Online Identity Reflection Paper

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 The world has come to adapt to the big technology change and got acquainted with social media. Most of us have or use one if not many different social media accounts. The accounts I use are Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. I also have a LinkedIn, but I honestly have not really used it. When you share information online you are giving key parts of yourself, like pictures and personal information, to more than just the people who can view it. Once things are posted on the internet it is basically there forever filed away somewhere. I tend don’t always think about that before posting and that could affect how people view me as an individual and give off the wrong impression. If people or employers decided to look you up, anything you post, or share, can be accessible. Our social media accounts have positive and negative similarities and differences when comparing our online and academic identity. Looking at how an outside audience would view our social media accounts and how these views can impact your future all are important aspects we all face daily. Posting online can be just as harmful to our future as getting into trouble in general since the things we post can negatively affect how people perceive us. Giving off a bad image online can make employers and people not want to waste their time meeting us. We need to be cautious what we post and how we portray ourselves both in public and online.

 As an outside audience member looking in, observing images and the general atmosphere given off by a profile, I would look at how the profiler communicates with their peers and the type of posts posted for everyone to read. Clearly if there are pictures of underage drinking, smoking, partying, participating in illegal behavior, promiscuousness, and inappropriate matters, employers would not be giving that person a chance. All that employer or corporations would observe is a lack of responsibility and to me be the kind of person I would not want to associate with or be around. Looking into my personal social media accounts, I see a girl who tries to hard to keep everything together. There is a lack of confidence in herself as she tries to portray herself as a loving mom/family-oriented person who just wants to enjoy life. Possibly trying too hard, mainly having more pictures with the family than any pictures of myself alone. The first thing when viewing my Facebook is a cover photo of my family and my profile picture of my son and me. On Facebook you can view my photos, posts and whatever information I allow, like job status, relationship status, age, etc. I used to spend a lot of time on social media but that has decreased quite a bit. I tend to use social media as an outlet to express myself and try to keep it appropriate as well to not hurt my academic identity. I would share any academic accomplishments like if I got honor roll, but I have been working on shaping these sites more academically to combine with my identity, so others get a better sense of who I really am with my academic achievements (Brittany Williams, Facebook).

Instagram is an account I use but it is a site you just post photos and it is taken over by my son. I only really use it to share photos of vacations, trips, and fun activities we do. Instagram is a great promoter of what you sell or what you want others to see. At one point I use to sell Usborne books and showing my networking skills could be viewed by my followers as an academic strength. I do not really use it academically otherwise because I am not sure how to promote yourself academically on a social media site that is focused on mainly photos. I also use Instagram to express myself with picture quotes and used to promote the business I use to be a part of Usborne books (Brittany Williams, Instagram).

Snapchat is occasionally used for fun taking pictures and sending them to others, but I mainly focus on Facebook. At one point I made a LinkedIn, as stated, but I don’t keep up with it. It is not that I do not want to, but I struggle enough trying to balance life without having to focus too much on social media. In general, I focus on the applications and social media sites I can use when I feel the need and try to only post if it won’t hurt or affect me as a person. I really use any of these sites to keep up with family who live in other parts of the United States. I think the biggest eye opener for me to be more conscious of what I post is from being in college. Looking at both identities I would hope what would be observed is that I came from a lot of hardship, but I keep fighting and moving forward to better myself as a person and make myself better for me and my son. Going to Longwood and pushing for my degree to further my education just shows how devoted and dedicated I am to reach this goal. If others can see the potential I have, then they will know just how strong and dedicated I could be.

 Comparing both my academic and online identity, they are very much separate. I have more of an informal account like Facebook and am lacking in more academic accounts. I like many have made mistakes in my past and have some photos that portray a time in my life where I made posts about partying. I share quotes and memes, tell Facebook what I’m doing, post what I accomplish, and what is on my mind although that tends to have the wrong impression implied sometimes. Although my Facebook is set on private I have 1,189 friends, that I do keep my private encounters private from. Regarding issues with spouses or family, it is no one’s business but my own. (Brittany Williams, Facebook) I rarely post now due to having no real desire and to have a form of professionalism shine through. There is nothing bad on my Facebook but the main point of having it is to keep up with family all over the USA. Both my academic and social media identities are similar in a way that they both show my accomplishments on what I am capable of. Differences in my social media accounts and academic identity are that I am more laid back on Facebook and informal compared to any academic sites but still I try to watch what I post. After coming into college, I realized more just how important it is to watch what you post and how expressing yourself can impact what others think of you. An example is you can like all kinds of pages and if someone feels strongly about a topic and you liked the opposite or stated your opposite view it can give a bad image to that person who felt differently. The less information you share and keep to a formal level the less struggles you will face, I have learned this lesson many times.

 Listing these small but important examples show the accomplishments reached giving a positive image of me. My academic achievements and the difference of watching what I post academically is different. It is a positive affect to let so many know what you achieved because then they see you as a hard worker. Achieving the deans list is an example I shared on Facebook to let others know just how hard I have been pushing to get that achievement while juggling school and a toddler. The difference of not fully being cautious of my posts can affect how others look at me and what job employers see. They could assume I am not as educated or that I am lazy because my job right now listed on Facebook is full time mommy. My future could be affected in the sense that I don’t get as many opportunities as someone who has less informal/personal posts and information. In General, I mostly need to work on more of a separation of my personal and academic identity.

**Reference**

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/brittanyrenee.williams.3>

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/wyattsmama_16/>