

Sarah Loveless
Survey Research Methods PRCM4510
Dr. Brunner
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Purpose

The purpose of this survey is to get a better understanding of the current trends on Auburn's campus. It sought to better understand why people choose Facebook or MySpace or both, what aspects are more appealing, and assess the attitudes people have about each.

Research Question

What are the current attitudes and trends on Auburn's campus towards Facebook and MySpace.

Survey Development and Pre-testing

Reasoning for Questions:

Question 1, “Which of the following are you aware of?”

1. Facebook
2. MySpace
3. I haven’t heard of either of the above (please return survey)

With this question, I was able to find out who has actually heard of or been exposed to Facebook or MySpace. This question had a skip because people who had never heard of either of these should not have taken my survey because they would not have given accurate answers. This is a screener question and seeks nominal data.

Question 2, “Which of the following do you currently or have previously had?”

1. Facebook
2. MySpace
3. I have both MySpace and Facebook
4. I have had neither Facebook nor MySpace

I needed to know this because there is a skip involved for those who only had one or who don’t have either. Also if they had MySpace or Facebook or both and failed to answer questions 16-18 or 19-21 then that would indicate a random or instrument error. I did leave a space for “If ‘Neither,’ please explain why you choose not to have a MySpace or Facebook account” so I could get an idea of why. This is an open-ended question.

Questions 3-9 used a 5-point scale where 1 means “Strongly Disagree” and 5 means “Strongly Agree with a 6 option for “N/A.” A Likert scale was used because I wanted to find out the degree to which they either agreed or disagreed with the statements I provided. . If the participant does have this application, these questions may help better understand why they use MySpace.

Question 3 said, “MySpace is a good place to keep in touch.” I used this question to figure out how much people thought this application was good for keeping in touch with friends.

Question 4 stated, “MySpace is a good place to listen to music.” MySpace has a music search engine and I wanted assess how good people thought it was.

Question 5 stated, “MySpace is a college-targeted website.” I used this question to find out how much people thought MySpace was for the college age group to assess whether this is why their level of involvement is high or low.

Question 6 stated, “MySpace generates a lot of child predators.” This was designed to see if the participants agree that MySpace is one of the reasons that child predators arise in our society.

Question 7 stated, “The majority of people that I know have a MySpace account.” This was designed to see if the participant knows more people with a MySpace rather than Facebook account.

Question 8 states “MySpace is a dangerous place for children.” There have been rumors of child pornography and predators and that the safety of young children is at risk, so this question was designed to gain further knowledge of whether the participants agree with this statement or disagree.

Question 9 stated, “My personal information is secure on MySpace.” This was created to question the participant has heard that MySpace is an unsafe place to put personal information.

Questions 10-15 used a 5-point scale where 1 means “Strongly Disagree” and 5 means “Strongly Agree with a 6 option for “N/A.” A Likert scale was used because I wanted to find out the degree to which they either agreed or disagreed with the statements I provided. If the participant does have this application, these questions may help better understand why they use Facebook.

Question 10 stated, “Facebook is a good place to keep in touch with friends from high school.” This question was used to see if the participants thought Facebook was a good place to keep in touch with high school friends.

Question 11 stated, “Facebook is a good place to keep in touch with friends in college.” I used this question to see if Facebook was used as a communication tool among friends. This was used as a separate question from question 10 because high school and college friends are often very different and can have different dynamics along with them. Participants may also be in closer proximity to college friends, thus Facebook may be used in different way depending on whether they are keeping in touch with high school or college friends.

Question 12 stated, “Facebook is my primary source of communication between me and my classmates.” This was designed to see if Facebook was used for instant communication between classmates and whether students felt it was immediate enough to use in between classes versus waiting until next class. This may have also been interpreted as a communication tool to talk to people who you may not have their numbers.

Question 13 stated, “I contact my teachers on Facebook” I selected this question to find out if participants agreed or disagreed that Facebook was a good communication tool between students and faculty.

Question 14 stated, “Facebook is a dangerous place for children.” This assesses the opinions towards the safety of Facebook to younger populations.

Question 15 stated, “My personal information is secure on Facebook.” This assesses opinions towards personal information being secure on Facebook and personal safety in general.

Question 16,

“Why did you choose to have a MySpace account?”

1. All of my friends have one
2. It has the best music
3. I like to keep in touch with my friends
4. I like to be online
5. Other

This question was only to be answered by people who have a MySpace account. In the directions it was stated to skip ahead if the participant didn't have an account. This question seeks to find out what initially attracted the participant to MySpace.

Question 17 stated,

“How many times do you access your account?”

1. once a day
2. several times a day
3. once a week
4. several times a week
5. once a month
6. once a semester
7. Never

In asking this question, I hoped to find out how frequently people used their accounts to better understand the amount of time the participants invested in MySpace. This was also under the MySpace only instructions and had a skip to another set of questions should the participant not have an account.

Question 18 stated,

“What aspects of MySpace do you use? *Please circle all that apply*”

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Music downloads | 7. MySpace Mobile |
| 2. Artist search | 8. My Bulletin Space |
| 3. My School | 9. MySpace Forum |
| 4. MySpace Events | 10. Classifieds |
| 5. Comedy | 11. MySpace Browse |
| 6. Blog | 12. MySpace Calendar |
| | 13. Other _____ |

I used this inventory question to further understand what aspects of MySpace were used the most by the participants. This allows for a better understanding of what is most important to this set of participants.

Question 19 stated,

“Why did you choose to have a MySpace account?”

1. All of my friends have one
2. It has the best music
3. I like to keep in touch with my friends
4. I like to be online
5. It's the socially acceptable thing to do
6. Other

This question was only to be answered by people who have a Facebook account. In the directions it was stated to skip ahead if the participant didn't have an account. This question seeks to find out what initially attracted the participant to Facebook.

Question 20 stated,

“How many times do you access your account?”

1. once a day
2. several times a day
3. once a week
4. several times a week
5. once a month
6. once a semester
7. Never

In asking this question, I hoped to find out how frequently people used their accounts to better understand the amount of time the participants invested in Facebook. This was also under the Facebook Only instructions and had a skip to another set of questions should the participant not have an account.

Question 21 stated,

“Which aspects of Facebook do you use? *Please circle all that apply.*”

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Photo Albums | 6. Wall Posts |
| 2. Poking | 7. Tag Pictures |
| 3. iLike | 8. Groups |
| 4. Events | 9. Marketplace |
| 5. Facebook Notes | |

I used this inventory question to further understand what aspects of Facebook were used the most by the participants. This allows for a better understanding of what is most important to this set of participants.

Question 22 stated, “Where do you access your account the most?” This started the Background Information section and is used to assess the general area that Facebook and MySpace are used the most.

Question 23 stated, “Do you have internet access at home?” I asked this to see if people who didn’t have either account also didn’t have internet access and maybe could have been one of the reasons that they didn’t.

Question 24 stated, “What is your gender?” This was used to see if there was any correlation between gender and each of the applications—i.e. if males picked MySpace or females were more inclined to Facebook, etc.

Question 25 stated, “How old are you?” I wanted to see if the older a person got the less they accessed their account or if age was a reason for not having a certain account.

Question 26 stated, “Are you currently taking classes at Auburn University?” The answer choices are “Yes,” “No,” and “I will be taking them in the fall” because it would be interesting to see if taking classes correlated to a decrease in the amount of times a participant accessed their account. After this question there is a follow-up statement, “If ‘Yes’, how many hours are you currently taking?” This is open-ended and allows the participant to fill in the amount of hours they are currently taking.

Pretesting Methodology:

To pretest this survey, two things occurred. The first was that the survey was turned in to Dr. Brunner so that corrections could be made to the format of the survey. She returned the survey the next day and I edited it in Word Processor.

The second thing that occurred was I printed out a copy of my edited survey and gave it to my neighbor to fill out. She took the survey and handed it back to me. Then I asked her if there was anything that she saw that was unusual, complicated, or confusing and she showed me where things should be reworded or changed. I looked back over the survey to make corrections of things that she pointed out. One pretest was handed out and one pretest was completed.

Feedback:

Dr. Brunner gave a lot of positive criticism. She suggested adding the course number to the class I mentioned in the introduction. I forgot to add the option “N/A” to my Likert scale questions (3-9) as well as putting a scale under each individual question. She also suggested adding a thank you to the end of the survey.

There was a lot of feedback from my neighbor. She pointed out that I had numbered a question wrong. The instructions that came before the MySpace Only section and the Facebook Only section did not tell the participant where to go if they didn’t have one of these. She also suggested rearranging the background information questions so that they flow a little better.

Design and Execution

The population selected is the Auburn University campus, including current students, upcoming students, and anyone else within the parameters of the Auburn University campus (college age range).

My unit of analysis is individuals on Auburn's campus.

I used a convenient sampling frame which is non-generalizable. The requirement for this project was ten people: five surveys were filled out by students in my speech class, four surveys were filled out by friends I was hanging out with one day and one survey was filled out by my sister who was visiting campus for a day.

Ideally my sample size would have been 378 because there are 23,000 students on campus. For this survey, it was ten.

I used paper surveys and handed them out personally, but if I had more resources I would have administered my survey over the internet. This would have been the best method because it is inexpensive. Also, the mini-mesters at Auburn are short so this would have been a quicker way to gather, code, and analyze data. Participants who use MySpace or Facebook or both are more likely to enjoy the internet and being online so the internet would have been a more direct way of reaching them. I also had skip patterns that would have been easier to follow on an internet survey

I asked ten people to complete my survey and ten surveys were completed. This gave me a 100% Response Rate.

Analysis and Interpretation

For this survey project, 10 surveys were administered and 10 surveys were completed. According to the sample survey calculator, for an ideal situation, with a population of 23,000 Auburn students, my confidence level is 95% and confidence interval 5, my sample size would be 378 surveys. Because I only administered 10 surveys with a populations size of 23,000, my actual confidence interval is 30.98. Therefore if one question was asked where 45% of the sample picks a certain answer, then I would know that if I had asked the same question of the entire relevant population, then between 14.12% (45-30.98) to 75.98% (45+30.98) would have picked that answer. This is not a very good statistic, but my sampling size was very small.

Coding for the questions was not difficult. In my original survey, close-ended questions with multiple option answers were number with numerals. So, for example, I coded answer “1” as 1 in SPSS. I just followed the survey. For the open-ended question 25, I gathered all of the responses for “How old are you?,” put them in order, and gave them values. For the responses I received, 1= “17”, 2= “18”, 3= “19”, 4= “20”, 5= “21”, 6= “22”, 7= “23”, and 8= “24”. This way I could give a number value in the SPSS system. I also gave values for “If ‘Yes,’ how many hours are you currently taking?” where 1= “3”, 2= “6”, 3= “9”, 4= “12”. For the inventory questions I had to code each individual answer option as 1= “Yes” and 2= “No” because there can only be one value in each data box. If someone was exempt from answering an inventory question because they didn’t have either MySpace or Facebook, I left the inventory data boxes blank.

All of the data that I collected went into the SPSS software.

Data cleaning:

I had a few errors on the first set of results. When I originally tried to input data, the system put in an 11th line and filled every box with a question mark. This caused all of the statistics to have 10 valid and 1 missing for most of the questions. For the frequency tables there was also an extra “Missing System” so it made all of the percentages wrong. I had to go back into the data view and erase the 11th line so that all of the statistics and the frequencies showed that there were only 10 responses total. After this I reprinted the statistics.

Results:

1. Which of the following are you aware of?
 1. Facebook
 2. MySpace
 3. I haven’t heard of either of the above (please return survey)

Ten people answered this question. Of the ten people who answered, 100% said they had heard of Facebook, 90% said they were aware of MySpace, and no one answered “3.” Everyone took the survey because no one had to return it for answering “3.”

2. Which of the following do you currently or have previously had?
 1. Facebook
 2. MySpace
 3. I have both MySpace and Facebook
 4. I have had neither Facebook nor MySpace

Ten people answered, and of those ten, 30% said that they only had Facebook and 70% said they had both Facebook and MySpace. This means that each of the ten people that took the survey owned a Facebook account, making this more popular than MySpace.

Questions 3-15 used a likert scale.

3. MySpace is a good place to keep in touch with friends.

Nine people answered this survey. The one person that didn't answer did not have a MySpace account, but was aware of it. I have concluded that the participant misunderstood the instructions and skipped ahead to the Facebook likert scale. This is an example of a random error. Of the nine that answered, 11.1% disagreed, 55.6% agreed, and 22.2% strongly agreed that it was a good place to keep in touch. The mean is 4.22 which leans towards "Agree."

4. MySpace is a good place to listen to music.

Nine people answered this question. Of the nine people who answered, 11.1% disagreed, 11.1% neither agreed nor disagreed, 22.2% agreed, 33.3% strongly agreed, and 22.2% chose "N/A." The mean is 4.44 which leans towards "Agree."

5. MySpace is a college-targeted website

Nine people answered this question. Of the nine people, 33.3% strongly disagreed, 11.1% disagreed, 11.1% neither agreed nor disagreed, 11.1% agreed, and 22.2% strongly agreed. The mean is 3.11 which leans towards "Neither Agree nor Disagree."

6. MySpace generates a lot of child predators

Nine people answered this question. Of the nine people who answered, 33.3% neither agreed nor disagreed, 11.1% agreed, and 44.4% strongly agreed. Only 11.1% chose "N/A" and no one disagreed. The mean is 4.33 which leans towards "Agree."

7. The majority of people that I know have a MySpace account.

Nine people answered this question. Of the nine people who answered, 11.1% strongly disagreed, 11.1% neither agreed nor disagreed, 44.4% agreed, 22.2% strongly agreed, and 11.1% chose "N/A." The mean is 4 which leans "Agree."

8. MySpace is a dangerous place for children.

Nine people answered this question. Of the nine people who answered, 11.1% disagreed, 11.1% neither agreed nor disagreed, 44.4% agreed, 22.2% strongly agreed, and 11.1% chose "N/A." The mean is 4.11 which leans toward "Agree."

9. My personal information is secure on MySpace.

Nine people answered this question. Of the nine people who answered, 11.1% strongly disagreed, 33.3% disagreed, 11.1% neither agreed nor disagreed, 22.2% agreed, and 22.2% chose "N/A." The mean is 3.33 which leans towards "Neither Agree nor Disagree."

10. Facebook is a good place to keep in touch with friends from high school.

Ten people answered this question. Of the ten people, 70% strongly agree, 20% agree, and 10% disagree. The mean is 1.5 which stands between "Strongly Agree" and "Agree."

11. Facebook is a good place to keep in touch with friends in college.

Ten people answered this question. Of the ten people, 80% strongly agree, 10% agree, and 10% disagree. The mean is 1.4 which leans towards "Strongly Agree."

12. Facebook is my primary source of communication between me and my classmates

Ten people answered this question. Of the ten people, 30% strongly agree, 30% agree, and 40% disagree. The mean is 2.5 which leans towards "Agree."

13. I contact my teachers on Facebook

Ten people answered this question. Of the ten people, 30% neither agree nor disagree, 30% disagree, 30% strongly disagree, and one participant chose "N/A." The mean is 4.2 which leans towards "Disagree."

14. Facebook is a dangerous place for children.

Ten people answered this question. Of the ten people, 10% strongly agree, 10% agree, 10% neither agree nor disagree, 30% disagree, 20% strongly disagree, and 20% chose "N/A." The mean is 4 which is "Disagree."

15. My personal information is secure on Facebook.

Ten people answered this question. Of the ten people, 20% strongly agree, 40% agree, 30% neither agree nor disagree, 10% disagree. The mean is 2.3 which leans towards "Agree."

16. Why did you choose MySpace?

- 1. All of my friends have one. [14.3%]
- 2. It has the best music [28.6%]
- 3. I like to keep in touch with my friends [85.7%] [7 answered]
- 4. I like to be online [28.6%]
- 5. Other [14.3%]

17. How many times do you access your account?

- 1. once a day [14.3%]
- 2. several times a day [42.9%]
- 3. once a week [14.3%] [7 answered]
- 4. several times a week [28.6%]
- 5. once a month [0]
- 6. once a semester [0]
- 7. Never [0]

18. What aspects of MySpace do you use? *Please circle all that apply.*

** 7 answered**

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Music downloads [50%] | 7. MySpace Mobile [14.3%] |
| 2. Artist search [42.9%] | 8. My Bulletin Space [28.6%] |
| 3. My School [28.6%] | 9. MySpace Forum [14.3%] |
| 4. MySpace Events [14.3%] | 10. Classifieds [14.3%] |
| 5. Comedy [14.3%] | 11. MySpace Browse [42.9%] |
| 6. Blog [28.6%] | 12. MySpace Calendar [14.3%] |
| | 13. Other [0%] |

19. Why did you choose to have a Facebook account?

- 1. All of my friends have one [50%]
- 2. It has the best music [10%]
- 3. I like to keep in touch with my friends [90%] [10 answered]
- 4. I like to be online [30%]
- 5. It's the socially acceptable thing to do [20%]
- 6. Other [0%]

20. How many times do you access your account?

- 1. once a day [10%]
- 2. several times a day [80%]
- 3. once a week [10%]
- 4. several times a week [10 answered]
- 5. once a month
- 6. once a semester
- 7. Never

21. Which aspects of Facebook do you use? *Please circle all that apply.*

****Ten people answered****

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Photo Albums [100%] | 6. Wall Posts [100%] |
| 2. Poking [50%] | 7. Tag Pictures [90%] |
| 3. iLike [40%] | 8. Groups [100%] |
| 4. Events [70%] | 9. Marketplace [10%] |
| 5. Facebook Notes [20%] | |

22. Where do you access your account the most?

Ten people answered this question. Of the ten people who answered; 10% access it from school, 10% access their account from work, 60% access their account from home, and 20% access their account from their laptops.

23. Do you have internet access in your home?

Ten people answered this question and 100% have internet access.

24. What is your gender?

Of the participants who took the survey, 90% were female and 10% were male.

25. How old are you?

Of the participants who took the survey, 10% were 17, 10% were 19, 20% were 20, 20% were 21, 30% were 22, and 10% were 23. I succeeded in getting my sampling frame target age.

26. Are you currently taking classes at Auburn University?

1. Yes [80%]
2. No [20%]
3. I will be taking them in the Fall [0]

Of the people who are currently taking classes at Auburn University, 12.5% are taking three hours, 25% are taking six hours, 50% are taking nine hours, and 12.5% are taking 12 hours. Two people did not answer this question because they are not taking classes right now and do not plan on taking them in the fall.

From this data I concluded many things:

1. Facebook is generally more popular than MySpace on Auburn's campus. According to data, it seems like there is a negative attitude towards MySpace in the area of safety and child predators. Also, Facebook was deemed more of a college-targeted website, which explains why more people have Facebook than MySpace.
2. Facebook and MySpace are seen on campus as good networking tools for both high school and college friends. Both places seemed to fit well with "keeping in touch" questions (87.5% for MySpace and 90% for Facebook). The only networking not perceived as a positive one is the one between faculty and students. The majority of participants did not agree with "contacting teachers" on Facebook. This may be an emerging trend that hasn't become a social norm or something that the participants are not interested in.
3. The majority of people access both accounts several times a day which shows that these websites are both important to people on campus. Of all of the participants, 80% are taking currently taking class, so these websites have a priority among their school work and other activities. A lot of people access their accounts at home, but some still get on their accounts at school.

Summary and Conclusion

Limitations:

One of the limitations that I had for this project was the sampling size. Because I could only administer 10 surveys, my confidence interval was way out of range (30.98). To get a more accurate perception of trends on Auburn's campus, I should have surveyed 378 people.

There were a lot of non-responses. I think this was a result of poorly worded instructions and confusion on the participant's part.

My survey had some instrument errors. For question 1, "please check all that apply" was left off. This made it confusing for participants and I had to explain that they could check all that apply. Although the questions were in the correct order, I had two Question "4"s. When the participant got to Question 16, the instructions right before it said "If you do not have a MySpace account, please skip to Question 20. The number was off and it should have read, "Please skip to number 19." It was important that I stand there and wait until everyone got to that point to then explain the problem. This would not have been effective had I been surveying 378 people.

Recommendations:

Looking at the data, I would recommend to MySpace that it work on creating a more positive image. The majority of the participants agreed with statements pertaining to child predators, danger and unsafe information. If MySpace could put some extra effort into creating secure lock pages and getting now technology that will allow for a safer environment, I think that it would benefit from its efforts. These are opinions of the participants, so to override them, MySpace is going to have to do a lot of customer relation type activities to create a more positive feeling.

Facebook has done a great job of reaching college kids and creating a positive and safe environment. I think that one thing it could work on is the music aspect. The 50% who said that they use "music downloads" on MySpace might be more attracted to Facebook if there was a stronger music network. Also, many of the items on Facebook that people used the most (Wall Posts, Photo Albums, Events, and Tagging) are all items that have been around for a year or so. Facebook should focus on advertising and getting more awareness out about the other items available so that more people will use them.