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THE ROLE OF FACEBOOK IN THE FORMATION OF
ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

A Thesis in
Sociology
by
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ABSTRACT

Taking together several recent trends including the rise in the number of young people attending college and delaying family formation processes, the decline of traditional modes of relationship formation, and the proliferation of internet technologies and online social networks on college campuses, it stands to reason that many young adults may turn to the internet as a means for facilitating the process of finding partners. Current research on the role of contemporary online social networks in the formation of romantic relationships scarce and there exists almost no research on explicit ways in which college students use the internet to initiate relationships. The aim of this project is two-fold: first, to explore the role of Facebook in college students’ formation of romantic relationships; and, secondly, to investigate the consequences of social networking use on the likelihood of being currently involved in a romantic relationship. I analyze data from an online survey of 875 respondents in a probability sample of one university campus. Facebook use on college campuses is nearly ubiquitous and college students use Facebook in several ways in their search for romantic partners. In regards to current relationship status, students who are currently single use Facebook more than do their partnered counterparts, confirming that Facebook is used as a tool to facilitate rather than maintain romantic partnerships.
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INTRODUCTION

Several recent trends have altered the methods among young adults for finding relationships and forming families in the United States. Delayed family formation processes, extended time taken to pursue education and self-enrichment endeavors, and an increasing sense freedom of choice for partners and family structures are markers of “emerging adulthood” (Arnett 2004). Emerging adulthood is a theoretical period of time following adolescence that is increasingly being recognized by family scholars as a distinct and influential life stage for many young Americans. It is important to note that emerging adulthood is seemingly most salient for young adults who have the financial and social capital necessary to delay family formation processes. It is necessary, therefore, to realize that the discussion of the dating patterns of emerging adults is potentially limited to specific population of young Americans, and this project will focus on college students.

Given the rise in the number of young people attending college and the changing nature of family formation described above, there has been much recent academic interest in studying “hooking up,” a system for partnering based on low-commitment casual sexual relationships, which are naturally facilitated by the instability and freedom of the emerging adulthood period (England, Schafer and Fogarty 2008). Simultaneously, another trend has further changed paths to relationships among Americans. Technological advances coupled with increasing computer savvy, especially among young people, have led to acceptance and proliferation of internet and social networking use in the United States (Smith 2011). Consequently, more Americans each year use online means to find partners. While internet dating and computer mediated relationships began as marginal practices, internet dating via matchmaking and dating sites has become mainstream and is an increasingly valid option for finding partners.

Taking these trends together, it stands to reason that many young adults may turn to the internet as a means for facilitating the process of finding partners. Current research on the role of
contemporary online social networks in the formation of romantic relationships scarce and there exists almost no research on explicit ways in which college students use the internet to initiate relationships. Zickuhr and Smith found in their 2011 follow-up to the Pew Center’s Internet and American Life Project that 94% of Americans aged 18-29 were internet users and that 87% of those internet users actively participated on online social networks. With so many young people online this may be an important area of study. The study the role of the internet in relationship formation is further limited because there is a lack of research on the long-term consequences of relationships formed online. Internet assisted relationships may be inherently different from dating via more traditional social networks in a number of ways that may have important consequences on relationship outcomes. Although there may be few college students who use matchmaking or other online dating sites, most college students have and use the social networking site (SNS), Facebook. There exist a few recent studies that have focused on self-presentation in profiles, but there is no extant research on the role of Facebook in the formation of romantic relationships. The aim of this project is two-fold: first, to explore the role of Facebook in college students’ formation of romantic relationships; and, secondly, to investigate the consequences of social networking use on the likelihood of being currently involved in a romantic relationship. Given the small number of studies directly relevant to the current research, it is useful to provide a general review of the literature on internet use and romantic relationships, even though some of these studies are only tangentially related to the current on.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Although the use of the internet as a means of relationship formation has dramatically increased over the last two decades, relatively little research exists explaining the relationship outcomes and consequences of finding partners using online means. Research in the field of computer-mediated communications (CMC) and relationships (CMRs) has been changing rapidly as both the technology available and attitudes are now vastly different than in the first years of internet dating. Although early
research in this area was focused on the selection effects that determine who will enter into CMRs and on the effects of the relative anonymity and isolation of CMRs, online matchmaking services are now so mainstream that the intent of research is shifting. Considering the nascent ubiquity and acceptance for Internet dating, new research is needed to understand the role of internet technologies in relation to relationship formation processes.

*The Ubiquitous Presence of Computer Mediated Relationships*

To date, researchers have conducted only one nationally representative to assess the prevalence of Internet dating among all Americans (the bulk of studies pertaining to online dating have focused on Internet daters alone). This study, conducted in 2004, is called the Pew Internet and American Life Project (Madden and Lenhart 2006). The investigators found that, in 2004, 11% of the Internet using population (roughly 16 million people) in the United States had used an online dating site. Additionally, they conclude in the report that revenue from online dating sites had increased 10 fold since 2001 to roughly $470 million in 2004, and that internet dating site created more revenue than any other online content category. More recently, in 2008, Internet dating grew to be roughly $1 billion industry (Tulsiani, Best, and Card 2008). Analyzing the data from the Pew study, Sautter, Tippett and Morgan (2010) found that 17% of single internet users had used online dating sites.

In addition to becoming an increasingly visible option for finding partners, computer-mediated relationships are becoming a progressively more acceptable means of forming relationships. For instance, 31% of Americans (63 million people) know someone who dates online (Madden and Lenhart 2006). Additionally, 43% of Americans know someone who has formed a long-term relationship with or married someone whom he or she met online (Madden and Lenhart). These researchers also found that although most respondents did not think that Internet daters were different than other single people, roughly 29% of their sample thought that online daters were “desperate.”
The Use of Internet Technologies Relationship Formation Processes

Using research on internet dating together with the limited extant study on the use of social networking sites in relationship formation processes, it is possible to speculate about how college students use Facebook in their search for partners. First, it is interesting considering which internet users have used online tools to form CMRs. Researchers have found that online daters are not particularly different than other single Internet users with regards to demographic characteristics and personality traits (Brym and Lenton 2003; Madden and Lenhart 2008; Sautter, Tippet and Morgan 2011; Valkenburg and Peter 2007). It seems that Internet users of all ages are online dating. In the Pew study, the largest cohort of internet daters was comprised of online adults ages 18-29; 18% of young Americans in this age group had used online relationship mediation tools (Madden and Lenhart 2008). These researchers found that people using online relationship mediation were slightly more likely to be employed and are slightly more likely to live in urban or suburban areas than rural areas (Madden and Lenhart 2008; Sautter, Tippet and Morgan 2011). Internet daters tend to be more computer savvy than other internet users (Madden and Lenhart 2008; Sautter, Tippet and Morgan 2011). Sautter, Tippett and Morgan found also that controlling for relationship status, the best predictors of propensity to online date are computer literacy, social networks, and attitudes about online dating (572). Given that young Americans are to a great degree both online and computer savvy, it is reasonable to assume that they would be among the first people to use online social networks for finding partners.

Online daters differ slightly from non-dating Internet users in a few ways regarding attitudes. First, Brym and Lenton (2003) found that although the online daters in their study were “joiners” who are socially well connected, that Internet daters were slightly less self-confident than non-dating Internet users (5). In their survey of Dutch online daters, Valkenburg and Peter (2007) found that Internet daters had low dating anxiety; this is a finding that stands contrary to early theoretical
perspectives of online dating as social compensation (Brym and Lenton 2003). Valkenburg and Peter (2007) suggest that this may follow what they label the “Rich get Richer” hypothesis. Those who chose to use internet technologies in their romantic relationships just feel that online dating is a more efficient means for finding partners than dating via traditional networks. Sprecher, Schwartz, Harvey and Hatfield (2007) assert: “People are likely motivated to seek online matchmaking service because such services provide them with access to many eligible and available others and the process can be efficient and even begin in the convenience and privacy of one’s home, day or night” (12). Madden and Lenhart (2006) find that online daters also have more generally liberal attitudes than other Internet users and other Americans. Internet daters, they find have more liberal political and gender ideologies and identify themselves as more open to new experiences than those who have not pursued online matchmaking (12). Finally, while 43% of online daters know someone who has formed a long-term or marriage relationship with someone they met on the Internet, just 15% of American adults have (Madden and Lenhart 2008). Taking these notions together, it seems that there is likely little difference between those who are inclined to use technology to aid them in their search for partners and those who are not. College students, especially, have ubiquitous access to the internet and are also, because of their age and education, likely to hold the more progressive attitudes and sociable interpersonal styles described above.

Self-Presentation and Facebook

As online dating has become increasingly mainstream in the past decade, the theories informing the academic study of computer-mediated relationships have consequently followed a similar shift. Though concerns about deception and misrepresentation online still exist, American internet users and the general American population have become accepting of online dating (Madden and Lenhart 2008). Although many concerns about safety and deception have abated, Madden and Lenhart conclude that 57% of their respondents think that many people lie about themselves on online dating sites. Given
these persistent concerns about dishonesty online, a sizable proportion of the literature and research on computer mediated relationships, especially in the field of communication studies, focuses on impression management and accuracy of representation. The general conclusion of this research is that the anonymity of the internet coupled with self-presentation strategies does allow for some minor misrepresentation (which many internet users come to expect), but that this purposeful deception is generally slight as the anticipation of a face-to-face meeting serves as an impediment to inaccurate self-presentation (Ellison, Heino and Gibbs 2006; Hancock and Toma 2009; Hardey 2002). Manago, Graham, Greenfield, & Salimkhan (2008) offer the notion of the “idealized virtual-identity hypothesis,” suggesting that users fib in favor of presenting ideal versions of their personalities. The authors confirmed this hypothesis in a content analysis of social networking profiles. However, Back, Stopfer, Vazire, Gaddis, Schmukle, Egloff and Gosling (2010) suggest that because many of these sites use content from users personal lives (comments from friends or photos uploaded by other users, for instance) that profiles on social networking sites may accurately depict the users’ personality. The authors assert: “OSNs [online social networking sites] integrate various sources of personal information that mirror those found in personal environments, private thoughts, facial images, and social behavior, all of which are known to contain valid information about personality” (372). Back et al. label this notion the “extended real-life hypothesis.”

While several studies have focused on truthfulness in self-presentation in the profiles of internet daters, there may be important differences between these users and Facebook users. Because Facebook profiles are not created for the express purpose of forming romantic relationships and are tailored to a much wider and more diverse audience, Facebook users (versus internet daters) may be more truthful in their self-presentation. In their study of Facebook users, Back et al. (2008) found that users were actually very accurate in their self-presentation and that there was no evidence of “self-idealization,”
supporting their extended real-life hypothesis and suggesting that “OSNs might be an efficient medium for expressing and communicating real personality” (374).

**Unique Qualities of Relationships Formed Online**

Prior research on computer assisted relationships (although to some extent dated as much of this research is) has suggested that relationships established online are characterized by several factors that may align with high levels of commitment. Anderson and Emmers-Sommer (2006) found in their study of 114 online daters that intimacy, trust and communication satisfaction, which are predictors of satisfaction in face-to-face (“FTF”) relationships are also good predictors of satisfaction in online relationships. The applicability of these results is somewhat limited, however, because respondents in this study were in relationships that were carried out strictly online and none had met their partners FTF. In their analysis of these findings, the authors suggest that online relationships follow a “hyperpersonal model”.

The “hyperpersonal model” of communication in computer mediated relationships was originally posited by Walther (1996). Summarizing Walther’s model, Anderson and Emmers-Sommer (2006) offer the following explanation for the quickly developing intimacy and trust in computer mediated relationships:

This closeness develops due to the sender’s ability to carefully present him- or herself, the affordability to edit messages before sending them, the receiver’s tendency to form positive and ideal partner attributions, and the dyad’s level and intensity of self-disclosure. These factors then combine cyclically such that online communicators reinforce one another’s perceptions of the idealized partner. (p. 155)

This provides an interesting extension to the self-presentation strategies mentioned above. In addition to allowing for appraising others’ profiles, Facebook features an email type messaging system, a “wall” where users may post to public messages to others’ profiles and an instant messaging service. Thus, Facebook may be an important vehicle for online, “hyperpersonal” communication.
Online communication via Facebook, it follows, may allow for high levels of trust, intimacy and communication similar to those found in other types online relationships (Anderson and Emmers-Sommer 2006; Hian, Chuan, Trevor and Detenber 2004; Walther 1996; Walther 2007; Wright 2004). These features all suggest the development of a perceived closeness between partners. Specher et al. (2007) suggest that although online relationships may become intimate and committed quickly, but that barriers to exit the relationship are minimal if either partner perceives an inadequate cost/benefit balance (26). This supposition suggests that online relationships may be especially vulnerable to instability in a way that more traditionally established relationships may not.

Specher et al. (2007) offer an interesting discussion of CMRs and of relationships formed via introductions from friends. The most relevant difference that they note is the benefit in online relationships of relative anonymity. Although in interactions set up via friend and family networks, anonymity is impossible, the inconspicuousness of online assisted relationships, Specher et al. suggest, has two potential benefits. First, internet dating allows users to slowly reveal information about themselves to potential partners after trust has been established in their relationship (27). Second, in an online situation, an individual may search for partners in a relatively private way without friends and family knowing. The notion of anonymity may have very interesting implications in this study because while Internet dating sites provide relatively high levels of anonymity, Facebook may not.

Facebook and online dating communities, although both virtual social networks, differ in a few important ways. It seems that many people turn to online dating communities because feel unable to find what they are looking for in a partner in their own existing social network. Although an online dating community does represent a social network for its users, it is a network that is distinct from its users’ real, physical communities. Alternatively, Facebook is a virtual community that is intrinsically linked to an individual’s actual social network. Interactions on Facebook, rather than being expressly about meeting new people, are most often derived from and based on an individual’s physical social
network. Most of the people with whom users interact are people they already know (for example: family, classmates, co-workers, etc.). Similarly, most people with whom users establish relationships are connected to their actual social networks, and most users initiate Facebook “friendships” for reasons other than dating. Simply speaking, although there are certainly exceptions to the rule, for the most part Facebook is not tailored to meeting people outside one’s social network, physical or virtual.

*Exchange Theory and the Dating Market Perspective*

The most useful sociological framework, and a subsequent group of theories often applied to dating and relationship formation in the literature, is a social exchange perspective. In an exchange theory framework, social interactions are guided by cost-benefit rational processes by which individuals make choices that maximize personal benefits and minimize costs. As Specher at al. (2007) offer succinctly: “Mating is a transaction in which assets are exchanged and people possess market value” (27). Heino, Ellison and Gibbs (2010) further the marriage market metaphor; they suggest that online dating sites allow for shopping for partners. In an online marketplace, they offer, users “shop” for partners and “sell” themselves in an explicit way.

Given the experience of “shopping” for partners via edited and thoughtfully created profile pages, this framework becomes especially salient as daters can chose partners via a cost-benefit rationale based on explicitly presented criteria. Sprecher et al. (2007) note the importance of exchange in online dating. Though their discussion focuses on formal matchmaking sites called “marriage market intermediaries (MMIs),” their discussion of exchange may provide interesting insight to this study of Facebook. They suggest that in FTF relationships proximity in real social networks bring people with similar relationship capital together naturally. In the case of online dating when these physical and social assessments are absent, the explicit “market value” of individuals may be appraised via users’ profiles.

This same exchange process can be extended to the use of Facebook. Although, as I explained in the previous section, Facebook is, by nature, less explicitly about “shopping” for mates, the potential for
finding partners may be salient for some people and, therefore, likely influences those users’ strategies. In a recent study in the field of interactive marketing, Frost, Chance, Norton and Ariely (2008) found that online dating often fails to meet users’ expectations. Daters’ value as partners, they assert, is comprised of both “experiential” (subjective or interactional) qualities and “searchable” (objective and concrete) attributes. On internet dating sites, users only have access to the searchable features of potential mates. Subjective attributes, however, could serve as better predictors of relationships success and compatibility. Because the site is a social network based on a person’s real (non-virtual) life, people predict other users’ personalities fairly well considering just their Facebook profiles (Back et al. 2008), Facebook may allow for the assessment of both “experiential” and “searchable” features of a potential partner. The information provided on an individual’s Facebook profile might offer both the explicit markers of dating capital as well as more nuanced aspects of personality.

Facebook and Romantic Relationships

Early research on the effects of computer mediation on relationships focused almost exclusively on romantic relationships. Interestingly, although there is some literature on the role of contemporary online social networks in social relationships generally, the focus of this work seems to have shifted away from the effects on romantic relationships specifically. As such, there is little current literature that explains the effects of Facebook and other social networks on romantic partnerships.

Steinfield, Ellison, and Lampe (2008) suggest that the several modes of communication available to users on Facebook facilitate expanded relationships. They explain that there are two specific ways that the types of interactions on the site influence the “formation of bridging capital,” which they describe as loose ties to one’s community. First, the site allows for direct communication via posts, comments and the messaging system. This direct communication can facilitate the maintenance and development of relationships. Second, they suggest that the information found on others’ profiles, such as preferences or interests, might serve as a jumping off point for initiating face-to-face communication.
One of the most unique aspects of Facebook is the “relationship status” feature. Facebook users have the option of selecting one status from a list of eleven relationship descriptives to be displayed on their profile. The list of “relations” include words such as “single,” “married,” “in a domestic partnership” and even “it’s complicated” (Facebook). Users also have the option of linking (with the other person’s approval) their chosen relationship status to another user. Although there is very little academic research on Facebook relationships statuses, this feature has been frequently mentioned in popular media articles. These relationship statuses are important to consider for three reasons. First, there is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that changing one’s relationship status may serve as an official marker of the beginning of a romantic relationship, or as a natural step in the progression of a relationship (Gerson 2010). In her book on the role of SNSs in breakups, Gershon (2010) suggests that sending another person an “in a relationship request”—a private message with which one user asks another to link his name and profile the “In a relationship” status on her page—can replace an awkward conversation and can serve to initiation the possibility of forming an official offline relationship.

Second, a Facebook relationship status may serve as a public statement of availability, in much the same way as an engagement or a wedding ring. Unlike an engagement ring, which is usually exchanged after a couple has been committed for a relatively long period of time, Facebook relationship statuses can signal availability (or lack of availability) earlier in the progression of a romantic relationship, when a couple has just established their commitment. Individual Facebook users can, with their relationship statuses, very easily identify that they are open to the possibility of forming relationships. Likewise, as users scan potential interests’ profiles, they can quickly and easily recognize if another user is available for pursuit. This process can be done without ever having had a conversation with the other person, and can seemingly save time and emotional investment in relationships in a way that was, prior to nearly ubiquitous Facebook use, impossible.
Third, issues with relationships statuses have consequences for established offline relationships. Papp, Danielewicz and Cayemberg (2012) concluded that for established couples, the experience of disagreement about either partner’s relationship status was linked to lower levels of relationship satisfaction for women. Similarly, Gershon (2010) found that some people change their relationship statuses as signals to their partners of problems within the relationship. Whether it serves as a public symbol of an established relationship, as the replacement of a face-to-face conversation, or as a point of conflict; it stands to reason that Facebook’s relationship status feature plays an important role in the formation of romantic relationships.

Though Facebook may facilitate the development of romantic relationships by providing an easy method of potential partner assessment, some literature suggests that Facebook use may have consequences for people in already established romantic relationships. In their studies of Facebook use among college students in romantic partnerships, Christofides, Muise and Desmarais (2009) and Elphinston and Noller (2011) found a significant relationship between respondents’ time spent on Facebook and their feelings and behaviors of jealousy. Christofides et al. (2009) found that respondents who were exposed to potentially jealousy-provoking information on their partners profile spent more time monitoring their partners’ Facebook pages. This created a feedback loop wherein they spent further time surveilling their partners on the site and experiencing more feelings of jealousy (443). This reciprocal process is further tempered by the nature of the information available to ones’ partner on Facebook. Information on Facebook represents snapshots of users’ relationships, that is to say that much of the content is available without specific context. Christofides and colleagues suggest that often the information available about relationships can be interpreted or misinterpreted in many ways. Snapshot judgments about the nature of partners’ other relationships, especially past or potential romantic interests, the authors suggest, are likely to add to feelings of jealousy.
Papp et al. (2012) similarly find that Facebook behaviors can have consequences for couples. They found that when men listed an “in a relationship” status with their partners, that both they and their partners experienced greater relationships satisfaction; men, it seems, did not receive such boost to their relationship satisfaction when their female partners’ status identified the relationship. Likewise, when women posted profile photos that pictured both them and their partner, both members of the couple reported greater relationship satisfaction; neither partner reported greater relationship satisfaction when the male partner displayed a picture of the couple.

THE PRESENT STUDY
Considering the focus of the extant research and the deficits in the literature, currently, there is little known about the ways that online social networks affect romantic relationship formation processes. Most contemporary researchers in the area of computer-mediated relationships have focused on the use of online matchmaking services and there is some research, especially in the field of communication studies, which focuses on the social-psychological aspects of online social networking. Additionally, some researchers have been exploring the use of online social networks in the formation and maintenance of friendships. Although some researchers have considered the effects of the use of online social networks, especially Facebook, on established romantic relationships (Elphinston and Noller 2011; Christofides et al. 2009; Papp et al. 2012), few have more than speculated about the ways the Facebook is actually utilized in the development of romantic relationships.

Taking these considerations together, the broad aim of this project is to conduct an exploration of the role of Facebook in the formation of romantic relationships among college students. I chose to focus this paper on the online social networking site Facebook and to consider only college students for a two reasons. First, Facebook use is seemingly ubiquitous on college campuses. The site began as an online social network exclusively for college students. It is difficult to discern the actual proportion of college students around the country who use Facebook, but in their 2007 study of Facebook use, Ellison
et al. found that 94% of the undergraduate students on their campus were registered Facebook users. In general Facebook use has continually expanded, so it would not be surprising if almost all college students have at least registered for a Facebook account. Secondly, as I discussed in the literature above and as is explained by Arnett’s ideas of “Emerging Adulthood” (2004), it stands to reason that college students’ romantic relationship experiences differ from those of both adolescents and of other adults.

The primary goal of this research project is one of exploration. First, I seek to understand who uses Facebook and, among users, how they use the site, both quantitatively (How much? How often?) and qualitatively (Which features? With whom do they communicate?). Next, I am interested in addressing the specific ways that young people use Facebook in the formation of their romantic relationships. More explicitly, I would like to explore the timing and extent of Facebook use in the trajectory of relationships. Additionally, I would like to understand if students who are more frequent Facebook users have different quality relationships than those who do not use the social networking site as often. The following are the explicit research questions that will guide the current study:

I) What role does Facebook play in the initiation and formation of romantic relationships among college students?

II) Do frequent Facebook users have romantic relationships that differ from those of infrequent users? Specifically, is Facebook use related to (a) whether people are in romantic relationship, (b) have ever been in romantic relationship, and (c) the quality of current (or prior) romantic relationships?

Hypotheses

Drawing on my review of the literature, and considering both an exchange theory perspective and contemporary research on relationships and commitment; this research will be guided by the following hypotheses:

$H_1$: Many college students have used Facebook in the early stages of relationship formation (RQ 1).
Facebook has become so ubiquitous on college campuses that it is hard to imagine that use of this social network would not figure into the formation of interpersonal relationships. It is, however, unclear what the explicit role of Facebook is in either the initiation or formation of romantic relationship among college students. I hypothesize, though, that Facebook will play an important role early in relationship. I believe that this is the case because from a social exchange perspective, daters participate in a cost-benefit rational process in order to assess potential partners’ merits and possible contributions to a relationship. Facebook features such as the relationship status option, “about me” sections and photos offer easy access to substantial information about users. Therefore, this assessment process likely takes place in the early stages of relationship formation as a means of screening potential partners without as much time and contact as would be necessary for information gathering offline.

H2: Students who have formed romantic relationship aided by Facebook consider their partners’ Facebook profiles in their assessment of their potential partners’ assets and deficits (RQ 1).

As I suggested in my review of the literatures, I believe that one of the most important functions of Facebook in the romantic relationship formation process is its use as a means for rating a potential mate’s dating capital. Literature on online dating and other computer-mediated relationships confirm that the assessment of partners is an important first step in the process of filtering the pool of eligible partners. I hypothesize, therefore, that many students have used Facebook in this way.

H3: The quality of relationships formed by more active Facebook users will differ from those who have less Facebook use and fewer interactions on the site (RQ 2).

There is very little extant research on the outcomes of computermediate relationships. It is, therefore, difficult to hypothesize the explicit differences between these two types of relationships. I expect, however, as delineated in the above hypothesis, that the relationships of more active Facebook users will be divergent from those of students who do not use the site as much. I imagine that these relationships will vary on levels of relationship satisfaction. Following the logic of exchange theory,
students who spend a lot of time assessing their partners on Facebook be better at gauging compatibility.

\textit{H}_4: \textit{Frequency of Facebook use is correlated with respondents’ reports of consistency and accuracy in their partners’ representations of themselves on their Facebook profiles (RQ 2).}

Informed by recent research on Facebook that suggests that Facebook users are very accurate in their portrayals of themselves on their profiles (Back et al., 2008); I expect to find that high-frequency Facebook users will rate their partners’ profiles as accurate representations of their personalities. Additionally, I anticipate finding that students will rate the information that their partners provided on their pages as consistent with respondents’ real experiences with their mates. This hypothesis is consistent with the notion that Back et al. (2008) call the ‘extended real-life’ hypothesis extended to the context of romantic relationships.

\textit{H}_5: \textit{Frequency of Facebook use is positively associated with a) ever having formed a college relationship and b) being currently romantically involved (RQ3).}

Considering the literature on online communication—both via social networks and on matchmaking websites—and the formation of relationships, romantic or otherwise, it appears that the use of Facebook may facilitate the romantic relationship process. Use of the site itself may serve as a platform for forming romantic partnerships. Online and offline networks are becoming increasingly overlapped as social networking use has expanded. Facebook allows for easy and instant exposure to information about acquaintances’ social lives and personalities that is not so readily available in the offline world. For students who desire a romantic partner, others’ Facebook profiles a) allow for the screening of potential mates and b) provide information that can serve as a jumping off point for the initiation of communication either within the online network or offline (Sprecher et al. 2007). Further, research on online dating suggests that relationships that form online, facilitated by ‘hyperpersonal’
communication, can become intimate and close quickly (Anderson and Emmers-Sommer 2006; Walther 1996).

Facebook also enables platonic social interactions. The site can serve as a medium for organizing and planning events, and for developing and maintaining one’s offline social contacts. It seems that students who have more opportunities to attend social events and, thus, increased exposure to other students may be more likely to meet eligible partners offline. The reciprocal may also be true. Students who have more active offline social lives may be outgoing in all aspects of their lives including on Facebook, and, therefore, may spend more time online and may be more active on the site. It seems probable that extraverted students would be more likely to both engage with others socially and also to form romantic relationships. The above explanations justify the association between the frequency of Facebook use and the likelihood of having ever formed a romantic relationship in college. It is possible, however, that Facebook use is linked to the probability of being currently involved with a partner.

Considering an exchange theory perspective, screening partners could allow Facebook users to find mates with whom they share underlying compatibility. Facebook profiles provide information about many aspects of users’ offline lives including their social lives, personalities, political persuasions and the nature of their relationships with others. When users screen potential mates on Facebook, they can be sure that their romantic interests have characteristics that meet basic expectations of what they hope for in a partner. This screening process allows for consideration of only the “searchable,” rather than “experiential” aspects, of potential mates. Although relationships facilitated by these cost/benefit processes do not differ from those formed offline with regards to subjective compatibility, the superficial commonality on which they are based may offer students some benefit. It seems that couples who have shared interests may have less conflict than those who have partners who are objectively different than themselves. It is possible, then, that students who regularly use Facebook are more likely
to have used these screening processes during the formation of their romantic relationships and that relationships formed with the aid of the site may be more stable than those formed exclusively offline.

METHODS

Survey

Data was collected using a web survey administered by the Survey Research Center at The Pennsylvania State University to students who were enrolled at The Pennsylvania State University, University Park Campus during the Spring semester in 2012. The survey was sent by email to 5000 undergraduate and graduate students identified using a simple random from a sampling frame comprised of all Penn State students. The total enrollment was approximately 44,000 students. The survey, which took respondents approximately 30 minutes to complete, consisted of between 20 and 35 closed-ended questions. The complete survey instrument is included in the appendix. Students in the sample received the survey invitation and one or two email reminders by email. The survey remained in the field for three weeks. The survey, which was approved by The Pennsylvania State University Institutional Review Board, was anonymous and no identifying information as obtained.

I chose to collect data using an internet survey because this method of data collection is appropriate for the population of college students. First, young people, in general, and students on college campuses, specifically, have ready access to the internet. Students on this campus use their Penn State email addresses, to which the survey was sent, to communicate with faculty and to engage in an online course management system. It was possible, therefore, to easily reach a large sample of students and to ensure that most if not all of potential participants would see the email invitation. Second, email addresses were available for the institution’s registrar’s office for the entire target population. A simple random sample of this database of emails allowed for a representative sample of student demographics. This sampling method yields a probability sample, which is favorable to the convenience samples
generated by other common approaches to the surveying of college students, such as the administration of a survey to a large undergraduate class. Lastly, although mail surveys yield higher response rates than web-based surveys that method would not be practical on this campus or likely to yield high response rates given the age of the population (Schonlau, Fricker, and Elliot 2002).

In total, 875 surveys were completed. This represents a response rate of 17.5%. This response rate is relatively low when compared to the rates of response for mail surveys, which tend to have response rates of around 50% (Cook, Heath and Thompson 2000). Online surveys, however, typically have lower response rates (Cook et al. 2000) and some of the reduced rate for this survey can be explained by factors related to the target population. College students’ time and interests are often divided, and student receive not only many emails per day but often also invitations for various types of surveys. This low response rate, may not be problematic. Researchers have shown that, despite low response rates, web-based studies that utilize probability samples of the target population yield relatively unbiased results (Groves 2006).

Because the primary aim of this research is to understand college students’ behaviors, respondents aged 30 or older were excluded from the analysis. Excluding older respondents, the sample size was 824 respondents. In total, 92% of the sample was comprised of undergraduate students (n=715) and 14% were graduate students. Roughly 40% of the respondents were male and 60% were female. According to the University’s official statistics, the campus gender ratio is 54% men and 45% women; therefore, women were overrepresented in this sample.

Variables
Scaled Measures. Following my review of the literature, one of my initial hypotheses was that the relationships of people who had used Facebook in their romantic relationship formation processes might differ from those who formed their relationships via more traditional avenues. Because Facebook use is so ubiquitous among college students however, this comparison is not possible nor is it important.
Given that 94% of respondents in this study use Facebook regularly and 90% of those respondents check out potential mates on the site, it may more salient to consider the degree to which respondents use Facebook. As such, in the following analyses, I use a variable that I developed as a measure of the level of each respondent’s frequency of Facebook use (‘frequency’) based on number of daily Facebook visits, amount of time spent on the site per visit, and total amount of time spent on the site weekly. This scale is based on student responses to the following three survey items: “How many hours total did you use Facebook in the last 7 days?” (Respondents selected one of the following: “Less than 1 hour,” “1-2 hours,” “3-5 hours,” “6-10 hours,” “11-15 hours,” “16-20 hours,” “21-25 hours,” “26-30 hours,” or “More than 30 hours.”); “How many times do you visit Facebook during an average day?” (Respondents selected one of the following: “I don’t use Facebook every day,” “1-2 times,” “3-4 times,” “5-6 times,” “7-8 times,” “9-10 times,” “10-15 times,” “16-20 times,” or “More than 20 times.”); and “How long do you typically use Facebook in one visit to the site?” (Respondents selected one of the following: “0-5 minutes,” “6-10 minutes,” “11-30 minutes,” “31-60 minutes,” or “More than 1 hour.”) I first created a tripartite scale for each of the above three survey questions, such that the one third of respondents with the highest values on each question were assigned a ‘3’ on the scale, the middle third were assigned a ‘2’, and the bottom third were assigned a ‘1’. I then created the variable ‘frequency’ by summing these values so that respondents ended up with values between 3 and 9 and dividing these summed scores into three new, final categories: low-frequency use (1), average use (2) and high-frequency use (3).

I also used an independent variable aimed at assessing respondents’ satisfaction with their relationship. This variable was modeled on the “Dimensions of Marital Quality” Scale developed by Johnson, Booth, White and Edwards (1986). The variable ‘relhap’ included the scaled means of eight items measuring relationship satisfaction such that respondents’ final relationship satisfactions scores ranged from ‘1’-lowest satisfaction to ‘3’-greatest satisfaction. For respondents who were involved in a romantic relationship at the time of survey, this variable included the following eight items: “In your
current romantic relationship, how happy are you with... a) the extent to which your partner understands you? b) the amount of love you receive from your partner? c) the extent to which you and your partner agree on things? d) the amount of time that you spend together? e) the activities that you share with your partner? f) your partner’s faithfulness? g) the overall quality of the relationship? (Respondents selected one of the following for each item: ‘Not very happy’ (1), ‘Pretty happy’ (2) or ‘Very happy’ (3)) and “Compared to your friends’ relationships, how good is your relationship?” (Respondents selected one of the following for each item: ‘Not as good as most’ (1), ‘About the same as most’ (2) or ‘Better than most’ (3).) Respondents who were at the time of survey single, but who had since attending college been involved, were asked to respond to the same items about their most recent relationship. These questions were worded as follows: “At the best time you can remember during your relationship, how happy were you with...” and “Compared to your friends’ romantic relationships, how good was your relationship?” Although respondents who were currently single had, unsurprisingly, lower mean scores on each of these, I made the decision to include both single and partnered respondents together in one variable. I developed the variable ‘single’ (described below) to control for differences between these two groups. The alpha reliability coefficient, before combining the two groups, was .8 for currently partnered respondents, and was .85 for single respondents.

Considering the literature on self-presentation and relationship commitment, I was interested in exploring the relationship between respondents’ perceptions of the accuracy of their partners’ profiles and relationship satisfaction. To those ends, I included the items on the survey that measured respondents’ perceptions of accuracy of their partners’ self-representation on their Facebook profile for several dimensions of personality and social life. Again, respondents who were in a romantic relationship at the time of survey were asked to consider their current relationship and those who were single responded to the questions about their most recent relationship. The survey included the following items for partnered respondents: “Now that you know your partner better, how accurately do
you think the information you first saw on his/her profile represented each of the following: Your partner's personal interests? Your partner’s personality? Your partner’s social life? Your partner’s political and/or religious attitudes? Your partner’s relationships with others?” The question was worded as follows for single respondents: “Reflecting on your most recent romantic partner, once you got to know him/her better, how accurately do you think the information that you first saw on his/her profile represented each of the following:” followed by the same 5 items. Response choices were operationalized as follows: ‘Very inaccurately’ (1), ‘Somewhat inaccurately’ (2), ‘Somewhat accurately’ (3), or ‘Very accurately’ (4). I created the variable ‘accuracy’ to represent the scaled means of these five survey items. Respondents who felt that their partners’ Facebook profiles were accurate representations of their actual selves had higher scores on this scaled measure.

In order determine if the quality of Facebook interactions is salient for students, I developed a scaled measure for Facebook social interactions ‘FB interaction’. On the survey instrument, I included a list of all possible Facebook features as follows: “In the past 7 days, which of the following have you done on Facebook? (Check all that apply): Posted a comment to a friend’s wall. a) Posted a link on your own wall. b) Posted a link on a friend’s wall. c) Posted a comment on a picture. d) Posted a personal status update. e) Played games. f) Uploaded photos. g) Changed your profile picture. h) Accepted a new friend request. i) Sent a friend request. j) Sent a private message. k) Used the instant messenger. l) RSVPed to an event. a) Made plans to meet up with a friend via Facebook.” Students selected the features that they had utilized in the week prior to survey. This variable represents a count of each of those features that I deemed social interactions (that is to say that they were either posting something publically or connecting in some way with another person). This scale yielded a normal distribution and serves as a proxy for the quality (rather than frequency) of Facebook interactions. Students who had more social Facebook interactions had higher scores on this variable than those who did not use as many Facebook features or those who used features on the site that were not interactive (viewing but not commenting
on pictures, for instance). The alpha reliability coefficient for partnered respondents was .77 and for single students was .825.

I created another scaled variable (‘social life’) for offline social interactions. Students were asked to select how often in a typical week they got together with one or more friends in person for several various activities (studying, playing sports or going to parties, for example). The survey item representing this variable was presented as follows: How many times in a typical week do you get together in person with one or more friend for each of the following activities?: a) Going downtown to get coffee or something to eat; b) Eating in on campus dining area; c) Playing sports; d) Studying or doing homework; e) Going to parities or out to bars. Respondents chose from the following response categories: ‘0 times’ (0), ‘1-2 times’ (1), ‘3-4 times’ (2), ‘5-6 times’ (3), ‘7-8 times’ (4), ‘9-10 times’ (5), or ‘More than 10 times.’ (6). I created the scale by adding the values for each item to form a total score. The final values of the scale ranged from 0-20. Higher scores on this variable suggest that respondents were more socially active in offline contexts.

In the following table (Table 1.a) I summarize the five key independent variables that I constructed for the subsequent regression analyses (See Tables 1.b-1.g in Appendix I for frequency tables).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relhap</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Life</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FB Interaction</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>780</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because I calculated the variable ‘frequency,’ which represents the quantitative frequency of Facebook use, using a method based on trisection of the final distribution such that each category had an equal number of respondents, the mean (presented here) provides no new information. The
relationship happiness score is negatively skewed. The mean of 2.6 is not surprising and is consistent with the literature on relationship satisfaction because many researchers in this area note respondents’ propensity to describe their marriages as ‘very happy’ or ‘above average’ (Buunk 2001; Donohue and Ryder 1982). The variable for perceived accuracy in partners’ self-representation on Facebook (‘accuracy’) is also skewed negatively. This is a similarly expected finding. For this variable, respondents were considering both the honesty of their partners and their own skill at perceiving others’ representations of self. A parallel “optimism bias,” which suggests that most people think they are better at most things than others, is at work here (Weinstein and Klein 1996). The positive skew of the variable ‘social life’ (mean=5.4) can be explain by the coding of this variable. The mean of 5.4 suggests that in a typical week most students meet up with friends for each of the activities listed on the survey around two times for a total six events per week. If a respondent had the maximum score of 20 that would mean that he meet up with friends for each of the five activities more than ten times per week for a total of more than 50 independent events. Finally, the Facebook interaction scale yielded a normal distribution with a mean of 6.1 Facebook features accessed.

Control Variables. To control for the differences between single and currently partnered respondents, I also created the dummy variable ‘single’ for current relationship status. Students who were currently romantically involved were assigned a ‘0’, and those who were currently single received a ‘1’. Lower scores on this scale are associated with less satisfaction. Other variables include measures of ‘age’, graduate student status (labeled ‘graduate student’—undergraduates received a value of ‘0’ and graduate students a value of ‘1’), and gender (labeled ‘women,’ women receive a value of ‘1’ and men a value of ‘0’).

Correlations of Principal Independent, Dependent and Control Variables. Below (Table 1.h) is a correlation matrix in which are included the principal variables. The relatively high positive correlation between frequency of Facebook use and frequency of Facebook interaction is not surprising because
Facebook interaction is essentially a count variable. It is worth noting that age is negatively associated with both frequency of offline social interactions and frequency of Facebook use. The negative correlation between relationship happiness and relationship status is expected as partnered students were discussing their current relationships and single students responded to the survey measures with their most recent past relationship in mind. The slight positive associations between both frequency of Facebook use and frequency of Facebook interpersonal interactions, and frequency of offline social networks suggests that students who spend more time engaged in Facebook have slightly more offline interactions. Frequency of Facebook use is also associated with relationships status such that students who use Facebook more frequently are more likely to be currently single. Finally, the very small associations between relationship satisfaction and the Facebook and social life variables may be misleading as all students, both those in current relationships and those responding to the survey about past relationships, are included in these analyses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table I.i: Correlation Matrix of All Control and Independent Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FB Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relhap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single (1) vs. Current Relationship (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women (1), Men (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS**

**Facebook Use**

One of the questions guiding this research was: “How many students use Facebook; and among users, how much do they use it?” It is clear that among students on this campus, Facebook use is nearly ubiquitous. Only 3% of students in this sample (n=27) did not have Facebook accounts. Of the students with active Facebook accounts, more than 97% had used their Facebook account within the seven days
prior to their completion of the survey. In the subsequent analysis, I will consider those students who both have Facebook accounts and who had used them in the seven days prior to their completion of the survey (n=780).

The students in this study used Facebook often, and most users accessed their accounts several times throughout the day for relatively short periods of time (see Table 2). Regarding their Facebook use, students were asked to describe their behaviors in the week (seven days) prior to their completion of the survey. The mean number of hours spent on using Facebook in the previous week was 8.6. In total, 30% of students estimated that in the week before the survey they had spent more than 10 hours using Facebook. Students visit Facebook many times throughout the day. The mean number of daily visits was 4, but 25% of students access Facebook more than 8 times in a typical day. Finally, students spend relatively little time online during each of their visits to the site; 70% of respondents use Facebook less than ten minutes during a typical visit. Students clearly spend less time accessing Facebook than they do engaged in other activities such as studying, spending time in classes or watching television. It is important to consider that although the time spent on Facebook is relatively brief that the time it takes to disengage from and reengage into other activities may be more substantial.
### Table 2: Total Facebook Use Time in a Typical Week, Total Daily Time and Time per Visit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many hours total did you use Facebook in the last 7 days?</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>% Total</th>
<th>Cum. %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than an hour.</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 hours.</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 hours.</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 hours.</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 hours.</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 hours.</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25 hours.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30 hours.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;30 hours.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>780</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.6 Hours/Week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many times do you visit Facebook during an average day?</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>% Total</th>
<th>Cum. %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don't use Facebook every day.</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 times</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 times</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8 times</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10 times</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 times</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 times</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;20 times</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>768</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 Visits/Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How long do you typically use Facebook in one visit to the site?</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>% Total</th>
<th>Cum. %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 minutes</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 minutes</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-30 minutes</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-60 minutes</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1 hour</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>769</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>12.3 Minutes/Visit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Men and women differ in their typical use of Facebook. A greater proportion of men than women do not have or actively use their Facebook accounts; 9% of all the men in the study compared with 4% of all the women either do not have Facebook accounts or had not used their accounts in the seven days prior to survey. Women, too, spend more time on Facebook than do men. Although the average number of hours spent accessing Facebook in the week before the survey was 7.5 for men, women used Facebook an average of 9.2 hours. The average number of daily visits was pretty similar for men (mean=6) and women (mean=6.5), but women spent an average of two minutes longer online during each visit.

Another aim of this research is to understand what students do on their Facebook accounts. Students were asked to note the Facebook activities in which they had engaged in the seven days prior to completing the survey. The results of this question are presented in Table 3 (See Table 3.1 in Appendix on for extended table including all measures). Students most often use Facebook to view and comment on their friends’ pictures, to communicate with one another via wall posts, and to display status updates. Roughly half of the respondents have used the private communication functions of Facebook (the instant messenger and the private message function). It is interesting to note that students more often use Facebook’s public, rather than private, communication tools. This speaks to theories of Facebook as a resource for self-presentation and impression management (Ellison et al., 2006; Hancock and Toma, 2009; Hardey, 2002, Manago et al., 2008; Back et al., 2010).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>% Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Viewed a friend's picture, but not commented.</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted a comment to a friend's wall.</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepted a new friend request.</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted a comment on a picture.</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted a personal status update.</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used the instant messenger.</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sent a private message.</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted a link on a friend's wall.</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Facebook Activities Ever Completed in the 7 Days Prior to Survey
In the past 7 days, which of the following have you done on Facebook?
(Check all that apply.)
Exploring Facebook and Romantic Relationship Formation Processes

One primary goal of this study was to explore the role that Facebook plays in the romantic relationship formation processes of college students. Three questions guided research toward this aim:

1) Do students use Facebook in their romantic relationship formation processes? 2) How do they use it? 3) When does Facebook enter into the relationship trajectories of college students?

Students clearly do use Facebook as a crucial part of their romantic relationship processes. I asked students: “When you are interested in someone romantically, do you look at his/her Facebook profile?” Ninety percent of Facebook users replied “Yes.” Further, including non-users, this means that 84% of all students on campus use Facebook to check out potential partners. Students were also asked if they have seen something on a potential partners’ profile that subsequently made them no longer interested in that person. More than half (51%) of the people who use Facebook to assess potential partners have seen something on a potential mate’s profile that turned them off to that person. Clearly Facebook is an important tool used to screen potential romantic interests.

Next, I sought to understand in what ways students use Facebook to evaluate partners. I asked students what they look at on a potential mate’s profile to assess their interest in that person; likewise I asked them to identify the degree to which each item on the potential mate’s profile influenced their feelings about that person’s potential as a partner (Table 4). In general, students check out those features of their interest’s profile, which they rank as most important. The most important and most frequently assessed characteristics of potential mates’ profiles were relationship status, physical appearance, status updates, and pictures. These findings speak to the importance of Facebook as a tool for screening eligible interests.

I was further interested in understanding when during the relationship trajectory students use Facebook. I asked students to rank the order in which various events occurred during their most recent relationship (Table 4, see Table 4.1 in Appendix I for extended table with all measures). Students who were currently romantically involved answered about their current relationship while those who were
single responded about their most recent college relationship. The trajectories for respondents currently in relationships were very similar to those who answered the question about their most recent, dissolved relationship.

People use Facebook early in their relationship formation processes, and it seems that Facebook milestones function in the same ways as other relationship milestones. For instance, for both partnered and single respondents, while meeting in person and exchanging phone numbers were the rank as the first and second relationship milestone, becoming Facebook friends ranked was third. Nearly 96% of currently involved participants ever became Facebook friends with their current partner. Similarly, although more respondents texted regularly with their partners (99% of partnered, 100% of single) than did use the Facebook messenger with their partner (80% of partnered and single), respondents placed both events as occurring at roughly the same time during the relationship (roughly the 5th event). With the exception of becoming Facebook friends, most respondents shared more public information about their relationship on Facebook later in the trajectories of their relationships. Communicated with one another on Facebook privately was ranked temporally before publically posting on partners’ wall. Importantly, all respondents ranked changing one’s relationships status as the last event in the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook Feature</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>% of Total N (n=657)</th>
<th>% Important or Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His/Her Relationship Status</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/Her Physical Appearance</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/Her Status Updates</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures (Other than Physical Appearance)</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Friends</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links He/She Posted on His/Her Wall</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His or Her Educational Information</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments Posted by Other People on His/Her Wall</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His or Her &quot;About You&quot;</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
relationship trajectory, following both the “define the relationship” talk and spending the night with their partner (Gershon, 2010). Only 80% of respondents currently involved in relationships and 70% of currently single respondents had ever changed their relationship status in their current or most recent relationship, respectively. This may speak to the relative gravity of publicly declaring one’s relationship status on Facebook.

Men and women differ slightly in their use of Facebook in assessing partners, both in terms of which features they access and the relative importance of those features in their assessment. Those gender differences are illustrated in the table below (Table 4.1). It is unsurprising that more women have ever accessed most features than men as female students use Facebook more frequently than do male students. It is more useful, therefore, to compare the relative salience of profile features across gender. There are two differences worth noting. First, women place greater importance on men’s status updates (mean=2.0) than men do on women’s (mean=1.8). Second, men value women’s physical appearance (2.3) more than women do men’s (2.2). It is interesting that men place more importance on the objective assessments of women, and women more often consider the subjective measure of personality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.1: Gender Differences in Features Used to Assess Partners</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Percentage Ever Done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/Her Relationship Status</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/Her Physical Appearance</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/Her Status Updates</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures (Other than Physical Appearance)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Friends</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links He/She Posted on His/Her Wall</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His or Her Educational Information</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments Posted by Other People on His/Her Wall</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His or Her &quot;About You&quot;</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links Other People Posted to His/Her Wall</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05, +p<.1
Communicating Relationship Status

One seemingly crucial function of Facebook is as a tool for communicating relationship status. Relationship status is the most important feature of Facebook that students use to screen potential mates. Likewise, changing relationship status on Facebook is the important last step of the relationship trajectory, which seems to serve as a public marker of commitment. In total, 80% of partners currently involved in a monogamous relationship changed their Facebook relationship statuses as part of their relationship trajectory; meanwhile 70% of people who are single changed their Facebook relationship statuses to reflect their commitment in their most recent relationship.

Of the students currently involved in romantic relationships (n=351), 76% display their relationship status on their Facebook profiles. The remaining 24% do not display a relationship status. Of the students who display a relationship status, 91% link their relationship status to their partners’ name and subsequently their profile; the other 9% list their relationship but do not list their partners’ name or link to their profile.

ANALYTICAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

I conducted these analyses using Ordinary Least Squares and Logistic Regression techniques. In my first line of inquiry, I was interested in assessing the relationship satisfaction of Facebook users. In order to consider as many respondents as possible, I included all respondents who had ever been romantically involved in college including both those who were currently partnered and those who were single. In my first models, I sought to predict relationship satisfaction (‘relhap’) using independent variables for age, gender, graduate students status, perceived accuracy of partners’ profile (‘accuracy’), and frequency of Facebook use (‘frequency’). These analyses allowed me to explore the following hypotheses: H₃: The quality of relationships formed by more active Facebook users will differ from those who have less Facebook use and fewer interactions on the site (RQ 2); and H₄: Frequency of Facebook use is correlated with respondents’ reports of consistency and accuracy in their partners’ representations of
themselves on their Facebook profiles (RQ 2). The only significant predictor of relationship satisfaction was current relationship status. Respondents who were currently involved with their partner were, unsurprisingly, more satisfied with their relationships. Therefore, regarding the hypotheses, I can conclude that there is not significant evidence that either higher frequency Facebook users have greater relationship quality (H₃) or that higher-frequency users report more accuracy in their partners’ self-representations on Facebook (H₄).

Next, I addressed the final remaining hypothesis: *H₅: Frequency of Facebook use is positively associated with a) ever having formed a college relationship and b) being currently romantically involved (RQ3).*

To conduct these analyses I used a series of logistic regressions.¹

First, in order to evaluate the association between frequency of Facebook use and having ever formed a romantic partnership (H₅a), I conducted logistic regression analyses (Table 6), including all respondents, predicting the odds of ever having had a relationship since beginning college using measures for frequency of Facebook use (‘frequency’), the measure of Facebook interaction (‘FB interaction’), the measure of offline social interaction (‘social life’), and control variables for age, gender and graduate student status. For the dependent variable, the dummy variable “ever” represents having ever had a college romantic relationship; students who have never had a romantic partner were coded 0, and those who have ever had a committed partnership (both those who are currently single as well as the students who are currently partnered) received 1. In the first model, I included only the control variables and the variable for frequency of Facebook use. In this model, gender and age are significant at the p<.001 level, and graduate student status is a moderately significant predictor of ever having had a relationship. Women and older students have greater odds of ever having had a relationship (Odds Ratios=1.79 and 1.5, respectively). Graduate students have 62% lower odds of ever having had a

¹ In order to assess the effect of gender difference in the frequency of Facebook use, I included interaction terms (gender x frequency) in each of the following regression analyses. This term, however, was not significant in any of the models.
relationship. In this analysis, frequency of Facebook use is not associated with the likelihood of ever having a romantic partner. This suggests that students who use Facebook infrequently are no less likely than their high-frequency-use counterpart, and does not support hypothesis $H_5a$.

Table 6: Logistic Regression Predicting Odds of Having Had a Romantic Relationship Since Attending College (N=705)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>b</th>
<th>Odds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student</td>
<td>-0.96</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of FB Use (1-Low to 3-High)</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.75</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05, ⁺p<.1

In the next series of analyses (Table 7), I predicted the odds of currently being single. I conducted these analyses to address the association between frequency of Facebook and the probability of being currently involved in a romantic partnership ($H_5b$). Again, I included all respondents in these models. Here, however, the dependent variable is coded so that the two outcome groups denote respondents who are currently in a romantic relationship compared with those who are currently single (regardless of whether or not they have ever been romantically involved). Including only demographic variables and the measure for frequency of Facebook use, gender, age and frequency of Facebook use are significant predictors of current relationships status. Women have 56% lower odds of being single. Students have 27% lower odds of being single for each year of age. Lastly, the third of students who exhibit the highest frequency of Facebook use have 69% greater odds of being single than the third of students who have the lowest frequency of use. In the next model I included variables of both Facebook and offline social interaction. I did this in order to control for user’s offline social lives and the quality of their Facebook interactions. It is useful to consider the social life variable because it is likely that the students who are more active in social activities may be more active daters. This may be because they have greater exposure to potential mates or because of certain personality characteristics. I included the Facebook interpersonal interaction variable because the quality of Facebook interactions
may affect the likelihood of developing relationships. For instance, a user who regularly communicates with others on Facebook via the wall feature and messaging service is more likely to develop and maintain relationships online than someone who does not use the site for interpersonal interaction (for example, they may look at photos and other users profiles without commenting on them).

These variables seem to operate as mediator of the relationship between frequency of Facebook use and the odds of being single. In this model frequency of use, and both measures of interaction are moderately significant predictors of currently being single. The odds of being single are slightly higher for people who have more Facebook and offline social interactions (4% and 6%, respectively).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7: Logistic Regression Predicting Odds of Being Single</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(0=Currently Involved in a Romantic Relationship, 1=Currently Single)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1 (N=705)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2 (N=694)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Odds</td>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>Odds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>-0.60 ***</td>
<td>0.54 ***</td>
<td>-0.63 ***</td>
<td>0.54 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.22 ***</td>
<td>0.80 ***</td>
<td>-0.19 ***</td>
<td>0.83 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of FB Use (1-Low to 3-High)</td>
<td>0.34 ***</td>
<td>1.78 ***</td>
<td>0.21 *</td>
<td>1.23 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Life</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FB Interaction</td>
<td>0.06 *</td>
<td>1.07 *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>4.32 ***</td>
<td>86.28 ***</td>
<td>2.96 **</td>
<td>23.66 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05, +p<.1

I performed additional analyses to predict the odds for students who had ever been in a romantic relationship (N=490) of being currently romantically involved (Table 8). I did not include students who had not had a romantic partner since beginning college. In Model 1 which included the demographic variables and the focal independent variable for frequency of Facebook use, only frequency of use was a statistically strong predictor of having ever had a relationship. Students who had higher frequency of Facebook use had lower odds of being currently partnered (Odds Ratio=.68). In the next regression, I again included control measures for both social and Facebook interaction. In this model, frequency of Facebook use is no longer a significant predictor of current relationship status.
Facebook interaction is, however, a significant predictor. Greater frequency of interpersonal interactions on Facebook is related to 10% lower odds of being currently involved. Likewise, offline sociability is a marginally significant predictor of current relationship status. Students who have more active social lives have slightly lower odds of being currently partnered (Odds Ratio=.95). These findings, which indicate that single users have more active social lives and greater degree of interpersonal communication on the site, suggest that interpersonal interactions, both on and offline, mediate the relationship between frequency of Facebook use and current relationship status.

| Table 8: Logistic Regression Predicting Odds of Currently Being in a Relationship for Only Those Students Who Have Been Involved in A Romantic Relationships Since Attending College |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                 | Model 1 (N=409) | Model 2 (N=483) |
|                                 | b       | Odds  | b       | Odds  |
| Women                           | 0.44 *  | 1.55 * | 0.45 *  | 1.57 * |
| Age                             | 0.03    | 1.03  | -0.02 *** | 0.98 *** |
| Graduate Student                | 0.15    | 1.16  | 0.08    | 1.09  |
| Level of FB Use (1-Low to 3-High) | -0.38 ** | 0.68 ** | -0.20    | 0.82  |
| Social Life                     | -0.05 + | 0.95 + |          |       |
| FB Interaction                  | -0.01 ** | 0.90 ** |          |       |
| Constant                        | 0.76    | 2.13  | 2.42    | 11.32 |

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.1

Finally, in order to evaluate differences between currently single respondents who have ever and never had relationships, I predicted the odds of having ever had a relationship for currently single respondents only (N=352). The only significant predictor in this analysis was age (Odds Ratio=1.141). This suggests that greater frequency of use, greater degree of interpersonal interaction on Facebook and more frequent offline social interactions do not increase the likelihood that students will enter into a relationship. Thus, it seems that although Facebook may be used as a tool for checking out partners and facilitating relationships, that Facebook use general does not provide a benefit that makes students more experienced daters.
DISCUSSION

The results of this study offer a unique contribution to the understanding of the role of online social networks in college students’ formation of romantic relationships. This study is one of few projects to explore the ways in which online social networks affect online relationships, and is to my knowledge, the first study to consider how and when students access Facebook in their search for romantic partners.

In order to explain the degree to which the use of Facebook is integrated into the lives of college students, it is necessary to understand how common and frequent Facebook use is. The use of Facebook among students in this study was nearly universal. More than 97% of all students surveyed are registered Facebook users and another 94% of all respondents both have and regularly use Facebook accounts. It is also worth noting the frequency with which students engage in Facebook use. The mean amount of time spent weekly on Facebook was roughly 9 hours, and nearly one third of respondents spent more than 10 hours on the site weekly. Further, although students spend relatively little time on Facebook during a typical visit (most less than 10 minutes at a time), they visited the site frequently throughout the day. On a typical day, the mean number of Facebook visits was 4, but one quarter of respondents visit the site more than 8 times during the day.

Qualitatively, students use Facebook in ways that are consistent with self-presentation and impression management research. This study offers evidence to suggest that one of the primary uses of Facebook is as an outlet for presentation of self. Many students regularly use the public features of Facebook for communication. In this study, almost 80% had posted on a friend’s wall in the past week compared with 52% who had used the private messenger. Both features allow students to communicate with friends, but use of the Facebook wall allows communications to be visible to others. Likewise, nearly 60% of respondents had updated their personal statuses on their pages in the week prior to survey. This is another public signal and a method by which students conscientiously signal their personality. Considering both the level of integration of Facebook in students’ lives and the relatively
public nature of typical behaviors on the social network, it seems that many students access the site as a means of impression management.

The most important and innovative findings of this study describe and explain the role of Facebook in students’ romantic relationship behaviors. Considering literature on the changing nature of romantic relationship formation together with our understanding of the proliferation of the use online social networks for interpersonal communication, I hypothesized that students would access Facebook as a tool in their search for partners. The results of this study confirm that students knowingly utilize the social networking site as a means of assessing potential partners, and that Facebook has become an integral element in relationship formation processes.

Several findings of this study confirm the use of an exchange theory perspective as a framework through which to consider the use of OSNs as tools for facilitating romantic relationship formation. The exchange theory framework suggests that individuals use basic cost-benefit rational to make decisions about potential partners. Because Facebook profiles provide easily accessible information both about users’ self-described habits and interests as well as subtler clues about personality (in pictures and communications), it logically follows that students may use Facebook to screen partners. The results of this study verify that respondents use Facebook in this way.

I found that 90% of Facebook users in this sample examine the online profiles of the people in whom they are romantically interested. Further, the information found on potential mates’ profiles affects students’ feelings about potential mates; more than half of respondents have seen something on a love interest’s profile that turned them off to that person. There are several aspects of potential mates’ profiles that are particularly salient for students in their considerations. The most important features are relationships status, appearance and photos and status updates. Although relationship status signals availability, and appearance is often cited an important criteria in mate selection (Townsend 1988); more interesting is the finding that photos and status updates are also relevant for
respondents. Many of the features of Facebook are concrete indicators of self-defined personality, however, these two aspects of students’ profiles may operate in a different way. First, students update their statuses more often than they do other aspects of their pages. As such, it is likely that although students actively create these statuses themselves, they offer more temporarily relevant and authentic glimpses into personality. Second, though users can choose to unlink (“untag”) themselves from photos posted of by other users and can post photos themselves, pictures offer genuine snapshots of users’ lives.

The use of Facebook is an integral part of students’ relationship trajectories. Several Facebook relationship milestones occur concurrently with traditional relationships benchmarks, and there is uniformity among respondents in this study with regards to the timing and sequence of these events. For example, students consistently ranked exchanging phone numbers and becoming Facebook friends as the second and third events in the trajectory of the current or most recent relationship. Taking this finding together with the understanding of the degree to which Facebook use is integrated into students’ lives generally, it is clear that Facebook is truly incorporated into students’ relationship formation processes.

The main goals of the analytical portion of this project were two-fold: a) I sought to understand the association between students’ frequency of Facebook use and the quality of their romantic relationships; and b) I aimed to assess the relationships between students’ intensity of Facebook use and their probability of having college romantic relationships.

The results of this study did not confirm my hypotheses about the quality of romantic relationships formed using Facebook. Frequency of Facebook use was not statistically linked with either relationship satisfaction or respondents’ assessments of their current or previous partners’ representations of self on the site. This suggests that although students acknowledge the use of Facebook for screening mates, that more intense Facebook use (which may include the surveillance of
current partners’ profiles) does not necessarily offer a benefit with regards to the quality of relationships. In fact, the literature on online surveillance loops submits that spending time browsing the site may have detrimental effects on established relationships by increasing intra-partner jealousy (Musie et al. 2009).

The most noteworthy findings of this study are those that explain the relationship between frequency of Facebook use and the odds of having current or past college relationships. Although the results of this study do not confirm both hypotheses regarding the positive association between frequency of Facebook use and romantic relationships, the findings do tell an interesting story. First, the results suggest that frequency of Facebook use is not associated with the probability of having ever had a college relationship. This indicates that frequent Facebook users are no more or less likely than those who do not regularly use the site to have ever formed relationships. This finding is surprising because Facebook seemingly offers a platform for extending one’s offline social networks and a medium that facilitates romantic relationships development. Frequent Facebook use, however, seemingly offers users little benefit with regards to the formation of their romantic partnerships.

Second, the most striking link between Facebook use and partnership status is the negative association between frequency of use and likelihood of having a current romantic partner. I found that the highest-level Facebook users had 43% greater odds of currently being single than the lowest-level users. Because I hypothesized that greater Facebook use would be positively linked with partnership, in these analyses relationship status is the dependent variable. It seems more likely, however, given these findings that the causal direction of this relationship may be inverted. Reversing this relationship, it can be said that single Facebook users use the site more frequently than do students who are currently involved in romantic relationships. There are a few possible explanations for this, and the draw to use Facebook or to avoid its use differs for those students who are currently romantically involved and those who are single. For single respondents, there are two probable explanations for greater Facebook use.
First, respondents in this study use Facebook to check out potential romantic interests. Single respondents may be spending time on Facebook searching for mates. Second, single students may have more active social lives than those who are partnered, and Facebook is a means for maintaining friendships, planning events and sharing stories and pictures from social outings. Relationships can be time consuming and studies have shown that when people enter into romantic partnerships their social ties weaken (Gerstel and Sarkisan 2006). Taking these ideas together, single students may have more time and need to use the site than do their romantically involved counterparts.

For partnered students, the reciprocal is true. These students do not need to use Facebook to maintain as many relationships because they are likely not searching for partners and they may not keep up as many ties with their friends. There is one other compelling explanation for coupled students’ diminished Facebook use. As suggested by Musie et al. (2009), Facebook use may cause problems in relationships. Communications with past romantic interests or romantic relationship alternatives may provide partners with fodder for feelings of jealousy. Students who enter into romantic relationships might cut off ties from their single social lives to avoid confrontation with their partners. It is reasonable to assume that students may curb their Facebook use to avoid relationship conflict. If the primary focus of partnered students’ Facebook use was surveillance, than we might expect all students (single or coupled) to have roughly similar levels use regardless of relationship status; however, partnered students’ significantly lower levels of use supports the notion that relationships are a pull away from Facebook rather than a draw to it.

Although this study sheds light on many previously unexplored aspects of the use of online technologies for relationship development, there are other directions for future research that are worth pursuing. It would be valuable for researchers to conduct further study on the association between frequency and quality of Facebook use and romantic relationship status. Research on this topic could explore the specific draws to use Facebook for singles and the pulls away from the site for partnered
students. Further exploration of the links between students’ on- and offline social lives would also provide an interesting area of study. Finally, although the results of this study pertain to the specific population of college students, internet use and, specifically, Facebook use are increasing across all age groups and demographics. It would be useful for researchers to further explore the role of Facebook in the formation of romantic relationships among other populations.
REFERENCES


### APPENDIX A
Additional and Extended Tables

#### Table 1.c: Frequency of Variable: 'Frequency'

*Frequency of Facebook use. (1)-Low frequency use, (2)-Average frequency use, (3)-High-frequency use.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 1.d: Frequency of Variable: 'Relhap'

*Scaled measure of relationship satisfaction. Higher score are associated with greater satisfaction. (N=476)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
<th>Cumulative Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.125</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
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<td>1.250</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
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<td>1.375</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
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<td>1.500</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.625</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.750</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.875</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>16%</td>
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<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.375</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.500</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.625</td>
<td>54</td>
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<td>49%</td>
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<td>2.750</td>
<td>61</td>
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<td>73</td>
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<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 1.e: Frequency of Variable: 'Accuracy'

*Perceived Accuracy of Partner’s Self-Representation on Facebook Profile. (N=463)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
<th>Cumulative Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.250</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.500</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.750</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.250</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.500</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.750</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1.f: Frequency of Variable: 'Social Life'

*Frequency of weekly social activities. Higher scores are associated with greater number of social activities. (N=746)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
<th>Cumulative Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>69.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>85.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>96.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>97.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>98.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>98.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>99.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>99.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.1: Facebook Activities Ever Completed in the 7 Days Prior to Survey
In the past 7 days, which of the following have you done on Facebook?
(Check all that apply.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>% Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Viewed a friend's picture, but not commented.</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted a comment to a friend's wall.</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepted a new friend request.</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted a comment on a picture.</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted a personal status update.</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used the instant messenger.</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sent a private message.</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted a link on a friend's wall.</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searched for a person with whom not already friends.</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSVP'd to an event.</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted a link on your own wall.</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sent a friend request.</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uploaded photos.</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed profile picture.</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made planes to meet up with friends via Facebook.</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Played games.</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=785

Table 4.1: Most Frequently Accessed Facebook Features in the Assessment of Potential Mates by Number of Respondents who Access Each Feature, % of Total Who Consider Potential Partners' Profiles, and % of Total Who Rank Each Feature as Either "Important" or "Very Important"

What do you look at on a romantic interest's Facebook profile to assess your interest in him/her?
(Check all that apply.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook Feature</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>% of Total N (n=657)</th>
<th>% Important or Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His/Her Relationship Status</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/Her Physical Appearance</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/Her Status Updates</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures (Other than Physical Appearance)</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Friends</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links He/She Posted on His/Her Wall</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His or Her Educational Information</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments Posted by Other People on His/Her Wall</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His or Her &quot;About You&quot;</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/Her Tastes in Music/TV/Movies/Books/Games</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/Her Sports and Activities</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/Her Work Info</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links Other People Posted to His/Her Wall</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/Her Religious Views</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/Her Favorite Quotes</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/Her Political Views</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/Her Friends</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His/Her Networks</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B
Survey Instrument

Demographic Information
1. What is your gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Other

2. How old are you?
   [Open Ended]

3. What year are you in school?
   a. First Year Undergraduate Student
   b. Second Year Undergraduate Student
   c. Third Year Undergraduate Student
   d. Forth Year Undergraduate Student
   e. Fifth Year or More Undergraduate Student
   f. Graduate Student

Facebook Use
4. How many hours total did you use Facebook in the last 7 days? [Drop down menu]
   [If a, skip to 11. b-k continue to 5.]
   a. I don’t have a Facebook account.
   b. I didn’t use my Facebook account.
   c. Less than an hour.
   d. 1-2 hours.
   e. 3-5 hours.
   f. 6-10 hours.
   g. 11-15 hours.
   h. 16-20 hours.
   i. 21-25 hours.
   j. 26-30 hours.
   k. More than 30 hours.

5. How many times do you visit Facebook during an average day?
   a. I don’t use Facebook every day.
   b. 1-2 times
   c. 3-4 times
   d. 5-6 times
   e. 7-8 times
   f. 9-10 times
   g. 10-15 times
   h. 16-20 times
   i. More than times

6. How long do you typically use Facebook in one visit to the site?
   a. 0-5 minutes
b. 6-10 minutes  
c. 11-30 minutes  
d. 31-60 minutes  
e. More than 1 hour 

7. In the past 7 days, which of the following have you done on Facebook? (Check all that apply)  
   a. Posted a comment to a friend’s wall.  
   b. Posted a link on your own wall.  
   c. Posted a link on a friend’s wall.  
   d. Posted a comment on a picture.  
   e. Posted a personal status update.  
   f. Played games.  
   g. Uploaded photos.  
   h. Changed your profile picture.  
   i. Accepted a new friend request.  
   j. Sent a friend request.  
   k. Sent a private message.  
   l. Used the instant messenger.  
   m. Viewed a friend’s pictures, but not commented.  
   n. Searched for a person with whom you are not already friends.  
   o. RSVPed to an event.  
   p. Made plans to meet up with a friend via Facebook.  

8. How many Facebook friends do you have? [Drop down menu-Increments of 100, until 2000; and “More than 2000.”]  

9. With whom do you communicate most on Facebook? [Check one only.]  
   a. Family  
   b. Friends I met in my Hometown  
   c. Friends I have met since arriving at Penn State  
   d. People I have met through Facebook  
   e. Other. Specify [Open ended].  

10. Do you use Facebook on your cell phone? If so, which functions do you use on your cell phone? (Check all that apply).  
    a. I don’t have Facebook on my cell phone.  
    b. I don’t use Facebook on my cell phone.  
    c. Read newsfeed.  
    d. Check notifications like wall posts.  
    e. Accept or send friend requests.  
    f. Use the instant messenger.  
    g. Send private messages.  
    h. Post links or comments.  
    i. Upload photos  

11. How many times in a typical week do you get together in person with one or more friend for each of the following activities?
a. Going downtown to get coffee or something to eat.
   i. [Drop down menus. 0-10 and “More than 10”]
b. Eating in on campus dining areas.
   i. [Drop down menus. 0-10 and “More than 10”]
c. Playing Sports.
   i. [Drop down menus. 0-10 and “More than 10”]
d. Studying or doing homework.
   i. [Drop down menus. 0-10 and “More than 10”]
e. Going to parties or out to bars.
   i. [Drop down menus. 0-10 and “More than 10”]

Facebook and Romantic Relationships

12. Have you ever met someone on Facebook? If so, where did you meet them? [Check all that apply. If a, continue to 14; if b-I, get question 13.]
   a. I have never met anyone on Facebook.
   b. I met someone because we belonged to the same Facebook “group”.
   c. I met someone through the mutual friends feature.
   d. I met someone after I read a comment he/she posted on a friend’s page.
   e. I met someone after I saw him/her on “People you may know.”
   f. I met someone because he/she was attending an event that I was also attending.
   g. I met someone in a network that we have in common.
   h. He/she contacted me first.
   i. Other. Specify [Open Ended]

13. Considering the people you have met through Facebook, have you ever
   a. become platonic friends with someone you met on Facebook?
      i. No
      ii. Yes
   b. been romantically involved with someone you met on Facebook?
      i. No
      ii. Yes
   c. met someone with whom you became neither involved with romantically nor with whom you became friends?
      i. No
      ii. Yes. Please explain: [Open-Ended].

14. Have you ever used an online dating site to find a romantic partner? [If no, continue to 16. If yes, get question 15.]
   a. No
   b. Yes. Which site or sites have you used? [Open Ended]

15. Did you meet anyone with whom you pursued a romantic relationship?
   a. No.
   b. Yes, I casually dated one or more other people, but never formed a serious relationship.
   c. Yes, I met someone with whom I entered into an exclusive, committed relationship.
16. When you meet someone who you are interesting in getting to know better (romantically) do you look at his or her Facebook profile? [If Yes, continue to 17. If No, skip to 21.]
   a. Yes
   b. No

17. What do you look at on a romantic interest’s Facebook profile to assess your interest in him or her? (Check all that apply)
   a. Mutual friends
   b. His/her friends
   c. Links he/she posted his/her wall.
   d. Links other people posted to his/her wall.
   e. His/her status updates.
   f. Comments posted by other people on his/her wall.
   g. His/her networks.
   h. His/her physical appearance.
   i. Pictures (other than physical appearance).
   j. His/her relationship status.
   k. His or her educational information.
   l. His/her work info.
   m. His/her religious views
   n. His/her political views.
   o. His/her favorite quotes.
   p. His/her sports and activities.
   q. His/her tastes in Music/Television/Movies/Books/Game
   r. His or her “About You.”

18. Have you ever been interested in someone and then seen something in his or her profile that made you no long interested?
   a. No
   b. Yes. What was it that you didn’t like? [open-ended]

19. To what degree does each of the following influence your feelings about your romantic interest? [Present as a table.]
   a. Mutual friends
      i. Not important
      ii. Important
      iii. Very important
   b. His/her friends
      i. Not important
      ii. Important
      iii. Very important
   c. Links he/she posted his/her wall.
      i. Not important
      ii. Important
      iii. Very important
   d. Links other people posted to his/her wall.
      i. Not important
      ii. Important
iii. Very important
e. His/her status updates.
   i. Not important
   ii. Important
   iii. Very important
f. Comments posted by other people on his/her wall.
   i. Not important
   ii. Important
   iii. Very important
g. His/her Facebook “networks”.
   i. Not important
   ii. Important
   iii. Very important
h. His/her physical appearance.
   i. Not important
   ii. Important
   iii. Very important
i. Pictures (other than physical appearance).
   i. Not important
   ii. Important
   iii. Very important
j. His/her relationship status.
   i. Not important
   ii. Important
   iii. Very important
k. His or her educational information.
   i. Not important
   ii. Important
   iii. Very important
l. His/her work info.
   i. Not important
   ii. Important
   iii. Very important
m. His/her religious views
   i. Not important
   ii. Important
   iii. Very important
n. His/her political views.
   i. Not important
   ii. Important
   iii. Very important
o. His/her favorite quotes.
   i. Not important
   ii. Important
   iii. Very important
p. His/her sports and activities.
   i. Not important
   ii. Important
iii. Very important
q. His/her tastes in Music/Television/Movies/Books/Games
   i. Not important
   ii. Important
   iii. Very important
r. His or her “About You.”
   i. Not important
   ii. Important
   iii. Very important

20. Which of the following do you consider most when checking out a potential partner’s Facebook profile? Check the three items that are most important. [Present as a table.]
   a. Mutual friends
   b. His/her friends
   c. Links he/she posted his/her wall.
   d. Links other people posted to his/her wall.
   e. His/her status updates.
   f. Comments posted by other people on his/her wall.
   g. His/her networks.
   h. His/her physical appearance.
   i. Pictures (other than physical appearance).
   j. His/her relationship status.
   k. His or her educational information.
   l. His/her work info.
   m. His/her religious views
   n. His/her political views.
   o. His/her favorite quotes.
   p. His/her sports and activities.
   q. His/her tastes in Music/Television/Movies/Books/Game
   r. His or her “About You.”

21. Are you currently in a committed, exclusive romantic relationship? [If Yes, complete questions 22-32; if No, skip to 33.]
   a. Yes
   b. No

For dating respondents:

22. Do you display a relationship status on your Facebook page? [If a, skip to 24. If b,c or d, continue to 23.]
   a. No, I don’t display a relationship status.
   b. Yes, I display a relationships status, but don’t list any other person’s name.
   c. Yes, I list a relationship status, and I display my current romantic partner’s name.
   d. My relationship status is not current or accurate, or I display a relationship with a person with whom I am not in a romantic relationship.

23. If yes, what is your relationship status on Facebook?
   a. Single
   b. In a relationship
c. Engaged
d. Married
e. It’s complicated
f. In an open relationship
g. Other

24. When did you begin dating your current partner?  
   [Month/Year]

25. Where did you and your partner meet?  
a. School  
b. Met through mutual friend  
c. At a party or a bar  
d. At church or a youth group  
e. Playing Sports  
f. Extracurricular or club activity  
g. Online  
h. Other. [Please specify.]

26. Have you and your partner had a talk during which you decided to enter into an exclusive, committed romantic relationship?  
a. If so, when. [Month/Year]  
b. We haven’t had one.

27. Are you Facebook friends with your romantic partner? [If a, skip to 31. If b, continue to 30.]  
a. Yes  
b. No. Why not? [Open Ended]

28. Rank the following events in the order in which they happened during your current relationship: [Include option for “N/A or has not happened.”]  
a. First Date  
b. Exchange Phone Numbers  
c. Change Relationship Status on Facebook to “In a Relationship”  
d. Facebook Message/Instant Message  
e. Write on his/her Facebook Wall  
f. Spent the Night (Slept over)  
g. Had a talk during which we decided to enter into an exclusive relationship.  
h. Met in Person  
i. Became Facebook Friends  
j. Hooked Up for the First Time (Made Out or More)  
k. Texted Regularly

29. In your current romantic relationship, how happy are you with...  
a. the extent to which your partner understands you?  
   i. Not very happy  
   ii. Pretty happy  
   iii. Very happy  
b. the amount of love you receive from your partner?
i. Not very happy
ii. Pretty happy
iii. Very happy
c. the extent to which you and your partner agree about things?
   i. Not very happy
   ii. Pretty happy
   iii. Very happy
d. the amount of time that you spend together?
   i. Not very happy
   ii. Pretty happy
   iii. Very happy
e. the activities that you share with your partner?
   i. Not very happy
   ii. Pretty happy
   iii. Very happy
f. your partner’s faithfulness?
   i. Not very happy
   ii. Pretty happy
   iii. Very happy
g. the overall quality of the relationship?
   i. Not very happy
   ii. Pretty happy
   iii. Very happy

30. Compared to your friends’ relationships, how good is your relationship?
   i. Not as good as most
   ii. About the same as most
   iii. Better than most

31. Now that you know your partner better, how accurately do you think the information you first saw on his/her profile represented each of the following:
   a. Your partner’s personal interests
      i. Very inaccurately.
      ii. Somewhat inaccurately.
      iii. Somewhat accurately.
      iv. Very accurately.
      v. We are not Facebook friends.
   b. Your partner’s personality
      i. Very inaccurately.
      ii. Somewhat inaccurately.
      iii. Somewhat accurately.
      iv. Very accurately.
      v. We are not Facebook friends.
   c. Your partner’s social life
      i. Very inaccurately.
      ii. Somewhat inaccurately.
      iii. Somewhat accurately.
      iv. Very accurately.
v. We are not Facebook friends.
d. Your partner’s political and/or religious attitudes
   i. Very inaccurately.
   ii. Somewhat inaccurately.
   iii. Somewhat accurately.
   iv. Very accurately.
   v. We are not Facebook friends.
e. Your partner’s relationships with others
   i. Very inaccurately.
   ii. Somewhat inaccurately.
   iii. Somewhat accurately.
   iv. Very accurately.
   v. We are not Facebook friends.

32. Do you display a relationship status on your Facebook page?
   a. No, I don’t display my relationship status.
   b. Yes, I list “Single.”
   c. Yes, I list a relationship status other than single. [End dating respondents’ survey.]

For currently single respondents:
33. Since beginning college, have you been in a committed relationship with another person?
   a. Yes
   b. No [If no, end survey.]

For the remaining questions, please consider your most recent romantic partner with whom you were in a committed, exclusive relationship.

34. When did you begin dating your most recent partner?
   [Month/Year]

35. Where did you and your partner meet?
   a. School
   b. Met through mutual friend
   c. At a party or a bar
   d. At church or a youth group
   e. Playing Sports
   f. Extracurricular or club activity
   g. Online
      Other. [Please specify.]

36. Did you and your partner have a talk during which you decided to enter into an exclusive, committed romantic relationship?
   a. Yes [Month/Year]
   b. We never had one.

37. When did you and your most recent romantic partner break up?
   Month/Year
38. Who broke up with whom?
   a. He/she broke up with me.
   b. I broke up with him/her.
   c. We decided together to end our relationship.
   d. Other.

39. Why did you break up?
   [Open Ended]

40. Rank the following events in the order in which they happened during your most recent relationship: [Include option for “N/A or did not happened.”]
   a. First Date
   b. Exchange Phone Numbers
   c. Change Relationship Status on Facebook to “In a Relationship”
   d. Facebook Message/Instant Message
   e. Write on his/her Facebook Wall
   f. Spent the Night (Slept over)
   g. Had a talk during which we decided to enter into an exclusive relationship.
   h. Met in Person
   i. Became Facebook Friends
   j. Hooked Up for the First Time (Made Out or More)
   k. Texted Regularly

41. At the best time you can remember during your relationship, how happy were you with...
   a. the extent to which your partner understood you?
      i. Not very happy
      ii. Pretty happy
      iii. Very happy
   b. the amount of love you received from your partner?
      i. Not very happy
      ii. Pretty happy
      iii. Very happy
   c. the extent to which you and your partner agreed about things?
      i. Not very happy
      ii. Pretty happy
      iii. Very happy
   d. the amount of time that you spent together?
      i. Not very happy
      ii. Pretty happy
      iii. Very happy
   e. the activities that you shared with your partner?
      i. Not very happy
      ii. Pretty happy
      iii. Very happy
   f. your partner’s faithfulness?
      i. Not very happy
      ii. Pretty happy
      iii. Very happy
g. the overall quality of the relationship?
   i. Not very happy
   ii. Pretty happy
   iii. Very happy

42. Compared to your friends’ romantic relationships, how good was your relationship?
   a. not as good as most
   b. about the same as most
   c. better than most

43. Reflecting on your most recent romantic partner, once you got to know him/her better, how accurately do you think the information that you first saw on his/her profile represented each of the following:
   a. Your partner’s personal interests
      i. Very inaccurately.
      ii. Somewhat inaccurately.
      iii. Somewhat accurately.
      iv. Very accurately.
      v. We were not Facebook friends.
   b. Your partner’s personality
      i. Very inaccurately.
      ii. Somewhat inaccurately.
      iii. Somewhat accurately.
      iv. Very accurately.
      v. We were not Facebook friends.
   c. Your partner’s social life
      i. Very inaccurately.
      ii. Somewhat inaccurately.
      iii. Somewhat accurately.
      iv. Very accurately.
      v. We were not Facebook friends.
   d. Your partner’s political and/or religious attitudes
      i. Very inaccurately.
      ii. Somewhat inaccurately.
      iii. Somewhat accurately.
      iv. Very accurately.
      v. We were not Facebook friends.
   e. Your partner’s relationships with others
      i. Very inaccurately.
      ii. Somewhat inaccurately.
      iii. Somewhat accurately.
      iv. Very accurately.
      v. We were not Facebook friends.