

Enhancing Privacy on Social Networks by Segregating Different Social Spheres

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Our Goal

Learn:

- What types of groups users create when forced to group friends on social networking sites
- From whom users restrict information
- What types of information is restricted

Social Networking Websites

- Web-based services that allow individuals to create personalized profiles and communicate with others on the network in the variety of ways
- Becoming a major part of teenage life.



Facebook

- ❑ The second largest social network on the Internet created in 2004.
- ❑ Users create personalized profiles that display their real names, date of birth, education, and other personal information.
- ❑ Privacy is an issue.
- ❑ By default, all of a user's friends can see his/her full profile.
- ❑ Posting of private or possibly embarrassing information.
- ❑ 'Facebook Stalkers'- users who use Facebook to follow and stalk other users



Friend Grouping Feature

- Recent feature on Facebook that allows a user to create groups of friends and restrict certain information to them.
- Problems:
 - 1) Not advertised
 - 2) Not mandatory
 - 3) Little customization of settings

Our Study

- 20 Study Participants- Males and Females 16-18
- Pre-Survey- Participants share their prior experiences with Facebook's grouping features
- Application- Participants group 'friends' on Facebook using our sample application
- Post-survey- Participants give feedback about the experience

Our Application

- Interacted with a user's profile without changing it
- Mirrored Facebook's privacy and grouping interface.
- Opt-in rather than Opt-out.
- 39 different privacy settings that can be restricted
- “Mandatory”

Application: Creating a Group

Create a Group

<~Menu

Current Groups:

Test

This is the menu for creating a new group, it shows existing groups and allows for the creation of a new group

Application: Setting Privacy

Group Chosen: Test

[<~Back](#)

Click a box to allow group members to view information

Blank checkbox means that the group cannot see the information

Edit Preferences:

Sex

Birthday

Hometown

Political_Views

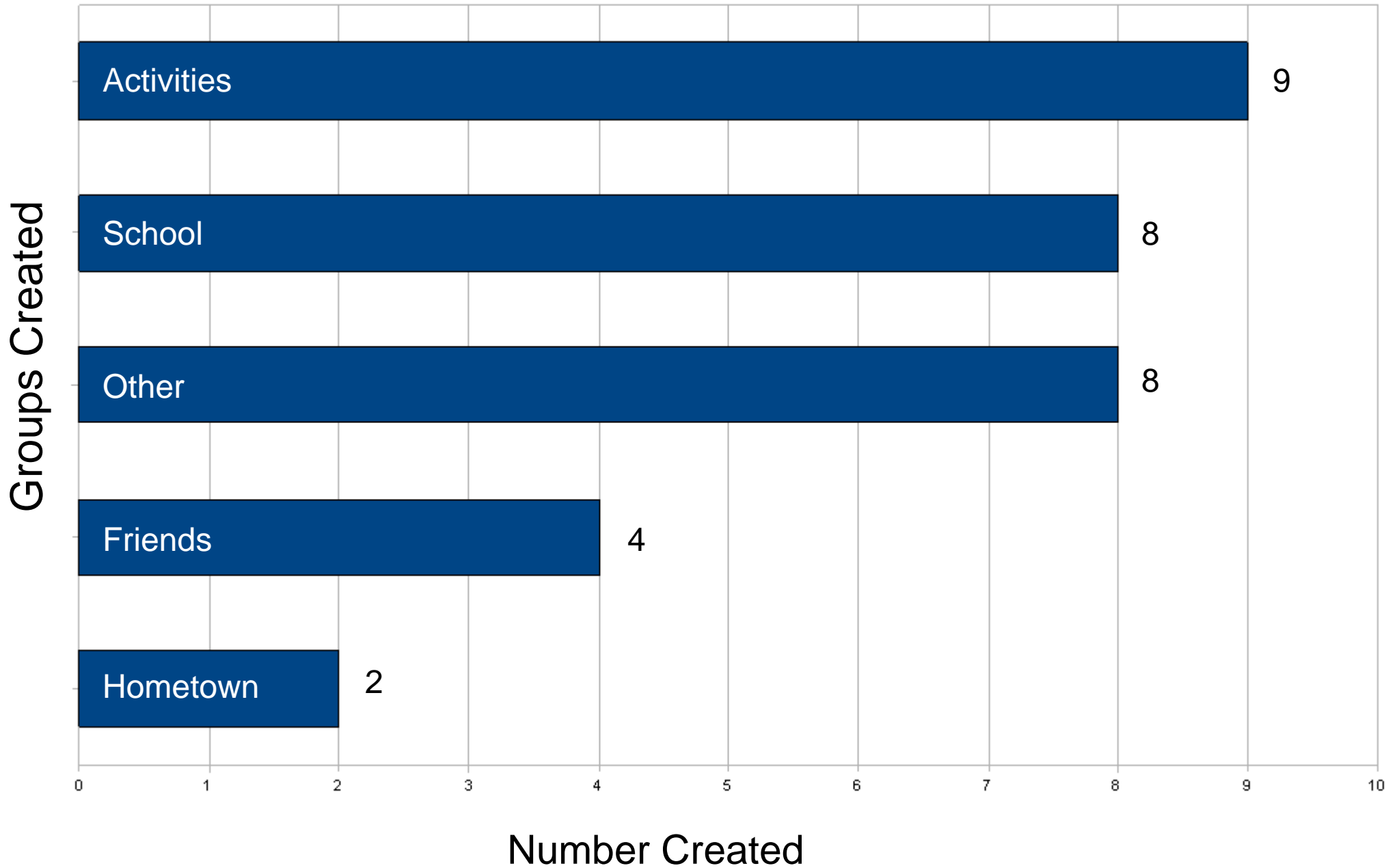
Religious_Views

The Information here is Opt-In instead of Opt-Out, so all this information is invisible to 'friends' in the first place

Results

- 35% of study participants were familiar with Facebook's current grouping feature
- 25% of participants have used it
- Most of the volunteers created similar groups.
- 30% of our test participants created multiple groups.
- Certain privacy settings were restricted often among test participants.
- “Smart” privacy restriction

Groups Created by Participants



Commonly Restricted Settings

Information restricted from groups created by research participants

- Home phone number- restricted from 81% of groups
- Address- restricted from 55% of groups
- Political Views- restricted from 48% of groups
- Interested in- (*Sexual orientation*) restricted from 45% of groups
- Tagged videos- (*Videos featuring you*) restricted from 42% of groups

Conclusions

- ❑ Users want to show different personas to the people they interact with
- ❑ Preset user groups should be available
- ❑ Privacy customization should be increased
- ❑ Viewable information should be “opt-in” rather than “opt-out”
- ❑ Grouping and privacy features should be mandatory to protect users

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