

Public Abstract

First Name:Kara

Middle Name:

Last Name:Krisanic

Adviser's First Name:Shelly

Adviser's Last Name:Rodgers

Co-Adviser's First Name:

Co-Adviser's Last Name:

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Title:Motivations and Impression Management: Predictors of Social Networking Site Use and User Behavior

The question of how and why consumers use media is grounded in the uses and gratifications theory. This paper applies the uses and gratifications theory to the new media technology social networking sites in an effort to better understand what motivates consumers to use the sites. Additionally, this paper ties to the broader discipline of online advertising in determining the extent to which consumer's motivations for using Facebook can predict consumer's behaviors toward advertisements on the site. An online survey was used to measure study participants' intensity of Facebook use, their motivations for using the site, including a motivation referred to as impression management, and their behavioral intentions toward approaching and avoiding advertisements on the site.

Findings reveal that participants' Facebook use can be predicted only when participants are motivated by the desire to connect with others and be entertained. Findings also reveal that when participants are motivated to shop and to inquire about products, they are more likely to approach Facebook advertisements and less likely to avoid Facebook advertisements. This research expands upon past uses and gratifications research by applying the theory to the newer media technology Facebook, while also relating the theory to online advertising research. By understanding what motivates consumers to use Facebook and behave in certain ways towards advertisements on the site, Web site managers and advertisers alike can better tailor site functions and advertising messages to both reflect and gratify consumer's motivations to using the site.