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### SOCIAL MEDIA THEORIES

### Social mediaThese are websites and computer programs that allow people to communicate and share information on the internet using a computer or mobile phone.  Now social media is consider as one of the hottest areas of interpersonal communication research; such as  how technology is influencing our interpersonal communication and how our interpersonal communication is influencing the development of technologies. Our interpersonal relationships has been changed lot by Technology . Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) is  altering the norms of interpersonal interaction and creating a new system of messages by which people attempt to understand one another both verbally and nonverbally.

##### **According to Mcluhan , technology refers to human inventions that enhance communication. The new technologies like alphabets, printing press, electronic media and now digital communication have effect on man’s cognition and social organization which in turn affect the culture of any society.**

### SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

### Social exchange theory defined by sociologist, [George Homans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Homans) . Social exchange as the exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two persons.Social exchange theory is  influenced by a [social psychological](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_psychology_%28psychology%29) and [sociological perspective](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociological_perspective). Social exchange theory has been generally analyzed by comparing human interactions with the marketplace. Social exchange theory have some key concept; they are  include reciprocity, fairness and negotiated rules, with information, approval, respect, power, group gain and personal satisfaction among the rewards in successful transactions.”Social exchange theory views exchange as a social behavior that may result in both economic and social outcomes.Online social networking is an ideal application of social networking theory. Researchers  find that positive social influence to use an online community increases online community self-disclosure; reciprocity increases self-disclosure; online community trust increases self-disclosure; and privacy risk beliefs decrease self-disclosure.

### THE SOCIAL PENETRATION THEORY

### The theory was formulated by psychologists Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor in 1973 to understand relationship development between individuals.  It is also called the “onion theory” of personality, since “layers” of personality are penetrated as time passes and intimacy grows. Social penetration theory was developed to explain the evolution of interpersonal relationships. The social penetration theory states that the relationship development occurs primarily through self-disclosure, or intentionally revealing personal information such as personal motives or desires, feelings, thoughts, and experiences to others. This theory is also guided by the assumptions that relationship development is systematic and predictable. Self-disclosure is the major way to bring a relationship to a new level of intimacy.The Social Penetration Theory explain the relationships, which is become more intimate over a period of time. The maintaining relationship determine the people’s willing to reveal their more personal information; For ex FB relationships. Millions of friendships have formed from a friend request. A person may start to follow you, but constant and direct interaction will lead to more intimate friendships that go beyond the computer or cell phone.  Maintaining relationships also relies on intimate exchanges by both parties.The process of self-revelation is influenced by three major factors, which are:  personal characteristics, reward-cost assessments, and the situational context. The social penetration theory (SPT) proposes that, as relationships develop,  from relatively shallow, non-intimate levels to deeper, more intimate ones.

### THE STRONG AND WEAK TIES THEORY

### The Strong and  Weak tie theory derives by Nick Granovetter .The Strong and Weak Ties Theory says  that people relationship levels depends on time, emotional intensity, intimacy and reciprocal service. The weaker connections also serve an important purpose, they help you connect to another part of the world that we  may not be aware of.When Granovetter talks about ties in social networks, he defines a strong tie as being your close friend and a weak tie as your remote friend. An average Facebook user, who has no experience with social network theory or has never heard of Granovetters theory,The individuals with few weak ties will be deprived of information from distant parts of the social system and will be confined to the provincial news and views of their close friends. This deprivation will not only insulate them from the latest ideas and fashions but may put them in a disadvantaged position in the labour market, where advancement can depend,

### MEDIA RICHNESS THEORY, OR  INFORMATION RICHNESS THEORY OR MRT,

### This theory was  introduced by Richard L. Daft and Robert H. Lengel in 1986 . This is consider as an extension of information processing theory. MRT is used to rank and evaluate the richness of certain communication media, such as phone calls, video conferencing, and email. Media Richness Theory provides a framework for describing a communication medium's ability to reproduce the information sent over it without loss or distortion. For example, a phone call cannot reproduce visual social cues  while video conferencing, which affords the transmission of gestures and body language. MRT explains that richer, personal communication mediums are generally more effective for communicating of equivocal issues than less rich media.Media richness theory states that all communication media vary in their ability to enable users to communicate and to change understanding. The degree of this ability is known as a medium's "richness."Media richness depends on

### Ability to handle multiple information cues simultaneously

### Ability to facilitate rapid feedback

### Ability to establish a personal focus

### Ability to utilize natural language

http://start-thinking.com/sm-and-comm-theories

SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION THEORIES

I wrote this blog post last semester as a humble student of [Lou Heldman](http://twitter.com/louheldman).  For this assignment we had to tie SM and communication theories. Theory has never been my forte, but I found it interesting that these theories could be applied to such new and untested waters.

This analysis looks at the patterns and rules of conversation under [H. Paul Grice’s Conversational Maxims](http://www.sfu.ca/~jeffpell/Cogs300/GriceLogicConvers75.pdf). This theory breaks down every aspect of conversation and states that if you want to create a successful conversation, than maxims, or rules must be followed. I will highlight the most important maxims here and cover other communication theories as well.

One maxim is quality. Contributors must always be truthful in their interactions and also avoid misleading their peers. This is a huge factor when it comes to the Internet because of its given ability to hide behind an invisible shield. The worst thing a person can do is to be unauthentic. Everyone knows somebody who has put themselves in an awkward situation because they presented themselves as something they were not. One of the greatest gifts of the SM world is the chance to let your freak flag fly and still make friends in the process.

Another maxim is relevancy. In order to have a successful interaction, participants need to stay on the topic at hand; this does not mean that a conversation cannot change topics, but it needs to be a natural progression. No offense to the over-forty population out there, but they are in direct violation of this rule. How many times have you had a conversation with one of your friends over a funny status update when your mother has to join in and ask you if you are coming over for dinner?  Relevancy is key; if you don’t have anything additional to add to the present subject, privately send them a message.

The great debate in Social Media is how do we know what is relevant?  Most people use blogs, Twitter and Facebook for their own personal use, therefore everything one puts on their site is somewhat relevant to their life (Farmville not included). I personally love these applications for their personal use because it helps me stay connected with my friends who are not so accessible. But, there is a thin line between what is considered relevant and what isn’t. I have one violator who frequently posts about her newborn’s inability to produce a bowel movement; completely relevant to her life and family but completely irrelevant to me.

Twitter has also thrown a wrench in this theory; how can anyone be relevant with 140 characters or less? Being a predominately personal site, I believe that statuses are all relevant. Since we choose who we want to follow, we must get some joy or satisfaction out of what they are saying.  The frequency of Tweets or Facebook statuses can be filed under relevancy and also quantity. If I can know a person’s thoughts, actions and their exact location throughout the day, without ever seeing them face-to-face, then they would be a relevancy violator.

[The Social Exchange Theory](http://changingminds.org/explanations/theories/social_exchange.htm) suggests that we choose to communicate through a context of rewards and costs. According to the paper, Microchannels and CMC: Short Paths to Developing, Maintaining and Dissolving Relationships (co-written by my professor Lou Heldman), “Key concepts of social exchange theory include reciprocity, fairness and negotiated rules, with information, approval, respect, power, group gain and personal satisfaction among the rewards in successful transactions.”

[The Social Penetration Theory](http://changingminds.org/explanations/theories/social_penetration.htm) suggests that relationships become more intimate over a period of time when more personal information is revealed; this is he evident in Twitter relationships. Millions of friendships have formed from “tweet-ups” or a friend request. A person may start to follow you, but constant and direct interaction will lead to more intimate friendships that go beyond the computer or cell phone.  Maintaining relationships also relies on intimate exchanges by both parties.

To go along with Social Penetration Theory, the[Strong and Weak Ties Theory](http://changingminds.org/explanations/theories/weak_ties.htm) suggests that you can have varying relationship levels based on time, emotional intensity, intimacy and reciprocal service. The strongest relationships will keep a person connected to the people they are most connected to, their nuclear family, if you will. The weaker connections still serve an important purpose because although you do not know them personally, they help you connect to another part of the world that you may not be aware of.

# https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/communication-theory-social-media-leah-sutherland/

# Communication Theory & Social Media

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**[](https://www.linkedin.com/in/leahsutherland/)**

## [Leah Sutherland](https://www.linkedin.com/in/leahsutherland/)

Podcast Lead at Headspace Inc.

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I'm going to let you in on a little secret that only my clients know: I fancy myself the best kind of nerd. I have super nerdish qualities and am the product of way too much time spent with books instead of people while growing up, but I’m usually still able to function in society.

Today, I throw all caution to the wind and put on my best nerd glasses because I’m about to guest lecture at a college in Nashville. (Yes, lecturing at a college was on my bucket list. Yes, it was still terrifying.).

I’ll be talking about some #basic Interpersonal Communication Theories and how they relate to Social Media. Theories mean NOTHING if you can't apply them to real-time examples, and I (a genius) knows that. Hence (can't you tell how smart I am because I use words like ~hence~) this article. (I promise to stop using parentheses now.) (JK I make no promises it's my article and I'll do as I please.)

## Why Should You Care about Communication Theory?

In short, because 1. You can’t not communicate and 2. Theories take common social behaviors and give them evidence and a name.

1. This is one of the first things you learn as a Comm major. Communication, verbal and nonverbal, is inescapable. If you’ve studied art or music or Taylor Swift, those ‘blank spaces’ are as important as what’s intended to be there. Which also leads us to context. Saying “Who’s that?” in one setting could be a simple inquiry for an unknown person’s identity. Example A. You're out with a friend, and you lock eyes with a perfect stranger across the room. Your friend waves back. You ask “Who’s that?" and in this setting you’re simultaneously asking, “Do you know? Can you tell me? Can you introduce us?” Example B. You're at a house party and someone comes in at a speed and volume inappropriate for the setting. You ask "Who's that?" and you're also asking, “Why are they here? Who invited them so I can not invite them to my next party?" and “What do they want?”
2. Social media is instant communication. There are rules and etiquettes to posting on each platform, and in the age of screenshots, no take-backsies. Understanding what this etiquette is and how to most effectively talk to your intended audience on each one (without offending the world) is a lot easier when you have a basic understanding of how people work. Introductory communication theories take behaviors that people use every day and point them out\*. When you are able to recognize common patterns in communication you’re able to use them better and avoid communication mistakes (aka miscommunication or horribly offending someone with something you posted on Facebook).

\*Caveat before we dig in: These theories apply exclusively to Western interpersonal communication. Also if you haven't guessed, I'm just a regular peasant so if you see any mistakes be a chill human and just lmk. Ok? Ok.

## Communication Theories Social Media Professionals Should Know

**The Theory**: Social Exchange Theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1952)

**Social Exchange Theory**, or **SET**, says that you choose the relationships you invest in because they’re beneficial to you in some way. There is a constant reconsideration of costs and rewards, which sounds a little harsh when it comes to humans, but it’s what we do all the time. We all have that one friend in the group who we secretly hate, but you put up with them because you only have to see them when you have all your other besties around so it’s tolerable. Here, the rewards (hanging out with your besties) outweigh the costs (hanging out with Jessica). Once you get to the point where the rewards don’t justify the costs (they really are THE WORST and were so rude to you last weekend) you end the relationship. It’s no longer worth it.

**IRL**: When you’re managing client social media platforms, you’re encouraging them to enter into a relationship with you. People want to maximize their rewards and minimize their costs, AND they want to see a return on their communication investment. If you have people commenting on your posts and sharing your content, thank them. Try to respond to people as much as you can, and provide “exclusive” content to show them their investment is paying off. If the relationship is deemed “not worth it” by the fan, follower, etc. - maybe you’re sending too many emails, posting content they aren’t interested in (and WORST OF ALL, if they're paying for anything and you aren't giving them whatever they think is their money's worth) - they’ll leave. This is not always a bad thing. If you have people leave who aren’t interested in what you’re saying and how you’re saying it, then the people that are still there will be dedicated followers. But you still have to engage who’s left! Or else they’ll all leave, and in the words of Siri, [**you’ll be sad because you have no cookies and no friends.**](http://www.cnet.com/news/siri-gives-a-little-snark-if-you-ask-her-to-divide-0-by-0/)

**The Theory**: Social Penetration Theory (Altman & Taylor, 1973)

**Social Penetration Theory** provides a name for the phenomenon that baffles most people, more commonly referred to as “getting to know someone.” This theory posits that interpersonal relationships move from a very shallow, surface level to deeper, more intimate levels over time. Moving between the levels and getting to know someone better happens with mutual self-disclosure, or sharing inner feelings, and vulnerability, which is also, incidentally, sharing inner feelings. This theory assumes that self-disclosure is mutual, systematic, and predictable. (Hint: it's not always. This causes problems.)

**IRL**: Consider the following scenario: You’re on a date with someone you really, really like. You've been seeing them casually for a month or so. You’ve shared stories about your life growing up, your hopes for the future, why you prefer waffles to pancakes - It’s a texture thing - and more. Things have been going well, and you’re ready to make it official... except they seem a little distant. You have been sharing so much with them and they aren't sharing as much... they know your deepest secrets and they haven't really told you anything in return. You have a feeling this will bite you in the ass later.

Disclosure and intimacy happen on two axes\*, depth and breadth. In computer mediated conversation, you can have more opportunities to escape traditional interpersonal barriers, like time and location, but have to work harder to create intimacy since you don’t have any nonverbal communication to draw from (Aka, a touch on the arm to comfort when face-to-face, vs the novel-length text you send full of heart emojis to mark caring and reassurance.)

There are pros and cons to this theory in regards to social media. Because you have the barrier of a screen and keyboard, people tend to be more honest. There is enough space to share personal details and information without having to be worried about immediate reactions. That being said, there is the fact that networks like Instagram and Facebook, are known for showing only the highlights reel of someone’s life. When creating a brand or campaign, especially if you’re working for a public figure, it’s important to take advantage of “what’s real” (#NoMakeUpSelfie, anyone?) to craft your image, but at no point should it be too perfect, too artificial, or downright false. People want to feel like they know you, and if they find out they’ve been deceived, all that trust is gone. That relationship is over.

**The Theory**: Expectancy Violation Theory (Burgoon, 1978)

**Expectancy Violation Theory**, or **EVT**, tries to explain human reaction to unexpected behavior. The unexpected behavior can be either positive, like saying ‘I love you’ for the first time, or negative, like criticizing your relational partner. EVT is commonly studied in close relationships, but it can also be applied to non-relational interactions. In regards to social media, we’re talking non-relational interactions.

**IRL**: As much as I WISH I was close enough to Beyonce to violate her expectations, I’m not worthy of her orbit. I’ll settle for bitching on the internet like everyone else when, after a hyped public appearance on Good Morning America, she did not announce she was leaving this mortal realm to rule over all that the light touches, but only that [**she’d tried a vegan diet and it was ok**](http://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2015/06/beyonce-vegan).

The Internet hated this announcement, and proceeded to point out every burger she’s ever had. The Internet isn't salty that Bey's vegan, it's salty because she didn’t announce what they thought she was going to. When brands and public figures violate their “image” or go against type (forever, Bey’s ‘big announcements’ will be compared to her secret album drop. Epic, but now she’s kinda setting herself up for failure on all future announcements unless they’re also epic.) people will either leave or rally behind you. As a social media professional, it’s your job to not only establish a consistent brand image and know what your audience wants, but to also make sure you’re providing positive violations of brand expectation to keep that audience happy and engaged.

Norm violations on social media networks can also include things like posting too often, overly emotional posts, heated comments arguments, or all three if you’re like me and suddenly learned who was cool with the legalization of gay marriage and who it was time to maybe keep an eye on/reconsider friendship (See: Social Exchange Theory. Homophobia and racism? Usually not worth it.)

### Extra Credit: [Communication Models](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Models_of_communication)

The most basic communication model happens with in-person conversations. You have a person sending a verbal message (the sender) to another person (the receiver), who then provides feedback (a response, a dirty look, a laugh at the hilarious joke you just told, etc) to the sender. Even though this is the most “basic” model, things still can go wrong. For a message to be completed, the receiver has to get the message. Like if you send a letter but it gets lost in the mail, that’s an unsuccessful message transaction because your message never got sent. The recipient never got it, so it doesn’t count. It’s the same with conversation. If the other person doesn’t hear what you said, doesn’t understand your reference, or pick up on the subtleties of your OG message, it doesn’t count. They didn’t get it, it's YOUR fault they didn't get it, and the communication has failed. Don't argue with them for not getting your witty joke. Same for anything said online that's misconstrued. Take the L and be better. Delete the tweet. Write more clearly. Go watch Lemonade and move on.

If you have time or interest, looking over these models of communication will help you further understand the importance of knowing your audience and clarity in communication.

\*No, this did not take a Game of Thrones turn, that's the plural of 'axis'. I had to look it up, too. Also, yes, that is Vince Vaughn. Who says stock photos can't be fun?