

SPEAKING UP IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THE EFFECTS OF
COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION AND INTERNET SELF-EFFICACY ON
USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

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ABSTRACT

The act of communication is an act of volition, mediated by one's level of fear associated with real or anticipated communication. Communication researchers call this fear communication apprehension and have traditionally recognized two forms: written communication and oral communication apprehension, both of which affect the amount an individual is likely to communicate. With the advent of communication via the computer, or computer-mediated communication (CMC), Scott and Rockwell (1997) and Scott and Timmerman (2005) have suggested a third form of communication apprehension: computer mediated communication apprehension.

To test the validity of this new construct, this study tests writing apprehension, oral communication apprehension, computer apprehension, computer-mediated communication apprehension and a related measure of Internet self-efficacy — or one's belief in his or her capability capabilities to achieve tasks online — to see which of these constructs best explain use of social networking websites. The study also examines the effects of gender on the use of social networking website use.