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## Where do they go?

A study of university academics who choose not to be on Facebook

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Abstract:

This study will look at a group of people not often researched and neglected by organisations; those who actively choose to stay off the social networking site Facebook. The aim is to find out the reasoning behind why a particular group, that is information science university academics, choose to stay off Facebook. This group represents an intellectual part of society who possesses specific knowledge of what it entails to be a member of Facebook as far as security and personal integrity is concerned.

The aim is to find out what reasoning is behind their active choice, whether it is a security issue or merely a choice to do other things with one's private time. Theories examined deal with how a person's background, values, trust issues and education can influence the choices he or she makes regarding Facebook.

The study subjects were asked the same questions during a research interview, with the main question being "why are you not on Facebook". The results of the interviews were analysed and each person was sorted under one or several categories:

*Idealists, pragmatists, sceptics and technocrats.*

*Pragmatists* were the most represented, typically people who consider Facebook a waste of time and prefer to meet people in real life rather than online.

The study showed that all *inactives* use Internet for emailing and research; some use it to indulge their personal interests. Being part of a professional group that works with media related topics gives this group both an insight on security issues but also underlines an urge to stay offline in their private lives.

Key words: Facebook, social media, inactives, university academics, non-users

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# 1 Introduction

Everyone is talking about the impact of social media today, how it affects society, how people relate to each other, interactions, and the newfound power individuals have on society. Social media gives individuals a possibility to participate and express their opinions in a way not possible before. Organisations try to tap into the power of social media by being present there and thereby nurturing their reputation or increasing sales. Universities wish to attract new students by offering courses on strategic communication with a high focus on social media. Social media is a way for organisations to target their audience in a newfound way (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011; Bergström & Sveningsson, 2014).

But what about those people who are not on social media? Even though this group might have become smaller with time, it is still a target audience in its own. Who are these people? Why do they choose not to be active on social media? Is it a duly reflected on decision or mere ignorance? What factors influences people not to be on social media? Are there specific needs that social media fulfils, if yes, what are those and where do those so called *inactives* find their indulgence?

This study's aim is to focus on one particular group of *inactives*, specifically information science university academics at a mid-sized Swedish University. The definition of university academics in this thesis includes senior teachers, lecturers and researchers. Information science is, according Merriam Webster (2017) "the collection, classification, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of recorded knowledge treated both as a pure and as an applied science," which is also the definition used for this thesis. One could argue that this group would have either a particular interest to be active on social media, in connection with the topics they teach, or quite the contrary, thanks to their in-depth knowledge about social media, perhaps therefore stay away from this type of sites. In this study one particular social media site has been chosen, namely Facebook.

In the book "Groundswell, Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies" (Bernoff, 2011) various social media types are described. Bernoff (2011, p. 43) calls it the Social Technographics Profile, which lets you examine any group of people as different social media types. The types range from *Creators*, who actively publish content, which they have created themselves, in forms of blogs, videos and web articles; to so called "*Inactives*<sup>1</sup>", who do not participate in social media activity at all (Forrester, 2007). Like Bernoff, the aim of this thesis is to try to define characteristics or traits for a particular group of people, in this case *inactives* on social media. The *inactives* in this study are people who are active online; that is it does **not** include people who do not have an Internet connection or for other reasons have never been online. *Inactives* in this study are those who are inactive on the social media site Facebook, i.e. they do not presently own an account on Facebook (even if they might have had one in the past).

Already in 2012, George Colony, the CEO of Forrester Research (whose data and research the Social Technographics profile is based on) said that social is "running out

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<sup>1</sup> *Inactives* in this case is capitalised as it refers to the name of this profile group in the Social Technographics profile. The term is not capitalised when it is used by the author of this thesis as a general term for those not active on social media.

of hours and running out of people.” That means that the vast majority who have access to a computer in the United States already use social media and they are using their spare time to be on social media instead of doing other things, such as volunteering, praying, talking on the phone, emailing, or even exercising (Fleming, 2012). This study is meant to turn the table and focus on those people that still do.

## 2 Background

In today’s modern society, people tend to stay connected all the time. They use their smartphones, work computers and tablets to be online at any hour of the day to check e-mails and text messages, including updating their status on social media sites. The fact is that social media is taking up a lot of people’s time (Denti, et al., 2012, pp. 5-16). Organisations are aware of this factor and try to access people on these types of sites, as a lot of time is spent there. “Social media have become a useful tool for organisations of all kinds to communicate with their public...” (Noor Al-Deen, 2013, p. 62). However, there is still a group that for various reasons is not being active on social media, which is the group that this study focuses on. This group might spend their time elsewhere online or might choose not to be online, at least not in their spare time, at all.

### 2.1 Definition of social media and social networking sites

Finding one definition of social media is difficult, as there are many aspects to consider and definitions vary. Haenlein & Kaplan (2010, pp. 59-) define social media as web based platforms that enable users to share personally created content as well as sharing and maintaining social relations, including the business model on which these platforms are based. Examples mentioned are collaborative projects, blogs, content communities (YouTube), social networking sites (Facebook), virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds. This is the definition that will be used for social media in this thesis.

Social networking sites make it possible for the user to interact with others and exchange and share digital products. The users can upload and share photos, audio-visual content and contacts, create groups that share the same interest and many other activities. Social networking sites also link together friends, acquaintances and their acquaintances (Bergström, 2010, pp. 435-; Findahl, 2009, pp. 30-).

### 2.2 Definition of inactives

The *inactives* in this study are people who are active online; i.e. it does **not** include people who do not have an Internet connection or for other reasons have never been online. *Inactives* in this study are those who are inactive on the social media site Facebook, which means that they do not presently own an account on Facebook (even if they might have had one in the past). Actives in this study would then be the opposite, those who do own an account on Facebook and log on and update their page on a regular basis. However this study does not include the latter.

### 2.3 Statistics on social media use and online activity

The Swedish Internet Foundation In Sweden (IIS), which is an independent organisation for the benefit of the public that promotes the positive development of

the Internet in Sweden, publishes reports each year on the use of Internet and social media among Swedes. According to IIS there are 93 per cent who have access to Internet and 91 per cent who use Internet in Sweden in 2015. In the ages from 8-55 more than 95 per cent of Swedes use the Internet. About 12.9 hours per week are spent online at home. The total time spent online is around 22 hours, where students are the most frequent Internet users, with 36 hours per week spent online.

The IIS report from 2015 states that social media activity continues to grow where the most popular social networks include Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and Snapchat (IIS, 2015a). When looking at the various age groups of social networks, those who are most active are among the age group of 16-45, according to IIS (2015a). Women tend to be more active and frequent visitors and contributors than men. However young people between 16-25 are those that spend the most time on social networks. According to Forrester Research whose research is behind the Social Technographics Profile data mentioned earlier, social networking has morphed into a global phenomenon. About 86 per cent of online US adults and 79 per cent of European online adults engage with social media (Fleming, 2012, p. 1).

IIS also conducted a study on people who do not have access to Internet, the reasons behind this and its effects. The majority of people who did not have Internet access said that it was because they have no interest in it. Even if Internet does not equal social media, there are some similarities between Facebook non-users and Internet non-users that can be drawn up. The most common reason why not using Internet is to avoid the negative aspects (child pornography, virus, shenanigans), to not have time to meet people or do other things plus avoiding getting addicted. However, the side-effects of not using Internet was said to be missing information, difficulty in paying bills, finding information and contacts, including missing out on for example newspapers and other media information (IIS, 2015a). One of the respondents of the IIS study mentioned risk avoidance when staying away from social media: “My disinterest for Facebook, Twitter etc. is based on the fact that I don’t have the need to expose myself (to risk) in that way. The phone and e-mail is a perfectly fine way to stay in touch with people” (IIS, 2015b).

## **2.4 Facebook in this thesis**

In this study focus will lie on the social networking site (SNS) Facebook. The reasoning behind this is that Facebook is one of the most popular social media channels used today, and probably the most studied. It also has its own particularities that other social media do not have. One could be that it is used mainly for personal reasons instead of professional.

## **2.5 Background Facebook**

As of the second quarter of 2015, Facebook had 1.49 billion monthly active users (Statista, 2015), making it the most popular social media channel today. Mark Zuckerberg founded Facebook in 2004, and its original intention was to be used as a digital student catalogue for Harvard students, enabling students to expand their social network. Registration to the public opened in 2006. Today it has grown into something way beyond that. Facebook can be seen as a “personal showcase where users share whatever goes on in their lives” (Denti, et al., 2012, p. 8). Users can not only share their news and views in a written format, but also upload photos and videos or share other people’s or organisation’s links and information. People can

interact with their friends, colleagues and acquaintances, as well as with companies, political parties and other interest groups. They can start and join their own groups to discuss various topics ranging from baby buggies to western movies. Facebook has also become a tool to form public opinion or even organise demonstrations and revolutions (Denti, et al., 2012, pp. 8-; Zhang, 2015, pp. 8-).

## 2.6 Statistics on Facebook

Facebook remains the most popular social network; with 70 per cent of the Internet users in Sweden visit Facebook, a small but steady increase from previous years. This increase comes from older people (over 55 years of age) who have found their way to the social networking site. However there is one age group where Facebook is on the decline, that between 12-15. According to IIS data (2015a), most Swedes over the age of 15 visit Facebook regularly, most on a daily basis.

# 3 Description of research question and problem statement

This thesis aims to answer the following research question:

*What makes information science university academics at a midsized Swedish University choose not to be active on Facebook?*

The question above is meant to find the deeper, underlying reasoning for said group to choose not to be a member of Facebook, although still being an active Internet user in all other aspects, both professionally and privately. The aim is not to look at people who do not have access to Internet or who do not go online in their private or professional lives. The chosen group is a group of intellectuals, namely university academics, who daily perform research online, use CMC communication, that is write e-mails etc., read newspapers online, phone and chat with others using online resources as well as play online games.

What does this particular population use Internet for and where do they find what others are looking for on social media? Or perhaps they do not have this need at all? Is it possible to be involved and give lectures or study media without participating in one of the major trends of society today? What drives this decision?

The intention is to dive into the world of these university teachers, lecturers and researchers to try to understand their way of thinking and approach to this particular phenomenon. The results will be of interest to organisations that are trying to reach several audiences; a non-Facebook user can be considered as one specific audience, as they may or may not have many characteristics in common. The results are also of interest to students and researchers within information science, and to anyone who is looking for certain trends in society. Perhaps this is only the beginning of people actively choosing to leave social media.

This group of academics naturally come in contact with the phenomenon social media and Facebook during their daily work, which means that most are very well aware of what Facebook is and what kind of services Facebook provides. The reasoning behind **choosing** not to be active on Facebook is the key word here, because it implies that it is an active choice, where one can assume that pros and cons have been considered beforehand.

A follow-up question to the above mentioned research question would be:

*What reasoning lies behind the choice of these university academics not being active online and what kind of an effect can this have on a person's life and surroundings?*

*Does a person's background, values and education have an influence on the choices he or she makes about being active on the social media site Facebook, and if yes, how is this shown for this study's subjects?*

Is there in fact a valid reasoning to choose not to be active on Facebook? Is this a new trend; an anti-trend from those being active all the time to those actively choosing to do other things with their time? This study will not have the chance to go as far as this, that is, to study whether this is a trend or not. However, by analysing the reasoning behind the choice of not choosing Facebook, one will be able to see certain tendencies, and this group of people will in fact be a small representation of society as a whole. Maybe it is not in fact social "running out of people", as George Colony at Forrester Research (Fleming, 2012) said, maybe there is a tendency to be "running out of social" and go back to using their spare time praying, talking on the phone or just hanging out with their friends.

One can assume that university academics are influential people; they write essays and books, they teach university students and they can have an impact through the choices they make, even being trendsetters, in some way. Do they know a secret that the rest of us are not aware of or are they simply choosing another way than society as a whole because of their personality or lack of trust and identification with those individuals on Facebook?

According to Hislop (2013, p. 147) a person needs to be able to both trust and identify with a community to be willing to share information. There could be an underlying distrust in society or in particular in posting personal information online for everyone to see, that is behind this active choice. Where does this distrust come from? Is this distrust perhaps relevant? Perhaps the reasoning has more to do with social integration? These *inactives* might all share similar values, norms and interests, and they identify more with other non-users than with people who are using Facebook. According to Sonnenberg (2014, p. 28) the more values and norms that are shared with a group of people the higher the attachment and identification level with said group is.

If an influential group such as university academics within an information science program choose not to be active on Facebook, maybe there is a *good* reason for the rest of us to start questioning what the heck we are doing there!

### **3.1 Aim and objectives**

The aim of this thesis is to find out what reasoning makes people, specifically university academics, not to be active on the social media site Facebook. The objective is to group these *inactives* into subgroups based on the reasons why they have chosen not to be active on Facebook. Josh Bernoff's (2011, p. 43) Social

Technographics Profile will be used for inspiration when drawing up these groups. Whereas Bernoff concentrates on various degrees of activity in social media (or the Groundswell), the focus here will rather be various degrees and varieties of inactivity.

The population chosen for this study are university academics within an information science program at a Swedish University. The particular program was chosen as, with the help of a gatekeeper, information was given that there many people in this group were inactive on Facebook. It is an in particular interesting group to study, as some represent people who study social media scientifically and still choose not to be active there. As described, the study has been limited to Facebook, here used as a typical example of a social media site. However, questions also include whether there is any activity on other types of social media or not.

The study's aim is to highlight those types of users who are not on the social media networking site Facebook and attempt to find an explanation for this. Is it based on distrust towards society and public institutions (where Facebook could be seen as a public institution)? Is it a lack of feeling of social integration with those already active on Facebook? If the trust isn't there, maybe there is a valid reasoning behind this distrust? The objective of the study is to pinpoint categories or characteristics, if possible, of the non-users of Facebook.

### **3.2 Limitations**

Limitations to this study include the fact that just one social network site was studied, Facebook, and thus the results cannot be generalised to other sites. Another limitation is that only one particular group of people and representatives of society was studied. This study can only say something about this group in particular.

## **4 Previous Research**

Most existing research on activity on social networking sites deals with those people who are active there. Even the book this thesis is inspired by (Groundswell) devotes 99 per cent to how organisations and companies successfully can approach their target audiences based on their activity on social media. Other research focuses on personality traits in relation to Facebook usage, such as narcissism and neuroticism. Even if the above is not the aim of this study, for research purposes a few of these studies are highlighted below, to give an idea about what kind of research has been conducted previously within this topic.

### **4.1 Facebook and personality traits**

Mehdizadeh (2010, pp. 357-) discusses in her study that social networking sites such as Facebook have revealed a new way of self-presentation with a focus on narcissism and self-esteem. The comparative study showed that individuals (in the ages of 18-25) higher in narcissism and lower in self-esteem were related to greater online activity as well as some self-promotional content. The attitude towards Facebook tends to vary according to a person's level of neuroticism. A neurotic person is a person who tends to be neurotic, have anxiety and show fear and negative emotions (Zhang, 2015, pp.

19-). Zhang's study showed that the higher level of neuroticism the higher the negative attitude towards Facebook tends to be.

Another personality trait discussed in studies about Facebook is the correlation between low self-esteem and Facebook usage. Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe (2008) found that lower self-esteem students appear to gain more from Facebook than students with high self-esteem, as the fear of rejection might be smaller on an online social networking site as opposed to real life.

A study by Ryan and Xenos (2011, pp. 1658-) investigated how personality influences usage or non-usage of Facebook looking at Australian users and non-users. The results showed that Facebook users tend to be more extraverted and narcissistic, but less conscientious and socially lonely, than non-users. Furthermore, frequency of Facebook use and preferences for specific features were also shown to vary as a result of certain characteristics, such as neuroticism, loneliness, shyness and narcissism. One of the most noteworthy findings was the tendency for neurotic and lonely individuals to spend greater amounts of time on Facebook per day than non-lonely individuals. For lonely people in particular, it appears that they are mainly using Facebook to partake in passive activities, instead of providing active social contributions.

## 4.2 Facebook and social aspects

Steinfield, Ellison & Lampe (2011) look at what Facebook can contribute to university students active on the social networking site. This study showed that Facebook helps university students develop relations, finding people with similar interests or to get emotional support.

“SNSs [Social networking sites] such as Facebook are well designed to support relational development in that they perform all three of these relationship supporting tasks. Facebook enables individuals to find those with shared interests (e.g., through Groups or searchable profile fields). It enables self-expression through the profile, which consists of multiple opportunities to share information about one's cultural tastes, friendship networks, political affiliations, and other aspects of the self. Finally, Facebook provides multiple communication opportunities, both public and private, broadcast and targeted, lightweight and more substantive.” (Steinfield, Lampe, & Ellison, 2011, p. 18). Facebook can also assist individuals to maintain contact with friends and family when moving away from home (Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008).

According to Steinfield, Ellison & Lampe, emerging adults are using Facebook to maintain large networks of friends, which has a positive impact on their accumulation of social capital. “Although it is tempting to consider these large networks of acquaintances as shallow, in reality these connections have true potential for generating benefits for Facebook users. Moreover, online social network services appear to offer important affordances, especially for those who otherwise face difficulties in forming and maintaining the large and heterogeneous networks of contacts that are sources of social capital” (Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008, p. 444).

Findahl (2009, p. 36) writes in his book “The Swedes and Internet” that social networking sites like Facebook by connecting friends and acquaintances enhance the importance of personal relations and contacts. These people become a source of

information and the more involved people are in a social networking site the more important these personal contacts become.

### 4.3 Social media statistics

According to data from IIS (The Internet Foundation In Sweden) Facebook is the number one social media site among Internet users, used by 70 per cent (IIS, 2015a). Facebook has grown in popularity, in 2010 only 53 per cent of the Internet users were active on Facebook. The IIS data also shows that an average Facebook-user will meet their family members less in comparison to those who do not use Facebook. This number is especially high in the age group 16-25 (six hours difference). However when it comes to spending time with their friends, the situation is reverse. Facebook-users of all ages up to 76 meet their friends more offline than non-users (2015).

The World Internet Project (WIP) is a partnership project between 39 countries who conduct surveys of individuals in thousands of households, researching Internet users and non-users from age 18 and older. The members explore how online technology affects the lives of those who use the Internet, and how the views and behaviour of users differ from those of people who are not online. According to WIP a majority in almost all member countries visit social networking sites at least weekly. Most countries report that users either visit these sites frequently, or not at all (Dunahee & Lebo, 2016, pp. 87-).

### 4.4 Non-users of Facebook

A study by Nyquist (2014) discusses what social impacts non-usage of Facebook has on an individual. Based on qualitative interviews this study shows that non-users are in fact highly social individuals and are not adverse to technology or technological progress. The main reason not to be active on Facebook according to said study is that it is too time consuming. Nyquist also shows that non-users cannot distance themselves totally from the information on Facebook, they become secondary users when it comes to accessing information from Facebook.

Another study, which compares users and non-users conducted by Hargittai (2007), based on data representing a diverse group of mainly 18- and 19-year-old college students, shows that a person's gender, race and ethnicity, and parental educational background are all associated with use. The study also shows that people with more experience and autonomy of use are more likely to be users of such sites.

## 5 Theory

To examine theories behind non-participation in social groups and activities, one also needs to examine on what basis participation is founded on. The theories below are presented to examine why people have the need to participate and what fundamental factors need to be present in order for people to participate.

### 5.1 Trust and affinity needs

People have a need for affinity. They need to interact with friends, family, colleagues and strangers. Maslow explained, in his hierarchical theory of basic human needs,

how affiliation is one basic psychological need that needs to be met, once physiological and safety needs are met. The need of affiliation, or “love needs”, as Maslow calls them, is represented by the need of love, affection and belongingness. According to Maslow a person will yearn for relations with people in general and look for a place in a group (Maslow, 1943, pp. 380-381). It is a powerful, fundamental and an extremely pervasive motivation for human beings, and research has shown that maintaining positive relationships is an important factor for satisfaction with life (Passer, Smith, Holt, Bremner, Sutherland, & Vliek, 2008). In fact, people’s well being is based on social integration, that is, social activities that go beyond the family and the household (Sonnenberg, 2014, p. 31).

Passer et al. (2008) claim that we affiliate because of four underlying psychological reasons;

- i. to receive emotional support
- ii. to obtain positive stimuli
- iii. to receive attention
- iv. to compare ourselves to others via a process called social comparison.

All of the above can apply to the needs being met by being active on the social networking site Facebook. But this means that Facebook is just one way of fulfilling those needs, for people who are not active on Facebook they necessarily have to find their fulfilment elsewhere.

People also have a need for trust. In order to participate in social groups, people have the need to feel that they can trust the people in those groups. Trust is named as a basic component of social capital, which includes social contacts, trust in other people and trust in institutions (Paxton, 1999; Paxton & Glanville, 2007). Trust can be affected by changes in the social environment. Studies have shown that small groups can foster generalised trust (Paxton & Glanville, 2007, p. 240). By interacting in heterogeneous networks in social interactions with people outside their family, individuals learn and practice basic virtues such as trust and tolerance (Sonnenberg, 2014, p. 29). According to Hislop trust and identification go hand in hand. “The greater a person’s level of trust in and identification with a particular group or community the more likely they will be to be willing to share knowledge with others in that community/group” (Hislop, 2013, p. 147).

Zmerli & Newton (2008, pp. 706-) claim in their research that there is a close link between social and political trust. In all types of everyday transactions, as consumers, at the workplace or in social interactions, trust helps to sustain a co-operative social climate and encourage a public interest. Trust between citizens makes it easier, less risky and more rewarding to participate in the community, they say. Individuals with the greatest trust in their fellow citizens also tend to have higher confidence in public institutions such as the police, the legal system and politicians. To be able to share information, and in many cases personal information on a public site such as Facebook, it requires a lot of trust from the individual. The social media site could here be part of the official system, as today it is in fact an institution, where most people are active.

## 5.2 Social participation and integration

As mentioned above social participation is associated with the basic need of affiliation combined with trust in institutions and people. Trust in other people is often referred to as social trust and trust in institutions as that of political trust (Guillen, Coromina, & Willem, 2011, pp. 332-). Research on political participation has shown that it is associated with which social group in society people belong to. For example Galbraith suggested in a US study, that richer and better-educated people were more likely to vote and participate in politics (Galbraith, 1992).

Research on group identity and a person's place in society has been occupying researchers for a long time. The famous French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, claimed that all people belong to a specific habitus, or a social group that is given according to their upbringing, social status and other factors. The habitus is structured by one's past and present circumstances, such as family upbringing and educational experiences. It helps a person shape practices and perception of others in a particular group (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 214; Grenfell, 2012, pp. 49-).

“Social integration can be summarized as primarily relying on similarities between people in their values, norms, or interests as a consequence of social interactions, mutual dependencies, and tolerance of dissimilarities” (Sonnenberg, 2014, p. 28). The larger the common ground as far as norms, values and traditions are, the stronger people's attachment and identification with others is, resulting in greater social solidarity and cohesion (Sonnenberg, 2014, pp. 28, as cited in Hunt and Benford 2004; M. Taylor 2006). Shared social norms and cultural values are the basis for social integration, it is argued by many sociological theorists, as stated above.

The other side of the coin, it could be argued, is that if group identity is based on shared cultural values and norms, it leads to a homogeneous group identity. If integration is based on similarities of the people in the group, people who do not conform to these characteristics are automatically excluded. This could also mean that the individuals within a group suppress their individual freedom in order to comply with the group norms (Sonnenberg, 2014, p. 30).

## 6 Research methodology

The data collection method used in this study is semi-structured interviews. The qualitative research interview is trying to understand the world from the research participant's perspective, to find meaning from their experiences and reveal their perceived world (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 17). During this study, the study subject was asked a series of pre-determined questions, with the intention of conducting a semi-structured interview.

The interviews were set to be conducted using a synchronous or “real-time” interviewing technique through Internet relay chat (IRC) and through spoken interviews, using computer-mediated communication (CMC). In the end, most study subjects were opposed to the IRC method. This method will still be described below, with its advantages and disadvantages, as it was a part of the researcher's preparation process. Its disadvantages can also be seen as advantages for **not** using said method.

## 6.1 Internet relay chat

When using the IRC technique the conversation takes place on the screen, with both parties present at the same time. The difference from and IRL (in real life) conversation is that questions and answers are typed instead of being spoken out loud. When using this technique various symbols and abbreviations can be used to add a more conventional and human aspect to the conversation (Pickard, 2013, p. 203; Mann & Stewart, 2000). The downfalls of this data collection technique would be the loss of certain visual messages, such as when a person smiles or hesitates. There could also be cultural resistance towards the use of written conversation. It is also necessary for the study participant to be computer literate and to be able to type fast.

Positive aspects are that people are more easily available through CMC, there is no need to travel for instance. This particular researcher was located in a different country than the study subjects. In the use of IRC, an immediate text file is produced, there is no need to transcribe a recorded interview or take notes while interviewing as notes are taken during the study by both researcher and study subject (Mann & Stewart, 2000, pp. 22-). Speaking patterns are difficult to transcribe and all in all transcriptions are subject to the researcher's methodology or even memory of the interview. "The digitally generated script is a verbatim account of the whole interview. The script is complete and immediately available for analysis" (Mann & Stewart, 2000, pp. 22-). It is also possible to display the complete record of the interview, which is not the case in a transcribed IRL interview. Another positive effect of using IRC is that the study participant can reflect more on his or her answer. In a live conversation he might feel obliged to answer something immediately. In a written conversation he can, if need be, quickly edit what he is saying when he is saying it. This can of course also be considered a negative effect of the chosen method, the fact that the answers aren't spontaneous, but more reflected on.

## 6.2 CMC Interviews

When addressing the study subjects the researcher discovered that some participants were opposed to IRC and preferred a spoken interview conducted online, in real time. Therefore an adaption of the method described in this thesis was conducted to include spoken interviews. The positive effects were that study subjects were more willing to participate in the study and were more at ease when finding the answers to the questions given. They could pause or rectify their answers when needed. Another positive effect was that for example the tone of voice helped the researcher interpret the answers given. Downfalls using this technique were the use of a recording device or software in order to be able to transcribe and analyse the material. Adding to that that, the material needed to be transcribed and in some cases translated.

## 6.3 Semi-structured interviews

The semi structured interview technique uses pre-determined questions but the order and phrasing can be modified during the interview process. The interviewer can also delete or add questions if necessary. A semi-structured interview gives more structure than unstructured interviews but also gives the interviewer more freedom than structured interviews do (Wildemuth, 2009, p. 233; Pickard, 2013, p. 204).

For the purpose of the study information science university academics were

approached through an intermediary. The reasoning behind this was that they are a distinct population, representing highly educated professionals; the purpose: to examine their social media inactivity, in particular in regards to Facebook. The interviews were conducted via Adobe connect, an Internet conference platform. The main reason why this platform was used was geographic distance and convenience for both researcher and study subjects. Each subject was made aware of the fact that the interviews were to be recorded to facilitate later transcription and analysis. Some of the interview subjects announced that they were uncomfortable with hearing their own voice during the interview, which might have affected the way they answered the questions.

When searching for the interview objects, a gate keeper at the university in question was used to get in touch with the possible study subjects via asynchronous CMC (e-mail) to describe the purpose of the interviews and topics to be discussed (Pickard, 2013, pp. 203-204). This gave the interview subjects some time to reflect on the subject at hand before actually being interviewed.

Pickard (2013, p. 199) talks about the difference between structured interviews and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews consist of a set of predefined questions or a questionnaire. Unstructured interviews' aim is to understand the thoughts and feelings of the interviewee. Questions are "open-end" which give the interviewee more freedom when giving answers. Two types of unstructured interviews exist (Pickard, p. 200, as cited in Patton, 1987): the "purposeful conversation", which requires the researcher to be very familiar with the topic as questions are allowed to flow freely; and the "general interview approach", which is a guided interview where the researcher prepares a checklist with questions to be asked. During this study a combination of the interview techniques mentioned above was used, using both predefined questions and open-end questions.

The goal of this research interview was to understand this particular subject through the eyes of the study subject or the so-called phenomenological method (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The aim was to find participants who are not active on Facebook and to try to find out what the reasoning behind this could be. The purpose was to find out what the person's opinion is about Facebook in particular and social media in general, if it is an active decision to not be active there or mere ignorance of its purpose or possible benefits.

#### **6.4 Study subjects**

The chosen population were information science university academics working in a department at a Swedish university. The study subjects were made anonymous in order to protect the personal integrity and information. Personal information about each participant was left out in order to not be able to identify the study subjects. The age of the participants ranged from 48-62 years. Two thirds have a Swedish background, one-third another nationality than Swedish. All university academics within the specific department of a midsized university were approached, a total of 18 individuals. Out of these six were not active on Facebook. These six people have all taken part of this study, which means that 100 per cent of the stated population are represented in this study.

## 6.5 Data collection

As described above the interviews were conducted through CMC. The following questions were posed to all study participants, or translated into Swedish. The interviews were conducted in Swedish and English. Swedish was used, as this was the native language of most participants, and the language in which they felt the most at ease. English was used in some cases when the study subject was not of Swedish origin and felt more at ease using English. The interviews were conducted in May 2016 and lasted about an hour each. The interviews were transcribed shortly after. At first, literal transcription was performed based on both handwritten notes and the recordings. The final quotes used in the thesis were on occasion slightly edited to make the text more readable.

The collected material was summarised and main parts which were to be included in the study translated by the researcher. One might argue that there is a possibility for not correctly translated quotes, but the researcher's previous experience working both in English and in Swedish and the positive effects of interview subjects being able to express themselves in their native language outweighed the negative effects of possible incorrect translations.

## 6.6 Ethics

“Do to others what you would have them do to you”, or the so-called “Golden rule” is what Jesus states in Matthew 7:12 (Matthew). Pickard (2013, p. 95) discusses that the researcher needs to put himself into their situation and consider if he would like to be treated the same way. Ahead of every study, the researcher needs to consider the possible risk and consequences for those involved in the study and weigh those against the knowledge acquired by the study (Vetenskapsrådet, 2002, p. 5).

All research participants have the right to know that they are being studied and why they are being studied; research should be ‘overt’ (Pickard, 2013, pp. 87; and as cited in Bell, 1999). Permission may be obtained by having participants sign a consent form. For a general permission to access a site or a group of people one might need to require permission from a gatekeeper by writing a formal written request. In general, participants should be aware of how the researcher has interpreted their answers and how he intends to present and use the results (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 128; Pickard, 2013, p. 94). For this study, a gatekeeper was contacted who had access to the contact information of the study subjects and could forward a written request. In this written request the purpose of the study and how the results would be published were presented. The request also included a guarantee of anonymity for the participants. When each study subject accepted to take part of the study he or she was further explained what the study would entail. The written acceptance letter would here be considered as the consent form described above.

If personal information is to be protected, anonymity by using pseudonyms could be considered. This is what was used in this study, when certain quotes will be attributed to certain interview subjects. It is also advisable to avoid mentioning a certain attribute, such as a specific nationality or specific area of work, in order to not reveal the true identity of the study subject, which has been considered in this thesis.

## 6.7 Validity

Throughout the research process and analysis of the study material, validity issues have been taken into consideration. Within social studies validity means if the

research method being used really studies what it was set out to study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 264;118). Validation of knowledge through interviews should be present throughout the whole interview process, from thematisation to the report stage. The researcher shows his validity skills by continuously controlling, questioning and theoretically examining the results (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 266).

### **6.7.1 Validity during the interview process**

It is important that the researcher keeps an objective mind, both during the actual interview and when evaluating the results (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 260). Reliability needs to be considered both by the researcher, that is to for example not ask leading questions, and by the study subject, whether or not the subject will change his answers during the interview. According to Kvale and Brinkmann, the posed questions need to stay the same for each study subject or else the answers might be affected. In this study a questionnaire was used, with the same questions posed to each study participant, see above.

### **6.7.2 Validity during transcription**

Transcribing spoken language to written text is not easy. There are many ways to go about it; word by word including pauses and omitted words, or by editing the text into a more accepted literate form. Either choice can cause a validity factor for the researcher (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 201-). In this study, literal transcription was performed, albeit for the final thesis some edits were made to make the text more readable. An important factor here is whether or not the interview was recorded. One validity problem could arise if the study subject felt more uncomfortable talking if the interview was recorded and therefore influenced the answers given (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 145).

If transcription occurs much later in time than when the interview was conducted, it could influence the result of the outcome of the study, as the researcher either has forgotten certain nuances or might be influenced by answers from other study subjects from interviews he conducted after the interview in question. Transcription in this thesis occurred for the most part either directly after the interview or within a few days after (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 196-). To avoid validity problems during the research process, the researcher can highlight notes involving issues concerning the main study problem already during the interview process. This method was used in this study, as both notes were taken and recordings were made of the interviews. This factor helped the researcher to focus on the most important issues later used in the analysis.

## **7 Analysis method**

The method used to analyse the results of the data collection consists of a mix of several methods and tools, otherwise known as bricolage (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 251). The basis however, lies in qualitative content analysis.

The purpose of qualitative analysis is to generate a hypothesis based on gathered data and interpretation of said data (Pickard, 2013, pp. 269-; Hsiu-Fang & Shannon, 2005). Pickard further explains qualitative analysis as the analysis of detailed responses to

in-depth interviewing, observation and focus group discussion. There are four strategies for qualitative analysis, as described by Pickard: phenomenological strategies, ethnographic methods, narrative and discourse analysis and constant comparative analysis. This study will take influence partially from the ethnographic method, which focuses on beliefs, ways of living and relationships. Its intent is to find variations in social and cultural enactments. However, some elements of the constant comparative methods will be taken into account as the analysis is meant to compare the study subject's answers to the pre-set questions given.

Qualitative content analysis, such as for example the constant comparative method often involve coding of the material, either prior or post data collection has taken place (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Pickard, 2013; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Hsiu-Fang & Shannon, 2005). The intention of this analysis is not to perform coding on the material, but rather to describe common denominators for people who are not active on Facebook. The bricolage method allows the researcher to read through the material, get an overview and then go back to interesting sections, then in some cases count a certain phenomenon, transcribe parts to a story using longer quotes, or look for metaphors, which can capture the meaning of the material. By using various approaches common denominators can be found in material that otherwise might seem without a point (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 251).

Graneheim & Lundman (2004) presume that reality can be interpreted in various ways and the understanding is dependent on subjective interpretation, which is something that is presumed for this study as well. Further they claim that text always involves multiple meanings as well as there being some degree of interpretation when approaching a text. It can in fact be the strength of interpretation of a text that different researchers will construct different meaning to a text (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 234). The unit of analysis chosen, as described by Graneheim & Lundman in this thesis are whole interviews. A meaning unit in this case are words, sentences or paragraphs related to each other through their content and context.

## 7.1 Bernoff and his social media types

As mentioned earlier, in the book "Groundswell, Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies (Bernoff, 2011) various social media types are described according to their activity on social media. Bernoff (2011, p. 43) calls it the Social Technographics Profile, which examines any group of people as different social media types. The types mentioned in Bernoff's book are the following (Forrester, 2007; Bernoff, 2011, pp. 43-):

Creators:	actively publish content created by themselves in forms of blogs, videos and web articles
Conversationalists:	actively update their statuses on social media sites
Critics:	comment on other people's work and contribute to online forums
Collectors:	vote online and use hash tags
Joiners:	maintain social networking site and visit them
Spectators:	read information online and watch videos (according to Bernoff this is the largest group, 68 per cent of online adult Americans and 54 per cent of online adult Europeans)
Inactives:	do not participate in any social media activity at all (however

are online in some form)

By using Bernoff (2011) and his book *Groundswell* as an inspiration, definitions for different typical non-users, or *inactives*, by categorising them according to the following types will be given. These categories are based on the researcher's gathered knowledge through literature, education and the results from the conducted interviews. Throughout the process they were set to be used as a guide and help for the researcher during her work, to later in the process become more finalised and concrete. Some of these categories may be represented by the same respondent.

- 1) **Principalists**  
Against social media as a principle
- 2) **Pragmatists**  
Do not have the time, consider social media a waste of time
- 3) **Defectors**  
Have been active but have chosen to leave
- 4) **Passive**  
Have an inactive account on Facebook  
Occasionally use Facebook for a particular project, log onto someone else's account
- 5) **Professionals**  
Do not use social media for private reasons, only professionally or as a working tool (by force)

As will be seen below the above mentioned categories were altered during the analysis process to correspond to the results of the study. The categories above were also found to not give an accurate picture of what the study is set out to research, mixing various types of inactivity reasons. It also included categories of people, which in fact are not covered by this study's definition of *inactives*, i.e. people who in some form do have accounts on Facebook. The final four categories, further explained under Chapter 9, emerged as *Idealists*, *Pragmatists*, *Sceptics/Distrustful* and *Technocrats*.

## 8 Presentation of results

At first a summary of the results will be presented for each participant of the study. The participants have been anonymised by excluding personal information, all but gender.

Study subject A

Code name: A

Gender: Female

Facebook status: Never joined. Was approached in 2005-2006.

Summary:

The loss of personal integrity and preference to meet people and have experiences in real life instead of the computer are the main reasons why A. is not registered on Facebook.

She was approached already in 2005-2006 to join when Facebook was still new but she chose not to. “ I am sceptical towards anything that is offered for free”.

A. is a high consumer of information and the Internet. She uses Internet a lot for professional reasons and “sits in front of the computer all day”, as she puts it. This is why she chooses not to be online in her spare time.

She will use Internet more in a pull fashion than in a push fashion, that is, she prefers to choose the information she is looking for, pull, instead of having information pushed to her.

« I do not have my social life on the web. For me conversations and meeting people is important. The telephone is a very important tool for me. However Internet is a super important tool, it is difficult to survive without it; we are dependent on being online all the time. »

Study subject B

Code name: B

Gender: Female

Facebook status: Never joined. Someone might have registered her name but it wasn't her.

Summary:

B is not on Facebook because she doesn't have the time or the interest for it. She also mentions not having the time to get accustomed to it, even though it should be easy when a lot of people are using Facebook. She prefers direct communication, even if she uses CMC communication such as Skype and e-mail. She seems to be quite negative towards Facebook and social media.

If she however would be researching it, she says that she would register on Facebook.

“I do not see where it would fit into my life. I am not active on [Facebook or other social media] because I simply don't have the time, I have better things to do with my time. I have not chosen not to be there [on Facebook], I am simply not there. I'm not interested.”

Study subject C

Code name: C

Gender: Female

Facebook status: Ex-member. Was active in her line of work around 2013

Summary:

C does not want to live her life on Facebook. She finds it difficult and intrusive that people share private information. The personal integrity factor is the main reason she is not registered on Facebook. It stresses her that people share private information with people they only know distantly.

“I find it difficult that people you don't really know share their private information, it is really frustrating. You lose the boundaries [between private and public], which stresses me. You find information about someone you only know distantly. [I prefer] to meet a person face to face to sit and talk and only share with your close ones. The main reason is that I become stressed. I find it too intrusive.

According to her Facebook is “all-pretend”, where people look like they lead perfect lives and they write a lot about their private lives. She does not like this as she is a very private person. C also doesn’t like the fact that Facebook seems stressful and takes up a lot of a person’s time.

“The information flow has become too large. There is simply too much information that I don’t want to know about.”

She also prefers to meet people in real life, or at least talk to them on the phone instead of through social media. C mentions a Facebook group her neighbours have started, which discusses possible burglar threats in the neighbourhood.

“I thought to myself, why don’t they just call? People live their lives on Facebook, I am the odd one.”

She regrets the fact that people don’t take the time to call anymore; instead they spend all their time on Facebook.

“I love my analogue life very much, to dig around in my garden, play with my cats or read books. I like to slow down, I think a lot of today’s stress illnesses come from the pressure of being available all the time.”

Study subject: D

Code name: D

Gender: Male

Facebook status: Never joined.

Summary:

Respondent D says that his main reasons for not being on Facebook are because he does not have a need of exposure, however he does have a need for privacy.

“I don’t have the need as a person to have private contacts in that forum or to show off my own private life to friends or to an outer circle of people.”

He summarizes his reason for not being on Facebook like this:

1. “I don’t have the need to expose myself
2. I have a need to ration information of private nature
3. I am not really comfortable with people knowing things about me without me having told it to them in person.”

Study subject E

Code name: E

Gender: Male

Facebook status: Never joined

Summary:

Respondent E mentions no necessity and no interest as reasons for not being on Facebook. He prefers to find information for himself. He also favours IRL meetings instead of meetings online.

“I don’t feel the need [to be on Facebook]. When Facebook came around 10 years ago my children signed up. My wife and I didn’t want them to feel obliged to add their parents, so it never happened. I prefer to call or meet my friends; that is nicer. It is just another distraction that I can live without. I don’t have the need for it and if I miss out on information I can live with that.

When E needs information he prefers to actively search for it instead of being pushed information. However he does not feel that he is missing out on any information because he is not registered on Facebook.

“I am active and good at finding the information I need online. It may happen that a Facebook page comes up in searches, but I do not feel that I am missing any information.”

Study subject F

Code name: F

Gender: Female

Facebook status: Facebook status: Ex-member. Joined around 2006 and left in 2015.

Summary:

According to F, Facebook and similar websites gather too much information about people. F would only be on Facebook if it were something that was managed by everybody; knowledge accessed by us all.

“Everything that we do leaves some digital footprints behind, and all of these different digital systems are cross-referenceable, [which means that] you can aggregate all the data. If you match them up, which has become very possible today, you can find everything about every person”.

Two study subjects have been registered on Facebook before, one in her line of work and the other more to stay in touch with family and friends abroad.

## 9 Analysis

Further follows an analysis of the collected material and interviews that will be compared to previous mentioned theories and research. As mentioned earlier, this study was set out to present reasons for the study subjects to not be on Facebook by analysing the results and placing the study subjects in different categories according to their reasoning.

### 9.1 How the categories were established

By looking at the results of the research interviews, four profiles of *inactives* were generated: *Idealists*, *Pragmatists*, *Sceptics/Distrustful* and *Technocrats*.

These differed from the profile types used before the research interviews and analysis were conducted, which were *Principalists*, *Pragmatists*, *Defectors*, *Passive* and *Professionals*. As mentioned earlier, some of the pre-research profiles do not bring anything to this study as it does neither include people who as of present are using a Facebook account professionally (*Professionals*) nor does it include *Passive* members who have an account but do not use it. Further the category profile *Defectors* is indeed represented in this study, as two respondents have been active on Facebook in the past. However, this does not add anything to the results of this study as the study is set to research *reasons* behind not being there and not just the fact that someone has been active on Facebook once upon a time. This leaves *Principalists* and *Pragmatists*. *Principalists* could in fact be represented by the category *Idealists* (see below), but that is only one side of the coin. *Pragmatists* is the only profile category that has stayed intact throughout the research process.

## 9.2 Reasons not to be on Facebook

One of the main questions during the research interviews was the question why said person is not a member of Facebook. By analysing the answers to this question, including other facts the respondents gave about their reasoning, similar answers were assembled to be able to see certain tendencies and types. Specific characteristics were categorised according to a specific category type.

The following categories were established after interviews and analysis was performed:

### 1) Idealists:

- Do not like the idea of Facebook
- Consider it to be a profit-making company that feeds on personal data
- Try to avoid hypes

Idealists have an ideological belief behind not being on Facebook. The common denominator is that the idea of Facebook in principal could be good, if it would be used in a different way, that is, that information would be shared in a non-selfish, non-profit way.

Respondents: F, A

F would have been more inclined to participate if a social media site had existed where knowledge is shared among all members.

“For me social media are mainly, at the moment, commercial organisations making money out of people’s contributions. It would be nice if we had more types of social media that were like Wikipedia that would actually allow people to contribute for the benefit of all.

According to F the major social media actors present today are in fact profit-making organisation that are taking advantage of the large public. She would have envisioned something more similar to a Wikipedia style tool, where people can share and access the information at an equal basis.

“[They are] taking advantage of the non-thinking and good hearted people who are contributing their data and making them lot of money... but it could have been a different tool that made people come together for the benefit of all and create a public sphere, that we come together and discuss things and come to find this bigger knowledge, and understand each other better.”

Respondent F

Respondent A could fall under the type “trying to avoid hypes”. She says that for her it is almost a social experiment to try to stay off Facebook as long as possible.

“My friends are all on Facebook, some think that I am very complicated [because I am not on Facebook]. It is almost like an experiment for me, how can I avoid to be on there, for how long can I stay out of there without missing out on information and be kicked out from all social interactions?”

Respondent A

### 2) Pragmatists:

- Consider Facebook time consuming
- Show non-interest

Studies show that non-Facebook users spend more time with their families than

Facebook users and are highly social individuals. Nyquist (2014) explains that non-users are very social people and that the main reason for not being active on Facebook is that it is too time consuming. Denti et al. (2012) and Fleming (2012) both discuss how social media is taking up a lot of people's time instead of doing other things.

Some of the respondents do mention the fact that Facebook is time consuming as one of the main reason them not being active there. They simply want to do other things with their time.

Respondent B, C, D, E

"I do not see where it would fit into my life. I am not active on [Facebook or other social media] because I simply don't have the time, I have better things to do with my time. I have not chosen not to be there [on Facebook], I am simply not there. I'm not interested."

Respondent B

"My sister [who is 42] is on Facebook and she can hardly put her phone down, everything needs to be registered on Facebook, that we planted potatoes, it makes me upset, how impersonal everything has become."

Respondent C

"Some of these things about where people are located or what they are doing, I don't have room for that in my head to process that information. I have so many other things that need to fit in there."

Respondent D

"It is just another distraction that I can live without. I don't have the need for it and if I miss out on information I can live with that. "

Respondent E

### 3) Sceptics/Distrustful

- Difficulty to trust people
- Fear to lose personal integrity
- Do not want to share personal information with strangers
- Do not want strangers to know about their lives

Respondent: C, D and somewhat A

Respondent C, who calls herself a very private person, finds it difficult to share private information, which she feels is the essence of sites like Facebook.

"Facebook is all pretend, people lead very perfect lives, they write about their private lives, I am a very private person. I find it difficult that people you don't really know share their private information, it is really frustrating. You lose the boundaries [between private and public], which stresses me. You find information about someone you only know distantly."

Respondent C

Respondent D shares C's concerns about the private and the public. He does not feel comfortable about the fact that people know things about him that he has never told them.

"I don't have the need as a person to have private contacts in that forum or to show off my own private life to friends or to an outer circle of people. I am not really comfortable that people know things about me without me having told it to them in person. Sometimes I have travelled somewhere with my wife, and I run into someone and they ask how my trip to

Copenhagen was, and I ask myself intuitively, how the heck do they know that I have been to Copenhagen, but then of course they have read it on Facebook and seen something about it. It is a personality question but I don't really like that [laughter]."  
Respondent D

#### 4) Technocrats:

- Safety/security concerned
- Concerned with how the material on Facebook is used
- Aware of technological aspects and safety concerns

Who owns the material that is posted? What happens to the material that is posted and how is it used? What can Facebook access, other than the information you post yourself? Those are the type of questions that *Technocrats* pose themselves.

Respondent: A, C, F

Respondent A is concerned of the loss of personal integrity and is sceptical towards anything that is offered for free. She is also aware that information that is posted is sold to third parties. Automatic alerts adapted to her specific needs make her uneasy.

"I do not accept everything at once; I ask myself what are the consequences with it being for free? Today every move we make on line is tracked. How we look for information, who we are in touch with, what we are searching for, how we move about on the web. The information is sold to third parties. This creates an asymmetry, they know what you are doing and someone is making money from it. We talk about artificial intelligence. This is for example that your phone puts on a certain song when you go for a run on Tuesdays at 3 pm or tells you when to pick up your children from school. I believe that it is on the verge of being unethical when this kind of user information is used this way and the personal integrity is in danger. Facebook sells information to third parties, and we do not even know who they are."

Respondent A

"Data is being sold by Facebook, such as what interests we have which is alarming. I don't want to receive news in a push way, I would rather find the information myself."

Respondent C

F mentions the fact that the social media that exist today mostly are commercialised sites that take advantage of people's goodwill of sharing their information.

"Alarming would be for example is everything that we do leaves some digital footprints behind, and all of these different digital system can be cross referenceable so that you can aggregate all the data, if you match them up, which has become very possible today, you can find everything about every person. ---

F is aware of what the big picture looks like, how we are all pieces in a big puzzle. She says that those who do have access to all the information could use it for something that is not in all of our interests.

"Like I might not have anything to hide and it's not problematic for me to get advertisement. If the whole society, if data is collected about every person in the whole society, those people who have access to that aggregated data, like Google or Facebook or whatever, they are getting quite lot of power and they can..., we don't know what they might be using this information for.

You can actually do a lot of behavioural studies, and determine what kind of people are looking at this, what kind of behaviour they have, what kind of personality they have. You can use this knowledge about the whole society and group people who are doing similar things or not doing similar things, to manipulate them.

I think it is a very dangerous, [pause]

It is not a good development I think. This aggregated data can have a lot of positive use, but you cannot stop people who are looking to misuse and abuse it for personal gain or other gains, not to use it.”

Respondent F

F has already started influencing her inner circle to stay off Facebook, her son and some of their friends have actively chosen not be members of Facebook because of the reasoning mentioned above.

### 9.3 How to find information

Three respondents, A, C and E mention that they prefer to find information themselves, rather than being pushed information.

“When I need information I search for the information, I am actively searching instead of being pushed information. I am active and good at finding the information I need online. It may happen that a Facebook page comes up in searches, but I do not feel that I am missing any information by not being active on Facebook.”

Respondent E

“I don’t want to receive news in a push way, I would rather find the information myself.”

Respondent C

### 9.4 Private time spent online (where do the non-actives go online)?

All of the respondents have answered that their private use of Internet consists of e-mailing, skyping, media consumption and private searches. However, some have mentioned activity that one could define as social media in the broader sense.

As far as Bernoff’s (2011) *Groundswell* goes, some of the study participants could even be considered as *Spectators*, that is they read information online and may even browse Facebook when searching for something.

“It may happen that a Facebook page comes up in searches, but I do not feel that I am missing any information by not being active on Facebook.”

Respondent E

This corresponds to the basic theory of affinity and affiliation needs, according to Maslow (1943). Whether or not the study subjects choose to be on Facebook, they do have the need to fulfil, a need that Facebook can accommodate for its users, to find people with similar views and similar norms and cultural values as described earlier.

Online board game:

*What is the game called?*

Reversi or Othello. It is a board game, you can do it offline you can do it online. It is like chess.

*Describe in your own words, Why do like to do that? Why do you do that online?*

I need to have people to play with and I’m quite good at it, people I know they don’t like to play with me so – [laugh] so I need to play it online so I can find people that will play with me.

*Do you discuss something else or the game?*

Some of the people who are not good at it ask questions, but say if I spend 100 hours it would be maybe 30 half an hour even less chatting, some people like to say hello or a couple of

people like to discuss the game, one person who discusses philosophical things as well, but not very much.  
Respondent F

Sports' Forum to discuss games:

"I watch a lot of football and I follow a [specific] team so I go on online forums to compare what people have said about a specific game, I like to compare my impressions with other people's opinions."  
Respondent D

Animal rights' issues:

"Everything happens on Facebook. I am involved in animal rights' questions and homeless cats and these organisations are on Facebook. If I want to find out what is going on I consult their Facebook page, but I cannot comment anything. If I want to help I call them or e-mail them."  
Respondent C

## 10 Discussion

Here follows a discussion about the results which take into account previously mentioned theories and research.

### 10.1 Affinity needs

As stated above, all humans have a need for affinity; they need to interact with their surroundings. Facebook users have found a way to partially do so through this social networking site. However, the non-Facebook users in this study have shown that they too, have a need for affinity, they just find it elsewhere. As per Maslow's theory (1943) the non-users too will look for a place in a group. Respondent D who is a football team supporter looks for opinions of other supporters online "I like to compare my impressions with other people's opinions". Respondent C is an animal right activist and she regularly wants to update herself on what others are doing in her field of interest. Respondent F looks for people to play online board games with. This could all be defined as online social integration needs, even if it does not take place on Facebook.

Other respondents, such as A, look to fulfil their affinity needs IRL, in the real world: "If I want to learn something I will take a course, like pottery for instance. I will share information with the people there. I like to meet people physically."

### 10.2 Trust

Another fundamental need is the need for trust. Without it, people tend to stay out of social groups, which is discussed by Paxton (1999), Paxton & Glanville (2007), Hislop (2013) and Sonnenberg (2014). As trust can be affected by changes in the social environment one could argue that Facebook is an enormous change in today's social environment. The way people behave on social media, by trusting their surroundings with personal information and photos, did not exist only ten years ago. The *Sceptics* in this study would fall under this category. As respondent D says "I don't have the need as a person to have private contacts in that forum or to show off my own private life to friends or to an outer circle of people [--] I am not really comfortable that people know things about me without me having told it to them in

person.” Trust is also based on a person’s ability to identify with the group, according to Hislop (2013). Respondent C addresses the sort of shallowness she sees in Facebook, something that she doesn’t identify with: “Facebook is all pretend, people lead very perfect lives, they write about their private lives, I am a very private person.”

### 10.3 Social participation and integration

When looking for theories for non-participation, numerous studies on political participation were found. In some ways one could compare political and social non-participation with non-participation in the social media world.

One could assume that well-informed people, or better-educated people, participate more in society and politics, as per the study made by Galbraith (1992). Sociologist Bourdieu (1977) highly stresses how family upbringing and education forms a person’s practises and perception of others. Here the category *Technocrats* first comes to mind, as information science academics will have a certain standing and will be well informed on the hazards and dangers with social media. Respondent F belongs to these category: “Everything that we do leaves some digital footprints behind, and all of these different digital system can be cross referenceable so that you can aggregate all the data, if you match them up, which has become very possible today, you can find everything about every person.”

### 10.4 Reasons for not being on Facebook

One could argue that reasons for the people not to be on Facebook in some ways are similar to the reasons for not being on Internet, with some exceptions.

IIS study (2015a) on non-Internet users showed that the majority of people who did not have Internet access had no interest in it. Others were to avoid negative aspects such as virus or shenanigans, which could be perceived as a simplified version of the *Technocrats’* fear of all their online data being assembled and used for negative purposes. Other reasons for not using Internet was to have time to meet people in real life instead, a factor that most of the respondents in this study share.

The IIS data (2015a) further showed that an average Facebook-user will meet their family members less in comparison to those who do not use Facebook. This is true as well for this study as most respondents mention a need to meet people in real life instead of online. However there is a difference when it comes to family and friends. Non-Facebook users meet their family more than Facebook users, however when it comes to friends the reverse is true, here Facebook-users will meet their friends more than non-users. In this study the question was not separated between friends and family, hence this particularity cannot be observed here.

## 11 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to find out why information science academics at a midsized university in Sweden are not active on Facebook. The results were to be presented in profile categories where each respondent would be place in a specific category according to their reasoning behind not being registered on the social networking site Facebook. The extended research question was to look at this reasoning to see whether the non-activity choice of a certain influential group could

have other effects on their lives and surroundings, and whether a person's background, values and education influence the choices he or she makes, in this case about being active on the social networking site Facebook.

### 11.1 Summary of the Category profiles

With Bernoff's book *Groundswell* (2011) and his Social Technographics Profiles in mind, four profiles of *inactives* were generated: *Idealists*, *Pragmatists*, *Sceptics/Distrustful* and *Technocrats*. However, most study subjects could not be identified with solely one profile type. The most represented profile was that of the *Pragmatists*; those who consider Facebook a waste of time and prefer to spend time with their friends and families in real life, or simply to poke around in their garden.

*Sceptics* and *technocrats* were the second largest group with equal representation. These represent people who have issues with trust (personal integrity) and security issues with Facebook and the fact that the site can access personal information and use it for financial gain.

#### 1) Idealists (2):

- Do not like the idea of Facebook
- Consider it to be a profit-making company that feeds on personal data
- Try to avoid hypes

#### 2) Pragmatists (4):

- Consider Facebook time consuming
- Show non-interest

#### 3) Sceptics/Distrustful (3):

- Difficulty to trust people
- Fear to lose personal integrity
- Do not want to share personal information with strangers
- Do not want strangers to know about their lives

#### 4) Technocrats (3):

- Safety/security concerned
- Concerned with how the material on Facebook is used
- Aware of technological aspects and safety concerns

## 11.2 Research question and its answer(s)

The set out research question was:

*What makes information science university academics at a midsized Swedish University choose not to be active on Facebook?*

With a follow-up questions:

*What reasoning lies behind the choice of these university academics not being active online and what kind of an effect can this have on a person´s life and surroundings?*

*Does a person´s background, values and education have an influence on the choices he or she makes about being active on the social media site Facebook, and if yes, how is this shown for this study´s subjects?*

As can be seen above, there are various reasons for university academics not to be active on Facebook. Some of them, the *Pragmatists* and the *Sceptics*, have chosen more personal reasons behind their inactivity. That is that they prefer to do other things with their time, such as actually meet people in real life and *do* things actively (poke around the garden). Their affinity and group recognition lies with those who meet up in a café instead of with those who meet up on Facebook.

*Idealists* and *Technocrats* are those whose reasoning could be more of the influential kind, that is if they can convince others that there is a major security issue with Facebook, or that companies are taking advantage of their users, perhaps this kind of reasoning could have an impact on society. If influential individuals such as university academics have valid reasoning for not being on Facebook perhaps others will follow-suite. People might be starting to run out of social.

As this study represents only one specific group of people who have many factors in common, apart from being non-active on social media they are all university academics, so called intellectuals, they are all middle aged and they are all active in information science. However, their reasoning behind not being active on Facebook varies, as can be seen above. The information science background and the fact that the study subjects are all very active online, both privately and professionally, is only part of the reasoning why this said group is not active online. Other factors, buried deeper, such as the need to see people face to face or a matter of trust and not being willing to share information publicly also play a role. One could say, given the above, that a person´s background and values **does** indeed have an influence on the choices they make, at least as far as this study´s subjects goes. However, this study cannot overall say that this is true for everyone. This study shows that information science university academics have a shared tendency to stay off Facebook perhaps due to their common background, however their specific reasoning varies. Factors as trust, habits etc. also play a role in their active choice to not be a member of Facebook.

This study raises many interesting questions for organisations that are trying to reach their audiences online through social media. There are in fact issues to be aware of; some people could turn-away from Facebook as it is becoming too commercialised, as it is using the data their users publish on there for other purposes. As the media scene keeps on changing, so might the role or even existence of social media. Already now research and statistics show that a younger generation is looking elsewhere for the

social media needs, such as Instagram or Snapchat (IIS, 2015a)<sup>2</sup>. It could just be another shade of the same blue, but maybe there are other factors, not researched in this study, behind this.

## 12 Suggestions for further research

Taking the study one step further would be to ask the question “How can organisations reach these social media *inactives*?” As far as strategic communication goes, organisations should be interested whom they are not reaching and if there are other ways to reach this group.

Another interesting factor that came up throughout the study was the fact that people seem to have switched from using the telephone to texting and messaging each other or informing its surroundings about latest events in the personal lives through for example Facebook. It could be interesting to look at this phenomenon and see if this is a sign of the times, if it is a cultural tendency (such as Northern Europe) or just an effect of being connected all the time through smartphones etc.

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<sup>2</sup> Instagram, a mainly photo-sharing tool, is growing in popularity, being used by 40 per cent of Internet users in 2015. Snapchat, a video and photo-sharing tool was used by 21 per cent of Internet users in 2015, with the most frequent users being 12-15 year old girls.

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# Appendix

## Appendix 1

Letter (e-mail) to the respondents, first version (in Swedish)<sup>3</sup>

11 april, 2016

Hej !

Mitt namn är KR och jag är en magisterstudent som just har påbörjat min magisteruppsats, som skrivs under april och maj månad 2016.

Det uppsatsämne jag valt är att undersöka vilka val och faktorer som gör att vissa personer väljer att inte vara aktiva på sociala media. Med hjälp av intervjuer har jag tänkt undersöka vilka orsaker som gör att vissa väljer bort sociala media.

Jag har valt att koncentrera mig på den sociala nätverkssajten Facebook för att begränsa min studie. Utgångspunkten kommer från boken "Groundswell, Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies" som tar upp olika användartyper beroende på deras aktivitet på sociala media. De inaktiva, eller "inactives" som Groundswell kallar dem, nämns i boken utan att analyseras ytterligare. Det var där jag fick intresset att titta närmare på just denna grupp.

Under det första brainstorming seminariet kom det fram att en möjlig och intressant population skulle vara universitetslärare på XX-programmet.

Jag skulle alltså vara intresserad av att intervjua universitetslärare, som inte är aktiva på Facebook. Syftet är alltså att ta reda på varför, vilka faktorer och val som ligger bakom och eventuellt vilka andra kanaler eller webbplatser som besöks istället.

Om du har några frågor angående studien är du välkommen att kontakta mig (se nedan) eller någon av mina handledare.

Eftersom jag är distansstudent skulle det vara lättast om det gick att motas på adobe, alternativt skype. Intervjun tar cirka en timme i anspråk där alla deltagare får samma frågor, men med möjlighet att anpassa intervjun till intervjupersoner med uppföljningsfrågor (semikonstruerad intervjuteknik). Formen är kvalitativ intervjumetod genom chat.

Intervjun kommer att sparas, för att kunna analysera och kontrollera intervju svar. Naturligtvis garanteras anonymitet och konfidentialitet.

Om du är intresserad kan du kontakta mig här:

[e-mail]

Jag skulle vara tacksam om du kunde svara även ifall du inte kan eller inte är intresserad av att delta. Intervjuerna kommer att genomföras under april månad (möjligtvis maj) 2016.

Tack till ML och JS som gav mig denna idé och hjälpt mig finslipa mitt forskningsproblem.

Med vanliga hälsningar

K R

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<sup>3</sup> Letter has been anonymised to not include names or other data revealing the identity of the respondents.

## Appendix 2

Letter (e-mail) to the respondents, second version.<sup>4</sup>

Amne:

Kan du hjälpa en SIK student genom att delta i studie om icke-användande av sociala medier/facebook bland universitetslarare ?

26 april, 2016

Hej !

Jag tar mig friheten att kontakta dig igen och be om hjälp om min studie av ickeanvändare av facebook bland lärare och forskare som undervisar och forskar om media och sociala medier. Med hjälp av ML har jag redan fått kontakt med tre personer som är villiga att medverka, men skulle behöva några fler för att göra denna studie möjlig.

### **Vilka faktorer gör att lärare som undervisar eller forskar i sociala media väljer att inte vara aktiva där?**

Det är något jag, KR amnar studera i min magisteruppsats som skrivs under april och maj månad 2016. Med hjälp av intervjuer har jag tänkt undersöka vilka orsaker som gör att (sociala) medie-forskare och lärare väljer att inte vara aktiva på sociala medier.

I samarbete med mina handledare har jag valt en väldigt specifik population, nämligen dig som är universitetslärare på XX-programmet. Jag har valt att koncentrera mig på den sociala nätverkssajten Facebook för att begränsa min studie.

***Jag skulle vara intresserad av att intervju universitetslärare, som inte är aktiva på Facebook.*** Det kan vara så att du aldrig registrerat dig, eller att du har haft ett konto, eller har ett inaktivt sådant, men har valt att inte vara aktiv. Syftet är att ta reda på varför, vilka faktorer och val som ligger bakom och eventuellt vilka andra kanaler eller webbplatser som besöks istället.

### **Bakgrund:**

Utgångspunkten kommer från boken "Groundswell, Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies" som tar upp olika användartyper beroende på deras aktivitet på sociala media. De inaktiva, eller "inactives" som Groundswell kallar dem, nämns i boken utan att analyseras ytterligare. Det var där jag fick intresset att titta närmare på just denna grupp.

### **Praktisk info och intervjumetod:**

Eftersom jag är distansstudent skulle det vara lättast om det gick att träffas i adobe, alternativt skype. ***Intervjun tar cirka en timme i anspråk*** där alla deltagare får samma frågor, men med möjlighet att anpassa intervjun till intervjupersoner med uppföljningsfrågor (semikonstruerad intervjuteknik).

Intervjun kommer att sparas, för att kunna analysera och kontrollera intervju svar. Naturligtvis garanteras anonymitet och konfidentialitet.

Om du har några frågor angående studien är du välkommen att kontakta mig (se nedan) eller någon av mina handledare.

Jag skulle vara tacksam om du kunde svara även ifall du inte kan eller inte är intresserad av att delta. Intervjuerna kommer att genomföras under april-maj månad 2016.

Tack till mina handledare som gav mig denna idé och hjälpt mig finslipa mitt forskningsproblem.

Med vanliga hälsningar

Katerina Rus

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<sup>4</sup> Letter has been anonymised to not include names or other data revealing the identity of the respondents.

## Appendix 3

### Interview guide

1. A brief description of the interview person, age, profession, academic degree, gender, background (nationality)
2. How many hours per day are you online? Private/professional use.
3. What do you use Internet for?
4. How much is private use, how much is professional use? Please explain. (For instance if you conduct studies related to Internet/social media)
5. What is social media to you, how do you define it?
6. Are you or have you ever been active on social media, please explain.
7. Why do you choose not to be on Facebook? Have you ever been on there in any way? Please explain.
8. If you are not active on any social media at all, then why?
9. What do you believe are the advantages/disadvantages with Facebook?
10. What kind of information do you believe there can be found on Facebook?
11. Do you feel as if you are missing out on information by not being active on Facebook? Please relate to this question as a private person and to your professional work. Please explain.
12. Do you give lectures or conduct research on social media/Facebook? If yes, how do you explain not being active there even if it is something you are studying yourself? Do you feel as if it could be expected or that you need to be on there considering your line of work?
13. Where do you find information that could otherwise be found on Facebook?
14. If you do come into contact with Facebook, how does this occur? (for instance by others talking about it, or by looking over someone's shoulder, by studying it) Please explain.
15. Would you say that there are security issues with Facebook? Please explain.
16. Is there anything that you would like to add that could contribute to the study?