

Negotiating Connection without Convention:
The Management of Presence, Time, and Networked Technology in Everyday Life

Kenzie Daniel Burchell

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Media and Communications

2012

Goldsmiths, University of London

Declaration of Authorship

I, Kenzie Burchell, hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and effort and that it has not been submitted anywhere for any other award. Where other sources of information have been used, they have all been acknowledged. This thesis or parts of it cannot be copied or reproduced without permission.

Signed: Kenzie Burchell _____

Abstract

This thesis explores the social processes through which technological change and technologies themselves are negotiated in everyday life. I look to interpersonal communication as a site of such negotiation and focus on the networked practices that extend from mobile telephones, personal computers, and online social platforms. The management of everyday life and interpersonal relationships are shaped by practices of communication management that work through the use of these technologies. I extend and inflect the phenomenological approach to co-presence in interpersonal communication, also reassessing notions of time, for the context of *constant networked connection*. Drawing from divergent theoretical approaches for understanding technology, an entry point for this thesis was formulated through social interaction. A grounded qualitative approach was used to engage with individuals' experience of interpersonal communication across everyday domains and contexts of activity. A selection of 35 participants was asked to complete two in-depth interviews, thinking-aloud tasks, and a communication diary. The empirical findings are explored from three perspectives. First, individuals' relationships to communication tools as objects in an everyday environment are understood for the perceived temporal pressures and a *need for networked connection*. Second, individuals' management of those pressures is explored through their imposition of individually controlled *barriers to interaction*, through which domains of activity are managed by communication practices as *relational domains*, developing a form of *networked awareness* between individuals. Third, I examine the forms of negotiation taking place through the interdependency of individual practices, captured by *notions of authenticity* and *perceptions of technologies*, as well as a discourse about technology that is enacted through practice rather than communicated through content, what I call *meta-communication*. I conclude that the negotiated use and role of technologies in interpersonal relationships has implications for the negotiation of wider social changes to the role of technology and to everyday life itself.

Acknowledgements

Amongst the numerous people who have inspired and supported me throughout this process, I would like to specifically thank a few here. I would like to thank my participants, who let me into their lives, giving their time and energy to this project. Without their interest and participation, none of this would have been possible. Michael Hoevel and Christopher Ludwig also volunteered their time and editorial support at a crucial stage of this work.

A very sincere and heartfelt thanks goes out to Daniel Knapp and Elina Mitrofanova for patience with, interest in, and willingness to hear out every idea and every worry during this process. They were there every step of the way. The same can be said for my supervisor Professor Nick Couldry. He has been a steady guiding force throughout the development of this thesis, fostering my passion for media research along the way. His dedication and drive have become a model for my own. I would also like to thank my family, who have been steadfast in their support, belief, and wonder, helping me steer my curiosity into education and towards research.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE: THE CHANGING CONTEXTS OF COMMUNICATION	9
1.1 Introduction	9
1.2 Understanding Co-Presence	13
1.2.1 Perception, Presence, and Absence	14
1.2.2 Presence, Telepresence, and Networked Presence	16
1.3 Space	19
1.4 The Body and Self-Presentation	22
1.4.1 Embodied and Disembodied Modes of Self-Presentation	23
1.5 Absence and Presence	25
1.5.1 Fixed Location Technologies	26
1.5.2 Mobile Technologies	27
1.5.3 Mobility and Person-based Networks	29
1.6 Multiplying the Forms of Absence and Presence	31
1.6.1 The Hypermediacy of the Real	32
1.6.2 Managing and Selecting Everyday Interaction	34
1.7 Chapter Conclusion	36
CHAPTER TWO: SIMULTANEITY, TIME, AND TEMPORAL REGIMES	38
2.1 Everyday Socio-Temporal Regimes	38
2.1.1 The Domains of Clock Time	39
2.2 Towards a Networked Time	41
2.3 Individuals and Interaction amidst Figurational Change	43
2.4 The Temporalities of Networked Connection and Interaction	46
2.5 Domains Subsumed by Communication	48
2.5.1 The Cross-Colonisation of Domains	49
2.6 Acceleration	51
2.7 New Digital Divides	53
2.7.1 Income, Occupation, and Communication	56
2.7.2 Gender and Communication	57
2.8 Chapter Conclusion	59
CHAPTER THREE: REVEALING THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY	61
3.1 Phenomenological Perspectives on Technology	61
3.2 What an Object is Not	64
3.2.1 Technology as a Tool	65
3.2.2 Interlocking Everyday Contexts	67

3.3 Levels of Instrumentalisation	69
3.4 Towards a New Unit of Analysis	71
3.4.1 The Spread of Affective and Free Labour	72
3.4.2 The Domestication of Media Practices	74
3.4.3 Social Network Analysis and Diffusion of Innovation	76
3.5 The Everyday Networked Context	78
3.6 Chapter Conclusion	81
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY	83
4.1 Methodological Foundation	83
4.2 Coding and Analysis	85
4.3 Scope and Participant Selection	86
4.3.1 Minimum Requirements and Selection Limits	89
4.3.2 Recruiting Participants	91
4.3.3 Overview of the Comparative Value of the Selection	92
4.4 Fieldwork Design	93
4.4.1 Piloting and Method Development	94
4.4.2 Interview Design	94
4.4.3 Thinking-Aloud Task	96
4.4.4 Researcher-Absent Diary Task	99
4.4.5 The Secondary Interview	103
4.5 Ethical Considerations	104
4.5.1 Avoiding Ethical Pitfalls in Design	104
4.5.2 Maintaining Trust and Respecting Privacy	106
4.5.3 Ensuring Anonymity and Responsible Use of Data	107
4.6 A Researcher's Reflexivity	108
CHAPTER FIVE: THE EVERYDAY COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT	111
5.1 The Abundant Conditions for Connection	112
5.1.1 The Physicality of Connection	113
5.2 The Need for Networked Connection	116
5.2.1 The Value of Social Information	116
5.2.2 Interactions as Everyday Tasks	119
5.3 Connection As Everyday Life	121
5.3.1 Morning Reconnection and Preparing for the Day	122
5.3.2 Connection by Default	124
5.4 Interactions as Productivity	127
5.5 An Environment of Overload and Anxiety	129
5.5.1 Metaphors for Focused Interaction	131
5.5.2 Metaphors of Control and Management	132
5.6 Chapter Conclusion	137

CHAPTER SIX: TEMPORAL CONTROL AND RELATIONAL DOMAINS	139
6.1 Between Receiving Selves	143
6.2 Deflection and Temporal Control	144
6.2.1 Temporary Barriers to Synchronous Communication	144
6.2.2 Temporal Control in Asynchronous Interaction	146
6.2.3 Temporal Control and Awareness	149
6.3 Networked Absence and Re-segregating Domains	150
6.3.1 Imposing Limits to the Work Domain	151
6.3.2 Imposing Temporal Limits to the Social Domain	156
6.3.3 Multiplying Modes of Communication	158
6.4 Multiple Domains, Multiple Selves	160
6.4.1 Segregation Failure and Emotional Reactions	162
6.5 Chapter Conclusion	164
 CHAPTER SEVEN: DEVELOPING NETWORKED AWARENESS	 166
7.1 Lacking Awareness	167
7.2 Networked Awareness	169
7.3 The Interactional Dimension of Awareness	174
7.3.1 Within My Barriers and Within Yours	174
7.3.2 Traceability and Observation	176
7.3.3 Observable Interaction in the Offline World	179
7.4 The Situational Dimension of Awareness	180
7.4.1 Schedules and Changing Situations	184
7.5 The Pluralised Temporality of Networked Awareness	187
7.6 Chapter Conclusion	190
 CHAPTER EIGHT: AUTHENTICITY AND TECHNOLOGICAL ORDERING IN EVERYDAY LIFE	 192
8.1 Reified Practices as Authenticity and as Technology	193
8.2 Embodied Interaction in the Context of Connection	194
8.3 An Emerging Sense of ‘Disembodied’ Authenticity	199
8.3.2 The Interlacing of Embodied and Disembodied Interactions	204
8.4 Perceptions of Technologies	208
8.4.1 Disembodied or Disengaged?	209
8.4.2 Social Tools and Social Devices	214
8.5 Chapter Conclusion	217
 CHAPTER NINE: META-COMMUNICATION	 220
9.1 Connection Rather Than Content	221

9.2 Technological Ordering	221
9.2.1 The Intimate Hierarchy of Disembodied Interaction	225
9.3 Meta-Communication	229
9.3.1 Shifting Connection, Specific Expression	231
9.3.2 Changing Relationships, Changing Connections	233
9.3.3 Maintaining a Nuanced Relationship	236
9.4 When Meta-Communication Fails	240
9.5 Perceived Pressure and Potential Change	243
9.6 Chapter Conclusion	247
CHAPTER TEN: CONCLUSION	249
10.1 The Situation, Temporal Regimes, and Instrumentalisation	250
10.1.1 The Communication Environment	251
10.2 Individual Practices	255
10.2.1 Deflection and Personal Temporal Control	255
10.2.2 The Re-imposition of Domain Durations	256
10.2.3 Networked Awareness	258
10.3 The Interdependent Expression and Negotiation of Technology	261
10.3.1 Finding Voice in Collective Instrumentalisation	262
10.4 Limitations and Tangents	265
10.4.1 The Continued Re-Tooling of Everyday Life	268
10.5 Taking Account of Differentiation as Social Change	271
APPENDIX ONE	276
APPENDIX TWO	277
APPENDIX THREE	278
APPENDIX FOUR	280
REFERENCES	281

Chapter One: The Changing Contexts of Communication

1.1 Introduction

In an essay written over a century ago, Georg Simmel ([1903] 2002) explores everyday metropolitan life. The city was characterised then by ‘the unexpectedness of violent stimuli’,¹ the environment from within which the individual and their conduct must adjust to the ‘the tempo and multiplicity of economic, occupational and social life’ ([1903] 2002, pp. 11,12). The experience of contemporary urban life is still perceived as a similar struggle with the tempo and multiplicity surrounding us every day. The stimuli, however, have changed drastically. The introduction, rapid adoption, and wide-spread embracing of networked communication through mobile phones, computer devices, and online platforms have introduced a new dimension to urban stimuli, though they are still just as metaphorically violent and unexpected. Simmel discusses ‘the rapid telescoping of changing images, pronounced differences within what is grasped at a single glance’ of pedestrians and passengers as they travel through the city ([1903] 2002, p. 11). Today, within a single glance at a mobile phone, numerous actions and interactions from countless others can not only be observed but are also potentially interacted with. The telescoping that occurs is not only through the mobility of individual bodies, but is also an extension of their perception both spatially and, in a sense, temporally. Contemporary urban life has become intertwined with networked connections, augmenting the mental life of Simmel’s urban density with networked layering of spaces and times. If King (2000, p. 97) argues that the possibility for interaction inherent to life in the city streets offers a ‘limitless contingency’ to one’s day, then networked urban life further multiplies that potential for contingency.

As I write this, I am surrounded by objects that have come into existence in my lifetime: personal desktop computers, portable laptop computers, mobile telephones, tablet devices, wireless internet routers, and game consoles. I can sparsely recall a time when they were not present in some form, but they are all relatively new, constantly changing, and largely regarded as inextricable necessities of my everyday

¹ This passage is translated as shown in 2002 *Blackwell City Reader* or as the ‘unexpectedness of onrushing impressions’ in the 1997 Sage publication.

life and the lives of those around me. These media and communication tools are only the observable interface to a material communications infrastructure that is nearly ubiquitous and nearly invisible in a major urban centre such as London. Through these devices and infrastructure, the substance and magnitude of media tools radically extend into software and the backbone, appendages, and capillaries of online tools and platforms that is the internet. From this springs forth the games, work-place applications, communication platforms, and information sources that attract our attention, keep us in daily, if not hourly or greater, contact with one interface or another, or numerous interfaces at once.

This everyday attention to media tools makes them the visible representations of social change. Such representations obscure the nature of the changes, distracting from longer-term and less noticeable, less superficial shifts. In this manner, our understanding of the changing world around us is attached to tools, misunderstood and heralded as the catalysts of change, often thought to underpin aspects of everyday life and social interaction that have persisted much longer in society than any of their young technological manifestations. Beniger (1986, p. 2) refers to this as ‘historical myopia’ whereby the attention of the contemporary witness to major societal transformation is captured and preoccupied with dramatic events and interruptions, often with short-lived but immediately observable impacts. This distracts from the longer tectonic movements of social change in the background of such events, which themselves are always intertwined with a variety of other technological developments and entrenched in older and slower societal patterns (Starr 2004, p. 4).

It is everyday life, however, that provides a particular conjuncture of normative values and cultural paradigms to lift the totemic technological objects out of their place in history and into our attention. It is in everyday life that social change is manifest, enacted, and made banal, as we individuals continue in our decisions, routines, and day-to-day lives. What occurs at the societal level, however, is enacted through the individual’s actions and everyday practices. Change happens around the individual, through and by them, and most importantly it happens between individuals.

This thesis focuses upon the contemporary experience of interpersonal practices conducted through the multiple and overlapping forms of everyday communication

technologies. The fieldwork focuses on a specific subset of individuals in London, those who balance the pressures and expectations of both work and social life using communication technologies. They operate within a context of constant networked connection, wherein their routines, relationships, and selves are integrated and inextricable from use of numerous networked communication tools.

Beyond their routines and practices, however, this thesis delves into the experience of living with and through multiple possibilities for networked action across spaces, which facilitates new forms and new magnitudes of interaction with others as part of the make up of everyday life. Time is a significant factor by which this potential for interaction is described and felt by individuals. These two elements, the presence of individuals across spaces and the related experience of time, become tangled within the use of technologies, which play crucial roles in the management of routines and relationships at the same time as they recede into the background of everyday life. Networked communication is something that the individual must manage and negotiate as a set of everyday practices itself.

This thesis argues that within the realm of interpersonal communication there are emergent forms of negotiating and managing relationships and other aspects of everyday life that are intertwined with the experience and use of contemporary networked communication technologies. The diffusion of networked technologies and practices through the traditional domains of the workplace and home has not only interrupted the integrity of these domains but subsumed them through the subtle interweaving of social practices across everyday activities. In this manner, everyday life is being understood and experienced through the management of communication practices, where participating in interpersonal relationships is not only the site of an emerging set of communication values, but also a site where the instrumentalisation and use of technologies is collectively negotiated. These values are inherent to, understood, and negotiated within the context of networked communication practices and interpersonal relationships.

The opening three chapters deal with earlier theoretical debates with regard to presence, time, and technology. Chapter one engages with co-presence in relation to social interaction in order to extend and apply these notions within the contemporary

context of networked communication. Chapter two, then, discusses the temporal implications of that extension of co-presence, as networked technologies connect spaces temporally through simultaneous engagement, despite being physically separate. Chapter three takes stock of the different approaches to studying technology in the domains of work and the home to form a vantage point from which everyday networked practices can be explored across the diffused and often overlooked social realm. Acting as hinge between the theoretical and empirical chapters, chapter four outlines the scope and methodology of the fieldwork conducted for this thesis. This chapter examines the reasoning behind participant selection and explores the development and selection of methods used.

The empirical chapters, five through nine, tell the story of everyday networked interaction as explored through the varying dimensions that emerged from my participants' accounts. The *communication environment* is examined in chapter five, outlining the main features of individuals' everyday experience being surrounded by a range of technological objects and the related opportunities for interpersonal communication. Participants describe this environment in terms of anxiety and a perceived potential for interaction that can be overwhelming. Yet, they also describe a *need for networked connection* in order to participate in and manage their wider social world. The remainder of this thesis draws a line from these conditions, inherent to the individual's relationship to communication technologies, through to their interpersonal practices discussed in chapter six and seven, and then through to the wider spaces and discourses through which these relationships and practices are negotiated, as explored in chapter eight and nine.

In chapter six, the practice of maintaining and managing *barriers to interaction* is explored, a response to and strategy of the individual to impose a degree of temporal control over that potential for overload associated with the communication environment. These practices of communication management are described in terms of the *receiving self* and chapter seven explores awareness of other receiving selves, of their practices of maintaining barriers to interaction and of their changing communication environment throughout the day. While maintaining one's own barriers to interaction is an attempt to minimize the temporal contingency and pressure that unexpected communication can introduce to one's day, acting upon this form of

awareness, which I call *networked awareness*, often involves a degree of self-restraint that minimizes or otherwise shares the temporal pressures of communication with others so as to facilitate engagement.

Chapters eight and nine set out three elements to the individual's role in the collective negotiation of communication practices and technologies: a *sense of authenticity*, *perceptions of technologies*, and a discourse about technology that is enacted through practice rather than communicated through content, what I call *meta-communication*. Faced with the numerous, emerging, and shifting modes of communication, individuals often appeal to sense of what is authentic communication and what is not. This is juxtaposed to the perceived function of a technology, and between these two elements, which are largely inconsistent between individuals but also inconsistent in each individual's daily life, a space for the negotiation of the role for communication technology in everyday life emerges. Acting upon notions of authenticity and perceptions of technology itself also becomes a social act, where boundaries of one's social world are delineated and relationships are acknowledged or overlooked. This, again, offers a way of reducing the potential for overload within the communication environment. It also, however, involves a partial displacement of attention away from the numerous single interactions, and away from the content of any one interaction, and towards the form and patterns of connection between individuals, a reduced form of social expression and interaction. This meta-communication, as a discourse, does not occur through any one mode of communication but through the forms of connection across the available range of communication modes. In the conclusion, this emerging space and discourse is examined for its potential to negotiate not just interpersonal relationships, but through those relationships also many of the wider temporal and social conventions woven into the management and structure of everyday life.

1.2 Understanding Co-Presence

Upon the first telephone call to his assistant in 1876, the words communicated across the line by Alexander Graham Bell were: 'Watson—come here I want to see you!' (Graham 2004a, p. 155). From that first moment, telecommunication and co-ordination across time and space would be inseparable. Such statements are pregnant

with the context of constant change, where a yearning for mobility is captured within those attempts to co-ordinate but also in the notion of opposition inadvertently cast over any new practice. Through action, through communication itself, interactions that take place in the co-presence of others and those mediated by technology are defined and redefined relative to one another.

Amidst rapid development, turnover, and adoption of new communication tools there is a need for research to take a step back from the novel functions and affordances touted by marketing adverts and sometimes marvelled at by users. To gain a perspective from which to approach these changes, and from which to understand the social process of change itself, the experience of interpersonal communication must be whittled down to an elementary core so that contemporary practices can be grasped.

To do so, I turn to Erving Goffman (1963, 1969, 1971) and his early studies of interpersonal communication. Two different but complimentary approaches of Goffman will be appropriated for the engagement of contemporary everyday interpersonal communication. From his earlier work (1963, 1969), notions of the physical region and the experience of being co-present, or in the presence of another, will be borrowed to help articulate more precisely the translation of being together (in the same space) and being connected (on the same network or otherwise through technology). From his later work (1971), notions of communication itself will articulate the possible degrees of interaction, in order to differentiate being together from being engaged in interaction. This will begin to plot out the possible degrees and forms of co-presence and connection that rely on the *mutual engagement* between interacting individuals. In this manner, the underlying elements of communication will provide a foundation from which to build a contemporary understanding of everyday communication amidst technological change.

1.2.1 Perception, Presence, and Absence

Goffman (1963) provides a starting point for this research with his description of the 'full conditions of co-presence': wherever and whenever an individual can 'sense that they are close enough to be perceived in whatever they are doing, including their experiencing of other, and close enough to be perceived in this sensing of being

perceived' (1963, p. 16). While Goffman's example of co-presence implies corporeality through the proximity of perceiving bodies, his conception of co-presence is hinged upon notions of perception and an awareness of one's own visibility. Co-presence involves the constituent elements of perception and presence and his formulation allows for distinctions between perceived presence and actual presence, which may not be perceived. This implies possible degrees of presence along a spectrum of the 'full' conditions of co-presence to forms of near absence. Absence, or the lack of shared presence, then also rests upon notions of perception and visibility. The absence that matters to Goffman is a perceived absence rather than an actual absence of another individual, again suggesting that there are degrees of what I will refer to as *absence*.

The conception of the everyday communication environment has changed drastically since Goffman's time of writing. Many of his notions about interaction, however, can still be applied. Goffman suggests that the physical region is 'defined as any place that is bound to some degree by barriers to perception' (1969, p. 92). While he envisioned walls, windows, and the divisive distances between spaces, this sense of the physical region that is hemmed in by perception allows for the inclusion of those communication technologies that today extend perception both spatially and temporarily. This provides an analytical separation between the scale of the local physical region where interaction is taking place and the scale of perception that can be extended through technology beyond the local physical region. The 'real' quality of this region as it is extended through communication technologies will be addressed shortly.

Basing co-presence on perception is very different from basing co-presence simply on the body. In his exploration of the 'time-space relations of presence', Giddens unpacks Merleau-Ponty's (1974 as cited in Giddens 1984, p. 65) assumed centrality of the body: 'Here' is not merely a co-ordinate reference implied by a 'spatiality of position' but includes the 'spatiality of situation', which is concerned with the 'active body oriented towards its tasks' (Giddens 1984, p. 65). This notion of the body consistently emerges within later chapters as individuals struggle to understand the difference they experience through modes of co-presence derived from extended perception and co-presence related to the body in of face-to-face communication. The

body, however, plays another important role, by anchoring individuals within a spatial position and situation that can be described as their (physically) local context. That local context remains vital despite the extension of perception through communication tools. The role of the body involves the context and everyday activity of that body in time and space. The local physical region is associated with the body, the context of its activities, and surrounding environment, but also then with the local possibilities for perception and communication that exist within and extend from within that environment . In contrast to his delineation of the physical regions that limit perception, Goffman's (1971, p. 243) later work presents a definition of this 'situation' within which the individual finds themselves, translating notions of presence and possibilities of perception into opportunities for interpersonal communication.

Goffman's concept of the 'situation' refers to 'an environment of communication possibilities', (1971, p. 243). For Goffman, however, writing in the late 1950s through to the 1970s, the environment within which communication took place was vastly different: his conception of the situation focused on a physical region defined by proximity. Interaction within these enclosed or defined spaces constituted 'the sociological relevant entity, the situation' (Goffman 1971, p. 243). This communication environment, according to Goffman, is comprised of two aspects. The first is what he calls the 'fully shared basis of unfocused' interaction between all of those who are co-present (Goffman 1971, p. 243). This unfocused interaction is the potential for interaction based specifically on co-presence: individuals in the room are aware of each other, perceiving each other, capable of interacting, but are not directly interacting in a focused way. The second aspect is the potentially multiple 'partially shared bases of focused interaction' of those who are also co-present and are actively and mutually engaged in communication with each other. This focused interaction will be referred to consistently throughout this thesis as *engagement*. The use of contemporary communication technologies, however, involves different forms of presence as mediated by the technology itself.

1.2.2 Presence, Telepresence, and Networked Presence

The form of co-presence derived from networked communication is often referred to as 'telepresence', which is defined by Manovich as 'real-time communication with a

physically remote location' (2001, p. 171). Within this notion, however, there is a distinction between real-time or instantaneous communication and forms of communication that take substantially longer amounts of perceptible time to be available to the receiver such as traditional mail, which relies on a transport infrastructure for communication to be received in a remote location. This difference is primarily that the time of reception is also remote from the time of sending. This notion of 'real-time', though lending itself to synchronous and live communication, can be understood in a separate sense of simultaneous availability of a communication. The definitional division between 'synchronous' and 'asynchronous' communication modes (Mitchell 1999, p. 126), then, helps distinguish between the multiple forms of telepresence across different modes of communication that are real-time in one sense but not the other.

Synchronous communication involves the live aspects of real-time mutual engagement between individuals through telephony, online video calling, but also face-to-face encounters. Asynchronous engagement does not presuppose (though does not preclude) simultaneity of engagement; it involves 'instantly available' but 'indirect' communication (Nowotny 1994, p. 124). Traditional mail is asynchronous but so are the online modes of communication that are available in real-time through network infrastructure. The latter, however, are available through an indirect or latent form of interaction that, unlike live communication, can occur at different times from the initiation of the interaction. For example, a phone call must be answered when the caller is calling, whilst an email is available the moment it is sent but does not have to be read or answered at that point. Numerous contemporary modes of communication fall under this category: short message service (SMS or 'texting' or 'text message') on a mobile phone; email; social network and forum actions such as posts, comments, and messages; as well as online 'chat' and instant-messaging (IM) platforms. Due to the potentially limiting nature of the term *telepresence*, this research puts forth a more inclusive term, *networked presence*, to include instantly available synchronous and asynchronous modes of communication. In an attempt to resist over-complicating the discussion, I will not force the distinction in this thesis between different types of communication networks, which have existed historically through the separate

development of material infrastructures, unless they are experienced as such by individuals with this study.²

Throughout this thesis, I will approach the distinctions between different modes of communication as they are experienced by participants, rather than depend on technical distinctions between media. Madianou and Miller (2012, p. 125) suggest that there is a need to consolidate the academic approach to how individuals communicate around the experience of communicating, explaining that while ‘analytically there were prior distinctions between application, platform, medium and technology, they have been superseded by media convergence which conflates them’. They argue for an engagement with ‘communicative opportunities’, a notion that is in keeping with Goffman’s understanding of a communication environment defined through possibilities. *Modes of communication* will be used to refer to all possible forms of communication including face-to-face communication, whereas *communication tools* will refer to technological objects used for the purpose of communication.

Meyrowitz (1985, p. 4), who adapts Goffman in consideration of media technologies, suggests that the impact of new communication technologies is often through abstracted reconfigurations of society. Such descriptions position ‘real’ interaction in contrast to networked actions, which are then considered somehow ‘un-real’ or beyond the real, providing a springboard for exaggeration of technological impact in contrast to an apparently natural conception of human interaction. Meyrowitz argues rather that the introduction of new communication technologies involves a ‘very discernible re-arrangement of the social stages on which we play our roles and a resulting change in our sense of “appropriate behaviour”’ (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 4).

The social stage with which we are concerned here involves presence through perception and engagement, as well as the local contexts for communication as experienced by the individuals. The degrees of presence, perception, and engagement are multiplied by the multiple modes of networked presence, which are added to but do

² For a brief discussion on the historical distinction between ‘network society’ and the more recent ‘mobile network society’ please refer to Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Qiu, and Sey 2007 (p. 6)

not replace the experience of presence, perception, and engagement in physical space. Networked presence itself is not a singular category. There is not only mutual engagement that depends on networked co-presence, but there is also a form of networked presence without or prior to focused interaction (engagement), which is perceived for the possibility of engagement that it holds. This mingling of presence with degrees of absence will be explored throughout the remainder of the chapter and provides the key to understanding the experience of contemporary networked communication amidst change.

Multiplied across the range of different modes of communication and within each mode, there are potentially numerous degrees of engagement, presence, and absence. As Meyrowitz argues ‘dynamism usually rests in the kind of activity needed to adjust to the relatively stable social order’ of the communication environment such that by building from Goffman’s work, a complex relatively ‘static ground’ of the communication environment can be discerned against which the everyday choices of the individual are made (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 3).

By examining everyday communication from this adapted Goffmanian perspective, I explore the possibilities for stability and dynamism within the communication environment, but also the negotiation of these elements between individuals as itself a site of social change. As the individuals themselves must come to terms with the nuances of different forms and degrees of interactions, they must navigate the possibilities of communication that are not only multiple but also shifting and incongruent between individuals. To participate in everyday social interaction is to manage one’s relationship to this environment, to these shifting elements, as they are defined through the interdependency of one’s practice with that of others.

1.3 Space

By focusing on a re-defined notion of the Goffman’s physical region through the extension of networked perception, I am attempting to ground discussion of the impact and role of technology within the lived realities of everyday communication. Woolgar warns of a tendency to invoke and over-emphasise the ‘new’ aspect of contemporary technologies, which skews questions about the role of technology in terms of

‘definitive answers’, of ‘effects, outcomes, impacts, changes that may or may not result from development, adoption, and use of the technology’ (Woolgar 2002, p. 7). This approach often leads towards a ‘synoptic answer...of general or macro-level trends’ that cannot wholly provide the frame of reference for exploring the ‘moderate mixed situations’ that may be occurring in situated everyday reality (Woolgar 2002, p. 9).

Macro-level analyses of cultural change often involve a degree of hyperbole of impact, captured by the neologism ‘cyberbole’ (Imken 1999 as cited in Woolgar 2002, p. 9), that swings between the binary visions of technological extremes: utopian ‘transcendence’ to a better world through technology or dystopian ‘substitution’ and loss of human connection to real or natural life (Graham 1998, p. 166, Graham 2004a, p. 13). McIlvenny, Broth, and Haddington (2009, p. 1883) add that the assumption that networked communication occurs in a ‘frictionless’ online vacuum serves to skew ‘considerations of place, presence and belonging’.

There has been a great deal of discussion regarding the reconfiguration of spaces through technological advancement. Harvey discusses the ‘time-space compression’ (1990, p. 240) afforded by new forms of transport and communication. This is often adopted in its extreme form as ‘the pursuit of annihilation of space through time’ by underlying capitalist forces (Harvey 1990, p. 258). Yet, Harvey is referring to the drive of commodity circulation, which does not translate into a social context: attempts to do so would misleadingly suggest ‘real’ space is simply displaced by the ‘other’ spaces of instantaneous communication technologies.

Giddens (1991, p. 108) similarly discusses the primacy of ‘place in pre-modern settings’ that has been ‘largely destroyed by disembedding and time-space distancing’. He describes disembedding as the ‘lifting out of social relations from local contexts of interaction’, where the meaning-oriented notion of place (as opposed to a material-oriented notion of space) is no longer wholly structured around the interactions that occur within that space itself, but involves ‘relations between local and distant social forms and events’, which he describes as having been ‘stretched’ across separate spaces (Giddens 1991, p. 64). Parallels can be drawn between Giddens’ framework of ‘time-space distancing’ and the adaptation of Goffman

above: 'The complex relations between local involvements' from the work of Giddens correlates with the circumstances of co-presence and the local situation of the individual, while 'interaction across distance' includes the types of networked connection afforded through new technologies (Giddens 1991, p. 64). His notion of 'disembedding' draws an analytical division similar to the one described in the previous section, between the 'situatedness' of local context of the individual and 'extension' beyond those local contexts (Giddens 1991, p. 64). Giddens' discussion, however, does not focus primarily on the role of technologies such as transport and communication in modern capitalist society, but on other far more diffused structuring mechanisms such as trust, value, and knowledge.

Castells (2010) directly engages with the re-structuring of spaces through the role of communication technologies. He employs the definition of space as 'the material support of time-sharing social practices...brings together those practices that are simultaneous in time...traditionally, this notion was assimilated to contiguity' (2010, p. 441). He argues that communication practices that extend between spaces involve the 'gradual decoupling of contiguity and time-sharing' by a domination of the 'space of places' by the 'space of flows' (Castells 2009, p. 34). As opposed to the space of places defined by local context and proximity, the space of flows represents 'the technological and organizational possibility of practicing simultaneity without contiguity' as communication extends between remote spaces (Castells 2009, p. 34). Castells stresses, however, that this is not a replacement but a domination of place by 'the new social morphology of our society', represented by the network logic that modifies not only the structure of communication but also 'processes of production, experience, power, and culture' (2010, p. 500). The network itself for Castells is comprised of both a material communication network and the places of people and activities linked by that network.

Graham (2004a, 2004b) offers an antagonistic position against the possible interpretation of the above notions as the dissolution of the real and material into the virtual. He seeks to 'debunk the virtual myth' by asserting that network technologies are '...physically embedded and located in real spaces...They are profoundly material. They sharply condition the functionality of digitally mediated encounters...ICTs have very real geographies...' (Graham 2004a, p. 13). Castells also stresses the material

nature of the network by locating both its infrastructure and the individuals who are communicating through that network within real physical spaces, showing that the 'space of flows is not placeless' but rather a new 'geometry...in terms of function and meaning' between places (2009, p. 34). Acknowledging the materiality of networks allows the spaces and times of networked communication to be integrated in a more nuanced way within the situated places of individual experience. Doreen Massey (2005, p. 99) argues that the possibility for a heterogeneity of interaction within the conception of real spaces must be considered. Such conceptions would include the numerous forms of physical co-present and networked interaction.

1.4 The Body and Self-Presentation

While many early internet studies endowed networked communication with 'transcendent' effects of being 'virtual', which was over and somehow beyond real practices and places, they also suggested the 'substitution' of real identities with a virtual counterpart (Graham 1998, p. 166, Graham 2004a, p. 13). There is a primacy of the body embedded within such notions of the 'real' as opposed to virtual self-presentation that must be reconsidered alongside the reconsideration of presence in a more nuanced, integrated, and heterogeneous way.

Everyday interactions become suffused with emotional and moral claims of an inauthentic and potentially deceptive basis of networked interactions, built upon the notion of a virtual space detached from the real space, lives, and accountable actions of those who populate it. A sharp contrast is often assumed between co-present interaction and networked interactions. This results in an ordering of those types of communication relative to each other. Boden and Molotch present just such an ordering with a rigorous exploration of the hierarchical quality of interaction derived from the individual's 'compulsion for proximity' (1994, p. 257). This involves a priority towards the full conditions of co-presence for interpersonal interaction, limiting 'the degree and kind of organizational, temporal, and spatial reshaping that the new technologies can induce' by making these interactions complimentary or subordinate to co-present interactions: mediated interactions are only referential to proximal co-present interaction 'through recall or anticipation of co-present talk' (Boden and Molotch 2004, p. 105). This compulsion, however, rests on a number of

subjective accounts of the ‘real’ quality and co-present context of communication, such as the ‘warm joys’ of proximity or eye contact as ‘windows on the soul’, in contrast to the implied less ‘real’ quality of networked interactions for which such subjective accounts are not explored (Boden and Molotch 1994, p. 260).

Baym argues that there is a ‘deep-seated presumption’ that networked interactions and relationships are less real, citing studies that apply a clear ordering of technology mentioning, for example, telephone interaction is thought to carry ‘only a semblance of “real” relations’ (Fischer 1992 as cited in Baym 2010, p. 30). Other studies explore the contradictory position of ‘fear that actual human connection has been irretrievably lost’, in contrast to the notion ‘that communication technologies can promote human connectivity’ (Sturken and Thomas 2004 as cited in Baym 2010, p. 30). Moores (2006, n.p.) warns of this idealisation of certain spaces and their respective interactions as being ‘more authentic’ than others and that such idealisations are themselves part of the social construction and ordering of space and interactions. Similar challenges need to be made to claims of authenticity as they are related to self-presentation and the body.

1.4.1 Embodied and Disembodied Modes of Self-Presentation

Turkle (2011, p. 11) argues that there is a new perception of self-presentation within online and other electronic communication as being authentic, which provides an alternative to the notion of co-presence as the only grounded source of authentic interaction. From this perspective, Turkle argues that the ‘disembodied’ self-presentation of texts, emails, and social networking profiles can be considered more ‘real’ as an attempt by the individual to present their ‘true’ self in contrast to muddled or otherwise uncontrolled expression of the ‘embodied’ self-presentation involved in co-present interactions (2011, p. 11). Forms of networked communication are understood to bracket out the distracting expression of body, locational, and tangential contexts so that the presentation of self is communicated in a manner that is controlled for its specific interpretation by the others. From this perspective, the embodied co-present interactions would be considered too ‘real’ due to the lack of controls over expression. The authenticity of the networked interactions stems from elements of

purposeful presentation in the Goffmanian sense of a performance, rather than as originating from elements of expression related to the body.

We return to Goffman (1969) and specifically the theoretical foundation he lays out for *The Presentation of Self In Everyday Life* for the purpose of conceptualising the possible divergence in practice and in understanding self-presentation while in person and while presenting oneself through networked forms of communication. Goffman explains (though he himself disagrees with the notion) that ‘this self-as-character is usually seen as something housed within the body of its possessor’ (1969, pp. 222-223). I will refer to this as *embodied self-presentation*, in contradistinction to a notion of the extended self-presentation through networked technologies and away from the local context of the body. This latter form of self-presentation and interaction through numerous forms of networked communication will be referred to as modes of *disembodied self-presentation*, as it relies on an image of the individual’s actions on screens of communication tools and can therefore be considered at least partially disembodied.

This notion of disembodied self-presentation borrows from Goffman’s conception of a performed self, proposed as ‘some kind of image, usually creditable, which the individual...effectively attempts to induce others to hold in regard to him’ (1969, p. 223). Unlike the self-as-body, this self involves the ‘whole scene of his action’ as it ‘relates to attributes of local events’ (Goffman 1969, p. 223). Self-presentation from this perspective is based on actions ‘concerning the individual’, not derived from the immediate witnessing of the body of the individual, but still from elements which are ‘interpretable by the witness’ (Goffman 1969, p. 223). It is this detachment of image from the body that allows the conception of a performed self to be adapted, from Goffman’s notion as it was originally used in physical settings, for understanding the manner in which individuals present themselves through networked communication tools.

Chun (2006, p. 56) elaborates on the assumed role of technology in deceptive self-presentation through her description of ‘virtual passing’. This refers to the online practice of the acting out identities contrary to those observable in the co-present domains of work or home. It is a practice built upon the conflation of authenticity with

‘indexicality’ of the individual’s body and actions (Chun 2006, p. 56). This assumes that the division between the ‘real’ and the potentially not-real of the media equates to the difference between physical witnessing through proximity to the body and those forms of witnessing and interaction that are possible through networked presence. As Baym states succinctly, ‘When there’s no body attached to behaviour, the authenticity of behaviour becomes less clear’ (2010, p. 107). In this manner, an assumed primacy of the body is involved in constructing a division between the real and the virtual through the social ordering of physical interaction as more authentic than networked interaction.

If networked communication can be understood as interpretable action that creates an image of oneself, it allows for a disembodied image to be an alternative and authentic source of self-presentation. It also allows for a disengagement from the lived temporality of the body, as interactions can persist and be witnessed in an asynchronous fashion after their composition by the sender, unlike co-present interactions. The prioritisation of interactions with the body over networked interactions, then, does not provide the only plausible grounds for authentic self-presentation. In chapter eight, I explore the relationship between authenticity and communication practices in detail.

1.5 Absence and Presence

The heterogeneity of space that involves both co-present and networked encounters infuses the local contexts with networked interactions and activities that may contrast one another, extending and complicating the sense of space that through media use may no longer be wholly private, public, work-oriented, or social. In modern urban space, interaction ‘in public’ is characterised by ‘dense co-present but ever changing interactions...an experience of discontinuity, where activities become compartmentalised in a series of fleeting encounters and impressions of little duration’ (Green 2002, p. 282). Interaction ‘in private’ by contrast is characterised by ‘co-presence, continuity, and proximity’ (Green 2002, p. 282). Yet numerous empirical studies engage with the manner in which media technologies are complicating this dichotomy (Sheller 2004, Gumpert and Decker 2007, Gergen 2002). Gumpert and Decker (2007, pp. 13,14) suggest that the individual’s erection of ‘media walls’

through communication practices overlay ‘private-in-public’ interactions and ‘public-in-private’ interactions on to these spaces. This is captured neatly in McQuire’s metaphor that the media act ‘as the hinge between public and private life’ (2008, p. 132).

Gergen defines ‘absent presence’ as when ‘one is physically present but is absorbed by a technologically mediated world of elsewhere’, whereby the individual’s perception is characterised by the ‘diverted or divided consciousness invited by communication technology’ that is extended beyond a particular space or particular domain despite remaining situated within it (2002, p. 227). Though this can relate to the private use of a book, radio, or television, Gergen suggests that ‘absent presence’ has become a substantial feature of everyday life through the shift from the ‘monological’ technologies of broadcast, to the more interpersonal, interactive and, thus, ‘dialogical’ technologies of the computer, internet, telephone, or mobile phone. The latter group of technologies not only involve the possibility for social interaction that is not available through broadcast technologies, but as Gergen argues, these technologies are also often ‘fully privatised’ technologies, where the experience is often cut off from co-present others unlike the collective television viewing or radio listening (2002, p. 227). He argues that the co-presence of someone who is using a computer or mobile phone is ‘virtually eradicated by a dominating absence’ (Gergen 2002, p. 231). In this manner, ‘...every situation is increasingly experienced as lacking “full” presence’, as the attention and interaction of co-present others are trained on and extended toward the ‘fluctuating and discontinuous pressure of the generalized “elsewhere”’ (McQuire 2008, p. 25).

1.5.1 Fixed Location Technologies

An example of absent presence that attracted a lot of academic attention in the earlier days of internet studies is the ‘stationary immersive engagement’ of internet communication afforded by the desktop computer; engagement through the internet was experienced to an extent in isolation from identities, spaces, and practices related to the private domain (Ito 2005, pp. 5, 6). This is one of the many manifestations of how the home has been ‘reconfigured’ in modernity: it is argued that such a shift has involved the ‘loss of stable coordinates, and the invention of new continuities and new

processes of cultural affiliations across interlinked domains' (McQuire 2008, p. 24). The emergence of interactive and interpersonal modes of communication has been associated with the construction of relationships, identities, and worlds that were considered to be 'other' than the situated 'realities' of the co-present and 'real' domain of the home. Such studies (Gergen 2002, Turkle 1995) somewhat disregard the geographies of the 'elsewhere' by focusing on the disconnection from immediate real spaces. Without consideration of the connection between real spaces that is also occurring, observations about communication technology use are taken as evidence of an immaterial or 'virtual' place of interaction. As will be explored shortly, when networked communication is considered in contexts that are more clearly interpersonal, then the 'elsewhere' becomes not an ethereal virtual realm but the 'real' and situated locations of multiple other individuals.

Given the shifts in everyday possibilities for communication since many of the studies cited above, a reassessment of the notion of virtual and role of the body in relation to networked presence is needed. Meyrowitz (1985, p. 38) reminds researchers to engage with 'patterns of access' in everyday communication, suggesting quite early on that there is a 'continuum rather than a dichotomy' between physical and mediated contexts. He argues that the 'social situation' should be engaged through the 'patterns of information flow' that can occur within or across spaces as the physical situation is extended, not replaced, by technologically mediated interactions (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 37). For this reason, Moores argues that rather than annihilation or usurping of real space by communication technologies, space is 'doubled' or 'pluralized' (Moores 2004, p. 23) through networked communications, a perspective that is adopted by this research. The contemporary communication environment, however, moves beyond the simple doubling of space: multiple modes of communication provide the possibility for simultaneous connection between numerous individuals as they move throughout their day, rather than just binary relations between the fixed spaces of stationary devices in the home or at work.

1.5.2 Mobile Technologies

In contrast to the 'stationary immersive engagement' of internet communication afforded by the desktop computer, mobile practices have formed what was originally

an 'alternative constellation' of networked communication that is not experienced in isolation from everyday identities, spaces, and practices (Ito 2005, pp. 5, 6). Ito argues that the integration of mobile communication with everyday communication practices involves a degree of 'tension and integration' within the local contexts of the body as the individual simultaneously manages co-present and networked encounters (Ito 2005, pp. 5, 6). This involves a shift away from conceptions of absent presence that involves a separation of the local 'real' world from media interactions, like the physical isolation of an immersed computer user discussed above. In contrast, aspects of mobile communication assert the individual's 'real' location and identity as an aspect of and partially constituted by networked interactions and networked presence. In this context, mobile practices are being reframed as 'continuous with and embedded in' (Miller and Slater 2000, p. 5) social spaces, and the recent changes to mobile phones expand those practices to include internet use. This shift calls for research to challenge the blanket application of offline or online, real or virtual categories (Wellman 1999 as cited in Ito 2005, p. 6).

Before the popularisation of the internet, Meyrowitz argued that despite an initial period of being confounded by the role and impact of early electronic communication, 'more and more, the form of mediated communication has come to resemble the form of live face-to-face interaction' (1985, p. 6). Two decades later, Ito made similar observations about mobile technologies: many phrases once reserved for face-to-face interaction are being applied metaphorically to mobile communication to include implications of being in the same room, present, or side-by-side. She argued that mobile interactions are considered by individuals as demanding a similar level or a potentially similar form of attention once associated only with corporeal proximity. Her re-description of the interactions possible through mobile technologies evokes their 'ambient and peripheral' character that replaces the online/offline divide with 'a seeping membrane between the real and virtual' (Ito 2005, p. 11).

More recent studies investigate the relationship between co-present and mediated interaction and report on communication practices that are integrated within the local physical environment in a substantially different way than that seen in the earlier studies above. Urry suggests that 'unmediated body to body talk is dwindling in modern society', though he is not arguing that face-to-face interaction is dwindling but

that co-present interaction is mediated by the physical presence and proximity of individuals to numerous communication devices while they interact (Urry 2007, p. 177). In many urban cities, it is not uncommon for individuals to carry their mobile phones on their person, while many home and work settings in the industrialised world include computers and other online devices, such that co-presence is often interspersed with numerous possibilities for networked interaction.

The physical set-up of mobile phone and laptop users within their local contexts shows patterns of place-making wherein both co-present interaction and networked interaction mingle: co-presence is integrated with moments of partial detachment that neither wholly overturn nor wholly align with Gergen's formulation of absent presence (Ito, Okabe, and Anderson 2007, Draft n.p.; Hampton and Gupta 2008, p. 841). In contrast to, but again not in complete contradiction of Boden and Molotch's prioritisation of co-present encounters, mobile technologies and practices have been shown to be integrated seamlessly into the management of face-to-face group dynamics (Ling 2008a, p. 167, Weilenmann and Larsson 2001, p. 107). In this manner, the networked connection between spaces provides the possibility for other spaces to 'interrupt and recontextualize' the local context of co-present interaction (McQuire 2008, p. 25). The possibilities of collective viewing or sharing, sending, anticipation of, and participation in mobile and internet communication with co-present others extends this process.

1.5.3 Mobility and Person-based Networks

The introduction and rapid adoption of the mobile telephone, followed by the internet-ready mobile telephone, involved a shift in online and telecommunication practices away from the 'fixed-location' networking of the landline telephone and desktop computer to 'person-based networking' (Ito, Okabe, and Anderson 2007, n.p.) through the mobile phone, which is experienced for its 'personal addressability' (Ling and Donner 2009, p. 137). Networked connection no longer requires a fixed location, for the technology itself is often carried by the individual. This calls for a re-examination of the role of 'proximity, distance, presence, and mobility' in everyday life (Green 2002, p. 282). Mobile networked communication does not necessarily involve the 'absent presence' as conceived by Gergen (2002) for earlier notions of the online or

virtual networked communication. Mobile communication does not imply connection to virtual space that is outside of locations and contexts of those individuals connecting with each other. To be mobile, physically, is to ‘denote an individual body’s movement in fundamentally geographical space, and between locations (which includes the spaces “in between” while moving)’ (Green 2002, p. 282). Mobile communication, however, also involves movements of one’s networked presence, which connects to different spaces and locations but also connects to other individuals in whatever position and trajectory they take.

Urry (2007, p. 12) points out that new social activities and routines are ‘engendering spaces that are “in-between” home, work and social life’. From the book to the mobile phone, media technologies enable new activities related to the ‘interspaces’ of movement (Urry 2007, p. 11). One such practice, ‘micro-coordination’, describes communication made for the purpose of accommodating and improvising schedules and activities between people who are not physically co-present (Ling 2004 as cited in Varnelis and Friedberg 2008, n.p., Ito 2005, p. 14, Bull 2007, p. 79). This involves the mediation of everyday mobility, allowing daily schedules to become a series of ‘flexible, but highly coordinated, encounters’ (Graham 2004b, p. 267) across geographical space, where ‘meeting places have become indeterminate; fluid territories rather than precise spots’ (Carey 2004, p. 136).

For an earlier era, Raymond Williams discussed the emergence of mobile private social units as families travel in cars and the ‘unprecedented mobility of such restricted privacies’ involving ‘the pursuit of self-determined private purposes’ (Williams 1974 as cited in Green 2002, p. 283). Unlike the car, the mobile phone provides for the pursuit of ‘self-determined’ but also interpersonal communication practices. In this manner, the in-between spaces are ‘less characterized by “isolation” but by connectivity, of private worlds and distant talk’ (Urry 2007, p. 176). Mobile networked communication involves the ‘merging and overlapping’ of spaces and domains of activity, engendering ‘simultaneity rather than linearity’ as individuals cross these domains but can also connect simultaneously between them (Urry 2007, p. 176).

These practices do not just signal new spaces of mobility as they occur in between the traditional locations and spaces of work and home life, but they also signal the possibility for a new relationship to those domains and a new way of being a part of everyday life. Beyond connection between individuals, interpersonal communication emerges as a new way of managing movement, of relating to spaces and relating those spaces to each other.

To manage one's place within a space, then, also entails managing interaction with individuals within and across spaces. This form of person-based networked interaction signals an emergence of individualised action and practice as a potential rupture to the integrity and consistency of spaces and domains, whether work and social or public and private, that have long defined everyday life. Following Norbert Elias' (1998, p. 71) formulation of 'the society of individuals', such 'advances of individualisation' can be understood as an aspect and consequence of the 'specific restructuring of human relations'.

1.6 Multiplying the Forms of Absence and Presence

Gergen built his analysis of 'absent presence' (2002) upon the perspective of those who are co-present, prioritising the corporeal basis of experiencing interaction. For the individual who is not engaged with those others in their physical vicinity because they are using their mobile phone or engaged through a computer, the situation seems much different. Through communication tools, they are enjoying the networked presence of those who are physically absent. I suggest that the notion of 'absent presence' can be extended by eliminating this bias or priority of the body and, thus, to include networked presence of those who are physically absent.

Numerous studies examine different degrees and manifestations of what I refer to as *networked presence* in everyday life. These all involve a potential lack of engagement with those who are co-present but also a continued networked engagement with those who are physically absent. 'Mediated Tethering' (Ito 2005, p. 7) and 'Telecocooning' (Ito 2005, p. 7, Moores 2005, p. 53, Bull 2007, p. 77, Varnelis and Friedberg 2008, n.p.) are practices that involve the secession of the individual's attention from their physical location through the creation of a personalised mediated environment. The

difference between these two practices is largely the degree and consistency of secession. The constant networked connection with another throughout nearly all hours of the day, which results in the substantial detraction from co-present interaction, is associated with the ‘telecocoon’. This is compared to the less constant ‘tethering’ that occurs between a small network of friends or potential groups of intense interaction, such as class or work groups but without a drastic impact on co-present interaction (Ito 2005, p. 7).

For the more subtle as well as more extreme manifestations, Licoppe uses the term ‘connected presence’ to refer to when ‘the (physically) absent party renders himself or herself present by multiplying mediated communication gestures up to the point where co-present interactions and mediated communication seem woven in a seamless web’ (2004, p. 135). Importantly, connected presence does not only involve constant networked connection, but points more specifically to the combination of co-present and mobile communication such that offline and online presence blends as a form of relationship. I prefer the proposed term *networked presence* to allow for the inclusion of not only the multiple gestures through a communication tool throughout the day that were important for Licoppe, but also the use of multiple modes of communication that rely on connection to mobile and online networks.

The multiple modes of communication involved in contemporary networked presence imply that an individual may be present and engaged with others in one mode of communication but not another despite being connected. Conceptually, this suggests that ‘absent presence’ could also have another networked equivalent, that of *networked absence*. Thus, the contemporary communication environment allows for engagement with individuals who are co-present, or a lack of engagement with them despite physical presence, Gergen’s original formulation. Individuals can also enjoy the networked formulation of the same thing, a ‘networked absence’ that is characterised by a form of networked connection without actual engagement.

1.6.1 The Hypermediacy of the Real

When we can conceive of networked presence as the product of the numerous possibilities for communication extending between the situated local contexts of

individuals, an understanding of the ‘real’ is necessary that does not rely on the counterweight of a virtual ‘unreal’. Grusin has sought a reformulation of the ‘real’ as experienced through media technologies, an update to the conceptions of the ‘immediacy’ and ‘hypermediacy’ of media experiences formulated over a decade earlier (Bolter and Grusin 1999, pp. 6, 33-34). His reformulation offers a useful parallel to the pluralising of setting, space, and time through media technologies taken up by this research (Moore 2005, p. 61). In an online conversation with Jenkins, Grusin (2011, n.p.) compares his earlier conception of immediacy where ‘real was defined in opposition to the multiplicity of mediation’ to a contemporary everyday experience where ‘hypermediation is the mark of the real’, evoking a sense of instantaneously pluralised networked time or ‘real-time not in terms of the erasure of mediation but in terms of its multiplication’. Unlike other accounts of real-time that focus on notions of instantaneous networks that conquer the spaces of everyday life explored earlier, Grusin’s notion lends itself to the individual’s perception of ‘the real’ through the extended perception to multiple or pluralised settings accessed through multiple modes of communication.

There is also another level of mediation occurring beyond the hypermediacy of everyday interactions between individuals, in the individual’s engagement with numerous forms of data-driven, aggregated, and administrative media platforms. These do not offer direct interaction with others, but interaction with the algorithmic and derivative mediation of individual practices en masse. This is the realm of search-engine results, data-mined content suggestions, and targeted advertising, which are the new virtual of the online world. Craig Calhoun (1998, p. 379) understands such relationships to be among the numerous ‘indirect relationships’ established, maintained, and proliferated through new technologies. These are forms of relationships that ‘could not be transformed into the directly interpersonal’ (Calhoun 1998, p. 380). The individuals involved are not particular, but rather aggregate and mediated by contemporary systems of data mining and re-organisation. These indirect relationships represent a new engagement with media tools whereby the mediation provided by the technology is purposeful and an end in itself, rather than a tool for the end goal of interaction with other people. This is outside of the limits that I have set for the thesis, because my interest is *interpersonal* interaction that is understood and experienced in everyday life as such, as interaction between people. The role of these

data-driven indirect relationships has yet to emerge as a substantially reflected upon part of the individual social experience and communication practice. Though this may be changing, from the perspective of the everyday life of participants in this research, these are very specific tools that are either occurring in the background of online technology and the commercial market or are not thought of as actively interpersonal, such as search-engine results, automatic bookseller recommendations, and numerous other market personalisation features. This thesis, in contrast, is firmly grounded in the social realm of interpersonal communication.

1.6.2 Managing and Selecting Everyday Interaction

The common thread that connects these numerous manifestations of networked presence in earlier studies of mobile communication and immersive online practices of the stationary computer is the role of interacting individuals in re-articulating space and presence through networked possibilities. These practices display what Ito refers to as ‘selective sociality’ (Ito 2005, p. 7). Individuals are attempting to manage when and how they interact with others and the physical proximity of these others does not necessarily mitigate the desire to connect. The implications of this, however, reach beyond the form of maintaining and developing existing social relations and relate to a wider re-articulating of the scope and form of social life taking place through communication practice.

The management of engagement by individuals, however, occurs from both directions, as they not only seek connection with those who are physically absent but also limit such connection. This is clear through the lack of engagement with co-present others described in the previous section but is also implied by one of the conventional differences between mobile and traditional landline phones: a lack of public directories for mobile numbers (Licoppe and Heuritin 2001 as cited in Licoppe 2004, p. 146; Gladarev and Lonkila 2008, p. 278). Mobile phones, always at hand as a portable personal object, are most often accessed through private numbers, the exchange of which Licoppe suggests is a form of ‘gifting’ of access that is also inherent to selective sociality (2004, p. 146). While limiting access in this way is obvious with mobile phones, this selectivity of everyday interactions applies to the multiple modes of networked connection.

Gergen distinguishes between different modes of communication as those that are ‘exogenous’, originating from outside the community, and ‘endogenous’, originating from within the community. He contrasts endogenous face-to-face communication with the exogenous reach of online forms of interaction (Gergen 2002, p. 237). He cites the mobile phone as ‘an instrument par excellence for endogenous communication’ whereby potentially constant availability ‘invites careful selection of those who will be granted access to one’s number...limited to those who are otherwise “close”’ (Gergen 2002, p. 237). Although he suggests other selective uses of communication technologies as well. The mobile phone ‘actively excludes’ co-present others from participation in the conversation when used in public. In this manner, he argues that ‘communication time is increasingly spent in the presence of “those who matter”’ to the individual (Gergen 2002, p. 238).

These same mobile practices that connect people also act as the ‘brakes’ on the ‘tendency toward self-fragmentation and diffusion’ if one was to connect with just anyone (Gergen 2002, p. 238). They allow for constant connection with friends and family despite activities of everyday life that involve physical distance from those individuals. Gergen, writing before the production and popularisation of internet-ready mobile phones, foreshadows the convergence of the (typically endogenous communication within one’s closer circle of family and friends) mobile telephone together in one mobile device with the (typically exogenous communication beyond one’s community) online communication. In this manner, the mobile phone becomes a device that incorporates both the desire to maintain close ties but also the desire to extend outwards from one’s geographically defined domains and communities for exploration and development of numerous weak ties (Gergen 2002, p. 240).

Of course, however, these brakes on superfluous interaction with unknown others are not simply the product of technology. Both Goffman (1963) and Simmel ([1903] 2002) write about the multiple and fleeting contact with unknown co-present others as one makes their way through everyday life. In closed quarters, rather than the city streets, Goffman describes the form of ‘civil inattention’ (1963, p. 83) that echoes Simmel’s ([1903] 1997, p. 180) earlier formulation of ‘dissociation’ as a common

strategy of everyday urban life, an earlier form of 'absent presence' (Gergen 2002, p. 227) to avoid interaction with the countless unknown others.

The practices emerging from mobile communication, then, introduce new dimensions and hierarchies of social interaction through selective sociality within networked communication. This encourages a re-assessment of the qualities and experience of interpersonal communication and presence in everyday life.

1.7 Chapter Conclusion

The individuals studied by Goffman attended to both focused and unfocused interaction when attending to a crowded room, but contemporary networked communication extends their perception far beyond that room and its crowd. Today's individuals face a similar need to attend to and manage interaction but across a much wider array of focused and unfocused interactions, across a wider array of presence and absence extending from their local situations and the numerous networked modes of communication.

This brings us to our first of three research questions, the remaining two of which will be presented after the corresponding discussions in chapters two and three.

RQ ONE: In the contemporary multi-modal context of networked communication, how are presence and absence experienced and understood across the different forms of everyday interpersonal interaction?

Everyday interpersonal communication can be understood as an attempt to manage the possibilities for social interaction across space. Yet, it remains to be understood to what extent those relational practices are individual choices and to what extent they are manifestations of social relations. Elias argues that 'however certain it may be that each person is a complete entity in himself...it is no less certain that the whole structure of his self control...is a product of interweaving formed in a continuous interplay of relationship to other people' (1998, p. 73). He conceives of social change as a manifestation of the interdependency of individual actions. With this in mind, the contemporary reconfiguration of everyday relations into person-to-person networks

suggests that the forms of interpersonal communication may not just be a site of social interaction but possibly also a site of social change.

As the numerous forms of networked presence and networked absence intrude upon everyday spaces, the individual has the possibility to reorient themselves to not only the local contexts but also the networked contexts of interaction with others. As forms of networked communication are themselves also multiple, the individual can also order those modes of communication in relation to each other. The question for the individual in their communication environment is no longer one of the 'real' or 'virtual', but the 'real' and the 'possible' as they attempt to manage the extended relational possibilities of not just everyday engagement but the wider structures of everyday life. The following chapter will explore the changing temporal structures of everyday life that have emerged alongside networked technologies. This will be followed by a discussion in chapter three related to the role and functions of technologies, as they are mutually constituted by social contexts and the interdependency of communication practices.

Chapter Two: Simultaneity, Time, and Temporal Regimes

The experience of interaction within and across spaces has been radically altered by the extension to perception and interaction through communication tools, but this is not the only dimension within which the individual is located. There is also the *simultaneity* involved in connecting multiple spaces through media tools given the impossibility of being physically located in more than one space at one time. Communication practices, however, cannot be reduced to their temporal dimensions either, for both time and space are woven into the contexts of a metaphorical social distance and closeness, which engenders a sense of ‘social accessibility’ in everyday life (Zerubavel 1981, p. 143).

The integrity of a discrete space as either public or private, work or home, is challenged by the possibilities of media technologies, as are the discrete times of such domains. Discrete spaces and times have a quality that is always a combination of more-or-less public and more-or-less private (Zerubavel 1981, p. 143). In this manner, times and spaces that are managed between individuals are manifest through metaphorical distances that capture degrees of intimacy and types of role as a quality of accessibility to the individual that is itself spatial, temporal, and relational (to be understood as through communication). This is more complicated than the categorisation of certain hours or certain locations for work and personal life; in the context of everyday networked communication, social accessibility emerges as the dimension most important to the collective co-ordination of everyday life.

2.1 Everyday Socio-Temporal Regimes

In pre-modern society, the pace and co-ordination of life related to a very different experience of time. The most traditional sense of time relates to natural and biological rhythms, both of the external environment and of the individual, where timeframes exist at the scale of everyday life and of a lifespan. Urry (2009, p. 184) argues that this relates to a ‘kairological time’ which is an ordering of when particular natural events, social traditions, or life phases should take place derived from past experience. Medieval life was organised around these ‘islands of time within seas of timelessness’,

as events occurred throughout the rhythm of seasonal events and observances (Lash and Urry 1994, p. 227). Such notions of time are not experienced by the individual in isolation, but are rather entwined within the shared observation and interdependency of everyday temporalities between numerous individuals.

Lewis Mumford (1934 as cited in Turkle 2007, p. 310; as cited in Urry 2009, p. 185) argued that the invention of the clock by monks in the Middle Ages was part of a transformation of the subjective experience of time, as it relates to wider regimes of co-ordinating activity between individuals in everyday life. The technologies of networked communication are today potentially involved in a similar transformation of the everyday temporal experience, one that is inextricably related to changes in communication practices.

2.1.1 The Domains of Clock Time

Clock-based units provided for 'the breaking down of time into a larger number of smaller units' such that activities, whether social or work related could be re-organised as durations of minutes and hours rather than simply the duration of activity (Lash and Urry 1994, p. 229). At later points in history, 'clock time' became intertwined with new production processes and forms of work-place organisation where the relationship between clock time and money was fostered (Green 2002, p. 149). Thompson (1967, p. 60) argues this was a fundamental shift in the structure of social relations in industrial capitalist societies, away from an orientation to task in everyday activities and towards an orientation to duration organised by the clock.

It can be argued that clock time in effect colonises both the work and social domains by establishing 'exchange relations between time and money' (Nowotny 1994, p. 105). Such relations have established two predominant domains of the public and the private upon which other distinctions between domains often depend. Everyday life has 'become the bracket combining work and so called free time', which can be understood respectively as the 'public use of time that is spent with – paid – work' and the 'private "spending" of time...mainly unpaid use' (Nowotny 1994, p. 104).

Akin to the sacred and the profane, ‘highly different ideas and meanings are subsumed under the concepts of working time and free time’; yet, in the cultural context from which they arise, one set of ideas can only be understood in relation to the other (Nowotny 1994, p. 19). Zerubavel argues that private time and public time ‘are only hypothetical constructs, and neither of them exists in pure form in actuality’ but are rather the ‘ideal-typical polarities of a hypothetical continuum’ (Zerubavel 1981, p. 143). Any moment of an individual’s day in some way relates to their private and public use of time as imbued with the contrasting but mutual constitutive values and ideals inherent to each domain. The manner in which they are related, the structure and dynamic between these times of everyday life are derived from ‘sociotemporal patterns’ which involve the ‘sequential structure [and] duration of situations and events’ in everyday life (Zerubavel 1981, p. 1).

The clock time of work also defines to an extent the free-time of the private and social domains in what Lash and Urry refer to as ‘the increasing timetabling and hence mathematization of social life’ (1994, p. 229). It is through the relationship between work-time and free-time that the quantifiable units of the day become mathematical, such as ‘use of time as an independent resource that can be saved and consumed, deployed and exhausted’ (Urry 2009, p. 185). Yet, clock time is experienced beyond the sense of the individual’s management of their day. Clock time presents itself as the ‘centralising and universalising march of time’ perceived to be beyond the control or choices of any individual (Lash and Urry 1994, p. 229). In this manner, the temporality evoked by clock time involves a degree of temporal control thought to be external to individuals as individuals pay attention to, orient themselves towards, and perceive themselves to be subject to clock time (Lash and Urry 1994, p. 229, Green 2002, p. 149).

The contemporary experience of simultaneity through networked connection similarly has a long history. ‘The emergence of simultaneity...had been prepared in longer-term processes’ in the expansions of government control, bureaucracies, and market economies where timeliness of action across spaces is a dimension of co-ordination and control (Nowotny 1994, p. 23). The focus within my PhD, however, is not the power of institutional actors but the experience of everyday individuals whose actions

through new communication tools are extended through space and, as this chapter will argue, time.

Nearly thirty years ago, Zerubavel was writing about the 'fixed' and 'regular' basis of everyday life as it was characterised by a degree of temporal 'rigidity' (1981, p. 6). These are the very characteristics that contemporary temporal and spatial orders have lost in the context of networked connection. What can, however, be borrowed from Zerubavel is the argument that the temporalities and temporal systems that govern life are 'entirely conventional' (Zerubavel 1981, p. 11). He argues that the acceptance of these temporal systems as socially constructed conventions can be derived from 'the artificial basis for those time units' in everyday life, and thus, the 'rhythmicity' constructed between those time units 'is obviously artificial as well' (Zerubavel 1981, p. 11). While his work explores the rhythmicity of schedules, calendars, and clocks, we need to engage with the forms of everyday rhythmicity associated with networked technologies.

Accepting this argument allows for a sociological investigation into how those temporal conventions and systems relate to 'the way time is perceived and handled by collectives' of individuals (Zerubavel 1981, p. xii). The clock emerges as a tool for thinking of everyday life in discrete and consistent units of time, an experience that becomes so integral to everyday life that it has been adopted and shared by numerous individuals and represents a major facet of social relations. Today the socio-temporal regime associated with clock time is being displaced through new forms of everyday interaction that are shifting the way individuals manage and conceive of time in their everyday life. Networked technologies for everyday interpersonal communication are tools for thinking about time and space in a new way. As communication tools that involve mutual engagement, their use is inherently between individuals. The experience of a new sense of time associated with networked technologies is already mutual and shared to some degree.

2.2 Towards a Networked Time

Synoptic and hyperbolic claims about time, similar to those made about space that were explored in chapter one, have accompanied the growing use of mobile and

networked technologies. Nowotny argues that the promises and fears of a new age are akin to a 'creation myth' for the digital era (1994, p. 101). From the proliferation of clock time through to new temporalities involved in networked communication and presence, 'society is assimilating its technologies again, they are becoming a habit, a habitualized way of life... then blends with the biological and social rhythms' (Nowotny 1994, p. 40).

Hassan, among others, argues that 'network time' is shifting perceptions and relationships with the clock, though 'it doesn't negate or cancel it' (2007, p. 51). Just as clock time lifted social relations out of natural and social rhythms related to the parts of the day and year, networked communication involves 'technological and organizational changes that break down distinctions of night and day, working week and weekend, home and world, leisure and work' (Urry 2009, p. 192). Urry relates this directly to shifts in communication practices involving 'instantaneous' transmission and 'simultaneous' access through networked communication technologies. This temporality of networked communication, whether 'instantaneous time' (Urry 2009, p. 192), 'timeless time' (Castells 2009, p. 50), or 'network time' (Hassan 2007, p. 51), emerges from the multitude of asynchronous interactions between individuals through networked technologies.

Giddens argued that social relations are being lifted out of the times, as well as spaces, of local context, though he sees this as a longer process of 'emptying out' of local meaning from activities that began with the clock. This process involves a partial detachment of social activities from their "embedding" in particularities of contexts of presence' (Giddens 1991, p. 20). He discusses clock time and later temporalities of modernity as a 'standardised' but also 'empty' dimension of time (Giddens 1991, p. 17). Castells proceeds further, suggesting a temporality that is not just emptied of locally produced meanings, but involves a dissolution of time itself in a much more hyperbolic sense of 'timeless time' (2009, p. 50).

Castells uses 'timeless time' as a characteristic of the 'network logic' linking the essential characteristics of this temporality to an extreme sense of the present (2009, p. 50). This involves a 'cancellation of sequences, thus of time' through either an extreme compression or the absolute blurring of practice 'in a random order' (Castells

2009, pp. 35, 50). When these claims are appended directly to specific social situations, however, their hyperbole is suspect. When Castells states that ‘timeless time... is the time of the powerful, of those who saturate their time to the limit because their activity is so valuable’ (Castells 2009, pp. 35, 50), one cannot help but hear echoes of the futurist manifestos that heralded the beginning of a new era, of the ‘morality of speed’ whereby human energy offers absolute mastery over time and space, but also over society (Marinetti 1916, p. 57). In a similar tone, Hassan argues that ‘through the temporal worlds constructed by information technologies we stand on the brink of new engagement with time’ (2007, p. 46).

These hyperbolic claims are part of a wider narrative of social change, but do not necessarily represent the reality of change in everyday life. To engage with the shifting sense of time in everyday life, we need terms such as clock time and networked time to help navigate and explore experience, but we must temper universalising claims through focus on empirical investigation. Nowotny offers a sobering reminder that ‘technologies alone can never manufacture time, any more than clocks’, it is interactions between people, ‘from which mechanisms of coordination arise, functionally instrumental, but which are also used as symbolic means of orientation’ (Nowotny 1994, p. 40). Socio-temporal regimes manifest only through the collected, repeating, reflected upon, and interdependent routines of individual practice.

2.3 Individuals and Interaction amidst Figurational Change

The emergence of networked time, like any socio-temporal regime, can be understood as potentially part of a wider ‘figurational change’ that ‘when surveyed over an extended time space’ moves in one direction despite the ‘to and fro of contrary movements’ through the interdependency of social processes of differentiation and integration (Elias 2000, p. 452). To assume what form that wider figurational change would take in advance, would be to take the synoptic vantage point that I find problematic and misleading within contemporary media discourse. I will, however, explore everyday practices as offering traces of an as yet unknowable wider figurational change.

The processes of differentiation and integration of social practices are manifest in the shifting nature of everyday communication practices. From Elias, I also borrow the conception society based on a 'kind of interweaving, of mutual dependence between people' (Elias 2000, p. 367) that is inherent to the social and relevant to the mutuality involved in interpersonal communication practices. There is a clear lack of convention in everyday communication practices between individuals and a flexibility in the individual temporal management of everyday life. Despite this differentiation, individual control of those practices does not jeopardise the constant possibility for mutual engagement that is deemed necessary for participation in everyday life. This relates to a uniform and integrating need for networked connection held by individuals, which will be addressed in chapter five.

Nowotny argues that such forms of background rigidity not only have an integrating effect but are also themselves 'negotiated collectively' such that even flexibility and differentiation in the individual's daily management of time 'bears within it the stamp of social time' (Nowotny 1994, p. 100). While this chapter will continue to explore temporal aspects of communication practice, chapters eight and nine will explore what forms such negotiation of social change takes between individuals in the everyday site of social interaction.

Temporal regularity in everyday life is often obscured by the constantly shifting and differentiating forms of contemporary communication practice. It is nevertheless similar to the social integration through 'rigidification' of practices suggested by Zerubavel for an earlier research context (1981, pp. 1, 2). Nowotny argued that increased flexibility is always relative: the dissolution of those rigid norms 'requires, with increasing complexity, new mechanisms in order to hold the seemingly loosening temporal connections together' (Nowotny 1994, p. 98). In the context of networked communication, the increased individual choice of how and when to communicate still relies on an underlying temporal rigidity. The uniform expectation of participation in networked practices is both 'the prerequisite and consequence' of those emerging practices (Nowotny 1994, p. 98).

Investigation needs to focus on the connection between individuals and how that connection is negotiated to some degree by those involved. In Elias' description of

wider figurational changes, he points to the specific management or regulation of action by each individual:

As more and more people must attune their conduct to that of others, the web of actions must be organized more and more strictly and accurately, if each individual action is to fulfil its social function. Individuals are compelled to regulate their conduct in an increasingly differentiated, more even and more stable manner. (Elias 2000, p. 367)

The interdependency of individual action is dependent on a degree of individual self-control, a management of their own actions in relation to others, so that interpersonal conduct is sustainable despite the possibility for incongruent and divergent conduct between individuals. In the context of constantly changing technologies and the personalisation of schedules as well as communication practices, the need to regulate one's own actions is necessary for continued participation in social life.

These patterns regulating one's conduct are often not understood as social convention, but as something else, something outside of the realm of individual action and choice. Georg Lukács calls this phenomenon 'reification' (as cited in Zerubavel 1981, p. 42), which was taken up by Zerubavel as 'the apprehension of the products of human activity as if they were something else than human products' (1981, p. 43). In his study of everyday routines and calendars, Zerubavel explains that 'given our tendency to reify the social world, it is not surprising that most of us are totally unaware of the conventional basis of our schedules' (Zerubavel 1981, p. 42). A similar statement can be made about our communication habits.

Elias would have perceived a similar process occurring through the interdependency of action as the 'external constraints' that occur between individuals are replaced by 'internalised' and 'more or less habitual and automatic' emotional and value-based regimes of self-control or self-regulation (Elias 2000, p. 383). Heidegger (1977) argues that such processes can be led astray through the incorporation of modern technology. He issues a stern warning of an 'extreme danger' when one becomes 'ordered' by the presence of technology as a context for action in everyday life, thereby losing sight of individual choice and reflection upon such actions (Heidegger 1977, pp. 32, 17). For our purposes, this represents a reification of conduct as specific

manifestations of technological action. I will return to this theme in greater detail in the following chapter.

2.4 The Temporalities of Networked Connection and Interaction

In the previous chapter, synchronous and asynchronous modes of communication were explored as different forms of networked presence. Synchronous modes often involve forms of embodied engagement in real time, while asynchronous modes are indirect, often partially disembodied representations through text, but enjoy the temporal characteristics of networked information. Rather than being live or in real time, many forms of asynchronous communication are instantly available and accessible across networks, and such interactions can also persist on the network so that mutuality of the engagement occurs at different points in time for each interlocutor. For example, I can send an email today, but it can be read by my interlocutor in the evening, replied to the following day, and retrieved a year later. In this manner, while networked communication extends interaction across spaces, asynchronous engagement extends interaction across time.

Such forms of ‘connected asynchronicity’ are, according to Hassan, the underlying basis of a networked society: connecting individuals in an asynchronous fashion allows for ‘temporal fragmentation’ of the day into numerous time contexts of the individual actors (2007, p. 51). The fragmentation depends on the constant functioning of the network and a degree of co-ordination that assumes the individual’s availability to connect to the network. In contrast, live communication is subject to the linearity of the clock, as individuals must be available for interaction at the same time.

The formulation of *networked presence* in chapter one highlighted the multiplicity of different modes of communication, both asynchronous and synchronous, which weave types of co-presence occurring both in person and across numerous media. Numerous social practices have emerged that depend on the ‘always-availability’ of networked communication tools, so that relationships become ‘durable and ongoing’ through multiple interactions rather than more ‘fragmented’ forms (Green 2002, p. 287).

Licoppe identifies two types of sustained personal presence with absent others: the ‘conversational’ mode relies on the depth and length of single (often live) interactions across a longer period of time, while the ‘connected’ mode is based on the frequency and continuity across many (often asynchronous) interactions (2004, p. 135). The difference can be understood in terms of the sense of time. Conversational style interactions are ‘generally spread out in time, long...in which the fact of taking one’s time to converse is a sign of the bond, of the strength of each person’s commitment to the relationship’ (Licoppe 2004, p. 153). The focus is on the duration of each interaction. The continuous mode of communication consists of ‘short and frequent communicative gestures’, fostering a sense of mutual engagement through the ‘frequency and continuity of this flow’ (Licoppe 2004, p. 152). Licoppe specifically argues that in the continuous mode of communication, it is the fact of connection occurring constantly between individuals that counts rather than the content (Licoppe 2004, p. 152). While possible through numerous phone calls and frequent short visits, this form of social interaction is understood more readily through the context of specifically asynchronous networked communications.

The everyday temporality of networked communication emerges through the constant nature of *both* technological infrastructure and the constant use of these technologies by individuals. Lee and Liebenau (2001, p. 268) argue that constant actions of internet servers and network infrastructures and arguably even personal devices, that are ‘(supposed to be) always switched on’ provide a ‘constant presence’ that facilitates the ‘aggregate’ and ‘instantaneous’ access through interactions which can occur despite being asynchronous and uncoordinated. In the middle of the last century, the ‘colonization of the night’ is said to have occurred through the constant availability of machinery and infrastructure that was always on so that shift workers are brought in to manage nighttime assembly lines and public and commercial services could become 24-hour services (Melbin 1987 as cited in Nowotny 1994, p. 99). This earlier constant availability of technology in general (for production, consumption, banking, etc.) predated those changes to patterns of work and private life happening through communication technologies.

Something similar is occurring in everyday life with regard to the constant availability of everyday communication infrastructures: constant networked connection is involved

in the re-organisation of work schedules, which are becoming ‘less and less rigid’ (Lee and Liebenau 2001, p. 266). The times and spaces of the private domain are being interrupted and infringed upon by networked interactions related to work but also in relation to non-domestic communication activities as explored in the previous chapter. Negroponte (1995 as cited in Lee and Liebenau 2001, p. 266) talks of a new ‘beat’ to the organisation of everyday life and the domain of work as ‘professional and personal messages start to mingle. Sunday is not so different from Monday’. The ‘long arm of the job’ in modern industrial capitalist society has been argued to structure the ‘extent’ and ‘intrinsic quality’ of the individual’s free time as time free for consumption: ‘like a cruel parody, dictated by work, for which the content and structure of free time were only able to fulfil a compensatory role’ (Nowotny 1994, p. 121). Rather than questions of only production and consumption, today, one must question the extent to which new forms of social interaction are a colonisation of the private domain, whereby accessibility and forms of social communication facilitate the temporal expansiveness of activities and forms of activity related to the work domain.

In the context of networked communication, the domains of the public and private are defined more by time than space. Whereas before networked communication, the domains of work activity were defined by being at the location of work, now such activities are organised around ‘accessibility’ of the individual and temporal distinction between ‘on time’ and ‘off time’ (Green 2002, p. 285).

Networked presence, as it emerges through the rhythms of interaction between individuals and throughout the day, is not devoid of time but dependent upon this constant availability of numerous individuals for connection and interaction³. It is not always a case of ‘perpetual contact’ but the perpetual possibility for interaction (Schegloff 2002, p. 285). The temporality of the network, then, is not a virtual dimension without time but rather the real, constant, continuous, and time-consuming practices of individual as they maintain connection to their devices and the network.

2.5 Domains Subsumed by Communication

³ Barbara Adam (1995 as cited in Hassan 2004, p. 38) refers to such interdependency of the individual’s temporal contexts as a ‘timescape’ where there is a convergence of time with space and situated context rather than transcendence of them.

Common to these conceptions of time within the context of networked connection are the constant possibilities for interaction that subsume the temporal aspects of everyday domains of life. McQuire suggests that one of the fundamental features of space is ‘spacing – setting things apart’ (2008, p. 25), which applies to both the physical separation of spaces and the temporal separation of spaces in consideration of an individual’s inability to be physically in two places at the same time. The simultaneity of networked presence connects the individual’s actions and experience across spaces, which were previously set apart temporally.

Zerubavel (1981, p. 145) describes the clear delineation of distinct activities in everyday life separated by time as related to the individual’s situated context of action ‘to establish...with minimum ambiguity whether something belongs to one space or another’. He argues that ‘simultaneity must be deliberately avoided at times, and the regulation of non-simultaneous access through the institutionalization of turn taking is essential to social arrangements of all levels’ (Zerubavel 1981, p. 103). He explores the necessity of distinct domains, segregated by space and time from each other, which we will explore through the separation between the domains of work and personal life.

Zerubavel primarily focuses on the mediating technologies of the clock, schedule, and calendar, though he briefly touches upon the role of the telephone in shifting the boundaries between the domains of work and home life. He describes this dimension as the ‘temporal boundaries of social accessibility’, which exist in addition to the spaces and times of an everyday work schedule (Zerubavel 1981, p. 145). Like one’s schedule and calendar before that, the mixing of domains through connection of communication tools becomes something to be managed by the individual as part of everyday life.

2.5.1 The Cross-Colonisation of Domains

Domains that were previously characterised by a degree of both spatial and temporal integrity, such as work and social domains of activity, are facing cross-colonisation whereby activities and interaction previously limited to the one domain extend, interrupt, and entangle with other domains throughout the entirety of the day. Urry

argues that the development of movement and communication technologies is resulting in ‘the apparently different domains of work, family and social life each becoming more networked – and in a way more similar to each other’ (Urry 2007, p. 273). In her discussion of work activities infiltrating the time and spaces of the home, Melissa Gregg (2011, p. 12) calls this ‘presence bleed’, which is an appropriate term for this research considering our focus on interaction through networked presence as derived from Goffman’s (1963) definition of co-presence in chapter one. Gregg describes a ‘to-do list that seems forever out of control’ (2011, p. 2), which has become of greater importance to the individual than the location or times normally associated with work.

In examination of use of media tools outside of the workplace, Gregg challenges the myth of individual’s ability to ‘contain’ work-related activities to the discrete times assigned for work (2011, p. 35). There is a ‘coerciveness of online technologies’ that allows employees to feel pressure from colleagues or superiors to remain accessible such that interaction is expected beyond the ‘paid hours’ of their employment (Gregg 2011, p. 2). The individual’s free time in the private domains of the social or home are colonised and encroached upon by the extended, or potentially erased, temporal limits to the domain of work (Gregg 2011, p. 52). Meanwhile, other media-related activities previously related to the private domain have migrated to the place of work. As Boczkowski’s (2010a, p. 126) study of online news consumption suggests, media-related activities once reserved for the home such as news consumption colonised the in-between times of the work domain.

It is not just, however, the bleed of types of communication activities that is at stake; the segmentation of the domains carries with it a ‘separation of the value, activities, social functions, and people of home and work into spatio-temporal locations’ (Nippert-Eng 1995 as cited in Boczkowski 2010b, p. 473). As the contexts and possibilities of networked connection subsume the spaces and times of both domains, the distinction between the values and functions of these realms becomes confused and re-ordered. Boltanski and Chiapello (2005 as cited in Gregg 2011, p. 13) illustrate the role of sociability within parts of the contemporary workforce where ‘integrating’ oneself into social networks and ‘meeting people and associating with things’ are considered productive work functions. Eva Illouz explores some of the social manifestations of this blurring in what she refers to as ‘strategic emotional capitalism’

whereby an ambivalent and conflicted value structure is manifest through intertwined ‘language of rights and economic productivity’ with emotions and interpersonal relationships (2007, p. 38). In contrast, Gregg points out that the dynamics and structure of the modern home become something that must be organised in a managed and productive way: actions are ‘tasked’ and ‘scheduled’ so as to accommodate the inclusion of work-related tasks alongside the unpaid labour of rearing a family and domestic chores as an efficient use of free time (2011, p. 52).

In sum, then, the workplace has become an emotionalised site where goals of productivity and efficiency are manifest through social interaction. The spaces and times of personal life, one’s free time, are being re-organised in pursuit of a social productivity that includes schedules within which the spending or exchange of quality time between friends and family is just one form of interaction among a list of other tasks to be completed. Temporally, however, this desegregation of domains involves a dissolution of limits to both work and social pressures as they subliminate into the networked practice of potential work and social connection. Gregg alludes to ‘the cumulative nature’ of ‘ambient’, ‘background’, and ‘incidental’ work practices that include simply maintaining a connection and checking one’s phone, emails and other modes of communication (2011, p. 35). This suggestion echoes Ito’s ‘ambient and peripheral’ (2005, p. 11) character to social practice explored in the previous chapter and is also cumulative in a manner that is often overlooked. The limitations of schedule and duration between domains have begun to dissolve because of the extension of interaction beyond the times and spaces within which the individual is situated.

2.6 Acceleration

‘Speed is contagious’ and the everyday interactions occurring today through the use of mobile devices and portable computers often spread across the once distinct domains of work and social life; ‘if one gets used to speed in some areas, the desire for speed will tend to spread to new domains’ (Eriksen 2001, p. 273). Since the eighteenth century, arguments have emerged that ‘history, culture, society, or even “time itself” in some strange way accelerated’ (Rosa 2003, p. 77). In recent years, this notion of acceleration has been coupled with the ‘compression’ of activities, interactions, and

relationships themselves into a larger number of instances of shorter duration (Townsend 2001 as cited in Green 2002, p. 284). Hassan argues that the most recent shift of acceleration is taking place in part through networked technologies. He argues that this is beyond the individual's sense of the chronological, stating that these changes are rather 'chronoscopic', whereby the possibilities of human interaction are accelerated beyond the scale of our perception: the processing time of networked interactions, of connection and extension of perception, relate to this 'spectrum of compressed clock time' (Hassan 2007, p. 49) that humans perceive as instantaneous. Just as the frame rate on a silent film occurs at another scale than in real life, so do possibilities of networked interaction, and thus, everyday life seems to be speeding up.

Rosa (2003) outlines three related forms of acceleration that occur in modern society. First, 'technological acceleration' involves the 'speeding up of intentional, goal directed processes of transport, communication and production...of processes *within* society' (original italics); such accelerations are the basis of many claims that space 'contracts' through the employment of the technologies of transport, communication and data-processing (Rosa 2003, p. 82). Second, the 'acceleration of social change' that Rosa discusses involves the instability of social institutions, structures, and actions of a social world that is in constant flow and flux, a claim put forth by other authors such as Appadurai (1990) and Bauman (2000). Both of these forms of acceleration, however, are either difficult to measure or track, or involve so many scales of change that they are difficult to define. Third, the 'acceleration of the pace of life' in Western societies, again a process for which measurement and definition are difficult, includes the 'speed and compression' of actions, interactions, and practices in everyday life (Rosa 2003, p. 82). Often, it is related to the 'measurable contraction of the time spent on definable episodes, units' of different actions and practices combined with doing more of these things in less time. Importantly, however, the pace of life also includes the subjective perspective, from which people feel under 'heavy time pressure' and complain about the 'scarcity of time' (Rosa 2003, p. 82). There is an inevitable feedback between these three forms of acceleration that is somewhat paradoxical: despite technologies of speed and time-saving efficiency, there is an increasingly perceived scarcity of time (Rosa 2003, p. 88, Eriksen 2001, p. 277).

Rosa, however, warns against jumping to conclusions about the longitudinal evidence of acceleration due to the vague measurements and causes of acceleration, but also because of the various counter rhythms of deceleration (2003, p. 86). Practices are emerging that involve purposeful deceleration: to ‘spend’ more time doing something because to do it efficiently is considered to be of less intrinsic value. This relates to a need to distinguish a time and place for the personal experience of everyday actions that is distinct from the clock and networked time. Nowotny argued that this is a new desire specific to our era, wanting not just time to one’s self, but in a wider sense, wanting ‘temporal sovereignty’; to control in what ways and to what extent one’s locally lived sense of time is integrated into the wide ‘interlocking’ temporalities of the clock and network (Nowotny 1994, p. 19). Chapters six and seven explore some of the forms of temporal control individuals assert but also the forms of sharing and negotiation that seek to alleviate the perceived temporal pressure and tensions of networked communication practices.

For the individual, it is not just a matter of accommodating to new forms of flexible schedules and daily routines, but also to accommodate change itself. The perceived acceleration of the pace of life is also something that the individual can become aware of and cope with, and is also something that they can choose to manage through considered attempts to control their participation in such change. Purposeful practices of deceleration are to an extent a ‘resistance’ to the temporal orders and “‘placelessness’ of instantaneous time’ in the modern era (Urry 2009, pp. 195, 196). Such active deceleration in everyday life is part of a wider discourse of social change occurring within society, where technological changes face contestation ‘in the name of human needs and values’ (Rosa 2003, p. 78). In their everyday life, individuals are often aware of these tensions, these changes and pressures, and through their own actions and choices can adjust and negotiate their place amidst that change.

2.7 New Digital Divides

While some individuals enjoy a choice of how and if they participate in the acceleration of society around them, a luxury of voluntary deceleration, others may be excluded from some of the changes. Meyrowitz asserts that the ‘fundamental shifts in the structure of society’ may not be clearly observable in the new connections

occurring through technology, and careful attention must be paid to ‘the ways in which disconnectedness – the separation of social situation and interactions shapes social reality’ (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 23). Thus, when we talk about acceleration and social change, we cannot assume the ubiquity of that change and attention must be paid to the potential divisions involved in the process of change. There are everyday consequences for both those amidst the change as well as those who have been left outside of that change.

The inconsistency of technological impact across the world and within specific populations is often the small print of grand narratives. Most of the generalised and synoptic approaches discussed in this chapter very clearly focus on in-depth descriptions of the new mobilities as they relate to financial technologies and industries, the global and cosmopolitan elite, and the upper echelons of Western industrial capitalism. There are multiple digital divides that must be addressed to understand the limited scope and realms of these changes. Even within those realms where change is occurring, the picture is often still unclear, as actions, practices, and roles are part of ‘the negotiation of intersecting trajectories...and are where negotiation is forced upon us’, and thus, the individual’s choices and practices are never occurring without being located in various ‘power geometries’ of everyday life (Massey 2005, pp. 100, 154). These matrices of power are diffused throughout social structures, possibilities, and choices, which are never as clear-cut as simply having access to a technology or not.

The fieldwork and thesis presented here emerge from a very specific selection of participants drawn from a major metropolitan centre of a Western industrialised capitalist country and, thus, are already on one side of a global digital divide. The nature of the selection will be explored more thoroughly for its exact characteristics in chapter four. Any such research must recognise that there has been a sharp distinction between the adoption and use of mobile and computer technologies relating to regional and national ‘economic wealth...levels of development, industry structure and strategies, and government policies’ (Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Qiu, and Sey 2007, p. 38). These provide very different social contexts for the adoption and development of mobile practices that are often in sharp contrast to processes within developing countries where mobile telephony is skyrocketing as a substitute and replacement for

fixed-line telephony. In European countries, some Asia Pacific countries, and North America, mobile communication has emerged from within an established infrastructure and culture with a high penetration of personal computers, and it has emerged alongside technologies for wireless internet access for portable computers (Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Qiu, and Sey 2007, pp. 37-38).

Within the context of Western industrialist capitalist society, the differential impact and role of new technologies must also be considered. As social organisation shifts to involve new temporal patterns and practices, there is a risk that society will run 'at two speeds' whereby 'social inequalities...can be translated into temporal inequalities' (Nowotny 1994, p. 32). When inequality is obscured by an ideological mask of a new era of speed and mobility, there is a risk of pathologising deceleration, or a lack of acceleration and mobility, in the lives of individuals and, sometimes, entire segments of society. The consequences of social inequality are then re-cast as an 'inability' of the individual or groups of individuals 'to keep up with the flexibility and speed required in modern western economies' (Rosa 2003, p. 94). Researchers must be aware of the social divisions that different speeds result in and exacerbate, or otherwise risk their research being used 'to tolerate, indeed to sanction social inequalities as non-simultaneities' (Nowotny 1994, p. 42).

The Oxford Internet Survey (OIS) (Dutton and Blank 2011, p. 4) reports two interrelated and striking shifts to everyday communication practice in the UK that have taken place between 2009 and 2011, specifically regarding the widening range of communication devices, many of which are portable, and a drastic change in how individuals access the internet. They identify a new type of internet user, which they refer to as the 'next generation user' in the UK: 'someone who accesses the Internet from multiple locations and devices' as well as while '...on the move' (Dutton and Blank 2011, p. 4). This often involves the use of computers at home and work, as well as accessing the internet through one's mobile phone and other portable devices. This is defined in contrast to the 'first generation user' who accesses the internet at home often through a modem and more recently a broadband connection. The terminology relating to generations, however, is misleading, for these are not distinct age groups of people, but communication styles and patterns of device ownership. While this terminology is implying that all young and new internet users will adopt these

communication practices, it jars with the middle-aged adult users who have adopted new forms of internet use over the last four years. What we can borrow from this research is the identification of new forms of internet use that have emerged and been rapidly adopted by a substantial portion of the population.

These new communication patterns often involve internet access at the workplace, through the individual's mobile devices, in addition to a broadband connection at home. This new multimodal, multi-site, and mobile style of communication represents 42% of all internet users in the UK in 2011, rising from 34% in 2009 and 20% in 2007. The mobile phone is increasingly becoming a device for accessing the internet: in 2003, only 11% of mobile phone users accessed the internet through their phone, rising to 49% by 2011. When asked where they accessed the internet, 40% of respondents to the OIS said through their mobile phone in 2011, double the amount from 2009 (Dutton and Blank 2011, p. 5).

2.7.1 Income, Occupation, and Communication

The proliferation of this pattern of communication, however, is not evenly distributed throughout the population. Such users tend to have a higher income, 'indicating a new digital divide in Britain and most certainly other nations' between those who have access to the internet from home and those who access it from multiple locations and devices as well as from home (Dutton and Blank 2011, p. 5). Grant Blank also revealed that there are steady increases of next-generation use among lower household income levels, implying that there is not going to be a complete income-based fragmentation between the two patterns of communication (Blank 2011, n.p.). This compounds a national digital divide that sees nearly a quarter of the British population without access to the internet (Dutton and Blank 2011, p. 5).

Household income is reported to be a major factor in using the internet from multiple locations and multiple devices. This partially relates to the extra income for the purchase of multiple devices, but can also relate to the type of occupation. While there are specific extremes and exceptions to these trends, higher income occupations tend to involve internet use whereas lower income occupations do not, as the same report suggests: 'managers and professionals are far more likely than blue collar workers to

use the internet...administrative and clerical workers are in between, with about half reporting that they use the internet at work' (Dutton and Blank 2011, p. 14).

Despite the relationship between owning several devices and using the internet at work with high income levels, internet use has largely broken free of the home, extending through the individual's day for these disparate income groups: both high and low income levels are using the internet on the move through mobile phones and at other people's homes as well as their own (Dutton and Blank 2011, p. 10). At home, use is consistently high among all income groups, while internet use through mobile phones and use of internet at other people's home and in libraries tends to be more important for the lowest income groups. It is the higher income bracket that, while similarly relying on mobile phone use, reports much higher use of internet at work (Dutton and Blank 2011, p. 10). These imbalances of use have implications for my participant selection, as the focus of this thesis is this multi-site and all-day networked engagement where individuals have the opportunity for multi-modal communication throughout the day within all of the different domains of their everyday life, across the spaces and times of work, home, and on the move.

2.7.2 Gender and Communication

Many of the global differences between genders are manifest in the levels of access and reasons for access between men and women to mobile technologies, though such studies do not engage with the culture of use when access to technology is more equal (Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Qiu, and Sey 2007, p. 45). The 2011 OIS found that the gender divide has largely disappeared in relation to internet use in the UK, though they did report that men were more likely than women were to use the internet at work, through their mobile phone, at school, and at paid public locations (Grant and Blank 2011, p. 15). Some of these points, however, could be a reflection of other gender divides rather than those arising from internet use alone. In this manner, while mobile technologies and practices may not be 'gender neutral', Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Qiu, and Sey argue that this must be taken as only one factor among numerous others which could have a determining impact on the adoption and use of mobile phones, such 'as work status, location of workplace, family status, and lifestyle' with which gender is often inextricably tied (2007, p. 54).

Several language-oriented researchers have compared men and women's mobile and online messages and concluded that gender influences mediated interaction just as it influences unmediated communication. Rather than being liberated from gender through communication technologies, it is argued that individuals perform gender through the ways they communicate (Baym 2010, p. 66). Studies from various western industrialised nations that reveal gender differences focus on differences in descriptions of purpose rather than differences in use (Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Qiu, and Sey 2007, p. 46).

Furthermore, Nowotny (1994, p. 109) argues that the tensions arising within the current socio-temporal order are more acutely felt by women, suggesting that the role of primary care givers in families, often taken on by women, is in contradiction to or rather neglected within the contemporary perspective on the use of time as it relates to the private domain. The colonisation of the private domain through encroachment of workplace activities compounds the already existing disregard for the unpaid hours of work within the private domain as caregivers. If disregarded under the temporal regime of clock-time, the time of care, whether it is for the young or also potentially the elderly or infirmed becomes further encroached upon (and somehow further disregarded) as time of the private domain is interrupted and interwoven with networked notions of on and off time. Urry discusses care-giving as one of the few activities that remains wholly outside of and desynchronised from the realm of instantaneous network time, as it is based on notions of time firmly grounded in co-presence (2009, pp. 196-7).⁴

The myriad of complex relationships that are developed and are sustained through mobile communications and the divergent role of gender within those relationships are 'signifying the flexibility of the technologies and their ability to promote both gendered and non-gendered behaviour, depending on culture, while at the same time blurring the lines between gendered practices' (Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Qiu, and

⁴ The OIS reported that one of the few skilled occupations in which individuals are less likely to use the internet at work are Health and Social Care Associates (Dutton and Blank 2011, p. 16), which echoes Urry's assertion about care activities, while in contrast Madianou and Miller's (2012) recent work focuses on parental care at a distance through networked technologies.

Sey 2007, p. 55). Within this thesis, however, through an evenly split selection of male and female participants, I have remained open to the possible role of gender in networked communication, and the possible role of new technologies exasperating the already existent social inequalities along gender lines.

Amidst these novel forms of connection that are becoming part of the everyday, researchers must be vigilant in the narratives they construct about such change because the social inequalities that are already prevalent throughout society are often manifest and masked by changes to everyday life. Attention must be paid to the danger of exacerbating those inequalities through a blind proclamation of change as modernisation and betterment. As researchers, it is our responsibility to ensure that the narratives derived from our work do not obscure the digital and social divides, and that we do not provide narratives re-casting inequalities that precluded the opportunity for participation as a failure to participate. When we can so readily identify these new digital divides and the unequal speeds of society in the face of new networked practices, does it not call for a re-consideration and re-negotiation of the motivations and values with which these changes are embraced?

2.8 Chapter Conclusion

The extension of action through communication tools between spaces introduces new networked forms of simultaneity of presence and interaction that partially dissolve the temporal distinctions between the domains of everyday life. There is a migration of everyday activities between domains, but there is also a migration of ideas and values that were formerly inherent to one domain or another. These domains of activity are now located within a wider context of all-day networked connection and practice, which engenders a different temporality. This leads us to the second of three research questions:

RQ TWO: What role does time play in the everyday context of networked communication and how are individual and collective manifestations of such temporality perceived, reflected upon, and negotiated as part of everyday life?

As tensions and temporal pressures arise from the contagion of expectations from one domain into another, individuals face the consequences. Adjusting to these temporal pressures in everyday life becomes a motor for the acceleration and compression of everyday life, which is perceived within and amongst the experience of social change itself. Such change involves processes of differentiation and integration of communication practices, a degree of rigidity between different practices despite their shifting and individualised quality.

Yet, if the integrity of the domains of everyday life is in disarray, then the values of those domains, now extended and colonising the everyday to its full extent, may have also lost their integrity, consistency, and applicability within networked contexts of everyday life. The pressure to keep pace with changes and the pressure for participation in this socio-temporal regime may be obscuring other important changes from the individual's vantage point. Amidst the drive into wider forms of integration through networked connection, individuals may have little knowledge of or time to reflect upon their own participation in changes to everyday life and social relations. What happens when they find themselves entrenched in the realities of networked connection that bear little resemblance to the form of everyday life they value?

Chapter Three: Revealing the Role of Technology

In taking a phenomenological approach, this thesis engages with networked communication practices through individuals' accounts of how they encounter the world. This focuses on the immediacy and validity of their encounter rather than on the different temporal nature of reflection and study involved in attempts at objectivity. Feenberg identifies this 'temporal priority' within everyday experiences as the setting within which the individual engages with things in a practical manner as a part of life, a perspective that is engaged 'before we contemplate them in knowledge' (2005, p. 27). Before engaging with the individual's place amongst technology within wider everyday contexts, I will clarify the specific encounter between the individual and the tool as an object in the world. This thesis is specifically starting from phenomenology in an attempt to capture the broader implications of networked communication practices as experienced in everyday life.

3.1 Phenomenological Perspectives on Technology

In the context of communication practices, the individual's relationship with networked technology becomes complex and convoluted as the range of everyday communication tools is overlaid with a society of interconnected individuals, each with their own experiences, perceptions, and practices. Don Ihde (1993, 2002, 2009) offers an approach to the possible types of engagement or perspectives on engagement that the social individual can have with and through technology. Ihde seeks to examine the individual's experience of a multi-faceted relationship with technology. Evoking Husserl's (1931 as cited in Ihde 1993, p. 75) notion of variations, derived from the mathematical version of the same term, Ihde proposes a 'variation theory': variations of experience of the same thing are compared to determine what elements of the experience are variant and what are the invariant and possibly essential elements. It is the 'phenomenologically derived variation that provides the rigorous demonstration' of what role technology takes on in everyday life (Ihde 2009, p. 15). Ihde argues that for humans, there can be no wholly objective perspective, 'no god perspective, only variations upon embodied perspectives' (2002, p. 70).

Ihde extends Merleau-Ponty's notion of describing 'the world as directly experienced' (1969 as cited in Ihde 1993, pp. viii-x, 75) from an individual's own particular point of view by arguing for the 'multistability' of lived experience (Ihde 1993, p. 12). In this manner, the individual's perception involves multiple perspectives on the same experience of using technology. Ihde (2009, pp. 42-45) describes roughly four variant perspectives of every human technology relationship: (1) alterity - our relationship to technology itself; (2) background relations - one's perception of self and action in specific contexts of everyday life of which technology is a part; (3) embodiment - our relationship to each other and the world through technology; and (4) relational ontology - the transformation of the self and world through a relationship with technology.

The alterity relationship⁵ involves interaction with the object, and the consequences and experience of attention towards that object. The alterity relationship is one that also 'mediates (existentially) how somebody is present in his or her environment' (Verbeek 2005, p. 198), how he or she experiences that environment because he or she is interacting with the tool, but not necessarily through the tool. Take for example the use of email or the internet at home on a computer or on a bus using one's mobile phone. Despite embodied interactions taking place through the technology, the individual is relating to the object in a manner that affects their place in the local physical context that, as first discussed in chapter two, changes their experience, awareness, and interaction with co-present individuals and the surroundings. Ihde separates this from another category of 'hermeneutic relations', which involves the reading or interpreting of the world through a referential system of technologies (such as dials, gauges, and indicators) (2009, p. 43). I have conflated the two categories as two aspects of engaging with the technology as an object itself, possibly affecting how one is present in their environment.

Ihde's conception of 'background relations' (2009, p. 43) refers to a sense of self within a specific environment: the micro-level of a single context, within which technologies are simply part of the individual's situated environment. This involves

⁵ (from the Latin word *alter*, as in the object that is not the subject, the alter to the self or the subject)

the numerous technologies of which we are not aware and others upon which our dependence is habitual, if not automatic. Both the individual's relationship to technology as an object and the individual's situated experience in their local environment within which the objects are located will be explored in more detail in chapter five.

Embodiment occurs through technology when it is 'a means of experience, not an object of experience...' (Ihde 2009, p. 42). In this manner, interaction through technology is an extension of the individual, whereby the tool is 'symbiotically "taken into" my bodily experience towards an action in to or upon the environment'(Ihde 2009, p. 42). The technology is included into the actions of the individual's body and perception, partially withdrawn as an object itself and is rather incorporated into the individual's 'very primary experience' (Ihde 2009, p. 36). Chapters six and seven will explore the manner in which relationships are conducted through embodied interactions with technology.

Beyond single contexts, however, the role of technologies is argued to change one's perception of the world, transforming the individual and their practices in the process (Ihde 2009, p. 44). This is what Ihde refers to as a relational ontology which links most readily to Heidegger's (1971, p. 59) insistence that technology involves a 'revealing' and potentially a 'knowing' that cannot be distinguished from the interpretation and knowledge of the world and one's place within it. Elias (1998, p. 72), however, makes similar statements about social relations for their role in changing the individual's interpretation of the world and the self. I would suggest that social relations then can also change our interpretation of the technological objects which are part of that world, a notion that will be discussed throughout the second half of this chapter. This social aspect cannot be separated, nor distinguished, from the technological aspect of relational ontology. Throughout this thesis, the word *relational* will come to take on the meaning of connection through technology and interaction between individuals as both types of relationship affect the individual's interpretation of world around them. This will be explored in much greater detail in the later chapters eight and nine.

It is in discussion of how the individual interprets the world around them that Heidegger raises his primary concern about our relationship to technology. He warns against being ‘enframed’ by a certain way of thinking, whereby the individual reduces everything, including themselves, to instrumental uses in systems of equipment (Feenberg 2005, p, 21). Dreyfus calls this restriction in our experience, in our thinking and knowing of the world, ‘a levelling of our understanding of being’ (1995, p. 99). In contrast to such reduction, however, Heidegger (1971, p. 53) also describes the possibility of perceiving one’s active place in a ‘clearing...in reference to what is...encircles all that is...’ within the wider life contexts rather than singular use contexts. From the individual ‘nearness’ to so many tools in use, a special type of focus is possible in relation to technology, but this a perspective that can only be achieved through the ‘vigilance’ of individuals; yet, from such a perspective, the essence of these tools, are ‘unconcealed in certain changing degrees’ (Heidegger 1971, pp. 53, 181). What, however, can vigilance mean, what form does this take in contemporary everyday life, and to what end can such a perspective lead?

3.2 What an Object is Not

Before exploring some of the recent interpretations of Heidegger, I will navigate the specificity of his conception of the essence of a tool. Heidegger stresses that the ‘thing-in-itself’ does not correspond to the Kantian understanding of an object that ‘is an object in itself without reference to the human act of representing it’ (Heidegger 1971, p. 177). The essence of a thing, for Heidegger, does not stand wholly apart from the world, and it does not stand wholly apart from the individual’s encounter with it. Heidegger also explores the limitation of the Roman notion of *res* and the related Latin notion of *ens*, whereby objects are engaged only in ‘what pertains to man, concerns him and his interests’ and, thus, is only concerned with the part of the object that is ‘standing forth’ in the context of use (Heidegger 1971, p. 176). This aspect of standing forth corresponds with an instrumental context, but fails to acknowledge ‘the very nature of that which is present’, which he argues ‘remains buried’ in such contexts (Heidegger 1971, p. 176).

Heidegger makes a distinction between how individuals encounter technology as a tool that is situated and defined by particular instrumental contexts of use and the essence

of each tool itself. The former is referred to as 'readiness-to-hand' and the latter as 'presence-at-hand' (Heidegger [1962] 2008, p. 104). Readiness-to-hand is that particular practical perspective of use, whereby individuals are not engaged with the full essence of a tool, but rather a particular contextual end that shapes the tool as a particular means to that end (Verbeek 2005, p. 194). In this instrumental perspective, he refers to technology as 'equipment' to evoke a reduced and particular manifestation of the tool. The essence of the tool, of 'the thing' itself (rather than equipment), is not the reified object of use because it is only accessible 'out of their place in everyday practice context', yet almost paradoxically still from a phenomenological perspective (Feenberg 2005, p. 36). This dichotomy allows the understanding that tools 'belong in certain ways to certain contexts', but often, characteristics remain unexamined until the tool is 'decontextualised' (Ihde 2009, p. 34).

3.2.1 Technology as a Tool

Technology, however, are very special types of objects through the individual's relationship with a single tool and their relationship to the wider contexts of multiple tools, the technological environments of everyday life. Albert Borgmann (1995, p. 88 and 1984 as cited in Verbeek 2005, p. 194) explores Heidegger's dual aspects of readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand to challenge the degree to which the tool's essence is concealed through certain types of use and links these to wider contexts and environments.

The crucial distinction for Borgmann rests on whether or not the individual is 'drawn into this process' of creating the context of the tool's use, or whether individuals themselves become pieces of equipment in a wider context of numerous tools and interrelated practices. Borgmann (1995, p. 88) offers an insightful comparison of two types of technological interactions; the first involves the care and attention of the individual in their engagement of a tool as 'a thing' and the second involves the individual's use of 'a device', which is understood as a single piece of equipment.

Musical instruments, Borgmann asserts, are 'things': use of these tools has a presence and commands the attention of those around through the individual's painstaking engagement with it, through their sensitivity and control of their own body that can be

translated into mastery of the thing itself. It involves resonance of the individual action through metal, strings, air, and relates to a wider system of musical notes, scores and numbers (1995, p. 88). Heidegger (1971, p. 59) relates this sort of relationship to the Greek notion of 'techne', originally derived as a notion of craft, rather than technology:

Techne signifies neither craft nor art, and not at all the technical in our present-day sense; it never means a kind of practical performance. The word techne denotes rather a mode of knowing.

In this manner, engagement with the thing is a way of knowing the world, of revealing or producing the world, as it 'gathers' together that which makes the world 'intelligible' (Feenberg 2005, p. 31) in the way the mastery of the musical instrument gathers together a new sense of perceiving the world and interacting between individuals and objects. The care and practice related to engagement with the thing, becomes as much a revelation of the essence of the thing itself as a possibility for a deeper appreciation of one's own essential experience of their place in the world. This involvement with a tool can take the forms of 'effort' and/or 'focal engagement' on the tool itself (Verbeek 2005, p. 195). In the context of contemporary communication tools, possible ways of using a social networking profile or blog are examples of communication tools that require a degree of involved engagement in order to be used: they need to be set up and checked often, and increased engagement with the site changes the quality of its use.

In contrast, Borgmann goes on to describe interaction of individuals with stereo equipment as a 'device', where its use can be reduced within a wider instrumental system of equipment (1995, p. 90). Equipment evokes a sense of ordered objects (and subjects) that are 'standing-reserve' to be employed in their numerous and connected instrumental use contexts (Heidegger 1977, p. 19). The particular example of the individual and the stereo is focused upon the instrumental relationship of the individual as consumer in a wider commodity structure, where individuals only experience the readiness-at-hand of stereo equipment and albums. They are detached from the process of knowing and revealing the fuller understanding of the object's essence and their own, as individuals themselves become a different sort of readily available object for use: a listener and a consumer in a wider market structure can possibly limit their relationship to the technology.

Engagement with the tool or device extends to include objects, the environment, and practices associated with the tool or device but not necessarily with its direct use. Verbeek uses the example of a proud car owner, who compliments the use of the car with consumption of numerous objects as decorative paraphernalia, as well as reading car magazines, and attending auto industry conventions (Verbeek 2005, p. 195). For the example of a social networking profile, such associated practices, objects, and environments could include the effort and actions of taking digital photos and finding links or articles online to post to that profile.

Borgmann's comparison is very useful to clearly illustrate Heidegger's concerns about modern society. The above comparison was not, however, an attempt to draw a line between authentic or traditional forms of technology and modern forms of consumption. It is not an attempt to praise the former and condemn the latter. Application of Heidegger's theories specifically focuses on the individual's ability to navigate and perceive the modern, commoditised world of ubiquitous equipment so that the experience of everyday life will be one of fulfilment rather than reduction of to instrumental function.

When the individual is reduced to their use context, the individual who 'no longer conceals his character of being the most important raw material, is also drawn into this process' as just another piece of equipment in a wider system of uses, then the individual, too, is 'standing-reserve' and from this context of being in use is alienated from one's own essential being (Heidegger 1977, pp. 17-19). Yet, in everyday life, it is specifically from within these extended interlocking contexts that 'We can affirm the unavoidable use of technical devices, and also deny them the right to dominate us, and so to warp, confuse, and lay waste our nature'. (Heidegger 1973 as cited in Dreyfus 1995, p. 101). Heidegger (1977, p. 28, 34) is not warning contemporary individuals to avoid technology, but pleading with them to find within it a 'saving power'.

3.2.2 Interlocking Everyday Contexts

Heidegger suggests that the 'revealing' of technological essence is never 'completely indeterminate' but is 'everywhere secured' by the real contexts and instrumental goals

of everyday life. Graham Harman (2002, p. 36) refers to such contexts as the 'equipment totality', in recognition of the ubiquity of tools in modern society to such an extent that to be in the world today is to be engaged within systems of equipment and knowledge. What interests me is Harman's explanation of continual exchange between tools themselves, which he relates directly to being 'embedded in a referential context' that is the equipment totality, that is everyday life (Harman 2002, p. 36).⁶ As Harman argues 'every implement exerts a determinate and limited range of effects in each instant, and is equally determined by the equipment that surrounds it...' but with 'an indefinite number of perspectives' (Harman 2002, p. 23). What I want to adopt from this is the constant instrumentality of a tool, not in use by an individual for a specific purpose, but drawn into systems of multiple and relative potential uses through the ubiquity of other tools, individual knowledge, and wider social processes.

With regard to contemporary media technologies, Nick Couldry (2012, p. 16) describes what he calls the 'media manifold', which 'comprises a complex web' of media platforms. Despite acknowledgement of certain limitations in the actual range of tools in everyday use, this manifold of tools is often accessible through just a few devices, a 'connected range of media' that draws from the 'effectively infinite reserve' of online platform manifestations. This notion emerges in more particular contexts of media use as well. Henry Jenkins (Jenkins and Grusin 2011, n.p.) describes the 'transmedia experience' of contemporary media habits with a focus on entertainment and consumption, whereby individuals employ 'dispersed media elements' across numerous platforms and throughout their social network as part of their experience with any one of the elements. Recent empirical work by Madianou and Miller (2012, p. 137) discusses 'polymedia': the manner in which parents and children who are living apart at a great distance build a habitual set of media choices for communication. These notions all involve an inherently referential perception of technology, for 'the understanding...of any one medium becomes less its properties, or affordances, and more its alternative status as against the other media that could equally be employed' (Madianou and Miller 2012, p. 137).

⁶ Other aspects of Harman's work, such as his concept of 'tool-being' (2002, p. 36) are somewhat incongruent with the phenomenological approach of this thesis, with potential implications akin to Bruno Latour's (1999) Actor-Network-Theory.

The media manifold, however, is not simply the changing repertoire of communication devices, but it involves something akin to a referential system of networked media tools within everyday reality: ‘that manifold can seem to be everywhere and nowhere in particular: we are just embedded in it to varying degrees’ (Couldry 2012, p. 17). Tiziana Terranova (2004, p. 7) described a far more abstract and an all-encompassing technological ‘informational milieu’ to everyday life that is useful in describing this referential system. Her focus is less on specific tools in the transmission of messages, and rather involves ‘the milieu which supports and encloses the production of meaning’ in everyday life (Terranova 2004, p. 9). She links this to the emergence of computer and information technologies, which are the basis for many of the networked technologies relevant to this thesis. Terranova concludes that this context ‘exceeds and undermines the domain of meaning from all sides’ and thus demands a re-assessment of our engagement with communication technology as sites where cultural processes are occurring (2004, p. 9).

The individual’s understanding of technology occurs through these diffuse but multiple and interdependent everyday contexts of use. Heidegger wrote: ‘The revealing reveals to itself its own manifoldly interlocking paths, through regulating their course’ (Heidegger 1977, p. 16). For this thesis, the interlocking of these numerous instrumental contexts of networked technologies can be understood to comprise Couldry’s ‘media manifold’ (2012, p. 16) within everyday life, which itself must be considered in terms of social interaction. This last consideration calls for the concept to be re-articulated in terms of Elias’ work (1998, p. 68) to involve the interdependency of individual action and chains of associated practices as explored in chapter two. Thus, the interlocking instrumental contexts of this complex array of networked communication tools become inextricable from the interdependency of social processes whereby individuals mutually attune and regulate their actions with each other.

3.3 Levels of Instrumentalisation

Throughout Heidegger’s conceptions of technology, there is a reluctance to reduce tools to their instrumental use. This is often investigated through the assertion that ‘objects have history...we forget why and how they came to be’ (Turkle 2007, p. 311).

To this, I want to add that objects also have a shifting, indeterminate, and unfolding present and future.

Tools are described as having ‘socio-technical’ dimensions in that they emerge from the association of humans and technologies involved in the processes of design and construction (Bijker 1997, p. 269). A technology becomes an ‘artefact’ of this process: evidence of social and political cultures of construction, interpretation, and use of objects (Galloway and Ward 2006, n.p.) within a longer process of constructing knowledge and contexts of potential interpretation (Grint and Woolgar 1997, p. 31).

The process of construction enforces a dominant interpretation of a tool, which provides the basis for further action and use. It is the persistence of this ‘technological frame’ that lends itself to a perceived endpoint of development in an object, such that the tool is considered static, with a single possible interpretation (Bijker 1997, p. 272). This assumption masks the social and political processes involved in its construction, but then also serves to dissuade the possibility for future interpretation of the technology. A tool itself is reduced to its ‘effects’, the instrumental form accepted as an apparent technological fact, an unexamined authority with determining implications for everyday life (Bijker 1997, p. 272). The entire process becomes reduced to a unified artefact, which rather than being representative of ‘an association made up of elements which can be redistributed’, becomes a ‘blackbox’ wherein constituent elements, social history, function, and role have all been made invisible (Latour 1991, p. 109).

Feenberg (1999, p. 202) attempts to capture the process of interpretation that occurs in construction and use of technologies by analysing forms of ‘technological expression’ of an object, which involve multiple levels of ‘instrumentalisation’. The development of a technology within a design process represents the primary instrumentalisation of a technology whereby its functional constitution and possible effects are first determined. The deployment, take up, or emergence of a technology within the wider technological and social environments of society is secondary instrumentalisation. This involves a degree of differentiation as the technology is translated into varying contexts but without undoing the effects of the design process. This is similar to the ‘mediating cultures of use’ as described by Sassen (2006, p. 347) whereby a

technology is ‘inflected by the values, cultures, power systems, and institutional orders within which [the technology’s use] is embedded’.

I propose, however, a tertiary level of instrumentalisation: one which occurs through the interdependent practices of individuals at the level of what this research will refer to as *collective instrumentalisation*. This involves the expression or instrumentalisation of technology through not only individual use but also the interdependent use of numerous individuals. By focusing on the interdependency of individual everyday social practices that often incorporate technology, we will be able to cut across and through many of the quite specific units of analysis taken up by other research: the individual within the organisation of a workplace, within a market, a household, a social group, or even nodes within a network. I am expanding Feenberg’s levels of instrumentalisation to include collective levels of use in an attempt to found a new unit of analysis that incorporates Elias’ conception of social relations and figurational change as consisting of the interdependency of individual action (Elias 1998, p. 68).

3.4 Towards a New Unit of Analysis

The remainder of this chapter will come at the literature in a more lateral fashion, to acknowledge and borrow from four areas of study that touch up but do not engage directly with implications of networked communication as they are negotiated through social relationships. These different avenues of exploration of contemporary networked technologies are related to different interpretations of use, often based on varying structures and contexts of relations within one domain of activity or another. The role of power, specificity of relations, and domain-related values associated with the world of work in relation to the market and home in relation to the community both offer valuable but very specific insights into the everyday negotiation of technology. As chapter one introduced and chapter six will explore in detail, the traditional domains of everyday life have been subsumed within the continuous context of networked practices. As such, I look to analysis of these separate domains to take account of the impact of networked technologies on domains themselves in general. For the same purpose, I will venture into Social Network Analysis, as the network itself is often regarded in theory as its own domain, though it is inextricable from the

other domains of everyday life. This lateral approach is a preparatory delineation of a new space for analysis, taken up by this thesis, in the figurations that emerge from the interdependence of social relations between numerous individuals, where the amorphous networks of social interaction cut across and help us integrate the differences between domains.

3.4.1 The Spread of Affective and Free Labour

Through the adoption of networked technologies, workplace activities have and are changing in substance and organisation. While demonstrating the exploitative and organising potential of contemporary digital culture, these shifts also shed light on the productive value and potential catalyst of change that has been found within social and cultural networked practices. It is necessary for this thesis to look beyond the workplace and market organisation of interaction and towards the possible manifestations of this productive force within networked communication in the social realm, where it may emerge through a very different prism of organisation and with very different goals.

I will focus here on the changes to the notion of labour itself because this is the foundation of the domain of work as it defines in contradistinction the personal domain. It is also the culture of labour organisation, management, and efficiency that has spread from the domain of work to inflect other parts the individual's approach to everyday social practices with this logic. The wider shift towards forms of immaterial or knowledge-based labour in recent decades has been coupled with the emergence of 'free cultural labour' and 'affective labour' that is taking place through network technologies and in the online world (Terranova 2004, p. 79).

The commitment to one's work is considered a type of 'emotional labour' stemming from a pressure for the voluntary service of overwork that Gregg associates with an ethic of white-collar office work environments (2011, p. 166). She argues that within the same environment, networked practices through social networking platforms become a 'seamless combination' of workplace organisation and personal lives so that the individual is offered a 'reliable solace' of intimacy at work despite the lost personal interactions when one's non-work life has been encroached upon (Gregg 2011, p. 88).

As touched upon in the last chapter, networked communication practices have allowed for workplace activities to extend beyond the workplace into social have turned into a work culture of supplementary free labour (Terranova 2004, p. 73, Gregg 2011, p. 35). This thesis is less interested in the implication of employment relations for one's personal life, which Gregg explores. From her work, however, I want to borrow the emergence of an emotional and nearly moral 'ethic' regarding the temporal management of networked practices, to explore the possible negotiation of something similar outside of power structures specific to and distinctive of workplace settings that could be occurring between social peers.

This organisation of free labour, as opposed to paid labour, of the digital world has spread from specific workplace organisation of the free time of employees to a more general market organisation of personal and cultural practices. The internet and its derivative economies are dependent on the unpaid creation of content and on the interaction that becomes its traffic and source of data. Terranova asserts that this 'excessive activity', which makes the internet such a 'thriving and hyperactive medium', is not only a feature of the wider digital economy, but also an 'unacknowledged source of value in advanced capitalist societies' (2004, p. 74). This is earliest step in what Jaron Lanier calls the 'de-monetizing' of cultural professions (2010, p. 104).

Beyond the workplace, Lanier points to the wider devaluing of individual contributions and participation in online culture that bases more and more aspects of online advertising markets on the 'collective volunteer basis' of platform use, for example, search engine use and social networking practices (Lanier 2010, p. 54). This reflects the market colonisation of social practices captured in the notion of the 'society factory' whereby work (or production of value) has shifted not only from the factories but also from the workplace itself to society (Virno and Hardt 1996 as cited in Terranova 2004, p. 73). Similar to the affective labour in the workplace, the new digital economies are driven by this social motor, which itself stems 'an affective desire for creative production...of the self and the community' (Gilroy 1993 as cited in Terranova 2004, p. 77). In the contemporary networked context, this desire emerges as the use of social networking sites, blog creation, and forum discussions.

Extending from the domain of work, technological practices can be seen as tools for the organising of labour beyond the limits of paid activity; extending from the digital sector of the economy, the individual's use of technologies has been subsumed within a market structure to estrange affective and cultural labour from its production of value. If, however, the communication practices of individuals and collections of individuals are being exploited, if these actions have been organised in such a way as to create new markets and new sources of wealth, then there is a creative and productive force to everyday communication practices. This thesis seeks to explore the manifestations of this potentially organising and productive force in the realm of social activity and outside of its exploitation within labour and market structures.

3.4.2 The Domestication of Media Practices

Beyond the work-setting, technological practices involve a 'double articulation' (Silverstone and Hirsch 1992, p. 4) whereby the expression of the technology occurs at the scale of local culture, but a further articulation occurs in daily life as individuals or households use the technology, 'incorporated and redefined' through the prism of each household's values and interests (Silverstone, Hirsch, and Morley 1992, p. 21). This earlier formulation of domestication theory focused on the single event of the purchase as the household's 'take-up or rejection' of new technologies (most notably television). The networked technologies explored within this PhD, however, are largely already a part of everyday life: the choice for their adoption is a foregone conclusion for those who have been communicating via mobile and internet platforms for years, but the negotiation and re-negotiation of their use is an everyday process. For this reason, the aspects of domestication theory that will be adopted within this research relate to a more nuanced processual approach to domestication, while only a few aspects of the consumption dimension will be adopted.

Domestication theory is more useful in Haddon's reformulation of domestication as a *process* of negotiation and the 'social shaping' of technology occurring through negotiation between individuals within a household, as well as between individual households, in a way that is distinct from analysis of the sites and practices of consumption (Haddon 2007, p. 27). Technological practices involved in domestication are part of a process of differentiation between households while at the same time are a

process of ‘integration’ of each household into a consumer economy and value-based community (Haddon 2003, p. 46). Media practices function, then, to *differentiate* between households while also *integrating* those households within wider social contexts.

Within this notion of consumption, there is a movement of the technological object from public to private domains, and this movement allows for its ‘double articulation’ (Silverstone and Hirsch 1992, p. 4). It is worth noting though, that these processes are to a certain extent relational: households express their choice of media practices relative to other households. The appropriation of a publicly available media product for domestication within the household is not a one-way process. The manner in which a household expresses their domesticated media practice involves movement of the domesticated product from the private domain back to the public. The media practice, now domesticated, is different from what it was on the consumer market, and the public scale of social relations between households is also a different type of public domain than the general consumer market.

Such movement from private to a different form of public shows an interdependency between the two levels of articulation and a translation of media practices that is occurring from the private domain of each household back to the public domain of the local context, a translation that is not captured within the notion of consumption alone. In this manner, domestication theory presents a way of understanding the relationship between processes occurring at the scale of the macro-level of markets and communities and at the micro-level of individuals and households (Haddon 2003, p. 46).

The re-articulation and collective negotiation of the technology across the private and public boundary and between micro- and macro-level scales carries a useful precursor for the interdependency of individual communication practice involved in the notion of collective instrumentalisation (proposed earlier in this chapter). In contrast to domestication theory, however, this thesis does not focus on family units (nor on the collective television viewing habits of the original study) and instead seeks to develop a unit of investigation through which the negotiation of technologies can be explored through networked relationships and practices.

From this consumption orientation, however, there is an additional dimension to the instrumentalisation of technologies that will be adopted, wherein the expression of technology is effected by ‘consumer perceptions’ about technologies and their use; which are often somewhat pre-formed by market and media discourse (Haddon 2003, p. 44). Though this thesis is not interested in the solely market-formed conceptions of network technology, there is a possible role for the individual’s perception of a technology within collective instrumentalisation. Wendy Chun (2006, p. 23) argued that there are ‘slippages’ between the perception of the technologies and the design of the device, whereby ‘extramedial representations’ of technologies act as another element of the technological frame as much as the interface, hardware, and software do. As she explains, in reference to online platforms, many media technologies ‘existed within the public’s imagination’ before norms of use were developed, and thus, an imagined use had an effect on the realities of use that took form in everyday life.

3.4.3 Social Network Analysis and Diffusion of Innovation

Social Network Analysis, popularised by scholars such as Granovetter (1973) and Wellman (1998 as cited in Boyd and Ellison 2007, p. 9), provides many insights into the realm of diffuse social relations through analysis of the representations of social life as networks. This strain of analysis seems to posit the network as a domain itself through not only a reduction of everyday contexts to network structures but also a reduction of individuals, whose actions, motives, and experiences are removed from an analysis represented only by relations between individuals within a network. Wellman argues that ‘the world is composed of networks not groups’ (1998 as cited in Boyd and Ellison 2007, p. 9), which drastically alters the unit of analysis but also changes the ways of thinking about the negotiation of practices and relationships.

Granovetter explores the role and strength of weak, as compared to strong, ties between individuals, the sort of relationships that extend beyond and through the traditional domains of home and work. Paralleling a move away from the alarmist accounts of the disintegrating home explored in chapter one, Granovetter suggests a shift away from the conception of weak ties between individuals as leading to

‘alienation’ and ‘fragmentation’ compared to ‘strong ties’, which were thought to breed ‘local cohesion’ (Granovetter 1973, p. 1378). He argues that ‘...weak ties, far from creating alienation...are actually vital for an individual’s integration into modern society’ (Granovetter 1983, p. 203).

While earlier studies of closed groups and communities focused on cohesion, they explored the mechanisms that structured group dynamics, such as reputation and trust, which required a closed rather than open structure to the group (Coleman 1988, p. 107). It was in these contexts of closed groups, though not within the arena of social network analysis, that Bourdieu’s (1986) theory of ‘social capital’ was developed. This argument set forth that there will always be something more to the shifting of social relations, ‘residue and not just the flow’ (Ling 2008a, p. 26) that builds up between individuals. This is posited against the notion of a completely diffused, completely discontinuous, instantaneous, interchangeability of agents represented by the perfect ‘mechanical equilibria’ of a social structure composed of only individuals without groups (Bourdieu 1986, p. 241). What forms of residue exist, however, outside of these closed groups, in wider multifaceted networks?

A role for weak ties suggests that rather than alienation there was ‘autonomy generated by conflicting associations...for an individual whose network spans the holes’ between groups (Burt 2001, p. 208). Those who possessed weak ties in their social network began to be viewed as those ‘best placed to diffuse...innovation’ (Granovetter 1973, p. 1364) and who were able to ‘observe innovations and activities in adjoining social clusters’ (Ling 2008a, p. 31). Spanning ‘structural holes’ between networks began to be understood as a source of social capital in open rather than closed networks and as a form of integration between those closed groups (Burt 2001, p. 208).

This foray into Social Network Analysis helps clarify some of the challenges that remain for this chapter in understanding the negotiation of communication practices beyond the context of small groups and closed domains. The micro scale of interaction between individuals translates into interactions between larger sets of individuals, which provides for an understanding of change again at numerous sites on the micro scale (Granovetter 1973, p. 1360). The network is not a site of change but

offers a representation of the processual patterning of change, the translation, movement, and feedback of activity and knowledge between scales of change.

Such translation has echoes of the movement and translation of media practices between the public and private and back to public contexts highlighted above with regard to the domestication of media products. These explorations describe the diffusion of innovation, once again, as being both differentiating and integrating when analysis spans the ‘micro-macro-bridge’ of processes throughout ‘interpersonal networks’ (Granovetter 1973, p. 1360). Without a role for the individual as a source of decisions and actions, however, this form of analysis provides a structural representation of interaction between individuals that can complement but not integrate wholly with an exploration of phenomenological everyday life.

3.5 The Everyday Networked Context

The concern of this PhD, however, is not the power structures of employment, nor the negotiation of technology within a family unit, nor the abstract functions of network relations, but the negotiation of communication technology that emerges from the social realm and crosses each of these domains of work, of home, and of networks. In the contemporary negotiation of networked practices and their role in everyday life, however, something more is occurring than what has been discussed above. There is a form to such negotiation within social relations that is largely under-conceptualised, save for Elias’ work. Elias’ conception of social change through the interdependency of individual practices and actions (1998, p. 72) offers a level of investigation separated from the isolated contexts of analysis such as home, work, or network structures. His notion of figurations provides a possible form to the interweaving of social practices involved in the collective instrumentalisation of technology.

David Morley identifies the current challenge for researchers in ‘how to re-situate’ the domestication of media technology amidst a ‘process of the technologically mediated dislocation of domesticity itself’ (2006, p. 22). Haddon points to the role of the mobile phone in extending relations beyond and through the home and suggests that many of the lessons learned from the study of domestication can be adopted but that the shifting nature of the household domain calls for a new unit of analysis to be considered

(Haddon 2003, p. 50). This involves, firstly, the recognition that there are other sites in everyday life where something akin to domestication may be occurring. While he relates to physical spaces such as a hacker club, the workplace could also offer a very conceivable domain of domestication. Yet, it is the 'personal addressability' of mobile phones that shifts attention away from spatially defined domains of the home and work to focus on 'person to person networking' that interrupts the accordance of activity to specific spatial domains (Ling and Donner 2009, p. 137, Ito, Okabe, and Anderson 2007, n.p.).

Richard Ling (2008a, p. 163) studies small group dynamics comparing household group dynamics with closely knit groups of teenage friends. Ling often focuses upon the 'bounded solidarity' of such close groups and how communication practices are an instrument of fostering trust within the group and group cohesion. Within these studies, communication practices emerge as the manifestation of *and* site of negotiation of a 'group ethos' (Ling 2008a, pp. 163, 180, Ling 2008b, p. 4). Our challenge will be to understand communication practices in a similar way but without the projection of those practices onto a specific or defined group.

Ling cites Berger and Kellner's argument that 'every social relationship requires objectification': where the subjective meanings and actions of the individual become objective social facts to the individuals involved, they 'become common property and thereby massively objective' (1964 as cited in Ling 2008a, p. 162). Similarly, domestication theory suggests that media interactions and practices can also be 'objectified in the same or similar ways as material artefacts' (Silverstone, Hirsch, and Morley 1992, p. 25). In Ling's work, the individual subject's actions become an objective object for negotiation by the group: those involved in communication within a small group objectify aspects of each other's communication practice as something external to the acting individuals. Once perceived as common property (metaphorically) of the group, communication practices can be collectively negotiated at the group level as opposed to each separate individual in isolation choosing their own actions.

Both the domestication approach and Ling's approach remain focused on small groups and do not address negotiation of collective practices across the numerous and diffuse

clusters of individuals interspersed with sometimes overlapping and sometimes fragmented multiple small groups. Community, like group and household, also proves to be too restrictive a unit. Craig Calhoun (1998) argued that a great deal of attention in early analysis of online practices optimistically searched for formation of a 'virtual community', when what was manifest was no more than an 'enclave' where certain types of interaction, certain types of communication practices were clustered together (1998, p. 384). These enclaves of activity are not clearly defined, lacking defined boundaries, and without the solidarity of a community.

Sherry Turkle (2011) recently recanted her emphasis on online communities, suggesting that while online communities do exist, a great deal of online interaction and online social networking is mislabelled. Turkle admits, 'I think I spoke too quickly. I used the word community for the world of weak ties' (2011, p. 239). Turkle metaphorically associates many of the new domains of communication with the public places where people meet beyond the confines of the private sphere: the cafes, parks, and the barbershops of previous generations that acted as 'points of assembly for acquaintances and neighbours, the people who made up the landscape of life' (Turkle 2011, p. 239). Turkle and Calhoun are not replacing the integrated domains of household or small groups with that of a community or a defined public, neither are they replacing it with notions of an anonymous multitude outside of private places. Communication practices do not belong exclusively within any one of these domains, but to scales that are linked and subsumed within the context of communication practices, blurring these spaces and domains along a spectrum of private to public, of known to anonymous, of integrated to diffuse.

Without reference to any objectified unit (household, group, community, or public) around which practice can be negotiated, I propose that the everyday use of technology itself becomes the common property through which interdependent individual communication practices can be negotiated. This form of negotiated technological expression occurs, for example, in Open Source software communities (Kelty 2008, p. 28). Kelty outlines a relationship between individuals that is manifest through their negotiation of the very technology that supports the relationship. He calls these forms of association 'recursive' whereby the form of interaction is both 'a moral and technical order' and those involved are participating in 'making, maintaining, and

modifying' the technological means through which they express themselves together but which also 'constrains their everyday practical commitments, their ability to...compose a common world' (Kelty 2008, pp. 28, 29).

This notion of a recursive relationship as a form of association has a lot to offer. When interaction is 'constituted by a shared concern for maintaining the means of association', then each use of technology becomes 'a kind of argument, for a specific kind of order' to interaction and of everyday life (Kelty 2008, p. 29). If this degree of awareness within recursive forms of association is present in everyday communication, then the everyday acts of connection have the potential to be both technological and social arguments for specific kinds of association. I am proposing the possibility for an active dimension to collective instrumentalisation, whereby an individual's interpersonal communication practices are acts of participation in the collective negotiation of communication technologies and everyday life.

3.6 Chapter Conclusion

This brings us to the third research question, presented below with the other two, that were posed in earlier chapters. Over the first three chapters of this thesis, I have explored the subjects of presence, temporality, and technological expression as landmarks around which this research is oriented. The following chapter outlines the methodological approach, participant selection, and tools of the fieldwork and analysis. Chapters five through nine present the empirical findings of this thesis, followed by a concluding chapter. As mentioned earlier, these chapters will roughly breakdown topically into the individual's relationship to networked technology in their environment (chapter five), the individual's interpersonal practices as embodied by and occurring through networked practices (chapters six and seven), and the changing relationship and negotiation between the individual self, technologies, and the realm of everyday social conduct (chapters eight and nine).

The three research questions, one relative to each of the first three chapters are below:

RQ ONE: In the contemporary multi-modal context of networked communication, how are presence and absence experienced and understood across the different forms of everyday interpersonal interaction?

RQ TWO: What role does time play in the everyday context of networked communication and how are individual and collective manifestations of such temporality perceived, reflected upon, and negotiated as part of everyday life?

RQ THREE: In the course of everyday interpersonal communication, what forms of negotiation of conduct and/or technology are taking place between individuals and how does this relate to possible collective practices?

In the ubiquity of and dependency on networked communication practices in everyday life, individuals have an opportunity, through connection and communication with others, to participate in the expression of, the negotiation of, and formation of wider aspects of everyday life. In that this would be a collectively instrumentalised expression of everyday values, concerns, and desire, then networked practices could be social acts and potentially part of wider social changes in an era when the spaces for such acts have atrophied. This is a possibility to hold in mind as we explore the empirical material of this thesis, a possibility to which I will return in the conclusion.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Given the theoretical focus on co-presence, time, and the negotiation of technology, the chosen research approach and set of tools needed to engage with and provide access to such notions as they are manifest and understood in the everyday experience of networked communication. My research methods have been chosen to access the temporal flow of each day without major interruption to or skewing of participants' communication practices. The methods have been chosen to engage with the experience and thoughts of the participants by encouraging reflections and reflexivity with regard to their own practices. Below, I present the relevant methodological considerations for this research through three sections: methodological foundation, methodological tools, and research design. While it is not an exhaustive mapping of all possibilities, the tools outlined below represent a range of appropriate methods for the scale of this research.

4.1 Methodological Foundation

A decision to explore 'the meaning of experiences', as I have made, is itself a strong orienting foundation that 'informs what will be studied and how it will be studied' (Cresswell 1998, p. 86). The social world cannot simply be accepted as 'an unproblematic given', and this research will be guided by the premise that the social realm is 'actively constructed' by people through 'the lived experience of everyday life', but as Bauer and Gaskell (2000, p. 38) remind us 'not under conditions of their own making'. Human experience is thus taken as 'an inherent structural property' of the social world (Cresswell 1998, p. 86). The generation of an interpretative framework for the experiential accounts of individuals has largely depended on the selected approach. Both the 'phenomenological study' (Cresswell 1998, p. 51) and 'grounded theory method' (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p. 102) allow for the exploration of 'lived experiences' across several individuals. These approaches differ in relation to the method and nature of the conclusions they produce, but largely centre on the experience of the individual as accessible through that individual's account. This rests on the validity of their experience and accounts thereof. These approaches contrast an approach towards human activity as observable phenomenon performed and produced

by individuals. Rather than being based on the individual's account, human interaction from this perspective is only accessible through the observations of individuals by the researcher. These approaches all, however, assume that conduct is purposeful action worthy of investigation as an entry point to the phenomenon (Mondala 2006 as cited in McIlvenny, Broth, and Haddington 2009, p. 1883). Many communication studies reviewed below, similar to this research, have complemented phenomenological methods with observational methods. A common pitfall, however, is the unchecked focus on the functions and capabilities of media tools. This often leads, deterministically, to an attempt of objectifying the 'effect' of a technology.

Given my object of study, there are some practical limits to the possible methods. As I am focusing on individuals connected to numerous others through networked technologies, it would be impossible to engage the selection as a 'cultural-sharing group' of an ethnographic study (Cresswell 1998, p. 58). The narrow range of practice and experiences involved in interpersonal interaction would also necessitate a considerable adaptation of the ethnography's 'holistic' portrait, shifting from that of a cultural-sharing group towards an abstracted ethnography to 'follow the thing' or potentially 'follow the metaphor' (Marcus 1998 as cited in Bird 2003, p. 186). Even 'multi-sited ethnographies' (Hannerz 2003, p. 202) would still demand for the scope to widen beyond the subtle reflections relative to communication practices. This study does not therefore employ an ethnographic approach.

As Duck (1991, p. 157) suggests, if theoretical grounding is based on the phenomenological aspect of media experience, then methods must necessarily be concerned not with 'what happens' but with what the individual experiences as happening. The validity of methods from a phenomenological approach, then, is not the accuracy of reporting behaviour and relational events, but whether or not they can validly claim to access the experiences of the individual. The underlying tenets of phenomenological study revolve around ideas that the reality of object, practice, or event is 'inextricably related to one's consciousness of it' (Cresswell 1998, p. 53). This involves an attempt for research to avoid (as much as possible) the outright objectification of social practices by placing primary interest on 'how ordinary members of society constitute the world of everyday life' (Creswell 1998, p. 53) or at least as it is represented in the accounts of that experience those individuals give. This

focus involves a concerted effort on behalf of the researcher to bracket out my own experience and preconceived meanings so as not to skew the development of meanings formed through and within social practices by others.

The priority of phenomenological studies rests with individual experiences and meanings over the shared construction of those meanings within a group. This does not mean, however, that phenomenological analysis of a single subject's experience is not submitted for inter-subject analysis, nor within the group and environmental contexts of practices, but that the single subject's experience maintains an *a priori* validity despite group and contextual analysis (Cresswell 1998, p. 55).

Glaser and Strauss' (1967) 'grounded theory method' is an attempt to systematise phenomenological research. This research employs many aspects of the grounded theory method, first and foremost the exploratory perspective. This research, however, does not adopt the tools for causal or quantifiable theories often associated grounded theory. Considering the multifaceted and highly idiosyncratic nature of the daily routines and communication practices of individuals, the possible quantification involved in the analytical 'coding' and 'testing' of variable relationships will not be used.

4.2 Coding and Analysis

This grounded theory method was used to focus upon the 'conditions, consequences, dimensions, types and processes' (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p. 104) of everyday social practices, stopping short of declaring the causes, effects, and outcomes of changing phenomena (Strauss and Corbin 1990, p. 99). This form of analysis engages with congruent but not identical practices such as the range of networked practices and perceptions of technology investigated by this research, whereas complete casual theories would need to be restricted to a more precise single phenomenon (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p. 104). The 'constant comparative method' of grounded theory can more realistically approach this topic, for it is 'concerned with generating and plausibly suggesting (but not provisionally testing) many categories, properties, and hypotheses' about a specific phenomenon (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p. 104). As opposed to deriving a theory from academic and technical literature, then 'proving' it

by locating it with phenomenological studies, earlier reading provided a ‘theoretical sensitivity’ that allowed me to frame research and recognise concepts within the data (Strauss and Corbin 1990, p. 47). While this sensitivity is derived from both literature and an appreciation of the general phenomenological approach, the constant comparative method of grounded theory also ensured a continual but systematic interaction with the research data throughout fieldwork.

My fieldwork was roughly divided into three phases, between which coding and analysis of data took place so as to constantly develop my theoretical sensitivity before returning to the field. All aspects of the study were transcribed and collated alongside field notes for coding using NVivo 8, which is an analysis and coding software for qualitative and mixed-methods research. After the initial round of fieldwork, I used an ‘open coding’ approach wherein the data was ‘marked’ and ‘broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared...and questions asked’ according to ‘emergent analytical themes’ (Seale 2004, pp. 242-243). I continued through the second phase and third phase of fieldwork with a new sensitivity to the emerging themes, refining the scope of what the research would be investigating. After each of these phases, new material was similarly open-coded for emergent themes but with greater emphasis on ‘axial coding’, which involves intensive work on single categories to ‘examine how it connects to other categories’ and to better understand the ‘conditions, contexts, action/interaction strategies, and consequences’ of those categories. It was only after the third phase of fieldwork that there were clear signs of the ‘saturation of data’ (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p. 104) with a lack of new themes and few new connections concerning the specific themes that were consistent across participants. At this point, the final coding scheme was devised and all data were recoded. This allowed for the final stage of open coding in the constant comparative method, which is ‘selective coding’, where ‘fully fledged theories emerge’ by organising the coding scheme around ‘core categories’ before revisiting the data (Seale 2004, p. 243).

4.3 Scope and Participant Selection

Two aspects of the research design, which have been carefully developed, are the construction of the sample selection and the scope of investigation. The final selection includes 35 individuals between the ages 22 and 46. After a re-assessment of the

scope early in the investigation, this selection was weighted to focus on the ages of 22–35. These participants use multiple forms of networked communication technologies in both their social and work life.

Bauer and Gaskell (2000, p. 41) explicitly prefer the term ‘selecting’ over ‘sampling’ to avoid the connotation of statistical sampling and representative populations often associated with the latter. The selection, then, within this thesis is generalised to a theoretical interpretation, not to a wider existing population (Jorgensen 1989, p. 20): ‘the investigator’s goal is to expand and generalize theories (analytical generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization)’ (Yin 1994, p. 11). The use of grounded theory parallels the exploratory or ‘revelatory case’ of phenomenon for which theory is relatively non-existent or underdeveloped (Yin 1994, p. 39). Strauss and Corbin’s (1990, p. 37) formulation of grounded theory includes an underlying provision that concepts for the phenomenon in question have largely not been identified. The application of grounded theory, in this instance, has sought the discovery of new ‘relevant categories...and plausible relationships among them’ (Strauss and Corbin 1990, p. 49). The selection of participants has been ‘non-probability based’ and ‘purposive’: participants were selected for the exploration of a ‘range of opinions, the different representations’ of the phenomenon (Bauer and Gaskell 2000, p. 41). It was necessary to define ‘relevant milieus from which to make a selection’ (Bauer and Gaskell 2000, p. 41) and identify participants through a blend of opportunistic, criteria-based, and maximum variation strategies (Cresswell 1998, pp. 123, 199).

The initial participant selection design was based on all available information and research prior to fieldwork, and subsequent selection focused on emerging categories, those for which the data was still lacking but deemed relevant (Bauer and Gaskell 2000, p. 43). An upper age limit was initially present through a lack of response by those in their late forties and beyond. From the first cohort of participants, however, age did prove to be a determining factor in communication habits. Those in their late thirties and early forties had drastically different and incongruent lifestyles and communication practices compared to those who were younger. While for some of the older participants, there was a comparable degree of experimentation with new technologies in the last five years, these practices seemed to have little role in the day-

to-day management of their lives. When change in communication practices occurred, it was singular and restricted to certain a part of their lives rather than negotiated in tandem with changes to other media practices. This contrasted the state of flux and constant re-negotiation of communication practices within the lives of younger participants.

The scope of the investigation was re-calibrated with the aim of further enrolment of young adults to adults aged 22–35 (from the initial selection aim of ages 22–50) of who offer both the level of media literacy and a variety of transitional and stable social roles alongside a variety of work practices and daily schedules. In consideration of this, the remaining selection aimed for a more even spread of individuals in their early twenties, late twenties, and early thirties. Approaching the second and then final cohort, equal numbers were ensured between genders as well as inclusion of those transitioning in careers and those transitioning into parenthood.

Emerging from the early fieldwork, the scope of this research was consolidated around the relevance of negotiating changing networked practices for these three age groups of participants despite the different social and life-stage challenges. The youngest group in their early twenties were largely acclimatising themselves to the new demands of a changing social and work responsibilities, yet many have lived quite some time with mobile phones, laptop computers, and public or shared access to the internet. Those in their late twenties faced greater work pressures, changing priorities, and a comfort in experimentation and re-negotiation of networked practices. While those in their early thirties have sophisticated and more established communication strategies coupled with a later stage in career development and the social changes that entails. They specifically describe embracing and following changes in the communication environment and are expected to do so socially and professionally. They place this within a longer context of change and negotiation, through comparison with their early twenties ‘before mobile phones’ rather than only ‘before’ internet-ready mobile phones as mentioned by the younger groups. Across all three of these groups, practices and strategies of adjustment within a changing media environment are central issues at stake in their everyday life, and thus, the change in scope of the investigation was justified.

Beyond these age groups, to consider teenagers and students would be outside the remit of this research, having to account for entirely different daily routines, priorities, and levels of responsibility. A teenage age group as well as those nearing or past retirement age could have vastly different levels of media literacy and access to communication tools that would call for a much larger comparative study or a dedicated research study on that age group.

A subset of five advanced or specialist users, made up only of those who use communication technology in a professional or near professional way was added to the primary selection of thirty individuals. The substance of their interviews and dairies is qualitatively different from the remainder of the participants. Reflection upon communication issues is part of the daily lives of this subset, whereas such reflectivity had to be fostered and facilitated in a very different way for the remainder of the participants. In this way, though these five individuals proved difficult to retain beyond a single interview, preferring informal follow-up conversations, the data produced within these few elements are dense, compelling, and valid in themselves as an object of study.

4.3.1 Minimum Requirements and Selection Limits

The scope of this study, its aim, is directed towards certain practical conditions regarding the selection of participants involving a minimum requirement that participants use networked communication tools across multiple locations and through a mobile phone. Baym, Zhang, and Lin (2004, p. 305), similarly, established a minimum requirement for their sample of individuals who identify themselves as someone who ‘socializes over the internet’. After initial pilot interviews, the minimum requirement was eased from using an internet-ready mobile to the possession of any type of mobile phone, but access to and use of multiple internet-connected devices for work and social life was added as a requirement. Working with participants who do not have a piece of technology similar to the mobile phone, or those who only use networked technologies in one domain of life but not another would have unsustainably widened the scope of the investigation. The lack of networked communication for a large portion of the day (for instance, while at work, while at

home, or while on the move) would have severely diluted the initial theoretical integrity of the project itself.

Following Ito, Okabe, and Anderson's (2007 draft) suggestion, I also decided that the selection would benefit by focusing on individuals whose mobility and interaction cross both social and work arenas. While Baym, Zhang, and Lin (2004, p. 305) cite college students as 'pioneers' of social internet use for whom such interactions are commonplace, I expected new graduates and young employed adults to likely share this media literacy, while potentially having greater financial access to mobile phones and computing devices necessary for economical wireless internet use. Drawing on this, I set a minimum age for participants in order to focus on individuals in pursuit of employment and career (including those pursuing career and work responsibilities alongside part-time education) at and above the age of 22 to ensure the diversity of their demands and responsibilities with regard to communication.

This does, however, impose an inherent bias to the selection that parallels certain socio-economic divides most readily manifest by occupation types, the details of which are presented in chapter two. The selection, however, was not set up to interrogate the existing digital divide in Britain between those who are online and those who are not, nor was its goal to represent all types of occupations, because the networked practices in question have been found to occur substantially less as part of administrative roles and even more rarely in blue-collar occupations (Dutton and Blank 2011, p. 10).

This research is, however, interested in the everyday experience of those within an environment of multiple communication possibilities. Resources, access, and media literacy were not even throughout the selection of participants, but individuals would not be viable participants if these variables precluded their participation in everyday networked communication. While the opportunity for access must be present for participants, so must the expectations and motivation for participation in networked communication for both social and work arenas. Having said this, the selection has aimed to provide a breadth of social and work-related lifestyles within this group.

The differentiating factors of the selection include the stability of their income and position, the industry and specifics of their role, and their daily routines and movements. This spectrum ranges from the creative sector, service sector, retail, administration, media, PR, government, IT, sales, consultancy, the energy sector, finance, and law. The daily routine of individuals extends from those who are based in their home including one individual on maternity leave and another who is a stay-at-home mother who does freelance work, those who do shift work with both regular and anti-social hours, evening work, regular working hours, to those who travel abroad consistently for work.

It should be mentioned, however, that this research was conducted at a very specific time of economic recession in Britain. Within the selection, there are several precarious workers, who despite self-presentation as one profession or another were cobbling together part-time service industry work with temporary, freelance, and unpaid work in the occupation of their choice. While this was particularly the case for those under the age of thirty, there were participants from all age groups who were underemployed at or less than the part-time level while they searched for supplemental and temporal earnings and unpaid experience.

4.3.2 Recruiting Participants

Gaining access to participants was initially perceived as a potential obstacle. Several strategies were employed, not simply to ensure a substantial number of participants but to ensure a balance. While I exploited a number of personal social networks including different former workplaces and educational institutions, the imbalance towards specific occupational and education backgrounds was understood as a potential problem. As a counter measure, a number of public requests, posts, and adverts for participation were made and these proved successful.

As a part of a casual debrief, the initial four pilot participants were asked about their experience of the study, what could have been better, but also what interested them about the reflection on their day-to-day life. This information helped compose an

advert or invitation for participation⁷ that accurately represented the experience of those participants, but an advert that was also not steeped in my own academic interests and language. This invitation was posted on the UK Civil Service Intranet and in posts to places of my own former employment, temporary work, volunteering, and internships. These included a variety of media firms from mainstream magazines to finance and creative publications, five different NHS trusts, as well as third-sector and other community organisations such as social work, rights agencies, theatres, and community groups. Where I was permitted physical access to the buildings, I would post leaflets on bulletins boards in canteens and work rooms for the different staff groups: senior and junior executive roles, administrative roles, and site management. There was no response from these site management roles.

I also made a series of wholly public postings on Gumtree, Craigslist, Mumsnet, and publicly searchable Facebook groups/events and Twitter posts. Several bloggers and micro-bloggers were also asked to post on technology, artistic, cultural, and general community blogs and forums for a two-month period in late 2009. Most of these posts and request were re-posted in the summer of 2010 and again in the winter over 2010–2011 in an attempt to encourage more participation. Participants, themselves, often provided the online and physical locations that were included in each subsequent call for participation.

The success, however, of finding participants rested on the genuinely positive experience reported by those who had taken part in the study and who were subsequently crucial to finding more participants. The majority of my participants offered to re-post my advert both electronically and physically at their workplace and have mass emailed members of their social network whom they felt might be interested. Many enlisted a spouse, a friend, a former classmate, or work colleagues. While the adverts or posts produced one participant if any, this snowball effect accounted for more than half of my participants.

4.3.3 Overview of the Comparative Value of the Selection

⁷ Please refer to Appendix Two to see the advert.

Importantly, for this research, it was essential that the selected participants were managing *the dual priorities* of a social as well as work life in the major urban centre of London. Many of the participants were single and a substantial amount were in what they describe as long-term yet unmarried relationships; this is an increasingly large section of the population in the UK as reported by the Office of National Statistics (ONS 2010, n.p.). While there are a few married participants, overall, most are childless and are thus not living in the traditional family environment. This is also an increasingly large section of the population: ‘childlessness is occurring increasingly often among healthy females who are living within marriage or cohabiting and who are sexually active’ (ONS 2009, n.p.).

Within the selection, however, I have aimed for and achieved a balance between genders, and I have aimed to include individuals born in London, those from other cities in the UK, and foreign-born residents and/or citizens. With London accounting for ‘nearly 40% of all foreign born UK residents’ (ONS 2010, n.p.), I felt it necessary that each of these three categories is substantially present within the selection. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) states that ‘London has a relatively young labour force, with 41 per cent aged under 35 compared with 36 per cent nationally’ (ONS 2010, n.p.). The selection of largely young employed inhabitants of London, managing both work and social life, meeting the necessary requirements for mobile phone and internet use provided a necessary focus to this research but also presents clear limits to the selection. This focus offers interesting insights into everyday life within the contemporary urban communication environment without claiming universal application.

4.4 Fieldwork Design

The fieldwork employed a multi-modal diary study and two interviews. Other methods, such as the ‘Thinking-Aloud Task’ (to be discussed in detail later) was contingent on these as a foundation. Two interviews provided a longitudinal dimension to the study. The first interview covered biographical information, providing some preliminary investigation into many of the central issues of presence, temporality, and management of the various mobile and networked practices, and this relates to demands of everyday life. This also provided at least a limited direction and

sensitising of the participants to the focus of the research prior to the diary study. The first interview was a suitable venue for brief hypothetical thinking-aloud tasks facilitated by myself, which served to illustrate to the participant what sorts of practices were to be covered in the diary study.

4.4.1 Piloting and Method Development

Pre-piloting of vocabulary that was to be integrated into the interview guide showed that efforts were needed to replace technical and academic words with more casual everyday phrases so as not to alienate or intimidate the participant, nor lead them to thinking that I am interested in the technical aspect of use, rather than their everyday experience.

Feedback from the first pilot participant insisted that interview length and organisation needed to be streamlined. There were several sections of questions regarding home and work life and technology use that overlapped to a great extent. The interview was revised to embed discussion of daily routines, situated daily locations and movement with communications practice within a 'Day in the Life' section: an elicitation of a regular weekday and regular weekend day of the participant. This effectively shortened the interview guide by half. Employing these changes, feedback from the second pilot participant said the interview length was fine and that no material had been repeated. After the first few pilot participants, I found it very helpful to make clear assurances that this is a collaborative process and explain what a generative study is, stressing that the research is essentially about the participant's experiences, rather than proving or disproving an already established theory. In the secondary interview, while I used a consistent set of reflective questions about media practices and the diary task in general, the majority of the questions were crafted with extra care by building upon entries from the diary or previous interview statements in order to avoid leading the participants.

4.4.2 Interview Design

The interview not only served as an opportunity for direct questions on key issues but also to reflect upon and contextualise the information from other methods, such as

researcher-absent diary tasks. It was also the setting for further elaboration of statements with insufficient context and re-engagement with artificial or over-contextualised reports from participants (Zimmerman and Wieder 1977, p. 488, Back, Cohen, and Keith 1999, p. 5, Couldry, Livingstone, and Markham 2007, pp. 43, 49). The interview also provided the setting to conduct thinking-aloud tasks.

As this research is not oriented towards the validation of a theory or concept, the interviews were explicitly framed as collaboration; rapport and quality of the data was based on expressing genuine interest in and validation of the experiences and reflections of the interviewee (Lindlof and Grodin 1990, p. 20). The openness of a semi-structured interview sustains the interviewee's participatory role in relation to the flow and direction of the interview (Murphy 2008, p. 278). Both open-ended and direct questions provide an opportunity to delve deeper into descriptive answers, where probing for clarification and detail becomes a reflexive process guided by the interview structure to engage with experiences the participants have potentially never discussed or thought about (Lindlof and Grodin 1990, p. 18). While semi-structured interviews are prone to digressions and unexpected answers, the accepted interview setting already provides a level of structured deference to the interviewer's guidance (Couldry, Livingstone, and Markham 2007, p. 43). Following the constant comparative method of grounded theory, interview transcripts and notes were revisited, as insights and thoughts accumulated throughout the process, and follow-up questions in the secondary interview were often amended to explore the formulation of working concepts, though the core interview guide was not changed (Bauer and Gaskell 2000, p. 44, Zimmerman and Wieder 1977, p. 491).

The primary interview breaks down into four sections: Biographical Information; Day in the Life, Use of Technology, and then concludes with the Thinking-Aloud Task. Beginning with biographical information, the participant simply describes their basic profile, their recent living situation, and occupation, briefly and casually. The 'Day in the Life' is a narration elicitation task that asks the participants to walk the interviewer through a typical weekday and weekend day, with a focus on any movement, activities, and communication, whether face-to-face or technologically mediated. This involves morning routines, commuting, arriving at work, general work activities, preparation for leaving work, and evening routines. The weekend narratives are often all different.

This provides a useful indirect opportunity for the participants to place their use of media technologies within daily spatial and temporal contexts before I ask them directly to describe what media tools they use for communication, with whom, and for what, in the 'Use of Technology' questions of the first interview. The 'Day in the Life' also provides a balanced alternative to the 'Thinking-Aloud Task', which, as I will discuss, was not always successful. As an alternative, it allowed the participants to construct the narrative themselves, with the hypothetical abstraction of an 'average' day. Despite the fact that most participants chose to describe the day of the interview or the day before as an example of an average day, their control of these choices provided a much more comfortable and reflective context than the 'Thinking-Aloud Task'.

4.4.3 Thinking-Aloud Task

The 'thinking-aloud method' involves the explication of thought processes during a given task (Ericsson and Simon 1984, p. 79). This offers another avenue to approach the subtle and internal processes of the individual regarding how they manage multiple and overlapping media practices. This task involves focusing on lower-level verbalisation and description of normally internal mental processes and covert actions, such as those mobile interface movements and the changing foci of attention. This can extend to descriptions of thought processes, attempts by the individual to explain those thoughts with motives, and other relevant information that would otherwise be ignored while performing the task. While this directs attention to the mental procedures of any task, and may ultimately change the thought processes related to this task, it affords rare access to, and provides for the unfolding of, mental processes normally hidden through the automaticity of such actions.

The primary difficulties with the thinking-aloud method, however, are that the participant may not be conscious of the mental processes and their ability to verbalise those processes may be limited. If the task relies heavily on highly automatic processes, the thinking-aloud method may not be suitable, as participants may have engrained 'mental shortcuts' of which they are not aware (Shapiro 1994, p. 3). Ericsson and Simon (1984, p. 81) suggested two instructions essential for any thinking-aloud task: first, participants must attempt to eliminate any self-censorship of

their thought processes and, second, participants must be encouraged to give complete and thorough explanations to follow each thought. It is also essential to ask participants to report thought and not explain thoughts, in order to minimise tendencies towards deduced mental shortcuts (Shapiro 1994, p. 4). Anonymity and validity of every report for the research were stressed to preserve naturalness of reporting. This helps avoid impression management on the part of the participant who may feel that they are being judged as having reported ‘correctly’ or ‘incorrectly’ (Shapiro 1994, p. 5).

The ‘Thinking-Aloud Task’ is useful for communications research in two ways: for investigating the social construction of interactions and the mental processes in the use of communication technologies (Shapiro 1994, p. 11). Given the potential for highly idiosyncratic verbalisation, flexible analysis of the transcripts is more useful than stricter content analysis codes (Shapiro 1994, p. 9).

I quickly understood during piloting that for any thinking-aloud task, as the researcher, I should be sitting across from the participant so that I cannot see the computer screen or mobile device they are using. If I was sitting beside the participant, it would have hindered regular use and the participant either would have felt self-conscious or may have awaited guidance and instruction. This also ensures that the thinking-aloud task requires the participant to actually describe everything they are doing and everything to which they are directing their attention, rather than omitting information because they rely on the researcher’s gaze. This tactic also precludes their worry that the researcher may interpret their description as correct or incorrect. Several times, however, the participant would request or insist that I look at something so that they could better explain what they were doing, and of course, I did not refuse the opportunity for direct observation.

I found it very useful to include both real tasks and hypothetical tasks in the thinking-aloud sequence. Real tasks included such things as checking your mobile phone messages, email inbox, or social networking sites if the participant would do so at that time of day, having just come home from work, or just finished dinner, for example. Often during the first 20 minutes of the interview, the individuals were receiving texts and phone calls, which provided an excellent opportunity for the thinking aloud task,

‘If we had a five minute break, what would you do?’ Invariably the thinking-aloud task then involved the description of needing to check their mobile phone, filter through and decide how to reply or otherwise react to the missed interactions. I also proposed hypothetical thinking-aloud tasks but asked the individual to actually go through the steps of the hypothetical communication routine on an actual device. Often these hypothetical examples were taken from their ‘Day in the Life’ answers such as ‘It is Friday afternoon, you are about to leave work and meet friends, what would you do?’ The participants would think aloud and actually execute the actions of logging in, noticing other messages, emails, up until the point of communication. With a live internet connection and their phone in hand, however, many participants began weaving in real-life interactions, having chosen not to separate their real interactions from the hypothetical task. This proved a unique opportunity to engage with such processes through the thinking-aloud method. Similarly, during the interview, I did not discourage participants from using their phone or leaning over to check their email if they were so inclined, and most were. Those who did not, often specifically discussed this choice during the interview, when they would hear their phone vibrate or signal an incoming text or email. Both these situations provided ample cues for discussing networked co-presence and temporal management of availability. I was always very careful, however, to insist that the participants need not include any personal contextual or content-level information regarding those communications, none of my follow-up questions would pry into information they had not offered in what effectively had often become both thinking-aloud task and live direct observation.

While the vast majority of participants effectively and enthusiastically participated in the thinking-aloud task, four participants would not, but only due to certain contexts and only for certain thinking-aloud tasks. For example, they did not want to check social networking sites, but had no hesitation in checking their email for the task. Their disagreement with the task was often frank, that it would be unrealistic or otherwise inappropriate. I was careful not to push, but was interested in their reasoning. The participants explained that either:

- 1) They had just completed these tasks, such as checking their email or social networking sites minutes before the interview, so they insisted there was no point in repeating it.
- 2) The available equipment whether their own or mine, was not appropriate for the task; for instance, they do not check that particular mode of communication on their laptop, they only used the desktop programme on their home computer
- 3) The setting was inappropriate, that is, they would never otherwise make personal computer-based communication in a public setting or work setting

Such reasoning and the following discussion regarding this decision was often valuable data in itself for this research. I ensured that the equipment or setting was different for the secondary interview and asked if it would be appropriate to conduct the thinking-aloud task then. Only two participants still hesitated, both were from the specialist user subset of participants. I chose not to insist, suspecting that it was the nearness of the task to their actual interactions that was the root of the problem. To report on what they see presently in their actual handsets or their actual email account was making them feel uncomfortable. In these cases, I would divert back to the narration elicitation context similar to the 'Day in the Life' question. Within this context, individuals were asked to reflect upon and describe (but not act out with the device) at least three or four situations, which had been prepared for the thinking-aloud task. From this context, they were consistently willing to delve into the degrees of reflection outlined in the thinking-aloud task, namely attention, action, decisions, and motivations.

4.4.4 Researcher-Absent Diary Task

Diary studies allow for the potential inclusion of 'perceptions, thoughts and feelings' (Hektner, Schmidt, and Csikszentmihalyi 2007, p. 7). Paralleling Bird's (2003, p. 17) 'researcher absent' method, the withdrawal or absence of the researcher after the provision of a task provides a setting for the articulation of 'unacknowledged cultural scripts' (Bird 2003, p. 18) that direct interaction or observation by the researcher may inhibit. The constructed nature of the diary study does evoke the researcher's presence, yet it offers a 'deceptively unmediated, light handed control' that limits the intrusion and alteration of the participant's natural environment (Murphy 2008, p.

278). The primary change to the natural setting of their practices is the self-reflexive frame of the actual diary, which generates empirical data as participants integrate, dismiss, compare, and classify the conventions and categories engrained in their very literacy, perception, and everyday media use (2003, p. 93). Researcher-absent methods such as diary studies offer another configuration from the interview, one which potentially allows for a more subjective reflexivity (Couldry, Livingstone, and Markham 2007, p. 47).

For the purpose of reporting upon the multiple forms of networked activities within everyday networked communication practices, I synthesised the formats and lessons learnt from several diary studies. Time-use diaries (Robinson 1977, p. 10, Reiss and Wheeler 1991, p. 280) provide a foundation for charting activity. Time-Space diaries (Urry 2007, p. 40, Buscher and Urry 2009, p. 104) combine activities with modes of movement and location. Communication diaries (Buscher and Urry 2009, p. 105, Grinter and Eldridge 2001, p. 223, Ling and Baron 2007, p. 5) provide structure for reporting mediated interaction, and importantly Interaction Diaries (Baym, Zhang, and Lin 2004, p. 306, Gladarev and Lonkila 2008, p. 278) plot the flow of interaction across all communication, networked or face-to-face.

To minimise the distortion or re-interpretation of experiences involved in retrospective methods, diary entries were requested within the flow and context of day-to-day interactional experience (Robinson 1977, p. 9, Reiss and Wheeler 1991, p. 280), which draws from the 'Experience Sampling Method' (Hektner, Schmidt, and Csikszentmihalyi 2007, pp. 6-7). I chose to combine two of Reiss and Wheeler's (1991, pp. 280-282) diary-recording paradigms. For 'interval-contingent recording', participants made entries three times daily at regular intervals suggested to be morning, afternoon, and evening with complimentary 'event contingent recording' based on any a flurry of relevant networked communication. This final format was chosen to allow for intensification of reflection and practice in some diary entries for periods of heightened networked communication.

The format of the diary scheme was fairly open-ended. I believe it was best to provide several overlapping options. This contrasts structured log-based surveys, which are most appropriate for large populations where there is not the opportunity for contact

and later qualitative contextualisation (Grinter and Eldridge 2001, p. 224, Palen and Salzman 2002, n.p., Duck 1991, p. 235), Couldry, Livingstone, and Markham (2007, p. 46) suggest a degree of openness and a degree of structure to follow a reflexive process, while still maintaining focus upon the particular research concern.

Unstructured diaries remain ambiguous as to the length, framework, and style, thus allowing the participant's 'voice' to emerge but also potential artificiality and performance (Couldry, Livingstone, and Markham 2007, p. 49). For both unstructured and semi-structured diary studies, the range of activities relevant to the study needs to be made clear, but as Palen and Salzman (2002, n.p.) warn, such prompts or instructions from the researcher may actually serve to limit elaboration. With that said, however, frequent investigator feedback ensures opportunities to clarify the necessary depth of reporting and to stress that investigative interest does also apply to the many subtleties of everyday life often dismissed as mundane (Palen and Salzman 2002, n.p., Zimmerman and Wieder 1977, p. 487). Any feedback will necessarily have to be supportive and the researcher will have to avoid using the opportunity to remind participants to fulfil their commitment, evoking a sense of doing their 'homework' (Couldry, Livingstone, and Markham 2007, p. 46).

Heeding feedback from the pilot participants, the 'Day in the Life' and 'Thinking-Aloud Task' were used to develop the participants' appreciation for what activities and types of reflection were possible in the diary. Despite varying participant requests for a specific list of questions, blank email-form diaries, or a check-box system, the diary was largely left unstructured and open to interpretation. In order to effectively pilot the original unstructured diary, I asked participants most concerned about this to follow the open-ended diary, but encouraged them to ask for reminders or any questions on the range of relevant activities if needed. I also suggested that they could construct their own tally of items to include if they felt it would aid in reflection. The extensive diary results from these participants, however, proved that the tally was not needed.

The major limitations of the diary method are 'self-selection bias' and 'selective non-response' by the participant, based on lack of commitment or perceived intrusiveness of the project (Hektner, Schmidt, and Csikszentmihalyi 2007, p. 7). According to

Palen and Salzman (2002, n.p.), diaries must not be disruptive or time consuming for participants for whom stopping activities and filling out paper diaries may be cumbersome. The 'Public Connection' project (Couldry, Livingstone, and Markham 2007) offered the versatility of a range of media for diary entries, in order for the diary to cause the least obstruction to their routine, but as their study suggests, the format has consequences. Email, preferred by younger and full-time workers, allowed for spontaneous entries when something interesting happened. Handwritten diaries lent themselves to reflective retrospective accounts of the week, while the voice recorder lead to less structured entries but often with detailed focus on particular issues (Couldry, Livingstone, and Markham 2007, p. 46). In my study, all but one participant (who recorded audio entries on her phone, complimented by SMS messages) chose email as the primary mode of their diary entries, which provided me with immediate access to each entry. Acknowledging receipt of each entry also gave me the opportunity to subtly keep contact with, encourage, and provide feedback to participants without having to meet them face to face to exchange a paper diary.

Feedback from the earlier participants proved the need to offer all methods for providing entries. I had assumed that one of the participants, who mentioned having dyslexia, would prefer to leave voice recordings. The participant felt this method, however, was absurd, for who would 'want to stand there in public talking to no one?' This participant elected to send emails but the attempts to send three a day proved quite demanding, and instead worked on a draft email at various points throughout the day.

Most participants chose to email diary entries, often updating or reply to the same email throughout the day, or working on a draft throughout the day and emailing it at their convenience. This seemed to encourage a greater amount of entries for each part of the day, than writing separate emails for the three specific intervals of the day. Several participants would text and email additional short entries while on the go, from under the table in a meeting, or in the middle of a night out, reporting on a specific situation or as reminders for something to be included in the next diary entry. These dairy format choices were themselves useful discussion points for the secondary interview. Five participants drafted word processor documents, which were sent throughout the day by email. It was often explained either within the diaries

themselves or during the second interview that these entries were composed at a home or office desktop computer or in one case a work laptop being used as the primary computer while on a business trip. These five diaries were unique in that they were extensively composed and formatted, sometimes even titled and paragraphed. This sense of purposeful self-presentation in text-based formats is explored more thoroughly in chapter eight.

The Diary Task proved successful and enjoyable for most participants. Although participants often received the request and instruction coolly, throughout the task the depth of and enthusiasm for reflection grew. Participants were asked to complete a diary for four days with morning, afternoon, and evening entries. The same schedule was largely kept, starting on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and one of the weekend-days as the fourth day. Many elected, however, to include two short diaries for each weekend-day. Casual reminders were sent out on the first day and second day of the diary and the morning after any day that diary entries had not been received. Interruptions and delays to the diary proved to be an interesting form of data and topic of in-depth discussion itself following the shifts in daily and weekly communication habits and pressures as will be explored in chapter six.

4.4.5 The Secondary Interview

The secondary interview allowed for reflection upon the diary project, feedback, and a much deeper engagement with the relevant themes, classifications, and practices generated within the diary task. It also allowed for further contextualisation of when and how the diary was written and assessed what aspects of reporting were found to be most difficult to describe or articulate, and what was straightforward. The 'Public Connection' project also presented an interesting intermediary level of reflection, by permitting access to the compiled diary materials, before the secondary interview (Couldry, Livingstone, and Markham 2007, p. 46). Many participants reported that they had been looking over their 'sent' diary entries throughout the diary task; others said they had read them over just before the second interview. I sent the compiled diary to each participant before the second interview, but found it necessary to bring a printed copy. Each interview began by asking them to look over the diary. A substantial portion of the interview flowed simply from the questions 'What did you

notice while doing the diary?’ and ‘Is there anything in the diary you find interesting?’ All participants had had a few elements of the task they were eager to reflect upon, without any prompting within the interview. These reflections were then complimented by further and more specific prompted reflections based on diary entries.

The remainder of the secondary interview involved specifically prompted comparison of the individual’s different practices highlighted from the diary or the first interview, as well as a series of open-ended questions about their communication practices in general. This latter group of questions involved changes that they have noticed in their communication habits recently, as well as times when they felt that they needed to change their communication practices. Having already completed the diary, participants quite eagerly engaged with, questioned, and reflected upon many of the everyday meanings and values they noticed with their routines.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

There are numerous important ethical considerations that were necessarily incorporated at all phases of this research, including design of the study itself, the management of the researcher/participant relationship, as well as the use and interpretation of the data (Ramos 1989 as cited in Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden 2000, p. 94).

4.5.1 Avoiding Ethical Pitfalls in Design

Apart from the consideration of selected methods above, there were several other tools that have been excluded from use in the study, in part, because of the ethical implications. These methods, including forms of direct observation and data, buffer, or log-based observations, were problematic, as they challenge some of the basic tenets of ethical fieldwork such as consent and privacy as identified by Punch (1994, p. 84).

Numerous media studies scholars have employed direct observation for the ‘scenic intelligibility’ (Buscher and Urry 2009, p. 104) of use, to capture representative themes of social interaction (Carey 2002 as cited in Humphreys 2005, p. 829), or the telling

interactional detail of the individual user within their physical surrounding (McIlvenny, Broth, and Haddington 2009, p. 1883, Arminen and Weilenmann 2009, p. 1908). Observation site examples from previous research include cafés (Hampton and Gupta 2008, p. 838, Weilenmann and Larsson 2001, p. 101); outside of those places where mobile phone use is forbidden, such as theatres or lecture halls (Humphreys 2005, p. 813); or places of high mobility and specific levels of immobility such as airports, train stations, street intersections and waiting lounges, and on transport (Humphreys 2005, p. 834, Buscher and Urry 2009, p. 108, Weilenmann and Larsson 2001, p. 101). Many of these authors suggest that public observation without prior consent poses no ethical dilemma if the researcher is in a 'similar position' as any other person in the location, but this limits gathering data to that which is made public and then can be considered to include the public view of another's mobile phone interface. (Hektner, Schmidt, and Csikszentmihalyi 2007, p. 6, Grinter and Eldridge 2001, p. 4). Several authors call for video or photographic recording of the public interaction in order to revisit observations (McIlvenny, Broth, and Haddington 2009, p. 1883, Weilenmann and Larsson 2001, p. 101, Humphreys 2005, p. 829), but argued that obtaining prior consent would interfere with the individual's communication and after the fact may cause offence. The notion that obtaining consent should be avoided because it may cause offence or may not be given is alarming.

In an attempt to balance these methods against the considerations of gaining consent, Hampton and Gupta (2008, p. 838) attempted to gain consent for further research participation after direct observation through spontaneous unstructured 'exit interviews' when the individual being observed was leaving (also used by Humphreys 2005, p. 813). This was met with mixed results. Notwithstanding the lack of consent, from the outset, these methods foster a lack of trust between the potential participant and researcher, which is unacceptable considering my priority of developing a healthy trusting relationship for the interviews and diaries task. Such hesitance in informing the participants of the research serves to bring 'stress' and 'spoil the field' (Punch 1994, p. 84) for further in-depth work and, depending on the size and intimacy of the location, possibly also for future researchers.

Specific to networked communication, communication traffic has also been observed, collated, or otherwise tracked in recent studies: digital traffic (Crabtree et al. 2006 as

cited in Buscher and Urry 2009, p. 106), telephone recordings (Licoppe 2004, p. 142), communication records, SMS transcripts (Arminen and Weilenmann 2009, p. 1908), or instant message logs (Ling and Baron 2007, p. 5). While these studies all involved informed consent, one has to consider what ‘fully informed’ consent means (Hammersley and Traianou 2012, n.p.) in any study, and I would add especially in communication and technology-related studies. The use of digital traffic or logging tools would present two major ethical dilemmas with regard to the media literacy and consent of the participant: first, participants may not be able to understand the degree of surveillance to which they are consenting, and second, they have no way of verifying that software involved is limited to the range of surveillance made explicit by the researcher.

4.5.2 Maintaining Trust and Respecting Privacy

Even after gaining consent for participation⁸ in my research, which necessarily included, according to Corbin and Morse (2003, p. 341), explaining the intent of the studies, conditions of participation (recorded interviews and no financial compensation in this case), and that sensitive personal information would be kept private while all information would be anonymised, I found it extremely important to watch and listen closely to the reactions and signals from my participants. I strove to slow down the interview process and pause at each section to ensure that they were comfortable with what was being asked of them. In this manner, informed consent became an ongoing process of ‘continual renegotiation’ (Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden 2000, p. 95), which was integral to the development of trust between the myself and the participants. It also allowed me to remind participants that they need not divulge more personal information than they were comfortable with and they can choose, without consequences, not to answer any question and move on to the next.

While the sensitive negotiation of the thinking-aloud task has been discussed, other privacy issues arose regarding the sharing of personal pictures during the piloting of methods. This resulted in an overall change to the diary format for the sake of maintaining trust with and not causing unnecessary stress during participation. The

⁸ See Appendix Three for the consent form, developed from a sample consent form produced by the University of Guelph (2008)

piloted diary was initially framed as a multimedia report, encouraging participants to take photo-images representative of their mediated practices, including how it relates to locations and contexts of their everyday life. The first pilot participant did lament the request to take pictures, which he said did not make sense as part of the diary. The second participant thought it was wholly inappropriate to take pictures of situations for the diary. Both did take pictures during the timeframe of the diary process, but did not share these in the diary or with myself the researcher. They were willing to discuss their use of their camera during the diary period but did not offer to show or in any way include the pictures. I surmised that expecting participants to include pictures is considered inappropriate as further discussion with the second pilot participant showed: what she takes pictures of and with whom she shares them is quite a specifically managed boundary relating to her sense of exposure and privacy. This proved to be too contentious of a privacy issue than originally thought and was removed from the study.

4.5.3 Ensuring Anonymity and Responsible Use of Data

When exploring the everyday communication practices of individuals, a great deal of personal information is divulged and much of it is inseparable from object of study. I conducted interviews with a level of care to ensure that I was pointing questions in the right direction, away from some of the more personal aspects of interactions with romantic partners, family members, and colleagues and towards the aspects of communication in which this study is more interested. My use and interpretation of the data, however, proved to be of greater importance in protecting the privacy and integrity of my participants. All participants' names were anonymised, employment and industry information was left vague, if not slightly altered to ensure that anonymity. There were also, however, several couples within the study, and many participants went on to recruit friends and colleagues for this research. This presented a different challenge to anonymising information. While it was valuable to have a closely communicating pair of participants who could comment on the mutual negotiation of shared practices, there was a great deal of subjective and emotional statements, plans, and opinions about these other individuals in their lives. In consideration of the integrity of both participants, these statements were not included. As a researcher, I felt that including these statements would amount to a degree of

validation of the opinion about another participant. Furthermore, much of the questioning involved the participants' negotiation of value-based perspectives on everyday practices. During the interview, as well as in analysis and presentation of the data, it was necessary to avoid my own 'subjective interpretations' (Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden 2000, p 94), though in many instances, the participants were asking for validation of their judgements about others and sometimes about their own actions. To avoid this issue, conflicts and judgements described by participants were presented in the context of the negotiation and perception of communication practices as values and not in the context of the specific relationship.

4.6 A Researcher's Reflexivity

Only at the closing point to my fieldwork did I come to fully appreciate that I personally was living through my object of study. Beginning the preliminary reading for this thesis in my late twenties and wrapping it up with fieldwork in my thirties, I have been faced with many of the challenges that are approaching or have passed the participants in this thesis. As a generative and grounded theory study, my departure from the initial understanding of the sensitising concepts and their re-articulation through the everyday experience of the participants has been genuinely exciting, surprising, and, frankly, overwhelming. What I did not understand, nor did I expect, was that I, too, was in and amongst the social and work pressures of London, negotiating my place in the city, amidst technological and social change at this stage in my life through my communication decisions.

Of course, I have been vigilant in bracketing out my own experiences from interpretation of the fieldwork. My challenge was the opposite: this intense interaction with these 35 new individuals in my life brought forth new demands on my communication practices that shook my sense of self and my sense of everyday life. Within me, an unknown sensitivity developed in light of the changing pressures of everyday life, the communication decisions of others, and the perceived role of each technology.

Beginning with the first cohort, the selection began to snowball, and the pressure that I felt upon my need to be connected grew exponentially. I found myself under a fair

amount of stress, not wanting to discourage tenuous interest in participation by delaying any response to emails or voice messages, and therein delaying in any way the beginning of the individual's interviews and dairies. Suddenly, my largely self-dictated schedule had to accommodate and negotiate co-ordination with the schedules and correspondence of at first five, then eight, then ten simultaneous participants throughout their two interviews, diary tasks, and numerous correspondences in between.

My participants shared their experiences of an overwhelming communication environment, their feelings of panic and vulnerability, but also attempts to control that environment. They shared the trials and successes of negotiating a sustainable way out of that vulnerability with their friends, families, and peers. When I began this research, I thought naively that their experience and their lives were something distinct from my own. Only later upon reflection did I realise that I was simply in the early phases of the struggle to balance the social pressures and expectations of work and social life and had not had the chance to reflect upon it in my own life, until I did so with my participants. Still overwhelmed and unacclimatised to the shifting communication tools in my life, I was unaware that those around me were negotiating a sustainable role for technology in their lives with each other through technology. I had just picked up my first internet mobile phone in late 2009, with blind enthusiasm had joined three additional social networking sites, started a blog with friends, signed up to university mailing lists, and joined online reading groups. My naivety saw technology simply as instruments for use, as means to the ends of my choosing. I was convinced that my use of technology was distinct from the relationships I negotiated through technology and my sense of self in the world. I was in for quite a shock and still struggle with finding a role for technology in my everyday life. From that common experience, the anxiety, pressure, and motivations made normal in lives of my participants become more meaningful each time I review my fieldwork.

In the brief but intense period of contact with each participant, I became sensitised to how they were communicating, not as an object of study, but as a necessary aspect of my participation in the everyday realm of communication. Poring over their diaries and interviews, transcribing and coding, re-listening and re-reading, I felt my impression of these individuals grow more nuanced, it was as if I had continued

interacting with them consistently over the last few years and through that interaction had negotiated an understanding of how we could engage with one another in a sustainable way. I had learnt to listen to how they were purposefully connecting with those closest in their lives; I had learnt to listen to what they were trying to say relationally through their communication decisions to those around them. It is now time to turn to the material that has emerged from these encounters.

Chapter Five: The Everyday Communication Environment

Everyday life, the succession of each day, and the contexts that compose those days are backgrounded by an environment of possibilities: both of interactions and of outcomes. Despite routine, the environment of each individual involves constant attention to, first, the potential presence of others and, second, to time. Time is often experienced at the scale of the hours and minutes of an unfolding day. Time is also experienced, however, in terms of how many things can be accomplished, and within this environment, interactions are described in terms of each taking time. Among the young connected adults of a major urban core such as London, the potential presence of others is often perceived to be in abundance, which makes the time for interacting often seem to be in desperately short supply.

In the contemporary context, this perceived abundance does not relate to an abundance of actual personal interactions. Rather, it is more specifically related to the *perceived potential for interaction*. This potential is thought to be in abundance because the conditions for immediate everyday interpersonal communication have shifted. Immediate interaction was once restricted to the size of a room or to those within earshot and line of sight in order to be considered fully co-present. Furthermore, it was accepted that an individual could only be in one place at one time, and there were only so many hours in a day, only so many places one could visit. The conditions for everyday interpersonal communication, however, have extended to include multiple and overlapping possibilities of co-presence through telecommunication devices and networks. This involves not only an extension of interaction across spaces but also the re-mapping of how interaction is woven into the temporality of everyday life.

The participants in this research describe a communication environment that is replete with the potentiality of opportunities for networked interpersonal communication. In other words, the conditions for communication are in abundance. They embody what I propose to call the *need for networked connection*, the desire to be connected at all times and connected via multiple channels. This need involves both an import to the consumption of social information but also a conflation of interactions with everyday

tasks. The role of interpersonal networked connections then becomes an inextricable element of everyday life. As the conditions for communication are in abundance, however, the participants often experience a sense of being overwhelmed by the potential demands of their communication environments. This involves a perceived need to remain attentive to that environment, a burden of attention, which then itself becomes something in need of constantly being managed or controlled.

5.1 The Abundant Conditions for Connection

An exploration of the everyday environment within which participants find themselves is a necessary starting point. How is it experienced? How is it described?

An overarching characteristic of this environment, consistently implied and expressed by participants as justifying their actions and practices, is that there is no scarcity of conditions for networked communication, but rather an abundance of those conditions. As one participant⁹, Andrew, who describes himself as ‘extremely extroverted and at the same time very social’, put it:

[There is] the very weak assumption [that] to initiate a new line [of communication] actually requires effort or consumption of some resource when it really doesn’t. It’s all very subtle and unwritten, but there’s no real effort.

This notion was echoed and implied by several participants: that making a connection, instigating, or engaging in a specific interaction with other individuals can happen with little effort, almost subconsciously, almost automatically. Many everyday work and leisure routines occur with the individual sitting in proximity to a desktop or laptop computer connected to the internet, in the office or studio, in the living room, bedroom, or kitchen. Email and social networking accounts are left open in the layered windows or tabs of an internet browser, open and running on a work computer throughout the day and on a personal computer in the evening, regardless of whether or not the individual is at the computer. Individuals also keep their mobile phone within an arm’s reach at almost all times, during times of work or leisure, when in public or at home, on the move or going to bed.

⁹ A chart with information about each participant can be found in Appendix Four.

Individuals remain connected to the various modes of communication that are accessible and converged within internet-ready mobile devices. With the exception of two participants who, at 39 and 46 years, are among the oldest of my participants, all participants describe an assumption that they are and are expected to be *by default* connected: accessible and available for communication on multiple different channels simultaneously. Their mobile phones are always on, except on the quite rare occasions when they are purposefully turned off. If not on their person, the phones are nearly always within reach and likely checked for text messages, emails, social networking notifications ‘compulsively’, a word employed by nearly all participants. On many of the participants’ mobile phones, there is a ‘push’ of new messages that provides an audible signal or visual indicator on the interface, which facilitates routine checking of message platforms and frequent glances at the mobile screen.

Reporting on their daily routines, participants described their own constant and habitual interactions, not with other individuals through communication devices, but *with the devices and platforms themselves*: with the mobile phone, application, or online interface for that mode of communication. Continuous background attention to networked tools, platforms, or applications is akin to the attention paid to the surrounding unfocused dimensions of a crowded room as experienced by Goffman’s subjects. Being connected to social networking sites, blogging platforms, discussion forums, and email applications is not the same as being engaged in specific and focused interaction with others on those platforms, but it holds the potential for such focused interaction.

5.1.1 The Physicality of Connection

Even in the interview setting itself, this practice of maintaining connection to the network through multiple open channels was evident among participants. During a short break in our second interview at his home, Chris mentioned above quickly went into the bedroom to check his emails, then upon returning had his mobile in hand to see if he had missed any calls. He was not specifically interacting with any person or group of people through these devices, but attending to the potential for communication by interacting with his device itself. Other interviewees displayed a

similar unfocused engagement with their mobile phone, unfocused in that they were not engaged in any specific interaction. Participants checked their mobile screens during natural breaks in the interview or during the interview itself while in conversation; some made a display of putting their phones away, in a bag, or in a jacket. Most retrieved them momentarily for a quick check at some point: when I had excused myself to use the facilities or when we had paused momentarily to order a coffee. As I signalled the end of the interview, often those who had put away their mobile phone retrieved it immediately to check for any missed calls, text messages, or emails.

Three participants displayed quite distinctive handling of their mobile phones that involved substantially more attention to the object than other participants, which despite their uniqueness within the selection are indicative of the wider desire expressed by most other participants: to be connected and aware of potential interaction at all times.

Eugene, a 26-year-old legal trainee, consistently apologised for checking his phone, but explains during the interview that if an email arrives during the evening, he would have to reply immediately. He has two internet-ready mobile phones, one for personal use and one for work. He checks the former at convenient points throughout the interview, keeping it in his pocket for the first half hour and on the table for the next. The latter is face up on the table. Without interrupting the flow of his speech, he picks up the phone and refreshes the email interface to actively check for any new messages rather than waiting for the frequent automatic checks the phone would make to the server. As a trainee solicitor, he notes that there is a great deal of pressure to be constantly accessible at all hours to his colleagues and superiors. Yet, this constant attention to the potential for communication seemingly applied to both his personal and work phone; his attention to each during the interview differed only in the frequency of checks, with the work device checked every five minutes and his personal device approximately every fifteen minutes during the interview period (about an hour and half with breaks).

Jack, 24, had just quit his job as a social work assistant contracted with the local council and was working as a hotel administrator. While walking into a café, which he

thinks would be quiet enough for the interview, he carries his phone in his hand rather than the pocket of his jeans or his coat. He glances and switches nimbly between applications with his hands, checking for messages, updates, or comments. This continues during the interview: he checks often, at times reads, and writes or rather taps out a quick message once or twice without pausing our conversation. By keeping his mobile device in hand, checking its interface can be done frequently, automatically, and without substantial disruption to our conversation.

When walking to the café where Ethan, a 30-year-old software and applications developer often works, I am struck immediately by his set up within the physical space. He is reading from his laptop screen placed just past his breakfast plate. He eats with a fork in one hand, while his other hand hovers around his phone, at times reaching to scroll on the laptop and at others checking an online instant chat message or text message on his mobile phone. Ethan comports himself at the table with what can only be described as a mastery over the devices and space. If this were not his casual and everyday creation of a workspace, it could be mistaken for a conspicuous display of control. Yet, the ease of his comportment lends itself more to virtuosity, achieved through the interlocking of numerous practices well honed over most of his life. During the interview, he is fully connected on multiple devices, aware of any possible interaction on any of these channels, yet without giving even the slightest sense that he is distracted from our conversation. In fact, his attention goes beyond our conversation, extending to the goings-on of the café around us to drop anecdotes about the neighbourhood as he points to something occurring out the window.

Unfocused interaction in Goffman's (1971, p. 243) terms, as discussed in chapter one, in the contemporary context becomes interaction with the multiple channels of the mobile and internet network: *unfocused interaction with the devices and platforms themselves*. The recurring instances of unfocused interaction are more constant than those specific moments when individuals participate with others in a specific *focused interaction through* a communication device. This unfocused background interaction with communication tools has been woven into the fabric of everyday life: morning and evening rituals, while walking in the city, waiting for the bus, during meals, or sitting in conversation with others. Connection to the network through multiple devices does not necessarily involve a removal from real space to a virtual world, but

rather, as Grusin argues in conversation with Henry Jenkins (Jenkins and Grusin, 2011, n.p.), this ‘hypermediation’ is now the ‘mark of the real’. The notion of the real has been extended beyond one’s physical location across multiple channels to those others who are also holding their mobile phones or sitting in front of a computer screen.

5.2 The Need for Networked Connection

Constant attention to mobile, laptop, and desktop screens – to the devices and networks of interpersonal communication – is motivated by the perceived importance of the *potential* for interactions. There is a perceived value to potential interactions in general as essential to the composition of the everyday. While it is not difficult to intuit the perceived personal value of face-to-face interaction and other live interactions such as the telephone, discussed in chapter one as the ‘compulsion of proximity’ (Boden and Molotch 2004, p. 105), the perceived personal importance of asynchronous communication needs to be explored in order to better understand this need for attention to and connection through communication tools.

Whether text messages, email exchanges, instant message chats, or social networking comments and posts, the potential for receiving these messages and the importance they hold is foundational to the perceived need examined above to check devices and maintain connection with the network: what is proposed here as the *need for networked connection*. The remainder of this chapter will explore this motivation to be constantly connected, as it allows for engagement with networked modes of communication and a resultant ‘connected asynchronicity’ (Hassan 2007, p. 51).

5.2.1 The Value of Social Information

Prior to engaging (that is, prior to responding to emails or social networking messages, answering a text, or responding to or commenting on social network updates and posts), maintaining attention to the unfocused or background flow of communication is itself treated by my participants as important, just as it is often deemed important to be able hear a ringing phone. A constant readiness to receive potential focused interactions, the accessibility of the individual for mobile and various forms of online communication is a fundamental characteristic of networked connection. That

readiness for reception extends beyond simply the need to feel connected and involves a perceived value of possible interactions. In reaction to criticism that he received from friends for steadfast engagement with his phone, email, instant messaging services, and social networks, Ethan begins to describe the ‘real value’ he gets from these practices:

Well, my friends are my issues, they’re my current events. My contacts and everyone I know are the issues going on... I just legitimately want to know...like *where* are you in life... *what’s going on?*

Interestingly, he equates his friends, or his ‘contacts’ on an online platform, to ‘events’. The contact list represents access to individuals for interaction, but also a list of access points to the spaces of other individuals as their lives are unfolding in real time, in the lived local time of the individual. He is connected to the ‘now’ of current events occurring at each individual address, an address understood for both ‘personal accessibility’ (Ling and Donner 2009, p. 146) but also the extension of perception through the mobile network to another space.

Andrew is 33 years old, currently looking for full-time work in the energy sector after completing an internship to facilitate a career move to this new industry. He uses a similar metaphor, describing how he feels when reading through the day’s emails, messages, but also the list of updates and posts on social networking platforms.

It’s like reading the news saying, ‘Oh, what’s going on in the world today?’ except I’m saying, ‘What’s going on in the world today with regards to all my friends, basically everyone I know?’

The ‘news’ or the world events that are often taking place beyond the immediate scope of our everyday perception have been replaced with Andrew’s interpersonal interactions across social networking sites, with the networked presence of his friends beyond Andrew’s physical ability to witness. Both Andrew and Ethan are describing access through networked devices to the real everyday spaces and times of other individual lives. This is not a virtual meeting place divorced from real lives and events, but rather a shared networked presence between multiple real spaces.

Ethan and Andrew, among many other participants, described this importance in maintaining asynchronous connection with those that they do not regularly see but also

with those with whom they interact in person. There is a great deal of *passive reception* of activity on social networks, activity that does not involve mutual engagement between individuals such as replying and commenting to each other's posts or messages. It simply involves the shared unfocused interaction of logging on to social networking sites and viewing the activities of multiple others.

Zaina, a 28 year-old online journalist, describes the need for this passive reception as a necessary element of connection, specifically with regard to social networks.

On Monday? I'm usually *observing*. I'll be *quietly seeing* what everybody else is talking about. It's almost like – did you ever play Double Dutch, like jump rope? You've got to wait until you go – you don't know when to jump into the conversation. Sometimes people just kind of like 'Agh!'. There's something completely else going on, and you just need to listen before you jump in.

Her metaphor is apt. Double Dutch is a game where two jump ropes are turned in opposite directions and one or more individuals (who are not swinging the ropes) need to assess the pace and timing of the two different ropes before jumping in the middle of them and continuing to jump at that pace. Networked connection also involves the multiple paces, contexts, and conversations of asynchronous interactions, which can be occurring between and be joined by multiple individuals. To attend to networked interactions – to reconnect as Zaina does on Monday mornings – involves a degree of passive reception before interaction.

Tania, who has a full-time job and young daughter, describes her passive reception on social networks such as twitter, Facebook, and LiveJournal (a social network and personal blog site):

I think it's just, I don't have much time to do communication. So that's why probably [my communication diary] is a little bit boring. So I'm not active on social networks and...I mean, I'm more like *an observer*.... It feels like I want to gather some information for myself and for maybe future use.

Despite not having the time to engage and interact with others on social networks, Tania is describing the same desire outlined by Ethan and Andrew, to observe the lives of others. This notion of 'future use' seems to parallel comments by several other

participants, including Ethan above, who keep up-to-date with friends who live outside London through such passive reception. When they finally can meet up, the ease and comfort of spending time together is helped because 'we know what's happening in each other's lives, the conversation can just continue' (Ethan). Four participants, Jack (24), Melanie (25), Miki (25), and Christina (27) explained that given their awareness of so many details of friends' lives through social networking sites, they often will not interact or otherwise connect with them, feeling that they have interacted 'enough' to maintain the relationship until they can meet again. They imagine that without social networking they would likely email or phone for updates once in a while. These assertions of these younger participants directly contrast to two of the older participants Chris (46) and Richard (39) who largely forego social networking sites and state that they much prefer phoning friends for updates or drafting long letter-style emails.

5.2.2 Interactions as Everyday Tasks

In addition to the perception of networked interaction and information as valuable in and of itself, interpersonal interactions are often construed as potential tasks, actions to be completed in the course of the day, and actions of which the day-to-day activity consists. The necessity of maintaining networked connection then is perceived as being aware of and engaging with the potential tasks that one must complete throughout the day. *Managing these tasks* is often thought of as *managing one's day*.

As discussed above, networked connection provides numerous access points to different individuals and their everyday contexts allowing for a 'temporal fragmentation, a smashing of the uniform and universal linearity of the clock into a billion different time contexts within the network' (Hassan 2007, p. 51). The context-created temporality that occurs between individuals gives way to a task-based perception of interaction but also to a task-based perception of time, disconnected from clock-time. A task is something that needs to be engaged and completed; the duration of this engagement is context-specific, not clock-specific. Thompson (1967, p. 60) relates this task-based time to pre-industrial societies where agricultural labour was a matter of completing tasks, not spending an assigned amount of clock-time on a given activity. Specific interactions have become tasks to be completed: an email that

'needs' to be answered, 'checking in' on friends by social networking or text, or a phone call that cannot be put off any longer.

Scott describes the agitation and alarm at being disconnected because, regardless of his personal absence from the network, the communication environment and expectations that his interaction would persist. He wrote in his diary '[Mobile phone] wasn't working on the bus this morning for some reason, so I couldn't access my emails. I feel like I was behind all day because of it'. The momentary loss of awareness from a brief disconnection from the mobile network was understood to have impacted the rest of his day.

Peter describes his morning ritual of checking his emails in order to better understand the day ahead of him.

Because typically if I get an email, it's asking me to do something and typically the thing it's asking me to do involves a computer so, yes. So I go and sit in front of the computer, maybe I'll put the kettle on and I read my emails and try to, like, figure out what I need to do today.

Peter, 27, works in computer and network sales. In the context of his work, addressing these email interactions represents the addressing and sometimes completion of a task for his colleagues or clients. These tasks make up his everyday activities. The practice of assessing the day as a series of interactions, however, extends beyond the work context.

Henry, 24, waits tables and is a freelance journalist. His day-to-day life involves a layering of different temporalities: the clock-time of his shifts as a waiter, networked time as he slips off to the bathroom to read texts emails while working, task-based time of freelance projects, and social interaction while sitting at his personal laptop. He describes his morning ritual:

When I, like, have had a shower and breakfast I kind of sit down at my laptop and have, like, a proper look at emails and my 'to-do' list I have on my laptop of what I have to do that day and what is urgent.

His 'to-do' list is juxtaposed with having a 'proper look at emails'; both are necessary parts of his morning to provide Henry with a sense of what he has to do each day.

Email interactions, whether work or social, are tasks to be addressed. Face-to-face interactions are perceived in a comparable way:

I don't really have any days where I don't do anything. I will kind of make sure to get up early if I'm meeting someone at midday so I can do some errands in the day, whether it's work related or kind of more like, you know, life maintenance, like pay bills and shit like that. So I use my social engagements as, like, *markers* and I find that makes me more *proactive in the rest of the time*.¹⁰

Henry perceives value in being 'proactive', implying a desire to complete more of the fragmented tasks that make up his day. A face-to-face social interaction is one of those tasks, albeit more important to Henry in determining when other tasks will be completed which do not rely on co-ordination with another person's schedule.

Ethan describes the personal time taken off from this workday in a similar fashion:

So I will go down to Wapping or Canary Wharf Waterside, it is just lovely down there, chill out, relax. And usually I will take 10 or 15 minutes and just enjoy the view. And then usually I get on my phone...and yes, I usually follow up on a few new things: SMS things, Facebook *things*. Like that is when I take a little bit of *personal time really*.

The clock-time of the work world is punctuated again and again by networked interactions from the non-work world. In this instance, Ethan implies that new social interactions are 'things' to follow up and complete outside of his time set aside for work. There is, however, no sense of being disconnected when one leaves the work domain, just a shift in what sorts of connections will be addressed. The need, then, for networked connection does not solely relate to the domain of work. Across both the work domain and the social domain, constant connection is understood as participation in everyday life, giving a sense of structure and a new temporality to the everyday as each interaction witnessed is an event in someone's life, and each interaction addressed is a task completed for the day.

5.3 Connection As Everyday Life

¹⁰ Emphasis added. Please see Appendix One for other transcription conventions.

It is difficult to stress enough how important networked connection is in the lives of the participants. Participants did not have to search for these experiences, as they were just below the surface; they admitted that they often thought about, reflected upon, scrutinised, and evaluated the role of communication in their lives. Henry and Margaret, among nearly a third of the participants, conceded that managing their communication is something so vital that they wish they could talk about it more, but the everyday is 'too boring' for their friends. That is why this research engages with and follows the banal, because the consideration of how interaction, negotiation of presence, of connection, and mutual engagement are occurring are rarely the subject of interaction, but they do give those interactions importance and weight in the lives of individuals. Networked connection is being experienced *as* everyday life, not simply a part of it. The readiness for, the participation in, and management of interaction through these multiple modes of communication is not an extraordinary experience in the lives of the participants; rather, it is the ordinary, the banal, the everyday that makes up their lives.

The perceived need to maintain constant networked connection is manifest in the often emotional expectation that specific interactions will continue to accumulate over time and this accumulation is a problem that must be addressed. This occurs most consistently upon waking, as the individual has him/herself been 'off' or disconnected. Knowing that there is the potential for focused interaction, participants have adjusted their routines to *immediately reconnect* in order to 'catch up' on communication, if necessary. There is a clear parallel between the passive reception of social information discussed earlier and the passive reception of interactions as tasks in order to manage one's day.

5.3.1 Morning Reconnection and Preparing for the Day

The motivation for early morning emailing, texting, phone calls, and instant messaging is not necessarily for interaction, but to see what has transpired over these channels while one has been asleep. There is a need to 'catch up' or make oneself aware of what has transpired in the overnight period when the individual has not been a party to the interaction occurring on communication networks.

Lena, a 27-year-old female model, describes a similar situation. The interaction, however, involves both work and leisure interactions, including potential emails from her agency and Skype messages from family and friends.

On a typical day I would check my email to see if I had any emails in the morning.... Then I would also check my Skype because people may have called during the night because of the time difference, and people may have written in the night.

Lena has accommodated the potential interaction of those who may have tried to communicate with her overnight within her morning routine, just as most other participants check their mobile phones first thing after waking.

Other participants report in their diary entries similar habits of starting their day through their mobile or laptop. They often evoke this notion that interaction has continued and they must address this, because, despite their necessary inattention, the focused interactions have begun to accumulate. This confirms their embeddedness in the network, where the biological necessity of sleep does not excuse them from participation. In her diary, Joanna talks of email and phone networks as active before she has even woken up, and walks us through the beginning of her day where these communication channels are constantly accumulating new interactions and potentially new tasks:

Couldn't sleep last night so was light in waking up. Woke up before alarm and checked blackberry (bb) for time (mistake!). Had 10 unread msgs which made me wide awake and got up 30 mins earlier than usual...Checked bb as was getting morning coffee at local coffee shop. Normally check and respond to emails and texts if I am waiting around.

Joanna recounts how the expectation of new messages leads her to check and re-check for messages while she sleeps, while walking, and at the coffee shop. This brings her to a point where her access to communication networks not only remains open on her work desktop but access is actually doubled and tripled, as she has her personal computer running, landline and internet-ready mobile phone on her desk at her workstation. On another morning, she described a similar situation in another diary entry:

Checked messages first thing as per usual but with nothing pressing, took my time to work and didn't check on the way. Funny habit – checking bb on the

lift to the 2nd floor as I'm arriving! What's the point if my PC will be booted up in a few mins? I think it's part of the *defence mechanism* kicking in. I don't like to be surprised when my email opens at work.

She is aware of and describes explicitly a defensive posturing or an over-readiness of her daily routine to manage and control the accumulation of interaction as tasks occurring during her walk to work. Being connected and aware of possible interactions is to minimise even the slightest window of unexpected or delayed awareness of interactions that may impact one's day. This is illustrated by Joanna's account of habitually checking her blackberry mobile phone for emails in the lift just minutes away from sitting at her desktop computer.

5.3.2 Connection by Default

While Joanna's example relates largely to her preparation for the domain of work, participants also reported a similar flow of texts or missed phone calls from family or friends (Lena, Scott, Elisabeth, and Richard). Nearly all participants checked for those personal messages each morning, though most often, there were none. Only a handful of participants had not incorporated these checks into their initial morning routine, often because they had children that demanded immediate attention and care. In Farzan and Sydney's case, the backlog of overnight interactions (where social and work interactions mixed) was often so large that they often likely had already checked in the middle of the night and then would try to hold off checking again in the morning until they arrived at work. Even though expressing a specific practiced reluctance to have the computer on at all times, Chris who works from home still mentions this latent interaction from an open channel:

I don't leave it on until I go to bed and I don't constantly check it – but while it is on I will go back to it quite regularly, and I quite like the fact that there might be something there that can give me a moment's distraction from whatever else I'm doing. So I would just leave it running in the background and I will look at it.

This background interaction takes the form of simply a passive glance, a 'distraction', or a quick 'look' that he will give the computer, as opposed to an implication of a more concerted focused interaction.

Zaina describes her nightly and bedtime ritual with her husband and their mobile phones:

We go – wake up. I still do – always the ritualistic thing before we go to bed and go to – wake up...[I'm] on the phone squinting, looking at the screen. Lowering the brightness, you know. So you don't blind yourself and whoever is in the bedroom. That's what [my husband and I] always do before we go to bed, [and then while] waking up [we're] always checking our phone.

They lower the brightness of the interface on the mobile phones each night, so that they can check their phones just before bed, in the middle of the night, and upon waking up. They have changed their bedtime and morning practices to include not disturbing or being disturbed by their partners while they wake up and check for online communication.

Similarly, Elisabeth turns off her alarm clock as she checks her email each morning. There is also this implied gradation of passive reception and awareness before interaction, where the individual is checking but not necessarily acting on any of the interactions just yet. Andrew was unemployed and looking for work at the time of the interviews. Despite the absence of client or boss-related pressure as in many of the above cases, he still found himself online from the moment he awoke until the moment he was asleep as the potential for messages to arrive was still there. His daily routines are arranged so that the laptop is taken to bed and his mobile phone is nearby. He describes a typical night in his diary:

Woke up, reached for my mobile which I keep at arm's reach from bed, checking primarily for the time, but also to see if I have any text messages. Next, still from bed, I reach for my laptop (which I take to bed with me most nights...it's the last thing I check before sleeping, the second when I open my eyes, after time on the mobile, unless I have to use the washroom) I'm *only* looking to check messages *at this point*.

This gradation of action, checking for messages, texts, and calls but not replying, posting, or otherwise interacting with other individuals illustrates that the division between *unfocused interaction* with the communication environment and the specific *focused interaction* with others is not an abstract conceptual distinction but a distinction that occurs in practice. Participants have a sense that the everyday world of

networked connection is structured as a gradation of actions that they follow to re-insert themselves into the flow of interactions: first connection, then passive reception, and then engagement.

Richard, who will be discussed later in more detail as an exception within the selection of participants, often actively disconnects from communication channels due to his anti-social shift work, yet he still reports this sense of accumulating interactions. He observes specifically how there is little attention or effort from his side to reconnect. In this case, it is a dating social networking service:

[The diary] made me slightly aware of how much online messaging has become part of my day to day life which quite surprised me – I don't know why. It's part of getting up, brush teeth, shower, turn computer on and see who's messaged me overnight or during the day depending on my shifts. It's something I do without thinking about it. And I think I hadn't realised how normal that was now. I don't necessarily think it's a bad thing because it doesn't take up lots of my time.

At the beginning of this chapter, Andrew said that there is 'no real effort' in opening up a new channel of communication. Above, Richard similarly describes how checking messages, how his unfocused attention to the communication network, is done 'without thinking about it'.

Turning on the computer or checking messages on one's phone first thing in the morning is for my participants as normalised and routine as getting out of bed itself. From waking in the morning until falling back to sleep at night, being attentive and connected to the multiple modes of networked communication is a daily necessity for the participants in this study. Being connected and attentive to multiple open channels is part of everyday life; it is coupled with turning off your alarm clock on the phone and waking up, walking to work, waiting in the elevator, being at your desk, being at home, going to bed, and literally hundreds of mobile phone checks through the day minute to minute. It is not only that these individuals feel they are caught out and surprised if they have not checked their phone for just a few minutes, they progress through their day in part by being continuously connected, or if interrupted, by re-connecting to the communication environment as soon as possible. Each check

is a positive attempt to manage their day-to-day life, affirming their preparation for and awareness of any potential interaction and potential new tasks to add to the day.

5.4 Interactions as Productivity

The implications of networked connection in everyday life become quite apparent when participants feel they are recovering lost time or otherwise gaining momentum within continuous connection. Times and spaces in between activities, then, can be translated through continued preparation for interaction, which in itself is considered to have intrinsic value. This suggests the spread of productivist notions of efficiency beyond the realm of workplace organisation and into an individually *managed* and temporally *optimised* approach to networked communication and interpersonal interaction within the individual's day.

Just because one is not connected to the network, does not necessarily deprive individuals from addressing their tasks and interactions involved in the asynchronous connections of email, social networking, and texting. Andrew describes how he uses his time disconnected from networked interaction for networked interaction:

So I was going to the gym for a run and I was bored and not looking forward to it and I thought even though I've only just checked Facebook and email twenty minutes ago, there was nothing worth thinking about there, nothing I could mull over in my mind while I was running to pass time. So I just checked again *for a quick fix*. Someone might say something funny and I'll think about it as I walk to the gym and I'll ponder my response.

Andrew actively searches out unread messages or new posts so that he can mentally prepare his response while away from his mobile phone and computer. Given that these forms of interaction are asynchronous, disconnection is simply time that can be spent addressing older messages rather than receiving new ones. Though Andrew's is a unique example, it is not dissimilar in substance to others.

This notion of 'filling time' with asynchronous interactions or more specifically of *preparing* for interactions is quite common. For Augustine, 33, who is the founder and co-director of a medium-sized PR company, it is often work-related, and therefore part of the colonisation of non-work spaces and times as discussed in chapter two and

three, but many other participants similarly prepare for social interactions. When Augustine finds herself offline, she actually types out emails on her phone rather than drafting it in her head as Andrew does at the gym: ‘In the underground [without signal]...I can spend the time writing the email whilst on the tube and send it when I get to the other end’. Though exemplified by these moments that are disconnected from the network, it is often more subtly embedded in the spare time considered to be in between other activities.

Karina, Lourdes, Marco, and Peter were among others who discussed the use of unassigned clock-time to address networked interactions. As Marco, the 25-year-old lab assistant, explains:

During my day, since my work is kind of, there are a lot of dead moments...you set up an experiment and you have like ten minutes, fifteen minutes, one hour maybe. So I keep on checking my phone... like while I was on the bus...yes because the bus time, the time it takes to get me to work, I use this time to check on the phone and to write down stuff if I have to reply. [These are] very good time for me to write down things, because I actually have time sitting there *doing those things*, better than just waiting.

Marco compares ‘dead’ moments where he perceives the finite clock-time of his day as being wasted, which he specifically tallies as minutes and hours of waiting, to the time he could be spending interacting over networked modes of communication. By checking his phone and drafting replies to messages, he is accomplishing these everyday phone ‘things’: interactions as tasks. Ethan in an earlier example also talked about social networking ‘things’, a phrasing that does not lend itself to the notion of interaction as a conversation, but is fitting for early conception of interactions as events in other people’s lives (things to witness) and as tasks (things to do). Peter describes a similar situation of regaining time on public transport that is quite common among the participants:

When I’m out somewhere, like if I’m on a bus to kill time I would check my email.... But I think a lot of the time I use things like email and Facebook and Twitter.... So on the bus I’ll go on Facebook because I’m bored or I feel like I have to use that time productively so I should try and chip away at the massive load of emails in my inbox for example.

Though still connected to the network, he perceives this as ‘extra’ time that can be used productively, gained in a sense from turning wasted clock-time (stuck on transport) into networked time (addressing unanswered messages). His notion of *productivity* again links engagement with interactions to fulfilling a task. Networked time and the task-based time therefore extend throughout the whole of the day, whether one is online or offline, typing on their mobile phone, or running at the gym.

5.5 An Environment of Overload and Anxiety

Indicative of the larger narrative of this chapter – that the conditions for networked communication are in abundance – descriptions of the need to be connected are partnered often with metaphors of incoming interactions and methods for engaging with those interactions. These metaphors are often combined with the emotional inflections of the participants’ experience of this everyday communication environment.

Descriptions of the everyday experience of the communication environment all entail a notion of flow and abundance, one that is specifically out of the individual’s control. Participants imbue their communication environment with everyday emotional tones, mentioning ‘anxiety’ and often using explicative exaggeration when they muse about their possible ‘obsession’ of checking their phone or sorting their emails. They often imply that they are overrun by incoming interactions. Interestingly, despite the emotional overtones of the words used by participants, these are matter-of-fact descriptions of the communication environment. Ron describes a workday in his diary:

Panic begets panic. I checked my emails on my phone twice during lunchtime, somehow afraid that, because I’d received so many emails at [work], I must have been *deluged* on my Gmail account as well.

These are not exceptional moments of crisis or failures on their parts, but stem from accepted everyday practice. Ron goes so far as to project an assumption of being overwhelmed from one medium to another, as they are both aspects of the constantly operational communication environment. He describes his reaction below:

If I end up having a massive backlog I'll try and find an hour just to go through [my emails and twitter]. Otherwise it just becomes overwhelming, there's just so much.

In the second quote, he finds that at times, he must schedule in a spare hour in the day to simply to catch up on the backlog of communication; otherwise, the number of tasks will become insurmountable. Again, this is not an exceptional instance but an aspect of everyday practice frequently featured across the participants. This is comparable to the sense of productively filling time on the transport that many participants used to 'chip away' communication tasks that had built up.

Elisabeth, a 25-year-old lawyer, finds herself inundated with emails, yet the nature of the emails will affect her immediate decisions and plans for the evening. Below is a description from her diary

Stream of emails between work friends discussing charity circus ball attending in the evening/outfits/general banter – sense of excitement when realise the 50 emails which have *flooded* my inbox are not urgent work queries which would have made me perhaps miss the ball.

Her excitement, almost relief, that these 50 messages were not work-specific, shows an interface between work and leisure life that is managed, controlled, and potentially blurred. It can be noted that the emotion involved was not surprise that there were 50 new emails in her inbox, but excitement that these were not urgent work queries and, thus, not urgent tasks. It is implied that the volume and possibility of having to change her plans to deal with these emails is the norm.

This accumulation of emails occurs in a variety of work contexts, all of which, however, involve an overlap of social- and work-based communication. Above, we see it within Ron's office-based temp job, within the context of a law firm for Elisabeth, and below for Chris who works from home.

It...really *built up* and it became a bit of a 'thing'. ...I ended up with this huge number of emails...becoming *a burden* in itself and it made me *suffer* because it felt like something I ought to be doing.

Chris is recalling a recent personally and professionally stressful period when he simply was unable to accommodate the continual flow of interactions he was expected to address. Since then, he described how allowing this accumulation of unaddressed

interactions to occur is now an anxiety in itself. This implies that the anxiety of managing interactions itself becomes something to manage. Addressing interactions not only provides a sense of accomplishment and productivity; for some, it becomes a manner of sustaining themselves throughout the day. Chris' anxiety seems to merit Joanna's language of checking as a 'defence mechanism' against unexpected interactions earlier in the chapter.

Sometimes, individuals directly reflect on their participation in and the perceived pressure of networked communication in a critical way. Zaina's description of this flow of information gives a better sense of this blurring of work and social interactions:

You just get totally *warped into this world* where if you miss a status update about so-and-so job, or so-and-so gig, or so-so's event...It's like *overload*, you know? ...It feels like you're just not on top of things. Honestly, the best thing for me to do sometimes is just drop out and tune out.

The online world has a flow of communication that Zaina gets 'warped into', implying a distorting sense of flow but also a sense of being drawn into that flow. The manner in which she lists a number of hypothetical potential interactions as opportunities and as events, provides a sense of magnitude. 'Overload' is commonly used to describe this communication environment, and like every other participant, Zaina perceives a need to manage or otherwise cope with this overload. She adds, 'No, I do seriously: I tell myself just don't check it anymore. I have to say, "That's it. You've got nothing to share over the weekend"'. By juxtaposing the perceived overload from incoming messages immediately with her own desire to contribute to the flow of information, Zaina implies that although overload is perceived to be built into the system, she links this to her own participation, which is part of that overload.

5.5.1 Metaphors for Focused Interaction

In their description of their own active interactions (or focused communication) rather than their passive reception of communication while connected to the network, participants evoke a slightly different set of metaphors. These are of a lesser magnitude, implying light and constrained actions. These actions still occur somewhat out of the participants' control but not to the point of being overwhelming. Several

participants use words such as ‘flurry’ or ‘sprinkle’, a few examples have been included below.

I check Twitter for the first time today. This is accompanied by a *flurry* of text messages replies: about ten, sent in response to messages I received yesterday. (Ron)

Immediately afterwards we had a *flurry* of exchange of phone and texts that would never [have] happened if we hadn’t bumped into each other. (Elisabeth)

Of course, *sprinkled* all throughout the day is checking email, checking Facebook, I will also then get *trapped in* at least two to three phone calls, Skype chats, whatever you want to call it. Those are like *sprinkled* throughout the day. (Andrew)

Another *flurry* of activity when I got back to my desk. (Joanna, diary)

These metaphors all entail a lack of control on the part of the individual. The uncontrolled nature of a ‘flood’ of incoming messages is clear, but these active interactions on the part of the individual are still defined by the uncontrolled environment around them. With metaphors of light weather conditions that come and go without much control, participants are still caught in the sprinkles or showers of their own actions and the actions of others, still trapped by the environment even when they actively choose to wade into or engage with the flow of communication.

5.5.2 Metaphors of Control and Management

For nearly half of the participants, many of whom describe themselves in one or another way as ‘heavy communicators’, the communication environment is something that they can ‘rise above’ in the words of David, a 33-year-old international sales rep and father of two. The flow of communication is something they must vigilantly keep ahead of. Their experience of everyday interactions is manifest as a need to manage potential interaction and immediately clear or address any focused interaction before

the accumulation of tasks can occur. For many participants, like Chris earlier, the management of interactions is itself something that participants monitor, to reassure themselves that they are in control and are minimising the chance of being overwhelmed.

Again, participants use expressions such as ‘obsessive’ and ‘compulsive’ to describe their engagement, not with actual focused interactions that are occurring, but with the potential for interactions. The individual is obsessively checking their computer or mobile screen to ensure that there are no new interactions to address, constantly ensuring that they are aware of and ahead of all relevant communication channels. Ron, below, begins with the idea that there is no escaping the constant accumulation of emails, and because of this, it is something that has to be continually addressed.

So that won't go away, so if I have 50 emails that I haven't answered at some point there will be 100. There are just going to be because I don't have, I can't change the way that that system works, I am subject to it. So I guess in that case it's just trying to keep it under control because you could end up overwhelmed, just sheer volume I think is what it is.

While he is attempting to stay in control, he introduces the notion that despite his best efforts, he is subject to the wider communication environment. He sees this as the ordinary conditions of his everyday life, yet he paradoxically perceives the extraordinary pressures and impact that it can have on him. So, it is out of his control, yet his only choice is to attempt to manage it by adjusting to the pace and flow of communication.

Joanna discusses in detail this need to manage all channels, ‘multi-tasking’ even in her leisure time in order to keep ahead of tomorrow’s expectations and the incoming interactions.

Yes so again it is this stimulation but in another way. So why do I need the TV on if I am trying to concentrate on surfing and my email and answering emails and have my Blackberry blinking potentially from my boss in New York? I don't know. I seem to multitask well in a way.... It is a bit obsessive when I come home and I've been staring at a laptop for or a computer screen for ten hours and then I turn my own on and have the TV

going and have my Blackberry sitting next to me on the couch. I think that's *overload* but it seems to work.

Joanna opts to be continually overloaded, a state of over-connection and over-interaction by her own choice, to avoid any sense of being overwhelmed. Similar to Ron above, there is a sense of ambivalence for Joanna as to whether or not her strategies for coping and retaining control are appropriate or 'obsessive'. Later, in her second interview, Joanna returns to this idea.

I wouldn't turn [my phone] off I don't think...Again this whole not-knowing-what-to-expect-on-Monday-morning thing. Am I going to have 50 emails waiting for me and feel like '*Oh my god I'm overwhelmed*'?

She describes this need to stay ahead of potential communication, where any anxiety has been addressed through constant attentive control within the situation.

When texts, missed calls, or emails do arrive, the participants describe their reaction in terms of a necessary response.

I checked, but I checked before on my phone, but I checked it here now *so* it doesn't show that I have '1' new email.

Lena is rechecking an email so that she can mark it as unread, so that she is not faced with the indicator that there is an unaddressed message. The purpose of her rechecking was not to address the email, nor to reply, but specifically to manage the visible representation of unattended messages. For other participants, this narrative of control and compulsion to rid the mobile interface of indicators is described metaphorically as 'cleaning'. The desire to check for Facebook messages (Lena), to refresh homepages (Eugene), or scan mobile interfaces for indicators of new interactions, are each coupled with an inability to ignore the text, call, or email indicator. This inability to ignore the indicator is expressed as an irritation or anxiety at seeing and *therefore not having addressed the interaction* immediately. It is a consistent compulsion to 'empty' and 'clean' the interface of the mobile or email platform of any representation of unaddressed communication. Below are three examples from an account executive, a trainee solicitor, and a model respectively:

Didn't check for emails or texts until I realised that I was late meeting friends for dinner. Annoying flashing red light! (Joanna, Diary)

I need to look at all my emails though and that little yellow box is the bane of my life – I don't want to see it. I open all my emails and not reading them if I know they're not important and I'll just go back to what I'm doing. (Elisabeth, Interview)

No I can't. I think I'm obsessive compulsive. You know on your phone, you've got that little red number, I can't stand it, I have to check. (Lena, Interview)

The three quotes above refer to the visual representation indicating that there is an incoming message, email, text, or missed call. This is visible for the participant, but it also has a public element to it. These indicators are often also coupled with a vibration or audible signal that is again noticeable for the individual who owns the phone but also co-present others.

While many participants tend to focus on the colour, there is also considerable consistent focus on the numerical aspect of the indicators. Ten or fifty elicits a much more anxious reaction than one, but even the presence of one is disconcerting as Lena described at the beginning of this section. Zaina makes this link more explicitly:

I need to clean out my inbox. You don't understand; zero inbox means zero responsibility. Really, I feel like they're little children crying 'Look at me, I need this attention'.

The numerical value of unaddressed interactions relates again to the task-oriented time, the number is seen as representative of a task to be completed, but is also a way of monitoring one's own management of the potential contingency and anxiety interactions can represent. Elisabeth, a lawyer, specifically mentions the relief as her actions actively diminish the number:

I guess it's like therapy just because if I get a crazy amount of emails – fifty in the space of an hour – which is not normal, well it might be. Normally I deal with them, I will not have that fifty flashing up on my screen and maybe it is almost a way of relaxing in the sense of – the moment I start scrolling through them and the numbers start to decrease, I definitely get an inner sigh and then just to delete all of the ones that are irrelevant, because I do get a lot of irrelevant – well not irrelevant but nuisance – and I'll go through to check.

For Elisabeth, not only is the presence and magnitude of the number an anxiety (as it is with other participants) but seeing that number decrease is also specifically described as relief. The threat that is being monitored is the unexpected impact and contingency that interactions can potentially have on one's day. It is a matter of losing sight and control of how one will proceed through the day each time that number appears on the mobile screen.

Below, Augustine discusses her need to engage and address these indicators, both coloured and numerical, but introduces the metaphor of a desk and the notion of cleaning the desk.

I don't like mess. My screen on my Blackberry now, I have 7 unread emails, that irritates me, that has to be gone, that has to be clear all the way across the top.... It's yellow, it's annoying. Yellow's one of my favourite colours but no. If I've had a text message that would be next to it. If I had a Blackberry Messenger then there would be blue. That would be so cluttered it would just annoy me. It's all about just knowing that everything is *done and dusted – finalized, clean clear – off my desk, off my screen* before I switch off to sleep.

As a desk, it represents the workspace, yet projected onto the interface of phone, it differs in two important ways. First, this workspace is also the site of social interaction, meaning that unlike a physical desk, the mobile is a blurred space where the work and leisure divide must be managed. Second, unlike a desk or physical work area, the individual does not leave the mobile phone behind at the end of a workday. Rather, it is carried around in a pocket or bag, and thus, the 'mess' of unanswered messages follows an individual throughout the day. It is an everyday context to live within networked time, all the way to bed, so it must be cleaned before going to sleep for participation in the day to be concluded.

This visual narrative extends with regard to the email inbox, which does not have this public element like audio and visual message indicators beeping and flashing on a mobile phone. Eugene's and Ron's descriptions, among others, consistently use metaphors of clean/messy to imply managed/disorderly.

The thing is [that] the important emails get lost between the chain of fifteen emails where they're talking about some picture or something. And then

when a client sends something it gets *lost* in between and it's very annoying.
(Eugene)

Well after I've replied to it there is no problem but I do seem to be anxious about things that I have not replied to yet and anxious about them building up. I'm not entirely sure why, it just seems messy, I think that's the word.
(Ron)

If left to the flow of the communication environment, the inbox will become a source of frustration as it becomes an increasingly 'messy' or chaotic place within which things are 'lost'.

Again, using the metaphor of a desk, the email inbox is described as being personally indicative of other everyday practices of Chris.

But then it becomes an anxiety in and of itself the fact that all this stuff is there...So I don't want them all sitting there waiting for me because it's a sign that I'm procrastinating again. So I want it to be that it's all empty – it's like having a clear desk.

He considers the full email inbox as a source of anxiety itself, but also as the representation that he has been procrastinating and the anxiety produced by that realisation. Unaddressed emails not only serve as a proxy for different tasks Chris feels he is neglecting, but their presence on his 'desk' also spills over and signals to Chris a neglect of responsibilities in his wider life. Only when his inbox is 'empty' can Chris be re-assured by that visual confirmation on his computer screen that he has successfully met the tasks that comprise his day.

5.6 Chapter Conclusion

If the conditions for communication are in abundance, what then has become scarce? For my participants, connecting or rather co-ordinating co-presence and telepresence is not the struggle it once was. Their struggle is the management of time; clock-time in its most literal sense has become scarce. It has not been displaced, but rather is colonised by the potential demands for interaction afforded through asynchronous connection to mobile and online networks.

There is a *need for networked connection* that is evident throughout the selection with the exception of some of the oldest participants. The import of this connection and the flow of communication is two-fold. It allows firstly for access to the everyday lives of those within one's social network, yet secondly, it also allows for potential interactions to be perceived as tasks, demanding attention and, importantly, time. In this manner, connection allows for the potential 'interruption and recontextualisation' (McGuire 2008, p. 25) of the unfolding day. These tasks become manifestations of our social and work-related relationships and responsibilities, as are connections and interactions themselves. In this manner, the desire for networked connection is inextricable from our participation in everyday life.

There is a crude though useful theoretical asymmetry between the finite time of day and the individual's attempt to maintain awareness of innumerable potential interactions that are conflated with the tasks to be completed in a day. The abundance of potential communication mutually enforces the sense of scarce time. In the context of interactions being conflated with tasks, connected asynchronicity allows for potential interactions to demand more hours and minutes than the clock or day has to offer. The potential to perceive temporal overload is a characteristic of the individual's relationship with the communication environment.

Participants all discussed a sense of being overwhelmed, anxious even, by the uncontrolled flow of communication during their day. Asynchronous connectivity extends perception and interaction across both spaces, yet also allows for multiplication of timeframes for interaction to be overlaid onto the clock-time of a day, which cannot be extended. As the following chapter will explore, interpersonal practices have emerged from within this environment to manage the flow of everyday interaction in a sustainable manner, to manage the increasing opportunities for interaction and to segregate the oversubscribed demands for time and attention into communication defined domains, or relational domains, in everyday life.

Chapter Six: Temporal Control and Relational Domains

Simmel argues that ‘disassociation...is one of the elementary forms of socialization’ ([1903] 2002, p. 15). In his essay on metropolitan life over a century ago, he discusses how the individual creates ‘a protective organ for itself against the profound disruption with which the fluctuations and discontinuities of the external milieu threaten it’ (Simmel [1903] 2002, p. 12). Today, however, the protective organ is not the ‘blasé’ comportment and attitude Simmel saw in the conduct of urban dwellers, but a contemporary management of communication that is less an effort to connect, because the potential for connection is a given, and more an effort to limit connection in certain ways. Individuals maintain barriers to communication effected through modulation between multiple communication tools. Yet, like Simmel’s blasé attitude, these barriers are erected and maintained by the individual to avoid the fluctuating flows of potential interaction and ‘discontinuity’ that such disruptions can have on one’s management of their everyday life. Everyday communication, experienced and perceived as a *management of barriers*, is neither wholly new nor native to the domain of communication technologies. These strategies roughly correspond to the ‘distantiation and deflection’ discussed by Simmel, strategies that he considered necessary to metropolitan life ‘without which this type of life could not be carried out’ ([1903] 2002, p. 15). This chapter will explore the formation and management of these barriers in the contemporary context of networked connection, despite the possibility for, expressed desire for, and perceived social necessity for continuous connection.

The contemporary experience of interpersonal communication is described by participants in terms of multiple open connections within the wider environment of networked communication. For the participants, this everyday communication environment is defined by an abundant potential for interpersonal interaction, which can be overwhelming as the flow of interactions impacts one’s day in an unexpected manner. The everyday practices of communication are described, however, in terms of managing boundaries or barriers to that potential interaction, controlling and limiting when and how an individual can be engaged. Employment of these barriers is also an attempt to segregate everyday contexts of interaction throughout the day. The

individual employs these barriers in order to manage the divergent roles played and selves presented through interpersonal communication throughout the day.

Accounts of the communication environment from my respondents oscillate between a perceived social expectation that one must be, by default, constantly connected on multiple channels and the perceived personal necessity of controlling or managing that environment. Participants involve and enlist multiple modes of communication in their everyday life. They overlap and overlay these modes, from face-to-face interaction, to technologically mediated communication through mobile devices such as voice calls, text, messaging email, and online and computer-based communication such as email, instant messaging, social network interaction, and forum discussions.

Naomi Baron (2008, pp. 5, 6) argued that individuals are exploiting novel ways to control the 'volume' for interpersonal communication through technology. Though apt, the use of multiple channels to manage everyday communication needs a more complex metaphor than volume. Ethan, a 30-year-old application developer, expresses a desire for stemming or filtering the flow of communication that is typical of the respondents when he states directly, 'I would love a better way to separate signal from noise'. Both the signal and noise he mentions are interpersonal communications, but signal connotes a value to some engagements compared to the wasted time and attention of other potential engagements. During the interview, Ethan dismisses several beeps from his mobile phone indicating that social networking messages had been received and only glances at his laptop screen when new messages periodically appear in his inbox. He then muses in contrast to those ignored messages: 'In fact there is nothing that I would consider as interesting, such as direct SMS messages from mates'. This desire for separation and filtering of potential interaction is inextricable from the assignment of importance to some people and some interactions from within the flow of everyday communication and the dismissal or at least delay of others. While there is not always the hierarchy implied in this example, there is often a differentiation of interactions and staging of these differences through the differing level of engagement between multiple communication tools.

Participants often explicitly and emotionally express something akin to *a right* to control with whom and when they will engage.

No-one ever has to communicate with you if they don't want to and there are so many people out there that think there is this social rule that requires people to keep up with you or respond [to you] (Scott)

Scott is describing both the wider social expectations and pressure to be constantly connected or otherwise available for engagement, yet also the individual choice to refuse interaction. The individual's communication practices are manifest through their personal use of multiple communication tools to form and manage complex sets of *barriers to interaction*. These barriers are maintained within a context of constant connection; they are a way of limiting potential interaction, a constraint to the potential attempts of others to engage in communication with that individual.

Andrew outlines the social expectation to be constantly connected, what he refers to as 'the system', and alludes to the strategies employed by individuals to manage that expectation and its potential impact on one's day.

This is the system, this is why this system exists and you're not using it for the reason that you and everyone else has it. Many people abuse systems to their advantage.

Interviewer: What is the advantage?

Your availability and you're screening it – just because someone throws you the ball doesn't mean you have to catch it. So when I phone you – I'm throwing you the ball – and just because you're capable of answering the phone – maybe it's not convenient for you – maybe you don't feel like talking to me but if someone else called you maybe you'd pick up. I do that all the time – I could be available but if I see that [one friend] is calling I might not answer but you might call and I might.

Andrew is describing the individual's desire to control how and when they will engage in communication. Avoiding a specific interaction now, however, is not an outright refusal for interaction. A 'deflection' of a phone call, such as in Andrew's example, is not necessarily a refusal to interact with that person, nor even a refusal to interact with them over the telephone, but a refusal to interact with them over the telephone *now, at*

that given moment. Interaction may occur but it is deflected to another medium or to a later point in time.

This description centres on the *specific* ‘deflection’ of interaction and thus implies that barriers to interaction *in general* could also be employed on one or more modes of communication to control or otherwise manage engagement with the individual. Such practices involve refusing engagement on an entire mode of communication for a duration of time. This is not a permanent disconnection from that medium. Rather, this practice involves a temporary ‘distantiation’ from sets of interactions that occur through one or another medium. As will be explored, these sets of distinct interactions often come to represent distinct domains of one’s interpersonal network and thus domains of one’s everyday life. Individuals often disengage and distance themselves from work, home, or social interaction for a duration of time throughout the day by disengaging, but not disconnecting from certain modes of communication.

Andrew describes the advantage of maintaining control over interaction through a limited presence on internet chat and call platforms within the context of a larger ‘system’ where connection is expected and desired by ‘you and everyone else’. This parallels the ambivalence discussed in the previous chapter regarding the perceived need for constant connection that is paired with a perceived need to limit and control connection in a specific way, as a manner of managing communication in general.

Managing these barriers to interaction does not equate to the disconnection of the individual from mobile and online networks, but rather, it provides for shifting degrees of absence and presence across multiple channels. Limiting interaction is not simply a lack of presence in one or another mode of communication but rather an active construction of that lack of presence on the individual’s part. When the individual is still connected to the mobile and online networks, still present in the engagement of other interactions, then there is not only a lack of presence but also a *purposeful practice of being absent* in specific ways. In the same way that communication tools provide for practices that involve *networked presence*, I propose and will explore the use of those same communication tools to achieve degrees of *networked absence*.

6.1 Between Receiving Selves

There is a particular manner in which participants consistently speak of interpersonal communication. They often speak of themselves and others as *receivers of communication*. Interaction is described from the perspective of the receiver. These descriptions of what I call *receiving selves* were far more consistent than descriptions of the self as a sender of communication. This has implications that will be visited throughout this chapter and the next. This chapter will explore the individual's practices of maintaining control of the possibilities for engagement with themselves as a receiving self by constraining the flow of communication. When participants speak of the others with whom they communicate, they do so either from the perspective of themselves as the receiver or from the context of how those individuals would themselves be receiving the interactions as *other receiving selves*. The following chapter explores the individual's awareness of other people's communication practices and the practices of self-restraint that the individual employs in connecting with those others. Interestingly, the glaring exception to this trend came as the participants described a moment when an individual knowingly transgressed a perceived norm for communication or purposefully attempted to transgress a barrier to interaction that someone else sought to maintain. It is in these cases that interaction between individuals was often described in terms of the sending and not receiving selves. This corresponds to Elias' (1998, p. 68) depiction of society as made up of individuals, who through their interdependency are the basic unit of social structures and relations. The receiving self then becomes that most basic unit of any possible figurational change, implying an integration of one's own experience and actions with that of the other.

Perceiving communication as always occurring within the context of the receiver emerges from a particular type of interpersonal communication, specifically the negotiation of interpersonal communication throughout the day as they occur between peers, whether colleagues, family members, romantic partners, friends, or acquaintances. Many of those examples mention but do not explore the relationships of power that are involved between an employee and employer. While such examples of workplace organisation and power relations offer useful contrasts, they are different in substance to the mutually desired interpersonal communication of the social world, which is the focus of this research. It is the stark asymmetry of power in the

relationship that allows for an imposition of interaction by the employer upon the employee that largely differentiates these categories. In these interactions, there is not the same negotiation of mutual engagement, nor the same sense of interchangeable standpoints between receiving selves, but rather a degree of force and authority as engagement and, thus, quite distinct from the primary focus of this research.

6.2 Deflection and Temporal Control

Each time a ringing mobile is ignored, a text message or email quickly glanced at but left without reply, or an online chat left hanging without engagement, an individual is maintaining their individual *temporal control* over interaction. The receiver is disconnected from that medium, but refusing to engage with one specific interaction and not necessarily others. Often, it is a refusal to engage now, or a refusal to engage in that specific medium. It is the temporal dimension that is often important to the participant, whereby the refusal of live or synchronous interactions, such as telephone calls or video chats is an imposition of asynchronicity to that mode of communication. This allows normally synchronous modes of communication to be managed with delay, in a similar fashion to asynchronous modes of communication such as email, text messaging on the mobile phone, or social network messages and updates.

The asynchronous message that has been received but has not been responded to remains unaddressed or *pre-interactional*. The notion of mutuality makes response (as mutual engagement) an essential element to Goffman's definition of focused interaction (Goffman 1971, p. 243). In Goffman's situation of face-to-face interaction, one person can approach another and begin talking, but the second may choose to refuse the interaction, establishing their temporal control of interaction by not responding. For the purposes of this research, while participants discuss the expectations associated with accumulating emails, they manage when and how these emails will be addressed or attended to. This is in contrast to the expectation that the message has been received, which is associated with connection to the internet and the email platform itself.

6.2.1 Temporary Barriers to Synchronous Communication

Scott is a 33-year-old account manager in a consultancy firm. He compares modes of communication in terms of their temporality when discussing why he may not always answer the telephone:

I think I'm a *bit private* and I think that I'm also *a bit bossy*. So *when* I want to reach out to someone, I want to get them, but I don't like the idea that they can reach me *whenever they want* – which is probably why texting is really good because it's *not in real time*

These 'real-time' (used colloquially here to refer to the lived time of the body) requests for 'live' modes of communication present a potential disruption to the receiving individuals' management of their time, tasks, and the wider days. Conventional use of the telephone insists that to make a phone call is to request talking on the phone at that moment; mutual engagement in such live modes is simultaneous engagement and thus in stark contrast to the 'connected asynchronicity' (Hassan 2007, p. 51) whereby an email, message, or post is sent and engagement occurs at the time the receiver chooses. The possibility to delay interaction is built into mediums such as text, email, or online messages or posts. Scott dwells upon not wanting interaction to be based on 'whenever' his interlocutor chooses but rather 'when' Scott wants. He is attempting to limit the disruptive potential of communications that is based on the timeframe of the person placing the call by not answering incoming calls.

Individuals often attempt to maintain control over the temporal flow of the day by avoiding unexpected live communication. There is, however, a perceived emotional element to live communication, which is also something receivers hope to manage. Andrew states that 'I screen a lot of calls...this is one advantage to having people's numbers in my mobile', indicating that it is on a phone-call-to-phone-call as well as a person-to-person basis that he is screening interactions. Below, he deflects and delays interaction first on a synchronous and then an asynchronous mode of communication:

I received a call this morning from someone who I knew was in town for the day but did not want to see, nor did I want to make up an excuse...luckily I recognized her country code # on the [mobile interface], knew it was her, and

didn't bother to pick up...She followed it up with a [private social networking] instant message telling me she tried to call...

These are both specific refusals of an interaction, rather than a broad systematic refusal of all phone calls or all messages on that specific social network. Andrew did not want to have a live conversation with this individual at that moment and explains that he chose in the end to respond much later to her online message. The wider implications of friendship aside, Andrew had no qualms with emailing an excuse to this friend at his leisure, yet wanted to avoid the implied difficulty of excusing himself in a live conversation or even in an immediate response to her social networking message to which she could have responded. He was not only delaying mutual engagement to retain temporal control over his day, but there was also an emotional dimension in having to unexpectedly engage in real time that he was also trying to manage.

Christina describes her avoidance of real-time interactions in a slightly different context. This is not an example of her temporal control over interaction, but rather a unique instance that highlights the anxiety of unexpected 'liveness' even without the presence of an interlocutor.

If I'm leaving a message, a voicemail message...Just because I don't have a message prepared and it just throws me, the spontaneity of having to think of ...I have been known to phone again: to end the call without leaving a message, write down my message, phone again and leave it.

This is not a disruption of an unexpected interaction in her day, like the examples above. It relates, rather, to the uncontrolled element of needing to interact in a live or 'real-time' context. Her discomfort with the lack of control over the temporality of her interaction leads her to hang up, and draft a scripted response in an asynchronous manner before calling back. This is similar to the pressure of an unexpected live and near-live interaction, which is consistently described with an emotional tone of anxiety or vulnerability. In contrast to the unexpected interruptions of synchronous communication discussed here, the purposeful exchange of live interaction is often framed as an expression of intimacy (as will be explored in later chapters).

6.2.2 Temporal Control in Asynchronous Interaction

The implications of temporality for participants become quite clear with regard to text messaging, instant messaging services, or chat modes of communication. Technically, these are asynchronous modes of communication because they do not require the same degree of simultaneous mutual engagement expected for communication channels like the telephone. Yet, the flow of interaction on these platforms can take on a near-live or staggered synchronicity as interlocutors can type out a conversation in rapid succession without much delay. Augustine explains how she uses one such chat programme on the popular social networking site Facebook in comparison to the telephone:

What I quite like is that you can screen who you talk to... You might have it open and you might get a little click on your screen that someone's writing to you and you make the call whether you want to write to them or not. It depends if you're busy

Augustine views this technology as asynchronous and, thus, with an in-built temporal control, which she enjoys. Andrew, however, perceives that first online chat message as an attempt to initiate a synchronous interaction. His strategy for maintaining control of live interaction on a popular video call application mirrors his use of near-live instant messaging applications:

There are people on this list that...well...I want to have them as Skype contacts in case I need to call them or want to call them, but maybe I just don't feel like [having a video call] with them [when they want to], or maybe I'm just not in the mood. I mean I'm constantly logged in online, so I'll leave myself online, but invisible, so that I feel like I am in complete control.

Andrew is constantly online but prefers to limit engagement on any live mode of communication: because he is invisible, his friends would have to message him first and wait for a response. He maintains 'constant' connection with this live mode of communication but with strict individual temporal control over when he will engage. He manages his presence in online instant messaging and chat applications in the same way:

In chat windows, I'm constantly invisible...I think I was happy to see that ... I am somewhat manipulative about trying to control *when and how* I'm contacted and by whom, whether I'm being *vulnerable* to a chat – and I sometimes don't like to be put on the spot with a *live thing*.

He discusses his choice and control over who can talk to him and when in similarly positive terms to Augustine, though he equates the potential for even near-live interaction occurring outside his control as vulnerability. Andrew is actively deflecting unexpected requests for interaction, effectively detaching the act of sending a chat message from his choice of whether to engage with the interaction. This separates the interaction into two acts that are temporally distinct.

Andrew, along with other participants such as Lena and Eddie, view attempts to interact with them through online chat in similar tones of violation and vulnerability as with telephone calls and video calls: all three described these attempts as potentially 'aggressive' and possibly as 'harassment', in the words of Lena and Eddie. The negative tone is not meant to describe the content of the interaction, nor the relationship between the interlocutors, but rather the act of unexpectedly attempting to connect in a synchronous fashion. While the emotionalised tone of these participants is not consistent among the selection, they are still salient examples for isolating what is at stake for participants: control over the time of interactions. Most participants expressed similar, albeit more tempered perceptions of live communications: as impositions, infringements, or demands upon one's time.

Participants are engaging with synchronous communication in an asynchronous manner as a way of maintaining individual temporal control over interaction. The choice to delay or potentially refuse these live engagements is not just a refusal of an unexpected disruption to the unfolding day, but it is also a refusal based on the time of interaction being outside of the receiver's control. By shifting the potential engagement to be addressed as a task to carry out when and if the individual chooses, they retain individual temporal control over modes of communication that involve synchronous interaction without having to resist the desire for constant connection or use of the mode of communication when it suits them. This is consistent with the 'task-oriented time' (Hassan 2007, p. 51) of networked interactions whereby the individual maintains all potential interactions at an asynchronous distance, ready to be addressed at any point but not interrupting the flow of one's day. As asynchronous tasks, the potential for interaction is manageable in a consistent way regardless of whether those interactions originate in the work or social domain. As will be explored

further, this is one condition by which the domains themselves can be managed through communication practices.

6.2.3 Temporal Control and Awareness

Though attempts to infringe on the receiver's attempts at temporal control are often described in negative emotional tones, the actual management of live communication in an asynchronous fashion was discussed as a commonplace occurrence and in a manner quite similar to how asynchronous communications are discussed. Joanna describes her decision regarding when and if to respond to emails, as resting largely on her awareness of the context of interaction.

The red blinking light bothers me more because I'm not aware of what it is.... Whereas if I've read it, I consciously make the decision of: am I going to do something about it or am I consciously going to say 'That can wait'. So I am empowered to make a decision about it, I think that is the difference.... It is amazing the power that little blinking light has. (Joanna)

This can be compared to Eddie's description of managing phone calls.

If [my best friend] phones first, then I'd answer, because I wouldn't know what it's about. But if [she had] texted first, then I'd know she's wanting to go out tonight or whatever blah blah blah blah blah, then I know that's in waiting, so I don't have to deal with that 'til later. Even if she then calls me, I don't have to [answer] because I already know what it's about. (Eddie)

Though these cases differ in terms of the mode of communication, there are similarities. Joanna and Eddie both feel compelled to engage only enough to find out the context of the interaction, 'bothered' in Eddie's words by the potential impact the interaction could have on their day. As Joanna's emails are asynchronous, she need only be connected and does not need to reply. Eddie would rather be contacted asynchronously and avoid the imposition and 'harassment' that he appends to live modes of communication. During the interview, Eddie constantly checks and reads his text messages. He even excuses himself during one research exercise and borrows his flatmate's computer to quickly check his email and social networking accounts. While he is doing so, his mobile phone rings, which he looks at with disgust *before seeing who is calling*. He looks at the interface; 'It's Dad', he says, and does not answer the phone. Immediately after, he receives a text message and explains aloud, 'It's Dad and

he wants to meet up in the pub down by Liverpool Street and we're busy'. We recommence the interview, but after a few minutes, he apologises and says, 'Actually, I have to phone him back'. Eddie, like Joanna with each email, wants to have the choice of saying 'That can wait'. It is a matter of maintaining control over when or if an interaction will be addressed. This a form of temporal control that relies on a context of 'connected asynchronicity' (Hassan 2007, p. 52) of networked connection. By maintaining connection to asynchronous modes of communication, the individual ensures both an awareness of the interaction but also the choice to delay addressing it.

Ron, an aspiring writer, works through a temporary employment agency that has recently placed him as an IT administrator for a large office building. In the example below, he explains how he screens and decides to delay accessing voicemails:

I used to respond to phone calls much quicker than I do now in that these days, I think because there is more going on and I find I have to compartmentalise things more, I'm comfortable – having – knowing – that I've got four voicemails and say 'Okay I'll listen to those at the end of the day' as opposed to having to listen to them right now. So yes, I think [it's] a bit more comfortable, taking your time I think.

By choosing when to listen to the message and when to return the call, he is using this mode of communication in an asynchronous fashion. Ron describes and stumbles on that description of being 'comfortable having' four voicemails, correcting himself mid-sentence to say 'knowing' he has four voicemails. This latter version implies a distance, a controlled awareness of these four potential interruptions to his day that is more systematic. He is imposing his own timeframe on when the interaction will take place; from the position of the receiver, he is constraining the actions of the sender. Yet, he alludes to something else that is beyond the temporal control of a single interaction but of durations of time throughout the day.

6.3 Networked Absence and Re-segregating Domains

For this selection, the most prevalent domains of everyday life were work and social life.¹¹ The following sections will explore the segregation of social from work interactions and work from social interactions through the imposition of barriers to interaction on certain modes of communication in order to temporally separate work and social networked engagement. Individual management of interaction structures connection, awareness, and engagement in certain ways for certain durations of time such that the individual can re-assert the limits and segregation of the domains of everyday activity, which were once defined spatially and temporally. I propose that the domains of everyday activity are being managed as *relational domains*, as both work and social life are subsumed in the context of constant networked connection.

For example, for the duration of the time for social interactions such as the weekend, evening or day off, often individuals distance themselves from all work-related communication by not engaging with certain mediums. Connection is maintained to these modes of communication so that the individual could remain aware of interaction, though these interactions were not replied to, addressed, or otherwise engaged. During this time, all modes of communication related to the social life were largely kept open, and engagement occurred. There were also, however, durations of time when the individual disengaged from all social networked communication in order to ground him/herself in a face-to-face engagement or even to have time to him/herself free from the expectation to communicate.

6.3.1 Imposing Limits to the Work Domain

Joanna often chooses to ‘escape’ from emails during the weekends, re-imposing a form of control over the duration of time from Friday evening until Monday morning so that she will not be accessible through a variety of communication modes.

Escape.... Meaning that people will not expect a response from me. Either because it is the weekend or because I have actually booked that day off....

¹¹ There are four participants who had children with whom they live. While their routines differed from those without children, they had young children and kept busy social schedules such that their lives offered little sense of the family/home as a domain of activities and values that are clearly demarcated and distinct from their social lives.

[I am] still receiving, probably still checking, reading them but not actioning, not responding...

Joanna's workday involves a sense of clock time imposed by her employers, nine to five and sometimes later. Yet, after having left the building, there is a blurring of work-related interaction with social interactions through mobile communication. These interactions consistently extend beyond the typical workday and workweek. This blurring relates to the expectation that Joanna will still check and can receive emails when outside of the office. By not answering her emails over the weekend, she is attempting to impose a duration of time whereby she will not be expected to engage with work-based communications despite being connected.

An interesting observational note was that several participants (David, Betty, Ron, Farzan, Karina, and Joseph) found it too demanding to complete the weekend portion of the diary task for this research with the same depth as they did the weekday portions or at all. They alluded to this in the second interview, expressing that the diary conflicted with their habitual and conventionalised barriers to email-based communication that they largely associated with work and the workweek. Ron describes limiting the possibilities for interaction for the duration of weekends in his diary: 'Friday evening: my computer stays off, my phone remains in my bedroom and I spend the evening talking face-to-face with housemates...'. As Augustine explained in an email, 'It's so much easier to do [the diary] during the week when at one's desk than when at home or out and about...'. Despite this, however, nearly all participants report that they are still online through the phone or computer over the weekend, as both devices are used for social modes of communication as well. Ron, too, admits that he inevitably runs back to his room to get his phone. They remain connected to maintain awareness of the constant traffic occurring on those modes of communication they perceive as work related. Similar to Joanna's weekend, Augustine describes the temporal and medium-based nature of her evening routines as they involve a systematic closure of interaction on many channels:

[My Mom] understands I've got phone fatigue in the evenings so I don't really want a chat, so she'll call me at work and I'm very abrupt because I'm very busy, which she also understands, but she does find that I don't have time for her on the phone – which is also true but a little bit unfair so I do give her a little bit of time at the weekends on the phone.

I guess it's a high level of activity that I let myself have when I'm at my desktop [during the day]. And then [in the evening], by just being aware of emails texts and Blackberry Messenger and knowing what's going on in Facebook [for my client's profiles], I *don't need to interact as much* in my downtime, that is my downtime.

After having left work or attended the necessary meetings and industry events, Augustine limits engagement in the evenings on those modes of communication she associates with work in an attempt to *delineate a duration of time that will correspond to a non-work domain*. She repeats 'my downtime', eliciting of sense of ownership and right of control through the possessive pronoun. Even though talking to her mother is not a work-related interaction, she has conflated telephone interaction with work and struggles to maintain a boundary between the two domains. Though she avoids interaction on these modes of communication outside of work hours, she maintains connection and therefore an awareness of interactions. She admitted that the only time she has actually turned off her phone, and thus disconnected from that level of awareness, was on her wedding day and even then only for a few hours.

Often, however, participants not only attempt to distance themselves from the work domain but also distance themselves from social communication as well. Margaret describes limiting engagement across multiple modes of communication after a long workday full of interaction:

But then there's times when you're just like I want to cut the whole world off, you may put your phone somewhere else so you don't want to hear it or you may just go to voicemail. Or you just may like you know just shut off for a little while and that's because that's the way you're kind of feeling at that moment...[but] if my mum rings – many people don't have my home number...we've restricted it to certain people...we just decided to just give our parents our home number whereas everyone else has our mobile number.

Out of exhaustion, Margaret decides to 'shut off' by ignoring engagement on almost every mode of communication and thus from almost her entire social network – 'the whole world' – to have time to herself. Having said that, Margaret is still accessible on her landline telephone, yet she only lets her parents have that number. Her parents have access to the one channel that none of her other friends do, which is available

even when she is ‘shut off’ from the world. She continues saying that if the landline rings, she can then make the decision to answer or not, knowing that it is likely her mother. In these instances, it is apparent that the pressures of networked communication, as explored in the previous chapter, can involve conflation of all potential interactions, work or social, as tasks demanding energy and attention that sometimes the individual simply cannot afford.

Participants are often attempting to re-impose a temporality grounded within the ‘here and now’ of the body by disconnecting at least partially from the multiple modes of networked communication. The most common example discussed by participants, yet admittedly less common in practice, is refusing phone calls during dinner or other intense face-to-face interaction with colleagues or close friends. Elisabeth keeps her phone in her purse during dinner as a rule. She describes this in her diary:

[There were] three phone calls during dinner – ignored them all, don’t like taking phone calls unless waiting for urgent phone call when having dinner with someone/talking one-on-one with a friend. Find it rude if people take calls with me one on one as well unless excuse themselves. Find it very rude when people stay on phone longer than feel they ought. Return phone calls on way home.

As she was not waiting for an urgent call, she effectively limits all engagement via the telephone during dinner, grounding her attention and interaction in the lived temporality of the body as shared with co-present others. She is imposing a specific social context by limiting potential interaction (work related or otherwise). She is not, however, turning off her mobile phone. In this way, choosing to spend time with someone over dinner, to share time and space with someone who is fully co-present without the interruption of mobile communications, becomes itself a task within an otherwise networked day. It is a subtle but important point: these barriers are not precluding the ability for the individual to make a call or send an email but are simply limiting engagements that are not initiated by the individual, the receiving self.

Consistently, however, although limiting engagement across entire modes of communication, participants do not go offline, nor turn off their phone: they remain aware that messages have arrived or that phone calls have been missed. It can be argued that the local temporalities of the body are imposed here from within a wider

context of constant connection. Choosing not to be accessible for engagement with others is not a matter of disconnection but rather a practice of *networked absence*, which maintains connection to the network but precludes one's presence in some modes of communication. This is not just a lack of networked presence, which would be disconnection, but it is specifically absence on some channels while being engaged and present within interactions on others.

Outright disconnection from a mode of communication only occurred as the exception to this rule for the majority of the respondents. The practices of the four oldest participants, however, directly contrast this desire to maintain connection. Chris, 46, who works from home, limits engagement for the duration of the evening but through temporary disconnection.

Normally if I'm here in the flat like I am today...I put the email on. And while I'm here I'll keep it on until such point where I go, 'That's my work day over'. It might not actually be that I'm going to stop working, but it might just mean that I'm just going to read now. So there's a point – I don't leave it on until I go to bed

Here, Chris distinguishes his leisure time from work time by disconnecting from online modes of communication. He turns off his computer. Unlike other participants, however, he does not check email through his phone, saying that he does not feel the need to set up that feature. Chris is not constantly connected by default, this is clear by the choice to 'put the email on' today implying that he may not on other days.

Richard, 39, maintains strict limits to his communication due to his irregular sleep patterns. His work involves a shifting rota that includes working several consecutive nights, then several consecutive early mornings, then afternoons and a period of time off.

And I turn my mobile off a lot as well because I don't expect my friends to understand my rota... so I just turn everything off, I unplug my phone. So I try to create as much radio silence as possible is what I'm trying to say.

By turning off all communication tools, he is not only limiting engagement, but he is also disconnecting from the network. There are no telephone calls, text messages, or emails that can get through if the mobile phone is off, nor is he aware of these

potential interactions, nor can he send any interactions. This is fundamentally different from screening each phone call that rings or glancing at text messages but not answering them because he is disconnected altogether from the mobile communication. Though he can simply reconnect by turning on his mobile phone and still receive those messages and likely a list of missed calls, disconnection involves a lack of real-time awareness of what attempts at interaction take place whereas ignoring those interaction maintains that awareness. Managing connection and disconnection is different from the practice of managing networked presence and absence, because disconnection foregoes awareness of networked interactions.

6.3.2 Imposing Temporal Limits to the Social Domain

Many of the above examples involved barriers to modes of communication that are perceived to be work related in order to impose a duration of time for social interactions. Consistently, throughout this selection, participants limit engagement to modes of communication that they often deemed to be more social while they were at work. This is in part to provide a duration of time free from potential interruptions of non-work related interaction but also in part not wanting to be seen texting or on social networking sites by co-workers.

Though an exception for the complete disconnection from certain modes of communication, Richard's limitation of networked interaction, imposed for a duration of work time, is similar to the practices of other participants. As he writes in his diary, 'Phone off, internet off, head down to do work. Appears to be the only way to stop myself being distracted. And it works'. Often, however, Richard is not this strict with himself and leaves these channels connected. Furthermore, social disruptions during work time are not always seen as wholly negative intrusions. With regard to internet dating messages, Richard uses the delay and anticipation of attending to his messages as a 'treat' after his 'stoic work ethic', as he explains. 'You enjoy yourself once you've put the hours in that's the trade off'. He specifically describes that he keeps dating sites online and open in the background of his desktop:

Have to get on with some work on my computer regarding job hunting.
Keeping my dating sites open. They beep if I have a message, but I won't be

checking them properly or actively seeing who's online until my work is done.

Well that's the plan anyway.

Though he has not literally closed the application, he has refused all potential interaction for an allotted amount of time. Effectively, he is limiting all engagement on that mode of communication. In this instance, he was working from home on the weekend and mimics the workday by not engaging with modes of communication he deems to be socially oriented.

These practices attempt to draw a line between the durations of social time and durations of work time, by temporally segregating social interactions and work interactions. Margaret explains:

I just kind of compartmentalise my life so that during the work days I'm just basically focused on my work. Say for example I go out for lunch then I might pick up the phone to speak to my partner. But I don't really call my friends to have a chat, maybe send a text about any plans that we may have in the evening or upcoming.... It's okay because I don't necessarily want to be on Facebook every day. I find myself logging in every day, which is a bit like – because I can. So it just becomes part of like a habit or a thing to do and it becomes when twelve o'clock comes around or, you know, at my lunch.

It becomes clear that an attempted division between social and work durations of the day is maintained in practice by shifting engagement between modes of communication. This divide between social and work contexts is only maintained by segregating these types of interaction between different modes of communication, though with a great deal of overlap.

In the next example, having both work emails and social emails available on a desktop or mobile parallels an awareness of, but disengagement from, work-related interaction in the evening:

If I'm going through a busy phase, I will not respond to social emails. When it's really, really busy and I feel like I am just about keeping my head above water, social emails register that they're there but I wouldn't even want to read them – I'll skim them and put them to one side and then they might get answered a few days later. (Elisabeth)

For many participants, the limiting of these ‘social’ modes of communication is only loosely enforced throughout the workday, and more strictly enforced during busy periods.

6.3.3 Multiplying Modes of Communication

This practice of compartmentalising social and work interaction into different modes of communication is more complex than simply the assignment of one medium for one’s work and another for personal life. Many participants increase their capacity to impose segregation between domains by having *multiple devices*, thereby *multiplying and separating the modes of communication*. This often involves maintenance of more than one instance of a given medium. An individual may have five email accounts and two mobile telephones, each for different purposes, different contexts, or different branches of one’s social network. While it is commonplace to have two emails (work and personal), most participants had far more, many of which were associated with different aspects of their social network and from different periods of their life. Gordon has five email accounts alongside his twitter accounts, while at the extreme Esther, who works with digital start-ups, has 13 email accounts, not to mention numerous accounts on each of the more popular social networking platforms.

As Elisabeth, the lawyer, comments, some of these email addresses are from her past and have been replaced, yet she still checks them often and ‘keep[s] it open in case all of sudden someone I hadn’t spoken to in years tried to get in touch’. Gordon, a 46-year-old freelancer for government and council agencies, has three active email accounts and two others that he refers to as ‘legacy email’ accounts. Though these are relatively defunct for day-to-day communication, he still checks them *habitually* to keep in touch with old contacts that have not been ‘transferred’ over to new email accounts. In addition to this, he has a pair of separate twitter accounts used as both blogs and messaging services.

Margaret, who is originally from Spain but has lived in London for over a decade, describes in her second interview that she has one email account for friends and family outside of England, her work email for colleagues and local friends, and another account for non-social communication such as leases and contracts that are

not work related. Andrew describes a similar everyday use of three email accounts: one professional, one from a university he attended, and one personal. These differ in how often he checks and is expected to check each email 'I [do] not mix things... I [need] to keep it separate because I only check my personal email, sometimes only once a day'.

With regard to mobile phones, six participants had both a work and personal mobile phone. This is another intra-medium division established through the multiplication of devices. Elisabeth describes the context of having two devices:

My mobile phone is my personal number and it has an overlap of people who are not at work to the friends that I would see outside of the office from work and then occasionally, one or two people that I don't see, but randomly I've got their number, though I don't know why. It's my primary device I would use outside of the office.... Whereas I have a Blackberry with a separate number and it has an email function so I receive all my emails and everyone from my office can access my Blackberry number so they can ring it if they needed to get in touch with me.

This establishes and maintains distinct communication channels for work-related and social interaction through the physical/material assignation of distinct devices rather than simply the assignment of some mediums for social interaction and others for work. Having multiple mobile devices often involves multiplication and separation of the numerous communication channels that have converged with telephony in mobile device design. Having two phones means two phone numbers, two separate texting services appended to those numbers but also two devices that can often be linked readily to separate emails, instant message programs, or social networking profiles.

Everyone within this selection has a personal computer or laptop at home, while all of those who work in an office environment also have a work-based computer (and some an additional laptop from their employer). These separate devices often employ similar if not identical software applications for email, instant messaging services, and depending on the industry, social networking services, and the like. The individual, however, has these assigned to separate accounts: one for work use and another personal use.

Yet the divisions are not solely between the work and social domain. As implied within the description of separate email accounts, participants often highlight a division with their social network when contrasting what one email account is for compared to another. Ron has a comparable divide for managing his social network:

There's three separate email accounts dealing with – one is work, one is personal and one is sort of tentative things. It is [for] people I've spoken to I'm not that crazy about them having my actual email address – I've got another one. So there's *filters there*, so it is *three separate email addresses*

He specifically understands the divide, however, in terms of work and social life, yet with an additional division and hierarchy between two social emails: one for high-priority social contacts and another for 'tentative' social contacts. Interestingly, as he checks his high-priority personal email account from his mobile phone, he describes that his use of this email account begins to blur the division between email and another medium:

My first email account is my personal email account so the only people who have that are friends and family. So I'll use that generally to catch up, catching up with family.... *It tends to be almost kind of blended with sort of texting it tends to be the same function...*

Thus, while he makes divisions between some modes of communication, other modes of communication converge, as they are used for same section of his social network. One is associated with texting, a medium that has been reserved for his close or 'high-priority' social contacts, compared to his 'tentative' contacts. As discussed earlier in this chapter, limiting engagement on one medium and not on others helps to segregate social and work interaction. This practice is also used to manage other divisions within one's social network.

6.4 Multiple Domains, Multiple Selves

The individual manages multiple modes of networked communication in order to segregate the domains of activity, but also to manage exposure to the divergent roles that are played by the individual within those somewhat distinct domains of everyday life. By attempting to divide one's social network according to various roles, one is attempting to separate the flow of interaction into distinct channels. In the context of many forms of online communication, there is a more public or semi-public element to

the observability of interactions such as blog posts, status updates, and comments. The separation of domains through the management of multiple modes of communication can, therefore, take on a different role.

Segregating domains of activity through divisions between communication modes can also provide a form of ‘information control’ (Goffman 1969, p. 123) by allowing for divergent presentations of the self to occur within distinct modes of communication. Margaret discusses exactly this with regard to one medium:

Facebook was just created for friends, that’s my impression of it.... When I decided not to include my family [on Facebook] I did it more for my own security – my own like data protection I guess because I didn’t want anything to be divulged that may have – maybe look really bad or.... Workmates: the same. I didn’t want to be caught out in case I was sick one day, you know, in comments... also there’s a bit of image control as well at work where you don’t necessarily want people to know what you’ve been getting up to and who your friends are may be or what you’re external life is all about. And then [ex-boyfriends] simply just because I think it’s a bit creepy for them to know what I’m doing.

Margaret outlines numerous distinct sets within her social network, which she excludes from interacting with her through one social network: family, colleagues, and ex-boyfriends. This segregation between mediums allows her to craft a separate image of herself that her interaction on the social network may contradict. Just as Goffman argues that there were divergent presentations of the self between the front and back stage, today, the possibility of managing multiple divergent self-presentations is provided by the use of multiple modes of communication for everyday life.

Through the example of a French-Canadian priest who wants to swim in public, Goffman suggests that the priest must ‘segregate his audiences so that the individuals who witness him in one of this roles will not be the individuals who witness him in another of his roles’ (1969, p. 119). Karina outlines a similar segregation clearly:

Twitter is a real work thing for me, I would not use that with my friends. I do not use that as just *Karina, as in, you know...Me*. I use it as *KARINA the General Manager of Karrine.com* and it is a real work tool for me. Facebook is more a social tool for me, so people that try to befriend me that I know in a work

capacity I wouldn't agree to just because some things just really need to be sacred. I don't really communicate with my close friends on Facebook. No, I find it really impersonal. I like it for general keeping up with people and I would approach people I don't see that often maybe on Facebook. If I knew that they were regularly on Facebook probably, it's a great backup.

Karina's description implies three distinct roles segregated between different modes of interaction: her professional self as a general manager, her intimate self with friends she sees on the weekend and talks to on the phone, and a more impersonal social self who wants to keep up with other friends and acquaintances. By maintaining segregation between modes of communication, she manages the distinct presentations of her professional and social self. She even refers to herself in the third person in order to describe her multiple selves: 'Karina the general manager' as opposed to 'Karina – as in me'.

6.4.1 Segregation Failure and Emotional Reactions

The complexities are clearly illustrated when the management of multiple selves fails. Zaina is an online journalist who has lived between New York and London for much of her life. Her everyday life is separated by work and socialising at industry events during the week and spending time with close friends and her husband on the weekend. Despite a few complications, she maintains at least two distinct online presences, two distinct selves:

What I'm trying to do moving forward is post a little bit of my funnier videos [on facebook] – I wouldn't put my boring interview with a CEO on there. Because nobody gives a shit. I have to remember that the people who are my Facebook friends are people who met me in my real life and don't give a shit about [my journalism] on the whole. Whereas those on Twitter follow me for a reason.... And they're waiting for me to give my opinion on certain devices and gadgets before it comes out to the public'.

Similar to Karina, Zaina keeps one online persona for her social life and the other for her professional life. The overlaps between her social networks, however, are more complicated than these simple divisions between tools. Though this research is less concerned about self-presentation and the content of interaction, this topic will be

briefly explored as it is partially managed through the maintenance of segregated domains of interaction. Zaina complains about this complex, everyday challenge of managing self-presentation.

...Now I feel like everything is blurred. All the lines are blurred...the social lines...the boundaries.... But you're almost creating a façade. You're creating a social identity. And if you don't realise that you're doing that, then you're in for a lot of trouble. Or you don't give a shit.

First, this is an expression of the pressure and anxiety related to maintaining numerous distinct domains for the distinct role in everyday life, despite the blurring that can occur in the context of networked connection. Second, Zaina is warning of the conflict that results when one fails to do so. She sighs and recounts months of criticism from her mother after posting a party photo that her family felt was unbecoming of her:

Ohhhh and I changed my profile pic on Facebook and Twitter and LinkedIn – [long sigh] So, basically I'm sick of all that shit; sick of my mom hassling me – she got my aunts on it and they were all attacking me. So I finally did it, changed it up. I did it in the evening and I changed it on that, Twitter, LinkedIn – changed it on all those things. In the morning I started to get 'Really nice photo', 'Oh sexy, love it'. Then the guys were like 'Photoshop – you don't look like that. That is not you'. I was just like 'Fuck you' – obviously pictures are a little more flattering than I look; I ain't that nasty...

Across these social networks and within each, Zaina has a number of different groups of friends, family, and colleagues. These groups each know Zaina in different roles, yet she does not segregate these groups across different modes of online communication. Posting one picture infuriates her family, posting another to placate them draws criticism from her friends, and she does not post any of the pictures in places where industry colleague have access. The frustration of being pulled in these divergent directions – the requirement to be the different people expected across multiple yet overlapping channels of communication – is palpable in her diaries and interviews.

Zaina's anecdote can be understood as failure to manage the distinct domains within a networked environment. Her failure to manage her self-presentation is a breakdown of the practices of managing barriers in order to segregate the domains and roles of her everyday life. This failure to segregate aspects of her social network, and thus allow

for the successful management of self-presentation, begins to threaten the relationships themselves.

6.5 Chapter Conclusion

The individual's practice of managing the flow of interactions through barriers to communication is a practice of relative disconnection, what this research calls networked absence, from within the context of constant connection. Apart from the upper limit of age of the selection represented by those within their forties, no participants disavow their desire for constant networked connection. These practices have implications for the individual's agency within the context of a highly technological, mediated, everyday, personal interaction.

Managing barriers to interaction, in one sense, is an attempt by the individual to retain control over the temporal flow of their everyday life. Though the social pressure and expectation to address interaction exists, the individual can choose if and when those interactions will be addressed. The social expectation to accept an unexpected live communication, such as a phone call, becomes a glaring inconsistency in an everyday management of time that allows the individual to delay or ignore certain communications in favour of others. These live communications are often managed in an asynchronous manner in order to achieve a more consistent task-oriented temporality to one's day; a temporality associated with other forms of networked asynchronous communications.

Barriers to interaction do not necessarily equate to complete disconnection but are rather attempts to create degrees of *networked presence and networked absence* simultaneously across different modes of communication. This provides a segregation of networked interaction in two ways.

First, there is a division of the day into different domain-related durations, during which some interaction can occur but not others. This is a re-colonisation of one's day, imposing boundaries on the expectations related to constant attempts for communication. To achieve this, engagement is limited through one mode of communication but not another: durations of interaction for work, for family, for

different parts of one's social network, even durations of time to one's self. Yet, this is not disconnection but shades of presence and absence, for individuals still want to be aware of asynchronous communication, simply not engage with it. This is an attempt to manage the domains of activity in everyday life relationally, through connection and engagement, to impose temporal limits on those domains.

Second, these divisions offer a degree of segregation between types of roles and aspects of one's social network. In this manner, one's self-presentation can become multiple and divergent as times and modes of communication become somewhat distinct. The separation of modes of communication becomes re-cast as the management of a range of tools with which individuals simultaneously manage their divergent selves, 'cycling through' (Turkle 2004, p. 102) different roles as one cycles through different applications on a mobile phone and computer interface each time they check for new interactions. Everyday life, then, becomes a management of barriers to communication in order not only to maintain control over the temporal pressure and demands of networked connection but also to segregate the demands and performances of divergent roles throughout the day and across one's social network.

Chapter Seven: Developing Networked Awareness

In an attempt to comprehend the actions of others, according to Schütz (1962, p. 11), individuals rely on an ‘interchangeability of standpoints’ between one life and another. Personal ‘relevance’ from one biography are compared to the known actions of another, providing the basis for a ‘common sense’ that can be relied on in everyday life (Schütz 1962, p. 11). Fifty years following Schütz’s writing, my fieldwork suggests that individuals employ relevant biographical information to help them understand the environment of another and their possibilities for communication. ‘Interchangeability of standpoints’ takes on more literal as well as more abstract meanings. Internalised as an aspect of their own communication practices, individuals make assumptions about the physical location and environment, about activity and one’s proximity to communication devices. These literal assumptions of physical standpoints are complimented by the socially derived contexts of being free or busy, at rest or overwhelmed, occupied in social interaction or a pressing work duty.

In the context of interpersonal communication, this version of common sense, at first, seems elliptical and indirect. For Schütz, a sense of awareness was employed to understand the actions of others; in this research, *awareness of others* emerges as a basis for one’s own communication actions. As explored in previous chapters, participants from this research communicate from within an everyday environment of abundant and sometimes overwhelming possibilities for interaction. The foundational standpoint from which the individual derives a common sense about how others communicate is therefore the *receiving self*. This self is faced with competing pressures to be constantly connected to the multiple and overlapping channels of networked communication. Faced with potential inundation of attempts for interaction, this receiving self manages everyday life by stemming and limiting possibilities for communication through a complex system of barriers to interaction, as explored in the previous chapter. Awareness, as will be explored in this chapter, is an awareness of *other receiving selves* who also manage similar shifting *barriers to communication* throughout their day.

In this manner, awareness of another's communication context and habits is an attempt to mitigate the pressure that initiating another interaction with that person might add to this environment. This is not, however, wholly altruistic: without jointly managing the pressure of interaction upon the receiver, one risks the delay or refusal of interaction by the receiver. Mutual engagement is the overall goal for perceiving one's own communication decisions from the point of view of the receiving other. The desire for mutual engagement becomes the basis for developing patterns of communication and a foundation for the development of wider possibilities of negotiation and conventions.

7.1 Lacking Awareness

Often a shared form of awareness is not present. These situations provide a useful entry point for understanding the role of awareness in everyday communication decisions. In such cases, an acknowledged lack of awareness leads to self-restraint and an inability to interact when and how one would like to interact.

Christina, 27, has a small core of good friends, whom she sees every week at least twice or more. They exchange text messages and emails that involve daily anecdotes as well as making arrangements to meeting up in person. These close friends are aware of each other's schedules and everyday communication habits. Yet, one friend has recently left the city and without constant contact and the awareness that follows, Christina struggles to connect with her:

...I have got out of the habit [with my friend] of regular catch-ups so now every phone call takes more effort and time.... I was also oddly amused thinking that this was a bit of a Catch-22.... So today I sent her another email to ask her if she was available to chat on the phone over the weekend and if so, what time would suit best. Now, my thoughts after sending that was that of sadness that I am no longer able to spontaneously ring my friends due to...not knowing what they are up to/commitments

Christina restrains herself from phoning this friend, as was once the norm, because she is no longer aware of her friend's daily activities. She must shift live communication to an asynchronous email communication so as to avoid a potential interruption or intrusion into her friend's day. Yet, through more consistent contact with her other friends, Christina is aware of their communication habits, more aware of their

availability, and knows when she would not be intruding and could call them without having to first ask permission via email.

Lena went into far greater detail as to how a lack of awareness about other people's lives affects her communication decisions. She is a full-time model who, originally from Eastern Europe, has been living in the EU for over a decade. A number of her close friends and relatives live abroad or in England, but outside of the London city centre. Skype, the popular online video-calling program, is her primary or most personal mode of communication with these people.

So the Skype is always open, I'm always signed in.... They'll ask me are you [on] Skype – they'll send me an SMS asking. Then if I don't pick up the Skype call, they'll send me an SMS asking right away 'Where are you? Are you home? What are you doing? Can you come on Skype?'.... It's fine. I would come [to Skype] if it was [my friend] or my mom, because I know they wouldn't want to talk to me about something useless.

At first glance, sending an SMS by mobile phone before video call on the computer seems to simply be about co-ordination, but Lena's friends first sent an SMS as if to ask permission, give warning or to otherwise initiate what would become the call. This is referred to as 'knocking' in Ito's (2005) research concerning 'keitai' or mobile culture among Japanese teens: 'almost without exception, [they] begin with a text message to determine availability; the social norm is that you should "knock before entering"' (p. 96). In Lena's case, when she ignores texts that ask for an online video call, the friend will continue to text rather than attempt to call. Lena continues explaining what she assumes is the reasoning behind her friend's restraint

...people who phone me on Skype, they *don't actually know my schedule*, that's why they SMS me.... If they knew that I – actually I wasn't home Tuesday all day long for example, then they wouldn't SMS me asking me if I am home. They are just kind of you know poking and probing me...

Awareness of another person's routine and everyday contexts is described as the basis for making communication choices. A lack of awareness can lead to self-restraint in any synchronous medium, perceived by the sender to be a potential interruption or imposition for the receiving individual. Above, Christina felt that she couldn't just phone because she didn't know her friend's daily routine, so she emailed albeit not knowing when the email would be addressed. She lamented not the loss of the

capacity to phone, but of the intimate knowledge of her friend's life that would allow her to phone within the context of their relationship. By sending a text, Lena's friends and family have found a medium-based solution to Christina's dilemma. Both Christina's reluctance to phone and the cross-medium 'knocking' illustrate that even a lack of awareness of the interlocutor's schedule impacts one's communication decisions. This is particularly evident with synchronous interactions and the individual's self-restraint in requesting such actions when they do not know whether the other individual is available.

7.2 Networked Awareness

Networked co-presence between individuals is occurring in different forms and to different degrees across the range of modes of communication. This networked presence requires a degree of *networked awareness* occurring between those connected individuals. Implications of this form of awareness are captured by various terms for contemporary media interactions. For instance, the term 'ambient awareness' (Thompson 2008, n.p.) in its popular press usage is specific to the practice of shared updates on social networking sites. 'Ambient', in this context, is imbued with the sense of a semi-public or public pooling of information, accessible in the ether of the online world. This manifestation, however, is only one aspect of the networked awareness. It lacks engagement, firstly, with the differing levels of networked awareness across an individual's social network and, secondly, is associated with only one mode of streaming communication rather than multiple communication tools of everyday life. This lends itself to the often-asymmetrical broadcast and consumption of a person's 'life-streaming' (Marwick 2011, n.p.) online updates rather than intimate reciprocal social interaction discussed in this chapter. Thirdly, it lacks engagement with an awareness that flows freely between both the offline and online. Ito's notions of 'ambient and peripheral awareness' (2005, p. 11) with 'augmented co-presence' (Ito 2003b as cited in Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Qiu, and Sey 2007, p. 152) combine to give us a sense the blurring between online and offline interactions. This blurring is fundamental to this chapter's notion of *networked awareness*. Such a manifestation involves a background awareness of the consistent and frequent mediated interactions as they lead up to and follow face-to-face interactions.

What I endeavour to add to this discourse with the notion of *networked awareness* is an awareness derived from the modulation between *networked presence* and *networked absence*. Networked absence is discussed in the previous chapter as the managed barriers to interaction within the context of networked connection. *Networked awareness* amounts to an awareness of another person's communication habits, often reflecting upon their everyday contexts and routines as well as their management barriers to interaction. A comparison of three examples will lead us through this concept.

Richard works anti-social hours. He is the exception among these examples and one of the exceptions among the selection. His everyday social and work relationships specifically do not involve constant networked connection and those in his life have a very superficial awareness of his schedule, beyond knowing that it is sporadic. He explains how this affects his communication with friends and family in two excerpts, one from his interview and the other from his diary:

Because I've been doing this job for 18 months now, it's settled into this thing where people presume that I'm available at funny times so the onus is on me because after the first three or four months they have stopped phoning me on an ad hoc basis.... And I would have to say I was going to have to be at work at four in the morning or nine at night and why should your friends know your rota – it's ridiculous.

Starting working nights tonight, so normally like to have a long lie in as I'll be up till 7 am tomorrow. Friends and family know not to call early which is why I'm surprised and bloody furious my mobile phone rang at 8.30 am and woke me up. (Diary)

Continual interactions with friends have largely stopped, as they were consistently responded to with frustrated explanations as to why he was not available to chat or meet up. Alternatively, phone calls and texts would go unanswered because he had turned his phone off while he sleeps during day. This is complete and frequent disconnection. In contrast to most of the participants, connection to multiple modes of communication is not the default state for Richard. For his friends and family, there is

a complete lack of awareness of his day-to-day life other than blanket awareness that he works strange hours and one cannot risk disturbing him.

In stark contrast to Richard, Lourdes and Sydney live together and have been in a relationship for four years. They are in their mid-twenties, and Sydney manages an entertainment venue, where Lourdes supports herself working the odd shift until she landed a full-time administrative role for a large online retailer (actually during her participation in this research). She also spends a considerable amount of time doing freelance writing and consulting for small creative companies. Sometimes, she is paid; sometimes, she is not. They spend mornings together and if they do not arrive home at the same time in the evening, they both state that whoever arrives home first will invariably phone the other. During the day, they have developed different communication patterns, which they define largely by their awareness of each other's communication habits, an awareness shaped by the receiver's management of engagement that goes hand-in-hand with the changing temporal context of each day.

Well I guess the fact that she, because I've questioned many times why she decides to have her phone on silent when she is at work and she always gives the same answer: 'I don't like my phone ringing all the time.' What I have found is the girl that she works with, if I ring her mobile, then my girlfriend will answer it and that is the way I can talk to her. So that is what I have learnt to do now.
(Sydney)

Sydney's experience of Lourdes's consistent unavailability by telephone during work hours directs a lot of their communication towards email. This dimension of awareness based on past experience of interacting with one another will be examined below as *interactional experience*. Sydney, however, also knows the context in the physical world related to her unavailability by mobile phone. He knows whom she is sitting beside between what times and, thus, he can likely still reach her by telephone when email does not suffice. This is what Ling and Donner (2009, p. 146) refer to as 'approximate calling', which is only possible through an awareness of an individual's communication habits as they are 'interlaced' with their everyday contexts and schedules. It is part of the 'process of creating a logic of interaction based on personal accessibility' (Ling and Donner 2009, p. 146), but here, we are extending that logic from simply the personal addressability of mobile phone numbers to awareness of physical contexts of the individual as they change throughout the day. This is an

example of another dimension to awareness that will be explored below, *situational awareness* as it relates to the contexts of the receiver's environment as it changes throughout the day. Lourdes has a similar *situational awareness* of her boyfriend's communication habits as it relates to the situation within which networked connection occurs: the physical contexts, daily schedule, overlapping face-to-face interactions. This is reflected in both his and her interviews:

He actually doesn't like to talk on the [phone].... I think because of his environment, he works in the office.... Like they can pretty [much] get away with what they want there but I think it is that kind of thing where in the office the other men, you don't really want to be on the phone to your girlfriend that much. (Lourdes)

She might ring me or I might ring her. Generally if she rings me I will always answer.... I think she knows [I'll answer] because I tend to, I work in a very relaxed office where we are incredibly free and if I want to go out for two hours in the middle of the day no-one is going to question that. So it is a very relaxed [environment], and so I will sit at my desk and talk to my girlfriend. I am not going to sit there and go 'Oh I love you, you are so beautiful'. But I will sit there and have a general personal conversation with her without having to think I have got to go on the other room or I have got to go outside or anything like that. (Sydney)

Though this research is less concerned with the content of interactions, Lourdes' awareness of Sydney's context for communication and knowing that he may be embarrassed to be on the phone with her in front of his colleagues is stated to be part of her communication decisions. Their final preference for communicating steers towards email and text, which allows them to both communicate and co-ordinate their day without disturbing their office environment but also send short expressive gestures of connection that Sydney feels uncomfortable with over the phone. Their short email interactions throughout the day extend from the 'micro-coordination' (Ito, Okabe, and Anderson 2007, n.p.) of mundane questions about dinner, to excited ideas about a business they could start, to the short gestures of emailing each other pictures from their camera phone, without appended text or explanation – just something they wanted to share. Descriptions of their everyday communication with each other is

backgrounded by comments about how the other manages their own practices at the level of the interface:

...whereas you know my boyfriend would always open it and delete it or just delete it straight away like I don't do that. (Lourdes)

But then if you asked my girlfriend she'd probably concur that I do it a lot as well. Like I will, I have to, every time, I take a lot of time over my inbox, like I would never let a spam email sit there and just drop to the bottom of the list, I have to delete it. Whereas my girlfriend might be able to just leave it for a couple of days, she'll respond to the email that comes in but she wouldn't like go, okay I need to delete those messages and stuff. (Sydney)

Their awareness of communication habits extends far beyond knowledge of another's more general practices of networked presence, through the everyday contexts of communication, to include which interface will be used and how. This will be explored within situational awareness. Lourdes and Sydney, for example, each know how the other manages their email inboxes, the length of time an email will remain in the inbox, and when approximately it will be opened, replied to, and deleted.

This level of awareness that results from networked presence derives not only from the frequent interactions inevitable in any relationship, but also from the experience with another individual's management of barriers to interaction, which for my participants is a feature of interpersonal relationships and networked connection. Networked awareness between individuals is linked to an intimate knowledge of each other's communication habits and everyday contexts, involving a flow of communication that is below the level of content and yet is full of personal expression and information about real world contexts.

Networked awareness can be understood as involving two mutually informed dimensions: interactional awareness and situational awareness. This heuristic breakdown of networked awareness into analytically distinct dimensions structures the exploration below, despite being blurred somewhat in the practices and experiences of the individual participants. *Interactional awareness* refers to knowledge about another's communication habits from personal experience of interacting with this

individual. *Situational awareness* involves the assumption of those habits with regard to particular contexts of communication, which are often determined in consideration of relevant personal information and the construction of types. Understanding the communication environment of another is to understand the situated context of networked connection as it occurs in another's everyday life. This involves being aware of their opportunities for interaction within their everyday schedule and physical environment. Without getting this right, mutual engagement can be delayed, deflected, and even refused. The consistent reflection upon and interweaving of these dimensions of awareness inform the subtle manifestations of networked awareness that are embedded within everyday communication decisions.

7.3 The Interactional Dimension of Awareness

The basic crux of interactional awareness can be extended from this off-hand remark by Tania, a young radio producer and mother, as she describes how she knows the best way to get in touch with her friend and hairdresser when attempting to make an appointment for her lunch hour while at work:

Some [people] prefer texts. Some of them prefer calls. It depends on the people, I would say. ...I just can count their calls and their texts.... But you know on Facebook you can see how [his] profile has been used. No profile picture, it's just like a couple of friends and never status updates, and stuff like that. So I do realize he doesn't use the Facebook.... And about everything else, I just know by experience. At first I called him and he was kind of busy, asked me to call him back at certain times, so I was thinking, assuming actually, it's easier to arrange meetings by text.

Tania had been discussing her diary where she wrote that her hairdresser had to be sent a text message on his mobile phone and this is how she explained that decision. In Tania's case, there are two nuances to interactional awareness that will be explored below. First, there is a desire for mutual engagement that motivates Tania to choose the medium through which she assumes he will be most accessible, and second, there is a *traceability* of previous interactions that occur both online and offline.

7.3.1 Within My Barriers and Within Yours

With each attempt to interact with another, successful or otherwise, interactional awareness has been accrued by the individual. Attempts to interact are, effectively, a testing of the barriers to communication as managed by another receiving self. Joanne, 30, describes those initial attempts at engagement.

So if you can put the circle of friends that I know on Facebook and even if I send a note to them by Facebook randomly I won't get a response right away. So it is learning through trial and error or testing that channel or using that channel a bit and knowing if I don't get a response from them but then send them a text or send me an email and I get a response back. Then I know that's almost their preferred way of communicating with me. So I will shift to that.

Without much interactional awareness, Joanne is shifting between modes of communication, identifying those channels on which this new friend is most readily available. Joanne's examples show that this interactional awareness does not apply to only one-to-one (individually addressed) communication such as text, email, or a private online message but also to group messages and semi-public posted items. As explored in the previous chapter, interaction involves mutual engagement. Having already sent the message, Joanne is awaiting a reply before deeming the interaction to have taken place. Joanne applies this interactional experience to her future attempts at interaction with this individual. She reports that their 'preferred way' of communicating is the basis for her own communication decisions.

Andrew, the self-described 'heavy communicator', similarly describes some early interactions with a new flatmate in a diary entry:

There's a text from my roommate confirming his ticket purchase for an upcoming concert we're attending together...I don't write him back because he's very curt with his messages, not much of a texter...I tend to chameleon with people's styles so as to not annoy them, so knowing he doesn't require a confirmation to his confirmation, I don't reply...I'll see him at home tonight

Andrew is acting upon the experience of previous text message conversations, electing to 'chameleon' to his flatmate's communication practice. Andrew is aware of the barrier to interaction his flatmate has employed in previous experiences. For this research, Andrew's focus on his flatmate's manner of writing texts at the content level is less important than Andrew's apparent internalisation of his flatmate's avoidance of superfluous interactions. Andrew's awareness of his flatmate's habits is inextricable

from his decision to restrain his desire to send another text message, a ‘confirmation to his confirmation’.

Ethan describes a situation where he is forced from live mutual engagement of telephone calls to the staggered engagement of texting because of the communication practices of his friends. Below he is comparing his interactional awareness of his two best friends’ availability for interaction by telephone:

Someone like my friend Mike, for instance, who’s my best friend, he’ll always answer the phone immediately. Someone like my friend John, who’s actually a very good friend of mine, I find he never answers the phone – ever. Almost never. And then sometimes, you know, I’ll leave a voicemail and he’ll respond two hours later. But I, in fact, I can’t remember the last time he actually picked up the phone when I called him....

Ethan is coming up against the barriers to interaction that his friend John has in place – John does not answer the phone and chances are if you leave a voicemail, he still will not get back to you immediately.

It’ll depend on, I mean, with someone like John for instance, I know that I’ll probably have a better chance of receiving a response if I do text. So I still call him anyway every now and then, but I usually text.

Rather than attempting to force interaction over the phone, Ethan will usually text his friend for the sake of engagement. Though Ethan may prefer a phone call, mutual engagement is the priority, not the form or channel. Ethan has embedded a degree of restraint within his own communication habits, shifting from a practice he prefers to one that does not transgress John’s barriers to interaction. Acting on the awareness of another’s communication habits often involves a transfer of a metaphorical cost of interaction to one’s self by conforming to their preference rather than following one’s own. This is an attempt to minimise pressure and imposition upon the receiver and minimise the chance of being refused engagement.

7.3.2 Traceability and Observation

The context of one-to-many communication, where passive reception can occur, offers a different form of interactional awareness that does depend upon mutual engagement in the same manner as the one-to-one modes of communication discussed above. For

example, an update or post on a social networking site has the potential to be seen by a semi-public or public social network involving multiple individuals. There are two forms of interactional awareness in this case. The first involves mutual engagement as discussed above: if an individual replies to, comments on, or otherwise refers to the interaction, then there has been mutual engagement. The second manifestation of interactional awareness involves an observable or traceable nature of communication habits that can occur without mutual engagement in online environments such as social networking sites, blogging platforms, and forums. At the opening of this section, Tania mentions this with the example of Facebook. She was aware that her hairdresser would likely not answer a Facebook message because she can see a lack of recent activity on his profile page. This allows her to assume that he is not very accessible on Facebook, that it is not simply a lack of reply or commenting to her posts, but a lack of exposure to them.

Licoppe (2004) argues that there is a ‘rationalisation’ of communication choices that ‘is amplified by the traceability of mediated interactions...all these devices enable actors to visualize detailed and quantifiable history of the relational interaction they have had...’ (p 153). The rationalisation he is mentioning is akin to the assessment that Andrew and Joanne are making above based on their interactional experience, but through a visualised manifestation of another’s actions. This holds true for the logging and storing of previous interactions in email inboxes, mobile phone call histories, and text message and chat histories, but is particularly interesting with regard to semi-public items that are posted and broadcast in an online environment and, therefore, made available for observation without mutual engagement. This is of course presuming that the individual is not taking active steps to misrepresent or otherwise obscure their online interactions.

David is a married 33-year-old father of two girls who travels around the UK and EU about three days a week for work, working from home the remainder of the time. He makes a lot of new social and business contacts, and often, the two overlap. He explains his decision for contacting an old university friend and her husband when passing through Brussels:

Okay so this mate of mine is a friend I’ve known since I did my business school.... Why Facebook? Because it’s been a while since I’ve spoken with

them, two options were Facebook or email. The reason Facebook won over email for the initial contact was because it had been a while since I'd spoken to her or had any kind of communication [with her or her husband] so if I were to email I was taking my chances that [it] was an email that they regularly checked, [that] it was still valid.

First, he introduces the notion that without continual interaction, a channel may no longer be appropriate. He perceives a potential atrophy of access to the individual by email and, thus, chooses to rely on a social networking site:

Facebook you can be pretty certain...at least if you can look on someone's Facebook entry and decide whether or not they are relatively frequent or active users and so therefore you can be pretty sure, assuming they are active users that if you post or you send a message by Facebook or post messages, they are actually going to check it.

Rather than testing this email address, which may or may not be out of date, David chose to interact on a medium where activity was apparent and observable. Here, the interaction history is not with David himself, but activity on the social network that has left a semi-public and, therefore, observable history. David knew that his friend's profile page would act as focal point for numerous online activities, interactions, as well as other people's attempts at interacting with the individual. Without his recent interactional experience with the individual, he could still make the decision of how to contact them based on what was viewable.

George, Tania's partner, offers a similar explanation of interactional awareness: 'It's not based on what people prefer, it's based on my knowledge [of] where people are staying the most [online]'. He specifically distinguishes between two aspects of interactional awareness: knowledge about what people prefer and what he can learn about how they interact through traceable interactions.

So if there are people who are using Facebook most, I will Facebook message them. If they're not that much into Facebook I choose email. Well again I mean people who are Facebook active or LiveJournal active, their page gets updated quite a bit. There's a lot of interaction on their page, there's a lot of self-publicizing going on their page, so I know they're using it, so I'd Facebook them. If they are kind of, you know, if they opened their account five years ago

and still haven't bothered to upload a picture, I probably should write them an email.

He compares the friend's profile pages and blog, which act again as the focal points for online interaction, in order to assess which platform will allow the quickest access to those individuals. He relegated email to a third choice in this example because he would rather base his decision on *observable traces of interaction*.

7.3.3 Observable Interaction in the Offline World

It is important to stress, however, that such observable aspects of interactional awareness are not found solely in the territory of new media. Observing how an individual communicates is as much an aspect of offline life as it is online. Evelyn, who is 33 years old and a mother of two young girls, provides an example of this referring to one of her close friends.

...You know she actually made her first eBay purchase last month and I did it for her.... And I literally had to walk it through...completely different in terms of our awareness of how to use a computer.

Evelyn knows not to email this friend who she describes as 'not a computer person' without having to actually email her and test that channel. She has observed enough in face-to-face interaction to be aware of this. She continues with regard to her other friends in general.

So we spend a lot of time [in] face to face communication but also because we're together you can also see what other forms they use. When you're at their house you know if the computer's on. You know if they're landline never rings or if they get texts. You can kind of just infer what their lifestyle's like because you do spend time in their homes or with them while they're communicating with you or with others.

Face-to-face communication then becomes another mode of interaction through which communication habits can be observed. Lourdes offers an example outside of the home and how it relates to her decision in contacting a friend and colleague:

I'd probably call her...I find specifically with her that she, it takes her a very long time to write emails. So I'm quite aware of the fact that it can eat into her day. So sometimes I think it's better just to kind of have a good, like, meaty

conversation for 15 minutes rather than her sit there, like, one-finger typing for half an hour when I know she's got other stuff to do.

Lourdes draws a clear connection between her decision of phoning rather than emailing this colleague and observable actions that are, again, not from the digital online realm but based on observations from physical co-presence. She continues, describing the motivation for acting on this awareness.

I've seen her do it before I guess.... I've noticed that she'll take a long time to reply to emails. Or even simply, because I type quite quickly I might reply to her and then it would take her a good half an hour to get back to me.

Lourdes's last comment implies a transfer of the temporal cost or temporal pressure of the interaction away from the receiver. Like all of the participants quoted above, she is illustrating a willingness to adjust her communication methods in order to achieve mutual engagement. They are adjusting to each other's perceived preference in order to maintain the flow of communication.

These manifestations of interactional awareness consistently involve consideration of another's communication habits as an aspect of one's own communication practices. This is determined through past experience of interaction and through the observable nature of communication habits in both online and offline situations. In consideration of the previous chapter's conclusions, participants practice a degree of self-restraint in their own communication practices by adjusting to the barriers to communication erected by others.

This restraint involves the individual's choice to relinquish a degree of control over the interaction, reducing the perceived temporal cost or pressure for the receiver so that the likelihood of engagement is increased. This is in part a sharing and mitigation of the overload that participants perceive to be part of the everyday communication environment. These degrees of negotiation are embedded within communication practices between peers. These are very different from the imposed power-oriented or hierarchical system of workplace organisation, but from that more balanced relationship, this distinctive form of negotiation emerges.

7.4 The Situational Dimension of Awareness

Situational Awareness involves deriving the individual's changing immediate contexts of communication as it relates to their management of everyday communication. It relates to understanding the individual's availability for and desire to engage because of where they are likely to be or what they are likely to be doing and thus having an understanding of that local context of the individual. Although, situational awareness also involves reflection upon the individual's movements, locations, and activities as they shift throughout the day.

Though in practice these analytical divisions are difficult to separate, situational awareness relates less to experience of how others communicate and is related more to relevant information about their everyday life: their schedule, their relationship status, if they are a parent, what type of employment they have, or where they spend their days or evenings. Such detailed knowledge about temporal structure and context of their day allows for derivation of typologies and assumptions about communication interfaces they are using and, consequently, the modes of communication they are most readily accessible through at different points. Such knowledge can be accrued through previous interactional experience with a specific individual, but often, it is inferred from any biographical information that may be considered relevant.

In lieu of direct interactional experience, known elements of a person's biography allow for assumptions to be made about their communication environment. In this manner, individuals prove to be 'cognitive misers': by attempting to derive an expansive amount of information from sparse social cues as part of an interpersonal decision-making processes (Ellison et al. 2006 as cited in Baym 2010, p. 33). These assumptions are often perceived as intuitive or logical, derived as Schütz says from 'common sense' (1962, p. 11). In this manner, communication practices are often based on 'idealizations' or typologies extending from our interactional experience with some and applied to others, sometimes an entire swath of one's social network. Paralleling the compartmentalisation of one's social network into separate domains seen in the previous chapter, these typologies involve the grouping of individuals often corresponding to how the individual decides to communicate with them.

Lena outlines her interaction with two of the closest people in her social network, illustrating the overlap between interactional awareness and situational awareness

Because you see [my friend]...I know when not to [video call] her because she has a baby, I pretty much know a baby's schedule, so when the baby is asleep I wouldn't bother them. I make an effort to remember that, to remember [different] schedules....I bother about these things, and they don't.

Through previous interaction, Lena is aware of the everyday contexts for possible communication with her friend as it changes throughout the day. She insists that she bothers about these elements of another individual's daily schedule and bases her communication choices so as not to impose upon that schedule. Lena continues by describing that for this friend, as for a few other people in her life, she has the same communication pattern. Despite biographical differences, she has created a typology for them based on their similar possibilities for how and when they are available for interaction the day. Rather than sending an email or text, she would write a longer instant message through the video call program, in this case Skype, allowing them to call when the baby was done eating, when they are back from work, or before they go to bed in a distant time zone. Her awareness of their everyday schedules and contexts of communication blurs with Lena's maintenance of her own availability and results in specific patterns of communication.

Evelyn, similarly, describes constructing typologies of friends as part of her communication decisions: 'I certainly have different categories of friends. And I might be just as close to them [or they may be] as close as some friends as others but *we've chosen a different way* of communicating....' She is stating that this set of communication practices is for a certain group, but this is not necessarily determined by how close they are or how much interactional experience they have with each other. An implicit process of mutual negotiation is alluded to: 'we've chosen' one pattern of communication over another. The typology relates to grouped sets of communication practices, which Evelyn understands in terms of the everyday context affecting the possibility and desire for interaction. Below, she describes communication habits she relates to the young mothers in her neighbourhood:

It's texting based. And we don't have time to go on email, check back and forth, so it's always – are you going to monkey music this morning? Are you going to the Salvation Army, okay see you in half hour. You know do you want to come back to ours for lunch after? That type of thing, all by text...it'll often be a more face-to-face or texting type of relationship.

Evelyn's communication decisions stem from an awareness of a typical mother's everyday possibilities for communication. Her broad assumptions about a young mother's schedule are blended with Evelyn's own sense of when and how *she* wants to be contacted. This typology is based on Evelyn's practice of being unavailable or inaccessible at certain times, but also similar practices of the young mothers she is close to. This awareness helps her define how to interact with others about whom she does not have enough biographical or interactional awareness to know their actual context of communication. Evelyn's conflation of her own practices with those of the other young mothers, 'we don't have time to go on email', involves what Schütz' calls the 'interchangeability of standpoints' (1962, p. 11). I propose that those standpoints relate to the comparable aspects of one's situational context for communication. Such comparison becomes a common sense of communication. As she describes:

Often because we want to arrange to see each other with the kids so I'll know – most children in my life tend to nap right after lunch.... However I know some of my friends have very inconsistent children or aren't as strict mothers with schedule and others are very rigid and I know that between one and three [in the afternoon], like, don't call and this, that and the other. And I know a couple of my other friends have morning naps.

I find that especially with my mum friends texting is very popular. We usually have a bunch of screaming kids you can never have a proper conversation and everyone's kids have a slightly different schedule. So someone might be trying to put their kid down for a nap and they don't want their phone to ring, you know, you're going to catch them off time...So for a very few of my friends do I actually pick up the phone now and call them.

She understands that there is a variety of different contexts and needs that would affect the communication habits of these mothers but also accepts that she could not possibly keep track every mother's *personal* schedule. She generalises her own practices of limiting engagement at certain times, such as nap time that is likely to be after lunch, and generalises her inaccessibility on certain mediums, such as phone and email, until evening once the kids are in bed, so that knowledge of her own practices informs her awareness of other people's practice.

This is quite different from the typologies she constructs for other parts of her social network:

My older friends by email and our – my friends my age by Facebook...they've become big Facebook addicts. So I know that they're just sitting at work sneaking Facebook so I'll just Facebook them – you know, send them a message there.

Whereas, with friends of mine from, friends of mine in London or outside of London that live further, we know we have to pick up the phone because we won't see each other as often. And I think just a lot of my friends get slotted into different categories of how I interact with them.

Again the 'relevances' (Schütz 1962, p. 11) about the individual's communication environment are conflated with an awareness about an individual's communication habits and the management of potential interaction. Evelyn knows that they will be checking Facebook at work, or that for friends who are older than her it is best to email – they have not joined or do not check Facebook. She is not, however, referring to the individuals, she is referring to 'types' of friends and 'categories' of how she interacts, effectively referring to the different ways individuals limit engagement at different times of the day. Such typologies are a conventional understanding of the differentiation and divergence of communication practices as they correspond to different daily outline and situational contexts.

7.4.1 Schedules and Changing Situations

Situational awareness is a broad category of knowledge and assumptions concerning the changing contexts of communication that sometimes also involves a very specific dimension of awareness about another schedule and routine. Among the many other biographical 'relevances', to use Schütz's term again (1962, p. 11), situational awareness can also involve knowledge specific to another's use or proximity to certain interfaces which then form the basis for communication typologies. The temporal structuring of one's day often relates to the individual's shifting engagement between specific modes of communication through specific devices. These are essential elements in situational awareness: individuals are often aware of or can make

assumptions about another's schedule and append to this an assumption of what communication interfaces they will be using at different points within that schedule. This involves an awareness or assumption of what interface an individual will be using at a certain point during the day, and thus, what channels may provide a greater chance for engagement or less interruption to the individual's day. This does not wholly overlap with interactional awareness, and relates more directly to the local but shifting situated context of the individual throughout the day.

Zaina states that she is aware from past interactions who from her close social network has an internet-connected mobile phone, a 'smartphone', although she says:

I never make the assumption that other people have smartphones. Never. Because if I go back to New York, none of my friends even have [internet access on their phones], So I don't do emails on the weekends. Text, definitely.

There is an awareness that most of her friends are accessible throughout the entirety of the week by email because even if they do not have an internet-ready mobile phone, she assumes they are working in front of a computer. On the weekends, she assumes people are out of the office or otherwise away from computers, and thus, she perceives texting as a better option. For example, knowing about another's career allows for numerous assumptions about their work setting, the basic schedule of their workday, and this may include knowledge about the modes of communication they will be using during that workday.

Elements of availability for interaction are assumed to relate to this schedule as Lourdes describes why she chooses to email and not phone friends:

I wouldn't necessarily call [my friends]...during working hours, I don't want to interrupt their schedule, don't want to get them in shit for anything...for slacking off or anything

This assumption is more nuanced than it first appears. Within a banal statement that many participants would dismiss as a simply 'practical' or 'logical' communication choice, the awareness that another individual is less accessible by phone and more accessible by email is quite nuanced. Lourdes is forgoing the convenience of controlling when the interaction will be engaged that would be offered by synchronous communication in an effort 'not to interrupt' the other individual's temporal control over their day. Yet, she is not going so far as to accept that the duration of time

associated with the domain of the workday makes the individual inaccessible and is quite aware that her friend's workplace includes desktop computers with internet access, so engagement can still occur. Lourdes is, furthermore, basing her decision at least partially on the social context of the receiver at that point in time, even taking into consideration the power relationships of their local social setting.

Evelyn's earlier assumption that her friends 'sneaking' Facebook at work could similarly be dismissed as mundane, though it is indicative of the embedding of typologies about interface, social situation, and everyday temporalities within Evelyn's communication choice. Inferences made about these work environments imply that overtly personal modes of communication such as taking a phone call, being on facebook, or even having on a personal web-based email account open on your screen may not be possible for these individuals and, consequently, are presumed not to provide the most direct access to the individual.

Margaret discusses the frequency of employers using the popular desktop email software Outlook Express and describes her awareness of how and when others will receive her interactions through that interface:

So for people who I know aren't on [web-based] email very often – because of course you have to understand – there's always work emails which you can, well you can use with your friends. So they'll always be on it because you know that their computers are on and they're looking at their emails....

So like if I send them an email and it comes into their Outlook, because most people have Outlooks in offices, they probably would get, like just, a pop-up that an email has come through and that I've emailed them. Or if I don't hear from them for a few hours then I'll follow that up maybe with a text.

Situational awareness, therefore, goes beyond the contextual biographical awareness of sitting in front of a computer throughout the day to include an assumption of exactly how the interaction will be received with that specific interface. Margaret's knowledge of the program features contributes to this. She assumes from previous interactional experience that these specific friends will likely not be looking at their web-based email, or may not want to be checking their phone at work, for fear of looking unprofessional in front of colleagues. Yet, she is also aware that this interface

will alert the recipient in the corner of their screen while they are working that she has messaged them.

Joanne, approximately the same age as Margaret, works for an international credit firm. She compares situational awareness with regard to the interface between two sets of friends:

Because I do sit in front of my email programme which happens to be open all day. I do find it slightly different depending on the type of industry that the person I'm making plans with is in so.... So friends that I work with, or friends that are in an office environment, it is always by email. Friends I know that don't sit in front of a computer all day, it is text.

In this example, Joanne describes the different practices for different people based on simple dichotomous variables of access to a specific interface, their work computer. This provides quite straightforward typologies and thus very clear dimensions distinguishing the spaces of possible communication with those sets of friends. In the context of the previous chapter, these are attempts to limit certain forms of interaction at certain times of the day, which is a communication decision undertaken by Joanne who assumes her other friends work in a similar environment. She assumes that, like her, they all have the email program open and are checking texts on their mobile phone below her desk, but not social networking sites nor taking or making telephone calls while at work.

7.5 The Pluralised Temporality of Networked Awareness

The awareness of another's communication habits involves an awareness of their possibilities for interaction within certain environments, their habitual management of those possibilities, and how this shifts and changes throughout the day. The lived day of another individual occurs despite connection or disconnection. The 24-hour day unfolds in the context of their 'local clock time' (Hassan 2007, p. 52). Awareness of how that local temporal context influences their communication habits is a fundamental aspect of networked awareness, one that clearly illustrates the relationship between interactional and situational awareness.

Networked awareness involves awareness of how other individuals manage shifts between forms of engagement throughout their day. Basing one's communication decisions on this awareness can be understood as an internalisation of another's practice of modulating between networked presence and networked absence. This practice cannot be separated from two characteristics of networked interaction: the perceived need for constant connection and the tendency of the majority of participants towards asynchronous interaction in order to retain temporal control over interaction. This is an internalisation in the sense that the practices of another are often embedded within one's own communication decisions and practices. It is an internalisation of asynchronicity of networked interaction because one's communication decisions provide a distribution of control over when the interaction will occur, allowing the receiver to choose when to engage.

Whether it is waiting for the evening to phone a friend, or asking them to call by text when they are free, there is an element of self-restraint involved in accepting delay of engagement as part of interaction itself. It is also an internalisation of the degrees of networked presence and absence as attempts at mutual engagement will avoid other's barriers to interaction: networked asynchronicity becomes fractured into the multiple possible channels through which the individual is accessible and their shifting readiness for engagement through those channels throughout the day.

Below Joanne illustrates the emergent hierarchies within networked awareness as it relates to the individual's management of time and everyday domains of life. In her diary, she emailed a friend throughout the day, yet began to text that friend in the late afternoon.

I think partly because you know that [texting] is the *next mode of communication*, that's the *next media* that you are going to rely on with the other person because the chances are they won't be sitting in front their computer anymore or if they have a Blackberry I will email them because I know they're checking their Blackberry.... So if I know they have a Blackberry I will email them at all odd hours because I know they are going to check.

Joanne only continues to email friends if she knows that they have email notifications on their mobile phone, such as on the popular Blackberry brand of internet-ready phones. If she is not sure of their mobile interface, she will shift to texting, just as

Zaina only texts on the weekend despite normally emailing some of her friends who work in front of a computer during the week. The vital aspect of this statement, however, is that within her own communication decisions, Joanna has embedded awareness of how other individuals *typically manage* the segregation of everyday domains through a temporal shift between modes of communication: shifting from one context of communication to another at what are assumed to be consistent times of the day.

Henry discusses similar examples regarding how he chooses to contact his mother based on her shifting availability on different modes of communication:

So, yes, my mum, I know she's on the email like from nine to five every day and then doesn't really check it in the evenings...Because she's not at work. She uses her work email and she's just not there to check it. And [I] also know that she's like quite bad at – she never keeps her mobile phone on her in the house or anything...It means I call like the landline of the house and I kind of, you know, if I do telephone her mobile in the evening when I know she's going to be at home I like half expect her not to pick up and to call back five minutes later.

Henry is describing three modes of communication that are possible with his mother. He understands that it is best to engage with her in different ways within different parts of the day. The flow of interaction between Henry and his mother is not through one or another of these channels, but occurs across these channels. His communication decisions involve a composite awareness of her varying accessibility between the durations of the day at work in front of the computer and in the evening near both the landline and mobile phones.

Andrew, below, describes his friend who has been shifting their interactions across a number of different platforms while arranging to meet:

He's the one that's moving [to different mediums]...In this case, we have been casually Facebooking over the course of the week and I would notice that he would always Facebook me in the evenings when I knew that he was done work.

First, there is a level of interactional awareness that combines with biographically relevant information about the friend's work environment and day-to-day schedule.

Him and I, we've been narrowing down a day [to meet] and all of a sudden I get a thing saying, 'What about tonight?' But he sent it to me via his email and I

know in where he works he can't check Facebook at work so I've assumed he was then at work, so I knew if I replied to that via Facebook he wouldn't get it and so I replied via text message, now he would get it. Maybe he has Facebook on his phone, I don't know...I assume that everybody, like me, keeps their mobile on at all times. I assume that if there's one medium that has the best chance of getting hold of someone that's texting them on their mobile.

He is also focusing on the interface aspect of the situational context: Andrew is sure that the text would arrive to his friend's mobile phone whereas a social networking message may not, nor is he sure an email will this late in the day. Andrew is focusing on the shifting access of his friend, on the different degrees of networked presence and absence in order to assure asynchronous engagement in a timely fashion; the email, social networking message, and text would all technically arrive at the same speed, but his friend's access and engagement on those networks is shifting and uneven throughout the day.

7.6 Chapter Conclusion

The reader's own experience with contemporary communication technologies may make the communication decisions highlighted above seem banal. Yet, it is that banality and the normalisation of numerous everyday practices contained within those decisions that is vital to this research. Networked awareness involves shared 'conventions' about how they shift between different forms of engagement throughout the day. The word convention, however, is misleading and fails to represent the differentiation of personal communication practices and divergence between everyday schedules and situational contexts. Networked awareness serves to bridge that inconsistency between individuals so that mutual engagement can occur.

Unpacking this reveals an assumed norm that the individual is expected to be constantly connected through multiple channels throughout the day, yet in order to control the pressures of that environment he or she will limit interaction in different ways at different times. Thus, networked awareness also involves understanding the shifts between durations of the day that others reserve for work life, social life, and home life. Though these other individuals will maintain connection to most communication channels throughout the day and will remain aware of any new attempt

at interaction with them, participants still follow that shifting networked presence of their interlocutors so as to facilitate communication. This relates to individual attempts at reducing and sharing the intrusions and temporal costs of constant connection by basing decisions on the habits and contexts of the receiving rather than sending self.

Acting on networked awareness thus becomes a practice of self-restraint whereby the individual makes communication choices based, to varying and overlapping degrees, upon the interactional and situational dimensions of awareness. To avoid the risk of being refused interaction and to better facilitate interaction, attempts to connect are often considered in terms of the receiving other, as those initiating are aware that, like themselves, other individuals often manage their day through shifting barriers to interaction. When initiating an interaction, the communication habits and shifting context of communication of the receiver partially determine the communication choices made.

The resulting flow of communication between individuals is then experienced as a pluralisation of those contexts as they exist and pass through the timeframes of an individual's day. Networked presence is not a connection apart from real world contexts and does not involve an erasure of the linear time as it is experienced by the body of each person involved, but is rather grounded in co-ordinating between the overlapping contexts and timeframes of the interlocutors. Hassan argues that networked connection offers a 'context-created temporal experience disconnected from the local times of the users' (2007, p. 51). I agree that networked connection *in general* creates an experience somewhat disconnected from the clock time of everyday life. Specific interpersonal interaction, however, based on a sense of mutual engagement that provides for that experience of networked co-presence is not disconnected from the contexts and schedules of those involved, but rather involves a pluralisation of those environments and temporalities. Networked awareness is a basis for self-restraint in communication practices that relates directly to the practices of others; the following chapters, however, will explore less explicit forms of self-restraint and negotiation occurring through the interdependency of numerous everyday networked practices.

Chapter Eight: Authenticity and Technological Ordering in Everyday Life

Neither the communicating individual nor the technologies they use can be considered distinct from the society within which they are embedded. Following Elias' conception of a 'society of individuals' (1998, p. 68), the individual, technological objects, and society are inextricably linked, despite the tendency to abstract them as distinct from one another. This linkage, however, must be addressed from all directions: society and more specifically social change must not be abstracted into a synoptic narrative that is distinct from the specific local components and movement of that change, nor can the expression of technological artefacts be objectified outside of individual use and social contexts. By tracing the relationship between individual practice and everyday perceptions of tools for interpersonal communication, indications of possible wider changes to the social structures and sociotemporal order emerge from within the lives of this thesis' participants.

This chapter examines the *notions of authenticity* held by individuals in the context of interpersonal communication. Such notions of authenticity are themselves undergoing a process of differentiation and change, signalling a changing *conception of the self* that participants relate to the context of communication decisions. There is an emerging sense of self that corresponds to and embraces asynchronous modes of communication within an environment of constant connection. This self relates to the *disembodied forms* of online text-based communication and perceived *temporal control* for the crafting of one's disembodied textual self-presentation in asynchronous communication modes. Such changes, however, are occurring in the context of technological change and the individual's shifting *perception of technologies* has a role in delineating what forms of technological interaction are perceived to be social and what forms are not. This perception of social interaction, attributed to the technology itself, defines what is 'real' social engagement between individuals in contrast to engagement with a social technology that lacks mutual engagement.

These perceptions of self-presentation and perceptions of technologies illustrate a marriage of Elias' notion of 'social interweaving' (1998, p. 72) and Ihde's 'relational

ontology' (2009, p. 44). In chapter two, the individual management of flexible schedules and divergent communication practices was explored for its interdependency with a more rigid background of constant networked connection. In chapter three, the practice and use of communication technologies was explored for the collective forms of negotiation they entail for not only technologies but also potentially for everyday life. Elias argues that 'people change in relation to each and through relation to each other', suggesting the linkages between changes to the self, and communication practice are part of a 'continual shaping and reshaping' of social relations themselves (Elias 1998, p. 72). From Ihde's perspective, 'technologies transform our experience of the world, and we in turn become transformed in the process', yet those technologies also recede to the background behind the activities and everyday environments that the self seeks to manage and shape, often through technology (Ihde 2009, pp. 42-44). The shifting communication practices, explored in earlier chapters, are inextricable from shifts to the conception of the self and social relations of which technology is a component but also a mediator.

8.1 Reified Practices as Authenticity and as Technology

Despite the multiple and varied practices of the individual, the need for constant connection and inclination towards asynchronous communication, explored in earlier chapters, are embedded within a form of collective communication practice. These notions are embedded at a collective level in, firstly, a perceived sense of the authentic (applied to both interaction and the self) and, secondly, in perceptions of communication technologies themselves. Both of these perceptions are assumed forms of knowledge: assumed to be natural or objective and assumed to be shared. They are neither static nor codified, nor necessarily congruent between individuals, nor even consistent among a single individual's practice, so they cannot be considered conventions and are far from institutionalised practices. I do propose, however, that they are collectively formed, despite being in constant flux, through individual but interdependent communication practices and constant reflection and observation of those practices.

These perceptions are the product of continuous interpersonal interactions across a number of individuals, as well as the reflection upon those interactions involved in

making communication decisions across numerous relationships at the same time and over time. This is not simply the interweaving of types of practice, but also the sum of the interdependence of numerous practices, awareness of the practice of others, and perceptions about the environment as elaborated in earlier chapters. Compounded and drawn out beyond any specific interaction or situation, the product of such reflections persists for a longer timeframe than individual choices. Notions of authenticity and perceptions of technologies are external to any individual action in this way.

Individual restraint and assumptions about how other's do and should communicate are integral aspects to the interdependency of interpersonal communication practice. Such reflections and actions are reified as a sense of the authentic self, something beyond banal notions of human choices, perceived as a moral or even natural self to which the individual strives. They are also reified as the perception of non-human technological tools and their functions. Such assumptions in their reified form are not consistent between individuals, though they are often assumed to be so.¹² In this manner, the need for constant connection and the emerging implications of asynchronous and individualised control, which have emerged from the exploration of everyday interaction in chapters six and seven, are written into contemporary conceptions of the self as reflected among my participants and become indistinguishable from the individual's perception of the technology.

8.2 Embodied Interaction in the Context of Connection

¹² The relationship between the notion of authenticity and technological ordering is, partially, a rehabilitation of Parson's (1953 as cited in Elias 1998, pp. 128-129) pairing of affective and affective-neutral framing of practices. What is borrowed from these terms is the individual's appeal to value-laden (emotional or even moral) reasoning for and interpretation of action and self-restraint on the one hand and the consolidation of similar reasoning for practice removed from the realm of individual choice and therefore divorced from the affective expression and choice of values on the other hand. In this research, such temporal considerations are not included, aligning rather with Elias who argues that in times of social change, both aspects are always in flux. There are echoes of this dichotomy in Zerubavel's work on temporal conventions where he applies Berger and Luckmann's formulation of reification, which is useful here: 'the apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things, that is non-human or possibly suprahuman' (1966 as cited in Zerubavel 1981, p. 43).

Every participant within the selection appealed a notion of ‘authentic’ or ‘real’ interaction within the face-to-face context but only with their closest friends and romantic partners. It is this latter qualification, however, that is of import to this research: the ‘compulsion of proximity’ (Boden and Molotch 2004, p. 105), explored in chapter two, is experienced with or rather reserved as a necessity and manifestation of key relationships.

What I mean by the notion of authenticity is a collection of normative values appealed to by the individual in the context of interpersonal communication often to assert or describe appropriate communication choices. As will be explored, the individual’s expression of authenticity is often located in one of two qualities: either derived from the ‘authentic’ qualities of an embodied self in relation to valuing of personal proximity and the body or derived from the ‘authentic’ qualities of disembodied modes of self-presentation, which this research proposes as emerging in relation to the need for networked connection and valuing of temporal control.

Regardless of the often-heard appeals to embodied authenticity of interactions in everyday life, however, are intentions and choices by every individual in this thesis to continually depend on disembodied interactions for much of their everyday communication. The compulsion towards embodied interaction is unsustainable in everyday life if applied to all or even a small majority of relationships; those who appeal to notions of the authentic embodied self do so in a way that is largely incongruent with their everyday practices. A minority of participants were very expressive about their preference for embodied interaction and correspondingly very dismissive about many forms of disembodied online communication. Despite this conviction, however, the necessities of everyday work and social life demanded the substantial reliance on disembodied modes of communication. This suggests that while individually held notions of authenticity play a role in communication decisions, they do not determine everyday interaction. The individual’s notion of authenticity is, rather, an element in the negotiation of those practices.

Elisabeth, 25, is quite dismissive of social networking sites and is a self-described ‘phone person’, which is quite rare among the respondents. She compares the different modes of communication below:

You don't have the space to put many thoughts in to email, apart from the people I'm contacting a lot. They are also at work – so it tends to be like MSN, quite instant communication – a rapid exchange. And then text, you don't have that much space. I don't tend to respond adequately to text messages.... It feels *once removed* as opposed to – I know I use my phone to call people and I know I use my phone to text people – out of the two, calling is the *more intimate* because on the other line is *somebody*...

Her sense of authentic interaction is entwined with her perceptions of technology, resulting in her ordering: the telephone is more 'intimate' compared to other modes of communication because while she does not perceive an embodied presence in the 'once removed' text-based interaction, she does perceive 'somebody' or some *body* on the other line of the phone. She makes these statements about the technologies themselves and expresses her conviction about intimacy of interaction through them. Within her accounts of her average day and week, however, a substantial amount of interactions take place within disembodied modes of communication. Much of her work is email related but so is her social life: she sends numerous group emails to set up nights out and weekend activities with her friends. Though these may be to plan an event a month in advance, they translate into several interactions: joking, gossiping, storytelling, and catching up occurring via email over the month of co-ordinating and confirming one face-to-face encounter. These emails represent a substantial amount of interaction but also an important aspect of her relationships. While she protests that she is definitely a 'phone person', Elisabeth's notion of 'real' interaction, even by her own evidence, is misaligned with how much of an 'email person' she is in practice. As we will explore, this disparity between one's sense of authenticity and one's communication habits is part of the space for the negotiation of networked practices in everyday life.

Neither Chris (46) nor Lourdes (24) finds much appeal in social networking sites or long email conversations with friends. Both stress that they will always choose face-to-face interactions if possible. As Boden and Molotch's (2004, p. 105) argument would suggest, texting, emailing, and online interactions often only provide for the coordination of the more valued face-to-face meetings. Both participants also talk on the phone quite regularly with family and close friends who they may not be able to see regularly. Through their avoidance of social networking sites (despite both having

accounts on more than one site) and Chris' habit of returning text messages with a phone call, Chris and Lourdes suggest this personal priority for embodied interaction through many of their communication decisions.

Chris, 46, is a freelance editor who is studying part-time at a London university and keeps in touch with his 'college friends' largely via email. He explains that he does not even have a lot of their phone numbers. He also describes colleagues from a former workplace who are now friends, yet they, too, email to keep in touch and only meet up once in a while. He distinguishes these from his two closest friends that he often sees and chats over the phone. His conviction about what constitutes a 'real' relationship through embodied interactions only applies to a small part of his social network and the conviction about the authenticity of embodied interactions is at once sustained but also contradicted because the remainder of more casual relationships are maintained by disembodied interactions.

In contrast, Lourdes visits, drops in on, and hangs out with a wide circle of friends, with whom she keeps little contact other than arranging to meet. Despite her expression of face-to-face communication as more authentic, with her closest friends and boyfriend, according to her own account, embodied interactions occur from within a context of constant connection that relies on disembodied modes of communication such as SMS and email. Lourdes is in continual contact with her boyfriend Sydney (also in this study) and her best friend with whom she helps run a small creative business alongside her night job at a bar and her day job in administration of a large online retailer. They text, email, and swap pictures through mobile applications throughout the day not to organise, recall, or anticipate of face-to-face encounters. Despite her insistence that much of contemporary online communication is inauthentic compared to face-to-face communication, her most important relationships involve a great deal of disembodied communication for its own sake.

Lena says she does not like to use SMS or email often. She was annoyed at having to take a phone call just moments before the interview and explains why she needed to answer:

They'll ask me are you on Skype? They'll send me an SMS asking, if I didn't pick up the Skype call. They'll send me an SMS asking right away 'Where are you? Are you home? What are you doing? Can you come on Skype?'

Lena is, firstly, illustrating the manner in which text-based modes of communication are dismissed as complimentary modes of interaction: useful only to organise what she describes as the more 'efficient' interaction of a phone call or video call. Often, however, convenient times cannot be arranged for a video call and an asynchronous and text-based conversation continues. Lena tells me a story about how she had lost touch with a friend who had moved from London to Oxford; previously, they would text and instant message in the evenings and often met up for coffee or drinks during the week. Out of the blue, Lena received a text and then a phone call from this friend with whom she had never spoken over the phone: 'She phoned because we hadn't seen each other all summer', Lena assumed. They caught up on recent events, and after the phone call, they continued to text for the rest of the week. Despite the expressed emphasis on embodied interaction as the foundation of the relationship, continued and substantial interaction occurs through disembodied modes of communication that involve the constant networked connection for both parties.

During the thinking-aloud task, Lena offered to show me some examples of why she really does not care for social networking, turning her laptop towards me and pointing to various interactions she largely ignores. Despite her disavowal of the entire platform as impersonal compared to face-to-face communication, there were three open and ongoing instant message windows. When pressed, Lena admitted she does IM often, but only with a few of her closest friends, because the rest of the people 'on here' are 'useless'. The question that arises from this example is why are some interactions not considered 'real' social interaction while others are real, and how does this relate to the perception of the technology itself.

From these examples, it is clear that despite the participants' disavowal of SMS, email, and social networks, such disembodied interactions play a major role in either their few but most important relationships or their numerous casual relationships. Though text-based communication does not replace embodied interactions, embodied interactions are taking place within a context of constant connection through asynchronous means and, unlike the casual and background interactions that occur by

SMS, email, and online social networks, are only occurring on a limited scale. As will be more thoroughly explored shortly, the emerging quality of these embodied interactions as mutual and purposeful engagement emerges as a quality for disembodied modes of communication as well.

8.3 An Emerging Sense of ‘Disembodied’ Authenticity

The authenticity of the partially disembodied interactions of some networked modes comes specifically through *limiting* the expression of the body through use of a medium where the individual can present the self in a ‘self-realized’ (Turkle 2011, p. 11) way. The disembodied realm of text provides both a sense of purposeful crafting, and an awareness, scrutiny, and traceability of one’s own self-presentation in present and past interactions. Turkle’s description of one’s relationship to their online self in a game-world can be extended and applied to everyday interactions occurring through disembodied modes of communication: ‘having literally written our online persona into existence, we are in a position to be more aware of what we project into everyday life’ (Turkle 1995, p. 263). In these often text-based modes of communication, the distracting expression of body, location, and tangential contexts can be bracketed outside of the frame of interaction so that the self is communicated in a manner controlled for its specifically intended interpretation by the others. The embodied self would be considered too ‘real’ due to the lack of controls over expression.

Chapters five and six explored the individual’s need to control the perceived excess of potential communication, to which most participants imposed a degree of asynchronicity and thus temporal control to most interactions. While no one in the thesis shunned face-to-face interaction with close friends and family, all but three of the individuals mentioned in the previous section (Lena, Chris, and Elisabeth) appeal to the sense of control involved in *disembodied* modes of communication as itself offering a form of authenticity in self-presentation. The tendency towards disembodied modes of communication never fully displaces but rather provides a balance to embodied interactions.

Andrew, 33, writes in his diary that ‘I...generally regard email as “safer”, in that you are not as *vulnerable* as you are in a live engagement’. Live interactions align with the

embodied time of a phone call or face-to-face meeting. He prefers to ‘choose’ his responses saying that with more time, he frequently comes up with a better answer. Many of the participants evoke this asynchronous element of control for their self-presentation and interactions. Often, there is little or no distinction between strategies for work-based interaction and social interaction, as we will explore. Andrew states quite specifically that in emails or texts, ‘You have the ability to present what you want and control it to the Nth detail...’ but is quick to remind himself that ‘you’re also vulnerable to them either misinterpreting something, or correctly interpreting something you didn’t want them to interpret’. This caveat is worth noting to illustrate that the element of control is only *assumed* to be inherent to email, text messages, or social networking posts. These communication modes are not free from the potential miscommunication involved in any interpersonal interaction and Andrew is aware of this ambiguity.

Lourdes, despite her conviction about embodied interaction explored in the last section, also relishes the control afforded by asynchronous communication, as described in her approach to very emotionally or professionally delicate situations:

I like [writing] emails of this sort as I find it easy to outline objectives and goals and necessary steps to achieve them. Sometimes it can be overwhelming to talk about this stuff, but somehow writing it down in a tangible format makes it more digestible. I always take time to make sure I’m clear in these types of emails too, and pay particular attention to the semantics – also bearing in mind who I’m emailing....I don’t know why I put it off really I guess it would just be kind of a desire to deal with it in, you know, a really kind of lucid way, so...

She is making a connection here to the clarity of her communication and asynchronous nature of the medium. She is replacing the ‘overwhelming’ and rushed nature of live communication, with control attributed to the technology. Lourdes says that she takes the same care when writing a good friend or her boyfriend as she does a colleague.

Margaret, 30, was born in Spain but is a UK citizen. She works in market research and stresses that she is ‘really kind of careful’ about what she puts in emails, whether they are social or work related. Many of her descriptions of how it is best to communicate could be interchangeable between the two contexts. She worries something she writes will ‘get back to me in a bad way’ and finds that it is important to be careful with ‘the

words you use and how you portray yourself' on Facebook as well as in work emails. Scott also makes this comparison, but more explicitly: 'So texting [socially] allows you to get your point across – again in the way I use work email so that it's down concretely – but then it gives people the chance to respond when they want to'. He actively translates his perception of technologies from work to the social context and relates it again to the temporal affordances between mediums.

Marco emphatically argues that while he loves meeting with friends, he would usually text rather than talk over the phone when they are not physically co-present. He states bluntly that he is 'not really a phone person...I don't really like to *just* use my voice to communicate...because if you're saying something I want to *see how you say that*'. He is quite dismissive of the phone as a mode of communication because it is '*muted environment*, muted from direct contact'. It brackets out his 'poses' and stops him from literally seeing 'what's going on, on your face, what are your expressions'. It is embodied, but not embodied enough for him to feel comfortable in the same way he does in person. He continues with a comparison to text messages:

You can't really express everything in a text but a text saves you from that moment of awkwardness, kind of, silence or waiting because it's already there, it's all there what I wanted to say to you, it's there. That's what I said, you read it, if you want to reply to me something, then you do. You do *reply on the basis what is written*...It is just like very, very – how to say, simple, you know. So, it's just there.

Other than face-to-face interaction where conversation benefits from the full range of body language, Marco prefers to limit connection to an asynchronous medium, to simply craft and present his side of the conversation, directly and simply: 'it's there'. The interaction is limited to text-based communication for its degree of temporal control; he assumes that interaction will be based solely on what is written, what he 'wanted to say' as opposed to the elements of uncontrollable expressions in telephone's lulls and silences. The hierarchy of embodied interactions to disembodied interaction suggested by Boden and Molotch (2004, p. 105) is hollowed out, illustrating instead an oscillation between the fully controlled disembodied modes and the fully embodied mode of face-to-face communication, which are both appropriate and authentic for different reasons.

Christina is a 27-year-old civil servant who volunteers on the side for local political campaigns. She compares different modes of communication with regard to the amount of control she has in each:

I text a lot like I like to write long texts [on my phone]...I like email because you have more room to express yourself than in a text, you can go back and edit what you write. Really! You can go back and check for mistakes in a way that when you're talking; on the phone you can't.... So yeah, with email you have a lot more – God I sound like a control freak – you have a lot more control over what you write and yeah, you can write properly.

Christina and George are the two exceptions among the participants in their outright and explicit expression that their authentic self is much more present in disembodied modes of communication than embodied modes. Christina perceives email to be the communication mode that allows for the most purposefully crafted interactions. It is text-based and asynchronous, so she can edit, reread, and carefully check the message: each message becomes a composition of her self-presentation in contrast to live speech. Though confident in this sense of authentic communication, there is a clear worry that her rationalisation of communication decisions is inappropriate and she may come across as a 'control freak'. Voiced and therefore partially embodied interaction is contrasted with control, which allows her to write 'properly', implying that less control over telephone interaction is a somehow less 'proper' form of self-presentation. This, however, is not always the case.

It depends who it's with. With my parents and a couple of close friends, it's pretty much the same [as email]. *It's just very fluent* and I can talk for a long time and I don't have to kind of think about what I'm saying or think of things to say.... [With other people, I'm] not so good. I get very self conscious and I start thinking excessively about what I'm saying all the time and my voice.

Despite her stated preference for text-based communication, Christina's reticence for telephone calls does not apply to everyone. Just as individuals qualified their expressed convictions about the authenticity of live interactions with exceptions within their practice, according to her own account, Christina's expressed preference for disembodied interaction does not apply to some of her closest relationships. Christina is anxious about the lack of control over her self-presentation, both what she is saying and embodied aspects such as how she is using her voice. Christina mentions something similar when leaving voicemail messages: 'I lose control of the syntax and

it turns into rubble of words and I want to reset it and I can't'. On the telephone and leaving a voicemail, Christina says she does not have time to edit and check for mistakes as she would in a text-based form of communication. The liveness of the interaction is stressful for her as she concentrates on the disarray of self-presentation through technology, which she specifically states, however, that does not apply to the full presence of face-to-face interaction.

George explains flatly 'If I type I feel more natural than when I speak'. He works, ironically, in radio. Our interviews took place on his coffee and lunch breaks during the workday, as he spends his evenings with Tania and their young daughter. He is a sound engineer, presents a bi-monthly segment, and writes on a few blogs, consistently updating his four online social network profiles. In management of his everyday interactions, George avoids aspects of live and embodied modes of communication, where elements of expression may mask or otherwise distract from what he is attempting to communicate.

Though an exception for his notion of authenticity, his interactions in everyday life are not dissimilar to others within this thesis: while weighted towards online communication, this does equate to a deficit of face-to-face interaction. Alongside Betty (32), Ethan (30), and Gordon (46), George (35) has been an active user of online forums and early blogging communities since the late 1990s. Among the participants, these four participants have long been comfortable users of online text-based interactions outside of work-based email and before the introduction and rise in popularity of SMS services and, more recently, social networking sites.

George explains that he 'never was much into phone calls you know, [ever] since I had an old-fashioned dial phone. ...You know, like a landline phone' explaining that 'I'm more a typist when it comes to communicating'. He says that because 'general move is in that direction...' with more people recently adopting text-based forms of communication like instant messaging and social networking '*I'm communicating more now, I guess because I can type*'. Though George does not avoid face-to-face interaction, he perceives certain modes as more authentic, 'more natural', modes of communication, specifically placing text-based modes as more natural than voice. He endeavours to explain his preference for text-based communication:

I mean my gut feeling is something to do with me not being *quick-witted* enough to come up with responses while I'm speaking. And the *speed of thinking* catches up with my *typing speed*.

Time plays an important role in the controlled interactions of the disembodied modes of interaction. Text-based communication is not only a *self-realised* interaction detached from the body, it is also detached from the *embodied time* of live interactions. George describes, half in jest, that the speed of text-based modes of communication is the speed of his thoughts. This implies that live interactions are too fast for the degree of control he prefers. Like others above, George's everyday practices show a clear preference for *either* the intimacy of *fully embodied encounters* with close friends and his young family *or* the control of *fully disembodied interaction*. Even his work in radio reflects this notion of authenticity that comes from purposeful realisation of what he wants to communicate: his radio segments are all pre-recorded, so that he can edit out the pauses, the coughs, and the stumbles in his thoughts. In this way, his radio work more closely resembles his blog entries than telephone calls: they are edited, reviewed, and perfected. I barely recognised the man I heard on air only a few hours after sitting with him face-to-face.

Though participants often appeal more strongly to the disembodied or to the embodied notion of the authentic self, an exclusive reliance on one or the other would be incongruent with the realities and demands of everyday social interaction. George, for instance, specifically manages his everyday communication so that the George his acquaintances and workmates most often interact with is the self he purposefully seeks to communicate, but this is in no way a replacement of the face-to-face time he spends with his partner, daughter, close friends, and immediate colleagues throughout each day.

8.3.2 The Interlacing of Embodied and Disembodied Interactions

The divergent types of interaction, embodied and disembodied, do not only occur throughout the day, but they are also often occurring together because of different qualities of interaction. The affordances for the multi-tasking and 'interlacing' of multiple disembodied forms of communication (Ling and Donner 2009, p. 146) are often perceived to be integral to networked communication, yet this often pre-supposes

a certain type of co-present engagement without exploring how disembodied and embodied interaction mingle. Asynchronous communications are perceived as not requiring the same type of monopolising engagement as live-interaction, because the interlocutors involved are not always engaging at the same time. This assumption mirrors the frustrated refusals of live interactions explored in chapter six, as well as the awareness and sensitivity to ‘imposing’ on other people’s time explored in chapter seven, which related again to live interactions. Such examples, however, focus negatively on the *monopolisation of engagement* involved in embodied interaction and not the possibility of *divided engagement* associated with disembodied interactions of networked connection.

Throughout the day, George is likely working on a few things at once: a radio piece, a few admin emails, or a blog post, and listening to music while he does this, but chatting with his colleagues throughout. In the evening, both he and Tania (also in this study) mention that a lot of their time together after their daughter has gone to bed involved them both on their separate laptops: writing emails, instant messaging with friends, or just browsing the internet, but doing so together while talking. This was quite a common evening activity for couples or flatmates in this study to do together after dinner and before bed: Elisabeth and Eddie both borrowed their partner’s laptop to use social networks while watching a movie or television with that partner or a flatmate; Zaina and her husband would both be on their mobile phones for the last thirty minutes or so before sleeping but already in bed; Sydney and Lourdes spent many evenings and weekends with each other talking while emailing and browsing the internet, and Betty described a similar nightly ritual with her fiancé as they check forums, browse blogs, and update social networks.

Disembodied modes of communication allow for an *interlacing of multiple communication activities* that is perceived to be not easily achieved or even inappropriate during live interactions such as a telephone call. The above examples illustrate the overlaid desire of proximity and need for networked connection. Co-presence with a loved one is only intimate because the other interactions occurring are not also embodied, which would potentially monopolise one’s attention. As the concurrent interactions are disembodied and asynchronous, they can be halted,

delayed, and ignored to provide for the continued engagement with co-present interactions.

Yet, such interlacing is also occurring within the context of embodied interactions that are not co-present, such as online video calls and across more casual friendships and acquaintanceships. A few of the younger participants in this study, specifically Melanie (25), Jack (24), Louise (22), and Miki (25), but also Eugene (26) and Ethan (30), play with the delicate temporal interlacing of multiple interactions while balancing embodied and disembodied personal exchanges. To spend time with friends in the evening who are not co-present, these participants often have one or more simultaneous video chat windows open, yet rather than talking through the microphone and speakers, they choose to type through the application's instant messaging tool. They are simultaneously working on something on their computer, posting and commenting on social networking sites, sometimes even on each other's profile as an additional window of that evening's interaction. Conversations strike up, multiply, and fade. Engagement is mutual at times, but also divided and staggered between interlocutors. Sometimes there is simply a video window onto an empty desk and chair with no recent instant messages in the chat dialogue box while the other conversations continue.

This practice allows for the intimate witnessing of embodied video interactions, but replaces the *synchronous mutual engagement* of a voiced (embodied mode) conversation with asynchronous *engagement* of a text-based instant message service (disembodied mode). The interaction becomes asynchronous and allows for the interlacing of other activities as well as other disembodied interactions to be occurring: they can't have four simultaneous voice conversations, but they can have four simultaneous instant messaging conversation while viewing streaming videos of their interlocutors. They have chosen to make this mode of communication less embodied, *limiting/controlling embodied connection* in order to shift aspects of their self-presentation into text and to allow for simultaneous but staggered interactions. By limiting the embodied and live aspects of communication, they are able to increase the amount of interactions occurring simultaneously, yet still hope to exchange a degree of intimacy and partially embodied engagement by streaming videos.

Jack mentioned that some people do not understand or appreciate the divided attentions that such interaction involves. He explains that when video chatting with someone for the first time you need to determine if they are ‘a talker or a typer’ and that the talkers always expect his full attention, ‘it is completely different – pretty annoying’. He compared those who expect full monopolistic engagement rather than the more casual ‘hanging out online’ to what he refers to as the ‘phone people, who just don’t get the message’. By picking up the phone to make a call or speaking (rather than typing) over video chat, an individual signals not just a commencement of interaction but also an entire set of perceptions about both the relationship and the proper use of technologies.

Jack and other participants mentioned above are the most comfortable among the respondents with this mesh and re-composition of embodied and disembodied aspects within online interactions. Such interlacing, however, is similar to the interlacing of co-present and online interactions of the couples described earlier. These few participants do, however, represent the communication practices associated with the younger age limit of the participants but, unlike the upper age limit of the selection, such practices exemplify (rather than contrast with) trends emerging from the whole selection. These overlaid and multiple interactions are possible because embodied interaction is limited either to those co-present or to a specific aspect of the engagement, rather than following the compulsion of proximity and electing the most embodied yet more monopolistic communication modes such as telephone, online video/audio calls, or face-to-face meetings.

The notion of authentic self-presentation occurring through these partially disembodied modes of communication is not fully displacing the authentic embodied self-presentation of co-present interaction but *emerges as its counterweight*. The two notions of authenticity mingle in practice to represent contradictory drives that would be unsustainable in everyday life without being balanced by the other. The contradictory drives are appealed to in place of stable norms or clear convention in the negotiation of use across multiple communication modes. Neither of these notions of authenticity fully determines any individual’s communication practice: they are both present in everyday life to provide sustainable balance with between the desire for

embodied interaction across a limited number of relationships and desire for constant connection as it translates into a perceived abundance of potential interaction.

8.4 Perceptions of Technologies

Many of the normative values captured within notions of authentic interaction are also captured in the perceived capabilities of communication tools relative to another. This is the *collective instrumentalisation* of each technology proposed in chapter three, as individuals describe a technological function in terms of what they assume to be its collective use, often described simply as how it ‘should’ be used. These notions of use are reified into ‘what’ the technology ‘does’ or ‘is for’, involving a conflation of what actions the individual chooses and a discernible notion of the effect of the technology itself. The ‘media effect’ is a term adopted from engineering language with regard to communication technologies; the effect is whatever is perceived outside of the content or message because of the choice of medium (Terranova 2004, p. 10). In the context of this research, however, the media effect is not a distortion or noise as it would be for the engineer context, but the social implication of the chosen medium.

Perceptions of technology, however, are always relative to other technologies: perceived to be more or less of certain social quality than another tool. From the perceptions of a range of tools, a *technological ordering* emerges: both an ordering of technological uses through the perceived instrumentalisation of a technology compared to each other technology and an ordering of how the individual interprets his or her own communication actions and the actions of others.

Not one of my participants, not even Peter the computer programmer, not Ethan the applications developer, and not Zaina the technology journalist described communication tools in solely technical or design terms. Even when describing the technology itself, the characteristics of the tools are, first, implicitly relative to other tools and, second, are informed by socially constructed contexts of use and desires.

Take Farzan’s description of texting:

SMS because it’s sensible, right? It’s immediate, it’s neat, you don’t have to write any introduction like you have to do in an email

This short statement implies a superiority of this medium over others. Farzan rhetorically asks for confirmation of this ordering, as he assumes it is a shared perception of the technology. He begins to unpack the nuances behind the technological ordering, which I argue are socially constructed rather than simply essential functional accounts. It's 'neat' in contrast to the wasted time involved in writing an email, which is 'sensible' evoking rational efficiency to limit what Farzan sees as superfluous niceties and intimacy required by convention in other modes of communication. It is also 'immediate'. This statement is more complicated and, as we will explore in the next chapter, relates only partially to the speed of the text delivery system and to the metaphorical 'proximity' to the body of one communication on the mobile phone over another modes that are also on the mobile phone. None of these notions offers a technical breakdown of the texting compared to email services, which are both accessible on the mobile phones of the participants.

Technological ordering will be explored through the frustrated accounts of disembodied technologies that despite temporal control fail to offer the desired degree of mutual engagement. The following sections will provide a sense of what is at stake for individuals as their perceptions of technological capacity contribute to their perception of the boundaries of the social world, leading individuals to dismiss certain modes of communication as not constituting real social interaction and, thus, dismissing the numerous engagements occurring within that mode.

8.4.1 Disembodied or Disengaged?

Lena is the only gamer among the participants and an anecdote she told outside the formal interview reveals a relationship between authenticity and mutual engagement that emerges quite prominently within exploration of perceptions of a technology and an individual's evaluation of social interaction. She began telling me about her weekend playing a popular massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) on a 'quest' in one of the three characters she has created for herself. In order to complete the quest, she was working, in the game world, with a group of other online players, swapping instant messages (IM) with them throughout her afternoon spent online playing the game. Late in the afternoon, one of the other players apologised in the IM chat window saying he'd be back after a few minutes because he

needed a cigarette break and needed to send some work emails. With this, Lena realised there was what she referred to as a 'real person' playing with her, meaning an adult (rather than a teenager) with whom she could socially engage. She joked about this with the other player through IM and explained that she would smoke a cigarette and refill her wine while he was away from the computer so neither of them had to feel bad about temporarily abandoning the quest. Though the two did not play together or interact online after that afternoon, they did converse throughout the remainder of the game.

From this anecdote, an important relationship emerges: some online interactions with other people do not involve enough mutual engagement to be considered interpersonal or social *at all* by those involved. This relates to whether the individual is engaged with the platform itself or with the engaged individuals. The other players online were not 'real' people to Lena until she had mutually engaged with one of them.

Lena does not consider her game-world interactions to be social in any way: she perceived very little mutual engagement with other players and is engaged rather with the game itself. For others, this gaming world could be very well quite social, personal, and even intimate. Her perception of the technology as less social than other modes of communication orders the types of interaction she is likely to have. The individual's perception of a technology disregards some forms of interaction by not acknowledging the form of engagement as a social experience.

Not acknowledging some forms of engagement as engagement, however, is a social practice in itself: despite being present in the online game world, the type of engagement is not acknowledged as meaningful, and this is an act of exclusion. This is similar in quality to a social practice explored in chapter one: to Simmel's 'blasé' comportment and notion of 'dissociation' in crowded city streets ([1903] 2002, p. 15), or Goffman's 'civil inattention' (1963, p. 83) and Gergen's 'absent presence' (2002, p. 227), all of which disregard the physical co-presence of others as opportunities for social engagement. Through the individual perception of the technologies, networked co-presence is similarly disregarded, illustrating the possibility for collective instrumentalisation of networked technologies as a tool for social interaction or not.

This calls for a re-articulating of Borgmann's (1995) categories of technologies explored in chapter three, to adopt his insight about the quality of engagement with a technology and adapt it for communication technologies. Throughout the earlier chapters, mutual engagement between individuals emerged as a vital element to the experience of connection: it is the basis of networked presence and awareness that builds into relational ethos and a relationship itself. This section will explore the frustrated accounts of participants who decide to limit their use of one technology or another because they do not perceive its capacity to provide mutual engagement between individuals *through* the technology, and perceive more only engagement of individuals *to* the technology.

When individuals find their perception of a technology so at odds with use of the technology that others have found for it, the result is a consistent failure of mutual engagement and often disconnection between individuals and from that medium. Elisabeth has begun to make sweeping changes to way she communicates after finding the manner in which she used a mode of communication incompatible with the others on the medium with whom she connected. She had been using Twitter consistently over the year and much more intensely for a few months before she recently quit the platform altogether.

I think, and have always thought, that Twitter is the most ridiculous thing. It's just like who cares? Who are these people? But then it's people who have time. People who have time to follow these people – it is not relevant to my life, it is not relevant to my life and I just don't have the time.

Her diatribe includes more ridicule about the types of interaction taking place on the micro-blogging platform. Her attacks on the content aside, her decision to stop using the platform relates to the demands upon her time to affect the type of mutual engagement she perceives as an essential element of social interaction.

As she abandons the mode of communication altogether, she is ceasing interaction with numerous people she had been consistently communicating with. She, however, does not see it that way, for like Lena and gaming, Elisabeth does not perceive interaction over Twitter to be social interaction at all. Exclaiming that she does not even know who these people are, she implies that she is not engaged with them in a way she finds meaningful. Her frustrations also imply that she does *make the time* for

other modes of interaction because *they are* relevant or important to her life. She also talks about having made a similar shift away from the social networking site Facebook a few years ago whereby she ‘transferred’ a handful of relationships over to an email correspondence as a way of maintaining ‘dialogue’ but dismissed others as lacking such any such quality replaced instead by ‘generic’ interaction with the site itself and not their ‘daily life stories’.

Henry is similarly shifting his communication practices:

I think I wanted to distance myself from the continual chatter of Facebook.... So if there’s someone that I care about or feel close to I decided that I wanted to send an email to them...

[Now]...I will use it...usually in quite like a fun way rather than a way of instigating like serious relationships with people.

I think I feel affronted that they think I will just be on Facebook and they think that I have the time to be on Facebook because going on Facebook feels like a kind of fun, like indulgence rather than like replying to texts and emails which is just kind of like part of the essential ebb and flow of day to day life for me. So I think I’m kind of like ‘You really think I have the time to be on Facebook’. But, like, usually I do.

Henry’s shift in how he uses the social networking site illustrates that he *had been* attempting to conduct ‘serious relationships’ through this platform, which he chose in the end to ‘move’ onto email. Henry does not perceive the technology as congruent with the way he would like to manage his time and relationships: in contrast to his perception of email and text, he asserts that social networking sites do not fit into the ‘ebb and flow’ of his everyday life. He feels that engagement with others through the platform is neither ‘serious’ nor ‘close’ but rather that Facebook itself is ‘a kind of a fun’. Turkle touches upon this with regard to Facebook, suggesting that its role as a ‘transference object’ when attention shifts from the friendships through the technology to having a relationship with the technology itself as ‘people describe feeling more attached to the site than to any particular acquaintances on them’ (Turkle 2008, p. 124).

These perceptions are in sharp contrast to Andrew and Ethan's positive perceptions of social networking sites, discussed in the previous chapter, as connecting the real times, places, and events of numerous physically disparate individuals, which is experienced as networked presence and awareness through the platform. Elisabeth and Henry do not perceive the use of the technology as engagement between individuals but as something separate from connection with others in their life, as an activity in itself that is not concerned with interaction.¹³

In addition to his day job in network and software sales, Peter, 28, runs a photo website, which keeps him quite active and social in the evenings and on weekends. He discusses how his perception of social networking platforms has recently changed.

I use Twitter for self-promotion, shameless self-promotion only. I think it has absolutely no value other than that. I use it to promote my website.... I have Twitter followers and sometimes they say things to me and I actually ignore them. I've got Twitter with 1,500 people or whatever, so I think Twitter for me has replaced the mailing list.... When I first got on Facebook I kept it personal for maybe like two or three months and then I had all these friend requests and I just thought 'Oh fuck it', and so I accept them all. I just make it all a promotional tool.

Peter describes how he has at first struggled to engage with friends through one platform and then another, attempting one strategy and then another before giving up on the mode of communication. The manner in which Peter gives up on Twitter and Facebook is telling. At first, Peter tried to create multiple accounts, one for close friends and another for loose acquaintances (a strategy of multiplication explored in chapter six), though this was too time consuming: he was spending too much time and energy engaging with the platform itself and not engaging with other individuals in a way he deemed meaningful. He does not stop using the platform; he simply stops using the platform for mutual engagement: he decides to use both social networking

¹³ Similar to Elisabeth's shift away from Twitter, Henry could be said to be acting out a strategy of distinction (Bourdieu 1984), to present his own interactions in a way that 'weren't to do with...the banality' that he associates with a certain type of interaction: his decision to use Facebook less is itself as a matter of taste. This research, however, points to more subtle nuances of engagement that have arisen throughout the empirical findings.

sites as a form of communication like a mailing list and does not bother to even look at the incoming messages, comments, or replies.

8.4.2 Social Tools and Social Devices

The purpose of these four examples is not to present condemnation or even popular opinion about one mode of communication or another, but rather to highlight the type of engagement that informs the individual's perception and ordering of technologies. Borgmann compares musical instruments and the stereo, a musical device, explored in chapter three, as evoking different forms of technological engagement. The musical instrument requires 'sensitivity' and 'endless painstaking practice' that 'in our presence captures our attention' (Borgmann 1995, p. 88) compared to the 'instantly, ubiquitously, and easily available' engagement with a stereo that is in no way 'demanding' relating to level form of engagement, specifically in his example to the consumption of 'disposable reality' (p. 89). I use a similar distinction in proposing the notions of *social tools* in contrast to *social devices*. While both are modes of communication, the social tool involves mutual engagement between individuals, where a type of presence is facilitated by the tool for engagement that demands attention and sensitivity through the tool. The social tool is a form of active interpersonal engagement, but the social device is nearer to a form of consumption of social interaction, a virtual engagement that only involves other individuals to a certain degree. It is a 'virtual' engagement in the sense that it is a near equivalent to engagement and that the presence felt relates more to a perception of the device or platform as an object than to the others using the platform; attention and engagement to the interface of the device is facilitated by its constant and instant availability without the perceived 'real' mutual engagement of individuals to each other.

The distinction between social tools and social devices, however, is not for the classification of some technologies as one or the other, but to distinguish between the perceptions of communication technologies. This is an analytical division derived from the individual's perception of technologies as either closer to a tool for mutual engagement or closer to a device that provides a backdrop of social entertainment or media consumption within everyday life.

Such divergent perceptions are also prevalent in the sphere of micro-blogging platforms such as Twitter, alongside other specialty platforms that often take a form somewhere between social networking (through the inclusion of user profiles and personal feeds) and theme-based forum discussions. Lourdes, who strongly disavows social networking, has a Twitter account that she does not consider social in any sense; she sees it as simply an online source for industry and entertainment news. She relates to them as social devices in a manner that is quite similar to Ashima's, a 33-year-old press officer who works for a variety of different private agencies across different sectors. As she explains with regard to first Facebook and then Twitter:

I seem to log on to Facebook because I'm addicted to [an online game] Farmville. I don't actually communicate with anybody at the moment. It's a good networking thing...Facebook actually is basically: I'm sitting at home watching a bit of TV, let's go on Facebook and see what's going on.

I would say I'm following a few people. Not friends; I'm following kind of institutions and that kind of thing and Stephen Fry. I'm following people I'd never, never come across in my daily life who are quite interesting in what they say

Ashima's perceived use of these technologies relates to them as devices for entertainment and media consumption rather than mutual engagement with people in her life. She describes not 'actually' communicating with anybody in the same breath as describing Facebook as a platform for online games and more comfortably described alongside watching television. Her use of the term 'networking' seems dismissive of personable engagement and relates to the accessibility of professional information much like her use of twitter, which is not for engagement with friends but for following the output of 'institutions' and celebrities.

This is in complete contrast to the perception of similar technological interaction held by participants such as Gordon and Betty who see these many information-oriented online platforms as modes of social engagement. In her diary, Betty, who is a data-analyst in a large public institution, describes that engagement with regard to a forum for part-time mature students:

Now wide awake, end up staying up writing some comments on forums...I've never met any of them in real life but we all give each other encouragement

online during essay crises etc...Lots of supportive comments from other people – I add one of my own...amazing how total strangers rally round for each other.

With the forums, okay, there's probably a couple of forums I contribute to which are all London-based ones, and those were forums I kind of started out with people that I don't know, on-line, but I've typically met some people through...so some people I know now personally, I'd consider not necessarily friends but acquaintances

Betty's interaction on this forum is clearly focused on engagement with others. Despite being strangers, they 'rally round' and 'support' each other. Such online interaction blends into offline life as forum users attend the same events and become acquainted. This perception of this technology as *social tools* for engagement and relationships between individuals is in stark contrast to the relationship Lourdes and Ashima have with the online platforms themselves as *social devices*, as sources of entertainment and information.

Other participants perceive and use the technologies in a mixed way. Both Tania and her partner George use social networking sites as a source of news and thus media consumption, but this is both social and professional communication activity, as they share and discuss stories and follow the links of their journalist friends. Ethan and Zaina, both work in the technology industry, and some social networking sites are for social engagement and interaction, while others are thought of as specifically an aggregator of news items and press releases from industry peers where concerted mutual engagement is rare. With regard to the same or similar platforms, there is a clear divergence of perceptions of the technology that locates its use inside or outside the realm of social interaction for each individual.

These divergent perceptions of technologies are inextricable from the use of the technology and are increasingly understood as the effect of the medium. Relationships are perceived as important, real, or intimate because they occur through one medium but not another; relationships are dismissed, overlooked, and sometimes abandoned because interaction is only occurring through a medium that is perceived as having little to do with social interaction at all, thought rather as fun, entertainment, informational retrieval, or just an everyday distraction. The social device involves an

experience similar to that of video games or online blogs: it is an exchange of distributed and networked attention for the purpose and pleasure of engagement with the platform itself, lacking the mutual engagement through which one experiences the 'real' presence of another person. The individual's perceptions of technologies express the boundaries to engagement that define and limit his or her social world.

8.5 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted how the divergence of contemporary communication practices emerges alongside new notions of authenticity and perceptions of technologies that are appealed to or otherwise embedded within communication decisions. This suggests that individuals' practice involves a degree of self-regulation and automatic adjustment of one's communication decisions through an adherence to the assumptions that one's perceptions of authenticity and of technologies are shared by others.

The *compulsion for proximity* and the *need for networked connection* are *mutually tempered* through the related notions of authenticity. Without such tempering, communication practices would not be sustainable in the contemporary context. The two contradictory notions of authenticity, embodied and disembodied, respectively evoke 'ideal states' of full mutual engagement and full temporal control that would be untenable modes of social interaction for one's entire social network. Appeals to a naturalised concept of an authentic self and authentic communication decisions are incongruent with the realities of everyday interactions. These represent two competing forces; one is not replacing the other, but rather they are both found to be integrated within the perception and ordering of technologies.

The individual's *perception of technologies* is itself a social act of defining and ordering one's social world. Social tools involve a sense of mutual engagement through technology. Social devices involve the individual's engagement with the technology rather than with others using the technology. In this manner, the individual's perception of a technology as facilitating mutual engagement constitutes the boundaries of social life as the individual experiences it. The inconsistency between individuals in their perception of technology implies that different forms of

engagement can be occurring through the same tools. One's perception of technology, then, becomes a space for the acting out social practice in its most basic form: '*this is not social engagement*' and '*that is social engagement*'. The notions of authenticity evoked by participants have a similar role: when I interact in one mode of communication, it is not meaningful, but when I interact in another, it is the real me.

These two distinct notions offer an opportunity for the further differentiation of communication practices between individuals. Acting on one's perceptions of technology, and acting on one's sense of authenticity are linked to one's own communication practices and that of others. This represents the 'chains of actions' (Elias 1998, p. 67) that link one practice to another practice for a single individual, which is extending through new opportunities for divergence, and the interdependency of these now numerous practice between individuals. As the opportunity for differentiation grows between individuals, the interdependency of those numerous practice draws individuals into the integrating process of social change (1998, p. 67). There is an assertion of individual control emerging in the face of constant connection and the increased importance of disembodied technologies. These three integrating components are potentially a part of a wider figurational change; these components also however lead to a necessity for negotiation between those individuals, which I propose in the next chapter, could be the threshold of a much wider figurational shift in the politics of everyday life.

Striving towards authenticity and acting upon perception of communication modes are not subsequent stages of the same social change, but can be interpreted rather as contradictory forces embedded within wider social change. I propose that the conception of an authentic self in general and perception of technologies are not just mutually constituting, but act as two poles of the communication process through which the individual struggles to understand and keep pace with social change. Ultimately, between one's sense of authentic interaction and perception of social technology, there is a space for the individual's negotiation of change.

From within that space, a new level of meaning has emerged from the context of networked connection, which is not located within the content of networked interaction as might be assumed but in the forms of connection itself. When individuals describe

new notions of authentic engagement within certain modes of networked interaction, they are not describing the 'effect' of the technology. They are describing, rather, the manner in which they have come to know the world and themselves through their interpretation of the technology. 'Connection' is the expression of the individual's relational choices to each other, to technology, and to themselves in this changing context of networked connection.

Chapter Nine: Meta-Communication

Mutual engagement provides the basis for any interpersonal communication; over time, it becomes the basis for our perception of each other and the relationships we form. As Goffman admits ‘the whole machinery of self-production is cumbersome’, but as we will explore throughout this chapter, it ‘sometimes breaks down’ (Goffman 1969, p. 23). *Meta-communication* is a concept developed here to capture the attempts of individuals to communicate at the level of that machinery, to both mediate the potential for breakdowns in interpersonal communication and provide a discourse about how interpersonal communication can and should be conducted. Such attempts emerge from the individual’s varying perceptions of one technology relative to another, which form a *technological ordering*. This ordering not only provides the basis for meta-communication, but also is key to the material aspects of social life, which meta-communication seeks to negotiate.

Meta-communication is an expression of and evidence of sensitivity to the changing machinery of communication between different individuals, groups, and people in general across a range of technologies. Signals are sent about how to communicate, to let people know when their communication choices align with the receiver’s own and when they do not. These are not, however, *just* signals about how to communicate. Emerging from the everyday context of constant networked connection explored in chapter five, meta-communication is not an expression appended to single acts. These signals are involved in the social negotiation (or collective instrumentalisation) of technologies themselves, which becomes inextricable from the management and expression of changing relationships through technology. In chapter six, communication practices were explored for the temporal controls imposed by individuals in their attempt to manage domains of work and social life as relational domains. In chapter seven, the individual’s use of the same technologies established patterns of reducing the perceived temporal pressures upon others by deferring and sharing that control to others for the sake of mutual engagement. With such practices in mind, meta-communication emerges as more than just the negotiation of single relationships but plays a part in negotiating socio-temporal regimes of everyday life.

9.1 Connection Rather Than Content

Within their everyday life, participants express being overwhelmed by the potential for interaction across numerous communication platforms. Linked to this is a focus and concern regarding the engagement of interactions as tasks: as something to be completed. Everyday life, then, becomes something to be *managed* in terms of how many known *tasks* remain unaddressed alongside a spectre of unexpected potential interaction as an element of *temporal contingency* in one's day. A perceived increase in the potential for communication is accompanied by an emerging acceptance of disembodied modes of communication as counterweight to the desire for embodied interaction in a few relationships.

The perceived potential for overload of interactions and the emerging perception of disembodied modes of communication as authentic and acceptable forms of interaction relates to a partial displacement of attention away from content, or even from any single interaction, as they are normally understood. Attention shifts towards *patterns of connection*, which themselves become meaningful as a structure to everyday life and a manifestation of relationships. The form of connection is itself an exchange of information: it is a socially expressive act that has meaning below the level of content and at scale unrelated to single interactions. The content of the messages exchanged between individuals, of course, still retain an important place in everyday communication, but networked presence and networked absence that occurs through mutual engagement is something that is expressed, interpreted, and read as way of understanding relationships and, as this chapter will propose, a way of negotiating everyday life. Where connection itself is meaningful, meta-communication is the negotiation of that meaning and, through that, the negotiation of changing nature and norms of relationships and everyday life.

9.2 Technological Ordering

There is a lack of stable conventions by which individuals interpret their own communication practices and the practices of others. There is, however, a *technological ordering*, related to the perceptions of technologies relative to one another as they relate to the conduct of relationships. These perceptions are more

fractured, shifting, and differentiated than a notion of convention would imply and they are assumed by the individual to be shared by others. Participants describe the use of each technology relative to other technologies, amounting to a technological ordering that is often conflated with descriptions of a structure of sorts of their social world. This is often referred to as a ‘natural’ staging of relationships demarcated by different modes of communication, but then is also captured within the largely unexamined metaphorical descriptions of the tools themselves.

By technological ordering, I mean an assumed understanding of actual communication actions, of presence and absence across a range of probable everyday network tools, which itself will be explored here as a realm of communicating social information between individuals. Networked presence and networked absence can be understood as the modulation between mutual engagement and lack of engagement across a range of tools despite a context of constant networked connection. These degrees of engagement and connection across numerous networked technologies act at a *level of radically reduced social code*, a relational language of practice, whereby the perceived effect or even the function of these technologies is taken in itself to be a relational expression within the social world.

Eugene and many other participants allude to a ‘natural’ division and ordering of how people are expected to and do interact in orientation to different relationships:

They’re different groups of people, in that I never Facebook my work friends. ...You add them as a friend and *they won’t [message] you or you won’t [message] them* – they’re just there.... The people who I talk to and whose walls I post on, it’s generally *quite a set group* of people. There’s some sort of second tier friends who once in a while will get something.

Again, Eugene is describing what he calls the ‘structure’ of his social network but one that is defined by different modes of engagement. He relates this to an emotional hierarchy but also on the patterns of communication that involve potential for communication and self-restraint explored in chapter seven. Though only talking about social networking, Eugene’s comments illustrate that interaction and multiple modes of communication can be ordered even within a single platform: friendship requests, messages, wall posts. The social practice of using a technology is not simple. Any tool can break apart into multiple modes of communication depending on the

perception and use of the technology. These multiple modes are perceived by the individual as ordered in their relationship to each other. To perceive these modes of engagement relative to one another is to attempt to understand the forms of engagement that signal and partially constitute relationships.

Elisabeth, also in law like Eugene, describes a similar ordering of communication actions with the telephone when she has first made a new friend:

But you do not necessarily want to infringe on their time, and texting seems the most unobtrusive way of starting to make inroads in someone's life but without being too overbearing or – you don't know what their routine is, whether or not they can take phone calls

Similar to Eugene's ordering of interactions on social networks, Elisabeth restrains herself from telephoning someone she has just met, ordering the use of telephone relative to exchanging texts. This is a much clearer attempt to limit temporal pressures on others for the sake of mutual engagement. It also relates to the development of networked awareness through continued interaction between individuals, which involves gaining knowledge about their communication habits, schedules, and daily routines as explored in chapter seven. She continues, but in reference to a wider technological ordering of distinct tools and face-to-face meetings in general:

When I first meet someone it will take them time to visit, like, *strata of intimacies* which are *slightly defined by the ways I communicate with them*. Someone I'm not as intimate with I'll probably communicate with them by phone or text and bit-by-bit if I start to socialise with them in large groups' maybe I'll acquire their email and start to include them in group emails. And then all of a sudden they're *in the sphere of email and phone*. And then I might start to include them more in my plans – if I'm already starting to see them enough that I'm sending group emails to them, I may be seeing them once a week.

Elisabeth speaks of 'strata of intimacies' that order how she communicates with individuals and types of relationships as well. As the relationship changes, so do expectations about which mode she will use to communicate and the frequency of face-to-face meetings. She admits that the ordering of these strata is 'slightly' defined by modes of communication, which sketches these naturalised 'spheres' of interaction

as demarcated by her perception of communication tools themselves. It also suggests, however, the ambiguity of an assumed technological ordering.

Two participants, Betty who is 32 and Gordon who is 46, are avid online forum participants. They discuss a similar ‘natural’ progression of relationships from online to offline. Gordon mentions that many times, he and other interest-based forum users would realise from online interactions that they had attended the same events. The next time, they decided to say hello. Betty describes similar shifts of online engagement to other communication modes as indicative of developing relationship:

There’s a few people now that I’m in touch with in other ways; I’ve either got their phone numbers, after I’ve met them [in person], or [became] friends on Facebook, or other ways like that. But typically it would be arranged via a forum initially, and then only after you’ve met them do they kind of move into other modes.

While there is no clear established pattern, Betty alludes to an assumed general technological ordering, whereby forum acquaintances are only engaged online until a closer relationship is established through face-to-face communication and only then does she communicate with these individuals in other disembodied modes of communication. She contrasts these individuals to her ‘established friends...My friend-friend, real-life friends’, relationships that she conducts ‘umm, probably mostly by meeting face-to-face... yeah, so I tend not to spend a lot of time on the telephone or on email having conversations’ with them.

Both Betty and Elisabeth’s examples support the conclusions from chapter eight: while embodied interactions are essential for closer relationships, disembodied interactions are still perceived as authentic engagement. It does so, however, while still suggesting an *ordering* between these disembodied modes of communication that is understood *relative to the type of relationship*.¹⁴ Close interrogation of the individual’s perception

¹⁴ While several studies have mapped the process of how ‘once weak ties develop and strengthen’ to include changes in communication patterns, these studies largely focus upon the specific content of interactions, of personal information that is divulged and shared (Baym 2010, p. 127). McKenna et al. (2002 as cited in Baym 2010, p. 129) and Haythornthwaite (2005 as cited in Baym 2010, p. 129) suggest an increase in connection from few to multiple modes of communication as a sign of intimacy, yet this misses the nuanced types of relationship occurring through different combinations

of disembodied technologies reveals a perceived hierarchy that is used to signal types of relationships attributed to that mode of communication

9.2.1 The Intimate Hierarchy of Disembodied Interaction

Disembodied modes of communication will be explored for the vestigial sense of the body accorded to them by individuals and the resulting hierarchy implicit in such perceptions of technology. These descriptions provided a sense of what is at stake for individuals, as their perceptions of technological capacity inform the everyday routines and priorities in communication and the barriers to communication used to segregate different levels and types of relationships explored in chapter six.

Disembodied modes of communication are often perceived through a notion of temporal immediacy and a metaphorical sense of spatial proximity to the body. This proximity is attributed to the technology itself but provides a connotation of closer and more authentic interactions and relationships occurring through that technology relative to another. There is an abstract sense of corporeality embedded within the relative perception of the technology, which is assumed to be shared by others and is very consistently appealed to by the respondents in descriptions of their communication decisions. Among other participants, Henry relates this hierarchy of disembodied technologies directly to his communication decisions but also the type of relationships involved.

Sometimes things happen, like someone will send me a Facebook *message* to say ‘Oh nice to see you last night’. And it’ll usually be someone I don’t know very well, who might have my phone number but if they do they probably *don’t use it on a regular basis* and it’s someone *I’m not close* to and Facebook feels like a *less invasive* way of saying that to someone, to say ‘Nice to see you last night’. And it also is like a *less personal way* of saying it to someone as well.

Henry places social networking interactions as furthest metaphorically from the body.

of connection. In contrast to those studies mentioned above, I am exploring how an individual understands or negotiates the assumed progression of a developing friendship as it is relationally expressed through *multiple* modes of networked presence and absence.

The communication choice made by his acquaintance above is not a matter of practicality: Henry explains that the person would likely also have his phone number so they could telephone or text. Henry ‘cycles through’ (Turkle 1995, p. 165)¹⁵ *habitual, social, and technological descriptions* of this acquaintance’s communication decision: they are not in the habit of phoning; the friend is not close to Henry; the technology itself is metaphorically not close to Henry. The perception of the technology as ‘less personal’ or more distant than other modes of communication is not distinct from the relationship as also being less personal, nor is it perceived as distinct from the habitual communication actions within that relationship.

Henry’s choice of words even implies that other interactions would not only be closer to the person/body but would also be invasive if the individual was not a close relation. Using a close technology implies the individual was also inserting themselves into his metaphorical personal space of that technology and his intimate social sphere. He also specifically cites social networking messages, which are private and do not carry the same connotations as a more public social networking post between individuals. This makes them more readily comparable technically to email and text messages, a comparison he makes.

Also email *feels more private and personal*, even compared to like a private message on Facebook, I think it just feels *more instant*. Facebook is still, like, kind of fluffy to me.

I also think it’s kind of safer because it is like *not imposing yourself* on the other person if you don’t know them that well.... [On] Facebook...[you’re] not kind of ascribing yourself *the importance of, like, a text message* if you know what I mean. So it makes it into like a *casual* comment.

Facebook is fluffy, casual, and far from the body, emails are ‘serious’ and feel different ‘even’ to private social networking messages. His use of ‘even’ implies that

¹⁵ This use of Turkle’s term is distinct from its use in chapter five, where individuals are cycling through different windows/media through which they performed different roles (Turkle 2004, pp. 102, 103). Here, the individual is cycling through different ways of thinking about technology, also employed by Turkle (1995, p. 165) in this way, which parallels phenomenological ‘multistability’ of our relationship to technology according to Ihde (2009, p. 12) as explored in chapter three.

he knows technically they are quite similar. Through this assumption that others share a similar relative perception of communication technologies, text messages become the invasive interaction that imposes upon others and expresses an importance of the interlocutor in one's life. This is not a perceived function of a single technology, but a perceived effect of the ordering of technologies. Relating to a single (though generalised) example of an acquaintance contacting him on Facebook, communication decisions are perceived as particular expressions of a relationship as well as particular expression of the technology itself.

Numerous other participants perceive technologies as closer to the body and they are aware that this is somewhat metaphorical, as each of the modes of communication comes to the same mobile phone in their pocket, purse/bag, or on the table in front of them. Margaret stumbles upon this inconsistency within her perception of technology:

Because I probably *feel* like that if I think *even though email is immediate*...I think texting is *almost, or even a little bit more immediate*...but people would have that, *their mobile phones, close to them* so they would know that something came up.

She is struggling with her knowledge that both types of messages come to her mobile phone, 'even though' she is aware of their technical similarity she perceives one mode of communication to be 'almost, or even a little bit more' personal, or close to the body. Her choice of wording begrudgingly defies her technical assessment of the technology. Joanne makes a similar comparison between personal and work emails.

There is an *immediacy about it*, and because I know my Gmail is personal. I know *I'd want to read those emails before anything else*. So the desire and the motivation behind leaving Gmail open is subtly different than my work emails.

This example compares work-related interaction to the popular online email platform she uses for personal interactions and, thus, is obviously quite different from comparing two modes of communication that are both used socially. Joanne's comparison though provides an insight into the perception of some technologies as metaphorically closer to the body. Joanne's personal email is more immediate; it offers a more direct route to her self, because she wants to maintain closer attention to it, because she communicates with her family and friends through that account. The perception of the technology itself, its function, its speed, and its closeness to the body is a manifestation of Joanne's practice of checking these emails first before other

modes of communication as well as the personal nature of relationships over that email. In this case, she explains that her communication decision equates to perception of the technology as an expression of the type of relationship.

Earlier, in chapter five, we saw how each participant discussed their morning routine: they woke up and reached for their phone, they looked first to see if they had any missed calls, second at the number on the interface signalling any SMS text messages, then email, and then towards social networking if they had time. While this exact routine is not consistent across the respondents, having some routine was consistent. There was staging of connection, awareness, and engagement on different channels, as explored in chapters six and seven, but there was also technological ordering between those channels. This practice was explained in a quite straightforward manner: only friends or family would phone and text and those interactions are more important because they are personal. This research also explored how each individual manages a series of barriers to communication, to restrain the actions of others and allow only certain people access in certain ways and at certain times. Participants also however restrain themselves, so as not to transgress those barriers when interacting with others. These two practices involve a preference for asynchronous and disembodied modes of communication. Technological ordering and the perception of technologies as they relate to types of relationships are a consolidation of communication practices in a reified form. When technological objects are perceived with a sense of what type of interpersonal relationships they relate to, this further restrains the individual's use of those objects. In this manner, however, communication tools also become objects through which, as this chapter has proposed, communication practices can be negotiated. The negotiation of technological ordering, then, has real implications beyond not just the attention and movement of the body in relation to technologies but also in the management and construction of individual temporal regimes of everyday conduct and wider interdependent socio-temporal regimes that partially constitute the management of work and social domains.

Connection on one medium as opposed to another is taken for the assumed demarcation of a social relationship, as the manifestation of that relationship. Meaning emerges from networked presence and absence shared between individuals across a number of channels, a radical reduction of information within everyday life to

relational signals that are understood to express not just the desired types of relationship but also the desired social and temporal structures of everyday life. In contrast to the possibility of a uniform, codified, or conventionalised technological ordering that is consistent between individuals, it is specifically the assumption and inconsistency between individuals' technological ordering that provides the space for its negotiation.

9.3 Meta-Communication

Networked presence and networked absence act, as it were, as the 'language' of meta-communication, encoded and decoded against the shifting and assumed implications of technological ordering. As engagement between individuals and groups modulates across numerous modes of communication (even face-to-face co-presence), many of the vital aspects of relationships and everyday life are being negotiated at this *relational level*, of how people are connecting, where meaning will not be lost in the potential inundation of signals at the content level.

Meta-communication occurs at a different scale compared to the individual's tendency for attention to one interaction before another. Like the processing times of networked communication, like the changing patterns of communication practice, and like the development of inter-personal relationships, the negotiation of everyday life through meta-communication belongs to a realm that is outside of the everyday scale of attention to single interactions, though this does not preclude the individual's awareness of this process, nor their participation within it.

Meta-communication is most readily found in this research as attempts to build and manage what I refer to as a *relational ethos* between individuals and groups. Individuals in a group are said to develop a group ethos, defined as 'a system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours, and customs shared by members of an interacting group to which members can refer and employ as the basis of further interaction' (Ling 2008a, p. 176). Unlike a group ethos, which involves a degree of 'bounded solidarity', (Ling 2008a, p. 176), a relational ethos relates to the negotiation and formation of communication patterns and connection between individuals. Gergen suggest that interpersonal communication has become a site of 'relational interchange' where

values, emotions, and even rationality are not located within the ‘isolated individual’ but in the manner in which people are connected (Gergen 2008 as cited in Ling 2008a, p. 181). Repeated interaction, then, where individuals develop and negotiate a shared sense of how to communicate, develop not just a networked awareness of communication habits and daily routines as explored in chapter seven, but also negotiate a *relational ethos*, whereby the technological ordering each individual perceives is negotiated into a distinct ethos of everyday communication between those specific individuals.

At one level, the relational ethos is a basic contextualisation of communication choices relative to other choices, derived from conventions and knowledge of past experience. At another level, relational ethos can be understood as negotiation of the forms of knowledge, values, and behaviours that structure everyday life.

In a sense, meta-communication occurs to negotiate the divergent technological orderings (which relates to perception of technology and relationships in general) held by communicating individuals into what we can call a relational ordering, which is specific to that relationship or set of relationships. The relational ethos, though, is much wider than simply the relational ordering, for it involves the recognition that in negotiating of that relational ordering, individuals are creating a shared space of social values and conduct.

Meta-communication, though purposeful, is often not explicit in the usual way because it does not occur at the scale of a single interaction or content upon which individuals often focus. Meta-communication, rather, is expressed across numerous interactions through the relational conduct of networked presence and absence in the context of constant connection. Specific single interactions are embedded in the longer-term process of developing a relational ethos, in the expression, establishment, and negotiation of the quality, nature, and form of relationships through meta-communication across numerous interactions.

As it occurs through repeated action and reflection upon action, meta-communication is most readably available for exploration through peripheral empirical evidence related to relational ethos: decisions made in the context of a relationship, or to

otherwise not disturb that ethos, or instances where meta-communication has failed. The motivation behind meta-communication is most apparent as a potential counterweight to the reflections on the pressure one feels to maintain relationships according to an assumed technological ordering.

9.3.1 Shifting Connection, Specific Expression

Though not meta-communication in itself, a single communication decision that shifts away from a regular pattern of communication can indicate a more persistent and shared relational ethos between individuals. This is not meta-communication, which would act to negotiate that ethos, but rather a momentary communication choice understood against that value-laden and contextually nuanced shared context of the relational ethos. Temporary shifts from one mode of communication to another are a modulation in contrast to a set pattern of interaction between individuals. This contrast from set patterns acts as an expressive element of a communication choice. These specific *shifts of connection* provide a *specific expression*; they are not meta-communication, for they relate directly to the content of a single interaction. Gershon refers to this as ‘second order information’ and relates it directly to how the content, ‘particular words and statements should be interpreted’ (2010, p. 18).

Evelyn attempts to describe just such an expression through a communication choice:

And I think also whenever I’m told about my grandparents’ health or something like that I’ll pick up the phone more and I’ll say, you know ‘I’ve got to phone them. I’ve got to....’ And same with if a friend has gone through a difficult period...you *can’t* just always go on Facebook....

Evelyn is discussing the shift from the routine of contacting family and friends online in order to express a different context for interaction, a different level of emotional engagement. In order to show concern, Evelyn purposefully forgoes the personal temporal control disembodied interaction affords both parties and chooses to telephone. The perception of the telephone as being more emotionally engaged than social networks is a matter of technological ordering, which inevitably overlaps with the specific relational ethos. In her fractured and repeated response, ‘I’ve got to...I’ve got to...you can’t just...’ she is telling herself that in order to express concern, she must act differently from the conventional pattern that her and her family rely upon.

Such a response also indicates the weight that relational ethos carries, both pressure to maintain the set patterns of communication and the specific value and expression of intimacy any modulation carries with it. These are not arbitrary but purposeful decisions to shift from one mode of communication to another.

Ashima provides a similar example. First, she describes her individual practice of maintaining temporal control over her availability:

There are times when someone will call me and then I will be busy or doing something and I will text them back saying ‘What’s wrong?’ So I’ll reverse it.

Texting is instant so they can tell me what’s wrong

Yet, if the situation calls for it she will diverge from this set pattern of disembodied communication:

Well during the day if my friends who work and they ring me during the day then there’s something up so I’ll text them back. If someone is emailing me something really shit like ‘My mum is kind of ill’ or something like that then I’ll instantly call my friend up...because I think texting isn’t personal but a call is personal.

These actions are understood against the background of a relational ethos involving not only the degrees of networked awareness that communicate to both interlocutors that phone calls will not be answered during the workday, but also that if someone strays from that set pattern, it could be an urgent and emotional matter. As a good friend, again a matter of relational ethos that has already been negotiated, Ashima knows that there is a balance that must be disregarded between the temporal control of disembodied interaction and emotional support that can be provided by embodied voice calls. If Ashima did not act in accordance to relational ethos, it would be a signal that this ethos, and the relationship itself, have not been mutually understood or negotiated.

A third example related to this context of an emotionally charged situation, illustrates the negotiation of a relational ethos between Richard and two of his friends that amounts to the opposite of those above:

They’ve had to go away so if they want to speak to me they can, I’m not going to pressure them to speak to me until they get back...if I had to fly to the other side of the world because my parents were sick, would I really want to be phoning up

and hearing about day to day stuff back in London – of course I wouldn't because I've got other stuff to deal with – so I presume that's how they're thinking.

The relational ethos developed between Elisabeth and her family as well as Ashima and her close friends involves a shared set of knowledge and values related to the relationship that leads them to shift to embodied interaction in light of a specific situation. In Richard's case, a different relational ethos has been negotiated within this relationship, which leads him to assume that attempts to connect would be intrusive and an emotional burden for his friends. He perceives the need to restrain his desire to connect given the circumstances.

Such content-related expression is not always positive, yet negative actions similarly imply an already negotiated relational ethos. Andrew provides an example:

So the example [in my diary] where I [blocked my number] myself before I called my ex – *that was me acting aggressive* – I was fully aware of what I was doing, I'm not stupid – and I did not feel like being considerate to her, I was trying to catch her off guard. So when people don't go along with *it* I'll either be offended and that's when I assume that someone understands *the rule* and is just being rude or inconsiderate, or I just recognize that they're just being somewhat aggressive.

By telephoning her at work, Andrew is purposefully shifting from the set pattern of interactions that have been established with an ex-girlfriend. This is a temporal boundary to her work domain that is maintained through set patterns of communication practice, patterns that those close to her are expected to restrain themselves from transgressing. Within their relational order such actions are off limits, he would be expected to phone her after work or email her, though he had justified in his diary that this was 'an emotionally charged issue that required a conversation'. He refers to 'the rule' of set patterns of communication negotiated between him and her, the 'it' that he is going along with, can be considered to be the relational ethos, which provides a value-based and emotional context to his actions as 'aggressive'. He assumes that she, too, will interpret his phone call that way.

9.3.2 Changing Relationships, Changing Connections

How participants interact and connect is not just a practical decision, nor is it simply a decision based on the popularity of one medium over another: It is conflated with and experienced as *the substance of a relationship*. Whether spending time together each week, chatting on the phone, texting or instant messaging in the evenings, patterns of communication can act as a reference point for negotiation of stasis and change in a relationship. Such negotiation does not take place in relation to a single action but through a wider gamut of cues, signals, and re-alignment of networked presence and absence as a change to the relationships itself: meta-communication has real consequences.

Andrew describes how he would ‘wean’ old friends and ex-girlfriends off of different modes of communication to signal a change in the relationship, specifically to a lesser degree of intimacy than before. Similarly, a girl he was dating had stopped replying to his emails and was ignoring his texts, yet he sees ‘her act of requesting this “friendship” [on facebook] as an indication that she doesn’t want to break things off completely’. He states that ‘...I can gauge how close I am to a person by how many potential means of communication I have available to me to contact that person and or how many lines are actively being used’. Andrew perceives a relational ordering as something that exists outside of his self, as something that is shared and contingent on not just his action. Against this relational backdrop, he not only monitors the degree of intimacy in his relationship but also expresses and reacts to changes in the relationship.

Christina decided to ‘relax the...embargo’ after quarrelling with a close friend. Though she continued to ignore the friend’s calls, texts, and emails, she sent a social networking message to show that she does not want a ‘permanent rift’ in the friendship. In the context of previous interactions, Andrew and Christina assume that repeated shifts in how they connect with their interlocutor, in the modulation of mutual engagement through networked presence and absence, is an expressive gesture to indicate a change in the relationship. Maintaining connection but in a different mode is also understood to be an expression of the desire not to forego the relationship altogether.

Eugene describes a similar situation, where a friend has just been promoted ahead of him in their law firm. Though this relational ethos is now re-cast as in terms of a

workplace power dynamic, the shift in relationship is still managed through meta-communication. The opportunity for negotiation, however, is more skewed by workplace organisation than in other purely social examples. Both work and social relationships are subsumed, however, within a relational context. Now his superior, Eugene's friend is attempting to re-cast his relationship with Eugene, in part by shifting how the two communicate. Eugene is still adjusting to this:

I think he's trying to send me a message like this is the proper way and what you were doing before was very unprofessional. I sent him an email, not bitchy in anyway...and he didn't respond to that. Before he would have been willing to engage in a [email] conversation but he just didn't respond. The next day, if he wanted to know something...he would come to see me in person or call me....

He does everything in person now

Similar to the re-negotiation of the relationships above, these shifting forms and patterns of engagement are not conveyed explicitly in the content of any interaction nor clearly expressed by a single interaction but are only understood by Eugene through a shift in engagement across a number of modes of communication. Like the above example, meta-communication is used to effect a new relational ethos. The friend's refusal to continue their previous pattern of casual and continuous email communication, though indicative to workplace surveillance and accountability, is nevertheless signalled by a shift between modes of communication.

In all three of these examples, there has been a shift in the mode of mutual engagement between individuals, a modulation of networked presence and absence across numerous mediums that is understood within the context of the relationship to signal a fundamental change in that relationship. None of these shifts involved any explicit negotiation how to communicate at the content level; the shifts were communicated relationally through modes of engagement at the level of meta-communication, rather than through spoken words and exchanged text.

In the context of previous mutual engagement, which is understood effectively as the context of their relationship, the refusal for connection across certain modes of communication is expressing that the personal relationship has diminished. Such decisions are also affirmations of what modes of communication are appropriate for the new form of relationship. Thus, meta-communication occurs in two ways: first, to

express a change in the relationship and, second, to communicate how those involved should engage from that point forward.

9.3.3 Maintaining a Nuanced Relationship

Signalling a change to relationship, however, is only the simplest and directly observable form of meta-communication. As a relationship develops, numerous aspects of everyday life are found writ large within a value-laden ethos that is to be negotiated, shared, and upheld as a matter of commitment to the relationship. This is not only commitment to mutual engagement, but mutual engagement in a certain way according to shared knowledge, behaviour, and expectations between individuals. Negotiation of such an ethos is evident through the participants' active attempts to maintain certain patterns of communication rather than risk being misunderstood at the level of meta-communication. There are also instances where meta-communication has clearly failed and the form of mutual engagement that the relationship is founded upon is called into question and the relationship itself is jeopardised.

In her second interview, Lourdes describes a subtly negotiated balance of embodied and disembodied interactions with friends that she does not get to see often, which is quite different from her engagement with her boyfriend and close friends explored in the last chapter:

So maybe you're working when you're speaking [with a friend] by email or texting, and you're finding a spare moment, but you've actually committed to give each other a bit of time that evening. So it feels like, you know, you both make that kind of effort to actually pick up the phone instead of just like reverting back [to email or texting]...It is more personal.

By contrasting telephone with 'reverting back' to the established pattern of communication, she implies that such interactions are understood as seldom and limited in this type of relationship. They require an 'effort' to purposefully exchange or 'actually' commit a 'bit of time', which is associated with a specific degree of intimacy. These friendships, however, function without demanding too much attention or time, where most engagement remains within disembodied means such as email. Lourdes' language implies her awareness of the nuances of the relational ethos:

without at least these limited exchanges of the intimacy perceived through embodied interaction, however, the relationship itself may falter.

The framework for meta-communication is maintained even when individuals choose not to express anything specific and simply interact with those in their lives in the way that they and others understand to be the norm. The pressure to maintain the established patterns of communication takes on such force because of these numerous often-unnoticed acts of communicating and affirming that norm. Each mutual engagement in a certain mode of communication provides ‘reciprocal affirmation’ (Ling 2008a, p. 179) of how the individual is expected to act in that relationship; modulation from these norms plots out the plausible contexts and meaning for such shifts as explored in the previous two sections. Andrew discusses his decision to avoid his unwanted expression through his communication choice:

I decided to text them requesting an update rather than phoning them directly...my reason for this is that I don't want to put them on the spot. If they want to make up an excuse, or discuss amongst themselves, I prefer to give them some time to do so, and texting is the most non-aggressive, yet immediate way to do so

Andrew chose to continue texting to make sure his friends still wanted to meet, because he knows a phone call can be interpreted as aggressive or otherwise demanding. Despite the neutrality of the content, the relational ethos that Andrew assumes to exist with these friends is one that respects the desire of others to control their availability for live communications, in this case, to potentially save face by making plans through a disembodied mode of communication. Against the background of this relational ethos, Andrew assumes that diverging from this set pattern would have emotional connotations.

Relationships between individuals, however, are not always as simple as the portrayal in these last examples. The relational ordering does not only shift between more or less emotive, more or less intimate situations. Established patterns of communication are multiple and overlapping, reflecting the multiple roles and contexts for communication that are the norm of everyday life. This complexity is written into the management of everyday domains and schedules and consequently the negotiation of a

relational ethos also often involves the management of those communication boundaries between work and social domains in the context of specific relationships.

Though this research is an exploration of social interaction, the contemporary nature of work and social life is reflected in a blurring of those domains within the lives of the respondents. As patterns of communication develop, the re-segregation of those domains is often embedded within communication practices. Eddie, a young creative worker, juggles a very blurry social and professional life. For each role, there is a very different manner of communicating and he often reacts strongly to any confusion of these contexts. Though such segregation was explored thoroughly in chapter six, it is highlighted here to indicate negotiation at the level of meta-communication: Eddie must maintain the segregation of those roles by avoiding any actions that may be construed as a re-negotiation of expected behaviour at the level of meta-communication:

Facebook is just for friends, say if I was contacting [an industry acquaintance], and I was friends with him on Facebook, I wouldn't like bring up the chat and see if they are online and chat to them. I would ignore them there and go on and email them instead. Because it feels like it's a bit of a harassment. I don't like it when people do it to me, because you don't really have the choice not to answer it.

Eddie views certain modes of communication as more intimate and reserved for social interaction. He feels that others are better suited for work contexts. This perception relates to his individual practice as much as it does his perception of the technologies that he assumes everyone shares. It is, however, the accrued experience interacting with Eddie in both roles that establishes a distinction between social interaction and work-related interactions. Within many of his everyday interactions, Eddie is attempting to reinforce a segregation of domains through specific ordering of possible interactions: though it is more immediate for him to click on 'chat' with his industry friend who he can see online at that moment, Eddie will switch from the social networking platform he is using to his email account in order not to upset the established patterns for that relationship.

Meta-communication is a struggle to interpret the actions of others and to struggle to signal one's own understanding of communication conduct without resorting to

explicit explanation or emotional outburst. It is always just an attempt and when his signals are not properly received, Eddie describes in his diary that he may not react explicitly in the content of his communication but by another much more explicit act of meta-communication: outright disconnection with that individual.

Similar to Eddie, across numerous interactions Karina hopes to maintain a healthy and productive communication pattern between herself and her employees. This involves the distinction she maintains between social and work modes of communication for herself and them, as she explains, ‘some things just really need to be sacred’. Her segregation of roles and domains through communication channels is explored in chapter six, yet her active attempts to signal how it is best to communicate relates to meta-communication. She evokes a notion of the sacred, implying that what she is attempting to protect between herself and the others is something that is important, that the ethos she currently has with her employees must not be transgressed or even diluted by a single miscommunication at the meta-communication level.

Karina is quite close with her employees, her brother even works for her; it is therefore impossible to untangle her work and social world. She is quite aware that the power dynamic between an employer and employee makes her interaction with them different from regular social interaction as she *can* single-handedly inflect the relational ethos. While this is an unbalanced negotiation of relational ethos within a workplace dynamic, it is a salient example of attempting to maintain a relational ethos that overlaps with the management of the domains of work and social life through communication practices.

I am careful about contacting them outside of work hours. I would never call them outside of work hours, I get texts from one girl outside of work hours, but I probably don't text her back in those instances.... I may be working, but I want my staff to not take the way that I work as an example of how I want them to work. I feel I am the one who has to put the boundaries there. I do email at ridiculous hours at times, one or two in the morning but I always start by saying, ‘Ignore the time’. I explain myself usually.... I just don't want them to feel that I will be impressed outside of work hours.

Karina is concerned that any one of her communication choices will be understood as an attempt to insist on engagement outside of work hours. By choosing not to respond

to her employee who sends text messages outside of work hours, Karina is ensuring that she is not expressing any expectations for engagement outside work hours. Similarly, when Karina herself sends emails in the middle of the night, she understands that it is necessary to explicitly insist that she is not expressing a need for them to reciprocate her communication choices. This power dynamic, though quite different from the social setting and specific to employer context, provides an insight into how single actions in contrast to the norm can muddle the state of relationship or otherwise express a shift in the context of interaction.

9.4 When Meta-Communication Fails

Among the stories imparted by participants during interviews, there are several outright conflicts where a shared understanding of appropriate communication conduct has not been negotiated. In these instances, meta-communication has failed to negotiate a shared relational ethos, and the result of such failure jeopardises both professional and personal relationships.

At his law firm, Eugene admittedly gets caught up in a lot of inter-department gossip by email, often testing the boundaries of appropriate communication conduct with colleagues that he also knows socially. He recently began testing barriers that segregate social and work interactions. He is aware of the immense pressure his colleagues feel not to stray from established patterns of communication, which can be understood as a relational ethos for balanced engagement as colleagues but also friends as signalled through multiple modes of consistent engagement. This example shows the negotiation of relationships that cross domains is again managed through boundaries between modes of communication:

The other means for using Facebook is – I don't know what this says about me – as a passive aggressive tool...making veiled references about people you don't like without naming anybody...like this occurred with a guy at work and every time I post a status update that could be, well okay, it is about him, then I'll get people at work, I don't get them to, but they'll put a thumbs up or comment that this is hilarious. Literally thirty seconds later, I'll get a work email from the guy that says 'I haven't spoken to you in ages, what's up?' A Work EMAIL!!

Though a convoluted example, Eugene is refusing to comply with the delicate balance of maintaining a segregation of professional interactions and social interactions through distinct modes of communication between friends at work. He explains further: 'I use it as a way of pushing their buttons and I use it as a way [to] vent a little, venting without actually making waves'. His frustrations with a colleague have spilled over into the content of his semi-public social networking posts, which Eugene admits is aggressive. It is aggressive as a breach of the shared understanding of how colleagues should relate and engage, specifically because it has transgressed the communication boundary between work and social matters. Eugene is shocked that despite such aggression, his colleague engages without explicit conflict by the normal work channel. His colleague's response can be understood as a consistent signalling at the level of meta-communication for Eugene to maintain the relational ethos that has been negotiated to address the delicate engagement as friends and colleagues: a signal that is clearly dismissed or misunderstood by Eugene.

This chapter talks at length about meta-communication, a form of communication that facilitates interpersonal interaction by expression and negotiation of how one should communicate. Like technology itself, meta-communication may go unnoticed by those involved until it fails. Zaina has a quite marked opinion about how a technology should be used:

I hate when people call. Worst is voicemail, right? Voicemail has just got to be the most disruptive thing ever. I mean, it's so archaic.... Couldn't they just text it to me? Or email? Email, I'll get it right away. I have a smartphone.

Phone calls and voicemail are contrasted to other options: text or email. Zaina expresses very clearly her perceptions of technology as better or worse, useful or archaic. This relates to her perception of the tools themselves, rather than specific relationships in her life. She even emphasises her ownership of an internet-ready mobile phone, further stressing her view that this ordering is not her own preference but an assumed objective hierarchy of technologies: if she has access to this technology, others should understand that it is the more appropriate option based on some form of a shared perception of networked technologies. Throughout her interviews, she is quite critical of people who 'aren't thinking' or just 'don't get it' as disagreements about how to use these technologies become quite personal matters for

her. She describes her frustration with one friend whose who perceives and uses the mobile phone in a different manner to Zaina:

I have a friend and she calls me a lot – she’s the one I talk to a lot on the phone and stuff. She always leaves me voice messages, and I understand why it is; she’s running from meeting to meeting so the only time she can really talk is when she’s leaving meetings.... I actually told her ‘Can you stop leaving me voice messages’, which should really belong in a Seinfeld skit. She was like ‘What do you mean’, and I’m like ‘Stop sending me voice messages, I don’t want to check them, just text me’.

Then she sent me a long message, it was a whole diatribe, ‘I’m so sorry you feel like that, but I’m not going to change the way I leave messages for you. Can’t you adapt the way you get the messages from me.... Does it really take that much time for you to listen to my voice messages?’

I said ‘Does it really take a lot for you to not leave a voice message, and I’ll call you back’, but she’s like ‘But I’ll be in meetings all day’. I don’t want to listen to a 2 minute message, even with virtual voicemail, I don’t want to.

...She got mad at me; she was really yelling at me.

Zaina and her friend have incongruent perceptions of how one should communicate, why one technology is more appropriate than another, and how this understanding should be incorporated into mutual engagement. Both appeal to the way in which the tools can be used, the types of interactions those tools permit as well as the personal knowledge about each other to justify that opinion. Meta-communication has not failed to communicate the context of communication decisions: Zaina states that she is aware of the context of her friend’s communication practice (she is running between meetings). Rather, there is a failure at the level of meta-communication to resolve the conflict inherent in their incongruent perceptions of technology. This conflict has now spilled over from the realm of meta-communication to that of communication (much like the conflict Eugene sought to provoke), becoming an explicit (content-level) conflict for these two friends, disrupting the flow of interaction, and threatening their relationship. Zaina ends her description however with what is effectively a description of the continued conflict at the level of meta-communication:

So her and I have had a really weird relationship, where now she leaves me voice messages, still as long if not longer, and I don’t leave any voice messages.

These are neither simply accounts of how a tool functions, nor even expressions of one's preference in use. Both Zaina and her friend understand the use of communication tools in particular yet divergent terms of saving time and degrees of efficiency, an *individualised rationalisation of temporal cost* that neither are willing to forego for the sake of mutual engagement.¹⁶

I have brought together this bundle of different expressions about relationships, interaction, and everyday life under the term meta-communication. Meta-communication takes place across the range of communication tools and across numerous interactions, where the choice of actions at that scale remains an expressive element relative to other choices about how a relationship and how engagement between individuals should be conducted. The meta-communication explored above is quite distinct from Gershon's 'idioms of practice' whereby individuals communicate explicitly and agree upon communication practices 'by asking advice and sharing stories with each other' (2010, p. 6). The type of meta-communication explored here is specifically occurring during communication but across modes of communication in a context of constant networked connection rather than through any one tool or mode of interaction at the content level. It is the range of potential communication modes that itself becomes the medium for meta-communication. To connect in one way but not several others, to modulate networked presence and absence across these modes of communication, is often not only purposefully expressive but also received and understood as expressive.

9.5 Perceived Pressure and Potential Change

Meta-communication, however, involves not just recognition and negotiation of these orderings; actions are based upon them. These actions can act as positive feedback

¹⁶ There is a partial resistance by the individual to be available to the contingency of another's desire for connection providing a degree of respite from the perceived pressures of everyday communication, as explored as barriers to communication in chapter six. If, however, a consistent balance is not negotiated between practices, this resistance risks the isolation of individuals who prefer individual control of communication rather than mutual engagement. It is, however, that very same degree of individual control over their own communication practices that provides space for negotiation of a common practice with others.

between individuals to communicate, maintain, and change the way they interact for the sake of mutual engagement, for the sake of the relationship. Participants are often reluctant to take these steps because of the immense pressure they perceive restraining them from straying to new communication patterns for further connection. The perception of modes of communication as having different connotations for relationships serves to compound this pressure.

Farzan, a 32-year-old online editor of an international magazine describes himself as a ‘social butterfly’. Below, he describes the pressure to maintain certain patterns of interaction:

But I find that the circle [of close friends with whom I use the phone] is still incredibly hard to break out of the amount of people. Like people are shocked if you step the relationship off from social networking [sites] to you know [calling or texting] because it implies a huge amount of commitment. Yes, it can be people that would happily spend hours with you but they’re shocked if you want to kind of move it on to a phone or try to arrange [to meet]...Because *it’s very stressful*.

Straying from the expected pattern of interaction is ‘stressful’ and ‘hard to break out of’ because of the implications of ordering whereby modes of communication come to represent a type of relationship. Farzan assumes that a shift in communication modes would ‘shock’ his acquaintances because such a shift would express something other than just arranging to meet, which could be accomplished through a social networking message, but a greater degree of commitment to their friendship. The distinction between mediums is exaggerated because of the fear that a shift in mediums will communicate at the level of meta-communication.

This pressure to adhere to the technological ordering and refrain from any actions that would negotiate a specific relational ethos, or rather change the generalised relational ethos, involves a degree of self-restraint to avoid expression at the level of meta-communication. Yet, Farzan sees this as somewhat unrelated to the actual wishes of acquaintances, who ‘would happily spend hours with [him]’. The pressure is perceived as external to his and their desires, for it is reified at the level of assumed meta-communication. While meta-communication negotiates the development of specific relationships, there is a more generalised fear of acting outside of those

patterns of communication negotiated through previous interaction. Such fear can exaggerate the perceived distinctions between technologies

This pressure to act according the appropriate modes of communication is so great that Farzan chooses to subvert his intentions to avoid the imagined reactions:

In the evening, I texted a group of friends saying, ‘Who wants to go for dinner?’ Which feels like a very old-fashioned, weird way of doing it...so I texted lots of friends, probably leading them all to believe they were the only one that got texted. But I just thought they could all go together if...but only one person got back to me, so we went for dinner and actually I was home by ten.

By segregating his group interaction into what will be received as separate individually addressed texts messages, Farzan is expressing a level of personal engagement and interest in having dinner with that specific individual, which a status update publicly broadcast or a group email would not express.

The decision, however, is more complex. He is attempting to retain the personal attention a text connotes but this also relates to the perceived pressure to adhere to the norms of social interaction and implications for self-presentation:

Like if you do it as a Facebook status update, there’s two problems: One, nobody will get back to you. And two, everybody will think that you’re depressed or something.... Because [posting that as a status update] seems full-on. *It seems like there’s nobody that you can actually communicate with.*

A more public status update on a social network to make personal plans is outside the norm of how Farzan and his friends use social network posts (though this is considered quite normal by some of the other participants such as Ethan, Jack, and Louise). He imagines that if he breaches the assumed norms of technological ordering, this would not only preclude anyone from accepting his invitation but would draw the shock or judgement of others. This pressure of technological ordering is so strong that he strategically manipulates reactions to appear to be acting within set patterns of communication for fear of straying from them. Paradoxically, Farzan is limiting the possibilities of connection with those in his social network in an attempt to avoid the outsider status specific to this connected society: somebody who has no one with whom they can communicate.

In his description of social network use, Peter compares the management of personal space to the element of controlling connection embedded within communication practices:

So they sent you a friend request, you accepted it, but because they don't know [you well], they wouldn't be able to say hello to you or wouldn't be able to send you a message or wouldn't be able to write on your wall and it would seem too awkward

So it kind of polices itself. *So people keep their distance.* Within your Facebook profile there's a core, right, and then there's a bunch of people at the edges. It's *self-policing*. So if you're in a public space, typically in London, people don't go up to each other and start talking to each other. You'd think the person was a nutcase and you'd probably be right. So Facebook is the same thing, right. *It just takes care of itself.* People don't cross that boundary.

Peter references a 'self-policing' structure, but policing what? He means the policing of interaction, time, and mutual engagement. In his comparison to public space, Peter also illustrates that when one makes unexpected shifts towards a mode of communication that is perceived to be closer, that person risks being a 'nutcase'. In order not to be presented as such and to avoid facing the imagined negative consequences, 'people don't cross that boundary'.

Each of these examples illustrates the perceived pressure against and imagined social consequences for straying from those set communication patterns as they often adhere to the divisions between distinct modes of communication. The perceived use of communication technologies is not only assumed to be shared by the individual, but is assumed to be prescriptive in its pressure for conformity. Though the inconsistency of technological ordering between individuals is a space for negotiating specific ways of interaction, it is also a space fraught with perceptions of immense pressure to restrain one's own actions to the assumed expectations of others. In specific cases where degrees of networked awareness are shared between individual, self-restraint is a matter of reducing the temporal cost of communication on one another for the sake of mutual engagement, as explored in chapter seven. From the perspective of the more general, less negotiated relationships explored above, fear of social isolation evokes the self-restraint that limits communication.

9.6 Chapter Conclusion

From within the context of everyday and all-day networked connection to numerous modes of communication, a wide array of divergent, flexible, and constantly shifting personal communication practices emerges between individuals. In the absence of clear conventions about how to conduct everyday social interaction, individuals appeal to their perceptions of each tool, which are defined relative to each other to provide an assumed technological ordering. This ordering is not just appealed to in order to understand the structure of one's social world, but it also becomes a way of signifying and communicating the desired form that relationships should take on. Across numerous modes of communication, patterns of networked presence and absence between individuals are understood as a reduction of social acts to the forms of engagement occurring in the context of constant networked connection.

Meta-communication occurs at this level, above the content of any interaction or any one medium, where the engagement across mediums over time itself is expressive and understood. Engagement itself, however, is not as simple as the exchange of content. Engagement has value-laden implications for the individual about the experience of closeness and mutuality of engagement, their conceptions of their authentic selves, and the authenticity of others. Communication choices and the construction of patterns between individuals are considerations of the pressures, contexts, and needs of everyday life, as individuals attempt to reduce the temporal burden of communication on others by themselves relinquishing control of certain aspects of interaction. Beyond the negotiation that takes place between the communication practices of individuals as a manifestation of their relationship, there is also an awareness and consideration of how individuals maintain and manage the everyday domains of activity such as work and social life through communication practices, as relational rather than solely spatial or temporal domains. In this way, the negotiation that takes place between individuals through meta-communication can be understood for its wider development of value-laden systems of personal knowledge, awareness, and experience and customs, what this research has called a relational ethos. The negotiation of technologies in social relationships could represent the threshold of a much wider change to the politics of everyday life. As the desire and capacity for the negotiation of everyday life emerges

from the simultaneously differentiating and integrating processes of interdependent communication actions of the individual, as described at the end of the previous chapter, this could be, in Elias' sense, the beginning of a 'figurational change' (2000, p. 452) that will radically alter the structure of social relations.

In using meta-communication for the negotiation of a relational ethos, there is a lot more at stake for individuals than the simple choice between one mobile phone function and another. This is the negotiation of those engagements and relationships that constitute everyday life. George describes the pressure to connect or restrain himself from connection in a unique way:

I don't like troubling people for no reason. So what some people consider, you know, social grace, calling people, asking them how they are, I don't mind when people do it to me, I don't feel that I'm within my rights to actually trouble people if I don't have anything to say to them in particular.

He re-casts the pressures of communication in terms of rights, implying another category of responsibility to those with whom he engages. This is a provocative perspective from which to approach everyday interpersonal communication: if one can accept that such interactions between individuals are foundational units to the make up of society at large, then connection becomes a matter of not just the everyday social world, but also the wider social and political make up of society. When meta-communication is used to negotiate a value-based role for technologies between individuals who consistently communicate, then meta-communication can also offer an opportunity for negotiation of the wider role of technologies in everyday life. If a relational ethos can be negotiated through communication practices and through meta-communication, then communication practices can also be the site of a much wider reaching cultural and political negotiation of everyday life where individuals are taking an active role. The pressure to conform to perceived and assumed collective uses of technology often leads individuals to believe that such negotiation is beyond their grasp. Yet, it is the very lack of conventions, the very divergence, assumption, and differentiation of perspectives and practices within everyday life that opens a space for the individual to actively communicate and negotiate the form of everyday life with their social peers through meta-communication.

Chapter Ten: Conclusion

When individuals describe the ‘phone people’ in their lives as akin to a band of luddites, their own ‘compulsive’ and ‘obsessive’ attention to their mobile screen, the ‘inbox regime’ they hold themselves to, or a friend’s social networking ‘addiction’, they are expressing a casual lack of concern for that which they also describe as ‘extreme’. These are not, however, glib and throwaway comments but relate to a subtle recognition of the apparent extreme that has become everyday, an insinuation of the rapid social change to interpersonal communication.

This research has sought to engage with the role of interpersonal communication technologies based on a selection of respondents from London who are managing the dual priorities of work and personal lives. Through their accounts of everyday life, the mediating role of networked technologies has been explored using a range of methods, including two in-depth interviews, communication diaries, and thinking-aloud tasks. These research tools stimulated a reflexive exploration of everyday media practices, with which many of the participants became thoroughly engrossed as the study progressed. Findings have been foregrounded by the first three chapters of this thesis relating to, respectively, theories of co-presence, time, and technology within society, which are discussed in the section immediately below. The empirical data and emerging discussion have been explored across five chapters, comprising three sections. Chapter five explored the individual's relationship to the communication technologies as both objects with which the individual engages throughout the day and as objects that are a part of the background environment of everyday life. Chapters six and seven engaged with the communication practices of the individual as the individual communicates with others through technologies. Chapters eight and nine explored the wider engagements between relationships and technologies, as the interdependence of individual communication practices has led to changes in how individuals perceive and negotiate interaction and relationships with others. Relating to how networked tools are used and instrumentalised across a multitude of individuals, the role and perception of technologies are themselves also negotiated by and between individuals, such that the processes of negotiation of technology can be understood to have significance for the very management of everyday life.

10.1 The Situation, Temporal Regimes, and Instrumentalisation

To update the ordering of possible interpersonal interactions, I have taken Goffman's (1963) conception of co-presence and applied it to a contemporary notion of the 'situation' (Goffman 1971, p. 243), which is into the field of interpersonal communication possibilities within which individuals find themselves. Chapter one theoretically explored the situation through the degrees of presence and absence as understood as engagement and lack of engagement. In the context of networked communication technologies, through constant connection, the individual can have shared networked presence through connection and mutual engagement, but they can also share a form of networked absence through connection without engagement. In chapter seven, these forms of *networked presence and absence* are found to be multiplied across the numerous modes of communication where they are translated into forms of networked awareness between individuals about the routines and situational contexts of everyday life. In chapter nine, the multiple and shifting manifestations of networked presence and absence provided the basis for a new realm of communication at the level of connection rather than content. In how an individual connects with another, in how one is present and absent with others through the multiple networked modes, the individual is communicating at this level of *meta-communication*.

This engagement, and the meta-communication which is derived from it, cannot be separated from the activities, pressures, and demands of everyday life. Networked presence and networked absence are manifest through the individual's communication practices and daily activities within the world of work and social life. Everyday life has traditionally been managed through the spatial and temporal separation between domains of activity, between work and social life. Chapter two explores the manner in which conventions, social practice, and social structures emerge as a socio-temporal regime of everyday life. Networked interaction introduces new degrees of differentiation to everyday schedules and activities but at the same time necessitates the constant connection to the network and attention to the device, which is explored in chapter five. As this research argues in chapter six, these domains and durations of day-to-day schedules are increasingly being managed through communication

practices, therefore defined relationally through communication. As the domains of activity are manifest more acutely as relational and temporal regimes, the forms of networked presence and absence take on more social and political import than just everyday manifestations of interpersonal exchange.

The technologies through which networked connection occurs are themselves perceived and used in different ways by individuals. Chapter three outlines the possibilities for understanding such use as a form of social and collective negotiation of technologies. Use becomes a form of instrumentalisation for the technology, whereby the functional role of technology and its perceived place in the individual's life are never quite untangled. This instrumentalisation is beyond the initial design and cultural adoption of a technology; it is a tertiary level of *collective instrumentalisation*, the negotiation of a technology that takes place between a multitude of individuals through the interdependency of their practices. At the level of networked presence and absence, the expression and manifestation of relationships, the role of technology, and the socio-temporal regimes are all mutually constituted, but through meta-communication, they are also mutually negotiated between individuals.

10.1.1 The Communication Environment

Each day and every day is consistently experienced by the bulk of the research participants as days that are thoroughly immersed within the context networked connection and partially comprised by networked interactions. To be disconnected from the network is to be removed from the pace of everyday life and the only consistent examples of such removal were sleep and technological failures that left participants reeling, not just disconnected, but out of touch with their place in the world.

The participant's relationship to communication tools was defined in chapter five by a *need for networked connection*. This is not manifest literally through constant interaction with other people, but constant attention to communication platforms and devices themselves and a perceived necessity to be aware of and participate in networked communication. In this manner, the desire for networked connection is often perceived and expressed as a necessity, which does not facilitate constant

interaction, but is a facilitation of one's continuous availability for potential interaction. It is the rigidity of one's relationship with networked connection, consistent across numerous people, that provides for the flexibility that each individual exercises over their own availability and engagement with communication. This individual's temporal control over interactions is evident within the exploration of individual communication practices. Without the integrating function of this need for networked connection, the differentiation between individual communication practices may not be possible without forfeiting the efficacy of these practices. This engagement with the network, however, has colonised and infiltrated all times of the waking day, and in some cases even sleep, through the numerous channels and devices that provide overlapping and constant access to the modes of interpersonal communication used most often.

Given the strength of the participants' language, this desire is understood and perceived often as a need for networked connection. It is not divorced from the physical contexts of the individual in the 'real' world: there is a real physicality to networked connection related to the proximity and attention to as well as engagement with multiple communication devices throughout the entirety of the day. This proximity and engagement with devices is a specific activity in itself but has also been woven into the background of everyday activities, if not also an aspect of accomplishing those activities. Engagement is not only an all-day engagement with communication devices but also involves the overlap of engagement with multiple communication devices. This allows for seamless transition between locations and timeframes of work, social life, and home without disengaging or disconnecting from networked communication. This relationship between individuals, modes of communication, and the situational contexts of communication as they change throughout the day is also part of networked connection, shared between individuals as a *networked awareness*, which helps facilitate the negotiation of mutual engagement.

Mobile phones are kept at the bedside if not tucked underneath the pillow. They are checked just before going to bed and first thing upon waking, before even getting out of bed and in some cases before speaking to one's spouse or partner. These devices are carried on one's body. Often breakfast routines involve pouring tea while sitting in front of one's laptop, with the mobile phone on the table and within reach. Each

individual has a specific habit of checking numerous modes of communication each morning, which varies depending on the priorities that individual appends to one medium or another. Each mode of communication is often perceived in relation to a different domain of interaction: colleagues and employers, close friends and family, or acquaintances.

When working, whether from home, a cafe, or a workplace, the respondents interact with desktop or laptop computers and with their mobile phone. In the evening, at home, the situation is similar, though in some cases, there is more than one laptop and the television is also on. On the move and socialising with friends, mobile phones are ever-present. Everyday networked connection is characterised by constant connection but also by multiple channels. For these participants, the traditional domains of the home and work involve laptop and desktop computers that often multiply access with the modes of communication that can be used on the mobile phone.

The constant potential for interaction, however, has emerged alongside shifts to the sense of time in the everyday. Constant networked connection allows for the day to be understood in terms of a quantity of interactions: the flow of the everyday is perceived as the contingency of potential interactions, the time those interactions will take to be addressed, and potential demands for one's attention that can reach beyond the finite number of things one can accomplish in the space of a day. In this manner, the participants are not planning their days in terms of durations composed of minutes and hours, but are planning them in terms of interactions as tasks that need to be completed.

This impacts the sense of everyday life in two ways. First, interactions are now distinct but variable units of time in themselves: things that demand attention, asking to be addressed and completed through engagement. Interactions are being understood for the quantity of such tasks that can be accomplished during the day. The quality of these interactions is displaced somewhat by simpler terms of not engaging or engaging with the interaction. The type of interaction, whether work-related or personal, still garners the individual's attention. The type of task and completion of task are often the manner in which interactions are described. Second, this shift from managing durations of clock time throughout the day, to managing potential interactions involves

a misalignment and tension between the finite minutes of the day and the potentially limitless contingency of networked interactions. Potential for overload is built into the socio-temporal regime that emerges from the context for networked connection, perceived by individuals to be a constant threat within the communication environment. This potential for overload becomes something that itself must be managed, as individuals seek to stay ahead of or otherwise mitigate the potential inundation of interactions each day.

This tension that arises between the pressure to engage with networked interactions and the scarcity of time in the day for those interactions is captured within the individual's descriptions of gaining and losing networked time throughout the day. Time for networked interaction is gained through colonisation of the in-between times that occur between specific activities or domains of activities such as while in transit or on a break from work but before one can go home. Temporary loss of networked connection evokes a sense of lost time. After being asleep, there is a perceived need to 'catch up' on what has transpired while one has not been attending to their mobile phone, email, and social networking accounts. When disconnected by a loss of mobile signal or an issue with one technology or another, individuals discuss being 'behind' for the rest of the day or even week. A loss of networked connection is a loss of one's place in the temporal flow of the day.

Numerous metaphors are used to express the lack of control and contingency that potential interactions hold for one's everyday life. One can get caught up in the flow of interaction that is described as a stream, flood, or deluge if it is not managed or prepared for. Even the individual's attempts to engage with this flow of interaction are always described in slightly sporadic and uncontrolled terms. The metaphors for managing this flow of interactions are always dual metaphors: the messy must be cleaned, the chaotic must be ordered, and the mountains of interaction must be cleared.

The management of interactions as a quantity of tasks within one's day becomes a way of understanding everyday life; it is an everyday practice, stress, and task in itself, backgrounded and facilitated by an unquestioned constant attention to and connection with the networked modes of communication, a need that is often described in terms of obsession and compulsion.

10.2 Individual Practices

The experience of interaction through its description by participants is consistently cast in very specific terms: from the context of a *receiving self*. Participants consistently describe themselves as being a receiver of interactions, but when they were initiating or sending an interaction, the instance is often described in the context of the other individual as a receiving individual. On the rare occasions when interaction is described in terms of the sender, it was to describe a transgression against assumed appropriate conduct where the sender took on the primary role without consideration of the receiver. Chapters six and seven respectively engaged with the practices of managing the reception of potential communication and the practice of interacting with others, which is considered in terms of one's awareness of the communication practices and context of that other receiver.

Domains of activity have traditionally been understood through the separation of spaces as well as through separation of times. The manner in which individuals in this research manage their interpersonal communication suggests that domains of activity are also now being managed through the separation of spaces of interaction, through the creation and maintenance of *barriers to interaction*, or more specifically temporal barriers between modes communication that are often managed through the same or similar communication devices. Domains of activity are increasingly shaped as *relational domains*, as the spatial and temporal dimensions no longer define the boundaries to the domain, but barriers to interaction have taken on that role. Individuals impose and manage interaction by limiting forms of engagement through barriers to interaction.

10.2.1 Deflection and Personal Temporal Control

There is a consistent effort on the part of the individual to deflect unwanted interruptions in their day, either to another medium that is less disruptive or to another time when they are able to engage with the individual and the interaction itself more easily. Limiting engagement in this way is an attempt to gain a degree of temporal

control over one's day. It allows the individual to choose when engagements will be addressed rather than leaving that decision to the individual who initiates interaction.

Often, this involves imposing a degree of asynchronicity to synchronous communication. This is evident in the management of live modes of communication such as the telephone by shifting interaction and requests for interaction to an asynchronous medium such as email or SMS text messages in order to retain control over when the interaction will be addressed. Such barriers are also quite evident in the management of instant message and online chat platforms where interaction can take on a near synchronous function, but initiation of contact involves the expectation of asynchronicity.

It is the live quality of interaction that is being avoided and individuals often describe liveness as vulnerability if they are unprepared or not expecting the interaction. There is a perceived sense that attempts at live communication are an interruption, imposition, or violation of one's personal space, as that space involves one's personal control over the time of interaction. This relates to an assumed right of the individual to temporally control their day and the desire to retain the integrity of that control.

Yet, maintaining these barriers to interaction is clearly about individual control and choice, because these were not blanket refusals for live interaction, but specific deflections. Participants maintained a degree of awareness over interaction: who was calling and information about the context of interaction would be taken into consideration to determine when and in what mode the interaction would be addressed. This results in the screening of calls as well as the shunting of interaction from one medium to another, so that individuals could assess the context in an asynchronous fashion and choose whether or not a live conversation was warranted.

10.2.2 The Re-imposition of Domain Durations

Individuals also limit engagement by placing temporal boundaries to interaction, which are managed through communication practices, but in a different way from that above. Individuals limit engagement through specific modes of communication at different parts of the day in order to impose regular durations of time for addressing

some types of interactions and other durations for other types. This involves an attempt to normalise the blurring of temporal divisions between domains of activity, specifically work and personal, through assignation of certain modes of communication predominantly to one domain or another. There is a distancing of engagement with social interaction during work hours by maintaining barriers to interaction on those modes of communication that the individual associates with social activities. There is also a distancing from engagement with work interactions after the traditional work hours to impose a social domain of interaction.

Such barriers, however, do not involve disconnection from those domain-specific channels, but rather a systematic lack of engagement for a duration of time. The individual still maintains awareness of social messages, whether emails, text messages, or social networking actions that arrive during work hours, but is less inclined to respond. Similarly, in the evening and on the weekends, the same is true for work-related emails: individuals will remain aware of and read the emails, but not engage with the sender through reply. This reinforces the notion raised earlier that potential interactions are taken for the contingency they introduce to one's day. This contingency is manifest in a desire to be aware of all interactions even if one does not intend to engage with or reply to them. It also reinforces the notion that interactions are understood as tasks to be completed, and thus, social tasks are left to be completed during social time, and work tasks, during traditional work time. Networked time then is not a matter of on and off time, for both work and social domains involve networked connection and interaction. There may be an on and off time for work, but it only applies to a few modes of communication, and there is similarly an on and off time for the social domain, again only applying to a few modes of communication. Only the few exceptions among the participants, who represented the upper age limit of the selection, ever disconnected from the network by turning off their phones and computers. This emphasises that it is not a question of on and off but of being always connected while attentive to and engaged with different domains on the network at different times. Thus, the individual is also 'on' the network, but through *networked presence* and *networked absence* is on and off simultaneously across multiple modes of communication.

One of the ways in which these barriers manifest themselves is through the multiplication of similar modes of communication: three emails, a pair of blogs, and several social networking accounts. In this manner, the domains of activities are kept distinct through management of these distinct channels. This reinforces the management of the self within multiple roles for the multiple spheres of life, again often separated through divisions between mediums. This provides a degree of control of information that is not only used to manage distinct work and personal selves, but also distinct social spheres for those who are family, who are close friends, or acquaintances. These levels of intimacy amount to a more public social self of weak ties and a more private social self with those who are closest. In this manner, communication practices offer another manifestation of domain management: the division between levels of intimacy occurs again through modes of access and control of engagement, though it is not differentiated in the regular temporal shifts to access that emerge between work and social interactions.

10.2.3 Networked Awareness

My fieldwork demonstrated that there is a desire held by the individual to minimise the pressure of potential communication embedded in the communication practices, not just for themselves as the receiver of communication but for others as receivers as well. This is manifest, as explored above and in chapter six in different types of temporal barriers to communication maintained by individuals as receivers of communication, to limit and manage the pressures of the communication environment on themselves. As explored in chapter seven, however, individuals also reported an awareness of the practices and communication contexts of others as receivers: this relates to the decision-making process when one initiates or sends communication and, in an effort to share the pressure or temporal costs of interaction, transfers such pressure from the receiver onto him/herself, the sender. This research wants to avoid making an overly optimistic implication about the motive for such sharing of temporal pressure and points rather to an acceptance on the part of participants that others also manage interaction through a series of barriers. In order to elicit a response from the receiving other, individuals often shift their own communication practices in order not to challenge the barriers of the other individual. To do so would not only impractically

minimise the chance of interacting with that person, but as my participants explain, it would also be considered an aggressive or rude act.

Networked awareness emerges from consistent and repeated networked interaction between individuals. This form of awareness involves the reflection on numerous elements of the receiving individual's communication practices and everyday contexts of communication with each attempt. Networked awareness is a dimension of networked presence (and absence) and is thus inextricable from the experience of interacting over networked modes of communication. This form of awareness relates to both the real and the mediated. As networked connection is part of everyday life and an aspect of the physical situatedness of each connected individual in their local context, networked awareness extends through communication practices and gives individuals a sense of each other's everyday lives, each other's spaces and contexts of communication as explored in chapters five and seven.

Networked awareness can be understood through two analytically derived dimensions of awareness: interactional and situational awareness. *Interactional awareness* is derived from previous communication; it is specific reflection upon and knowledge about how another individual prefers to communicate. It involves how they make themselves available and accessible across various modes of communication and their preferences for communication as understood through past interaction. *Situational awareness* involves reflection upon and knowledge about the local contexts of the other individuals that makes up their changing communication environment as they are located and engaged within different spaces and times of activity throughout the day. This also involves the reflection upon and knowledge of the individual's use of specific devices, interfaces, and modes of communication throughout the day. Clearly, these aspects are related, overlapping, and inter-woven dimensions of awareness.

Each of these aspects provides insight into and the basis for assumptions about other aspects. Much of this reflection on these aspects of another's communication practice involves the construction of typologies of communication based on the experience of interaction with others who may share similar practices, local and biographical contexts, or technological access and habits.

The maintenance of temporal barriers to communication and acting upon an awareness of those barriers as others maintain them reveals a synchronised or mutually attuned shifting of communication possibilities between individuals. In effect, these form domains of interaction between mediums through the practices of each individual involved in any given interaction. In the context of constant networked connection, this shifting of temporal barriers from some mediums to others amounts to a practice of modulating networked presence and networked absence, as opposed to times of connection and times of disconnection. This research proposes the notion of *networked absence* because, despite the practice of distancing oneself from modes of communication assigned to different domains, the individual does not disconnect from those modes of communication. Individuals are perceived by others to be ‘not present’ because they are not engaging with interaction, yet they are still connected and aware of incoming attempts to interact with them over work email in the evenings or on their personal mobile while at the office. It is not an actual absence from the network that could be represented by disconnection but a modulation from networked presence to networked absence on different mediums at different times. Networked awareness involves awareness of the patterns of networked presence and networked absence. Acting upon one’s networked awareness is often an attempt to engage with individuals on the modes of communication when they are allowing themselves to be accessible, to be perceived as present.

Continuous networked interactions and the networked awareness involved in making communication decisions develop what this research calls a *relational ethos*. The relational ethos develops between individuals and groups of individuals who are communicating with each other. Unlike a ‘group ethos’ (Ling 2008a, p. 176) that is developed against a background of group solidarity, a relational ethos is developed through interaction and the mutual accumulation of knowledge and sensitivity to aspects of another’s everyday life, habits, and values as they relate to communication. This facilitates mutual engagement between individuals, involving knowledge that when embedded within communication decisions reduces the pressure on the other individual and, thus, possibly facilitates the flow of communication. My fieldwork found evidence that the development of a *relational ethos* is not only the result of previous interaction between individuals but a body of knowledge accumulated about each other that can be employed as part of those decisions being made in attempts to

communicate in the future. The more intricate the relational ethos is, the greater possibility for the practices, preferences, and everyday situations of the other individual to be embedded in one's decision-making processes for initiating communication.

10.3 The Interdependent Expression and Negotiation of Technology

While chapters six and seven explored the communication practices of individuals and how they directly relate in everyday communication decisions, chapters eight and nine engaged with the outcomes and possible signs of 'figural change' (Elias 1998, p. 126) emerging from the interdependency of many individuals who attune their communication practices to each other for the sake of everyday sociability and engagement. This research has argued that from this interdependency, a reified sense of how one ought to communicate emerges. This is manifest in a natural sense of *authenticity in communication* and in *perceptions of technologies* as they are understood and ordered in relation to each other. These naturalised or externalised senses of personal conduct and use of technology are perceived as external to the actions of the individual, respectively as something that is separate from personal choice or something that is non-human. In this way, many social actions and contexts are understood to be the products, functions, effects, or characteristics of the technology. Understanding these as the product of figural interdependency links them to the everyday negotiation of technology's role in the numerous interdependent communication practices of the individual.

I introduced the term *meta-communication* as the practice which provides for the negotiation of a *relational ethos* between individuals in the context of these perceptions of technology and conduct. Often, individuals hold incongruent and even contradictory conceptions about the perceptions of a technology's role in everyday communication and meta-communication is one manner of negotiating such differentiation. Given the rapid change and turnover of communication technologies, practices, and trends as well as the differentiation of those practices between individuals, there is little chance for stable norms and conventions to coalesce. In order to facilitate everyday communication, an expression of and sensitivity to the technological ordering adopted by individuals has developed. Meta-communication is

the practice of communicating about communication, not through the content of interactions but through the conduct of engagement and connection itself. It is the site of negotiation between the divergent impressions of how relationships should be conducted and how technologies should be used so that everyday interpersonal communication can occur. Meta-communication, however, is not a precise translation of each party's interests but an attempt at negotiation whereby signals are sent out and searched for in the actions of others but not explicitly confirmed in the short term nor codified in the long term.

10.3.1 Finding Voice in Collective Instrumentalisation

The implications for such negotiation, however, extend beyond communication practices as limited and discrete domains of specific actions and towards technology as a way of participating in the negotiation of everyday life. In the essay 'A Cyborg Manifesto', Donna Haraway (1991, p. 161) outlined her conception of an 'informatics of domination' which, twenty years later, has manifest in numerous and often subtle ways. She suggested that 'the home, workplace, market, public arena, the body itself' would all be 'dispersed and interfaced in nearly infinite, polymorphous ways' (Haraway 1991, p. 163). More recently, Nick Couldry investigated the 'modern integration of the lifeworld and system' in such a way that the boundaries between 'spaces, times, and moral worlds' of work and personal life blur (2010, pp. 3, 31). This is 'intensified by the work regimes of digital media age' under the contemporary neoliberal doctrine, a 'hegemonic rationalisation' of individual and social interaction to reduced components of a market society (Couldry 2010, p. 3). Both Haraway's and Couldry's arguments, however, reach far beyond the analysis of traditional domains. Couldry calls attention to the diminishing space for and disruptions to 'voice/expression' (2010, p. 3), while Haraway, in a very different way, is calling for a re-calibrated awareness of the individual's place in everyday life. I see vital parallels between the two that point to a potentially important role for the collective negotiation and instrumentalisation of communication technologies in everyday life.

Haraway argues that the same tools that 'embody and enforce new social relations' can become tools for 'recrafting our bodies' so that the individual can navigate the boundaries of everyday life, the domains of work and home, private and public, that

have proven so permeable to network practices (Haraway 1991, p. 164). In the context of this research, I am also adopting that possibility for the individual to re-craft presence and connection, to re-craft an everyday relational practice so as to become an active element in the expression and construction of the networked context of everyday life, such that their own actions are formative within this milieu of cultural processes and meaning.

The relatively recent ‘success of capitalist de-skilling’ that has brought passive and ubiquitous engagement with technology to many aspects of everyday life ‘reduces the human dimensions’ and individual involvement to ‘marginal phenomena’ within the society (Feenberg 1995, p. 18). Heidegger’s warning that individuals are being gathered into this passive relationship, to be ‘standing-reserve’ in the wider systems of equipment (1977, p. 19) has wide-reaching implications about the technological and social structure of everyday life as a product of labour and market systems. I would relate Heidegger’s warning regarding the individual’s relationship to technology to Couldry’s warning that the possibilities for ‘externalities’ to the governing logics contemporary neoliberal society have diminished (2010, p. 31).

Feenberg sees a hegemonic transmission of management techniques through the use of technology as ‘new forms of technical control’ across the realm of everyday life; he also states that any attempts to right this trajectory will be hollow ‘unless they emerge from the experience and needs of individuals’ living in and choosing to resist such contexts (1995, p. 18). Couldry argues that while the personal values of individuals are being encroached upon and undermined by the conditions of work and wider economic logics, we need to look for changes within ‘the social terrain...in the pattern and organization of people’s practice of voice’ (2010, p. 127). I am proposing that the collective instrumentalisation of communication technologies is a potential site and organisation for those voices in everyday life.

Albert Hirschman’s definition of voice as ‘any attempt at all to change, rather than escape from, an objectionable state of affairs’ (1969 as cited in Couldry 2010, p. 7) can be applied to the assertions of Haraway, Kelty, Feenberg, and Heidegger: a consideration of the objectionable relationship to technology but also the opportunity to craft or re-craft technology in a way to change that relationship. Through Haraway

(1991, p. 164), we can conceive of the individual who can re-craft their engagement with technologies. From Kelty (2008, p. 28), we borrow the conceptualisation of collections of individuals who make, maintain and modify the very communication practices through which their relationships are manifest. Feenberg reminds us that when as a society it becomes advantageous to do so, technology can be re-considered and its role re-constructed so that it does not privilege the forms industrial capitalist rationalisation of everyday life that reduce the ‘natural, human, and social environment to mere resources’ (1995, p. 15). Put into Heidegger’s words, these three authors present the possibility for technology to be understood through the individual, the collection of individuals, and within society as a ‘mode of knowing’ the world around us (Heidegger 1971, p. 59).

The process with which I am concerned, however, is more diffuse and everyday than the call made by Feenberg for a collective pause and re-consideration of the role of design and proposed use. I am proposing a re-capturing of everyday use of communication technologies between individuals as a space for the re-contextualisation and re-crafting of the role of technology. Everyday communication can itself become a craft, considered and engaged, such that it has a role in the making of the world around it, in the gathering and ordering of presence and use.

Feenberg takes up Heidegger’s idealisation of humanity’s earlier relationship with technologies, in the craftsworker, artisan, and guild whereby technology was ‘associated with a way of life, with specific forms of personal development, virtues’ (Feenberg 1995, p. 18). In this relationship, one devotes themselves to the craft, to a vocational investment, which involves tools in a longer, more personal, embodied engagement that was a reflection upon one’s self and one’s place in the world. In this closer relationship to technology itself as a craft, individuals in relation to each other find ‘the belongingness of human being’ and tools in ‘the making of worlds’, that Feenberg, and Heidegger before him, suggest may only be possible from the ubiquity and nearness to technology within modern contexts (Feenberg 2005, p. 40).

This crafting of engagement and awareness of technology becomes the constant and essential role of technology of which Heidegger spoke. Within everyday life, a recognition of the productive power of negotiation within interpersonal

communication practices, of collective instrumentalisation of communication technologies could act as a form of voice. Communication tools and the practices occurring through them can be the ‘social resources’ and ‘form’ that will give way to an opportunity for the ‘materiality of voice’ to which Couldry points (2010, p. 9). As communication tools, they are already a site of exchange between individuals but need to be understood as such, lest they become a technology of division. As a resource, they reach far beyond the isolated and collapsing enclosures of the private world: they are already one set of tools by which industrial rationalisation has extended and transmitted its logic and values beyond the domain of labour organisation; thus, they are in particular the very equipment that reduces the individuals themselves to an instrumental use.

For the crafting and negotiation of everyday communication to become a manifestation of voice, however, it must be understood as such. In his discussion of creating a work of art, similar in nature to the notion of crafting that I am outlining, Heidegger states:

In contrast to all other modes of production, the work is distinguished by being created so that its createdness is part of the created work...but in the work, createdness is expressly created into the created being, so that it stands out from it, from the being thus brought forth, in an expressly particular way. (Heidegger 1971, p. 65)

Individuals and the wider society around them must be aware of and be able to recognise that these individual and collective voices are taking part in the re-negotiation of everyday life for that negotiation to occur. The collective instrumentalisation of networked technologies brings to the technology this ‘createdness’, this quality of having been negotiated by individuals in a ‘free relationship’ to each other, to technology, and to the world around them, where individuals have set up ‘in the unconcealed’ (Heidegger 1971, p.p. 6, 61), where individuals have found their voice in the wider systematisation of the society.

10.4 Limitations and Tangents

Though purposeful limits to provide a feasible scope for this research, the most apparent limits to this thesis arise from the specificity of the selection of research respondents. By focusing on adults between the ages of 22 and 35 (though the entire

selection spanned an age range of 22–46) who are juggling the dual priorities of work and social lives, other sections of society are precluded. This choice was made in order to engage with those who communicated through multiple computer and mobile platforms both socially and for their employment to capture the emerging practices and issues relevant to constant connectivity in a mobile networked world. The limitation of this selection of participants extends from the focus on mobile and computer-based communication within those two domains, when the communication practices of large portions of the population do not extend across those domains in quite the same manner.

Many issues such as the possibility of new digital divides (Nowotny 1994, p. 32, Dutton and Blank 2011, p. 5), which emerge through unequal access and participation in mobile and online life, remain at the periphery of this study. An extension of the sample or, better yet, a similar study could focus on those who have been affected more clearly by the new paces of everyday life because they may have one foot in the world of constant connection and one foot outside of it. Such a study would lend itself to exploring the role of technology for its potential reproduction of existing social inequalities in the new relational-temporal regimes of contemporary London. In specific contrast to the participant selection, such studies would necessarily include lower-income and blue-collar occupations that on a whole do not frequently use online technologies at work (Dutton and Blank 2011, p. 18). This would allow for the exploration of the social use of these technologies without the same conflation of social practices with workplace communication habits, pressures, and expected use that has been central to this study.

Another limitation of the participant selection, which itself represents an important area of study, is the role of technology for families as they negotiate a very different set of everyday domains. These would more heavily involve communication practices of the home, as they balance the demands of work and social lives. All of the parents included in this thesis had young, if not infant, children¹⁷ and research on the communication practices of parents at home with older children, who themselves are

¹⁷ Though Joseph does, however, have an adult son who lives abroad from another marriage and his wife was pregnant with their first child at the time of this study, this is different in quality to having teenage children living at home.

online and communicating, is a very different study from this one, though no less important. Teenagers themselves represent another sample entirely where lives are often more likely split between the domains of social life, school, and home, and their perceptions of technology may be partially skewed, though not defined, by household and family patterns of interaction as well as parental communication choices (Turkle 2011, p. 169, Madianou and Miller 2012, p. 131, 150).

Some of the findings of this research related to everyday communication environments and the forms of individual everyday communication practices may not directly translate into these possible alternative studies of the occupational, family, and youth contexts that are outside of this research scope. Meta-communication as a concept, however, may have a lot to offer as a way of understanding the negotiation of technology in everyday life in those contexts that are outside the scope of this specific research.

If some occupations do not rely on online mobile and computer technologies, then the development of practices, perceptions of technology, and relational ethos could very well be taking place solely in the social domain yet still through meta-communication, but without the adoption and reaction to workplace communication practices that occurred through the same technologies within this research. In the context of the family unit, notions of power and rebellion could very well become an aspect of meta-communication as negotiation of a relational ethos becomes intertwined with parenting and growing up. Furthermore, meta-communication could involve exploring the collaborative, almost contagious, nature of fostering digital literacy in young children by their parents as well as the likely reversal of that process as teenagers and young adults may take on the roll of not just negotiating but fostering the ability of their parents to keep pace with technological change (Turkle 2011, p. 174). Specific attention could also be paid to the youth context, where the social realm can be a space for the unbridled and rapid experimentation and evolution of communication habits, conduct, and the negotiation of relational and communication values (Turkle 1995, pp. 203, 213). Meta-communication could emerge as a vital skill and even as a form of literacy in and of itself for the negotiation of healthy communication practices. A deeper understanding of the positive feedback at the level of meta-communication in

the everyday lives of connected youth could stave off endemic anti-social mobile and online behaviour.

10.4.1 The Continued Re-Tooling of Everyday Life

Even in the short time since the fieldwork for this research was conducted, the repertoire of popular interpersonal communication tools has shifted and changed. A constant worry when conducting research about everyday technologies is the applicability of findings over time. While also providing a snapshot of mobile and computer practices in 2010 and 2011, this research has not been interested in describing the exact use, but the management of everyday life in the context of constant and constantly changing networked connection. The findings of this research, hopefully, do not only apply to the exact use of social networking sites and mobile applications for the years of fieldwork but also provide a deeper understanding of interpersonal communication technologies and the processes of negotiating social and technological practices and change themselves

Not only has the range of actual tools, the possible modes of communication, continued to shift, but the factors that are crucial to the individual's access to those tools have also shifted. The concept of the 'media manifold' as proposed by Couldry considers the range of possible communication tools in terms of the actions of institutional actors such as product developers, as well as the access and cost of these tools beyond just habits of use (Couldry 2011, p. 221). These discernible changes to everyday communication that I will point out relate largely to such institutional actions, though they will have implications for individual practice. Such changes can be readily engaged by the groundwork provided within this research for exploring the negotiation of change.

There have recently been increases in the accessibility, types, and formats of mobile and portable internet-ready technologies to include a variety of different and more affordable internet-ready mobile phones, and the introduction of a variety of portable tablet devices that offer an alternative that exists somewhere between mobile phone and laptop computer. Alongside the iPad tablet device from tech-giant Apple, the online bookseller Amazon.com has introduced the Kindle ebook device that has been

re-introduced with web browsing and other online communication tools (Levy 2011, n.p.). These are just two of the more popular devices that have entered the consumer market. While this introduces another type of device for users that involves a unique comportment and relationship of individuals with that device, many of the modes of communication available through the tablets are similarly available on mobile phones and laptop computers. The shift in communication practices likely rests in the changes between perceptions of devices as objects in relation to each other and how such changes affect the perception of modes of communication such as telephone calls and text messages that are specific to one device but not another.

Another institutional element, present during this research's fieldwork, which has risen to greater prominence, is the move away from personal computers towards the application or 'app' environment of mobile phones, tablet devices, as well as television and gaming consoles with online capabilities. According to Jonathan Zittrain, the rise of these 'centrally controlled – "tethered" – information appliances' among mainstream users is in effect a 'counter-revolution' against the earlier emergence of innovative, programmable, and 'generative' environments characterised by personal computing and the internet (2008, pp. 8, 101). Though these devices are not hard terminals of specific modes of communication like the telephone, and new communication applications can be installed with ease, many of these devices are not as open and re-programmable as the personal computer. Such devices threaten the innovative and free-wheeling universe of online 'web apps', when manufactures tether device to the 'native apps' designed specifically for their own device (Berners-Lee 2012, n.p.).

The tethered application environment is part of the wider shift of expansion, convergence, and fragmentation taking place between the internet giants. Many of the largest platform developers are expanding their popular single-mode platforms to include several alternative modes of communication and a wider online environment, The purpose is to retain individual attention and use of multiple forms of interaction within what Zittrain calls a 'digital gated community' (2008, p. 165), also popularly known as 'walled gardens' (Arthur 2012, n.p., Berners-Lee 2012, n.p.). The services that were once at the core of Google and Facebook are now only part of a larger system that includes anything from applications, integrated communication and

community platforms, and web browsers, to operating systems provided by each company. In this way, Google and Facebook for example act as ‘gatekeepers’ to a great deal of online activity, promoting access to their services and sites through this community of tools while locking down some aspects of their inter-operability, a move which may come to diminish the neutrality of the internet in the future (Battelle 2012, n.p.).

The ability for individuals to distinguish between modes of communication and segregate the use of those tools into different everyday roles is central to the management of the domains of work and social life through communication practices within this research. The negotiation of changes to communication practices has also emerged as occurring through perceived differences between modes of communication, whereby social implications are woven into the perception of each mode relative to others. If the perceived distinction between shifting and changing modes of technologies is minimised, so is the basis for the signalling that takes place through meta-communication. Thus, the space for negotiation atrophies. Within this thesis, individuals assume that their perceptions of technology are shared by others and the divergence between these perceptions between individuals is negotiated alongside the similarly divergent views about authenticity: this inconsistency becomes the space for negotiation between individuals almost in spite of technological changes. At the height of technological and economic convergence sought by such multi-modal walled gardens, perceptions of authentic conduct and relative function will have few alternatives points of reference from which they can be developed.

Within those expanding platforms and within the applications environment of mobile phone and other portable devices, there has been constant proliferation of platforms for the social sharing of information, activities already present through social networking and micro-blogging sites during this research. The interest in specific social games applications receives what Tim Berners-Lee argues is characteristic of the online environment: enormous jumps in popularity and just as often a similar decline (2012, n.p.). Many of these interactions do involve connection between individuals through the game or sharing platform, yet this highlights the usefulness of the analytical distinction between *social tools* and *social devices* proposed in chapter eight. The perception of a platform as providing mutual social engagement as a social tool is

opposed to the perception of the individual's engagement being with a platform itself as a social device, where mutual engagement with others is secondary to gaming or entertainment. This distinction could increasingly be of use and significance with the potential further 'gamification' of mobile and online activities to include self-improvement tasks, project management, as well as peer-to-peer and crowdsourcing for business, journalistic, and scientific projects (The Economist 2012, n.p.).

Such changes only emphasise the differentiated practices between individuals and, thus, the desire for flexibility and individual management of their communication habits. This possibly increases the role of networked awareness of another's habitual communication practices and contexts for communication in everyday life. With further potential differentiation and continued acceleration of technological change and adoption, the individual must have a degree of sensitivity to the changing communication practices of others for the sake of mutual engagement. Such sensitivity would capture the habitual, contextual, and relational aspects of networked practices, which can then, in turn, be negotiated through meta-communication.

Between notions of authentic engagement and the assumed perception of technologies, the individual resists wholeheartedly accepting the newest modes of communication, which could risk social fragmentation or isolation within their social network. Meta-communication, then, potentially becomes the manner in which individuals can retain the agility to keep pace with such changes while also negotiating the place for specific tools in one's life. In this manner, meta-communication may also offer a way of negotiating with others the place for technological change in general within one's everyday life.

10.5 Taking Account of Differentiation as Social Change

This research has explored the social processes and phenomena that remain consistent across the participants' experiences despite the divergence, flux, and differentiation of their individual actions. These processes emerge from the individual's experience of their everyday communication environment and are located within the interdependency of interpersonal practices such that they provide a possible perspective on the wider shifts to social structures. These processes and phenomena

are what Elias (1998, p. 67) would refer to as ‘levers in the comprehensive process of increasing differentiation’, which despite the contradictory movements between individuals links their practices in an inextricable and interdependent manner. Numerous dimensions of communication decisions, such as individual reflection, action, and practice, involve a linking and ‘extension of all chains of actions’ between the numerous practices of the individual’s everyday life and between individuals themselves, representing part of the wider integrating changes to social structures (1998, p. 67).

The ability, expectation, and perceived need for constant connection are the stable elements of the contemporary everyday co-ordination of engagement and communication. In the context of constant networked connection, individuals can engage asynchronously, yet fluidly, and with the affordances of personal management of time, schedules, and availability for interaction. As the availability of the individual for communication becomes more flexible, it faces extensions through the blurring of the once spatially and temporally defined domains of work and social life. As seen in chapter six, individual communication practices have emerged to normalise schedules in an attempt to impose individual control over the flexibility demanded for work communication in social times or social communication in work times. In this management of everyday availability and access, there is a clear to and fro of variable practices but based on that differentiation the integrating need for constant connection is consolidated so that both the work and social domains can be managed through communication as *relational domains*. These two elements, constant connection and relational domains, provide a more consistent background of social practices against which divergent and rapidly shifting practices can occur without the fragmentation or dissolution of social interaction.

An aspect of that everyday management of domains through communication practices involves the individual’s desire to control and limit unplanned live communication. Acting upon this desire establishes a clearly perceived distinction for my participants between live and asynchronous communication through the individual receiver’s re-occurring imposition of asynchronous control of everyday interactions. This becomes inextricably linked to both the division of domains temporally throughout the day and attempts to segregate roles, interaction, and information for different parts of one’s life

between different mediums as illustrated in chapter six. As explored in chapter nine, such segregation serves to further the perceived distinctions between mediums, which are compounded by the persistence of information about interactions over time in online modes as explored in chapter seven. It is the asynchronous mediums that emerge as the consistent focus of such practice: individuals reflect upon the persistence of these online, often text-based, forms of communication in email inboxes, social networking profiles, and blog and micro-blog feeds. They are reflected upon and often purposely crafted with a knowledge that other's look to such persistent manifestations of asynchronous interaction as a source of *networked awareness* about one's everyday life. This involves not just the persistence of content, but also histories of attempted and mutually engaged interactions. Despite differentiation and the increasing complexity of practice through the segregation of domains, roles, and practices across mediums, there is an emerging importance of the role of asynchronous communication.

Yet, there is something else that is consistent across these numerous, divergent, and shifting individual practices, which is also evident in the interdependency of networked practices. Any analysis of these reified objects must be sensitive to the individual desire for limits to the potential for interaction made possible by constant connection and asynchronous communication. Each individual practice has involved an acceptance of the notions of efficiency and productivity embedded within the desire for constant connection and asynchronous communication but not without the creation of space for individual choice and negotiation of that space between individuals. The colonisation of the everyday within a relational regime of constant connection involves the emergence of the individual's imposition of temporal control over engagement and the attempts to impose distinct relational domains despite pressure for engagement at all hours that blurs traditional domains, as apparent in chapter six. Individual practices of control are also coupled with a self-restraint that defers control for the sake of others in a manner that resists the reduction of social interaction to atomised isolated individuals within a network, as illustrated in chapter seven. This is a relational space for negotiation between individuals, forged through the same technologies that provide for constant connection and asynchronous communication but offer an opportunity for resistance to the homogenisation of interpersonal communication to which constant asynchronous connection could lead.

Each individual perceives a sense of the authentic conduct in interaction, assumed to be a natural or objective human value, and a perceived use of technologies, which is assumed to be shared. Disembodied modes of self-presentation are understood within a hierarchy of intimacy, often described in abstracted or metaphorical terms derived from a vestigial sense of proximity to the body. This proximity to the body equates to the practiced priority individuals give to certain disembodied mediums over other disembodied mediums. The priority is manifest in the language used through proximity metaphors and relates to the type of relationships they have assigned in practice to those mediums. This hierarchy can be interpreted as another manifestation of segregation within the relational domain management, but in this case, it is between the intimate private sphere and the more public or diffuse social sphere of acquaintances.

Live and embodied modes of communication are understood in terms of the loss of temporal control they entail for those involved. These modes of communication used for exchanges of interaction that take time, which are considered by the participants to be a scarce quality in the contemporary communication environment. Embodied interactions are moments when interaction is purposefully exchanged for the quality of the interaction, which serves as a counterweight to the quantification of networked interactions as tasks throughout the day. These are moments that individuals share despite the temporal pressures of networked communication, which as a communication choice itself is an expression of commitment to engagement and the wider relationship between those involved, whether it is work-related interest or an expression of intimacy.

By appealing to both these perceptions of authenticity and perceptions of a technology's use, as explored in chapters eight and nine, the individual maintains a place for their own experience and their own desired forms of interaction so that any assumed sense of the collectively understood role for technology is in part perceived against these individual social values in its collective instrumentalisation.

The relational space is a space for negotiation between individuals, where engagement between individuals itself becomes the language, argument, and expression for the

desired mediation of relationships, of technology, and of the self in everyday life. This is the space and purpose of meta-communication, whereby the engagement between individuals is the very negotiation of a relational ethos, the amalgam of values, technology, behaviour, and personal knowledge. What occurs between individuals occurs consistently throughout their social networks as it engulfs and captures every aspect of everyday life. What occurs between individuals becomes the partial and provisional negotiation of a much wider and far-reaching potential form of social relations across numerous sets of interdependent lives. In this manner, meta-communication as explored in this thesis becomes a site for the negotiation of social change and society itself.

Appendix One

Transcription Conventions

Interview excerpts have been transcribed using the annotation below.

Omission	...
Pause or Break in interviewee's speech	–
Interviewee's emphasis	CAPITALS
Researcher added emphasis	<i>italics</i>
Researcher clarification	[text]

Appendix Two

Below is the invitation for participation used to recruit research participants, distributed through email, posted widely in different forums and on physical bulletin boards.

Is constant connectivity the exposure you want or too much access for prying eyes?

Without your mobile phone, do you feel *cut off* or *relieved*?

Is the Mobile-Internet your *window into the world* or an *inbox of stress and distraction*?

Would you like to explore how and why you personally use different communication technologies in different ways throughout the day?

A study is being conducted at Goldsmiths University that aims to better understand the role of mobile technologies in day-to-day life. You will reflect upon and map out what technologies play what roles for you personally.

If you are interested in taking part in this study, then please contact Kenzie Burchell at k.burchell@gold.ac.uk or by telephone at 07970030660 for more details.

This study is to be part of a PhD thesis from the department of Media and Communications at Goldsmiths University

Appendix Three

Consent Form

Title (Preliminary): Sharing Location and Context Every Way Possible

Date: _____

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Kenzie Burchell from the Media and Communications Department of Goldsmiths University.

Purpose of the Study:

The study aims to better understand the role of mobility and communication in everyday routines and social scenarios with regard to the use of mobile telephones, computer-based communication as well as some situations of face-to-face contact.

Participation:

This study includes a recorded 20–30 minute introductory interview with the researcher, a diary task (timing and length to be determined with the participant) and a recorded 45–60 minute interview and reflection on the diary task.

Confidentiality:

All material will be kept confidential and will be fully anonymised. This includes any personal information such as your name, or any name or company you mention, none of which will be used in any work that results from this research.

The results of this research project will be written up as part of a PhD thesis at Goldsmiths University, and such results may be published in an academic journal and/or discussed at conferences.

Participation, Withdrawal, and Rights of the Research Participants

- You can freely choose to participate or not in this study.
- There will be no remuneration for participating in this study.
- If you volunteer, you have the right to withdraw at anytime without consequence.
- You may stop the interview or participation in any other research task at any time.
- You may exercise the option of removing your data from the study.
- You may elect not to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still continue to participate in the study.
- The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which justify doing so.
- By participating, you are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies.

This research has been reviewed and has received ethical clearance through the Department of Media and Communications at Goldsmiths, University of London. If you have any questions regarding this research or your rights as a participant, feel free to contact the department or the supervisor of this PhD research.

Department of Media &
Communications
Goldsmiths, University of London
New Cross
London SE14 6NW
Tel: +44 (0)20 7919 7600
Fax: +44 (0)20 7919 7616

Research Supervisor:
Professor Nick Couldry
Professor of Media and
Communications
Phone:+44 (0)20 79197636
Fax:+44 (0)20 79197616
Email: n.couldry@gold.ac.uk

Signature of the Research Participant

I agree to participate in this study.

I have read the information provided for the ‘Sharing Location and Context Study’ (provisional title) described herein. I understand the purpose of this study and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been given a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Participant:

Signature of Participant:

Date: _____

Printed Name of Interviewer/Witness:

Signature of Interviewer/Witness:

Date: _____

Appendix Four

Participant Chart:

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Occupation
Andrew	Male	33	Energy Sector Sales (intern/unemployed)
Ashima	Female	33	Press Officer
Augustine	Female	34	Director of a PR firm (starting maternity leave)
Betty*	Female	32	Analyst
Chris	Male	46	Editor/Analyst (freelance)
Christina	Female	27	Civil Servant
David ^o	Male	33	International Sales
Eddie	Male	24	Creative Worker
Elisabeth	Female	25	Lawyer
Ethan	Male	30	Applications Developer
Esther*	Female	33	Digital Consultant/Sales
Eugene	Male	26	Legal Trainee
Evelyn ^o	Female	33	Homemaker, Consultant (freelance)
Farzan	Male	32	Online Editor
George* ^o	Male	35	Sound Engineer/Blogger
Gordon	Male	46	Analyst/Consultant (freelance)
Henry	Male	23	Journalist (freelance)/Waiter
Jack	Male	24	Hotel Administration
Joanne	Female	30	Finance Account Manager
Joseph* ^o	Male	43	Chief Research Scientist for a finance firm
Karina	Female	29	Entrepreneur/Director of an online retail firm
Louise	Female	22	Museum Assistant
Lourdes	Female	24	Service Industry, Retail Administration
Lena	Female	27	Model
Marco	Male	25	Lab Assistant
Margaret	Female	30	Market Research Analyst
Melanie	Female	25	Au pair
Miki	Female	25	Hair Dresser, PR Assistant (intern)
Peter*	Male	28	Technical Sales Consultant
Richard	Male	39	Civil Servant (anti-social hours)
Ron	Male	26	Temp. Office Worker, Writer (freelance)
Scott	Male	33	Senior Account Manager
Sydney	Male	26	Venue Manager
Tania ^o	Female	33	Assistant Producer
Zaina	Female	28	Online Journalist

* Indicates the five specialist selection participants beyond the primary selection of 30 participants as explained in chapter four

^o Indicates that the participant has children

References

- Appadurai, A., 1990. Disjuncture and difference in the global culture economy. *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 7, pp. 295-310.
- Arminen, I. and Weilenmann, A., 2009. Mobile presence and intimacy – Reshaping social actions in mobile contextual configuration. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41 (10) pp. 1905-1923.
- Arthur, C., 2012. Walled gardens look rosy for Facebook, Apple – and would-be censors. *The Guardian*, [online] April 17, 2012. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2012/apr/17/walled-gardens-facebook-apple-censors> [Accessed on August 3 2012].
- Back, L., Cohen, P., and Keith, M., 1999. *Between Home and Belonging, Critical Ethnographies of Race, Place and Identity*. London: CNER.
- Baron, N., 2008. *Always On: Language in an Online and Mobile World*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Battelle, J., 2012. Its not whether Google's threatened. It's Asking ourselves: What common do we wish for?. *John Battelle's Search Blog* [blog], Available at: <http://battellemedia.com/archives/2012/02/its-not-whether-googles-threatened-its-asking-ourselves-what-commons-do-we-wish-for.php> [Accessed August 10, 2012]
- Bauer, M. W., and Gaskell, G., (2000). *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound: A Practical Handbook*. London: Sage.
- Bauman, Z., 2000. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Baym, N., 2010. *Personal Connection in the Digital Age: Digital Media and Society Series*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Baym, N., and Zhang, Y.B., and Lin, M.C., 2004. Social Interactions Across Media: Interpersonal Communication on the Internet, Telephone and Face-to-Face. *New Media & Society*, 6 (3) pp. 299–318.
- Beniger, J., 1986. *The Control Revolution: Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Berners-Lee, T., 2012. Battle for the internet series: Tim Berners-Lee on the rise of walled gardens. *The Guardian*, [podcast], April 18th 2012. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/audio/2012/apr/18/tim-berners-lee-walled-gardens-audio> Accessed: August 10, 2012.
- Bijker, W., 1997. *Of Bicycles, Bakelites, and Bulbs: Towards a theory of Sociotechnical Change*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

- Bird, E., 2003. *Audience in everyday life: living in a media world*. New York: Routledge.
- Blank, G., 2011. OxIS 2011. SDP Seminar Presentation. July 15, 2011. Oxford Internet Institute, unpublished.
- Boczkowski, P. J., 2010a. *News at Work: Imitation in an Age of Information Abundance*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Boczkowski, P. J., 2010b. The Consumption of Online News at Work. *Information, Communication, and Society* 13(4) pp. 470-484.
- Boden, D. and Molotch, H., 1994. The compulsion to proximity. In: R. Friedland and D. Boden, eds. *Nowhere. Space, Time and Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 257-286.
- Boden, D. and Molotch H., 2004. Cyberspace meets the compulsion of proximity. In: S. Graham, ed. *The Cybercities Reader*. London: Routledge, p. 101-105.
- Bolter, J. and Grusin, R., 1999. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Borgmann, A., 1995. The Moral Significance of the Material Culture. In: A. Feenberg and A. Hannay, eds. *Technology and the Politics of Knowledge*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, pp. 85-96.
- Bourdieu, P., 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Translated by R. Nice. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Bourdieu, P., 1986. The Forms of Capital. Translated by R. Price. In: J.E. Richardson, ed. *Handbook of Theory of Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood Press, pp. 241-258.
- Boyd, D. and Ellison, N., 2007. Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), article 11.
- Bull, M., 2007. *Sound Moves: iPod Culture and Urban Experience*. London: Routledge.
- Burt, R.S., 2001. The Social Capital of Structural Holes. In: M.F. Guillen, R. Collins, P. England and M. Meyer, eds. *New Directions in Economic Sociology*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, ch. 7.
- Buscher, M and Urry, J., 2009. Mobile Methods and the Empirical. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 12 (1), pp. 99-116.
- Calhoun, C., 1998. Community without Propinquity Revisited: Communications Technology and the Transformation of the Urban Public Sphere. *Sociological Inquiry*, 68 (3), pp. 373-397.

Carey, Z., 2004. Generation Txt: The Telephone Hits the Street. In: S. Graham, ed. *The Cybercities Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 133-137.

Castells, M., 2009. *Communication Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Castells, M., 2010. *The Rise of the Network Society: Second Edition with a New Preface*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Castells, M., Fernandez-Ardevol, M, Qiu, J.L., and Sey, A., 2007. *Mobile Communication and Society: A Global Perspective*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Chun, W., 2006. *Control and Freedom: Power and Paranoia in the Age of Fiber Optics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Coleman, J.S., 1988. Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 94, Supplement: Organizations and Institutions: Sociological and Economic Approaches to the Analysis of Social Structures, pp. S95-S120.

Corbin, J. and Morse, J.M., 2003. The Unstructured Interactive Interview: Issues of Reciprocity and Risks When Dealing with Sensitive Topics. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(3), pp. 335-354.

Couldry, N., 2010. *Why Voice Matters: Culture and Politics after Neoliberalism*. London: Sage.

Couldry, N., 2011. The Necessary Future of the Audience ... and how to Research it. In: V. Nightingale, ed. *The Handbook of Media Audiences*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, ch. 10.

Couldry, N., 2012. *Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Couldry, N., Livingstone, S. and Markham, T., 2007. *Media Consumption and Public Engagement: Beyond the Presumption of Attention*. Houndsmill: Palgrave MacMillan.

Creswell, J., 1998. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Dreyfus, H. L., 1995. Heidegger on Gaining a Free Relation to Technology. In: A. Feenberg and A. Hannay, eds. *Technology and the Politics of Knowledge*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, pp. 97-107.

Duck, S., 1991. Diaries and Logs. In: S. Duck and B. Montgomery, eds. *Studying Interpersonal Interaction*. New York: Guilford Press, ch. 8.

Dutton, W.H., and Blank, G., 2011. *Next Generation Users: The Internet in Britain*. Oxford Internet Survey 2011. Oxford: Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford.

- Elias, N., 2000. *The Civilizing Process : Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*. Translated by E. Jephcott. E. Dunning, J. Goudsblom, and S. Menell, eds. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Elias, N., 1998. *The Norbert Elias Reader: A Biographical Selection*. J. Goudsblom and S. Menell, eds. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Ericsson K. and Simon, H., 1984. *Protocol Analysis: Verbal Reports as Data*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Eriksen, T. H., 2001. Speed is contagious. In: R. Hassan and J. Thomas, eds., 2006. *The New Media Theory Reader*. Maidenhead: Open University Press, pp. 272-277.
- Feenberg, A., 1995. Subversive Rationalization: Technology, Power, Democracy. In: A. Feenberg and A. Hannay, eds. *Technology and the Politics of Knowledge*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, pp. 3-22.
- Feenberg, A., 1999. *Questioning Technology*. New York: Routledge.
- Feenberg, A., 2005. *Heidegger and Marcuse: The Catastrophe and Redemption of History*. New York: Routledge.
- Galloway, A. and Ward, M., 2006. Locative Media As Socialising And Spatializing Practice: Learning From Archaeology. *Leonardo Electronic Almanac* 14(3) Available at: http://leoalmanac.org/journal/vol_14/lea_v14_n03-04/gallowayward.asp [Accessed January 28, 2009].
- Gergen, K. J., 2002. The Challenge of Absent Presence. In: J.E. Katz and M. Aakhus, eds. *Perpetual Contact : mobile communication, private talk, public performance*. Cambridge and New York : Cambridge University Press, pp. 227-241.
- Gershon, I., 2010. *The Breakup 2.0: Disconnecting over New Media*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Giddens, A., 1984. *The constitution of society: outline of the theory of structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A., 1991. *The consequences of modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gladarev, B. and Lonkila, M., 2008. Social networks and cellphone use in Russia: local consequences of global communication technology. *New Media & Society*, 10 (2), pp. 273–293.
- Glaser, B. and Strauss, A., 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago: Adline.
- Goffman, E., 1963. *Behaviour in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings*. New York: The Free Press.

Goffman, E., 1969. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London: Penguin Books.

Goffman, E., 1971. *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order*. New York: Basic Books.

Graham, S., 1998. The end of geography or the explosion of place? Conceptualizing space, place, and information technology. *Progress in Human Geography* 22 (2) pp. 165-185.

Graham, S. 2004a. Introduction. In: S. Graham, ed. *The Cybercities Reader*. London: Routledge, multiple sections.

Graham, S. 2004b. Excavating the Material Geographies of Cities. In: S. Graham, ed. *The Cybercities Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 138-142.

Granovetter, M., 1973. The Strength of Weak Ties. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 78 (6), pp. 1360-1380.

Granovetter, M., 1983. The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited. *Sociological Theory*, 1, pp. 201-233.

Green, N., 2002. On the move: technology, mobility, and the mediation of social time and space. *The Information Society*, 18 (4), pp. 281-292.

Gregg, M., 2011. *Work's Intimacy*. Cambridge: Polity.

Grint, K. and Woolgar, S., 1997. *The Machine at Work: Technology, Work and Organization*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Grinter, R. and Eldridge, M., 2001. y do tngrs luv 2 txt msg?. in W. Prinz et al, eds. *Proceedings of the Seventh European Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work ECSCW '01*. Bonn, Germany and Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp. 219-238.

Gumpert, G. and Decker, S. J., 2007. Mobile communication in the Twenty-first Century or 'Everybody, Everywhere, at Any Time. In S. Klienman, ed. *Displacing Place*. New York: Peter Lang, pp. 7-20.

Haddon, L., 2003. Domestication and Mobile Telephony. In: J. Katz, ed. *Machines that become us: The Social context of personal communication technologies*. New Brunswick NJ: Transaction publishers, pp. 43- 56.

Haddon, L., 2007. Roger Silverstone's legacies: Domestication. *New Media & Society*, 9 (1) pp. 25-32.

Hammersley, M. and Traianou, A., 2012. *Ethics and Educational Research*. British Education Research Association [on-line resource]. Available at <http://www.bera.ac.uk/system/files/Ethics%20and%20Educational%20Research.pdf> [Accessed August 3, 2012].

- Hampton, K. and Gupta N., 2008. Community and social interaction in the wireless city: wi-fi use in public and semi-public spaces. *New Media & Society*, 10 (6) pp. 831-850.
- Hannerz, U., 2003. Being there... and there... and there!: Reflections on Multi-Site Ethnography. *Ethnography*, 2003 (4) pp. 201-215.
- Haraway, D., 1991. *Simians, cyborgs, and women : the reinvention of nature*. New York: Routledge.
- Harman, G., 2002. *Tool-being: Heidegger and the metaphysics of objects*. Chicago: Open Court.
- Harvey, D., 1990. *The condition of postmodernity : an enquiry into the origins of cultural change*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Hassan, R., 2007. Network Time. In: R. Hassan and R.E. Purser, eds. *24/7: Time and Temporality in the Network Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 37-61.
- Heidegger, M., 1962. *Being and Time*. Translated by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, 2008 edition. New York: Harper and Row.
- Heidegger, M., 1971. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Translated by A. Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row.
- Heidegger, M., 1977. *The Question Concerning Technology and other Essays*. Translated by W. Lovitt. New York: Harper and Row.
- Hektner, A., Schmidt, J, and Csikszentmihalyi, M., 2007. *Experience Sampling Method: Measuring the Quality of Everyday Life*. Sage: Thousand Oaks.
- Humphreys, L., 2005. Cellphones in public: social interactions in a wireless era. *New Media & Society*, 7 (6) pp. 810-833.
- Ihde, D., 1993. *Postphenomenology: Essays in the Postmodern Context*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Ihde, D., 2002. *Bodies in Technology*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ihde, D., 2009. *Postphenomenology and Technoscience: the Peking University Lectures*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Illouz, E., 2007. *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Ito, M., 2005. Introduction: Personal, Portable, Pedestrian. In. M. Ito, D. Okabe, and M. Matsuda, eds. *Personal, Portable, Pedestrian: Mobile Phones in Japanese Life*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 1-19.

Ito, M. Okabe, D. and Anderson, K. 2007 [Draft]. Portable Objects in Three Global Cities: The Personalization of Urban Places. In R. Ling and S. Campbell, eds. *The Mobile Communication Research Annual Volume 1: The Reconstruction of Space and Time through Mobile Communication Practices*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction books. Available online at: www.itofisher.com/mito/portableobjects.pdf [Accesses February 28, 2009].

Jenkins, H. and Grusin, R., 2011. A remediated, premeditated, and transmediated conversation with Richard Grusin. *Confession of an Aca-fan: The official Weblog of Henry Jenkins* [blog]. Available online at: http://henryjenkins.org/2011/03/a_remediated_premeditated_and_t.html [Accessed July 22, 2012].

Jorgensen, D. 1989. *Participant Observation: A methodology for Human Studies*. London: London.

Kelty, C. M., 2008. *Two Bits: The Cultural Significance of Free Software*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

King, R., 2000. Habitation. In: S. Pile and N. Thrift, eds. *City A-Z: Urban Fragments*. London: Routledge, pp. 97-98.

Lanier, J., 2010. *You are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto*. London: Penguin.

Lash, S. and Urry, J., 1994. *Economies of Sign and Space*. London: Sage.

Latour, B., 1991. Materials of Power: Technology is Society Made Durable. In: J. Law, ed. *A Sociology of Monsters: Essays on Power, Technology and Domination*. London: Routledge, pp. 103- 131.

Latour, B., 1999. *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*. London: Harvard University Press.

Lee, H. and Liebenau J., 2001. Time and the Internet. In: R. Hassan and J. Thomas, eds., 2006. *The New Media Theory Reader*. Maidenhead: Open University Press. Pp. 266-271.

Levy, S., 2011. In conversation with Jeff Bezos: CEO of the Internet. *Wired Magazine* [online] December 12, 2011 (January 2012 issue) Available at: <http://www.wired.co.uk/magazine/archive/2012/01/features/ceo-of-the-internet?page=all> [Accessed August 12, 2012].

Licoppe, C., 2004. 'Connected' presence: the emergence of a new repertoire for managing social relationships in a changing communication technoscape. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 22, pp. 135-156.

Lindlof, T. and Grodin, D., 1990. When Media Use Can't Be Observed: Some Problems and Tactics of Collaborative Audience Research. *Journal of Communication*, 40(4) pp. 8-27.

- Ling, R., 2008a. *New Tech. New Ties: How Mobile Communication is Reshaping Social Cohesion*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Ling, R., 2008b. Trust, cohesion and social networks: The case of quasi-illicit photos in a teen peer group. In: Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Conference on Mobile Communications, Budapest. Available online at: <http://www.richardling.com/publications.php> [Accessed February 28, 2009].
- Ling, R. and Baron, N., 2007. Text Messaging and IM: Linguistic Comparison of American College Data. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 26 (3), pp. 291-298.
- Ling, R. and Donner, J., 2009. *Mobile Communication*. Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press.
- Madianou, M. and Miller, D., 2012. *Migration and New Media: Transnational Families and Polymedia*. London: Routledge.
- Manovich, L., 2001. *The Language of New Media*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Marinetti, F. T., 1916. The New Religion Morality of Speed. In: H. Rosa and W.E. Scheuerman, eds, 2009. *High Speed Society: Social Acceleration, Power, and Modernity*. University Park Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, pp. 57-59.
- Marwick, A., 2011. The Public Domain: Social Surveillance In Everyday Life. In: University of Toronto, *Cyber-surveillance in Everyday Life: An International Workshop*, Toronto, May 12-15.
- Massey, D., 2005. *For Space*. London: Sage.
- McIlvenny, P., Broth, M. and Haddington, P., 2009. Communicating Place, Space and Mobility. *Journal of Pragmatics* 41(Special Issue 10), pp. 1879-1886.
- McQuire, S., 2008. *The Media City: Media, Architecture and Urban Space*. Nottingham: TCS Centre.
- Meyrowitz, J., 1985. *No sense of place: the impact of electronic media on social behavior*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Miller, D. and Slater, D., 2000. *The Internet: An Ethnographic Approach*. Oxford: Berg.
- Mitchell, W., 1999. The City of Bits Hypotheses. In: S. Graham, ed., 2004 *The Cybercities Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 123-128.
- Moore, S., 2004. The Doubling of Place: Electronic Media, time-space arrangements and social relationships. In: N. Couldry and A. McCarthy, eds. *MediaSpace: place, scale, and culture in a media age*. London and New York: Psychology Press, ch. 1.

- Moores, S., 2005. *Media/Theory: Thinking about Media and Communication*. New York: Routledge.
- Moores, S., 2006. Media Uses and Everyday Environmental Experience: A Positive Critique of Phenomenological Geography. *Particip@tions* 3(2) November 2006. Available at: http://www.participations.org/volume%203/issue%202%20-%20special/3_02_moores.htm#_edn22 [Accessed on November, 21, 2008].
- Morley, D., 2006. What's 'home' got to do with it? Contradictory dynamics in the domestication of technology and the dislocation of domesticity. In: T. Berker, M. Hartmann, Y. Punie, and K. Ward, eds. *Domestication of Media and Technology*. Maidenhead: Open University Press, pp. 21-39.
- Murphy, P., 2008. Writing Media Culture: Representation and Experience in Media Ethnography. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, 1, pp. 268–286.
- Nowotny, H., 1994. *Time: The Modern and Postmodern Experience*. Translated by N. Plaice. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- ONS, 2009. *Social Trends Report, No. 40, 2009 Edition*. Office of National Statistics. Originally retrieved at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=2312> Presently Available at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/social-trends-rd/social-trends/social-trends-39/index.html> [Accessed July 13, 2012].
- ONS, 2010. *Social Trends Report, No. 40, 2010 Edition*. Office of National Statistics. Originally retrieved at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=2235> Presently Available at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/social-trends-rd/social-trends/social-trends-40/index.html> [Accessed July 13, 2012].
- Orb, A., Eisenhauer, L. and Wynaden, D., 2000. Ethics in Qualitative Research. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 33 (1), pp. 93-96.
- Palen, L. and Salzman M., 2002. Voice-Mail Diary Studies for Naturalistic Data Capture under Mobile Conditions. In: Association of Computing Machinery, *Computer Supported Cooperative Work Conference 2002 (CSCW 02)*. New Orleans, LA, November 2002.
- Punch, M., 1994. Politics and Ethics in Qualitative Research. In: N. K. Denzin, and Y. S. Lincoln, eds. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London : Sage Publications, ch. 5.
- Reiss, H and Wheeler, L. 1991. Studying Social Interaction with the Rochester Interaction Record. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 24, pp. 269-318.
- Robinson, J. 1977. *How Americans Use Time*. New York: Praeger.
- Rosa, H., 2003. Social Acceleration: Ethical and Political Consequences of a Desynchronised High Speed Society. In: H. Rosa and W.E. Scheuerman, eds, 2009. *High Speed Society: Social Acceleration, Power, and Modernity*. University Park Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, pp. 77-112.

- Sassen, S., 2006. *Territory Authority Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Schegloff, E., 2002. Beginnings in the telephone. In: J.E. Katz and M. Aakhus, eds. *Perpetual Contact : mobile communication, private talk, public performance*. Cambridge and New York : Cambridge University Press, pp. 284-300.
- Schütz, A., 1962. *Collected Papers: The Problems of Social Reality*. A. Brodersen, ed. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Seale, C., 2004. Generating Grounded Theory. In: C. Seale, ed. *Researching society and culture* London: Sage, pp. 239-248.
- Shapiro, M., 1994. Think-Aloud and Thought-List Procedures in Investigating Mental Processes. In: A. Lang, ed. *Measuring psychological responses to media Messages*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Sheller, M., 2004. Mobile Publics: Beyond the Network Perspective. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 22, pp. 39-52.
- Silverstone, R. and Hirsch, E., 1992. Introduction. In: R. Silverstone and E. Hirsch, eds. *Consuming Technologies: Media and Information in Domestic Spaces*. Routledge: London, pp. 1-15.
- Silverstone, R., Hirsch, E. and Morley, D., 1992. Information and communication technologies and the Moral Economy of the Household. In: R. Silverstone and E. Hirsch, eds. *Consuming Technologies: Media and Information in Domestic Spaces*. Routledge: London, pp. 15-31.
- Simmel, G., 1903. The metropolis and Mental Life. In: D. Frisby and M. Featherstone, eds, 1997. *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*. London: Sage, pp. 174-186.
- Simmel, G., 1903. "The Metropolis and Mental Life." In: G. Bride and S. Watson, eds, 2002. *The Blackwell City Reader*. Malden, MA: Wile-Blackwell, pp. 11-19.
- Starr, P., 2004. *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J., 1990. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. London: Sage.
- Terranova, T., 2004. *Network culture: politics for the information age*. London: Pluto Press.
- The Economist, 2012. The Technology Quarterly, Outsourcing is so passé: Computing Unsourcing. *The Economist* [online], Q2 June 2 2012. Available at: <http://www.economist.com/node/21556094> [Accessed August 10, 2012].

- Thompson, C., 2008. Brave New World of Digital Intimacy. *The New York Times* [online]. September 5th. Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/07/magazine/07awareness-t.html?_r=2&pagewanted=print [Accessed December 2, 2008].
- Thompson, E. P., 1967. Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism. *Past and Present*, No. 38 Dec 1967, pp. 56-97.
- Turkle, S., 1995. *Life on the screen: identity in the age of the Internet*. New York : Simon & Schuster.
- Turkle, S., 2004. Our Split Screens. In: A. Feenberg and D. Barney, eds. *Community in the Digital Age: Philosophy and Practice*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 101-120.
- Turkle, S., 2007. *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Turkle, S., 2008. Always-on/Always-on-you: The Tethered Self. In: J.E. Katz, ed. *Handbook of Mobile Communication Studies*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 121-138.
- Turkle, S., 2011. *Alone together: why we expect more from technology and less from each other*. New York: Basic Books.
- University of Guelph, 2008. *Sample Consent Form*. [online] University of Guelph. Available at: <http://portal.psy.uoguelph.ca/resources/worddocs/sampleconsentform.doc> [Accessed on September 23, 2009].
- Urry, J., 2007. *Mobilities*. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Urry, J., 2009. Speeding up and slowing down. In: H. Rosa and W.E. Scheuerman, eds, 2009. *High Speed Society: Social Acceleration, Power, and Modernity*. University Park Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, pp. 179-200.
- Varnelis, K. and Friedberg A., 2008. Place: Networked Place. In: Varnelis, K., ed *Networked Publics*. MIT Press: Cambridge. Available at: <http://networkedpublics.org/book/place> [Accessed on February 28, 2009].
- Verbeek, P., 2005. *What Things Do: Philosophical reflections on technology, agency and design*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Weilenmann, A., and Larsson, C., 2001. Local Use and Sharing of Mobile Phones. In: B. Brown, N. Green and R. Harper, eds. *Wireless World: Social and Interactional Aspects of the Mobile Age*. Godalming and Hiedleburg: Springer Verlag, pp. 99-115.
- Woolgar, S. 2002. The Five Rules of Virtuality. In: S. Woolgar, ed. *Virtual Society? Technology, Cyberbole, Reality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yin, R., 1994. *Case study research. Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Zerubavel, E., 1981. *Hidden Rhythms: Schedules and Calendars in Social Life*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Zimmerman D. and Wieder, D. L., 1977. The Diary: 'Diary-Interview Method'. *Urban Life*, 5(4), pp. 479-498.

Zittrain, J., 2008. *The Future of the Internet and How to Stop It*. New Haven: Yale University Press.