

12 April 2011

Lindsay,

Your topic is an interesting and important one: as communication technologies like Facebook become more and more central to the daily lives of the average Americans, how are traditional relationships like that of child and parent changing? And are we potentially better or worse off as a result?

I'm worried that you go into the topic a little too strongly about the conclusions you're planning to draw. The technologies are still very new, and so there's only anecdotal evidence about the effects tools like Facebook are having on parental relationships. While such evidence is important to collect and make some tentative predictions from, I don't think it's enough to make hard conclusions like "relationships between parents and their children are quickly diminishing". We won't be able to be so sure about such a general trend for years, at least when it comes to blaming something like Facebook as the culprit.

I think the fact that you conducted real interviews with parents and children is the strongest point of your paper. Instead of listing those interviews and the results of them in your paper proper, though, instead I'd summarize the results and immediately reflect on the implications of them: what led to those answers and what can we conclude or predict based off of them (and what can't we yet conclude without more information and time)? Including the entire interviews as appendices would be cool, but they're definitely not necessary in the paper itself to help argue your point.

Another thing I wasn't clear on is what age groups you are talking about. We all have parents, after all. My parents just recently joined Facebook while I've been on it for years, so I was interested in hearing your take on that kind of situation. Make sure you clarify from the beginning what your definitions of "parent" and "child" are for the purposes of your paper.

You've got a good start. Just make sure to give all sides of the issue a fair chance. Maybe some parents and children actually have better relationships now that Facebook gives them more opportunities for communication. It's not something that's obvious from the get-go which is, of course, the point of researching it.

Good work. Keep it up!

Your peer,

John Pray