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# 13 (Micro)Blogs: Practices of Privacy Management

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## 13.1 Introduction

Weblogs (or blogs for short) are a prototypical application of the Social Web. They lower the barriers for participating in online conversations and the dissemination of information, blurring the basic dichotomy that is at the heart of traditional mass communication: the separation of roles between sender and receiver, or between producers and users of information (Bruns, 2008). Intertwined with this development, blogs (and their younger sibling the microblogs) are also one of those online formats that challenge the classic dichotomy of the private and the public, because they make it feasible to share information of personal relevance with an audience over time and space.

A particularly telling case of the possible tensions between privacy and publicness has been reported by Johnson (2005): a nanny in New York one day told the people she worked for about her private blog. The parents followed the blog for a while and then decided to fire her. The mother, herself a journalist at the "New York Times," explained in a newspaper article (Olen, 2005) her outrage that her and her baby's life had been made public on the Internet. Although she did not mention any names, the details provided in her article made it possible to track down the nanny's blog. The nanny, in turn, reacted to her case being made public in the New York Times through blog postings of her own that specifically criticized the sensation-seeking style of the article: "If you have come to this little blog today looking for prurient details of a 'nanny gone wild' and another 'nanny diary' detailing the sordid life of a family she works for, I am very sorry to disappoint you" (N.N., 2005). She also announced that she was closing her blog and would blog anonymously to protect her own privacy.

Of course, this story is not representative of bloggers' experiences and neither are these events inherent to or inevitably caused by blogs as such. The individual and social consequences of the appropriation and institutionalization of the format might differ quite substantially. This is especially true for privacy, which should not be conceptualized as a fixed state, but rather as a constant and historically variant process of navigating and managing the boundaries between the private and the public. This includes, as classic theories of privacy have pointed out, maintaining and exercising control over the extent of personal information that is communicated (Westin, 1970) or over the access to the self by others (Altman, 1975). With regard to (micro)blogs, then, managing privacy refers to the ways people actively use the technology to selectively disclose certain personal information to certain audiences (and also to not disclose certain information to others).

This paper proceeds in three steps: Firstly, it describes the formal characteristics of (micro)blogs and presents empirical findings on their prevalence among onliners as well as on different uses of the technology. It then analyzes (micro)blog-based practices of privacy management by reconstructing their technological evolution as well as some of the shared routines and expectations about self-disclosure and privacy with regard to particular audiences. A summary and outlook to future research conclude the text.

## 13.2 Formal Characteristics and Prevalence of (Micro)Blogs

In a formal way, blogs can be defined as frequently updated websites that display content in a reverse chronological order. Single blog entries ("postings") have unique URLs and can be linked to individually, rather than to the site as a whole. They can also usually be commented on by other users. Microblogs usually impose a limit on the number of characters in a single posting; Twitter, the most prominent if not generic example of a microblogging service, allows for 140 characters within one "tweet." Microblogs also rely on articulated social connections for the structuring of conversations and audiences, because users explicitly establish connections amongst themselves by "following" or "being followed by" other users, and by explicitly referring to other users by replying to or retweeting (i.e., "forwarding") their postings.

Taken together, individual postings or tweets, comments, and articulated connections through hyperlinks, replies, or retweets between (micro)blogs form networks of interconnected texts, usually referred to as the "blogosphere" and the "twittersphere." Not only are these spheres connected (since tweets might refer to blog postings and vice versa) they are also greatly heterogeneous: which information, topics, or events are selected by the (micro)blogger and which are not, how this content is presented in terms of writing style, illustrations, etc., and how these "distributed conversations" (Efimova, 2009) within and between blogs are structured, varies greatly. Thus, there is no such thing as "the" blog; rather, blogs and microblogs are prime examples of the contingent and under-determined nature of new media formats (Lievrouw, 2002) that allow for or afford various practices, including the ways in which privacy management and self-disclosure are performed.

According to blog monitoring services, the blogosphere has grown from 4 million blogs in 2004 to approximately 150 million blogs at the beginning of 2011 (Sifry, 2004; http://www.blogpulse.com). Twitter, the dominant microblogging service, was estimated to reach 200 million users at the end of 2010 (Murphy, 2010). The share of (micro)blog users among the general online population varies between countries and age groups. In the US, around 11 percent of adult Internet users and 28 percent of the 12- to 17-year olds had created a blog in 2009 (Jones & Fox, 2009). Within Europe, eleven percent of the 9- to 16-year old onliners had written a blog or online diary within the last month (Livingstone et al., 2011, p. 34). 19 percent of US Internet users were using Twitter (or similar microblogging services) in October 2009 (Fox, Zickuhr & Smith, 2009), while in Germany, it is used by only one percent on a weekly basis (Busemann & Gscheidle, 2010, p. 362).

Parallel to this diffusion of (micro)blogs among Internet users, a growing body of research has focused on specific practices and contexts, most notably the relationship and interdependencies with professional journalism (e.g., Lasica, 2002; Tremayne, 2007; Messner & DiStaso, 2008). Other strands of research have examined the role of (micro)blogs within other fields of professional communication, specifically political communication (e.g., Scott, 2007; Park & Thelwall, 2008; Keren, 2009) as well as market communication and organizational communication, including knowledge management (e.g., Böhringer & Richter, 2009; Efimova, 2009; Puschmann, 2010). Somewhat in contrast to this strong research focus on blogging within professional contexts, various studies, by employing different methodologies, agree that the majority of blogs deal with personal issues rather than political, economical, or professional topics as such (e.g., Nardi et al., 2004; Papacharissi, 2007; White & Winn, 2009).

For example, in a representative survey among US bloggers (n=233), Lenhart and Fox (2006) found that 37 percent of bloggers consider “my life and personal experience” as their main topic, with the next most popular topic, “politics and government,” reaching only 11 percent. Accordingly, most bloggers (78%) are inspired to blog by personal experiences, with female and younger bloggers of age 18 to 29 being even more likely to do so. In a content analysis of n=457 blogs within a 13 month period between 2003 and 2004, Herring et al. (2007) found that between 65 and 75 percent belonged to the “Personal Journal” type. A content analysis of n=207 English tweets found that 41 percent of all messages were reporting the user’s personal experiences (Honeycutt & Herring, 2009). And a cluster analysis based on message content of n=350 randomly selected Twitter users revealed that 80 percent could be categorized as “meformers,” since their tweets predominantly focus on their personal situation, opinions and complaints, or statements and random thoughts (Naaman, Boase & Lai, 2010).

While the composition of a blog’s audience, the types of personal information shared, and the particular communicative strategies for disclosing personal information may differ (see below for a more thorough discussion), blogging is nevertheless a fundamentally social activity. It is a hybrid between the modes of “publishing” and “engaging in conversation”—especially in the case of the seemingly paradox online journal, which is both personal and public at the same time. Rather than being an expression of mere “exhibitionistic” self-disclosure, journal-style blogs are used to maintain personal relationships: personal information is disclosed to an audience of readers, which might react to postings by commenting on them or linking to them on their own blogs.

Various studies find that the level of self-disclosure within a personal blog has an impact on the structure and quality of social relations: in a survey of n=307 female bloggers and a corresponding content analysis of n=100 blogs (authored by the respondents), Bane et al. (2010) found that bloggers with a high level of self-disclosure on their blogs reported a high number of and higher satisfaction with online friends. Stefanone and Jang (2007), in a survey of n=154 randomly selected bloggers, found that bloggers with a higher level of extraversion and self-disclosure (as personal traits) not only reported larger strong tie networks, but were also more likely to use blogs to maintain these networks.

Of particular interest for this paper, however, is not the connection between personality traits and blogging behavior, but rather the specific communicative situation in which bloggers engage. It contributes to the emergence of "personal public spheres," which are one of the defining features of the Social Web (Schmidt, 2009, pp. 105-128). They are formed when and where users make available information that is personally relevant to them (instead of the information being selected according to journalistic news factors or news values), that is directed to an intended audience of strong and weak ties (instead of the disperse, unconnected, and unknown audience of mass-mediated public spheres), and that is presented mainly to engage in conversation (instead of the one-way mode of publishing).

This new type of public sphere, which is not limited to (micro)blogs but is also visible on social network sites such as Facebook, is blurring the boundaries between the personal and the public. But rather than simply eroding privacy and fostering "digital exhibitionism," as some commentators suspect, personal public spheres reconfigure the context for identity management and relationship management in a more complex way. One the one hand, they contribute to the maintenance of "connected presence" (Licoppe & Smoreda, 2005), because they empower users to share information that is relevant to them within an extended network of strong and weak ties. On the other hand they demand certain routines and skills. As Marwick and boyd (2010, p. 11) put it with regard to Twitter: users "must maintain equilibrium between a contextual social norm of personal authenticity that encourages information-sharing and phatic communication (the oft-cited 'what I had for breakfast') with the need to keep information private, or at least concealed from certain audiences." The remainder of the paper explores how exactly this practice of privacy management within (micro)blogs can be described and analyzed—what do we know about how people use this technology with certain communicative affordances to share personal information with others and to selectively control access to their selves?

## 13.3 Practices of Privacy Management in (Micro)Blogs

There are various approaches that can be used to account for the diversity of blog use (Bruns & Jacobs, 2006; Schmidt, 2006; Walker Rettberg, 2008). Most notably, Herring and colleagues have conducted various studies on blogs as a communicative genre (e.g., Herring et al., 2004, 2005; Herring & Paolillo, 2006; see also Puschmann, 2010). Here, I will draw upon an analytical model of blogging practices that is based in sociological theory and has been developed in more detail in Schmidt (2007a). In a nutshell, blogging practices consist of and are performed through individual blogging episodes. How individual bloggers select and present content online is framed by the technology or *code* (the underlying software with its specific technological affordances) but also by *rules* (shared routines and expectations) and by *relations* (hypertextual as well as social connections). Along these structural dimensions, we can identify groups or communities of blogging practice, for example, those bloggers who share a specific software such as Wordpress and its features, or those who belong to a specific subculture and use blogs in a certain way to express their subcultural identities and norms (e.g., Hodkinson, 2006 for the Goth subculture; Wei, 2004 for knitting blogs).

Thus, code, rules, and relations frame the situative use of blogs, for example, by suggesting a certain style of writing, or by providing the technical means to easily link to other content. However, they are also the result of these individually performed episodes: expectations or routines might change over time if bloggers do not follow them, hypertextual and social networks are (re-)produced only by individual acts of linking or commenting, and even the code might be developed further in a reaction to direct or indirect user feedback. Thus, (micro)blogging practices are expressing the recursivity of social action and social structure that has been explained by Giddens' theory of structuration (Giddens, 1984).

This analytical model, which accounts both for the social structuredness of blogging and its dynamic nature, can also serve as a framework to look specifically at the development of (micro)blog-based practices of privacy management. In a first step, it allows the reconstruction of the sociotechnical architecture that has evolved from the rather static personal homepages of online diaries to the distributed conversation of the blogosphere, and to the constant and near-live streams and feeds of current (micro)blogging within articulated social networks. In a second step, it can connect these changes in the communicative architecture to prevalent communicative routines and shared expectations, including conceptualizations about the nature and scope of one's audience. Figure 13-1 summarizes the main analytical categories and interdependencies between structure and action, and these are discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

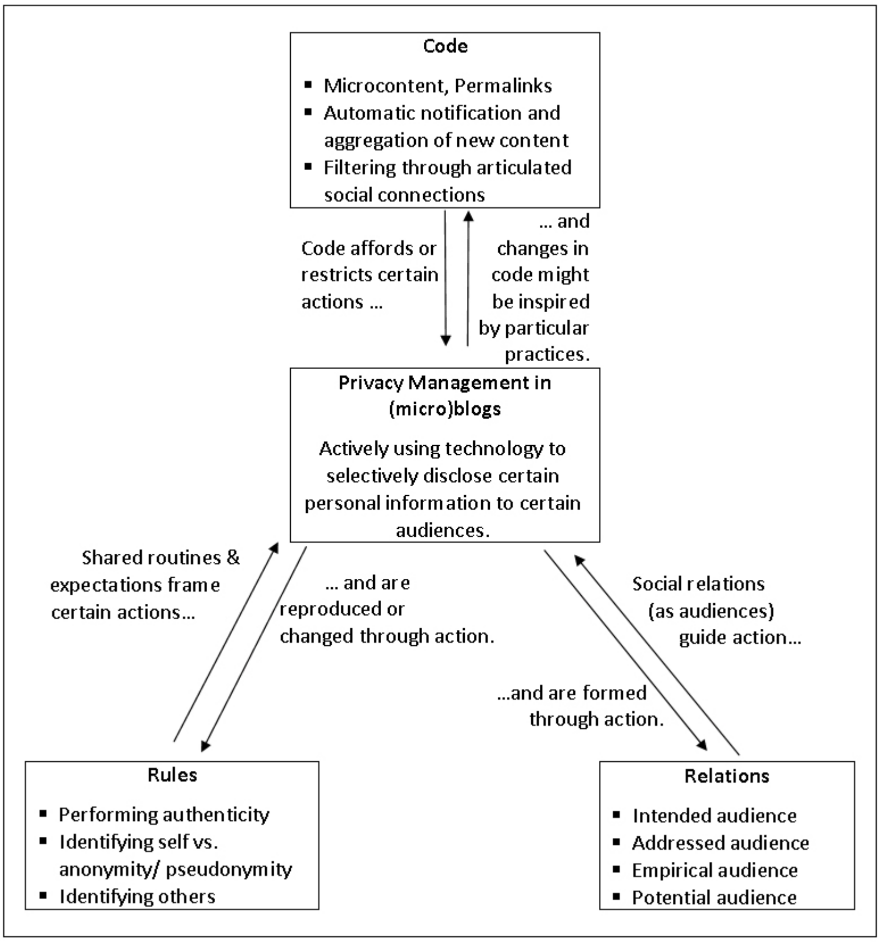


**Fig. 13-1: Analytical framework for privacy management in (micro)blogs**

### *13.3.1 Affording Privacy Management: Software Architecture*

The term “weblog” was coined by Jørn Barger, who stated in 1997 that a weblog is a “Web page where a Web logger ‘logs’ all the other Web pages she finds interesting” (cit. by Blood, 2004, p. 54). Predecessors of blogs date back to the early 1990s, when individuals such as Tim Berners-Lee and organizations such as the “National Center for Supercomputing Applications” (NCSA) curated regularly updated websites where they provided links to other interesting sites. Around the middle of the 1990s, online journals or online diaries, where people shared and reflected upon personal impressions and experiences (McNeill, 2003) provided an additional tradition of online-based communication that blogs drew upon. Other predecessors include the personal homepage (with its author-centered way of presenting content) and online discussion boards (offering options for commenting on and discussing content).

While the first blogs were edited using regular HTML editors, around the Millennium, various blog hosters such as Pitas, LiveJournal, or Blogger.com launched their services and helped to increase the number of bloggers (Blood, 2004). While Pitas provided a field for entering a URL and one for a corresponding text, thus suggesting a form of blogging that consisted mainly of commented links (the "filter blog"), blogger.com offered only one text field. If the user wanted to link to a different site, he/she had to enter the URL manually using HTML tags—this difference in interface design suggested a blogging style that was more similar to the style of diaries: chronicling events, reflecting ideas, or disclosing emotions. Blogs also featured "permalinks"—a unique and stable URL for each single blog posting that can be linked to individually (rather than having to link to the whole blog if one wants to refer to a specific idea or text). The "trackback" function introduced an automatic notification that is added to a blog entry if other blogs link to it.

Microblogging services such as Twitter provide additional options or restrictions for the presentation and connection of content. The most obvious feature is the 140-character limit for each message, which originates from restrictions imposed by using Twitter via mobile phones and text messages. It also encouraged users and developers to invent or co-create communicative routines to overcome these limitations, such as using the "@" symbol to address other users or the abbreviation "RT" for a "retweet" (forwarding another user's message). These social conventions were in turn incorporated into subsequent versions of Twitter, thus stabilizing certain emerging routines technologically. Another interface change made an implicit difference: the textbox for entering a tweet now asks "What's happening?" instead of the former "What are you doing" (Dybwad, 2009)—suggesting (but not prescribing) tweets of a somewhat more general relevance than of journaling one's activities.

The specific features such as permalinks, trackbacks, and the comment feature on blog postings, but also the referencing signals of Twitter, make it possible for "distributed conversations" (Efimova, 2009) to emerge. Distributed conversations are asynchronous and non-linear conversations where multiple authors refer to and discuss a topic on various sites. While such distributed conversation might be followed or participated in easily within small communities of bloggers, the rapid growth of the blogosphere has made it rather difficult to follow the constant updates. Basically, two technological innovations have proven highly important in assisting readers in keeping up with new content and changing the affordances of information management.

Firstly, the development of the RSS feed format and the corresponding feed readers from 2000 onwards allowed users to subscribe to a variety of blogs. Instead of having to regularly and "manually" visit those sites that are of interest, users aggregate selected sources in their feed reader and this automatically retrieves new and updated content. Secondly, the articulation of social relations became a relevant mechanism for filtering content. The "blogroll," a linklist of favorite blogs on one's own blog, provided an early mechanism for expressing social connection and topical interest. Platforms such as LiveJournal introduced more sophisticated social networking features to the basic blogging functionalities: by adding other users as friends, one could not only selectively give access to certain postings to this group (thus engaging in privacy management; see below), but could also be informed about updates on one's friends' LiveJournal blogs (boyd & Ellison, 2007).

On microblogging services such as Twitter, the articulation of social connections has become a basic organizational principle of communication. The act of "following" is akin to subscribing to that account, so that relations on Twitter are not necessarily reciprocal: they do not signify mutual acquaintance (although this can be the case), but more often just interest in those users one follows. By explicitly choosing certain Twitter accounts, a user can customize his/her own repertoire of sources, thus engaging in active information management. The @ feature and the Retweet function, which are both used to relate to other users (by addressing them or forwarding their tweet), also contribute to the organization of conversations on Twitter, thus structuring social relations and networks (Honeycutt & Herring, 2009; boyd, Golder & Lotan, 2010).

To summarize: (micro)blogs have incorporated several technological innovations that distinguish them from predecessors, such as the easy-to-maintain commented linklist or hosting platforms for online diaries: the shift to regularly updated "microcontent" addressable through permalinks, the automatic notification of new content, the aggregation of these updates in one single "place" (the RSS feed reader or the Twitter interface), and the reliance on articulated social connections to filter information. The resulting technological architecture has not only significantly lowered the barriers for making information accessible to others via the Internet, which includes sharing personal information, but has also contributed to a fundamental shift in the communicative architecture of web-based publics, which is (maybe even more prominently) visible in other Social Web applications as well. Instead of the hypertext networks of separate websites connected by and traversable via hyperlinks that formed the early web, the Social Web is characterized by "streams" and "feeds": afforded by technological features, personal information is constantly made accessible, aggregated, and updated within networked publics that are based on social connections.

### *13.3.2 Framing Privacy Management: Shared Routines and Expectations*

The technological architecture of (micro)blogs only partly explains practices of privacy management. The software use is framed by shared routines and expectations (i.e., social rules) about how to self-disclose and whom to address in a blog. It is not the use of the same tool, but rather the shared knowledge about—often informal and latent—rules that makes a blogger. In this sense, blogging as a practice has to be learned, and the conventions of the blogging genre have to be internalized (Lüders et al., 2010). In doing this, bloggers usually combine existing knowledge about similar genres—such as the paper diary—with reflections about their own experiences and with feedback from people they communicate with through their blog. Additionally, public discourse about the qualities, benefits, or drawbacks of (micro)blogs might influence how bloggers see the genre. Press coverage on Twitter, for example, framed microblogs positively as a tool for maintaining social contact, but also negatively as increasing information overload (Arceneaux & Schmitz Weiss, 2010).

The particular rules and expectations about the adequate amount of self-disclosure, about the topics selected for postings, and about the "right style" for blogging differ between sub-genres of blogging. In this respect, corporate blogs or blogs by politicians are different to personal journals, although they use the same software. However, at the core of the rules, expectations, conventions, and norms framing these different blogging practices is the idea of personal authenticity and subjectivity: blogs are considered to be formats where people use their "personal voice" and express their own subjectivity by sharing personal thoughts, observations, or comments about current events. This leitmotif of blogging not only explains the high share of journal-type blogs, but has a direct impact on self-disclosure and privacy.

By following and supporting the norm of authenticity, bloggers predominantly refer to their "real" identity. In their study on blogs run by American teenagers, Huffaker and Calvert (2005) found that a majority of them provided information about their first name (70%), their age (67%), and even additional contact information such as an e-mail address or a phone number (61%). The findings of Herring et al. (2007) point in the same direction: between 66 and 79 percent of the blogs in their three samples contained first or full names of their authors.

In a survey of 4,220 German-speaking bloggers in 2005, 70 percent stated that they do not blog anonymously or pseudonymously (Schmidt, 2007b). The particular ways through which they disclose personal information varies though: approximately 40 percent state that they include this information in blog postings; a somewhat smaller share (36%) of bloggers have a separate "about me" page with personal details. Around one in ten bloggers (12%) link to a separate personal homepage from their blog. While anonymity is not the dominating but a prevalent mode of blogging, it is debated in courts whether there is a right to anonymity for bloggers in the legal sense (Barendt, 2009). This question is fundamentally tied to issues of free speech, but also touches on the intersection of blogging and journalism, since it raises the question of whether bloggers should enjoy the same protective rights as professional journalists (Hendrickson, 2007).

Bloggers also have to build routines on how to deal with the privacy of other people. A non-representative survey on privacy expectations of bloggers (n=486) conducted by Viegas (2005) found that only three percent always ask for permission before mentioning or citing other people on their blog, while 66 percent almost never ask; 42 percent said that they refrain from mentioning names in their blogs, while 21 percent stated that they almost always reveal them. Common strategies to protect others' identities are to use initials, nicknames, or particular social roles (such as "my daughter" or "my husband") that might identify them to those in-the-know but not to other readers. An exception is usually made for those people who blog themselves—since they have chosen to make certain aspects of their personal life public in their blog, they are considered as having to live with the consequences of being mentioned or linked to by other bloggers as well. Similar findings were reported by Schmidt (2007b) for the German-speaking blogosphere; the survey also found that those people who blog anonymously or pseudonymously were more likely to not disclose information about others or, if they do disclose information, to use only initials etc. instead of full names. These findings indicate that reciprocity norms seem to guide the amount of disclosure about other people.

### *13.3.3 Performing Privacy Management: Conceptions of Audience*

The routines and expectations about self-disclosure or disclosure of others are strongly tied to the conception of the audience. Although (micro)bloggers might reject this term when talking about their own experiences—because they dislike the corresponding notion of acting prominently on a stage or of broadcasting to a diverse group of people (Marwick & boyd, 2010, p. 6)—they nevertheless have certain assumptions of their readership. Due to the particular technical affordances of blogging software compared to microblogs, the audience of blogs remains largely invisible – an "unseen audience" (Scheidt, 2006)—in the absence of articulated social connections; it is only through comments, through trackbacks and referrer links, or through one's server log files that a blogger can get an impression of the size and composition of his/her audience (Viegas, 2005).

Given these limitations and the characteristics of online-based communication in general, where information is persistent, replicable, scalable, and searchable (boyd 2010), four analytical categories of blogs' audiences have to be differentiated: firstly, the *intended audience* comprises a blogger's general idea of the audience he/she wants to reach or address, for example, friends, colleagues, or those interested in a specific topic. Secondly, the *addressed audience* comprises those people that are addressed in a specific blog posting—which might be the same as the intended audience in general, but might also be a specific subset, for example, when a posting or tweet is directed to a particular group of readers for feedback. Empirical studies usually concentrate on the intended audience and find that most bloggers have a vague idea about its composition. Almost half (49%) of the bloggers surveyed by Lenhart and Fox (2006) believed that their audience consisted of people they personally know, about a third (35%) believed that mostly people they have never met personally read their blogs, and 14 percent believe that it is a mix of personally known and unknown readers. Qian and Scott (2007) report a higher number of bloggers (88%) who identify people they know offline as their main audience.

Both the intended audience and the addressed audience are conceptualizations on the blogger's side, and are an important point of reference for deciding what information to disclose online. However, they do not necessarily correspond with the *empirical audience* that comprises those people who actually take notice of any given posting or tweet. In many cases this will be only a subset of the intended audience, since, for example, not all followers on Twitter will actually read a particular tweet. Problems with regard to privacy arise especially if the empirical audience is larger than the intended audience, for example, when tweets get retweeted or a particular blog posting is found through a search engine. As a result of network effects, the empirical audience might differ significantly from the intended audience: in a large scale analysis of Twitter, Kwak et al. (2010) found that no matter how large the follower base of the original user, a retweeted (forwarded) tweet reaches on average 1,000 users. Qualitative research suggests that especially for teenagers it is the "known, but inappropriate others" (Livingstone, 2008, p. 405) who are problematic: parents or teachers reading a blog or discovering a Twitter account that is not intended for them to read.

Finally, the *potential audience* has to be considered. This is mainly determined by the "technological reach" of a blog within the wider context of networked communication. Under the conditions of persistence and searchability in particular, it is hard to assess who might possibly have access to a blog posting or a tweet in the near or in the more distant future. Features of the software code, for example, protecting a Twitter account from non-followers, or blocking search engine robots from a blog, can assist a blogger in restricting his/her potential audience.

## 13.4 Conclusion

This paper has argued that privacy management in (micro)blogging can be understood and analyzed as a particular practice that is grounded in specific software affordances, in certain shared rules, and in the addressing of particular audiences. More specifically, the technological characteristics of (micro)blog code, which include uniquely addressable microcontent that is regularly updated and aggregated within feeds or streams of text, which in turn are filtered or channeled with the help of articulated social connections, provide a particular communicative architecture for sharing personal information. How exactly these technological features are used to share personal information with others is framed by shared routines and expectations. They evolve, stabilize, and change by combining experiences from (micro)blogging with knowledge about other CMC genres (such as the social network site) as well as with experiences grounded in other spheres of social life (such as the workplace or the home), where selective disclosure has to be performed as well. Important rules of (micro)blogging center around the key norm of authenticity, around the alternative between identifying oneself vs. blogging anonymously or pseudonymously, and around the ethical question of how to disclose information about others, where norms of reciprocity play an important role.

Finally, privacy management in (micro)blogs is inseparably tied to the social relations that are maintained and established through blogging. Not only do articulated social relations, for example, links in blogrolls, subscribed RSS feeds, or one's followers on Twitter assist in filtering information, social relations also become relevant for privacy management in the form of particular audiences: bloggers conceive of an intended audience and might even explicitly write for an addressed audience. In this respect, privacy management is performed for specific audiences. Due to the specific technological affordances, however, the intended or addressed audience might be incongruent with the empirical audience and the potential audience, which in turn can lead to privacy conflicts or failures to control who has access to certain personal information.

Analytically separating and discussing elements of privacy management practices is only a first step in understanding the impact that (micro)blogging has on individual users and social life. Ongoing technological innovation and the convergence with other Social Web applications introduce constant and great dynamics into the way people communicate via (micro)blogs. Not only do we lack more detailed knowledge on the various normative guidelines and shared expectations that frame privacy management under these conditions, especially in a comparative perspective,, but there is also the need to research the congruence or disparities between expectations of privacy and actual behavior. This in turn might lead to a better understanding of appropriate interventions, whether they aim at better and more sophisticated software-based control, or at improved knowledge and skills. Both seem to be necessary to guarantee that users can make the best use of the communication tools while maintaining control over their own personal information and private sphere.

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