazine. I'm pretty sure I did.
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?  
I have not yet, but I certainly would.
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?
- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?  
Another source for health-related information and just information on a choice that I personally use myself.
- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
The ones I've seen so far I'm really satisfied with. I can't think of anything off hand... I'm always interested to see anything that deals with cardiac health, that type of thing.

- What is your overall impression of this page?  
Overall, it's been very good I'm satisfied.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?  
I think it's very professional. I personally think that it would be a positive benefit to them if they would maybe emphasize a little bit more the connection with Barnes Jewish Hospital. I have had positive experiences there and it has a very high reputation. It's a very, very well known hospital. Usually it's up in the top 12-20 hospitals in the country each year in national surveys and national polls. I just think being a part of that health care system is a positive feature of Boone.

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Male, 71.
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?  
I've been a cardiac patient since 1998.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
I usually check it each day.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
Probably more in the afternoon. I check in the morning, too, but I do more reading things in the afternoon.
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?  
It's been less than a month, probably approximately two weeks.
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?  
A couple of times a week. I haven't seen a whole lot. I don't think I'd want to be getting 10-12 posts per day. But I'd say one or two per day is reasonable.
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?  
It's just reinforced my positive opinion.
- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?  
I certainly imagine that would be possible. I'm not even sure how, exactly. But just to continue using the services and how it reinforces an already positive opinion that I have.

## Community member 5

### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
I think I saw somebody else liked the page. Probably a friend.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
I am a Boone Hospital fan in real life.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?  
Honestly I didn't have any expectations but because I've had good experiences there I guess I thought maybe they'll put some more information out there.

### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts?  
I have done that a few times. Mostly more recently since the new tower opened it has been looking at some of the videos and stuff related to that. I also looked at a couple of the Boone Stories because I've known the people who have submitted those, so I clicked on them to read the whole thing.
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?  
Just here recently, I've really enjoyed interacting with the new tower opening, for personal reasons. My daughter was interviewed when we went over there to the grand opening so I was spending a lot of time to see if her interview made it on there and stuff like that. But just what's going on at the hospital is really interesting and then I do like to read the Boone success stories. Both of my kids were born at the hospital, but that was before Facebook, but I would have loved to have an outlet because I received such great care it would have been great to have a place to go to tell the world about it. My kids are five and nine.
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?  
Mostly like. I don't do a whole lot of commenting.
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?  
Probably those ones that I had some connection with, when I knew the author of the Boone Stories.
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?  
Not really.
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?

- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?  
Just more insight into what's going on there at the hospital. I am very involved in the community and just knowing what's going on around me is important. I like to stay informed.
- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
Not than I can think of. I'm trying to think off the top of my head if there are posts with health-related information or health-related articles. More information you can use to be healthy would be good.
- What is your overall impression of this page?  
I like it, it is kept current and it is engaged with the audience by posting frequently, but not too frequently. It's kept up to date and fresh and doesn't just sit out there. To me, too frequent posting would mean more than once per day, for sure.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?  
No, that will do it.

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Female, 37
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any? I had both of my kids there and I am actually a Boone Baby myself.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
It is daily, at least.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
I'm usually early in the morning, then I'll check it a couple of times during the day, but not so much in the evening.
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?  
No, not exactly, but it's probably been a year at least. I don't even know if it's that old yet.
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?  
It seems like a few times per week.
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?  
No, I already had a very high opinion so it certainly hasn't negatively impacted it either.

- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?  
Yeah, I think learning what new services the hospital has and learning what WELLAWARE is offering, for sure.

## Community member 6

### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
I think I was clicking on another physician's links and I saw some of the Boone links.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
I had worked there in the past and I wanted to stay up to date on the things going on there.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?  
Well, I mean I'm away from Columbia and I was mainly curious about the remodeling and the new wing and the things that were happening to the hospital, just the big news. I was looking for an easy way to follow that.

### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts?  
Not all the time, maybe one out of four, or less even. Not all the time.
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?  
I was a physician there before I moved to Hawaii, so whenever any of the specialties or the physicians are featured, or any details about what they are doing or specialty programs. And certainly information about the remodeling and the new wing. The hospital staff as well. I know the hospital Facebook page focuses a lot on community outreach and special interest stories, but I kind of like things that relate to the physicians more.
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?  
I really haven't. I just kind of scan it. I don't do that very often. I'm a passive reader.
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?  
I don't.
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?
- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?  
I think there's a possibility someday that I'll return to Columbia to work. And I just feel like it keeps me in the loop as far as what's going on with the hospital



and what the news is. It just kind of gives me a feel for the scope of what they're doing.

- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
The things that interest me may not be what they are targeting. But there is certainly room for more specialty news and there is a lot of technology that certainly would be interesting to the community too. What they can do now with nuclear medicine and some of the interventional radiology things. There's a lot of cutting-edge things like the cancer screening programs. Just the details of what is clinically available is kind of my interest. And just recently there was a story about Dr. Brian Johnson, those are the kinds of things that I like.
- What is your overall impression of this page?  
It's appropriate. It's interesting and appropriate and good quality.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?  
I don't believe so.

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Male, 43.
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?  
I worked there as a physician for about four years before moving away.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
Every day or every other day.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
No, anytime that I can get to it.
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?  
Probably about a year, it hasn't been the whole time I've been here. So probably about a year.
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?  
Occasionally, maybe once a week.
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?  
No, I think Boone is a good organization and it portrays Boone as a pretty savvy organization. No, I don't think it changed anything.

- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?  
I don't think so. Boone would be my hospital of choice in Columbia anyway. But it portrays a good image.

## Community member 7

### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
I'm certain I looked it up.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
I had been a patient.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?  
I like to be in the know about what's going on in the community, about what they're doing. I thought there might be tips. I really just wanted to be in the know. I work in marketing. I just like to know what everybody's doing because who knows when I might need to collaborate with that.

### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts?  
I've probably did it two or three times in the year I've been a fan.
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?  
I'm trying to remember what it was. I think one might have been a story about somebody. I might have clicked on if there was some tips for keeping your child healthy. Or if it's flu season and there were some things you need to know about flu season. Those are the type of things I'd click on. It would be based on the intro. If the intro made it seem like it was user-friendly and relevant, then I would have clicked on it.
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?  
I have a couple times. It's not something I make a big habit out of.
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?  
I know one time I made a comment when the first magazine came out. I wrote on the wall that I had received the magazine because I didn't know how I got it. But I liked it. So I wrote on the wall that I liked the magazine, on the comment where the magazine was linked. I remember I wrote that. But I very rarely use the like button. For full disclosure, I probably use social media differently than most people do. A lot of people use it as a social setting. But I use it more to be able to do my job better. So, if I would like something, it would be just if the article was really well written or was just really useful.
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?  
I don't think I have. I've used the share button sometimes, but I don't think I've shared Boone. The things I usually share are events, recipes or call to actions.

- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?
- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?  
I think Boone actually does a good job of giving the community updates, of, “Here’s how we’re involved in the community, here’s what we’re doing for the community,” and that’s probably what I get most from Boone’s page. I like to know what they’re doing and why.
- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
Just posts that are very useful. I like the useful posts. I’m a mom and I’m a runner. So anything on those two topics automatically get my attention. So if it’s relevant for sports medicine or for moms. But anybody could say that about their own preferences. But anything that could grab my attention and I could say, “I can own this, because I believe in it,” that’s what I’d look at, that’s what I’d share, that’s what I’d like.
- What is your overall impression of this page?  
I think they do a pretty good job. I’d give them an eight out of ten. Which coming from me is pretty impressive.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Female, 35.
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?  
I’ve been a patient there before. I have a Boone Baby.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
I’d say many times a day.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
Around 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center’s page?  
Oh gosh, probably close to a year.
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?  
Not quite once a week.
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?  
No. I liked Boone Hospital before. They’ve been my provider for 15 years. I love

Boone Hospital.

- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?

Yes, I definitely do. I assume if it's on a Facebook post then it's been approved by the health care community. It's not just the marketing department guy saying, "I think this is a great idea." I assume it's one of your doctors approving all these messages. So if I get a great tip... I think of sun safety and a post talking about moles and said, "here's a mole you need to watch out for, and if you have one of those you need to go get it checked." They haven't used a post like that. But if there was a post that came up like that, I might say, "oh my gosh, that's a warning sign, I need to go check that out."

## Community member 8

### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
I probably just did a search on Facebook for Boone, or I saw a friend who had it on their page through posting and I became a fan that way. I don't know.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
We just had a baby girl at Boone a little more than five months ago and it was around then that I became a fan. It was that experience that led me to become a fan.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?  
The term "expecting" doesn't really play into it. I wasn't really expecting anything. I just wanted to join the conversation, as they say. I think it was just that I really liked Boone and it was the right thing to do, to like the page.

### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts?  
Honestly, that's probably rare. The subject line is really the key. If it's exciting or compelling in some way. I certainly would if it's affected me in some way. General updates, I probably wouldn't.
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?  
Not that I recall. I don't know if the birthing center does much, but I think that would be a pretty positive spin to their Facebook page. I don't know if they're currently doing anything like that. But it's generally what people like to see, new life.
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?  
Um, no. If they ask a direct question, like, 'what's your opinion?' I find myself more inclined to participate that way. But if it's just a declaration or a statement or a link to a blog or something, I usually don't.
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?  
No.
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?
- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?  
I think that there's something. Not that it's a great deal and not that it needs to be, but I think it's just an awareness that I know if something is going on and if

it's noteworthy to the Boone Hospital world, then I'm going to catch it.

- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
It's hard to hone down, but I think that just overall things that matter to overall health might be compelling and then just packaged in a pretty exciting way in the header.
- What is your overall impression of this page?  
I think it's good. It's a positive experience, I think.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Male, 32.
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?  
I had a daughter there a little more than five months ago.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
Daily.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
I use it many times of day, any time of day.
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?  
I have no idea. I would imagine probably around six months.
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?  
I don't know that I recall. Nothing is jumping out at me that says, 'oh, that's Boone Hospital's Facebook.'
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?  
No.
- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?  
No, being born there and having my daughter born there, the page isn't really going to change the way I make decisions about health care at all. They've already proved themselves, if that makes sense.

## Community member 9

### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
I searched it.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
I would say when we were talking about it at the Foundation board meeting is when I became a fan. I wasn't really aware of it until then.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?  
Have you looked at my page yet? Have you seen it? I have every intention of following these pages, but because I end up with so many friends on my personal page and then I have 3,000 and some odd on my company page, I can barely keep up with my stuff, not to mention look at anyone else's.

### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts?
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?
- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?
- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
Well, I'll tell you what I don't want. What I see so many people doing now is only asking questions and I think that whole, "what do you want on your hotdog?" I'll just give you an example, the QVC, Lane Bryant, all these companies now want you to be engaged, but asking what you want on your hotdog, or how you think the weather is today. All of those things kind of wear me out. But I think that it would be nice to see recognition of donors. And it would be nice if there was a way for people to share their positive experiences and that would just create a positive feeling for the page.
- What is your overall impression of this page?



- Is there anything else you would like to share?

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Female, 51.
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?  
My sons are 22 and 23 and they were both Boone Babies. So that's the first start with them. Through the years, they've taken care of my parents with medical issues and other surgeries that I've had myself. They've just been a solid hospital. I think their values and ethics are in line with what we want to see in the health care profession. When I was asked to serve on their Foundation board back in 2003, it seemed like the right thing to do. I wanted to support the hospital because that hospital does a lot of great things in our community.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
I used to get on it several times a day. But today I just noticed I hadn't been on it in three days.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
I try to get on it in the afternoon.
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?  
I do not. I would say when we were talking about it at the Foundation board meeting is when I became a fan. I wasn't really aware of it until then. So it really hasn't been more than a year is what I'm thinking.
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?  
This is terrible, but never. If you look at my page, I have almost 3,000 Facebook friends. I'm 14 people away from having 3,000. Do you know how fast it goes? The feeds go so fast I can't keep up with anybody. And yet, you know what, I honestly know all those people.
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?
- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?  
I don't think it could.

## Employee 1

### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
I work at Boone Hospital so I liked the page so I could get updates and information.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
I wanted to see what they put on there and maybe get information that I might not get from my Boone Hospital email.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?  
When I only work three days a week, sometimes I feel like I miss information. So just communications from the hospital.

### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts?  
Gosh, I don't even remember when I liked the page, but I clicked on it quite a bit when the Boone Family Birthplace commercials came out. I was looking for updates on those. And then when those came out I'd go back quite a bit and look at those commercials. And when the new patient tower opened, I'd go back quite a bit to look at the pictures and stuff. Other than that, I did do a contest too. If you responded to something, you got Providence Bowl tickets last week, so I clicked on that. So I'd say I've clicked on the links maybe 10 times.
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?  
Like I said, seeing the commercials, advertisements and contests. Things relating to the community.
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?  
Yeah, I do sometimes.
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?  
Gosh, I don't know. I've liked a few of the comments, but I don't remember what every one was. I liked a few when they did the patient tower opening. They made some comments and I liked them.
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?  
Oh yeah.
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?  
I've shared the videos and the commercials they posted. And I shared the link for the new patient tower opening.

- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?  
Just updates about the hospital and sometimes information about the community that I wasn't aware of.
- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
I like getting information about the hospital that I didn't know before and that I wouldn't have found out through work.
- What is your overall impression of this page?  
It's good, like on a scale of 1-5 I'd probably say a 4.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?  
No, I think that's it.

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Female, 36.
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?  
I've worked at Boone for four years.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
Daily.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
Twice, usually in the morning and at night.
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?  
I don't really remember, but for more than a year. It was probably last fall around the time when the Boone Baby ads came out.
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook? Probably a couple times a week. It depends on when they post and when I check. I don't go back real far when I'm on there. I have several friends who post a lot, so it takes a while to go through everything. If the hospital posted something earlier than that, I might not see it.
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?  
No, it hasn't.
- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?  
No, I don't think so.

## Employee 2

### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
I don't really remember, but I think I saw some other people were responding to a contest, so I did that too. I think that's how I became a fan.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
Because I work there. I wanted to see what they had on there and just to show that I work there.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?  
I'm not really sure, I guess just updates of what was going on and to find out what is going on with fellow employees and stuff like that.

### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts?  
I think I have two or three times.
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?  
Not too long ago there was a post about one of the respiratory therapists winning some sort of award, so that was interesting. And of course the giveaways, those are fun too. Because I've won before.
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?  
I don't think I ever have on this site.
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?  
I don't think I ever have.
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?
- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?  
Well, let's see. I can tell you I obtained Providence Bowl tickets and then I saw another concert, it was a jazz concert of some sort a year ago. I've actually obtained things rather than just information. Other than that, I've just obtained information about what's going on at Boone. But it is information that is similar to what I would have gotten from other places. I can't think of any posts that are any different that the information I would have gotten through the newsletters.

- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
I don't know. I think it's doing fine how it is.
- What is your overall impression of this page?  
I think it's pretty good. More posts I think would be better. Because it seems like it's just two or three a week. And that's probably on a good week. So really, more posts.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Female, 35.
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?  
I have worked here for three years and I'm a flex nurse.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
Almost constantly, not really constantly though.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
Probably four or five times a day. It could be anytime during the day.
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?  
I'm not really sure, but I'm going to guess a year.
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?  
I'm going to go with two or three times a week.
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?  
No, I don't think so.
- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?  
I suppose it could. I can't say for sure, but maybe.

### Employee 3

#### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
I think I saw somebody else's post where they were a fan.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
Just because I'm a fan of Boone Hospital. I work there and I like working there. I like to read the feedback stories about the patients and it makes me feel good about what I do.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?  
I guess I've been a fan for quite a while. I was expecting updates on the new addition and that kind of thing.

#### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts?  
I'd probably say over 50 percent of the time.
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?  
I can't think of anything right now. Well, probably the stories about patients are what I like the best. Because it makes me feel good about what the hospital does in general.
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?  
A few times.
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?  
I might have done the like button on a few posts where someone I know has taken care of that patient in the past, maybe.
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?  
No, I don't usually use that one.
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?
- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?  
Just the reassurance that the hospital seems to have a good satisfaction rate amongst the community and we have quite a few nice success stories from all areas of the hospital. I don't think I would have known about this without the Facebook page, especially if they are in a department I don't work in.
- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
I don't know that Boone would ever make a stand on health care reform issues

or things like that, but it would be nice to know what some of their opinions might be like that. Maybe candidates they might support. Just out of curiosity. I guess that's something as a hospital they don't like to stand behind and support. Especially with the changes in Medicare reimbursement, it might be kind of interesting.

- What is your overall impression of this page?  
I'm pretty impressed. I'm impressed that there is somebody who seems to have enough interest to keep it up to date. They keep coming out with new stories. It's not something they just started and then kind of dwindled away. It seems to be pretty current and continues to make posts instead of just one every quarter or something.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?  
I don't think so.

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Female, 47.
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?  
I've been at Boone 18 of my 20 years of nursing.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
Usually once a day or once every other day.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
Usually just during the evenings when I have some time.
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?  
It's been several months ago, I don't know exactly though.
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?  
I guess it depends on when they have a featured story or something. Maybe once every month or couple months.
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?  
I don't think it has. It's just more of a way of keeping up with our clientele and it's a way to communicate with people.
- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?  
Well, I think I'll always go to Boone Hospital because I work there. So I don't know if that's a fair question.

## Employee 4

### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
I saw on the side that it was suggested I become a fan. I think it was because some people I knew had also joined.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
I work there. I think I just wanted to see some updates about the things happening there.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?  
I expected to see information that probably more that the public would see, rather than as an employee. There's definitely a different... Sometimes I just like to see what the public sees. It's like I pretend I'm not an employee and I just see what's out there. See the face that Boone is putting out to the world.

### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts?  
Quite a bit, most of the time I do.
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?  
Have they been posting things lately because I haven't seen many? I think I remember seeing patient stories and I enjoy those. It makes me feel good that we're doing the right thing. We're making the patient feel good. They will come back.
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?  
Yeah, I think so.
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?  
Those patient stories are the ones I would like.
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?  
I don't think I have yet, with Boone.
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?
- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?  
I think it just makes me feel good to be apart of something so big. In my job, sometimes it's hard to get that feeling because we work from home. We're not, you know... There's not stories about us. No one is going to call in and say, "I really like what this transcriptionist did for us today." But I think that, that's what



I like best about it.

- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
Well, it seems like every week there is a special week for some group. I think pain management was this week or week last week. Just bringing up things like that. Something that not everyone would see.
- What is your overall impression of this page?  
I like it. I'm going to have to check, because honestly I haven't been seeing it much. I don't know if there is something going on where I'm not getting it. Maybe I'm just not going back to it. Sometimes, if you get too much stuff on and you don't go back far enough you don't see it.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Female, 49.
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?  
I've worked at Boone as a transcriptist for almost 11 years.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
Several times a day.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
Especially in the morning, several times in the morning and then again in the evening.
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?  
It was several months back, before the new tower opened.
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?  
Sometimes, but I haven't seen very many lately. It used to be more, or it seemed like it at least.
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?  
I don't think so.
- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?  
No, I pretty much know where I will go. I mean, I work there and I know it's a good place to go, so I don't think it changed my opinion.

## Employee 5

### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
I think it was because of a friend. They had it on their Facebook and I was like, “Hey, I work there. I want to know what’s going on.” So that’s how I became a fan. It probably was another employee, but I can’t tell you who exactly.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
I think it was because I work here. And, honestly, the stories that have come out of the marketing department are so good and so personal and I really, really like them.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?  
I don’t know. Working off site and not in the hospital, we feel a little bit disconnected from the hospital because we spend most of our time here. So, finding out some of the things that are going on was going to be a benefit. For example, the employee events, like during February there is heart month, or the other ones. So it was just kind of knowing what’s going on out there. Whether I participate or not, at least I know about them. And again I like the stories, the personal stories.

### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center’s Facebook posts?  
Not as often as I would like. A lot of that is just time constraints—family, work, having my job. I’m just busy. And usually I’m using my smart phone and a lot of time the link just takes too long or I can’t see it very well. The majority of the time I used my phone for Facebook.
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?  
I loved when the tower was going up. I loved seeing all the advertising for the tower which just stirred me to no end, I just loved that. And again the stories of people. It just makes what we do more personal. You just hear about what people go through, some of their trials, some of their joys and it just feels good. A lot of times we hear the things that aren’t so good, that’s just the nature of the role I am in. So to hear some of the things that go on and people’s stories that affect their lives, it’s meaningful to me.
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?  
I “like,” usually I’ll “like.” I don’t know if I’ve ever commented. I don’t do that real often.
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?  
I just like it, I don’t know. It’s funny because I have five kids and they’ll say, “You

'like' something, you always 'like' something." And I'll say, "Well, I do, and I wouldn't do it if I didn't mean it." So there is meaning behind me liking something. I wouldn't just do it just because the button is there.

- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?  
I do.
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?  
I don't recall any that I have done. Maybe with the tower opening I may have done that just because that was just such a big deal and I wanted everybody to know what was going on and become a part of it.
- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?  
Just better insight with our patients and how they are. Some of the stories I've seen, I've though, "oh that is just so cool." I don't think it helps my work, unless it's just being more satisfied with my employer. I know most employees don't have access to it on their computers, and I think that's a really good thing. I think it could be used in their jobs more and I think it could be used more in that way as time goes on. I kind of got off topic there.
- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
I think it's just such a good way to reach a population that you don't get to through the newspaper or through television. So I think doing what Boone is doing and advertising events and opportunities to do things, you know, like races and health screenings, and then the good things that happen. I like all of that stuff. I won't know if I would change what they're doing.
- What is your overall impression of this page?  
I think it's great, I think it's really good. I'm kind of jealous that someone gets to do that. It's like, what a really fun job. But they do it really well.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Female, 53.
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?  
I've worked here for 10 years. In my current role for 10 years and previously in administration.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
I use it daily, several times a day.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
Probably in the evenings I use it more because I have more time to see what my

friends are up to and my family and kids are up to.

- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?  
I have been a fan for eight to 10 months.
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?  
Usually everyday. I check it, I'm almost always checking it.
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?  
No, my opinion is I'm a huge fan. I'm really proud of it. I'm just proud that it's out there and we have this avenue to communicate.
- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?  
Nope. If I didn't work here, maybe. But no it won't influence my health care decisions. I'm just really proud of Boone, so I promote it wherever I am and hopefully people see it from my page and I hope it reaches a few people it might not have.

## Employee 6

### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
I looked it up and found it.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
Basically because I've been a fan of Boone Hospital the whole time I've been around. Just between working there off and on for the last 15 years. I've been back three times.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?  
Just general information about the hospital and what services they have to offer. That kind of stuff.

### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts?  
Not often because I actually see them on the website that I have to go to, with work. We get it there to. But it's nice to be able to get it from home.
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?  
Information about education. Education for patients, like things they can go to like diabetes education that people can go to, that kind of stuff. I have family members who have issues and they can actually log on from Canada to go and take a look at that kind of information. I share that kind of information from this hospital with my family members.
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?  
Oh yeah. Like, definitely. Comment, a couple of times.
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?  
Things that pertain to me, or stuff that I've read that I think is important to other people. When I push the like button, I want to share it with other people.
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?  
No, I haven't.
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?
- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?  
Exactly what I told you before. It's information that I can pass on to my family members or other people with issues where they can get education on how to take care of different medical issues.

- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
No, not really. Just educational stuff. I'd like to see more education done. Free education for people with medical issues. There are a lot of people out there who won't go to stuff because they have to pay for it. And if they knew that it was free to them, they may actually show up and go to some of these things.
- What is your overall impression of this page?  
On Facebook, I don't like the way that it's set up as much as... That's not the right way to put it. It's not as easily accessible as I thought it could be. It's hard to navigate for people who don't spend a lot of time on a computer. On Boone Hospital posts, I'd say most of it's pretty good. Some of it is just drivel that nobody wants to listen to. But it doesn't matter where you go, you are going to get that from every website. What I don't find interesting is how much money Boone is spending on their new wings. You know, that just aggravates me because it means my income isn't going to be as good as it could be. But, that's just the way everybody is. It doesn't matter, that's money that has already been spent. It just kind of makes people think not as highly as they could. People don't need to know how much money was spent. They really don't. You know, if you are part of the board, yeah. But if you are Joe Blow on the street, I don't want to hear how much that tower cost.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?  
I'd like to see more of them advertising what's available. Not just Boone but everybody. Education is one of the biggest things there is. And you're not going to get anybody doing anything if you're not telling them what's available. It's classes. Education to me is huge. If you know what's there and you know what you can do, it makes a huge difference.

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Female, 57.
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?  
I work and I've been there since 1996, on and off.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
Everyday.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
Usually, early, early first thing in the morning.
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?  
No, I couldn't tell you. Probably the whole time I've been at Boone. Or however long they've had it open.

- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?  
Not that much, maybe just every so often.
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?  
Nope.
- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?  
No. I don't go anywhere else.

## Employee 7

### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
I think it was some of my friends became a fan of it and then I became a fan of it.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
I think it might have been when they were doing the new tower promoting and stuff like that. I think after I signed a beam I might have done it.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?  
I'm not really sure, I think just updates on the construction status. Just pictures and cool things that were going on in the departments.

### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts?  
I would say maybe two or three out of every 10 times. It depends if it is specific to my interests.
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?  
I just recently went to flex and they were having information about events that we could go to, maybe I would click on those. If there were ever education things on there. A lot of the stuff... Like when patients share their stories, I click on those. Because I want to see if it was someone I had taken care of to see if it involves me. I work in Maternal Child Health. I see those things printed off, someone will print it off Facebook and put it in the employee bathroom so we can read it.
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?  
I know I've liked a couple of the stories that people have posted.
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?  
I usually like the "job well done" stories I've liked and maybe commented on. You don't want to comment too much because you don't want in any way to violate HIPAA. I feel pretty leery to actually comment, but the liking seems pretty innocent. HIPAA is a concern. They did really discourage Facebook use in our department and to be leery of what we post on Facebook. And now it's pretty funny that now the hospital has its own Facebook page. I think it was last March when things maybe changed. I think they had brought up Facebook in one of the staff meetings but they haven't really brought up Facebook since then.
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?  
I don't think I ever have.
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?



- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?  
Just a lot of information on the new tower. And a lot of pictures of things that happen like the book fairs or nurses week, stuff like that. Stuff that's happening within the hospital. I don't know if it really is useful but I like it just to keep updated. Just for fun.
- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
Maybe, highlight a different area of the hospital each month or something, or each week. Give each department it's own meet and greet so that way we can all become more familiar with each other. We each all know and see our own Environmental Services staff and you pretty much know the same dietary staff but when you call to another floor, you're not sure who's who and what's what. It would be nice and make people feel proud of their floors.
- What is your overall impression of this page?  
I think it's good. It's more than what I expected it to be.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?  
I think just highlighting different areas is the main thing, that's my good idea.

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Female, 26.
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?  
I've been a nurse there for about four and a half years. I also had my daughter there.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
Oh god, probably everyday for hours a day.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
It's something I do right before I go to bed. It's something I do when I'm bored. It's just there. I have it on my iPhone so it's always with me. I just pop it open. I'll be like, "Oh look, let's see what's been going on on Facebook in the last half an hour," just because I have it available. If I didn't have it on my phone, I don't think I'd use it as much.
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?  
Probably a year.
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?  
I want to say, I don't know, twice a week lately.

- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?

I mean, maybe a little, I guess. It's like, "Oh cool, they're trying to keep up with the times," I guess. I think that people were resistant to Facebook at first, but now it seems like every business has a Facebook page. It's like they are trying to stay on track. It makes it seem a little more active and young, I don't know.

- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?

I think it would for the general public, because nothing negative about the hospital gets posted on there. So if only good things get posted then it could influence someone. But I like Boone, I would never get my health care at the university. I've had experiences. And I know I would just always stay at Boone.

## Employee 8

### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
I think it was some one I knew, probably one of the other people who works here became a fan. I saw that and decided to fan it too.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
I've worked here for 12 years. Has it really been that long? No, it was November so 11 years, and I just think the world of this place. It's been good to me. It's a good place to work.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?  
Updates, mostly. I think stuff going on here. Maybe some pictures.

### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts?  
I hardly ever click those. I read them, but most of the time I don't have time to go in and read it all.
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?  
I like it when the patients have their Boone Stories about their care. It's interesting to read about those and see who was caring for them.
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?  
Sometimes, I do.
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?  
Yeah, I think, mostly it's those patient stories.
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?  
No, I don't really ever click there.
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?
- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?  
I think its mostly just knowing what's happening at the hospital and knowing that the community appreciates what we do and who we are at Boone. It makes me feel good about what we do, like I know we're taking good care of people.
- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
I don't know, I think I like what is on there. That's pretty much it. I don't really think about it much. I mean, it's fine like it is.

- What is your overall impression of this page?  
I think it's nice, it's a nice way to stay up on what's going on and to stay on top of everything happening in the different parts of the hospital.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?  
No, I don't think so.

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Female, 42.
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?  
I started there as a tech in 1996, I left for a few years but came back and I'm still here.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
Almost daily, sometimes I don't go on it on the weekend, but most days I check it.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
Mostly in the morning, before I come here. I can't check it here because it's blocked on the computers. I guess I can understand why they do that, you know, I think a lot of people would be checking their pages.
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?  
I'm not sure probably sometime close to when the new tower was being built. So maybe during the spring.
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?  
Probably one or two a week.
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?  
I wouldn't say so, I think I know my opinion. It hasn't changed that.
- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?  
No, I already know where I'm going to be going if I ever need help.

## Employee 9

### Why they became fans (expected gratifications)

- How did you come to become a fan this page?  
I think I saw a link to it from my aunt's page. She had had a surgery here and then became a fan, that's how I saw it. It was surprising she knew about it before me because I work here.
- Why did you decide to become a fan?  
I just wanted to show everyone that I work here.
- What did you expect to get from becoming a fan?  
Just news about programs at the hospital and events that are happening. I don't always know everything happening here, it's like I miss things sometimes, so I thought I might get updates through this.

### What they receive from being fans (obtained gratifications)

- How often do you click the links on Boone Hospital Center's Facebook posts?  
I do it sometimes, maybe once every other week.
- What are your favorite things posted on this page?  
I like when people upload photos of their Boone Babies. I did that once and then the hospital wrote back. It was just saying that my son looked like he was having fun. That was fun to do that, it was just cool that they interacted like that.
- Do you comment or like posts on this page?  
Yeah, I do like some posts.
- What kinds of posts do you comment or like?  
It's not too often, but I like the ones about kids and tips you can use to keep your kids healthy. That's what I'm interested in now, with my son, and so that's really what I look for.
- Do you share posts on this page with your personal Facebook friends?  
No, I don't really use that.
- What kinds of posts do you share with your friends?
- What do you feel you obtain from being a fan of this page?  
I think it's mainly just a fun diversion for me. When I'm on Facebook I use it more to see what my friends are doing. For companies and places like the hospital, I like more when they do things that are, you know, fun or entertaining. That's what I'm looking for.

- What kinds of posts would you like to see more of?  
I liked the videos that were on there recently, with the doctors talking about shots. I thought those were interesting and it would be good to see more like that.
- What is your overall impression of this page?  
It's really good, I think it makes Boone look good.
- Is there anything else you would like to share?  
Nope.

#### Secondary questions

- What is your sex and age? Female, 26.
- What is your experience with Boone Hospital Center in the past, if any?  
I started working there this year, in January.
- How often do you use Facebook?  
Wow, all the time, every day really.
- What times of day do you use Facebook?  
It's really a lot of times each day. I use my phone to check it, mostly.
- How long have you been a fan of Boone Hospital Center's page?  
Since my aunt was here, that was, I think, in March.
- How often do you see posts from Boone Hospital Center on Facebook?  
A couple times a week, it seems often. They're active on Facebook, which is good.
- Has this Facebook page altered your opinion of Boone Hospital Center in any way? How so?  
Not really, I think it's helped a bit just to get more familiar with it and some of the services. But it hasn't changed my opinion.
- Will Boone Hospital Center's Facebook page influence your health care decisions in the future?  
No. I can't really see that.

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