

I. SUMMARY

We examine the reasoning behind and factors that affect people's friending practices on Facebook, particularly concerning familiarity with an individual and whether people are influenced by mutual friends. We believed that Facebook users evaluate friend requests based largely on their degree of familiarity with the other person and at a certain level of friendship people generally always accept a request. By acting as participant-observers and friending students in the Georgia Tech network of varying degrees of familiarity and gathering information via a survey, the group discovered that familiarity seems to be the most important factor to people when assessing whether or not to accept a friend request. In particular, people value knowing someone's name, having met that person, and how well they know and get along with someone. However, the less familiar people are with whomever friends them, the more they take into account that person's mutual friends and network. In addition, people have about a 73% chance, overall, of having their friend request accepted, with this percentage significantly increasing for acquaintances and buddies and dropping to around 50% for distant strangers.

II. INTRODUCTION

Social networks serve as extensions of people's social worlds. They also serve as boundaries that extend the number of people individuals can contact and limit who can contact them in return. They consist of strong and weak ties. Characteristics of these ties include closeness, context, and familiarity. A typical user's friends are made up of only a select few close ties with the rest consisting of weaker but still significant and active ties. The number of weak ties tends to increase with technology while the amount of close ties stays relatively the same. Online social networks enable people to maintain contact with weaker ties when they

otherwise wouldn't keep in touch. Other people elect to maintain a higher level of privacy in order to control who has access to their information. For example, individuals may choose different profile settings for different categories of friends, thereby keeping their work friends separate from their close friends. Nonetheless, by increasing their friend network, people are broadening the meaning of "friend," making sustaining or keeping track of all of these relationships quite challenging (Boyd and Donath 79-81). A fairly significant group of people exist who are willing to become online friends with others without actually knowing the individual. This fact begs the question "why are people willing to become friends with strangers?". According to Boyd and Donath in "Public displays of connection," people may simply desire to have more online friends. Other people may find the requester interesting. In a number of cases, the person may live in the same city or attend the same school, both of which could justify becoming friends. Others may accept a request because of the quantity and quality of the mutual friends they share with the other person, providing common ground. Knowing someone is connected to people they already know and trust is one of the simplest ways of forming trust with a new acquaintance. Public connections are a way of expressing that people think someone is reliable. If someone makes up information or exaggerates the truth, real friends would know and probably say something (73-4).

There are three defining factors of online relationships that differ from real world friendships: links are mutual, public and nondiscriminatory. If A includes B as a connection, then B has agreed to list A as a connection as well. Links are also public. By becoming friends with someone, people give the other person the ability to view their information, and other people can see the connection as well. Finally, links are nondiscriminatory. Facebook and other social media sites do not make distinctions between close and distant friends.

Based on this background research, we wanted to evaluate the reasoning behind and factors that affect people's friending habits on Facebook, particularly concerning familiarity with other users and whether or not someone's mutual friends actually play an important role when deciding to accept, reject, or ignore a friend request. In the group's opinion, Facebook users evaluate friend requests based on an internal "acquaintance rating" that determines whether they are familiar enough with someone to friend that person; a critical point exists along this scale at which friend request acceptance rates peak.

III. DESCRIPTION

The group used several different theories to support our experiment's hypothesis. One of these theories is Dainton's communication theory, which looks at the way people create, sustain, and manage meaning with others. Communication theory investigates how people produce relationships and give them meaning. Another concept of communication theory considers how a person says or communicates something gives it meaning. Relating this concept to the experiment, the group decided to look at who accepted our friend requests, and, with the aid of a survey, what reasons people are accepted as friends. The group also took an ethnographic approach by participating in the experiment as observers. Ethnography can be described as an observational method of studying the nature of the people being observed. Data can be collected in an ethnographic study through participant observation, interviews, or questionnaires. Our group acted as spectators, as discussed by Sturken and Cartwright, since the subjects were humans.

In addition, in "Public displays of connection," Donath and Boyd claim that social networks are part of one's social world. They act as boundaries, controlling the number of people

someone can contact and who can contact that person in return. This idea can be directly applied to Facebook since users are in control of who they accept or reject. Donath and Boyd discussed a typical network as consisting of 3-6 close ties and 5-15 less close but still significant ties. Donath and Boyd claim that social networking sites such as Facebook provide a way for people to be in contact with those weaker ties with whom they would not normally keep in touch. By increasing the number of friends in a network, the original meaning of “friend” is broadened (79-81). The group believed the experiment would, in particular, reveal this expanding meaning of friend.

With Facebook being among the largest social sites on the internet, it has become increasingly one of the prominent forms of communication. With our research, we hoped to deconstruct Facebook with special attention given to Facebook friends: how one defines a Facebook friend, how a user chooses who to accept or reject, and the various trends that emerge from these choices. Specifically, our interest lies in determining at what level of friendship acceptance rates peak. By utilizing the Brunswick model, which states that people’s individual behavior and what is produced by it is representative of their personality, we seek to analyze the collective Facebook personality as it concerns friending practices by examining real friend requests instigated for the sake of study (Utz). Since it has been shown that Facebook profiles accurately represent personality, the same may hold true for Facebook friends and offline friends: by studying online friends, we could discover trends that are true in the real world (Utz). However, by connecting with someone online, your relationship becomes more visible than it would ever be in real life, imposing a degree of social risk that users must evaluate before accepting a friend request (Donath). Despite the blanket term “friend” used by Facebook to describe connections, many different types of relationships can develop on Facebook, making the term friend quite difficult to define, especially online. A Facebook user may accept a request

from someone they do not know “if only to avoid offending them,” resulting in a strange limbo in which they are friends online but may not describe each other as friends in real life (Boyd). Part of the challenge of investigating friending practices lies in that friending rules vary drastically from person to person. Some people take a liberal approach and accept most anyone who asks while other people prefer to keep a small group of close friends online. By examining a random group of people these marginal friending practices can be minimized, yielding an average representation of what level of friendship most people are comfortable accepting on Facebook.

IV. METHOD

In order to examine the reasoning behind and factors that affect people's friending practices on Facebook and to test the thesis, the group devised a two-stage process. The first stage of the process was the friending stage, which involved the recording of our participant's actions, and the second stage was a survey researching our participant's opinions about friending habits. In the first stage of the process, each group member friended approximately twenty to thirty people belonging to our target group. The target group consisted mostly of people that were already friends with other members of the group and belonged to the Georgia Tech community. The reason that the group friended friends of group members was so that when we moved on to the second stage, the group members would be able to send the surveys to their own friends instead of to random people that they did not know. For instance, if Colin friended Daniel's Facebook friend John Doe, who is a distant stranger to Colin, Daniel would send John the survey rather than Colin sending it to him as a distant stranger. The process was shaped this way in order to make it more likely for the people that we friended to respond to the survey. In

order to do the friending, the entire group met together for a friending session and searched for people to friend that fell under the categories of Distant Stranger (DS), Familiar Stranger (FS), Acquaintance (A), and Buddy (B) as perceived by each group member. These 4 categories were inspired by an article written by the author of the “Life of J” blog. The author introduced a scale of friendships, Acquaintance(A), Buddy(B), Consultants (C) and Dearest (D), which he applied in his personal life. Finding that a scale of friendship would be useful to this research, the group revised the scale, making it fit closer to the situation related to the accepting of a friendship request on Facebook. We have thus defined DS, FS, A and B as the following:

- DS: I've never seen or heard of this person
- FS: I've seen this person around and may have spoken to him/her
- A: I would be comfortable talking with this person and we know each other's names.
- B: I would be comfortable spending time with this person and can have fun with them.

These abbreviations will be found continuously throughout this research paper.

The friending process was done together as a group at relatively the same time in order to standardize the process and to better deal with any problems that arose as a group. The goal was to send out all of the requests within the same time period and wait about a week before entering into stage two of the process. As each group member friended people, he or she also recorded certain data about the people into a shared Google Docs spreadsheet. This data included the name, sex, and total number of friends of the person being friended, the name of the group member doing the friending, the name of the group member already friends with the person, the number of mutual friends between the member friending the individual and the person, the average relationship quality (DS, FS, A, B) of the mutual friends as deemed by the group member, the length of the relationship between the two, the relationship quality of the group

member and the person, and the amount of time taken to accept the request if accepted. All of this data was recorded in order to derive statistics that would be useful when formulating the results.

After sending friend requests to 140 people, the group created a survey to collect further data about their friending practices and sent the surveys about a week after requesting “friendship.” The survey asked for the people’s age, how they would rate their relationship with the group member who friended them, whether the number of mutual friends played a role in the decision to accept or reject the request, the importance of different factors when assessing friend requests, how they would rate their relationships with their Facebook friends, and any friending patterns they may have. Of the 140 people who received friend requests from the researchers, 88 people responded to the survey.

Thus through this two-stage process, we were able to examine people’s Facebook friending practices by examining the experimental subjects’ real-world actions and also through quantitative and qualitative feedback via the spreadsheet and survey. We were able to test whether there is, in fact, an “acquaintance rating” that determines whether people are familiar enough with others to accept their friend requests. Our group gained further insight on the subjects’ friending habits via the survey. We were able to cross-reference the survey with the actions of the subjects in order to determine if what the subjects said actually matched what they did.

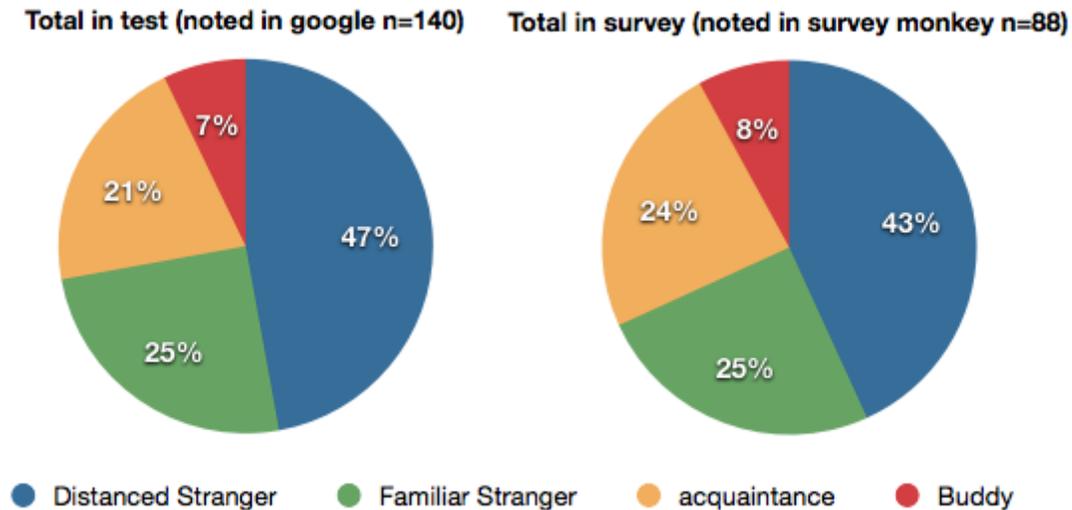
V. RESULTS

As the data was retrieved through two different stages, each stage produced the following quantity of data:

Stage 1: A total of 140 participants were selected to be individuals included in this experiment. As stated previously, the researchers sent personal friend requests to these people.

Stage 2: A total of 88 participants (62.8% of total stage 1 participants) responded to the survey about their facebook friending habits. An analysis of these numbers show that the same percentage of friend categories are present in stage 2 as in stage 1. This means that though the number of participants is different, the representation of the 4 categories remained the same.

Fig. 1.

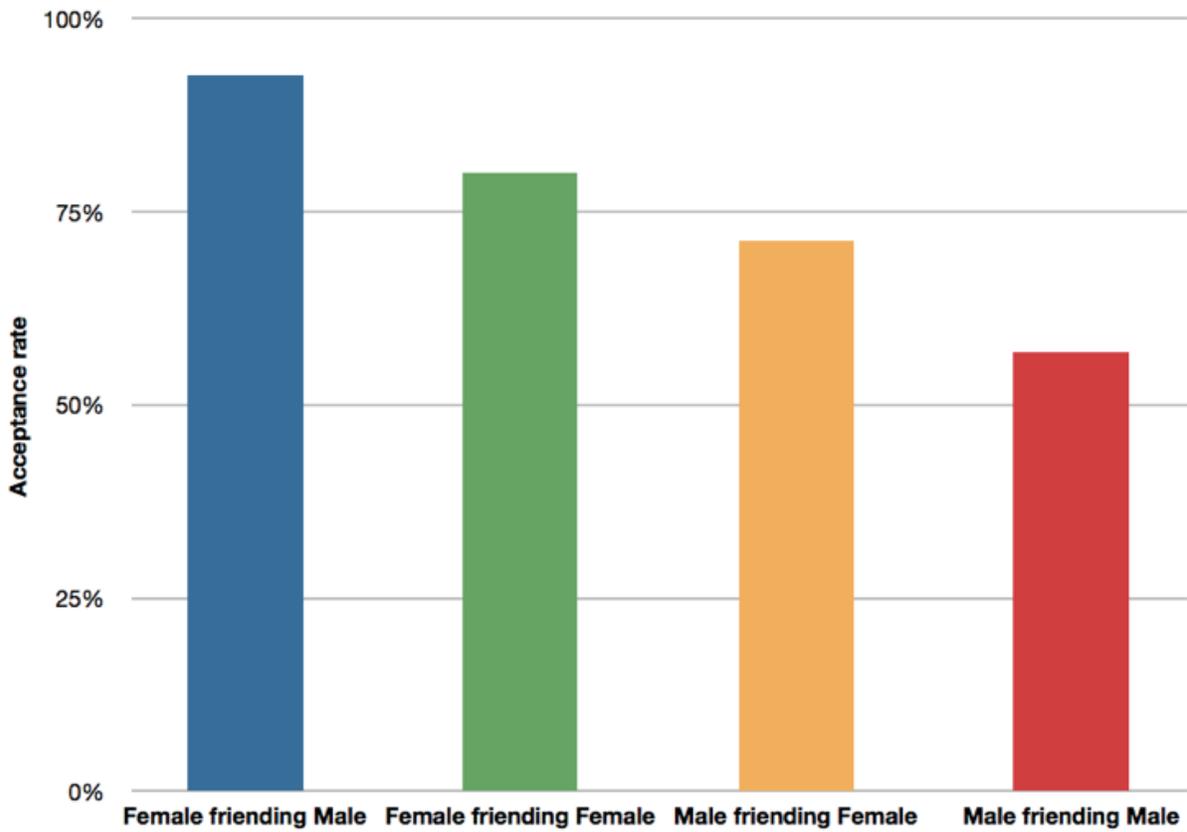


General data:

It took, in general, about 15 hours for an individual in our target group to respond to a friendship request. Our target group had an average of 870 Facebook friends each and an average of 21 mutual friends with the person who requested a friendship. There is a 73% chance of being accepted as a friend by this target group. There is only a 2% difference between males and females when it comes to acceptance rates in this target group. 72% of the males and 74% of the females accepted friend requests. However, males are more likely to accept a request from a

female than from a male. Females only differentiate by 9%, though they are still more likely to accept female requests.

Fig. 2.



Noting that there is only a 9% difference in the acceptance rates between female-male versus female-female and the fact that one female participant stated "[I] don't accept creepy guys," indicates that females are perhaps more aware of the meaning of creating a tie over Facebook.

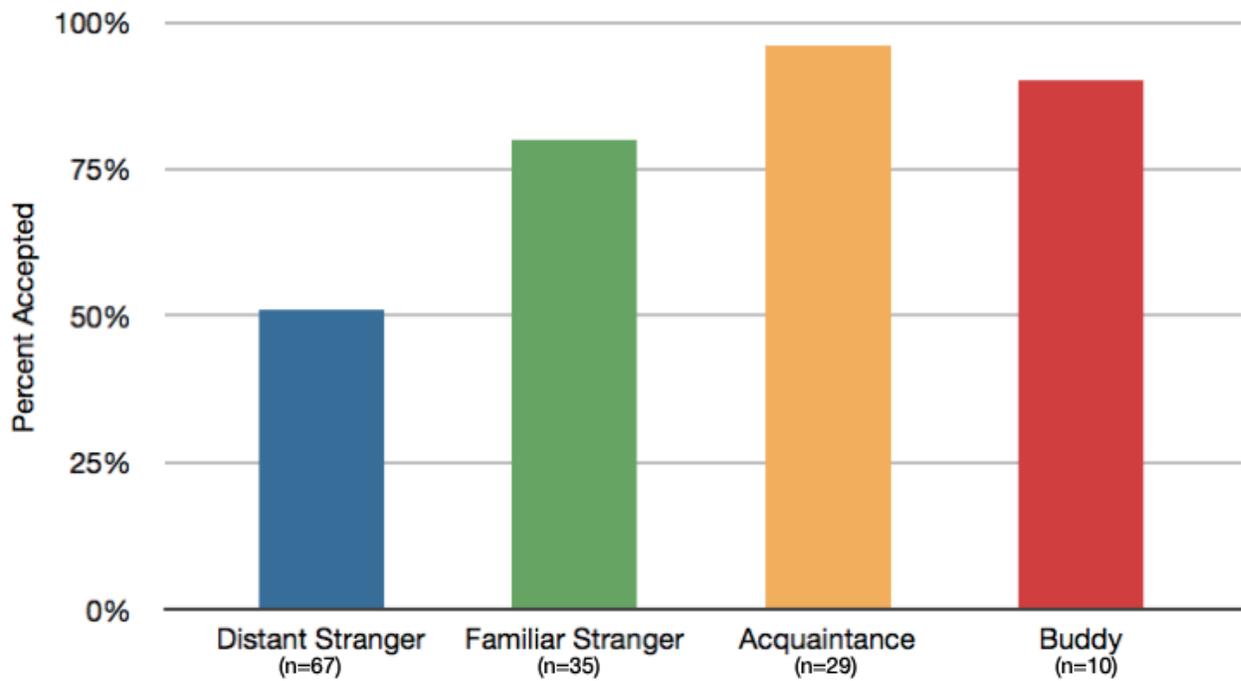
A general hypothesis exists that states that users with many friends are more likely to accept a request than those with only a few friends. Our data affirms this hypothesis, as it shows

that someone in our target group who accepts a friendship request has, on average, 78 more friends than someone who doesn't accept a request.

Thesis Related Data:

This section covers more of the in-depth data that is of further relevance to our thesis.

Fig. 3.



This graph shows how likely a person is to have a friendship request accepted based on relationship. Note that Buddies are shown as having a lower percentage than Acquaintances. This should not be the case and will be discussed in the sources of error. Importantly, this graph strongly suggests that there is a point, not just between a Distant Stranger and an Acquaintance, but even between a Distant Stranger and a Familiar Stranger where there is a critical change in

the acceptance rate. It suggests that as a person becomes more familiar, acceptance becomes significantly more likely.

Fig. 4.

8. How important are these factors when assessing friends requests?					
	Important	somewhat important	non-important	Don't know	Response Count
Having physically met them	59.1% (52)	34.1% (30)	4.5% (4)	2.3% (2)	88
Knowing their name	67.0% (59)	28.4% (25)	3.4% (3)	1.1% (1)	88
How well I know them	15.9% (14)	63.6% (56)	19.3% (17)	1.1% (1)	88
How well I get on with them	8.0% (7)	52.3% (46)	35.2% (31)	4.5% (4)	88
How many mutual friends we have in common	14.8% (13)	50.0% (44)	34.1% (30)	1.1% (1)	88
How well you know the mutual friends	20.5% (18)	52.3% (46)	26.1% (23)	1.1% (1)	88
The person's network (school/work/etc)	17.0% (15)	46.6% (41)	36.4% (32)	0.0% (0)	88
Their interests/music/etc	0.0% (0)	4.5% (4)	94.3% (83)	1.1% (1)	88
Their appearance (in case you haven't met the person)	6.8% (6)	33.0% (29)	53.4% (47)	6.8% (6)	88
			answered question		88

Each survey participant was asked to fill out this chart according to what they felt was important, somewhat important, and not-important. The table tells us on which factors the target group focuses as they evaluate a friendship request.

The list, from most important to least important, goes as following:

1. Knowing their name
2. Having physically met the person
3. How well I know them
4. How well you know the mutual friends
5. How well I get along with them
6. How many mutual friends we have in common
7. The person's network (school/work/etc)
8. Their appearance
9. Their interests/music/etc

Notice that our survey indicates that knowing someone's name is more important than actually meeting someone in order to accept them as a friend. This a departure from real life in the sense that hearing a person's name would never make anyone consider themselves friends with that person.

Fig. 5.

Relating to the statistics above, an interesting occurrence was found:

		Mix A	Mix B	Mix C	Mix D	Only DS
How many mutual friends we have in common	Important	8.7% (2)	14.3% (2)	14.3% (2)	10.0% (1)	45.5% (5)
	somewhat important	52.2% (12)	35.7% (5)	71.4% (10)	60.0% (6)	36.4% (4)
The person's network (school/work/etc)	Important	17.4% (4)	0.0% (0)	21.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	54.5% (6)
	somewhat important	52.2% (12)	57.1% (8)	50.0% (7)	70.0% (7)	27.3% (3)
How well you know the mutual friends	Important	17.4% (4)	7.1% (1)	35.7% (5)	20.0% (2)	45.5% (5)
	somewhat important	60.9% (14)	71.4% (10)	50.0% (7)	50.0% (5)	36.4% (4)

In this table, one can note that DS rely more on mutual friends, the value of mutual friends, and on the requester's network. Continuing on the argument about acceptance rates, the data shows that as people who are not familiar rely on other factors when making a decision. When a Facebook user does not know the requester, then he or she turns to the things they share in common, the friends they have in common and a common network. We see that distant strangers almost completely rely on those 3 factors, and very little on anything else.

Summary of results:

Through our research and survey, we found that most people rely on familiarity when assessing whether or not to accept a friend request. People especially value knowing someone's name, having met that person, and how well they know and get along with the individual. However, as people become less familiar with the person who friends them, they are more likely

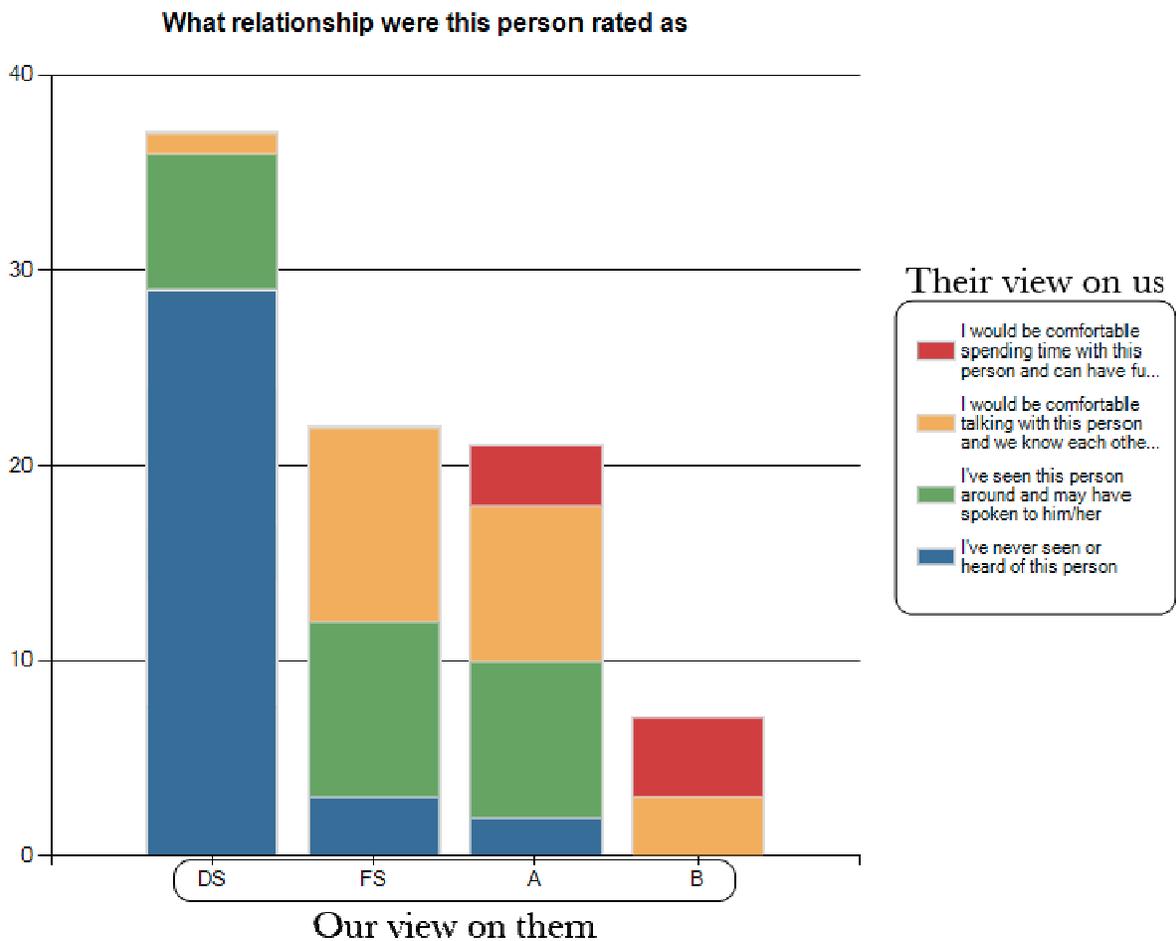
to take into account that person's mutual friends and network. Furthermore, people have about an overall 73% chance of having their friend request accepted. This percentage significantly increases for acquaintances and buddies and decreases to around 50% for distant strangers. This information generally supports our thesis that Facebook users look mostly at familiarity when evaluating friend requests and that acceptance rates peak at the acquaintance level.

Sources of error:

1. Since the percentage of category representations isn't even, our data may be inaccurate. We would need equal number of participants in each category (DS, FS, A and B) to be able to compare the 4 different groups. Our test leans towards having many more DS than the other three categories (FS, A and B). It becomes very hard to say anything definitive about FS, A, and B because each participant in these categories comprises such a large percentage of the total and can throw off averages.
2. Following the error above, we have an uneven representation of gender in the categories, which means our generalizations on gender and behavior could be inaccurate. We would need to have an equal representation of each gender in each friendship category to draw any statistical connection.
3. In the real world, what one person thinks of another may not be reciprocated. The group has evaluated each tie to the participants, but we have also asked our participants to evaluate the friendship requester. This has created a somewhat odd balance of our categories which we chose to look past. We have done this based on the possibility that participants have misunderstood the survey (which there are hints of in our data), and furthermore group members having a personal

understanding of each category. The following figure (3.0) shows the difference between the two parties' understandings of the strength of a tie.

Fig. 6.



If the group's evaluations of the ties with the participants matched those evaluations by the participants of the group members perfectly, then the first column would be all blue, the second all green, the third yellow, and the fourth red. It is interesting to note how the yellow color is represented in each category, indicating that the target group is more welcoming towards the idea of what an acquaintance might be.

4. The males and female acceptance rate comparison may be influenced by an uneven number of male and female requesters. The group had two females and four males. Seventy six requests were made to females and only sixty four requests were made to males. Furthermore, it is unclear what the ratios of friendship categories are within these numbers. To claim anything about gender and acceptance rate would require an equal distribution in friendship categories for males and females.

VI. FUTURE WORK

Because our research on Facebook friending practices only covered a very small and unique group of subjects, i.e. those belonging to the Georgia Tech network, there is much room for diversification in future projects. While the data collected was more pertinent to college age students, a later research project could just as easily involve a different age group, or even span all age groups for that matter. Perhaps friending practices differ heavily across generational gaps, or perhaps the data culled from the experiment holds true across all ages. In fact, age is not the only factor that could be assessed in future works. Other identifiers like culture and geography could play just as pertinent a role as age, and would be well advised to research further.

Another aspect of this research project that would be well worth looking into for future work is the way friendship quality is assessed. The group's research focused on four distinct tiers of friend types: Distant Stranger, Familiar Stranger, Acquaintances, and Buddies. While this approach suited the project well enough, it would be beneficial for future researches to further develop these categories, or perhaps abandon these categories all together for a different approach.

A problem faced with keeping the research within a certain network, Georgia Tech in this case, is that the subject pool was rather limited and perhaps biased to a certain extent. One way to accurately gather data for a broad range of subjects is to simply collect a larger sample set. Expecting a similar rate of subjects participating in the post-friending survey (about 63%), a much larger data pool would yield more accurate results and minimize erroneous results like the fact that our experiment showed a higher acceptance rate for Acquaintances than for Buddies.

Future work in this category could benefit from a longer period to allow for friendship acceptances. In our study, we simply used a week long deadline to determine whether a friendship request was accepted, deferred, or rejected. If the time period to accept a request was lengthened or even removed, there could be a significant change in the data collected. In fact, the time taken for each subject to accept or reject their request could become a completely new area of study.

Another important change that could be implemented in future work is the method in which the surveys are sent to the participants. This experiment involved sending the surveys to every subject that was friend requested, regardless of whether they accepted or not. The surveys were sent out about two weeks after the initial friending was done; the result was a response rate of about 63%. A different approach may be better suited, where the surveys are sent immediately after an acceptance or rejection. This approach could correlate to a higher survey response rate, and therefore more accurate data.

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahn, Yong-Yeol, Han, S., Kwak, H., Moon, S., and Jeong, H.. (2007). Analysis of topological characteristics of huge online social networking services. WWW '07: Proceedings of the 16th international conference on World Wide Web. (pp. 835-844).New York, NY, USA. <<http://www2007.org/papers/paper676.pdf>>.

- Examines social network structure on three different social sites, focuses heavily on mathematical models to represent structure. Probably not very useful for our project.

Boyd, Danah. (2008). Taken Out of Context: American Teen Sociality in Networked Publics. <<http://www.danah.org/papers/TakenOutOfContext.pdf>>.

- Huge discourse covering online teen socializing, has two relevant sections for us: “Controlling Access: Public or Private?” (pg 159), “Peer Relations and Teen Friendship” (pg 173), and “Strategies for Friending” (pg 213). The strategies for friending is particularly relevant and focuses on the teen demographic which resembles those that we will be researching.

Buckman, Rebecca. “Too Much Information?” Wall Street Journal (2005). Web <http://www.wsjclassroomedition.com/monday/mx_05dec12.pdf>.

- Although facebook was rather new when this article was written, info is still pertinent.
- This article discusses whether there is a need for facebook to determine which profiles are fake or illegitimate. It raises the question of how much fake profiles are affecting the facebook experience for legitimate users. This can be tied into those subjects who accept friendship requests with complete strangers.

Dainton, Marianne, and Elaine D. Zelle. “Introduction to Communication Theory.” *Applying Communication Theory for Professional Life: a Practical Introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2005. Print.

- Communication theory investigates how we produce relationships and give them meaning.
- We acted as participant-observers in our project, using an ethnographic approach to our research with the assistance of a survey, both of which are types of communication theory experiment designs.

Debatin, B., Lovejoy, J. P., Horn, A.-K. and Hughes, B. N.. “Facebook and Online Privacy: Attitudes, Behaviors, and Unintended Consequences.” *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 15 (2009): 83–108. Web. 26 Oct. 2010.

- Part of the research asks people what kinds of friends they accept (people they know, people they have heard of through others, or anyone who requests them). The article also deals with the idea of privacy on Facebook.

Donath, Judith, and Boyd, Danah. (2004). Public displays of connection. *BT Technology Journal*, 22 (4), 71-82. <<http://www.danah.org/papers/PublicDisplays.pdf>>.

- Covers some of the basic aspects of online social media, defines properties of online friendships and what these friendships say about a person. Has information that could be very useful introductory material.

Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of Facebook “friends:” Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(4), article 1. <<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol12/issue4/ellison.html>>.

- “Regression analyses conducted on results from a survey of undergraduate students (N=286) suggest a strong association between use of Facebook and the three types of social capital, with the strongest relationship being to bridging social capital”
- Brings light on online social capital.

Geertz, Clifford. “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight.” *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York, NY: Basic, 2008. Print.

- Understanding the role of the participant-observer.

Gilbert, Eric, and Karahalios, Karrie. (2009). Predicting Tie Strength With Social Media. Proceedings of CHI. Boston, MA April 4-9. <<http://social.cs.uiuc.edu/people/gilbert/pub/chi09-tie-gilbert.pdf>>.

- Discusses the dimensions of tie strength between friends and how tie strength can be predicted by looking at facebook interaction. Tie strength is a very similar idea to our Acquaintance Rating, our ABC scale encompasses several of the dimensions outlined here.

J. Brown. “Six degrees to nowhere.” *Salon.com*, September 21, 1998.

- “Why do I care that there are 26,075 people who are six degrees away from me? Well, I'm not quite sure. And what can I do with these sudden cozy friends”
- Talks about sixdegrees.com and questions why we care about connecting with people we haven't met in real life.

Online Persuasion in Facebook and Mixi: A Cross-Cultural Comparison <<http://www.springerlink.com/content/7ln3778rmq22441j/fulltext.pdf>>.

- A study of facebook involving persuasion, captology, social networking, persuasive technology, behavior chain, persuasive design, and cultural comparison.

Rosen, Christine. "Virtual Friends and the New Narcissism." *The New Atlantis* (2007): 15-31. Web.

- The relevant part of this source creates a distinction between real-world friendship and online "friendship" by explaining that online social networking sites encourage gaining as many friends as possible and that doing this satisfies a need for status more than a need for companionship.
- This article is pertinent to our research because it describes important factors as to why people add hundreds of friends on social networking sites.

Sibona, Christopher "Business School student finds top reasons for Facebook unfriending". *University of Colorado Denver Newsroom* n.p. 5th Oct. 2010. Web. 22nd Oct. 2010. <<http://www.networkworld.com/news/2010/100510-facebook-unfriending-colorado.html>>.

- Brings to light top 3 actions that makes a person unfriend another on facebook.

"The 4 Levels of Friendship." Web log post. *Life of J.* Wordpress.com, 2 Dec. 2007. Web. <<http://lifeofj.wordpress.com/2007/12/02/the-4-levels-of-friendship/>>.

- Determining the different types of friendship.

Thelwall, Mark. "Homophily in MySpace". *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* Volume 60, Issue 2, (2009): 219-231. Web. 22 Oct. 2010. <<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/asi.20978/full>>.

- "The results showed no evidence of gender homophily but significant evidence of homophily for ethnicity, religion, age, country, marital status, attitude towards children, sexual orientation, and reason for joining MySpace."
- Brings light on what connects people. Talking in connection of myspace instead of facebook.

Thompson, Clive. "Brave New World of Digital Intimacy." *The New York Times*. 07 Sep 2008. Web. 26 October 2010. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/07/magazine/07awareness-t.html?_r=1&pagewanted=1&th&emc=th>.

- The relevant part of this article explores what type are friendships people have with the people they interact with through social media. The article references the anthropologist

Robin Dunbar who argues that humans have a hard-wired upper limit on the number of people he or she can personally know which is around 150, or the "Dunbar number."

- Thompson explores whether users of social media are increasing their Dunbar number. This article is pertinent to our research because it explores the numerous weak ties people have through social media and how this enriches or detracts from people's lives which may lend itself to reasons why people friend who they friend.

Tong, Stephanie, Tom, Brandon Van Der Heide, Langwell, Lindsey, and Walther, Joseph B.. "Too much of a good thing? The relationship between number of friends and interpersonal impressions on Facebook." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 13.3 (2008): 531-49. Web. 26 Oct. 2010.

- The article examines the relationship between one's number of friends and observers' ratings of attractiveness and extroversion, suggesting that one's number of friends may indicate one's popularity. It also discusses how the definition of "friend" has expanded and become more superficial to include mere acquaintances.

Utz, Sonia. (2010). Show me your friends and I will tell you what type of person you are: How one's profile, number of friends, and type of friends influence impression formation on social network sites. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 15 (2), 314-335. <<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2010.01522.x/pdf>>.

- Mainly covers how the friends one has online defines that person's personality. Not completely relevant but has a few interesting thoughts on what people look for when friending.

Wang, S. S., Moon, S., Kwon, K. H., Evans, C. A., and Stefanone, M. A.. "Face off: Implications of visual cues on initiating friendship on facebook." *Computers in Human Behaviour* 26.2 (2010): 226-34.

- This article explores the willingness of people to "friend" or accept "friends" based on appearance and gender. It also mentions that older teens are more likely to be Facebook friends with people that they do not know, indicating that age may be a factor to further explore when investigating Facebook friending practices. Additionally, the article discusses how people select what is displayed on their profiles for potential "friends" to see, thereby creating their "digital selves."