Mobile Public Memory: The (Digital/Physical) (Artifacts/Souvenirs) of the (Archiver/Tourist)

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Abstract
This article will look at the impact that mobile technologies have had on the ability of people to document their everyday lives. What is important to note about this documentation is that it has become a public display of events and experiences via mediated content. This documentation becomes more interesting to observe when it is put in context of how people can now record their travels. This “public memory” of private travel is assisted via mobile technologies with applications designed to record locations through Global Positioning System data and mediated content. After the documentation, the consumption of this content is conducted through social media services and other public outlets as opposed to the traditional means of showing where people have traveled via postcards, slides, and souvenirs. Through a mixed-method study, this process of documentation is analyzed via the thematic dichotomies that emerged throughout the course of surveys and interviews. This article will explore this contrast between the digital and physical through an analysis of the “traditional tourist” versus the “archiver of experiences.” Finally, the impact of this documentation will be framed in the context of mobile communication.

Keywords
memory, artifacts, travel, mobile communication, mixed-method research

As people adjust to mobile technologies as part of the normal flow of society, those same people find new and innovative methods of applying these technologies beyond mere one-to-one communication or even one-to-many communication (Ling & Campbell, 2011). Some people are applying the channels of communication to become more of a self-documenting mode. This self-documenting mode is comprised of writing posts and comments and recording mediated content for the purpose of recording the experiences and mundane actions of everyday in a way that can be recalled or searched via a public social feed. This feed of information represents a kind of “public memory” for the individual who posted the content.

For the purpose of this analysis, the term public memory is simply shorthand for posting content onto a mediated platform where one of the purposes of posting is to journal or note information that has a personal significance. For example, one could take pictures of their meals not because they are showing the dinner to their friends but rather keeping a recorded journal of their favorite meals to remember them later. In this way, there is not necessarily an imagined audience that the individual is focusing their content toward, but rather it is designed to be an online scrapbook.

The purpose of this work is to look at how mobile media is changing the nature of the collection of memory via digital artifacts created by the hybrid of services that represent the social and hyper-local interactions. These interactions are best exemplified through the use of the SoLoMo (social, local, mobile) category of applications for mobile devices, especially services such as FourSquare and Instagram (Nelson, 2013). These services will be discussed within the context of their impact on public memory, specifically how they bridge the gap between the digital and the physical, the gap between an artifact and a souvenir, and its ability to combine the role of the tourist and the archiver. The remaining parts of this article will define these terms and describe the impact that the mobile media space has had on these concepts.

Public Memory and Rhetoric
While this article can only provide a basic understanding of memory as a theoretical concept, there are two elements that can be focused on to help explore this connection between the transmission of personal public memory via social networks and the binary nature of those creations as described in the introduction of this work. Both of these thematic elements can be explored by looking at the rhetorical

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elements of memory and the psychological elements of shared memories/shared social experiences.

Most of the nominative constructions of the term public memory tend to be embedded in the rhetorical aspects of communication. This idea of “public memory” goes to the practice of public remembrance to cultural events. Condit (1985) framed this concept within Aristotle’s inartistic elements of rhetoric. Primarily, Condit made the argument that public memory performed an epideictic element of rhetoric as public memory was normally invoked through the ceremonial speeches surrounding a particular event (in Condit’s example, the Boston Massacre). Communication actions using epideictic discourses allow for a definition of a public event by a speaker via the sharing understanding of the context of the event toward the larger whole shaped by the speaker. The speaker shaped shared symbols to have a community focus on one particular theme or image. The nature of these actions is normally for the purpose of display or entertaining the community. Those commemorative discourses are normally for a shared audience with a mass understanding.

Another aspect of public memory is the sense of placement. According to Dickinson, Blair, and Ott (2010), the construction of the public memory is tied to the rhetorical art of memory in contemporary public culture. Public memory exists “at the nexus of rhetoric, memory, and place” as this concept represents a deep complexity of events as they were occurring. The connection between rhetoric and public memory was enhanced by the works of Maurice Halbwachs (1992) and Michel Foucault, Bouchard, and Simon (1977) as their work focused on the forms of memory, which tended to be broken up and defined by the cultural norms and the “language of the memory” in the mind of society. Place within this context notes the terminologies of spaces, spatiality, sites, territory and deterritorializing, border cultures, the urban and exurban, social locations, geographies, zones, the archive . . . to reckon with the complexities of what anyone might mean when s/he deploys one or more of these terms. (Dickinson et al., 2010, pp. 22-23)

Public memory as a concept has a broad definition because the theoretical discourse around the term public memory has some semantical weight behind it. The definition fragments as newer communication and humanities theorists explore the central concept of memory. In communication, memory is one of the foundations of rhetoric. This foundation adds to this discussion of the chosen definition of “public memory” for this article because it exemplifies the need to observe the cultural aspects of memory. The technological aspects of memory related to the personal encoding and decoding of information can best be theorized in the scientific/psychological realm.

### Public Memory and Technological Influence

The reason that the technological support of memory is noted for this article is because the nature of memory distorts without some method of recording. One of the major influences to this sense of memory is social influence. People will normally conform to the “erroneous recollections of the group, producing both long-lasting and temporary errors, even when their initial memory was strong and accurate” (Edelson, Sharot, Dolan, & Dudai, 2011, p. 108).

This representation of communal public memory can be influenced through the normal discourse of communication actions or through social interactions. The record of an event can be “protected” from these social influences with a well-constructed archival system designed to limit this layer of social static and misinterpretation (Jacobsen, Punzalan, & Hedstrom, 2013). This archival element to the technological influence on the public memory has often been framed in the scientific/psychological realm as a version of collective memory. This collective memory represents “an inherently mediated phenomenon . . . as much a result of conscious manipulation as unconscious absorption” (Kansteiner, 2002, p. 180). This aspect of collective memory means that the dissemination of events comes from channels of communication and messages embedded in those channels. Under the traditional understanding of these channels of communication, the messages related to collective memory encoded in these channels are often placed into these “linear, one-way channels of description” (Hall, 2013). New media channels create a more complete collective memory as the artifacts of the events are placed in a shared space with the purpose of “making claims about the subjective experience, as if claiming that a given representation is a authentic recollection (neither perception nor imagination)” (Haye, 2012, p. 27). This representation is crafted through the co-creation of the meaning of memories placed within the shared space under the guise that most of the artifacts added to the shared space come with their own set of bias and positional aspects. There is a sense of social static and misinterpretation can exist with this space, but there are embedded check and balances that can normalize those elements of distortion.

This version of public memory described in this article is not a representation of the communal public memory as collective memory, but rather the publication of private or semi-private events (e.g., traveling) into a semi-public or public sphere (e.g., Instagram) as a way of remembering the experience and categorizing the elements of the experience via the norms of the mode of communication (e.g., hashtags and check-ins). Hashtags have the potential to act as the “guideposts” toward the shared spaces described earlier as they function as a public link to a common set of pictures, posts, and links that is hosted within the social networks of choice. The common vernacular of hashtags has a shared lexicon with significance and meaning. Those tags place individual artifacts connected to the tag within a framework designed to either support a community or maintain a dialogue around a common theme or event (Alper, 2013). The second aspect of the hashtags that is rarely discussed is their ability to act as personal organizational tools. A person can search through
his or her own feeds via typing his or her username and the selected hashtags to find post with a significant importance (e.g., the first trip abroad). These elements of selective filtering influenced the creation of the methods used for this research.

**Method**

The data from this article come from mixed-methods approach using a survey and follow-up interview. A snowball sample technique was used that led to a sample size of 98 people (Goodman, 1961). A snowball sample was used due to the point of analysis. The problematic in question is within the range of those who travel and use SoLoMo to document their travel. As this would be considered a specific population, the use of the snowball sample seemed appropriate.

The surveys included 12 prompts on a 9-point Likert-type scale. Those prompts focused on the use of social networks and the tools used to access those social networks. In addition, there were 10 prompts on a 7-point Likert-type scale that focused on audience awareness, travel practices, and cultural awareness. The rationale for conducting the survey was to make sure that the interview questions would fit the “real world” as understood by the people and at the same time would eliminate possible personal bias. The two different types of Likert-type scales were required for this research as the 9-point Likert-type scale prompts related to temporal elements (once a year, once a month, 2 or 3 times a month, once a week, 2 or 3 times a week, once a day, 2 or 3 times a day, every hour, and multiple times an hour) to get a sense of the survey takers relationship between themselves and the tools of posting (technology and services), while the 7-point Likert-type scale dealt with the perceptions of survey takers toward the tools of posting and thus had a “more traditional” set of ranges within the scale (strongly disagree, disagree, disagree slightly, neither agree or disagree, agree slightly, agree, and strongly agree).

A structured interview was conducted after the survey was completed. The interviews ranged from 15 to 20 min. The interviewee was asked a few ethnographic questions that closely resembled a “guided ethnography” (Tilton, 2012), with the exception that the researcher would not be there to observe them as they used their mobile devices. Interview questions primarily dealt with how they use their mobile devices when they traveled and whether or not they alter their documentation practices because of the SoLoMo applications.

To identify participants, the following message was sent via Facebook feed and several group pages that dealt with academic research:

Facebook Hivemind: I’m looking to interview about 30 people about their use of FourSquare and Instagram, especially how they use it when they travel. If you are interested in being interviewed, please message me. If you are not interested in being interviewed, please share this.

In addition, an abbreviated version of this call was sent via Twitter. From this original call, 49 responses were received. From those requests, the respondents were asked if they knew anybody else that would fit both of the criteria. From those requests, there were 49 more responses. Between the two groups, the total sample size was 98.

**Data Analysis**

The sample size included 64 women and 34 men. Four of the research participants were college students, and 2 of the older participants were retired. All of the other participants were employed, with 16 of them being employed in social media/marketing-related positions. The participants all live in the United States, and the pool includes individuals from cities in the Northeast (Washington, DC; Boston, MA; New York, NY; Arlington, VA), the Southeast (Raleigh, NC; Chapel Hill, NC; Charlotte, NC; Atlanta, GA; Kennesaw, GA; St. Augustine, FL), the Midwest (Chicago, IL; Cincinnati, OH; Indianapolis, IN), and the Pacific Northwest (Seattle, WA; Portland, OR; Central Washington state).

The interviewees were frequent users of FourSquare, Instagram, or both. Frequent users were defined as people who had more than 100 posts on one of the sites and had checked in at least once in the previous 3 days. Of the survey population of 98 people, there were 26 people who fit this characteristic. Six of the participants were interviewed face-to-face. Seventeen people were interviewed using Skype and three people were interviewed using a phone with no video. The interviewer did not notice an appreciable difference between the face-to-face and Skype/phone interviews. A grounded theory approach was used throughout the data collection as a way of maintaining balance within the instrument between a loose interpretation of the data and a narrow deconstruction of the interviewee’s statements (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The interviews were transcribed and placed within an open coding procedure. There were extensive notes taken to encode the interviews in a way that helped overlay the analysis of the survey “on top of” the transcription of the interviews. Throughout the back and forth of interviewing and coding, the data were organized into categories and eventually grouped categories based on thematic similarities. The coding included multiple themes that emerged from the data.

Those themes were gathered by transcribing the 26 interviews, for a total of 10 hr of interviews. The transcripts of those interviews were then coded to examine for common themes. The researcher was the lone coder for the process. The common themes were examined for patterns consistent with the trend found in the analysis of the surveys. Finally, those common themes were framed within the context of the current research in the field. The artifacts from this coding and selection process will be shown in the impact sections of the article. For the purpose of this article, the focus will be on three primary thematic dissidences that arose in the data.
The next two sections deal with the analysis of the surveys and interviews as a means of framing the thematics at the end of this work.

**Survey Analysis**

As this was a mixed-method study, the analysis took on two separate elements, an analysis of the survey and the coding analysis for thematic elements of the interview. The initial rationale for this process was to reinforce the qualitative research and analysis with the analysis of quantitative instrument. The survey instruments allowed for a clearer picture of the people completing the interview process and better identified the limitations that may be present in an interview that the researcher would not be aware of.

One of the most interesting data points that came to light from the survey was with the prompt “I use my mobile phone.” All 98 of the participants responded by marking they used their phone once a day or more. Of the 98, 79 participants marked that they used their mobile phones once every hour, as noted in Table 1. This seems to be in line with other similar research dealing with current usage of mobile phones (Baron & Segerstad, 2010).

The next point of analysis is the documentation practices of the sample population during their travels. The sample population was divided between those who fit the characteristics of the interviewee pool (n = 26) and those who did not (n = 72). From these data, there was little difference in the documentation and souvenir practices of those who were interviewed versus those who were not. In terms of the analog aspects of travel, both groups tended to buy souvenirs about half of the times they travel. As noted in Table 2, more often those purchases would be for themselves over family and friends. In addition, this group was more likely to travel alone than with friends or family.

The final point of analysis from the survey would be the posting practices of the sample population. The only point of divergence between the interviewee and non-interviewee that stands out is their awareness of their audiences when the post content about their travels. Those in the interviewee group were less likely to be concerned about their audience when posted travel content on their social media feeds compared with the non-interviewee group. This point of divergence is noted in Table 3.

This point of divergence helped shape some of the interview instrument to find out what the interviewees focused on when posted content from their trips.

**Interview Analysis**

With a smaller interview pool, it was necessary to craft the questions to not only work with the larger problematic but also the element raised during the survey regarding audience awareness. This major point of separation between those who were being interviewees and non-interviewees leads to a deductive approach of interviewing and analysis (Schadewitz & Jachna, 2007). The questions raised during the interview focused on the interviewee’s understanding of memory and their audience awareness.

From the analysis of both methods, a series of thematic dichotomies emerged that positioned the collection of digital artifacts while traveling into uses and gratifications present when using any online services, especially those services that can act as “catalysts for personal narrative and recall” (Viegas, boyd, Nguyen, Potter, & Donath, 2004).

### Table 1. Percentage of Mobile Phone Use of Sample Population (N = 98).

| Mobile phone use | Less than once per day | Once a day | Two or three times a day | Every hour | Multiple times an hour | NA |
|------------------|------------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|------------------------|----|

### Table 2. Documentation and Travel Practices of Sample Population (N = 98).

|                          | Interviewee average (n = 26) | Interviewee SD | Non-interviewee average (n = 72) | Non-interviewee SD |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Documentation            | 4.454                        | 1.905           | 4.454                            | 2.016              |
| “I purchase a souvenir from the place I travel for myself.” | 4.000                        | 1.837           | 4.060                            | 1.951              |
| “I purchase a souvenir from the place I travel for my family.” | 3.787                        | 1.932           | 3.545                            | 1.985              |
| “I purchase a souvenir from the place I travel for my friends.” | 3.437                        | 1.664           | 3.250                            | 1.813              |
| “I travel with my family.” | 4.363                        | 1.635           | 4.000                            | 2.031              |
| “I travel with my friends.” | 3.667                        | 1.707           | 3.606                            | 1.599              |


**Table 3. Posting Practices of Sample Population (N = 98).**

|                                      | Interviewee average | Interviewee SD. | Non-interviewee average | Non-interviewee SD. |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Posts while traveling                | 5.334               | 1.756            | 4.698                   | 1.836                |
| Uses social media to remember trips  | 5.125               | 1.665            | 5.030                   | 1.519                |
| Collects digital artifacts (pictures,| 3.177               | 2.193            | 3.505                   | 1.869                |
| badges, check-ins, etc.)             |                     |                  |                         |                      |
| Audience awareness                   | 3.507*              | 1.574            | 5.400*                  | 1.813                |
| Audience empathy                     | 4.003               | 1.838            | 4.712                   | 2.031                |

*p < .05.

**Digital Versus Physical**

When a person captures the experience of travel and translates it into a mediated form, both the digital and the physical are the same. A person can see the Grand Canyon in front of him or her while taking the picture of it on a digital camera. The farther you move away from the physical location, the more the digital representation of that space becomes the “authentic” symbol of your experience at that space. The Instagram picture allows the person to experience the feelings of being in the location through a combination of observing the picture with the personally embedded textual and location data within the picture. The comments attached to the picture become the “vox populi” of the overall impression of the experience. This combination of all of the mediated content represents the digital contextualization of the experience.

In contrast, the physical represents a token, a takeaway that allows the person to actually touch elements from a location where the person visited. This ability to touch the object means that the object can be placed in space defined by the person to be an area of significance based on other objects of travel. Objects allow the person to immerse himself or herself in the memories of the travel via the sensory relationship between himself or herself and the object. The smell of suntan lotion on a piece of sea glass allows the person to remember a trip to the beach via the smell.

The convergence of the physical and the digital is moving closer together via the social media platforms and SoLoMo apps. A person can look over his or her own feed on Instagram or FourSquare to find a great place to watch a sunset. They have the mediated experience of watching the sunset on Instagram, which is a social media service design to share a small (300 × 300 pixels in size) picture that can be framed by the “filters” that the users can use to overlay on top of the picture. This simple picture of the sunset also includes the location where the picture was taken (either in the form of Global Positioning System [GPS] data or location information “borrowed” from Facebook or FourSquare) and other textual provided by the Instagram community in the form of comments and tags.

It is in this way that the difference between the digital and analog is more than a “bits versus atoms” discussion; it is also a “dynamic versus static” discussion. It is more than the simple ability to store the elements and place them in some form of order and structure. Dynamic allows for different modes of selection and filtering. Static maintains a standard form of selection. A person can look over his or her boxes to view his or her collection of postcards. The digital elements can be organized in multiple albums. The ability to tag these elements allows for a more complex and comprehensive approach to memory selection. For example, a person can organize his or her elements based on the people associated with the elements (“my wife” or “Grandma Sofia”) or the timing of the elements (“2013 Trips”) or the physical location the elements were taken from. One element can fit multiple organization platforms (Hine, 2003).

**Artifacts Versus Souvenir**

Artifacts are the small constructed elements that have some cultural purpose (the postcards can be mailed to others to tell about the trip or communicate some other aspect of travel) or a social purpose (the Disney shot glasses can be used at a party to serve drinks) that contains the visual cues of the location that the artifact comes from. Sociologically, artifacts become the central point of analyzing the practices of organized communities.

The ways that artifacts are used can tell a lot about a society. Digital or physical artifacts have a sense of placement that reflects the discourses about how the culture or subcultures connect and interact with others. The slideshow is a communal sharing of pictures that have some meaning to the person or group sharing. In a similar fashion, the album or feed on social media has some significance to the person posting the photos without necessarily worrying about what type of audience is viewing the work.

Souvenirs are mass produced works that are created to fill the needs of the tourist as a trinket from location that has some significance to the tourist as a representation of the location (i.e., a piece of the Berlin Wall). In addition, souvenirs could be individually created and have a larger representation to societies in the form of collections or “placement.” For example, you can look at the collective nature of the “pressed penny” as a self-created souvenir that not only represents the location (the person inserts a penny and some
other change to have the penny transform into a souvenir via the pressing of a symbol of the location on the penny, thus flattening the penny) but also the penny becomes an addition to the penny collector collection.

Both the artifact and the souvenir in the area of public memory represent a type of signifier in the ritualization of travel. If ritual can be defined as a pattern of actions and the process of those actions via a type of performance, then the ability to collect digital artifacts or souvenirs has the same weight as taking physical pieces from a location (Rothenbuhler & Coman, 2005).

In the digital realm, the argument is that the poster of the digital work is the performer and there is an audience that can be actual (posting pictures for friends or family to see them) or imagined. It is in this regard to talk about services such as FourSquare as part of the ritual. FourSquare is a location-based social network service where the users of the site can go to locations in the real world and “check-in” on the site to indicate they are at the location. As a “ritual leader,” FourSquare is responsible for mediating the artifacts of the experience (pictures taken at the location to prove aspects of the experience) and the souvenirs (user can collect “badges” based on their travel and check-ins). FourSquare also amplifies the ritual nature of travel via the expression of the experience through mediated channel to the imagined other (“the crowd”).

As it relates to public memory, the important element to note in this analysis of ritual is that the performer and the audience can be one and the same. The performer in the present is collecting artifacts and/or souvenirs for the purpose of the future self to observe the aspects of the performance. A person performs the aspects of the ritual of taking pictures while travel. The person digs his or her phone out of his or her pocket or bag. She or he goes to their camera app, takes the pictures, and adds the metadata or other information relevant to their current location and/or experience.

Archiver Versus Tourist

The last conflict to consider is the role of the person collecting the elements related to travel. In the traditional mode of discussing their role, the person would be described as a tourist, with all of the semantic baggage associated with that term. The tourist is defined as a person who travels from his or her home to other place, while bringing all of his or her cultural bias and frameworks to the place of travel. All new experiences the tourist has while traveling are foreign based on the binary of familiar/non-familiar.

This foreignness forces the tourist to reconceptualize basic tenets of the mundane. Even the extremely basic function of getting up from sleep has the aspects of foreignness (the bed is not their own, the location of clothing and basic bathroom products would be different). It is also this foreignness that frames the tourist interactions with people and the inanimate.

The collections of memories are based on their relationship to the “known” (“it tastes like chicken”) and the “unknown” (“why are they wearing those funny hats?”). The collections of memories to the tourist are in the form of mementos. Therefore, the idea of public memory for the tourists would be the scrapbook of their own experience via the mediated platforms.

Archivers are trying to understand the location of travel through points of analysis and cataloging their experiences within the context of the tools of collection. Analysis is conducted via the reflective examination of the collection of elements within a mediated distribution platform. The picture of the Grand Canyon is understood and placed within the context of similar experiences, either personally experienced by the archiver or through the aggregation of similar elements within a common platform. The tools of collection mediate the experience and transform the experience into an element of analysis.

Impact on Mobile Media Space

As the interplay between mobile communication and the real world is becoming more fluid, the ability to reflect on everyday experiences becomes a mode of coping and adjusting to the speed of life. The framework of this work was to explore public memory through the view of its impact to document travel for the individual. It is a natural connection as the mobile device is a person’s lifeline as they explore places that she or he is not familiar with. It is their map, connection to the outside world, recommendation engine for trying new restaurants and, as explored in the course of this work, the mode of documenting those new experiences. However, public memory is more than a reflective mode of understanding the world. It is a way of filtering and organizing all information that an individual is exposed to on a daily basis. As people are exposed to new stimuli and feeds of information, there needs to perhaps be agents that can help a person actively document his or her own experience. In addition, those agents could act as the extension of memory that can be recalled via mobile devices. Those technologies, platforms, and services could be thought of collectively as the public memory of the individual with the purpose of being aware of one’s own environment.

Impact on Mobile Media Usage

One of the common themes from the interviews and the literature that impacts this concept of “mobile public memory” is the increase of usage of mobile devices over the past decade, specifically the consumption of mobile media. Mobile phones have changed how people in the developing world cope with their dynamic lives through the engagement of the larger community. Of the 26 interviewees, 20 discussed how their mobile phone was an extension of themselves. Amber, a 29-year-old sales professional from New York, discussed how her mobile phone was an extension of her experience while travel for the individual. It is a natural connection as the mobile device is a person’s lifeline as they explore places that she or he is not familiar with. It is their map, connection to the outside world, recommendation engine for trying new restaurants and, as explored in the course of this work, the mode of documenting those new experiences. However, public memory is more than a reflective mode of understanding the world. It is a way of filtering and organizing all information that an individual is exposed to on a daily basis. As people are exposed to new stimuli and feeds of information, there needs to perhaps be agents that can help a person actively document his or her own experience. In addition, those agents could act as the extension of memory that can be recalled via mobile devices. Those technologies, platforms, and services could be thought of collectively as the public memory of the individual with the purpose of being aware of one’s own environment.
Orleans, stated, “If I left the house and realized that I left my (Samsung) Note there, I would be running back for it. I feel naked without it. My entire life is on my phone.” Barry, an African American 36-year-old freelance artist from Columbus, discussed during his interview:

I only use my laptop when working on client’s projects. When I’m out, I have my DSLR (his digital camera) and my phone. Sometimes, I’ll just use my phone to take pictures, even if I have my DSLR with me.

When pushed why he used his phone instead of his professional camera, he said “it’s easier to post from my phone and it’s quicker.”

Part of the discussion related to mobile phone usage is the “social disconnection” supposedly created by the use of mobile device. The social disconnection within mobile device relates to the anecdotal evidence that the more a person consumes mobile media, the less likely that person is able to maintain relationship away from the device. Hampton, Sessions, and Her (2011) disputed this claim in the research stating,

[i]n support of our hypotheses, findings reveal that neither Internet nor mobile phone use is associated with having fewer core discussion confidants, or having less diverse ties with whom to discuss important matters. As predicted, mobile phone ownership and specific Internet activities—the use of certain “social media”—were found to be associated with having a larger number of confidants. (p. 148)

This assertion was supported through the interview conducted during this research. In all, 19 out of the 26 interviewees mentioned through the course of this research that they felt the same number of friends or more when compared with a decade ago.

These social connections were important to note in this research because despite the observational point that the interviewees felt they had more social connections, the postings on SoLoMo apps and Instagram were more for the interviewee rather than for the imagined audience. In all, 16 of the 26 interviewees very rarely use hashtags to attract audience. Of the 26 interviewees, 19 would use a hashtag or GPS metadata on their postings as a way to remember an event or a location they were at. Charlie, a 40-year-old educator, encapsulated this point when he said, “I remember my grandparents showing me their vacation slides and they were organized in this carousels. I sort of see using the map on Instagram or putting a hashtag in as organizing my photos in those carousels.”

**Impact on Documenting Experiences**

The second thematic of documenting experiences versus collecting souvenirs was also reinforced from the interviews and the previous literature. Both documenting experiences and collecting souvenirs fit into what Neubaum, Rösner, Rosenthal-von der Pütten, and Krämer (2014) would describe as the “psychosocial functions of social media usage” and framed such functionality within the uses and gratifications of these services. The context of the psychosocial was broken down into information gathering and sharing and observing emotions. Neubaum et al. were studying how emotions in a disaster situation were transmitted and expressed via social media connections and public interactions online. The psychosocial was also described in the documenting experiences (the private interpretation of the SoLoMo postings) in the observation of emotions and mentioned in the collection of souvenirs (the public display of the SoLoMo apps) when describing the sharing emotions. David, a 27-year-old male, described these psychosocial elements by saying, “When I travel, I will normally look at the pictures and comments about a location from FourSquare, Yelp and Instagram. I find this seems to be more of a realistic look at a place.” This would correspond to information gathering. He would later talk about sharing the picture not with his followers on Instagram, but rather with his family.

The last time I was in Boston, I went to a Red Sox (baseball) game. I took a few pictures and post them on Instagram… I wanted to show my son the pictures I took and I couldn’t find them on my phone. I went back through my Instagram feed and found them. He likes Jonny Gomes and I wanted to show him the pictures I took of (Gomes). He kind of giggled when (my son) saw the pictures.

**Impact on Posting Practices**

The final thematic that was explored was the posting practices of the individuals on Instagram. Most of the literature that studied posting practices on Instagram were looking how the individuals captured everyday experiences with the service (Memarovic et al., 2014) or how the foreign and strange were “normalized” via the service (e.g., war photography; Alper, 2013). In the case of Memarovic et al.’s research, the service was mutated to a networked public display that could post snapshots taken on the display of an individual at a location onto any service or website the individual wished. The other option was to leave the picture on the public display as a part of the example pictures on the display. Of 26, 18 chose to remove the pictures from public viewing and place those snapshots onto private services. The public display, and therefore a more public audience for the photograph, was rejected by a majority of the individuals. Those individuals preferred a more private display of the photographs. The interviewees reinforced this private desire, specifically when discussing hashtags. Ellen, a 22-year-old female sales representative from Austin, Texas, commented on this by saying,
Most of the time when I take pictures when I travel, I normally don’t post “#postforlikes” or “#foodpron.” I like having the pictures on Instagram. But, I don’t need a large group of followers validating my pics or likes. Most of the time, I post the pictures for me.

Limitations

The major limitation to this work was the snowball sample that led to the survey takers and the interviewees. Both the units for inclusion in the sample were not based on random selection. Therefore, it is impossible to determine the possible sampling error and make statistical inferences from the sample to the population. This research is not fully representative of the population being studied. The rationale for conducting the survey and the interviews with a snowball sample allowed for a more select group that would provide better artifacts within the context of the thematics of the research. The sample group was more familiar with tools of distribution being described in the research and could therefore articulate the elements of study needed to conduct this research; specifically the sample could discuss the connection between audience, memory, and the tools of distribution in a sensible manner.

Conclusion

One of the common themes that has made up the current conceptualization of the idea of memory is its connection to mediated content. A by-product of this thematic understanding of memory is how digital content has impacted this discourse. The collection of slides and postcards from trips long ago have become the feeds of pictures from social network services as we travel. The accessibility and ubiquity of this content has changed the way that memories are captured. There are multiple public systems and social networks designed to catalog and distribute experiences in the form of mediated content. Layers of metadata are embedded within the content posted on these networks and services. As the academy and scholars study the influence and impact of mobile and social media on society, it is important to note how these services and networks change people’s memories on previous experiences.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research and/or authorship of this article.

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