

AN ANALYSIS OF HOW RANGATAHI MĀORI USE SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

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Abstract

Social networking sites (SNSs) have changed the ways in which we communicate and connect with others, forming new ways of communicating, building relationships, accessing information, and being self-expressive. While much of the literature around SNSs looks at social impacts, little research exists around Māori use of SNSs. Rangatahi Māori (rangatahi) are finding new ways of connecting and communicating through Facebook profile pages and are faced with new challenges of online/offline variations and protocols that become blurred—particularly in online spaces. This article is a descriptive study of how rangatahi are using SNSs that enhance, adapt and challenge ways of self-expression, ways of communicating with whānau (family), maintenance of relationships, and ways of accessing information.

Keywords

social networking sites (SNSs), Facebook, Māori, rangatahi

Introduction

Over the last decade, a number of studies have been conducted on social networking sites (SNSs) focusing on their social impacts (Boase, Horrigan, Wellman, & Rainie, 2006; DiMaggio, Hargittai, Neuman, & Robinson,

2001; Joinson, 2008; Jones & Soltren, 2005; Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008; Tufekci, 2008; Wellman, Haase, Witte, & Hampton, 2001). Boyd and Ellison (2007) consider SNSs, which include Facebook, Skype, Twitter, Bebo, MySpace and Google Plus, as online spaces that allow individuals to present themselves,

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articulate their social networks, and establish or maintain connections with others.

There is some literature that exists around Māori use of the Internet as a new technology. These studies include Māori use of the Internet in cultural ways (such as for language learning and teaching) and discussing potential risks involved in negotiating identity, culture and language in virtual or cyber spaces (Ferguson & Werahiko, 2008; Keegan, Cunningham, & Benton, 2004; Keegan & Cunningham, 2003; Lemon, 2001). One study examined Māori cyber-identity and how it can contribute to Māori offline-identity (Muhamad-Brandner, 2010) but did not discuss the implications of SNS use and engagement. Other literature includes social network analysis online using a kaupapa Māori framework (Kennedy, 2010), and the establishment of Māori-specific web domain names such as .Māori.nz and .iwi (Goode, 2010). Māori have also been sampled in demographic studies of wider Internet use and access that show heavy engagement (Smith et al., 2008), but while SNSs have provided scholars with an exciting field to research, there are very few studies on Māori use of SNSs.

This paper will provide a descriptive analysis of rangatahi Māori (rangatahi) use of SNSs and attempt to understand the complexities that are attached to using SNSs and how rangatahi negotiate and navigate these complex issues. Three major uses were identified by participants as significant in their SNS engagement and experience. Specifically, these involve self-representation and perception, managing online and offline relationships (including whānau/family), and accessing people and information.

Representations and perceptions

Digital identity studies mainly focus on how online identity is constructed through social interaction within networks (DiMicco & Millen, 2007; Leonard, Mehra, & Katerberg, 2008; Mehra, Kilduff, & Brass, 1998). More

recently, studies have emerged that highlight self-representation within SNSs as a form of narcissism or self-absorption (see Buffardi & Campbell, 2008; Rosen, 2007). A study conducted by Mehdizadeh (2010) indicates that self-absorption exists in SNSs, particularly Facebook, through the promotion of one-self in photos and status updates. However, another study found that most Facebook users tend to contribute more to these functions on other contacts' pages, rather than their own (Hampton & Goulet, 2012).

Larsen (2007) conducted a study on how young people maintain friendships and thereby continuously work to construct and co-construct their identity online, with online networking acting as an extension of offline lives. Several studies indicate that what young people are doing online (socialising, organising, sharing information and so on) is very close to what they do offline, thereby blurring and obscuring the line between online and offline behaviour (boyd, 2006; Hine, 2000).

Other research around self-representation in SNSs suggests that there is a level of identity negotiation which occurs in varying online environments, situations and audiences (Cullen, 2009; Kendall, 1998; Stutzman, 2006) but there are a small number of studies that look at how cultural identity is constructed online (Diamandaki, 2003; Kennedy, 2010; Larsen, 2007; Niezen, 2005). Broadly, these studies look at the impacts of online identity construction and how identity (individual and cultural) is impacted through online environment and protocols. Diamandaki (2003) notes that cyberspace provides both individuals and large ethnic communities with the "stage" to construct identity online.

Research on Māori identity broadly covers the discourse around identity articulation (through spoken language, participation in community groups, hapū (sub-tribe), iwi (tribe) activities and performing arts) as well as issues that impact on identity (Broughton, 1993; Durie, 1998; Gibbons, Temara, & White, 1994;

Houkamau, 2010; Karetu, 1990; McIntosh, 2005; Mead, 2003; Rangihau, 1977; Te Rangi Hiroa, 1982; Walker, 1992, 2004). These studies look at cultural identity based on teachings of family, hapū and iwi through learning about genealogy, history, significant lands and waters, marae, language, and protocols which are passed on from generation to generation. Identity formation in these studies occur in face-to-face situations (such as on the marae) and do not look into virtual spaces where identity might be formed.

Managing offline and online relationships

Negotiating one's relationships with friends, relatives, parents, siblings, work colleagues, employers, sports coaches, and so on is a juggling act for any one user to adequately manage the varying degrees of relationship within these networked communities, all the while considering how relationship management online will affect the offline relationship (or vice versa). A number of studies have looked at how SNSs help individuals to maintain existing (and new) relationships (Bryant & Marmo, 2012; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Hampton & Goulet, 2011; Harrison & Thomas, 2009; Stern & Taylor, 2007). SNSs facilitate an extension of people's real life networks and communities, bringing more demands on the user to maintain these relationships offline and online at varying degrees.

The blur between offline and online relationships can be difficult to manage and, in a Māori context, could potentially raise conflicts amongst whānau members requesting friendship in SNSs. If declined, this may cause some upset between those whānau members, which evidently may impact on their offline relationship. These situations are fairly new challenges for Māori, in that relationships have regularly been established face to face (such as on the marae), where obligation and responsibility to whānau might be felt a lot more in face-to-face

contexts than virtual spaces. These sorts of potential conflicts can challenge Māori in how they manage their offline/online relationships, and currently no research has looked into this area of inquiry.

Smith et al. (2008) state that 65% of Internet users (within Aotearoa New Zealand) have increased contact with networks of people, particularly those who live overseas: "Most users say the Internet has increased their amount of contact overall with friends (64%) and family (60%)" (p. 316). This indicates that a large proportion of the Aotearoa New Zealand population are utilising the Internet as a key tool to communicate with people (boyd, 2007) both locally and further afield. The Internet is now considered part of everyday life and is well entrenched in many aspects of the culture (Boase et al., 2006).

The ways in which Māori connect to each other and keep in touch and whānau keep connected are evolving as the Māori diaspora continues to grow, with 18% of all Māori living overseas (outside of Aotearoa New Zealand) (Collins, 2011). The Māori diaspora, including Māori living away from their hometowns within Aotearoa New Zealand where their families remain, or moving away from tribal boundaries, inevitably affects how connection amongst whānau is maintained. Kennedy (2010) discusses how important the Internet and online SNSs are to whānau to keep in contact.

Donath and boyd (2004) hypothesise that SNSs may not increase the number of strong ties a person has, but could greatly increase the weak ties one could form and maintain because the technology is well suited to maintaining these ties cheaply and easily. Granovetter (1973) theorises the strength of weak ties and how network analysis (using a mathematical formula) can examine macro-level structures and impacts on interpersonal ties. There are currently no studies that focus on how rangatahi utilise SNSs to keep connected to whānau living overseas or vice versa, thus SNSs and connecting to whānau will be explored in this

paper with particular focus on the wellbeing benefits and capability that whānau are being equipped with through the use of SNSs.

Access to information and people

SNS platforms have become information highways for users, providing up-to-the-minute/second information and data on a broad range of topics concerned with particular networked communities. Facebook, for instance, provides a status update function where users update their profile with up-to-date information. Twitter offers the same function and both SNS platforms demonstrate how instant, current data can be transmitted to the users' networks in a second. Information or data can range from what the user is currently doing or thinking, to a notice of someone passing away, or the latest gossip. Hoadley, Xu, Lee, and Beth (2009) write that the introduction of the newsfeed to Facebook gave users greater and easier access to finding out instant information. Thus, this type of data provides a rich dialogue where those receiving the data (in their newsfeed or as a tweet, for example) have an opportunity to rapidly access that information (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009), providing constant connectivity to social, political, cultural and topical issues that a user's networked community might be interested in and therefore decide to share dialogue and information about it.

This flowing river of constructed information and data enables users to interact with their networks in ways that were not previously possible. As described by one of the participants of this study, the Facebook newsfeed is his "morning newspaper" to the world of his networked communities offering him cutting edge, up-to-date information about a range of different topics and depicting a "glocalised" community that is globally connected, yet locally involved (Wellman, 2001, p. 236), feeding through relevant constructed information to layers of networks.

While the theoretical lens for this study focuses on self-representation and identity negotiation, the study also leans towards broader theoretical frameworks around social identity and social interactionism, discussing intergroup behaviour and understanding why people behave and interact in particular ways. For example, feminist research sees the objectification, primarily of women, as observed in the use of online photos and video, as increasing obsessions with physical appearance as users continually strive to present themselves in ways that they would like to be seen (Huebner & Fredrickson, 1999). It is acknowledged then that other theoretical lenses could be applied as they relate to issues of self-representation and identity negotiation.

This study

This paper will contribute to a PhD thesis entitled *Kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face)—A thing of the past? An examination of social networking sites and their impacts on tikanga (practices), tuakiritanga (identity) and whanaungatanga (relationships)*. The thesis is also part of a wider, Marsden funded research project entitled "The Social Network Project," which broadly focuses on SNSs and youth drinking cultures. The paper will provide a foundational analysis of rangatahi use of SNSs and serve as an introduction to further areas for research into Māori and SNSs to be explored in subsequent chapters/articles from my doctoral research.

Method

This study uses a framework that has been specifically developed for my doctoral thesis. The framework firstly encompasses kaupapa Māori principles which provide a platform for Māori research to be conducted using distinct Māori cultural practices and a Māori worldview (see Bishop, 1996; Cram, 1992; Moewaka Barnes,

2008; G. H. Smith, 1997; L. T. Smith, 1999). Secondly, the framework is complemented by acknowledging the tribal upbringing of the researcher, namely three Taranaki iwi (Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Ruanui, Ngāruahine Rangi), which uniquely contributes to the way the researcher interprets and makes meaning based on two fundamental teachings: rangimārie (peace, tranquillity) and hūmārie (humility, goodwill). Finally, te reo Māori me ōna tikanga (Māori language and protocols) is the third part of the framework where Māori language use is elevated and used to holistically understand Māori concepts.

The study will draw from a rich empirical data set of 12 focus groups made up of mutual friends (54 rangatahi), aged 18 to 25, from both rural and urban areas of the North Island, Aotearoa New Zealand. They included 19 male and 35 female participants within both single and mixed gender groups. An interview schedule was designed to capture talk that generally pertained to five research questions of my doctoral thesis. Focus groups were utilised to capture co-constructed dialogue from participants regarding their experiences, attitudes and understanding of SNSs. Thematic analysis has been employed in this study, which highlighted the three major themes that will be explored here (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Representations of the self

SNSs provide a number of different ways for users can share information about themselves. Facebook (the primary choice for most participants), for example, allows users to update their status (which says what users are currently doing or a thought that they wish to share with their network); share or tag (identification labels in images) photographs and videos of themselves (or of friends); and to like or show interest in other people's shared information, updates, media or links and sharing external

links. These functionalities provide rangatahi with a number of ways to express themselves, their personalities and their identity/identities through online profile pages. Participants of this study indicated two distinct viewpoints on self-representation: perceptions of the self and perceptions of others which will be discussed in this section.

Representations of the self were expressed in how participants talked about presenting themselves, the effort they put in, and how they crafted and shaped their online presentations. Generally, participants worked towards presenting themselves in a way that they want others to perceive them, which reinforced feminist views of objectification through an observer's perspective and constantly seeing themselves from others' points of view.

Participant response—self-representation through a Facebook profile

What reasons would you untag? (Researcher)

Tragic [photos] (AA)

Tragic? What do you mean by tragic? (Researcher)

Tragic looking, like make up everywhere, blaaaah. Tragic! Untag that [photo]. Like, you never know who you're going to meet or where [laughter] so what if someone comes across your page? It's like [clicks fingers] dam cos I don't want to see no tragic photos up there. (AA)

Furthermore, young women in the study expressed that they invested a considerable amount of thought (and time) into how they might present themselves online. The creation of text, selection of photos and links to share and with which networks (which might include whānau, friends, colleagues, university friends, community workers and so on) to include in their profile all contributed to the person they wish to be presented as.

More male participants appeared to think carefully about how they present themselves in SNSs in relation to possible impacts on their chances of being employed. Their concern was focused on minimising adverse impressions or consequences of sharing particular information about themselves or their activities.

Participant response—unintended consequences of self-representation

Like, if I had a shit day at work, I wouldn't go on [Facebook] and say I had a shit day at work. Cos like some of my bosses and friends are on Facebook and like even like employers, they search Facebook quite a bit apparently. Mmm yeah. (Ben)

There was a consciousness amongst participants of the study that what they posted online could have potential consequences for their chances at future employment and could tarnish their reputations. Much of their online activity and shared information was done so by firstly considering the adverse effects of what that might mean for their future careers and reputations.

Perceptions of others

Another theme was the judgement and evaluation of peers' self-representations that are measured against how that person is perceived offline, with participants using the terms "real life" and "normal." Participants highlighted the contradictions between real life and online representations as causing confusion and giving contradictory ideas about an individual.

Participant response—conflicting online and offline personas

She only has photos when she's beautiful, when she's got make up on, when she's wearing her hair extensions, when her hair is straightened, but in real life she's not like that,

she's hori [rugged], she wears track pants, and her hair is always curly ... so every single photo, I mean every photo she has about 500 photos, is a perfect edited photo of her ... and there's no just normal photos of what she's like normally. (Hine)

Participants (both male and female) appeared to alter their perceptions about individuals whose online and offline representations were not seen as congruent. Some participants also commented that their perception of a person changed when they saw or read something on an SNS such as Facebook and judgements of that person would be made based on the online material.

Participant response—impressionable self-representations

Yeah, I reckon Facebook can sometimes be quite yuck cos you know how girls like put themselves out there, especially like girls and they're like hardly wearing anything and they'll post it on their wall and make everyone see like their bodies and exposing their bodies, I reckon it's gross. Yeah ... It gives you sort of an idea of what people [are] like. (Kiriti)

Judgements, often in the form of sexual references, were often made in relation to others trying to seek attention with photos, or elaborate and excessive textual excerpts, particularly in the case of women seen as wearing revealing clothing. Participants would cast judgement based on what they think they know about a person and if the online representation does not match up, often judgements of falseness were made. These forms of expression are fundamentally based on how rangatahi choose to represent themselves, which ties into identity.

Exploring the way that rangatahi present themselves online requires examination of the role of the non-textual such as photographs and video. Photos in particular are shared and tagged (a practice that means a user's name,

and therefore profile, is attached to text, photographs or video) and this contributes to how a person is represented in SNSs. Females in particular expressly discussed tagged photos that they considered unflattering as unhelpful to their image, reinforcing views on how femininity is or should be presented. There is a process of “untagging” of photos that are seen as undesirable.

Participant response—tagged photos damaging to self-representation

Yeah I hate it when people tag you on photos though aye [...] especially when you're not looking your best. (Sonia)

Oh you've got to ... it's all about, yeah, personal image. (Tui)

Untagging of images was a common practice amongst female participants and for some, had been routinely implemented into their Sunday morning schedule (as many photos were posted from weekend nights out).

Identity

Durie (1998) presents a useful framework of cultural identity based on a set of cultural markers that are used in a longitudinal study measuring Māori identity (Te Hoe Nuku Roa). These cultural markers include knowledge of whakapapa (genealogy), participation in marae activities, involvement with whānau, access to whenua tipu (ancestral lands), contacts with other Māori and use of te reo Māori. Identity in virtual spaces is both self-identified through text, photos, videos and interests, and collectively-identified through groups (for example, iwi Facebook pages may require administrative permission to join the page which might involve a process of scrutinising members' affiliation to that group).

Managing relationships

While rangatahi are negotiating the ways in which they express themselves online, there is also evidence which suggests a negotiation and navigation of managing and maintaining offline relationships in order to satisfy needs of family members, friends, work colleagues and circles (networks). This section of analysis will look into how participants negotiate online relationships and follow an informal etiquette or process of making friends on Facebook. Etiquette includes a caution against making friends with colleagues or employers to avoid any potential damage to the status of or relationships with such parties. Connecting with family in SNSs will also be discussed, as participants of the study felt relationships that were weak had become stronger through their online connection.

Negotiating online relationships

Again, participants of the study discussed there being a blur between offline and online relationships, making it more difficult to establish and clarify expectations and restrictions of both relationships. Participants identified that there are certain risks involved with forging online relationships with colleagues and employers as there may be incidents where information or media might impact on the participant's reputation or ability to represent themselves in the best possible way to their employer or co-workers.

Participant response—managing relationships with colleagues and employers

Like, cos at my old job I was a supervisor so they were all like younger than me so it doesn't really matter, but older people maybe I wouldn't add them um ... just cos I don't want them knowing what I get up to in the weekends and stuff. I don't want that to have any effect on my job. (Krystal)

Participants were very aware of the risks involved in friending employers or co-workers in SNSs and generally tended to stay away from those types of online relationships. By doing this, participants did not feel like they were being examined and judged by their employer or colleagues.

Managing relationships with family members was also challenging for participants where textual and non-textual information being shared could represent mischievous or uncouth notions of participants' online activity.

Participant responses—managing familial relationships

- Don't add your parents!
- He was ok [dad] like for a while, when I added him as a friend, and then I made a status that had a swear word in it and then my older sister wrote to me on Facebook and she was like "stop swearing in your statuses, Dad's getting angry." [laughs] DELETE!
- Bye, bye! So now he can't see my statuses!
- I'm not friends with my dad, cos I know he'll snoop up on me what I get up to. (Conversation amongst siblings. Names omitted for confidentiality purposes)

I don't really want my mum to know what goes on in my life. I think she'd be a bit embarrassed about some of the things that happened. (Name omitted for confidentiality purposes)

Participants were careful in what they shared and what others would share about them on their Facebook profiles to safeguard their family members (including extended family members) from being exposed to that material, which might influence family members' judgements.

Etiquette

Participants discussed their own protocols they employed in the process of managing new and existing relationships, which included extensive

researching and investigating of relationships that were made online. In the instances where participants did not recognise a person requesting their friendship (through Facebook, for example), they would then examine who their mutual friends were, in the hope of getting some insight into that person before agreeing to accept them as a friend.

Participant responses—complexities of process in managing relationships

Someone might add me and like oh you've got 15 mutual friends so I'll check who the mutual friends are first and then if it's people that are close to me and then they know them oh yeah I'll add them. (Manuel)

The mutual friends thing is a good way of determining aye like oh should I friend you should I not friend you, cos you just check out to see who do they know and who they're friends with and then you kind of, well I just go off that anyway. It's like oh yeah sweet. (Kawena)

Participants generally felt in control over who they could have as part of their online networks, as they were able to investigate who people were before deciding to make them a friend or not. Participants also tended to become friends with people who they had a personal connection with; perhaps someone they knew well, or might have met recently at an event or social gathering, or knew through someone else—someone who they genuinely seemed more interested in knowing more about.

Connecting with whānau

With one in five Māori living abroad, the ways of staying connected to whānau are becoming increasingly pertinent as rangatahi and pāhake (adults) continue to move overseas seeking job and study opportunities and working holidays. SNSs are paving the way in terms of

new technologies to connect people the world over. Participants in my research discussed the positive and negative impacts of using SNSs to communicate with and connect to their families, which contribute to their wellbeing and feeling of connectedness to family despite being some distance from them or from their marae, hapū and iwi.

Increasing and strengthening whānau ties

Facebook has provided participants in this study the ability to connect with family members, including parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents and elders. Many of the participants were, at the time of interviewing, living away from their families in the main cities for study or work, or some participants had moved out of their family homes to elsewhere, but remained in the same town, district or region. However, across all of the focus groups, every participant commented on the usefulness of SNSs in connecting to their families.

Participants also had whānau living overseas or in other parts of Aotearoa New Zealand in which they were able to continue communicating through the likes of SNSs. While Facebook was identified as a good tool to access information about what family members were doing, Skype (a video conferencing social networking tool) enabled participants to have more personalised and in-depth conversations with family members, providing a live video image of the person to the other. Keeping in contact with whānau via SNSs allows participants to feel that sense of familial contact and ties that is felt within a family and within the home of a family, particularly if it is not possible to physically go and visit one's family members.

Participant responses—increasing whānau ties

Yeah sometimes it's [Facebook] the only communication you have with family ... especially when you move away from home. (Paige)

Similarly, Facebook provides an opening and introduction to family members whom participants had not met or not yet been introduced to but who recognise each other through Facebook from mutual friends (who might be family) or the same last name and so on.

New or weak familial ties are being strengthened as SNSs are bringing together communities virtually and providing the platform for individuals or groups to make familial connections online, and thus strengthening whānau connections.

Participant responses—strengthening new or weak whānau ties online

Yeah just the other day I was on Facebook ... and one of my cousins that I've never spoken to, I think he was like one of my kuia's [grandmother] sister's mokos [grandchildren] and she lives here and she was like "oh I don't know if you'll remember me", but um, yeah, she like spoke to me and then we exchanged numbers. (Aroha)

And that all started from Facebook? (Researcher)

Yeah, yeah, just cos she started talking [via Facebook] to me. (Aroha)

One thing about Facebook is like I've found like random cousins and aunties I never knew I had ... You know they just add you and you know like request family—like family tree you know. And then I'm just like whoa never knew there was a [family member] over in America or you know like just [some] random place in the world. (Claire)

Whānau capability is increasing through the use of SNSs, where whānau members can maintain a form of communication despite being at a distance from each other. This notion comes through strongly from the data and indicates that whānau wellbeing is being contributed to

by the use and adoption of SNSs from Māori families.

Access to information and people

SNSs are providing increased access and connectivity between friends, between families, and between Māori who are living abroad. SNSs are also a platform where an exponential increase in access to information and people occurs. For the participants in this research, a main use of SNSs was to have unequivocal access to information and people of interest to them. Participants described the level of access as their “morning newspaper” where everything and anything could be found out from Facebook about something or someone. Participants tended to see this as a huge positive in their experience of using SNSs.

Information

Participants commented strongly on the notion that they were more engaged with current events happening locally and globally as a result of their participation in SNSs. News items were discussed as being shared between friends that might spark the interest of another user, who might then read and repost the news item—creating a domino effect where more and more people become interested in a piece of information based on their friends’ interests.

Participant responses—unequivocal access to information

Oh when there was that shooting ... when that guy took someone hostage ... I found out via Facebook and people putting links up and instead of waiting for the newspaper to come out, you’d get a better link [from Facebook], like someone reposting it ... (Aroha)

Better view of it on Facebook aye. (Tihema)

Participants also commented that news shared on Facebook from their networks was more reliable than hearing it from elsewhere. As one participant described, when he found out a friend of his passed away he turned to Facebook to validate the word-of-mouth information.

People

Participants tended to use SNSs as a way to dig up dirt and investigate into the lives of others. “Stalking” other people’s Facebook pages was a common theme throughout this study and highlighted the notion that information about people was highly accessible and readily available for other users to access, as well as highly desirable (and of interest to this age range). Information about a person would often be a combination of media (images and videos), previous dialogue between the person and his or her networks, status updates, mutual friends, friends lists, links that the person is interested in and so on.

Participant responses—SNSs as an investigative tool

- And like you go in to kinda be like stalkerish too a little bit [*laughs*] like you go on, have a look at other people’s photos.
- When you get bored, stalk their page.
- Read their statuses, anything that’s interesting.
- See what they’re up to [*laughs*]. You don’t even really talk to them.
- Don’t even know them personally but will like their statuses! (Conversation amongst two friends. Names omitted for confidentiality purposes)

Participants talked openly during the interviews about their ability to use SNSs in this way to find out more about people who they were interested in knowing more about. They could investigate at their own leisure from their computer and

often without informing the person whom they were investigating.

Surveillance of family members

On the flipside to SNS use building whānau capability and wellbeing through communication and connectedness, participants living away from their parents discussed the likes of Facebook as being detrimental to their privacy, and therefore their online relationship with family members. Some parents would use Facebook information shared on their son's or daughter's page as a way to keep an eye on them and what they were doing (as many of them lived away from the family home). This form of surveillance occurring between parent and child would sometimes damage the online relationship and some participants would unfriend their parents if surveillance antics became too much for them to retain some level of privacy and separation between their social lives and their family lives.

Conclusion

There are disparities in the ways that rangatahi present themselves in offline and online spaces that do not appear to be congruent with their offline representations and the former are sometimes perceived by audiences as overly manufactured. Facebook networks are usually acquaintances that have initially been made in person, therefore the notion that offline and online representations do not align poses a threat to those physical relationships (in real life) concerning the authenticity of those relationships. Thus, online and offline spaces become blurred.

Feminist views of objectifying women's bodies and obsession over appearance extend to SNSs where young females in particular invest much time and effort in presenting themselves at their very best, often driven by what they think others want to see. Careful consideration

as to what material and text is shared amongst networks is important in presenting an online profile of oneself. This process requires extensive work in its development and maintenance and is restricted to conforming within the structure and architecture of SNS platforms. SNSs provide a space where participants seemingly have a level of control over how they choose to represent themselves; however, the infrastructure of SNS platforms affects how people can represent themselves in SNSs.

Rangatahi identities and representations are articulated through how they perceive themselves, how they would like to see themselves, and how they want others to see them. Identity is in a constant state of development, shift and change as factors influence the space in which identity is being presented. Different contexts and audiences in SNSs draw out different notions of identity that are presented. Moreover, identity becomes scrutinised by audiences where judgements are made about how identity is produced, reproduced, represented and perceived.

Participants were negotiating their online relationships with their offline relationships which were often conflicting with one another and causing tensions for them. Relationships must be negotiated and carefully navigated to not only fulfil their own expectations of the relationship, but others' expectations too. The challenges participants are faced with take time and considerable thought and can have impacting consequences on the participants and their relationships with others. Again, the online/offline confusion or blur is not helped with the architecture of Facebook and the inability to separate friends into pods or groups which could potentially address some of these challenges of friendship.

It is clear that SNSs are facilitating whānau connections and communication and thus increasing whānau ties and connectedness. Whānau ora (family wellbeing) is a direct result of maintaining healthy and consistent communication with family members, marae,

hapū and iwi, increasing capability and providing whānau with the tools to carry out their roles and tasks of being family orientated and connected.

The potential of using SNSs as an investigative tool presents a more sinister use of technology in that much personal information can be easily accessed by anyone (dependent on privacy settings). On the other hand, some participants explained that they actively used Facebook in this way to learn more about a person, without the ordeal of having to find it out face to face. The vulnerabilities of rangatahi through use of SNSs could be largely due to them not fully understanding the importance of privacy and settings attached to their online personalities, or not understanding the potential dangers involved in online engagements. Similarly there is a certain naivety in publicising their personal life, which leaves individuals exposed to cyber-bullying, targeting by online predators, and vulnerable to influential people such as current or future employers. Certainly in this rapidly changing milieu it is vital that young people better understand the implications of their online behaviour and how privacy settings play an important role in keeping them safe. Perhaps more education options (potentially through formal schooling, and in the home) could be explored so that youth can become more equipped for appropriate and safer behaviour in SNSs.

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