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Online Identity Reflection

On social media I believe all people are less professional than when in an academic setting. On social media sites, people feel as if they can express their opinions more whereas in an academic setting when it is more professional they are less likely to express their own personal opinions. Future employers often search social media when considering a person for a job. When viewing my social media accounts, they would find lots of family photos, animal photos, and sports related events. My online identity and academic identity are very similar because I am very professional in both settings.

As an academic, I am a therapeutic recreation student. With my major, I am very involved in volunteering with kids, teens, and adults with disabilities. My hope is to become an Occupational Therapist in the future. I am also involved in many extracurricular activities such as helping coach two different softball teams. I also volunteer at two different church bible schools as well as help for Hands for Christ every year. Although I do not speak up much in class I usually know and understand the material but I worry about getting something wrong. I do not think I am a procrastinator because I try and get things done ahead of time so I do not have to work on it last minute.

My parents had a big affect on social media because they were very strict when I was younger. I did not create my social media accounts until high school. They always told me that once you put something on the internet, it never goes away even if you hit delete. This dramatically affected what I posted on my social media because I was more aware of what I was posting and talking about. I would be sure just to post about things that are appropriate. I also know that this could affect future job offers if I had posted something inappropriate.

One thing someone would find on my social media accounts is lots of family photos. When looking through my pictures, you would find many pictures of myself, my sister, my mom, my dad, and even cousins and grandparents. In the pictures you would find many from different trips we have been on together such as Hawaii, Mexico, Haiti, and other places. You would also see my family in photos from church and other events revolving around it. My family means a lot to me and we do pretty much everything together which is why I share so many photos revolving around them. We’re always together for holidays, birthdays, and even other times when there is not a special occasion. Family has really helped me express my academic and social identity.

A second thing that someone would find on my social media accounts would be animal photos. I live on a farm and have grown up with all kinds of animals my entire life. Growing up on a farm and in a small country town, I also was part of the FFA (Future Farmers of America) so some of my posts have to do with agriculture as well. I have five dogs that are like children to me so I post a lot of them, especially when I first got them, their birthday, and just because I love them. I also have raised several calves on bottles as well as lambs. I also grew up riding horses and have one of my own, so I post pictures of him too. Anything animal or farm related would be on my social media accounts because that’s a big part of my life.

The third thing someone would find on my social media accounts would be sports related activities. I grew up playing softball so it has been my whole life. From county ball, to school ball, to travel ball, you can find all of that on my social media. I have played county ball I have played since I was four years old, so I don’t have as many pictures from that. I have many photos from school ball because I played for seven years. Lastly, I also have a bunch of photos of travel ball because I played for five years. We took lots of group photos for the newspaper for winning games, tournaments, and pictures of me pitching explaining the overall game. Softball has helped me express my identity since it has been my whole life and what I grew up doing.

I do not like any type of controversy, so I try to avoid posting anything that could cause controversy. I also rarely ever post anything, so it’s hard to even start drama with me over something I posted because most of the time I haven’t posted at all. I mainly just scroll through and look at everyone else’s post. The one that I did post, that could cause controversy was during the 2016 presidential election. I was very excited about having Trump become president so I shared lots of articles about him and how bad Clinton was. The majority of my friends are Republican, so it was no problem with them, but I had one girl comment on one of the posts I shared that said “2016 President Trump” and the girl commented and said “he’s not my president”. I do not like negative things going on my page, so I deleted her from being my friend to avoid any more drama. This helps represent my identity because it reflects that I am a respectful person and do not want to be involved in negative situations. This reflects my academic identity because it helps prove that I am very good at working with others and also avoid conflict with others unless it is necessary.

I think some similarities in my academic and online identities are that I am more professional in both settings. I am very aware of what I post online and I am very professional in my academic identity as well. The only differences I can think of between the two identities are that I am more aware of what I talk about when I am face- to- face with someone in an academic setting. In an online setting I am aware of what I am posting but sometimes do not take into consideration how it would make someone else feel if I was to say it to them face- to-face.

The similarities and differences I found can effect my professional identity in the future because I am more aware of things that I say and post. This could help with job opportunities when being considered for a position. Not only do employers check what you post on social media, but also they do interviews in order to determine who is most qualified. Many of the things you post online can reflect on who you are as a person. I believe everything I post on social media reflects who I am in a positive way. I think being aware of what I say and do on social media and in academic settings will help greatly in the future.