

Conceptualizing “Filter-ing”: Affordances, Context Collapse, and the Social Self Online

SAESHA KINI¹
MANISHA PATHAK-SHELAT²
VARSHA JAIN
MICA Ahmedabad, India

Our article advances filter-ing as a vital affordance to understand how and which aspects of social lives dynamically manifest (or are excluded) from online settings. We demonstrate filter-ing’s conceptual potency in context-collapse studies, examining contextualization and context-collapse negotiations online. Drawing from Goffman’s writings on self, identity, and sociality, we demonstrate filter-ing in the self-presentational practices of young, urban Indians on popular online platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp. Our research illustrates the ongoing, relational, communicative, performative, situational, contingent, and boundary-drawing activities of filter-ing. We highlight the collaborative role enactments of relational friends through team filter-ing. Our discussion and coda discuss the influence of platform design and interface, normative and nonnormative filter-ing, the (in)stability of contextualization, the scope for context-specific inquiries and creative methods, and the strength of filter-ing in identifying excluded and privatized aspects of social life.

Keywords: context collapse, self-presentation, platforms, affordances, social media, Instagram filters, privacy online

New media studies have moved beyond arguments of free-willed virtual identity-experiments toward recognizing the complex sociotechnical negotiations in mediating social lives over online avenues. We propose *filter-ing* as a vital affordance to study the inclusions and exclusions that these negotiations

Saesha Kini: saeshakini.fpm19@micamail.in

Manisha Pathak-Shelat: manisha.shelat@micamail.in

Varsha Jain: varsha.jain@micamail.in

Date submitted: 2021-07-30

¹ Acknowledgment: The authors would like to thank MICA Ahmedabad, India, for the financial support for this research, and Niyati Talwar, former FPM doctoral scholar at MICA Ahmedabad, India, for assisting with the data collection. The authors are thankful to the reviewers and editors for their guidance and feedback in improving the quality of this article.

² Corresponding author Saesha Kini and Manisha Pathak-Shelat are first coauthors. Both have contributed equally to this study.

Copyright © 2022 (Saesha Kini, Manisha Pathak-Shelat, and Varsha Jain). Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd). Available at <http://ijoc.org>.

involve. We review existing literature on *filtering* (sans hyphen), discussing visual filters on social media and filtering in a broader analytical sense (Rettberg, 2014). We also draw from *affordance*, a term initially formulated in ecological psychology and adapted across fields such as design studies, communication, sociology, and science and technology studies. Broadly describing action possibilities relational to human actors and environmental properties, affordance is variously understood today as perceived, communicative, imaginative, vernacular, sociomaterial, relational, multilayered, and platform sensitive (Bucher & Helmond, 2018; Gibson, 2015). Of particular interest to us is *affordance-in-practice* promulgated in Costa (2018) as a nonmedia-centric approach to social media studies. Catalyzing the potentials of filtering (Rettberg, 2014) and *affordance-in-practice* (Costa, 2018), we conceptualize the term *filter-ing* (hyphen included) as the inclusions-exclusions afforded in the multiple and varied realizations of sociotechnical potentialities of social media.

We demonstrate filter-ing's conceptual significance in context-collapse studies. *Context collapse* in new media studies refers to how copresence of multiple disparate audiences, information, norms, and so on, in online settings influences self-presentation(s) (boyd, 2008). Existing context-collapse scholarship ranges from coining the term (boyd, 2008), to widening its conceptual dimensions (Davis & Jurgenson, 2014), to studying its effects on users and their digital practices (Vitak, 2012), and to identifying user negotiations in response to context collapse (Costa, 2018; Pagh, 2020). In addition, Szabla and Blommaert (2020) draw attention to online *contextualization*, or the behavioral modifications and norm-oriented enactments digital users undertake in situation-specific and collaborative interactions with specific audiences. Identifying commonalities among the negotiation strategies, we propose filter-ing as a valuable conceptual lens to capture inclusions and exclusions undertaken in online contextualization and context collapse.

Theoretically informed by Goffman's (1959) works on self-presentation, we discuss the filter-ing practices and negotiations by metropolitan-based Indian youths on four widely used online platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp. Interviews with consociates (i.e., friends, family members, and colleagues of the youths) additionally highlight multiple collaborative role enactments that relational *friends* undertake through *team filter-ing*. Our work reveals the ongoing, multiple, relational, communicative, performative, situational, contingent, sieving, and boundary-drawing activities of filter-ing. While the inquiry itself was carried out before the pandemic, the proposed concept of filter-ing holds an enduring relevance. We posit filter-ing as a timely conceptual tool for new media and communication scholarship to grapple with fast-changing sociotechnical, cultural, political, and economic landscapes and mounting privacy concerns in the age of visibility and connectedness.

We begin the article with a discussion on filtering as an analytical term, followed by the proposed filter-ing that draws from affordance studies. We proceed to review the existing new media studies on context collapse. After discussing the theoretical framework and methodology, we present our findings in two sections. One details platform-wise filter-ing, while the other looks at team filter-ing. Our discussion summarizes the findings and significant contributions, which we follow with a *coda* (a flash-forward) to address filter-ing's limitations and future scope.

Literature Review

Filtering: An Analytical Term

Filtering in common parlance describes the process of removing something unwanted by holding it back ("Filter," n.d.). In the digital scenario, filtering is popularly associated with features available for visual manipulation. Visual filters enhance the subjectivity and experiences of reality for mediated social communication and social connection (Tiidenberg, 2018). The visual-centric platform Instagram provides several filters and editing options to stylize self-presentation and convey personality traits, moods, aesthetics, and effects.

A notable work that suggests going beyond visual-centered notions of filtering is by Rettberg (2014), who discusses filtering as a broader analytical term for the exclusions, inclusions, manipulations, and enhancements that comprise various digital phenomena. Such phenomena range from skin tone bias in digital photography to automation and algorithmic cultures. Rettberg (2014) suggests that different kinds of filtering occur, including technological, aesthetic, social and cultural, and cognitive. Technologies hold distinct filtering affordances and constraints in their design, architecture, and features. To illustrate, Snapchat was considered unique in the initial years for its temporary, self-destructive images and messages, which competing platforms like Instagram have only recently introduced through *Stories* and *Vanish Mode* (Leaver, Highfield, & Abidin, 2020). Cultural and social filters consist of norms, expectations, normative discursive strategies, and deep-rooted beliefs. Such filtering is found in Costa (2018), whose ethnographic study describes how young women in conservative Turkish society post anonymously to avoid negative repercussions. Aesthetic filters enable the aestheticization of everyday lives, while cognitive filters involve sensorial-perceptual filtering of the world. Finally, genre filters refer to genre expectations, such as Tumblr encouraging curatorial and multimodal expression, personal testimonials, and affinity-based participation, which manifest in user practices. Rettberg (2014) emphasizes the dynamic qualities of filtering that often subvert normative filtering expectations and boundaries. For example, while Instagram *Stories* has nine fonts to choose from, the various user-generated filters on Instagram and third-party and independent editing apps (e.g., B612, Hyperlapse) give many other alternatives to help contextualize *Instagrammable* self-presentations. Rettberg (2014) also underscores the relational and entangled nature where multiple filters influence a particular phenomenon. The group feature on popular digital messaging service WhatsApp can involve technological filters (the *Add Participants* option that circumscribes membership), social and cultural filters (group membership through criteria such as gender or religion), and genre filters (posting content suited for a WhatsApp group chat as opposed to *Stories*).

Introducing "Filter-ing" as an Affordance

The previous section discusses *filtering* as a useful analytical term in new media studies. Here we draw from another well-known concept of affordance to propose the concept of *filter-ing* (hyphen included). The concept of affordance has been malleable to diverse theorizations across ecological psychology, design studies, human-computer interaction, communication, and media studies. The term broadly refers to action possibilities enabled or constrained in relation to actors and environmental properties. New media studies and communication scholars have conceptualized affordance as perceived, communicative, imagined,

vernacular, relational and multilayered, and platform sensitive (Bucher & Helmond, 2018; Hookway, 2014; Schrock, 2015). While proposing filter-ing as an affordance, we draw from "affordance-in-practice," which describes the "multiple and varied realizations of the social technical potentialities of social media in different places and social groups" (Costa, 2018, p. 13). We believe this definition incorporates affordance's dynamic and relational aspects and the diversity of mediated engagements.

Filter-ing emerges from the inclusions-exclusions in interactions involving social media architecture and features, platform-specific social norms, and diverse agentic user practices (Davis & Jurgenson, 2014). Our concept is novel compared with social media affordances identified in literature.³ The use of the hyphen in *filter-ing* underscores the intertwining of (a) the processes/the doings/the filtering/the production processes, which involve the inclusion of some settings, features, people, emotion, information, and objects and the exclusion of others, (b) the resultant manifestation/the performance/the filter that is presented to others, and (c) the emerging affordance of filter-ing itself. Filter-ing takes platform specifics into account in two ways. One, the filtering activities on platform architectures and features are examined: the filtering in (inclusion) and the filtering out (exclusion). Two, the platforms as a whole become associated as particular filters in the process. Extending the analytical term of filtering (Rettberg, 2014) to engage with affordance-in-practice (Costa, 2018) provides dynamism to filter-ing in capturing the inclusions-exclusions involved in the multiple and varied realizations of sociotechnical potentialities of social media.

Context Collapse and Contextualization

Filter-ing can serve as a valuable conceptual tool in context-collapse studies, in light of the growing emphasis on sociotechnical practices and negotiations in literature. *Context collapse* (alternately, collapsed context) refers to the eliding or simultaneous situation of formerly distinct spatiotemporal arrangements, actual and imagined audiences, social norms, and information onto a common setting. Context collapse often makes it challenging to differentiate self-presentation strategies, resulting in generic communication on relatively public platforms such as Facebook, which have multiple audiences (Vitak, 2012). In response to context collapse, individuals undertake negotiating strategies, such as concealing personal information or avoiding potentially controversial topics, holding private conversations on nonpublic sites, encouraging collective social norms, and practicing *social steganography*⁴ (Davidson & Joinson, 2021; Marwick & boyd, 2014).

³ Popular social media affordances include persistence, scalability, searchability, and replicability (boyd, 2010), and visibility, editability, persistence, and association (Treem & Leonardi, 2013). Among these, editability affords strategic crafting of communication through techniques such as regulation of expressions, selective targeting, and enhancement. While editability comes closest to the concept of filtering, it is discussed predominantly in the context of organizational communication, as compared with the broader scope of filter-ing. Filter-ing is also keenly attentive to exclusions and the management thereof, besides examining what gets included.

⁴ Social steganography refers to the strategic encoding of information to limit decoding possibility (boyd, 2012).

The conceptual dimensions of context collapse are widened by Davis and Jurgenson (2014), whose work discusses the consequences of an intentional *context collusion* and an unintentional *context collision*. Context collusion can enhance bridging social capital or take a turn for the worse. Likewise, collisions can cause disruptions from unwanted audience members or lead to positive events. Context collapse, collusion, collision, or their management are relational and situation-specific sociotechnical processes that jointly involve "architectural affordances, site-specific normative structures, and agentic user practices" (Davis & Jurgenson, 2014, p. 482). Costa (2018) and Szabla and Blommaert (2020) further explore context collapse's situated and contingent nature. Costa (2018) observes unique user practices among Facebook users in Mardin (Turkey) that preempt context collapse altogether, such as running several parallel Facebook accounts to channel communication to different audiences. Szabla and Blommaert (2020) use a sociolinguistic approach to discuss how social media interactions involve *contextualization*: the constant behavioral modifications and norm-oriented enactments in situation-specific and collaborative interactions with specific audiences.

The existing studies on context collapse and contextualization additionally highlight the role of *Generalized Others*, who become actual/imagined audiences for the performer's self-presentation and maintain situational definition through their own performance (Goffman, 1959). Generalized Others engage in other roles, such as becoming reference groups for active feedback, validation, and posting other-generated content (Zillich & Muller, 2019). They collectively decide norms for online spaces and form online group identities (Patra, 2015). Alternately, they may violate norms intentionally or inadvertently and trigger confrontations (McLaughlin & Vitak, 2012). Self-presenting individuals may be required to engage in relationship management of Generalized Others (Marwick & boyd, 2014).

Reviewing the new media literature on context collapse and contextualization, we observe certain commonalities among the agentic user practices and negotiations. Described variously as self-censorship, social steganography, behavioral modifications, and intraplatform communicational bifurcation, these practices involve the inclusion of/ emphasis on certain elements, actions, settings, emotions, and so on, while others are either excluded altogether or, more interestingly, included/emphasized elsewhere. We propose that filter-ing can serve as a valuable concept to understand the manifold inclusions-exclusions in contextualization and context-collapse negotiations online.

Theoretical Framework

Goffman's writings on self-presentation theoretically inform our inquiry (Goffman, 1959). Goffman's dramaturgical and interactionist account of social life holds an enduring influence in self-presentation and context-collapse studies. In his seminal *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman (1959) discusses how performing individuals strive to maintain a given definition of the situation through self-presentation—that is, the projection of a specific image of oneself to others. Performing individuals also engage in impression management by monitoring the responses of others to their self-presentation. Factors such as the situational particularities of settings, imagined and actual expectations and responses of audiences, the nature of information disclosure, previous interactions and patterns of actions, and expressive equipment available influence self-presentation and impression management. Goffman's (1959) concepts such as front, face, expressive equipment, and impression management share some resonance

with filter-ing. His observations on region and region behavior (*front region*, *back region*, and *outside*)⁵ help us view platform architectures and features as performative sociotechnical elements involved in filter-ing. Goffman (1959) also notes that self-presentation may involve a *team*, that is, individuals whose intimate cooperation helps “maintain a given definition of the situation” (p. 51). Team members are privy to aspects strategically concealed from self-presentation. Other discrepant roles exist that partake in cooperative, collaborative, combative, and dormant capacities. Extending Goffman’s (1959) discussions on team performance and discrepant roles provides nuance into role enactments by relational others who partake in more/other-than audience capacities during filter-ing.

Methodology

We based our study in Mumbai and Delhi, two densely populated Indian megacities characterized by rapid growth, industrialization, urbanization, migration, neoliberalization, commercialization, media convergence and digitization, individualism, and social changes, including women’s public participation and changing sexual mores. The cities also bring the complexities and contradictions of modern social life, including hectic work culture, social orthodoxy, and traditional hierarchies and inequalities by caste, religion, class, and so on (McFarlane, Silver, & Truelove, 2017). We anticipated relatively complex self-presentation activities and greater context-collapse possibilities in residents of these cities, owing to such locational complexities.

We shortlisted four online platforms for the inquiry: three social media platforms—Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat—and the cross-platform digital messaging service WhatsApp. Besides their extensive user base (Kemp, 2021; Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology [MEITY] & Press Information Bureau, 2021), the commonalities and differences among these platforms in terms of architecture, features, social norms, and user practices give scope to study the distinct, shared, and relational dynamics of filter-ing on these settings.

Sixty participants were interviewed in total, including *principal participants* and two to four consociates or relational *others* of the principal participants, such as immediate and extended family, friends, and peers. The principal participants were between 18 and 30 years of age, belonged to the “A” sociodemographic class, as per the New Consumer Classification System (a tool for classifying consumers in India by their education level and number of durables owned), and self-reported at least two to three hours of daily online activity on multiple online platforms (IAMAI & Nielsen, 2019). Such a criterion was not applied for consociates to capture the diversity of role enactments by relational others. Table 1 provides demographic details for the main participants.

⁵ The place where self-presentation is held is the front region (or *frontstage*) whereas the “place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by a performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course” (Goffman, 1959, p. 112) is the back-region (or *backstage*). Outside are residual spaces that neither serve as frontstage or backstage, with respect to a particular performance.

Table 1. Participant Demographics.

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	City	Occupation
Akshay	28	Male	Delhi	Architect
Shalini	26	Female	Delhi	Marketing
Karan	26	Male	Delhi	Marketing
Shanaya	23	Female	Delhi	Architect
Poonam	26	Female	Delhi	Analyst
Yamini	24	Female	Delhi	Student
Samyukta	25	Female	Delhi	Journalist
Adwait	24	Male	Mumbai	Software Engineer
Tilak	24	Male	Mumbai	Student
Ruhi	22	Female	Mumbai	Student
Dev	22	Male	Mumbai	Student
Rudra	29	Male	Mumbai	Marketing
Sushmita	21	Female	Mumbai	Student
Rohan	29	Male	Mumbai	Sales
Animesh	25	Male	Mumbai	Human Resource
Dhara	23	Female	Mumbai	Student

The interviewing process was completed over six months in the year 2018. We recruited participants by posting about our study on digital platforms. Eligible participants who expressed interest were then approached in person. Purposive and snowball techniques were used in which the principal participants recommended potential consociates. One of the coauthors and a doctoral scholar, both trained qualitative researchers, visited the respective cities to conduct face-to-face semi-structured in-depth interviews of 45–60 minutes. To gain some background on the participants' social media presence, the interviewers surveyed their public profiles before the interviews, having obtained prior consent. Many participants themselves pulled out their smartphones midinterview to illustrate certain aspects under discussion. We then employed thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and constant comparison method (Charmaz, 2006).

The following questions guided the inquiry:

R1: How does filter-ing afford contextualization and negotiations of context collapse online across Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp? How do interactions of platform architectures, features, and affordances, platform-specific social norms, and agentic user practices influence filter-ing on the platforms above in distinct, shared, and relational ways?

R2: What are the role enactments of relational others in the individuals' filter-ing?

Analysis

The first section of our analysis examines filter-ing on the four platforms under consideration: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp. We have platform-wise subsections to highlight prevailing filter-ing on each platform, and we pay equal attention to the (changing) relational dynamics among the platforms. The second section discusses the roles and practices of relational others partaking in filter-ing. Here the focus is on relational *friends* that prominently contribute to team filter-ing. Such friends comprise of strong social ties of the principal participants who are connected both offline and on multiple platforms online.

Filter-ing Social Life Online

We found frequent use of Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp among our participants, with various considerations influencing filter-ing on these platforms. These include architecture, features, and norms on particular platforms, the affordances of other online-offline platforms or settings, the actual or imagined audience expectations, user practices, the nature of information, visual and aesthetic potential, visibility and privacy afforded, sociocultural backgrounds, affective states, temporal factors, and context-collapse probability.

Facebook

Facebook was among the earliest social media platforms to launch in India, in September 2006 (Sircar, 2020). Many participants, now in their 20s, were either teenagers or college-going when Facebook became part of their lives and online identities. Adwait, a software engineer and longtime Facebook user, recounts, "I have been on (Facebook) since the time I was in 12th (grade) . . . it was in 2010." As time progressed, many added (or *friend*ed) diverse social connections on Facebook of different ages, generations, life stages, settings, and intimacy levels. Dhara, a commerce student, comments, "Nowadays there is nobody who is not on Facebook, and if you do not add them then (it's a problem)." This is further complicated by Facebook's real name policy⁶ ("What Names," n.d.) which facilitates easier searchability and traceability compared with platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, or WhatsApp (Brandtzaeg & Lüders, 2018). Facebook's layout change, notably through the Timeline feature, encourages individuals to maintain a narrative biography, making it less conducive to performative discontinuities that might trigger unfavorable collapse (Brandtzaeg & Lüders, 2018). We found many participants projecting a generic image on the platform. Ruhi, a postgraduate student of commerce, explains, "Facebook will give you just a rough idea of the kind of person I am." Most participants considered Facebook unsuitable for intimate and emotional sharing, albeit with exceptions such as offering condolences. Positive emotions and events usually get filtered in on Facebook, while negative ones, such as heartbreak and job loss, are filtered out. Some participants dismissed those posting negative situations publicly as attention-seeking. Others were wary of the unwanted attention that such content might garner from outsiders having little contextual background. "There are too many people on Facebook, and I don't need that much sympathy. Why do I have to discuss my personal

⁶ Profile names cannot be words or phrases or include symbols, unusual capitalization, or offensive words, and they should generally be names that appear on official IDs (with exceptions).

life publicly?" wonders Sushmita, a student of banking and finance, who confides in her best friend intimate moments over WhatsApp or in person.

Facebook is prone to scrutiny from *outsiders*, a term Goffman (1959) uses for people "for whom performers actually or potentially put on a show . . . that is different from, or all too similar to the one in progress" (p. 135). Potential employers are outsiders who review the social media presence of candidates for hiring decisions. Shanaya, a professional architect, learned this the hard way when she had applied for an internship once and was greeted with little enthusiasm over her Facebook filter. She narrates, "The hiring team . . . said I should add more architectural stuff to my Facebook profile. Apparently, my profile made me appear self-centered because of all the display pictures I had put up!" Since then, Shanaya has been actively following architecture-related pages and groups. Some participants made the effort to look presentable on Facebook and other public platforms, anticipating that potential admirers would evaluate their profiles. Dev, an aviation enthusiast, admits to feeling validated when "a girl likes and comments on my post." Ruhi shares that she goes through "[a boy's] profile to find out what kind of a person he is." Filter-ing *presentability* comes with the risk of facing unwanted encounters, with women likelier to bear the brunt. Sushmita found complete strangers on Facebook approaching her with "'Hello' and 'How are you doing' and then asking directly 'Are you single or committed?'" To tackle this, she projects an image of assertiveness. "I find it disturbing if someone who is not a close friend in real life comments on my posts with words like *sexy* [emphasis added]." Sushmita adds, "I message him personally not to post such messages especially on social media." While unwanted encounters did not deter Sushmita's digital participation, pervasive online gender-based harassment and abuse have led many women to filter out altogether from online platforms or use WhatsApp, which is perceived as affording greater privacy (Gauer, Corr, & Gallinetti, 2020).

Norms of public visibility are maintained on one's personal Facebook profile (Costa, 2018). "I have to get alert before uploading on Facebook (since) it's very social with so many people," shares Dhara, who consults her family members before posting photos on the platform. Rudra explains this further, stating, "There are family members (on Facebook) whose mental thinking is not same as us." Such sentiments stem from Indian society's collectivist orientation, in which family and cultural expectations often triumph over individual expression (Diwakar, 2016). Karan, a marketing professional, says he does not share anything that might be "unacceptable in a country like India." This includes pictures featuring his girlfriend, which may evoke an unfavorable response from conservative family members on Facebook and are thus shared on a private Instagram account. Very few participants used Facebook in a manner that is usually reserved for Instagram or Snapchat. While Rohan, a sales professional in his late 20s, has added his family members to Facebook, his friend has managed to keep his Facebook profile family-free. Annoyed by his father's confrontations over his Facebook posts, Rohan's friend filtered out his entire family. He shares, "I rarely add anyone on Facebook except school and college friends or people that I really desire. My dad is blocked along with loads of relatives, many from the USA." Such cases, while few and far between, reveal the multiple filter-ing potentialities on Facebook. Facebook has introduced several privacy features to counter its image as an "open book" (to quote Sushmita), which includes audience customization (Public, Friends, Only Me), restricted list, profile locking, two-factor authentication, and hiding last active status (Protti, 2021). Costa (2018) notably demonstrates how Facebook users in Mardin (Turkey) have mastered such privacy features to manage multiple audience expectations. The limited occurrence of such practices among our participants suggests the possibility of sociocultural differences in filter-ing, as well as the vernacular nature of

affordances, grounding action possibilities in “people’s own perceptions and experiences” (Bucher & Helmond, 2018, p. 241).

Instagram

Instagram launched in 2010 and expanded exponentially in India by 2015, with the 18–24 age bracket as its early adopters (Mathur, 2015). Participants were either college-going or early in their career, a time when friends and colleagues usually become an integral part of people’s social lives. Instagram entered an alternate front stage for the participants to present a relatively intimate and *friend-friendly* filter compared with Facebook, which had become generic and family-friendly (Leaver et al., 2020). Calling Instagram a “more detailed” filter compared with Facebook, Ruhi finds “all her friends whose opinions matter the most, friends I spend almost half my day with, friends who know each and everything about me.” Instagram gives Animesh the feeling of a “social” setting where he posts specific life moments, like “a video of hanging out at Juhu beach (in Mumbai)” and tags his equally active friends on Instagram. While tagging and commenting happen on Facebook, Animesh feels that his timeline on Facebook has become merely reposts of pages that he and others in his social networks follow, rather than self-generated content.

Many participants did not add any of their family members on Instagram. Similar-age siblings or cousins were allowed if participants felt they would not cause trouble. Youth culture finds greater expression on Instagram through posts on nightlife, drinking, premarital relationships, and unconventional interests and lifestyles. Dhara shares, “Boyfriend-related pictures will not go on Facebook (but will be shared on Instagram or Snapchat) . . . party photos, night out, and hookah (smoking).” In such cases, Instagram also served as a relational back region to Facebook, where participants like Rudra could present their “rowdy side.”

Filter-ing is afforded on Instagram through the grid layout and various creative features and formats that stimulate user curation to make content *Instagrammable* (Leaver et al., 2020). Karan’s friend, who lives in one of Mumbai’s liveliest suburbs, has some tips for Karan to improve his Instagram presence. He shares,

Karan should style his posts and hashtags well and improve his fashion sense to attract people. He is using an old phone, so he should replace that for a DSLR camera. Instead of taking pictures at the same restaurants, he should visit popular locations like Gateway of India (in Mumbai).

Instagram is not immune to social norms that influence and restrict the nature of sharing. Such norms may arise from family or hiring agencies’ potential/actual presence, as in the case of participant Rohan, who mentions, “I cannot put up an Instagram post where I’m having hookah (smoking). Relatives just come (and check).” Dominant social scripts on beauty, health, fashion, and so on, also impact the content visibility on Instagram. These pressures are usually more pronounced for women, although men are not immune. Ruhi remarks, “In our college only, there are girls who use smudge-proof eyeliner so they can post pictures anytime and show off that they received 500 likes.” Such filter-ing expectations may demotivate some to reduce posting frequency or deactivate accounts. To quote Yamini,

I am not very active on Instagram now. I used to post pictures once but I could not survive there because people post such incredible and amazing pictures. I just deleted everything I had posted . . . Instagram is really good for those people, but not for me.

Snapchat

Snapchat has only seen a dramatic rise in India in the previous two to three years, leading to a smaller user base compared with Facebook and Instagram (Sekhose, 2021). Participants however viewed the smaller user base of Snapchat as desirable for more intimate disclosures; marketing professional Shalini states, "I usually post post-party pics with Snapchat, where I'd be drinking and smoking. You don't find family or family friends here, which gives freedom to post anything." Such an experience is less afforded on a heavily populated platform like Facebook. Snapchat has gained an exclusivity of its own, providing a "lightweight channel for spontaneous experiences with trusted ties" (Bayer, Ellison, Schoenebeck, & Falk, 2015, p. 956). Snapchat's main draw is the ephemeral, self-destructive *snaps* and messages. While Poonam, a data analyst by profession, is discreet about her Facebook sharing, she has no such qualms for Snapchat, owing to its 24-hour snap deletion feature. She shares, "There was a time when I would post (on Facebook), but then Instagram came . . . so I started using it, and now with Snapchat, I post my photos there." Snapchat has additionally provided multiple features for data privacy, though threats of data leaks also persist. Snapchat has a Screenshot Notification that alerts users when someone screenshots their content. This feature assures Rohan, who filters societally proscribed activities on Snapchat, and a societally sanctioned filter on Facebook. He shares,

I come from a devout Brahmin (caste)⁷ family. So I can't tell anyone that I eat chicken, which is why I post such updates just on Snapchat. Plus you'll know who screenshots it so no one can share it further.

Snapchat has become a lifesaver for Rohan, who says he may be "thrown out of the house" if caught eating nonvegetarian food. The platform makes for a digital getaway place or hideout for connecting with the selected few. To quote Animesh, a human resource professional, "Connecting with persons, be it new or old, starts with Facebook, then WhatsApp, followed by Instagram and then Snapchat, which completes the cycle."

WhatsApp

With a user base of 530 million as of February 2021, WhatsApp is the most used Internet-enabled messaging application in India (MEITY & Press Information Bureau, 2021). "I'm confident that 9 out of 10 people will know about WhatsApp," remarks Ruhi, who credits the platform's addition of video calls, document sharing, and other features over the years for boosting its popularity. WhatsApp has consistently emphasized user privacy through end-to-end encryption and easily implementable features of turning off

⁷ The caste system has been entrenched in the Indian social fabric and affects various facets, including dietary preferences, with many upper-caste Brahmins abstaining from nonvegetarian consumption to maintain ritualistic purity and distinguish themselves from meat-eating castes.

read receipts or adjusting *profile photo* visibility. The platform also affords hypercontextualization through its one-on-one and group chat feature. The WhatsApp groups have a maximum limit of 256 participants per group; however, hacks can work around these restrictions ("WhatsApp Now Allows," 2017). While Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat also have the group feature, Tilak, an accounting student, notes that "WhatsApp groups are more popular and common. If you meet 2–3 people, you can easily create a group in a minute." Our participants had up to 40–50 different groups, including for family members, friends, collegiate connections, colleagues, and communities, and permutations and combinations of these clusters. Ruhi, who wakes up to more than 400 unread messages every morning, shares,

There's one group each for the mother's side and father's side and four groups for maternal and paternal cousins. There are separate groups for graduate and postgraduate college friends, school reunion friends, computer-coaching classes, "studious" groups, kabaddi (sport) and cricket groups, too!

Depending on user needs, these groups are characterized by occupation, life stage, passions and interests, religion, caste, gender, nativity, and so on. Participants engaged in filter-ing related to each group's purpose, audience composition, and norms and activities. Some groups expect enactments of specific role performances on a time-to-time basis. As a follower of Jainism, Dev has two faith-centered WhatsApp groups, one to "upload videos about our culture," and the other, an apartment group exclusively for Jains, "to share religious stuff every day." Some group admins act as gatekeepers, enforcing strict entry barriers to facilitate contextualization and curb context collapse. Animesh and his friend share common WhatsApp groups for cricket and other purposes, however, this is not the case for caste (Pruthi, 2004). "We have a caste-based WhatsApp group where Animesh's entry is a no-no as he does not belong to our caste," shares his friend.

Many participants were comfortable expressing sad feelings on WhatsApp compared with the more public platforms such as Facebook, where such actions are often perceived as attention-seeking. These feelings are communicated through indirect and ambiguous expressions that only select consociates can decode, a phenomenon boyd (2012) termed *social steganography*. "Usually when Sushmita has an argument with her boyfriend, she ends up blanking her WhatsApp DP to convey her feelings to him," shares Sushmita's friend. Other participants took to means such as uploading fewer posts and sharing sad songs. By engaging in such *emotional filter-ing*, participants could share intimate concerns selectively online while avoiding attention from people who are unfamiliar with or undesired to the situation.

WhatsApp filter-ing also has boundaries in terms of what content can be publicly shared on the platform. For instance, the presence of multiple family members makes WhatsApp unsuitable for posting family-disapproved content as a *WhatsApp status* unless suitable privacy measures are implemented. WhatsApp is also susceptible to situations of accidental collapse, notwithstanding its hypercontextualization and privacy features. WhatsApp's ListView chat layout stacks contextual units (i.e., chats, groups) close to each other, with information sometimes reaching the wrong group and people. Rohan, who experienced such incidents, eventually quit all WhatsApp groups. He shares, "I now fear sharing something meant for friends to in-laws' group which also has cousins and children in it. It has happened in the past and created chaos." As a corrective measure, WhatsApp introduced a *Delete for Everyone* option in 2017 that gives users

the option to remove a message before it is *seen* by others. However, the feature can be availed only within an hour of sending a message ("WhatsApp's 'Delete for Everyone' Feature," 2020), and besides, chances are, the recipient has already viewed the message by the time it is deleted.

Table 2 summarizes the key aspects of filter-ing undertaken on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp.

Table 2. Platform-Wise Filter-ing.

Platform Name	Insights
Facebook	Generic, family-friendly filter-ing Multiple varied audiences Higher outsider scrutiny Restricted anonymity Public visibility norms Perception of limited privacy Restricted intimate disclosure
Instagram	Friend-friendly, social filter-ing Limited family presence Potential for youth expression Potential for outsider scrutiny Curated, Instagrammable filter-ing
Snapchat	Intimate, spontaneous, and friend-only filter-ing Limited outsider scrutiny Perception of privacy and anonymity Greater freedom of expression
WhatsApp	Filter-ing mundanities of everyday life Hypercontextualized and group filter-ing Relative privacy and security Emotional filter-ing through social steganography Restrictions of family presence Accidental context collapse

Team Filter-ing

This section suggests that filter-ing involves the presence and participation of multiple acting-individuals whose roles and actions are entangled with online contextualization and context collapse. Our inquiry focuses on *team filter-ing* of relational *friends*, who comprise close and intimate friends, peer groups, colleagues doubling as friends, and, in some cases, siblings and cousins.

Insiders

Close friends become *insiders* when they have greater access to the backstage by being privy to and entrusted with exclusive information, intimate disclosures, and dark secrets (Goffman, 1959). A

friend of Dev shares about the rough breakup Dev experienced recently, which stood in contrast to the filter of confidence that Dev projected on social media (which was also maintained during the interview). The friend discloses,

He wouldn't talk properly to anyone and would make calls after calls to his ex-girlfriend. Only when we asked him about the matter did he tell us about his affair and eventual breakup. We calmed him down. He shared his feelings with us but didn't post it publicly on Facebook.

The activity of calming down Dev after he confided in them reinforces the friend's relational role as a team member. Insiders are privy to secrets of other kinds. A number of Karan's friends highlighted the inconsistencies between his online filter and actual life. One friend says,

We were out one day when he spotted a supercar and told me to take a picture of him next to it. A few hours later, he has posted it on Instagram with a caption "My new car. Thank you dad for the lovely gift."

While being aware of (and disapproving) the deception, the friend played along rather than exposing Karan's online filter-ing.

Insider friends include not only nonbiological relationships but also similar-age siblings and cousins. Ruhi's brother, who is on a common friends-only WhatsApp group with his sibling, shares,

We usually chat and have fun on WhatsApp and are in a common friend's circles too. People would remind us we are brother and sister, but we say no . . . on (WhatsApp) chat, we are friends. It's not the same at home because of mum and dad.

The last line suggests that the siblings practice *double talk* by loosening up, or temporarily filtering out, ascribed role expectations to socialize as *friends* on WhatsApp.

Shills

The backstage roles of friends are often accompanied by front-stage roles as *shills*, or pretend audiences that are a part of the team. Friends are expected, implicitly or expressly, to constantly provide validation through likes, glowing comments, and reposts. Ruhi and her friend have an agreement whereby they compulsorily *like* each other's Instagram feed posts. "If she posts something at night and finds out that I have not 'liked' it by next morning, she calls me up and asks me to do so." Friends also exercise restraint while sharing other-generated content through tagged posts, stories, and so on, to avoid undesirable context collapse. To quote Sushmita's friend, "I don't really consult Sush (nickname) before putting up something that includes her. I don't have to because I know what to post and what not to."

Agents

Friends act as *agents* when they supervise the performing individual's filter-ing on behalf of the audiences (and to the benefit of the performing individual) to preempt untoward incidents (Goffman, 1959). Ruhi's friend mentions, "There are times when Ruhi posts a picture on Facebook, and I tell her it is not meant for Facebook but Instagram. Everyone has a social image to maintain." Such help may not always be appreciated; friends may impose their expectations that do not align with the performing individual's filter-ing. Shanaya, wanting a minimalist approach to her Instagram photography page, is badgered by a friend to include detailed captions. "She offers to write 3–4 paragraphs herself, but I am like 'Stop babes! It's really not my thing!'" shares Shanaya. Had she begun posting detailed captions, it would have changed existing audience expectations and may have even brought to her page people different from those she wants to impress.

Informers

Friends become *informers* when they wield exclusive back-region knowledge to trigger conflicts (Goffman, 1959). Karan's friend ended up stoking a heated argument between Karan and his girlfriend. "We were together one day when (Karan's) girlfriend called to enquire about his whereabouts. He coolly lied that he was at his parents. I secretly recorded him and shared the video on the friends' group (leading to an argument)," narrates the friend. Even as relational friends go rogue sometimes by divulging discrepancies in the performing individual's online filters, their presence is predominantly conducive to filter-ing.

Discussion

Our article builds on the analytical term of filtering (Rettberg, 2014) and the concept of affordance-in-practice (Costa, 2018) to advance *filter-ing* as an affordance for the inclusions-exclusions involved in the multiple and varied realizations of sociotechnical potentialities of social media. These engagements involve dynamic and relational interplay of technological features and platforms, people, information, affective states, social and cultural norms and practices, offline settings, and so on. We demonstrate filter-ing's conceptual salience in understanding contextualization and context-collapse negotiations online. Filter-ing helps people manage diverse and conflicting expectations in collapsed contexts and maintain a sense of stability and boundaries between the public, social, private, professional, and other aspects of their social lives online. As participant Rohan puts it, "Online helps connect with more people, but by maintaining a space for everyone and not hurting another's space, we are respectful to all."

Our inquiry reveals the ongoing, multiple, relational, communicative, performative, situational, contingent, sieving, and boundary-drawing activities of filter-ing. Drawing from Goffman's (1959) writings on self-presentation and using thematic analysis, we demonstrate how filter-ing manifests in the self-presentational practices of young, urban Indians on the popular online platforms Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp. Facebook predominantly acts as a front stage to present a filter of decency, respectability, palatability, and selective and normative disclosures. Instagram and, more specifically, Snapchat become alternate front stages or relational backstages for relatively intimate friend-friendly filters compared with the family-friendly Facebook. By offering a setting that does not require as many self-

presentational considerations as Facebook or Instagram, Snapchat affords a filter-ing of spontaneity, casualness, intimacy, candor, and freedom. The hugely popular Internet-enabled messaging service WhatsApp is used for filter-ing the mundanities of everyday life. It also affords flexible and dynamic contextualization possibilities through group filter-ing. We discuss how the platforms maintain certain boundaries to contextualization through their overall design and user interface experience, such as Instagram projecting an impression of polished exclusivity, which may filter out those who cannot effectively “do it for the gram” (Leaver et al., 2020, Instagram’s Platform Vernaculars and Practices, para. 3). While the platforms afford particular normative filter-ing possibilities, our research also shows the variations people undertake in filter-ing which may transcend conventions.

Interviewing consociates such as family, friends, and colleagues, our study additionally provides an account of the collaborative aspects of online contextualization through *team filter-ing*. This concept refers to role enactments by relational friends who help sustain (or unravel) an individuals’ filter-ing. Friends may act as confidantes, offer constant validation, and help individuals maintain the situational definition. Conversely, they may deliberately or accidentally fail to conceal discrepant information from Generalized Others and trigger an undesirable collapse.

Coda: Filter-ing Futures

While our article shows how filter-ing can help maintain contextual stability, we do not suggest that it brings about an ideal contextualization state that circumvents probability of unanticipated collapse. Any given contextualization through filter-ing instead exists in a state of (in)stability. By (in)stability, we mean that the sense of stability achieved through contextualization remains open to potential collapse. The list of destabilizing influences is endless. Platform design changes can trouble prevailing stabilizations. For instance, Instagram’s increasingly algorithmic feed can make behavioral inferences that lead users to unanticipated encounters with new contexts (Büchi, Fosch-Villaronga, Lutz, Tamò-Larrieux, & Velidi, 2021). Sociotechnological developments also reconfigure filter-ing. The TikTok 2020 ban in India led its content creators from Tier 2 and Tier 3 Indian cities and rural backgrounds to adjust, with difficulties, to filter-ing dynamics on platforms like Instagram, or use homegrown alternatives to TikTok (Josh, Moj; Chakravarti, 2021). Life events, major or minor, bring their vagaries. We quote participant Dev, who is troubled by his “unhygienic friends with low career ambitions”; their presence was welcome until Dev began repositioning his online filter-ing to that of a responsible individual. (In)stabilities like these alter prevailing arrangements of front stages, back regions, information, people, and team solidarities. The biggest instability in recent times is the COVID-19 pandemic, which has necessitated major reworking of prior stabilizations. For instance, how has online filter-ing reconfigured for youngsters who moved back to families, a situation compounded by mobility restrictions, work-/study-from-home arrangements, and heightened surveillance of online activities?

A key limitation of our inquiry is its reliance on prepandemic data, especially considering that social media evolves rapidly. Although this does not undermine our core argument on filter-ing, considering the pandemic situation can provide insights on evolving qualities of filter-ing. Moreover, we have examined only four popular online platforms, leaving ample avenues to analyze other platforms, apps, and so on, for filter-ing potential. Tumblr is a case in point. The platform’s announcement that it would censor adult material

drew severe criticism, especially from queer and sex-positive communities, for whom Tumblr had become a safe space for uncensored filter-ing that was not feasible on Facebook and other platforms (Pettis, 2020). While the OnlyFans subscription service is an available alternative (Espinoza, 2021), its content monetization emphasis invokes different filter-ing dynamics. The meanings, expectations, anxieties, and affects associated with the platforms through filter-ing merit further attention. Because filter-ing is a developing concept, there is significant scope to examine the influence of gender, sexuality, race, religion, political beliefs, geopolitical changes, and so on, and their complex intersections. How has filter-ing changed for many women and human rights activists in Afghanistan following the 2021 resurgence of the Taliban, for instance? We also encourage researchers to employ methods beyond personal interviews that help capture the active dynamics of filter-ing, such as social media ethnography and online walk-throughs.

The core strength of filter-ing is that it brings the excluded and privatized aspects of social life to the surface. One pertinent example is Dhoest (2019), whose work on gay refugees escaping homophobic societies reveals how they maintain parallel online profiles to disclose their sexuality—profiles that are strictly demarcated from family-inclusive spaces. These exclusions may not necessarily be negative; they are often empowering. For example, Chib, Ang, Ibasco, and Nguyen (2021) found out how strategic (non)use of mobile media helped marginalized Singapore-based cis and trans feminine sex workers avoid retaliation. Accounting for exclusions, whether strategic or undesired, can help stakeholders think of alternative ways of making the Internet suitably more accessible to those who cannot afford the same liberties as others. With the growing demands for online privacy and restraint alongside visibility and expression, platforms must ensure adequate affordances for filter-ing.

References

- Bayer, J. B., Ellison, N. B., Schoenebeck, S. Y., & Falk, E. B. (2015). Sharing the small moments: Ephemeral social interaction on Snapchat. *Information, Communication & Society, 19*(7), 956–977. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2015.1084349
- boyd, d. (2008). Why youth heart social network sites: The role of networked publics in teenage social life. In D. Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth, identity, and digital media* (pp. 119–142). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- boyd, d. (2010). Social network sites as networked publics: Affordances, dynamics, and implications. In Z. Papacharissi (Ed.), *A networked self* (pp. 39–58). New York, NY: Routledge.
- boyd, d. (2012). Networked privacy. *Surveillance & Society, 10*(3/4), 348–350. doi:10.24908/ss.v10i3/4.4529
- Brandtzaeg, P. B., & Lüders, M. (2018). Time collapse in social media: Extending the context collapse. *Social Media + Society, 4*(1), 1–10. doi:10.1177/2056305118763349

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
- Bucher, T., & Helmond, A. (2018). The affordances of social media platforms. In J. Burgess, A. E. Marwick, & T. Poell (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of social media* (pp. 233–253). London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Büchi, M., Fosch-Villaronga, E., Lutz, C., Tamò-Larrieux, A., & Velidi, S. (2021). Making sense of algorithmic profiling: User perceptions on Facebook. *Information, Communication & Society*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2021.1989011
- Chakravarti, A. (2021, July 2). A year since TikTok ban, Indian TikTokers narrate how their lives were impacted. *India Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.indiatoday.in/technology/features/story/a-year-since-tiktok-ban-indian-tiktokers-narrate-how-their-lives-were-impacted-1823024-2021-07-02>
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Chib, A., Ang, M. W., Ibasco, G. C., & Nguyen, H. (2021). Mobile media (non-)use as expression of agency. *Mass Communication and Society, 24*(6), 818–842. doi:10.1080/15205436.2021.1970187
- Costa, E. (2018). Affordances-in-practice: An ethnographic critique of social media logic and context collapse. *New Media & Society, 20*(10), 3641–3656. doi:10.1177/1461444818756290
- Davidson, B. I., & Joinson, A. N. (2021). Shape shifting across social media. *Social Media+ Society, 7*(1), 1–11. doi:10.1177/2056305121990632
- Davis, J. L., & Jurgenson, N. (2014). Context collapse: Theorizing context collusions and collisions. *Information, Communication & Society, 17*(4), 476–485. doi:10.1080/1369118x.2014.888458
- Dhoest, A. (2019). Digital (dis) connectivity in fraught contexts: The case of gay refugees in Belgium. *European Journal of Cultural Studies, 23*(5), 784–800. doi:10.1177/1367549419869348
- Diwakar, V. (2016). “It’s complicated”: The construction of Indian middle-class teens in social media. *Journal of Creative Communications, 11*(2), 161–182. doi:10.1177/0973258616644813
- Espinoza, J. (2021, September 20). OnlyFans explained: What you need to know about the NSFW site. *Complex*. Retrieved from <https://www.complex.com/life/what-is-onlyfans-explainer>
- Filter. (n.d.). In *Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary* (11th ed.). Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/filter>

- Gauer, M., Corr, A., & Gallinetti, J. (2020). *Free to be online? Girls' and young women's experiences of online harassment*. Retrieved from <https://plan-international.org/publications/freetobeonline>
- Gibson, J. J. (2015). *The ecological approach to visual perception* (Classic ed.). New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
- Hookway, B. (2014). *Interface*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- IAMAI & Nielsen. (2019). *Digital in India* (Round-2). Mumbai, India: IAMAI.
- Kemp, S. (2021, October). *Digital 2021 October global statshot report*. Singapore: DataReportal.
- Leaver, T., Highfield, T., & Abidin, C. (2020). *Instagram: Visual social media cultures*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Marwick, A. E., & boyd, d. (2014). Networked privacy: How teenagers negotiate context in social media. *New Media & Society*, 16(7), 1051–1067. doi:10.1177/1461444814543995
- Mathur, N. (2015, December 2). Active Instagram users in India more than double in a year. *Mint*. Retrieved from <https://www.livemint.com/Consumer/1vbk7EK1fSHo0pxbJkDKKI/Instagram-Indian-monthly-active-users-have-doubled-Kirthiga.html>
- McFarlane, C., Silver, J., & Truelove, Y. (2017). Cities within cities: Intra-urban comparison of infrastructure in Mumbai, Delhi and Cape Town. *Urban Geography*, 38(9), 1393–1417. doi:10.1080/02723638.2016.1243386
- McLaughlin, C., & Vitak, J. (2012). Norm evolution and violation on Facebook. *New Media & Society*, 14(2), 299–315. doi:10.1177/1461444811412712
- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology & Press Information Bureau. (2021). *Number of social media users across India as of February 2021, by platform* [Graph]. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1232311/india-number-of-social-media-users-by-platform/>
- Pagh, J. (2020). Managing context collapses: The Internet as a conditioning technology in the organization of practices. *International Journal of Communication*, 14, 2810–2827.
- Patra, S. K. (2015). Online participation and self-presentation in social networking sites: A study of selective users of India. *Journal of Creative Communications*, 10(1), 89–104. doi:10.1177/0973258615569968

- Pettis, B. (2020). *The Tumblr porn ban: The platform triad and the shaping of online spaces* (Master's thesis). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (ProQuest Number: 27963935)
- Protti, M. (2021, April 19). *Our privacy progress and the path ahead*. Retrieved from <https://about.fb.com/news/2021/04/our-privacy-progress/>
- Pruthi, R. K. (Ed.). (2004). *Indian caste system*. New Delhi, India: Discovery Publishing House.
- Rettberg, J. W. (2014). *Seeing ourselves through technology: How we use selfies, blogs and wearable devices to see and shape ourselves*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Schrock, A. R. (2015). Communicative affordances of mobile media: Portability, availability, locatability, and multimodality. *International Journal of Communication*, 9, 1229–1246.
- Sekhose, M. (2021, August 18). Snapchat to “double down” on expansion in India as it witnesses over 150% growth in daily active users. *Business Insider India*. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.in/tech/apps/news/snapchat-app-witnesses-over-150-growth-in-daily-active-users-in-india/articleshow/85394136.cms>
- Sircar, S. (2020, April 25). A 14-year “timeline”: Facebook's roller-coaster India journey. *The Quint*. Retrieved from <https://www.thequint.com/tech-and-auto/facebook-india-journey-mark-zuckerberg-whatsapp-reliance-jio-rollercoaster-ride>
- Szabla, M., & Blommaert, J. (2020). Does context really collapse in social media interaction? *Applied Linguistics Review*, 11(2), 251–279. doi:10.1515/applirev-2017-0119
- Tiidenberg, K. (2018). *Selfies: Why we love (and hate) them*. Bingley, UK: Emerald.
- Treem, J. W., & Leonardi, P. M. (2013). Social media use in organizations: Exploring the affordances of visibility, editability, persistence, and association. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 36(1), 143–189. doi:10.1080/23808985.2013.11679130
- Vitak, J. (2012). The impact of context collapse and privacy on social network site disclosures. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 56(4), 451–470. doi:10.1080/08838151.2012.732140
- What names are allowed on Facebook? (n.d.). *Facebook*. Retrieved from http://www.facebook.com/help/112146705538576/?helpref=uf_share
- WhatsApp now allows over 256 users in a group; Here's a quick way to cross the user limit. (2017, October 25). *BGR*. Retrieved from <https://www.bgr.in/news/whatsapp-now-allows-over-256-users-in-a-group-heres-a-quick-way-to-cross-the-user-limit-525042/>

WhatsApp's "Delete for Everyone" feature: Here are some things you might not have known. (2020, November 25). *The Indian Express*. Retrieved from <https://indianexpress.com/article/technology/techook/whatsapp-delete-for-everyone-feature-everything-you-need-to-know-on-how-it-works-faq-7063526/>

Zillich, A. F., & Müller, K. F. (2019). Norms as regulating factors for self-disclosure in a collapsed context: Norm orientation among referent others on Facebook. *International Journal of Communication*, *13*, 2632–2651.