

**YOUNG PEOPLE ON
FACEBOOK: Privacy
Management
A theoretical
approach on youth's
view of privacy on this
social network**

**JOVENS NO FACEBOOK: Gestão
da privacidade**
Uma abordagem teórica sobre a
visão dos jovens acerca da
privacidade nesta rede social

**JOVENES EN FACEBOOK: Gestión
de privacidad** Un enfoque teórico
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privacidad en esta red social

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ABSTRACT

Over the years, Facebook has become more and more popular, especially among young people. Because Facebook's nature lies on the ideal of an open and interconnected world, the act of sharing it's its main foundation. Because of this,

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many adults worry that teenagers and young adults are exposing themselves too much by sharing so much information online. It is commonly stated that youngsters do not care about privacy and don't recognize it as a necessity and a right. However, privacy has to be looked at in the current situation of the our world. Things have changed a lot with the evolution of Internet, and the changes in the concept of privacy must be looked at within this context. In this paper, we aim to discuss the current concept of privacy, how it is seen by young people and how they manage it on Facebook, according to their own convictions about its significance

KEYWORDS: Facebook; Young people; Privacy; Social networks.

RESUMO

Ao longo dos anos, o Facebook tornou-se cada vez mais popular, especialmente entre os jovens. Considerando que a natureza do Facebook está ligada ao ideal de um mundo aberto e interconectado, o ato de compartilhá-lo é o seu fundamento principal. Muitos adultos preocupam-se, contudo, com a elevada exposição dos adolescentes e jovens provocada pela partilha de tanta informação on-line. Afirma-se, frequentemente, que os jovens não se preocupam com a privacidade, não a reconhecendo como uma necessidade e um direito. No entanto, a privacidade tem de ser analisada considerando o nosso mundo atual. Com efeito, muita coisa mudou com a evolução da Internet e as alterações no conceito de privacidade devem ser analisadas dentro deste contexto. Neste artigo, pretendemos discutir o conceito atual de privacidade, como ele é visto pelos jovens e como eles a gerem no Facebook, de acordo com suas convicções sobre a sua importância.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Facebook; Jovens; Privacidade; Redes sociais.

RESUMEN

A lo largo de los años, Facebook se hizo cada vez más popular, especialmente entre los jóvenes. Debido a que la naturaleza de Facebook se encuentra en el ideal de un mundo abierto e interconectado, el acto de compartir es su principal

fundamento. Debido a esto, muchos adultos se preocupan de que los adolescentes y los adultos jóvenes se exponen demasiado al compartir tanta información en línea. Se afirma comúnmente que los jóvenes no se preocupan por la privacidad y no lo reconocen como una necesidad y un derecho. Sin embargo, la privacidad tiene que ser mirado en la situación actual de nuestro mundo. Las cosas han cambiado mucho con la evolución de Internet, y los cambios en el concepto de privacidad deben ser analizados dentro de este contexto. En este artículo, tratamos de discutir el concepto actual de privacidad, cómo es visto por los jóvenes y cómo lo gestionan en Facebook, de acuerdo con sus propias convicciones sobre su significado. En este artículo, tratamos de discutir el concepto actual de privacidad, cómo es visto por los jóvenes y cómo lo gestionan en Facebook, de acuerdo con sus propias convicciones sobre su significado. Palavras-chave: Facebook; Jovens; Gestão da privacidade; Redes sociais.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Facebook; Jovenes; Privacidad; Redes sociales.

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Introduction

Over the years, Facebook has become more and more popular, especially among young people. Its use has become ritualized, most of the users don't like to spend much time without access to this social network. Because Facebook's nature lies on the ideal of an open and interconnected world, the act of sharing it's its main foundation. Because of this, many adults worry that teenagers and young adults are exposing themselves too much by sharing so much information online. It is commonly stated that youngsters do not care about privacy and don't recognize it as a necessity and a right.

However, privacy has to be looked at in the current situation of the our world. Things have changed a lot with the evolution of Internet, and the changes in the concept of privacy must be looked at within this context.

In this paper, we aim to discuss the current concept of privacy, how it is seen by young people and how they manage it on Facebook, according to their own convictions about its significance. We will start by briefly presenting Facebook as a social network, and then explore young people's relationship with Facebook. In order to understand their convictions about privacy, we will first explain what kind of information and content they opt to share on their pages. After, we will look into two different dimensions of privacy: social privacy and institutional privacy. The first one, refers to privacy threats that are related with one's social context and social norms. Institutional privacy englobes the threats from Facebook as a company itself and their business partners. We will attempt to explain how much teenagers and young adults are aware of those threats and how they challenge them.

At last, it is important to understand why they still share information and content even when they are aware of such threats. For that, I will analyze their possible reasons and explain how they measure and weight the benefits of sharing versus the possible dangers.

Overall, this is a general approach on today's concept of privacy in the context of this online world based on the connections created by the act of sharing something. To support our research, we will be using investigations from researchers like danah boyd, Alice Marwick, Howard Gardner, Katie Davis and Sarah Raynes Goldie.

WHAT IS FACEBOOK?

Facebook is a social network Site which allows users to create profiles that combine information provided by themselves and also by their "friends". It is an online platform where one can connect to multiple people through a simple "friend request", and share content of multiple kinds, such as photos, songs and videos. It allows users to interact with each other and to react to these contents which are displayed not only on each user's profile but also in the *newsfeed*, where one can also see the connections made between members of the same network.

Even though the concept of social network Site is complex and controversial, in 2013 danah boyd⁴ and Nicole Ellison proposed the following definition of it:

A networked communication platform in which participants 1) have

⁴ danah boyd prefers to be identified without capital letters in her name.

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uniquely identifiable profiles that consist of user-supplied content, content provided by other users, and/or system-provided data; 2) can publicly articulate connections that can be viewed and traversed by others; and 3) can consume, produce, and/or interact with streams of user generated content provided by their connections on the site. (ELLISON; BOYD 2013, p.7)

As we can see, taking into account what has been said above, Facebook can be considered a social network Site. Functioning as a networked public sphere, it has four fundamental characteristics: persistence (everything that is put online is automatically recorded and archived), replicability - all the content is made of bits and bits can be duplicated -, scalability - Facebook contents have an immense potential of visibility - and searchability - research allows access to most of the information - (BOYD, 2008b, p. 27) The changes in the concept of privacy are all influenced by these factors.

The company defines its own purpose in the following words: "Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them." (FACEBOOK'S NEWSROOM, 2015).

THE EVOLUTION OF PRIVACY POLICIES

Facebook was launched in 2004, initially for the exclusive use of Harvard students. In a short period of time, it had extended to other universities such as Stanford, Colombia and Yale. Initially known as "The Facebook", it was created by the Harvard University student Mark Zuckerberg and his roommates Dustin Moskovitz, Chris Hughes and Eduardo Saverin (RAYNES-GOLDIE, 2012, p. 87). Within the first 24 hours, the social network had 1,200 active users and after one



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month, half of Harvard's undergraduates had created a profile (THE GUARDIAN, 2007).

It was also in 2007 that Facebook decided to start making even more profit of the massive database that had been formed. "In August 2007 Facebook announced that it was looking to 'translate its popularity into bigger profits' by offering advertisers direct access to their targeted demographic consumers" (THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, 2007). We will look into this in the next section.

With an average of 1 billion active users per day in 2015 (FACEBOOK'S NEWSROOM, 2015), Facebook continues constantly developing new features and settings that make this social network even more attractive to join.

For a social network that started somewhat exclusive, Facebook's privacy policy evolved quite fast into a platform where most of the information is public by default. Year after year, changes were made towards a more open world. Here I will discuss some of the more significant ones.

On its 2005 Privacy Policy, it was stated that "No personal information that you submit to The facebook will be available to any user of the Web Site who does not belong to at least one of the groups specified by you in your privacy settings" (p. 7). But, in 2006, that fact was starting to change: "Our default privacy settings limit the information displayed in your profile to your school, your specified local area, and other reasonable community limitations that we tell you about" (p.1). So, from this moment on, user's information is available from anyone who is geographically close to them, unless they consciously change it. Besides, while in 2005's Privacy Police it was already stated that Facebook kept information for advertising purposes, in the next year's policy, it is more detailed

Facebook may use information in your profile without identifying you as an individual to third parties. We do this for purposes such as aggregating how many people at a school like a band or movie and personalizing advertisements and promotions (FACEBOOK'S PRIVACY POLICY, 2006, p.16).

They justify it by stating that, through this system, the adverts become directly related with the consumer, and, therefore, more interesting to them. "We believe this benefits you. You can know more about the world around you" (p.16).

Also in 2006, Facebook created a controversial feature: the *newsfeed*. It functions as Facebook's homepage and displays the online activities of a user's network, like status, pictures, and all kinds of actions, for example comments that have been made to someone's profile, or recently accepted friend requests. Although none of the individual actions were private, their aggregated public display on the start pages of all friends outraged Facebook users, who felt exposed and deprived of their sense of control over their information (DEBATIN, 2009, p.85). This was something that raised many protests because it publicized things that, while public, were sort of hidden or obscured, but that now were impossible to miss (BOYD, 2008, p.15). With the newsfeed, "participants have to consider [even more] how others might interpret their actions, knowing that any action will be broadcast to everyone with whom they consented to digital Friendship" (BOYD, 2008b, p.16). As a response to the protests, Facebook then introduced privacy controls for users to be able to regulate what was shown on the news feed and to whom. Since then, users have become used to that feature and it hasn't raised many protests.

Later on, Facebook's privacy policy of 2007 affirmed that "the name, the networks and the profile picture thumbnail started being available in Facebook searches, to allow a broader audience to send you friend requests." (p. 23) It was also in this year that Facebook opened a platform for third-party applications developers, who gained access to the user's data. This subject specifically will be discussed in the following sections. It also started made available to advertising companies "a much wider array of characteristics" of the users and "interspersed with items on the news feed"(THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, 2007).

On november 2009, the new privacy policy lets users know that some of their information starts being available to "everyone" by default. Nowadays, any profile picture that users upload or post in their own timeline is also set to be seen by "everyone" until that setting is changed by themselves.

Information set to "everyone" is publicly available information, may be accessed by everyone on the Internet (including people not logged into Facebook), is subject to indexing by third party search engines, may be associated with you outside of Facebook (such as when you visit other sites on the internet), and may be imported and exported by us and others without privacy limitations⁵ (FACEBOOK'S PRIVACY POLICY, 2009).

In the same year, certain categories of information, for example the pages that have been liked by a certain user, become public and stop being included in the private settings. The only thing a user can do is "limit the ability of others to find this information through search using your search privacy settings" (FACEBOOK'S PRIVACY POLICY, 2009).

⁵ The Privacy Policies from 2009, 2010 and 2012 couldn't be found online. Hence, the quotations were transcribed from the website of the "Eletronic Frontier Foundation".

In 2010, the privacy policy changed again, stating that

When you connect with an application or website it will have access to General Information about you. The term General Information includes your and your friends' names, profile pictures, gender, user IDs, connections, and any content shared using the Everyone privacy setting (FACEBOOK'S PRIVACY POLICY, 2010).

In 2012, the users were asked to vote in favor or against the new privacy policy, which included the new profile's format, called Timeline, and "the possibility for Facebook to start showing people ads on outside websites, targeting the pitches to interests and hobbies that users express on Facebook", as it is stated in the article "Facebook Forced To Let Users Vote On Privacy Changes" (THE HUFFINGTON POST, 2012). For the vote to be valid, Facebook required 30% of users to vote. However, they only got 0,2% participants, which resulted in the vote being only advisory. At least for now, the possibility to vote in future privacy policies is over, explained Heather Kelly, in a CNN article (December 11th, 2012).

The most recent Privacy Policy will be applied from the 30th of January, 2016. It focus manly in explaining and simplifying privacy information to the user. Besides that, Facebook tells us that they have been working on in order to create more benefits in sharing location and buying things through Facebook.

Finally, it is important to state that Facebook does not allow users to delete their accounts. It is possible to deactivate them yes, but the option of deleting all of its content doesn't exist. While the information might become invisible to other users, it remains on Facebook's servers indeterminately (TELLO, 2013, p.210).

The long and complex Terms of Service are usually not read by most people, especially not by the younger users. During last year, Facebook has developed a “Privacy Basics page” which is actually somewhat summarized and easier to read. There, it is possible to understand *slightly* better to where the information is, supposedly, going. In spite of this, studies still argue that Facebook’s policy is becoming less transparent (SHORE; STEINMAN, 2015) and there still is a lot of controversy and suits filed against the company.

WHAT IS PRIVACY?

Privacy has always been very hard to define. In addition, with the development of Social Networks this concept has been becoming even more blurred and controversial. In the different definitions that have been given by multiple scholars throughout time, we can find some common aspects. According to Katherine S. Raynes-Goldie those are the “interrelated notions of disclosure, control and the public/private divide” (RAYNES-GOLDIE, 2012, p. 62). It is frequently seen as a dichotomic concept, the public part being conventionally connected to spaces outside of home and the private side to the more intimate side of life such as relationships with friends and family. Conventionally, in the public parts of life, others have the right to interfere, but in the privacy sphere one should expect to have freedom to act as he pleases. With the evolution of social network sites like Facebook, it can be said that the once separated spheres of private and public are starting to be overlapped. But the question is, were they ever really that separated? Raynes-Goldie argues that the “spheres of public and private have always been, to some degree, overlapping” (RAYNES-GOLDIE, 2012, p.63), but this reality is just more pronounced due to the crescent use of digital technologies. For example, before

modern society, there were already surveillance techniques, they are just more developed now and take different forms.

Furthermore, it can be considered that privacy has two different sides. The institutional side, which is related to the law and privacy policies and settings of companies (in this case, Facebook), and social privacy, "the management of identity, reputation, and social contexts" (RAYNES-GOLDIE, 2012, p.82). Both forms of privacy will be analyzed here, as well as young people's relationship with them. According to many studies, it is a myth that they are not concerned about them (MARWICK; BOYD, 2014, p.1052).

SHARED CONTENTS

Before looking into who people share information with, we consider it important to try and understand what kind of information is shared. What contents does a young Facebook user put out there?

The first thing to be considered is the profile of the user, which is the main foundation of Facebook (SIMÕES-PORTO, 2011, p.10). There are many fields of personal information to be filled by the user, some are mandatory, others are optional. These include name, a personal picture, age, date of birth, location, nationality, place of work, school, university and a more customizable area about favorite quotes, movies or books. By filling these information and customizing their profiles, young people are writing their identity and formalizing it. "Mediated environments like networked publics formalize and alter the identity processes of self-presentation and impression management. Teens must formally make their presence known through the explicit creation of profiles [...]" (BOYD, 2008, p.119).

When online, it is impossible to have the same feedback that one would have when interacting personally with a friend. So, the identities that are built are often based on an imaginary and predicted feedback. Still, the role of the friends' list is very important. Zhao *et.al* (2008) apud Amante *et al.* (2014), argues that identity isn't a personal, defined element but a social product (built in alterity with others who surround us), according to a specific social environment, and which develops in different ways according to the context.

The contents shared by young people on Facebook are all part of this identity construction. They measure the benefits of sharing and decide what to keep private according to the idea of themselves that they want to give to the others.

However, this identity doesn't differ that much from the one teenagers and young adults present offline as both worlds are strongly intertwined. The people they have on their network are mostly people they know personally and the conversations online are frequently connected to the conversations offline. But that doesn't mean young people don't try to create the best presentation of their real-selves that they can.

Las identidades virtual y física de los jóvenes pueden ser coherentes, pero la correspondencia no tiene que ser exacta [...] los jóvenes se esmeran en presentar una identidad pulida y socialmente deseable cuando están en línea (GARDNER; DAVIS, 2014, p.72).

When in real life, young people might use clothing as a symbolic element of their identity, the difference is that, when online, people use the language of the media to create those symbolic elements. (MARWICK, 2013, p.6) Just like one's day-to-day presentation, "the online presence becomes something to be

“worked on” and perfected” (PAPACHARISSI, 2002, apud MARWICK, 2013, p.6).

Gardner and Davis argue that, even though it is commonly said that young people don't care about privacy,

Su preocupación por cuestiones concernientes a la privacidad les llevaba a emplear una amplia gama de estrategias para proteger su privacidad en Internet, como el uso de los controles de privacidad o la omisión de información personal como su dirección postal o su número de teléfono” (GARDNER; DAVIS, 2014, p. 89) .

According to a study conducted by Bernhard Debatin *et al.* (2009, p. 94) 90% of the 119 college undergraduates that were inquired,

[...]signed up under their full real name and included their gender, date of birth, and hometown. This same percentage of respondents also uploaded a picture of themselves as well as additional pictures of friends, family, pets, etc. Four-fifths of the participants specified interests, favorite TV shows, music, and movies, field of study, schools attended, and e-mail address on their online profile. About one-third provided specific contact information, such as phone number [...].

This data is in agreement with what Simões-Porto (2011, p.68) concludes with her study made in Portugal. She also states that what the inquiries post mostly on their profiles are music videos (often accompanied by quotes), thoughts, other kinds of videos and quotes. Thus, they often express themselves, building their identity through what they post on their profile.

Os inquiridos tanto optam por utilizar as próprias palavras para se expressarem como também escolhem palavras de outros, seja de letras de músicas, excertos de livros, etc., para comentarem alguma

situação, expressarem aquilo que sentem, descreverem uma situação ou estado de espírito, entre tantas outras situações (SIMÕES-PORTO, 2011, p.69).

According to another study (AMANTE *et al.*, 2014) young people prefer processes of identity construction that are more implicit and mediatized, “pela imagem, por um código linguístico apenas entendível entre os amigos, ou citando por vezes excertos de letras de música que expressam o que sentem” (p. 34).

In this study, it is found that a major amount of the status updates and comments between friends have a strong sentimental nature, however “parece existir algum cuidado com os conteúdos de caráter mais íntimo, que possam ferir suscetibilidades ou denunciar características pouco populares” Self-presentation on Facebook tries to avoid embarrassing situations, thus the topic of romantic relationships isn’t as popular as others, and it is almost only brought up among the feminine gender.

Other subjects as personal taste in music, celebrity idols, movies, books and even demonstrations of affection between friends are much more common, among both genders (AMANTE *et al.*, 2014, p.33). This identity construction is thus very focused in their friends which is also a visible factor when analyzing the disclosed pictures. Besides their profile picture, in which they tend to be alone, young people often share other photo albums containing pictures of themselves with friends. Therefore, image seems to play an important role in the identity construction and the interpersonal communication that takes place online (AMANTE *et al.*, 2014, p.32).

Ultimately, we can conclude that Facebook profiles function as a kind of a journal that documents the day-to-day life of young people (AMANTE *et al.*,

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2014, p.34) and presents their identity which they build through pictures, thoughts, quotes, songs, comments, videos and implicit messages that are mostly directed and understood by their friends who are familiar with certain contexts, references and codes. Therefore, this doesn't prove that, by sharing so much content, young people don't care about privacy. Rather, the content that they post is carefully measured according to their own notion of privacy and, as we will see later on, negotiated between the risks and the benefits.

PERCEIVED SOCIAL PRIVACY

Perceived privacy includes the privacy elements of which the young people are aware and the ways in which they consider they are protecting themselves.

Friend requests can be considered the most frequently used privacy control (RAYNES-GOLDIE, 2012, p.165). They are crucial part of social networking on Facebook, as the friend's list influences the representation of the self and the discloser of all contents. This feature serves to mark and display relationships, define who has access to each user's profile, increase one's network by connecting users through the "friends in common" category and also to authenticate one's identity. "No mundo online, onde é fácil usurpar a identidade de alguém, a exposição das suas ligações pode ser também interpretada como um sinal de comprovação da identidade de alguém" (SIMÕES-PORTO, 2011, p.12).

It is commonly thought that young people don't pay attention to privacy settings, accepting all friend requests (regardless if they have met the person or not). Fortunately, many studies have proved these ideas to be false (GARDNER;

DAVIS, 2014; BOYD; MARWICK, 2011).

They use several strategies to protect themselves, the more basic ones being, as we discussed in the previous chapter, not giving away their phone number or address (GARDNER; DAVIS, 2014, p.89) but also, restricting access to their Facebook profile through the friend requests control. Since most people set up their settings to make the majority of the content only available to friends, this feature is indeed very central in the usage of this social media. "Facebook Friendship also requires reciprocity -- that is, both Friends must agree on the relationship. The result is that by default, both Friends equally and openly share information with each other" (RAYNES-GOLDIE, 2012, p.165).

Young people usually only accept friend requests of those who they have met personally. As stated by boyd and Marwick (2011, p. 9), "teens use social media to get to know people who are more acquaintances than friends or to meet friends of friends. A small minority of teens seek out broader audiences, welcoming strangers who seem to share their worldview." However, in some social contexts, accepting friend requests from strangers is even looked down upon: in some social circles, it is seen as a sign of irresponsibility. What is more common is using Facebook to maintain and solidify relationships that already exist in the offline world (SIMÕES-PORTO, 2011, p.12).

But rejecting requests from people they have met personally is more complex. Each person has distinct criteria when it comes to accepting friend requests but most teenagers tend to accept people that they know, regardless if they are mere acquaintances. This is influenced by different factors, as personality and context: some prefer to do it for popularity reasons, others do it because they are afraid of the social consequences that refusing a friend request might have (BOYD, 2008a, p.217).

As for accepting family members, a Pew Research Center study that focused on 802 adolescents concludes that 76% of them are Facebook friends with brothers and sisters and 70% with their parents (2013, p.6). Therefore, the social connections established on Facebook tend to correspond to the connections developed by young people in their day-to-day lives. In the same study, it is stated that "The vast majority of teen Facebook users (85%) say that their parents see the same content and updates that all of their other friends see" (2013, p.45).

Nevertheless, there is a major difference in the social connections established online and offline. When in real life, people act according to each social circle they are in and its context. But, on Facebook, the possibility of presenting multiple identity facets is very limited. This originates a problem: the collapse of contexts. The fact that each user can only have a unique profile is a choice that "reflects a normative assumption about information sharing and the way the world should be. Zuckerberg and his colleagues at Facebook Inc. believe that by having a singular and thus "authentic" identity, society can be improved" (RAYNES-GOLDIE, 2012, p.166). Zuckerberg himself has stated that he sees no reason why one should have different identity facets according to context, sets of social norms and audiences, and that the unique profile option contributes to a more transparent world (RAYNES-GOLDIE, 2012, p.167) .

Social privacy threats like context collapse can then be seen as "the result of Facebook Inc.'s attempted imposition of its technologically utopian values on the everyday social lives of its users." (RAYNES-GOLDIE, 2012, p.218). However, people develop and locate their day-to-day approaches with the help of this context, and that isn't necessarily a negative thing, it is rather a very useful tool that is lost in this approach: "speakers explain concepts or describe events

differently when talking to different audiences based on their assessment of the audience's knowledge" (BOYD, 2008b, p.37).

What happens when people post something on Facebook is that "the potential audience can be far greater [than what they imagine] and from different contexts" (BOYD, 2008b, p.36). Even though most teenagers seems to think that the Facebook friendship is a sufficient privacy control setting to keep them safe, "el uso de los controles de privacidad puede dar a los jóvenes la impresión (errónea) de que es seguro revelar lo que subyace bajo la barnizada imagen exterior que presentan a los adultos en el mundo real" (GARDNER; DAVIS, 2014, p.89). Even though they are aware of the friend requests that they have accepted, they can't have a clear notion of who exactly is seeing each post or photo posted by them. "Even teens who welcome broad audiences do not assume that they are publicizing information to all people across all space and all time when they engage in networked publics" (BOYD; MARWICK, 2011, p.9). First of, as it was already explained, "the category "friend" is very broad and ambiguous in the online world; it may include anyone from an intimate friend to a casual acquaintance or a complete stranger of whom only their online identity is known (DEBATIN *et al.*, 2009, p.87). So, this acquaintances are people that teenagers usually forget about when posting something online, as they don't interact with them as often.

"When performing in networked publics, people are forced to contend with invisible audiences and engage in acts of impression management even when they have no idea how their performances are being perceived" (BOYD, 2008b, p.36). This lack of awareness that, in great part, comes from the social network dynamics itself, makes it harder for young people to manage what is socially appropriate to make public.

Their “imagined audiences” often don’t include some of the people who look at their profile and also they rarely consider the third party, which is Facebook as a company itself, a subject that I will address later in this section.

Even if the immediate audience is perceived due to interactions as comments, shares and likes (BUTLER *et al.*, 2011, p.7) and young people are forced to act before different contexts without ever obtaining a complete, direct feedback that tells them what each person, of each context thinks about a certain content. “Maintaining distinct contexts online is particularly tricky because of the persistent, replicable, and searchable nature of networked acts” (BOYD, 2008b, p.36).

This is part of the reason why teenagers and young adults often make use of codes that will only be understood between certain groups of friends and their contexts, as it was referred in section one, they function as a very common strategy for privacy protection.

Also, even though young people try to manage their posts according to who they currently have on their friend’s list, “they are less aware of, concerned about, or willing to act on possible ‘temporal’ boundary intrusions posed by future audiences because of persistence of data” (TUFEKCI, 2008, apud DEBATIN *et al.*, 2009, p.87). When, in the future, they accept new friend requests, they might not realize that certain things they have posted a long time ago are still going to be available, and can be prejudicial to their reputation and privacy depending on the new audiences.

As any other setting in a young person’s life, Facebook can be a stage for drama and gossiping. The fact of the content being persistent and nondependent of time variables, allows users to gain access to situations of gossip even when they are not online at the time of their occurrence (BOYD,

2008a, p.228). Furthermore, young people can move around online in a way they never could in real life: presence as observers may not be noticeable online, social network sites can allow them to “stalk” their peers, keeping up with the gossip and lives of people they do not know well but with whom they are familiar.” (BOYD, 2008a, p.228). Even between Facebook friends, there are privacy settings which can be questioned. In Facebook introduced the “See Friendship” feature, which allows a user to see every interaction that has occurred between two mutual friends. There is no option available to block that feature (BUTLER *et al.*, 2011, p. 53).

Lateral surveillance, or peer-to-peer monitoring, understood as the use of surveillance tools by individuals, rather than by agents of institutions public or private, to keep track of one another, covers (but is not limited to) three main categories: romantic interests, family, and friends or acquaintances (ANDREJEVIC, 2005, p. 488).

Although there still isn't much research on this topic, it can be deduced that this feature benefits the “stalking” and the gossip between Facebook friends. Even though all the information there is, by default, public since it has been posted, it can be questioned if it is ethical to have it all combined in one page which can be accessed by any friend of the individuals involved.

When we discussed the kind of content young people posted online, we concluded that they avoid sharing some of the more personal information and that usually they try not to approach certain subjects that are considered more intimate. “Their frequent sharing of digital content does not suggest that they share indiscriminately, nor does it mean that what they do share is intended for wide audiences” (BOYD; MARWICK, 2014, p.17). They do use some strategies to

protect themselves from the privacy threats they realize they are exposed to.

For such youth, privacy is about being in control of their own actions, information, and choices, including the ability to share personal information online and participate in online socializing (MARWICK *et al.*, 2010, p.11).

However, the social environment of Facebook and the fact that the privacy settings are directed towards this social privacy, that ends up distracting users from other important threats, more related with institutional privacy.

INSTITUTIONAL PRIVACY THREATS

In most studies conducted so far, the investigators concluded that young people considered that, in spite of the profile information and the photos disclosed by them and their friends, there was not enough information to endanger their privacy and safety (LENHART *et al.*, 2013, p.16). The problem, however is that they have difficulties in “understanding what will happen to their personal information once they post it on the World Wide Web” (BUTLER *et al.*, 2011, p.7). It is Facebook itself that is mostly responsible for the misunderstandings that surround the disclosure of information. The site’s “radically transparent architecture facilitates this focus on social privacy at the expense of institutional privacy” (RAYNES-GOLDIE, 2012, p. 219). This means users are more focused on which individuals can access their profiles, and they think that the “friendship” privacy control is sufficient to guarantee that only those they want have access to their information.

For the common user, the biggest threats come from the judgments that

can be made by those who know them personally or from strangers who might try to find them or steal their identity. "Facebook's privacy settings are all social privacy settings - that is, controlling one's information relative to Friends. These controls give users a somewhat false sense of privacy, which distract from Facebook Inc.'s potentially harmful activities"(RAYNES-GOLDIE, 2012, p.219).

There are two other privacy threats that don't get as much attention from users and the general media who usually focus on the social privacy. First off, Facebook's company possesses an enormous database of information and it is very hard to be aware of what they decide to do with that information (DEBATIN *et al.*, 2009, p. 88). "The Wall Street Journal cited instances where Facebook users' personal information was being shared with advertisers without the users' consent and subsequently raised questions about Facebook's security" (STEEL; VASCELLARO, 2010, apud WATERS; ACKERMAN, 2011, p.101).

If an individual gets a phone call from a company asking him to answer a certain survey for marketing purposes that individual is usually compelled not to answer the survey or, in doing so, he usually leaves out information that, on the other hand, he would easily disclose on Facebook. "Every move we make online leaves cyber footprints that are collected as a vast amount of information and it can be used for giving new insight into all aspects of everyday life" (ÖNGUN; DEMIRAG, 2014, p.266). This makes the site an incredible powerful tool for marketing companies, providing "an ideal, data-rich environment for microtargeted marketing and advertising" (DEBATIN *et al.*, 2009, p.88) This might be one of the reasons for the enormous economic value that is attributed to Facebook, these days.

Facebook's business model "is based on targeted personalized advertising" (FUCHS 201, p.141), which is shown to any user according to an ad

system that tracks their online behavior, not only on Facebook but also on its business partner websites (HASHEMI, 2009, p.5). As a Social Network, it is “especially suited for targeted advertising because they store and communicate a vast amount of personal likes and dislikes of users”, indicating the kind of products and services each user would be interested in (FUCHS, 2011, p.138).

Another eminent threat are the third-party applications, that is, additional applications that provide new functionalities to Facebook users and which are created by developers outside of the company, like games and quizzes. In 2007, Facebook opened the door for these developers, providing them “with a set of tools that decrease their development costs and, thus entry barriers.” (CLAUSSEN; KRETSCHMER; MAYRHOFER, 2010, p.5). With minimal regulation rules, Facebook did not impose many requirements for these applications to be included “in the official directory” and neither for the advertisement placed by the third-party apps (CLAUSSEN; KRETSCHMER; MAYRHOFER, 2010, p.5). Besides, Facebook can also place its own advertisement. Given that fact, and considering that apps motivate people to spend more time on Facebook, the social network’s objectives are “largely aligned with the third-party developers’ ones”. This is the reason why there is so little regulation (CLAUSSEN; KRETSCHMER; MAYRHOFER, 2010, p.6).

Therefore, by using these apps, young people are putting their information out there, without realizing. “These games do not necessarily adhere to Facebook’s privacy rules. And even if users didn’t partake in these third-party applications, their information could still be collected if friends were playing” (COWAN, 2010, p. 29)

Facebook’s culture of “sharing and ‘being yourself’” (RAYNES-GOLDIE, 2012, p.72) is its best tool to conceal these other threats. Debatin *et al.* (2009)

presents us a visual representation of this system, named "*The Facebook's Iceberg Model*", suggesting that "we must conclude that the social context of the attack leads people to overlook important clues, lowering their guard and making themselves significantly more vulnerable" (DEBATIN *et al.*, 2009, p.86).

The privacy policies are long and complex, therefore they are barely read or understood by the teenagers and young adults who join Facebook. And, when they do take the time to manage and explore privacy settings, they find that they are "entirely designed around social privacy management", which makes it easier to ignore or be completely unaware of "how Facebook Inc. might be violating one's institutional privacy in the personal information it gathers" (RAYNES-GOLDIE, 2012, p.220). In her study, Raynes-Goldie confirms that she found young people more concerned with the immediate threats of social privacy than with the apparently distant issues of institutional privacy.

THE BENEFITS OF SHARING

Although there are all of these privacy threats that we have seen, it is a fact that teenagers do not only continue using Facebook but they also keep sharing their personal data. Even though they aren't fully aware of the risks, they know that these threats exist. So why do they still decide to disclose their information?

Common sense makes us see the virtual world as an unreal dimension but the truth is that "a sociedade em rede surge como uma sociedade hipersocial, onde as tecnologias se integram no cotidiano ligando o mundo real ao virtual [...]" (AMANTE, 2014, p.40). The online sphere is becoming less and less imaginary as it evolves, having, now, permanent connections to the

physical world.

Conversations that begin online continue when teens are in shared space; dramas that take place at school are reproduced in digital settings. Teen communities are not simply online or offline, but increasingly mediated (BOYD;QUAN-HAASE, 2011, p. 3).

To engage and participate in a social context, one has to reveal information about himself, get involved in conversations, discuss and speak of his experiences. So, just as it happens then, teenagers also have to share information in order to affirm their identity and participate actively in this new online context.

Within the context of 'real life' peer relationships, sharing personal information is normal and usual. This does not change for youth online. Maintaining a persistent identity ("nonymity") is necessary to engage in peer group discussions" (MARWICK *et al.*, 2010, p.24).

Marwick also concludes that sharing photos with friends or simply speaking to and about them may also be a way of reaffirming the friendship, and all of these sharing decisions might be related to practices of "micro-celebrity", "where attention is gained through self-conscious identity construction and forged relationships with others" (MARWICK *et al.*, 2010, p. 25).

Online popularity is one of the main motivations for teen's practices of online sharing.

Having a presence on Facebook requires that a person post many pictures, have active discussions with friends, and share personal

interests and information. Popularity and disclosure thus become inextricably linked (CHRISTOFIDES, 2009, apud MARWICK *et al.*, 2010, p.26).

Therefore, the more a person shares, more they build a presence and an identity in the Facebook sphere. On the other hand, if one avoids disclosing information, not only it decreases the chances of popularity but it might even lead to a certain degree of social exclusion. However, if one's group of friends is systematically concerned about privacy, that person tends to be more careful as well (MARWICK *et al.*, 2010, p.20). For this reason, "peer pressure" is one of the factors that influences a young person when it comes to sharing or not sharing.

People that are extremely popular within their networks can be denominated "micro-celebrities". These users, like celebrities, are under the spotlight before a certain audience, which grants them prestige and influence among its members. However, "the primary difference is degree of popularity and span of control" (PUGH, 2010, p.12), since these micro-celebrities have more power on what becomes public about them, since they are usually the ones disclosing it.

They choose what or not to disclose based on the audience they have in mind, "emphasizing qualities considered high-status within that community and de-emphasizing attributes that are not characteristic of their environment" (MARWICK *et al.*, 2010, p.26). Also, the fact that they receive feedback "The more a young person uses the Internet to talk to his or her friends and engage in playful, social behavior, the more likely that young person is to reveal personal information" (MARWICK *et al.*, 2010, p.33), because it causes them forget more easily the fact that the audience might be way broader than the small part who is actually giving feedback.

The attention they are given and the relationships they develop create a feeling of importance, support and belonging (PUGH, 2010, p.35). Therefore, these are the benefits that get young micro-celebrities to share more with their online community, since “youth with the highest levels of social confidence [are] the most willing to divulge personal information, and the least likely to engage in privacy-protective behavior” (MARWICK *et al.*, 2010, p.20).

Waters e Ackerman affirm that “users are motivated to disclose on Facebook to share information, store information and be entertained, keep up with trends, and show off. One positive consequence of disclosing is users feel somewhat in control of relationship management/psychological well-being” (WATERS; ACKERMAN, 2011, p.112).

Other studies argue that Facebook plays an important part in young people’s construction of social capital (ELLISON *et al.*, 2007; DEBATIN, 2009; MARWICK *et al.*, 2010). In a general approach, social capital refers to the resources accumulated through the relationships between people. Robert Putman defines it as:

El conjunto de factores intangibles (valores, normas, actitudes, confianza y redes) que se encuentran dentro de una comunidad y que facilitan la cohesión y la cooperación para obtener beneficios mutuos (PUTMAN *et al.* 1993, apud URTEAGA, 2013, p.57).

Although it has been argued that the Internet decreases social capital because it creates isolation from one’s surroundings, not many studies have been made to explore how the online connections can compensate for those losses (ELLISON *et al.*, 2007, p.1147). According to a study conducted by Ellison, Steinfield e Lampe (2007, p.1161), “Facebook appears to play an important role

in the process by which students form and maintain social capital". Social networks play an important part in the development of reciprocity and productivity of an individual or a group: by sharing information on Facebook, teenagers and young adults end up becoming familiarized with certain social norms and values. Besides, Facebook serves as a form of solidifying relationships. First off, it can be used to activate latent ties (that is, ties that are possible but not yet activated), since the "detailed profiles highlight both commonalities and differences among participants", allowing youngsters to become aware of people that share the same interests and/or that can be useful in some matter (ELLISON *et al.*, 2007, p.1163). Other than that, Facebook permits the maintenance of established ties that would eventually result ephemeral if there wasn't a simple, fast and free way of keeping in touch (MARWICK *et al.*, 2010, p.24).

The development and preservation of this social capital is then "systematically built upon the voluntary disclosure of private information", so, online networks can be considered as "complicit risk communities where personal information becomes social capital which is traded and exchanged" (DEBATIIN *et al.*, 2009, p.87).

Therefore, although they are partly aware of the risks of sharing, teenagers decide to expose themselves to some level. They don't do it in a careless, totally irresponsible way. As young people perceive more benefits from sharing information about themselves, being active and participative on Facebook, they tend to do it more, taking a "risk-benefit" approach, continuously negotiating the tension between perceived privacy risks and the benefits of publicity. However, if they perceive a bigger privacy threat, they tend to restrain on the sharing (DEBATIN *et al.*, 2009, p.87).

CONCLUSION

Privacy is a very complex issue. It can be defined in multiple ways, and, more than that, it is a concept which may have a different attributed meanings according to each person. It is also an evolving concept, which is gradually adjusting to a new reality where Internet and specifically social networks are not a world separated from reality anymore. The sharing of information has always shaped social relationships, but now it does it in an enormous scale.

After this research, it is possible to conclude that it is a myth that young people expose themselves carelessly online. Actually, many investigators, as Gardner e Davis (2014, p.89) argue that "la privacidad de los jóvenes en las redes sociales ha aumentado con el tiempo". They measure the content that they post, as they are aware of different kinds of threats. They realize the social threat represented by the overlapping of contexts. They try to build their online identity in a way that does not damage their reputation in any of the separated contexts in which they are inserted in "real" life. They attempt to manage their posts consciously, sometimes posting content using a kind of social code that they share with specific groups of friends, or sharing implicit messages through song lyrics.

Fundamentally, social privacy management and the optimization of disclosure is about contextual integrity -that is, the management of the appropriate flow of personal information within one's various life contexts (RAYNES-GOLDIE, 2012, p.222).

Many of them adjust social privacy settings, making their profile available to their friends only, as verified by the Pew Research Center Study "Teens, Social Media, and Privacy, "Among teen Facebook users, most choose private settings that allow only approved friends to view the content that they post." But, in

spite of that, their audience can still be a very broad, given the fact that it usually includes close friends, family, mere acquaintances and, less frequently, strangers. Identity theft and stalking also scares them, so they avoid posting their cellphone number or address.

When it comes to institutional privacy threats, they are less aware of what they are getting into. Facebook utilizes its massive database to supply information to other companies, taking customized advertisement to a scary level. An infinite number of third-party apps have access to this database. Teenagers and young adults know that these threats exist, but they are not really aware of their extent and importance, thus they either forget them or ignore them.

Regardless, we understand that young people don't share indiscriminately: they do it because there are social benefits for doing so. Most of those benefits are summarized here by Alice Marwick: "The use of social network sites, which require the sharing of personal information, allows young people to maintain weak ties, strengthen friendships, increase social capital and popularity" (MARWICK *et al.*, 2010, p.25).

Education plays an important part in young people's exposure to threats. But it is necessary to understand that they are sharing information because they profit with important benefits, and that the solution isn't as simple as educating them not to share at all because, in that case, great benefits would be lost. We shouldn't limit ourselves to criticizing young people for their online behavior, but rather develop media literacy plans. Because not only Facebook privacy policies are hard to understand but "It is extremely difficult for the average citizen to keep up with the pace of technological change" (MARWICK, 2010, p.10) More than teaching them not to share, they should be taught how to share, how to manage context overlap and how to function with Facebook's privacy definitions.

Facebook itself should play an important part in this education, making it even more clear for everyone the extent to which our information is used. "For the average user, however, Facebook-based invasion of privacy and aggregation of data, as well as its potential commercial exploitation by third parties, tend to remain invisible" (DEBATIN *et al.*, 2009: p.88).

Only when teenagers are more familiarized with this part of the issue they will be able to weight clearly the threats and the benefits. Overall, it is important to realize that our society is evolving and that technology, Internet, and social networks like Facebook can bring us opportunities to grow, explore and connect to the world in a way which would never be possible without them. In spite of all the dangers they might come with, it is important to keep an open mind and understand their benefits and advantages. That is what has been done by most of the young users.

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