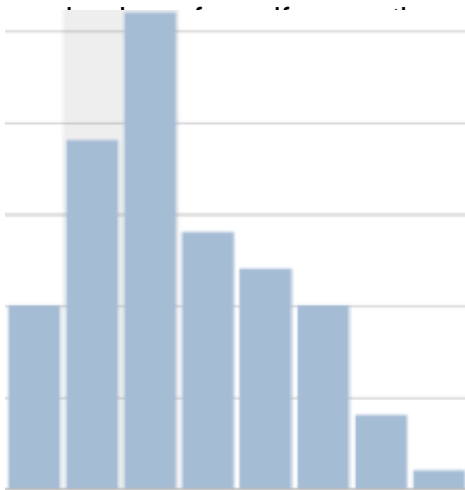


Profile yourself (Narcissus on line)

Description

Concern in the press about cyberbullying, identity theft, and other online risks have all but eclipsed the interesting influences the Internet has on professional life. Social media are turning professionals into celebrity wannabes. See for example the [Architizer](#) website for promoting architects and their work, and the pop celebrity orientation of the architectural firm Bjarke Ingels Group ([BIG](#)) and their videos and book [Yes is More. An Archicomic on Architectural Evolution](#), foregrounding their founder.

Reputation is important among responsible adults. It seems that social media and other Web 2.0 technologies tempt professionals to tilt their concern about reputation (or identity formation) in the direction of celebrity. After all, social media are mass media of a kind, and borrow concepts of celebrity from broadcasting. Depictions of Internet cultures are replete with examples of individuals who have elevated themselves from obscurity into the limelight through the Internet. Furthermore, low-cost star ratings, friends lists, “likes” lists, and collections of Twitter celebrity fan base.



Social media also provide aids for assessing or manipulating

reputational success in numerical terms. Tools for hosting personal web logs (blogs), such as WordPress, provide daily charts of visitor and hit counts. Professional academic credentials succumb to similar accounting. Through Google Scholar, citation indices for academic publications are as readily

available as Facebook likes.

In keeping with celebrity culture, social media encourage personal and **private disclosures**, or at least, the tools for presenting oneself professionally readily elide into tools for personal presentation. You have to decide whether to let your online professional persona deliver insights into your hobbies, holidays and family matters.

The scope for identity formation seems to be expanding, or at least changing. There will always be some group or other, no matter how small, amongst whom one can entertain unusual or **idiosyncratic interests**, and with whom one can readily identify. There is a group out there, possibly not yet formed, and unknown to you, amongst whom you can enjoy a ration of fame if you really want it.

Much has been said about the role of the Internet in identity formation. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), identity is the condition of being a single individual, having an identifiable character or personality, but also understood in terms of the individual's place within a group with which he or she associates.

With social media and Web 2.0 you have **control** (or at least the illusion of control) over how you project yourself to others, what you choose to make public or private, and the extent to which you might reveal different identities in different contexts. Part of this control involves letting you choose the extent to which you reveal your identity to different groups. Since the development of online chat rooms and online communities, the management of identity has become a major issue amongst its critics and commentators, with social media providing tools for negotiating and managing identity.

Unlike earlier, stand-alone computer applications social media applications require you to **profile** yourself. SecondLife requires users (residents) to invest effort in creating their own personas as 3D humanoid avatars, complete with clothing and accessories. Something similar (though less like dressing up) is required of GoogleDocs, LinkedIn, WordPress, and any number of other websites and applications with a social aspect. Reputation amongst one's peers is clearly a factor when any group comes together. It is fair to say that until social media and Web 2.0 it was unusual for computer applications to incorporate tools for managing online identities into their operations.

With social media you are **connected almost by default**. Part of the definition of identity involves connections with people, associating with the right group of other individuals (identifying with them), and letting it be known with whom you identify. The Facebook friends list provides an obvious example of how group identity can operate.

It is only recently that I first heard of a university teacher enjoying a following through social media, eg blogging. It is not only those of the Y generation who might promote or sully their reputations through social media.

According to legal philosopher and theorist of hermeneutics Stanley Fish, an intellectual community is not a group of individuals who share a point of view, but a point of view or way of organizing experience that [shares] individuals. Do we have as much control over our professional identities as we think?

Also see [Computer-supported collaborative distraction](#).

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