Chapter 2
Facebook, Identity, and Deception:
Explorations of Online Identity Construction

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project uses the social networking site Facebook to explore notions of personal identity: Its conception, construction, and expression. Students begin the assignment by creating a fictitious Facebook account. Second, students work to create an online identity through this account that is dissimilar from the way they perceive themselves. Students conclude by presenting their fictitious Facebook profiles to the rest of the class, discussing how/why it differs from their “real” identities, how/why they made the decisions they did, etc.

INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSE

This project uses social networking technology to engage students in an academic manner. It also offers potential entry and discussion points for the instructor to clarify or expound upon claims made by students regarding the construction and performance of personal identity. Finally, it generates an environment of mutual respect, while promoting reflexivity beyond the classroom setting.

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