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SOCIAL MEDIA WITHIN COOPERATIVE EXTENSION: OPPORTUNITIES, RISKS, & BARRIERS

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Research Questions

- How does Cooperative Extension utilize social media to connect with people in a different way?
- Is Social Media seen as an effective communication platform? Is it worth it for Cooperative Extension to utilize this resource?

Literature Review

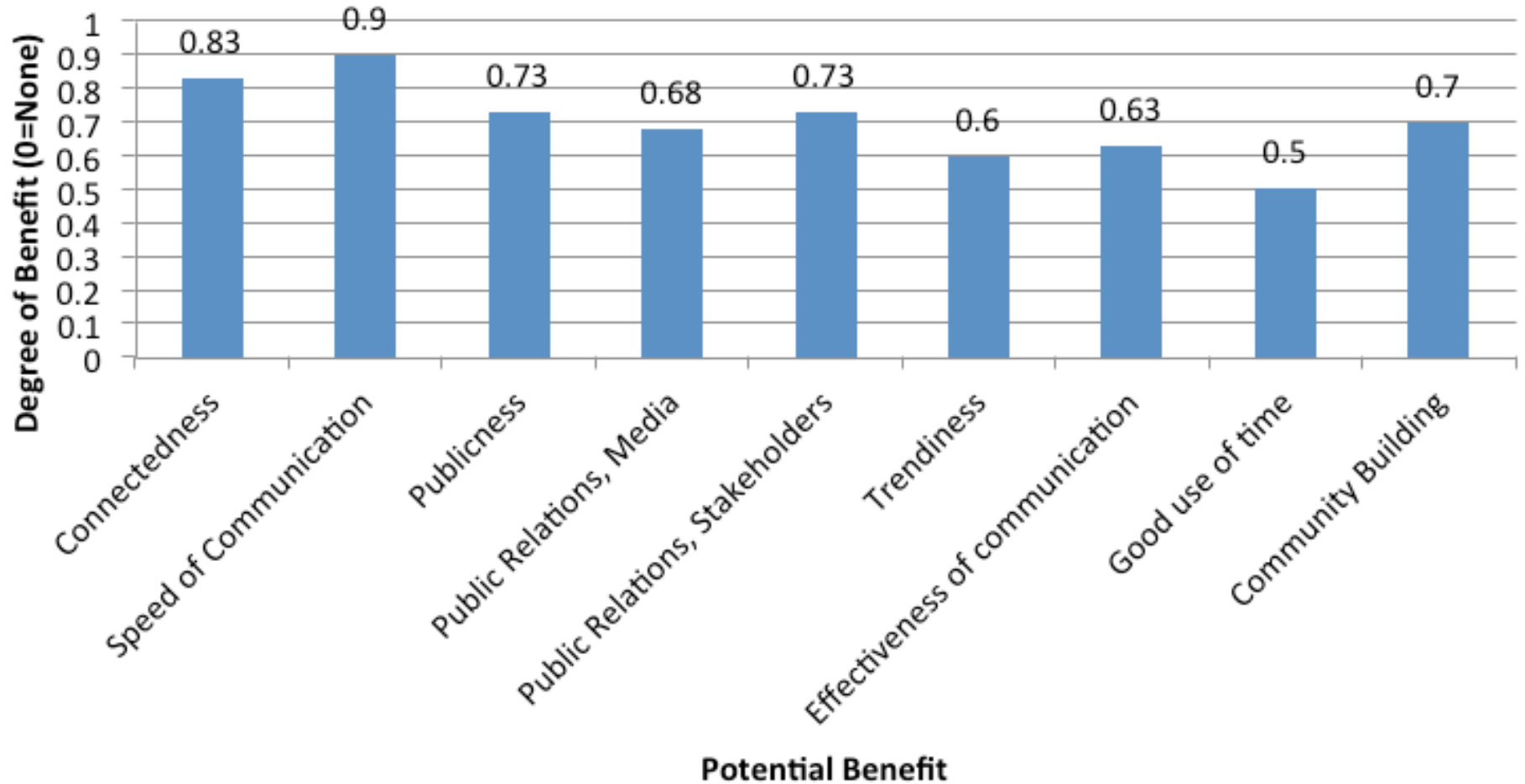
- Social network sites are powerful tools that can improve a group's welfare and rate of information exchange (Skelly, 2005).
- Social media have transformed non-profit organizations in not only the way they function internally, but in how they connect with those they serve (Kanter, 2009).

Methodology

- Study 1: In-depth interviews with 27 Cooperative Extension agents (17=NY, 10=Wisconsin)
 - Both rural (80%) and urban areas
 - Varying amounts of social media & extension experience
 - Transcription and analysis of interviews
- Study 2: Survey of NY exec directors (42 responses out of 56 requests)

Key opportunities

Figure 2: Perceived Benefits of Using Social Media

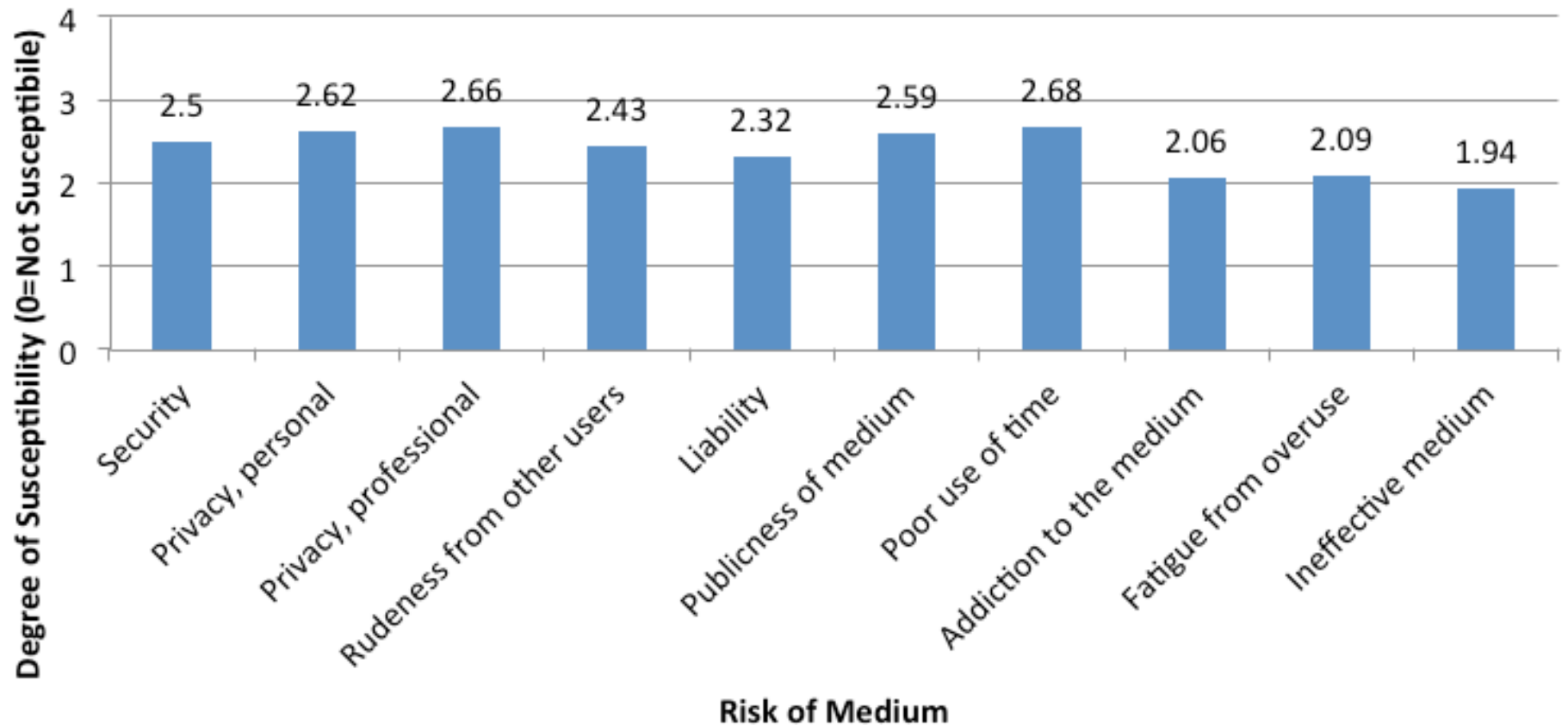


Findings

- “I think a lot of it is that connectivity. [Social media] let you have friends and fans and stuff. It’s an easy way of reaching out to people who are also interested in the services that we provide.”

Key Risks

Figure 1: Perceived Risks of Using Social Media



Additional Issues

- pressure to use social media
- access

Perceived mode of stakeholder internet connection

Type of Connection	Percentage
Dial-up	14.3%
Cable or Satellite	42.9%
Other Broadband	47.6%
Mobile	35.7%

Findings

- In rural areas of NYS where internet connectivity is low, extension respondents reported less social media use.

“I don’t see us using Facebook as a way to get the word out. The traditional methods, right now, seem to be working the best.”

Discussion

- Social media is a low-cost supplement to traditional outreach communication.
- Technological challenges, low internet constituent use & perceived lack of control are major barriers to use.

Recommendations

- train in Facebook Insights, etc. to understand evaluation & metrics of social media effectiveness
- divide up roles (promotion vs engagement)
- use tools to pre-schedule “liveness”

Other Issues in Using Social Media for Outreach

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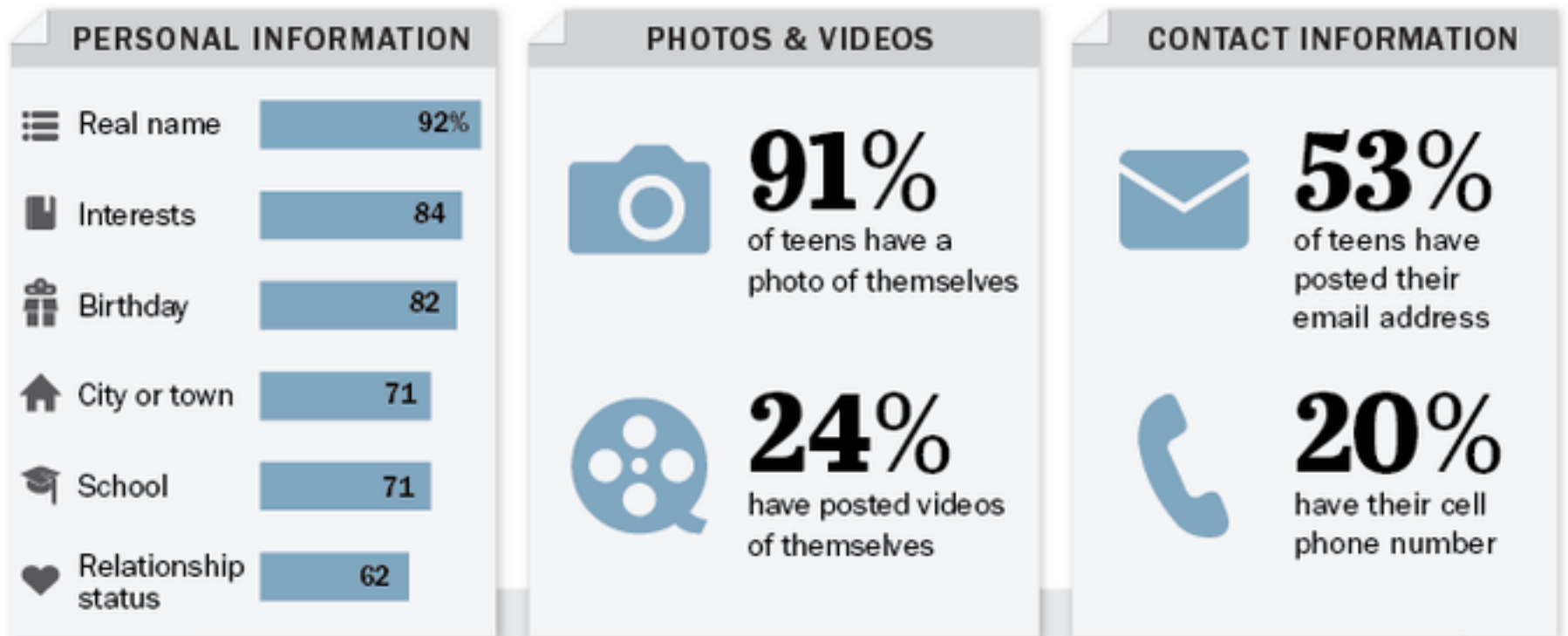
Context Collapse

Privacy

Privacy is the ability to control who has access to personal information, that is, information about an identifiable person

Teens, Privacy, & Social Media

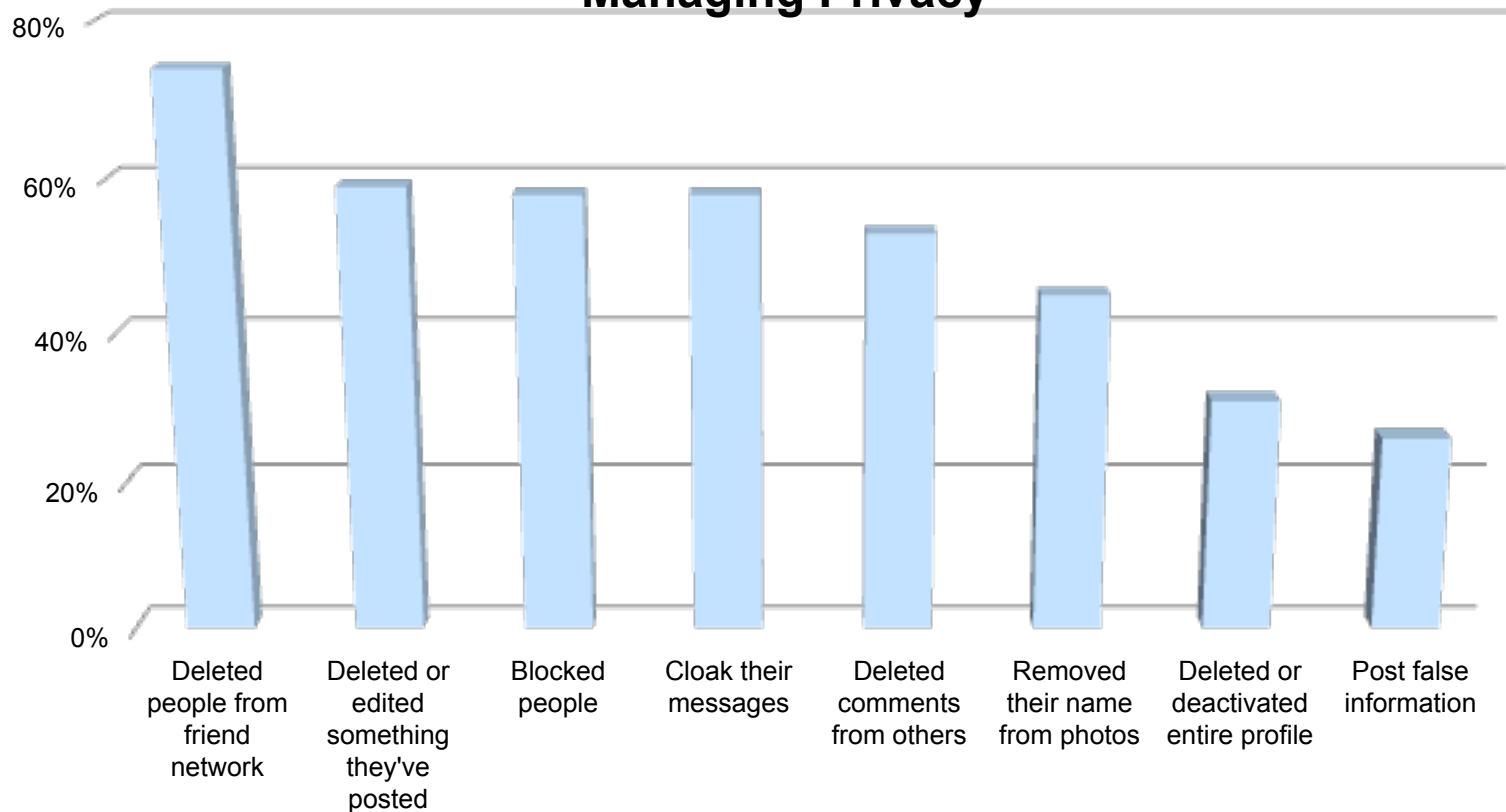
What do teens post?



Teens, Privacy, & Social Media

The Good News

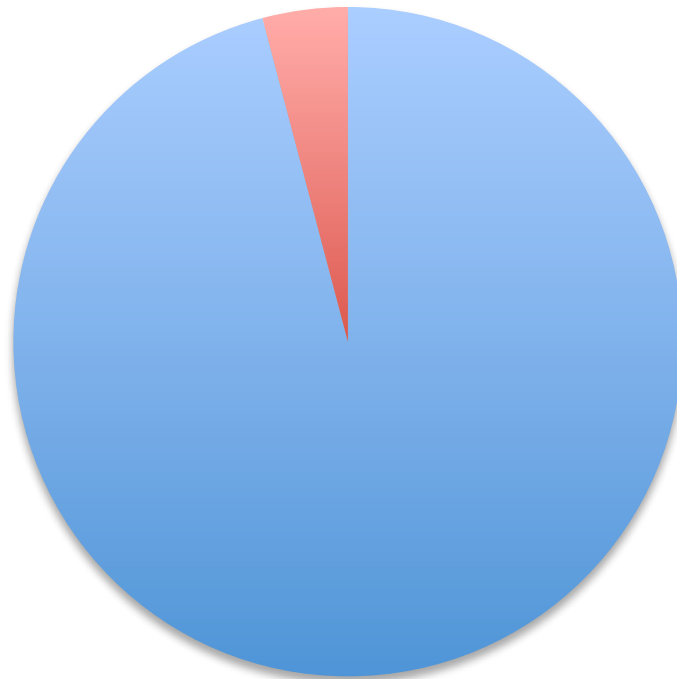
Managing Privacy



 **Update Status**  **Add Photo / Video**  **Ask Question**

What's on your mind?

Facebook Revenue 2015



- Advertising
- Other

If you're not paying for it, you're not the customer. You're the product being sold.

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Best Practices?