

A horizontal strip of three images: a car's interior dashboard, a satellite dish, and a group of young people using laptops.

Over-exposed portraits: social media overload and the identities of the young

Giulia Ranzini

Christoph Lutz

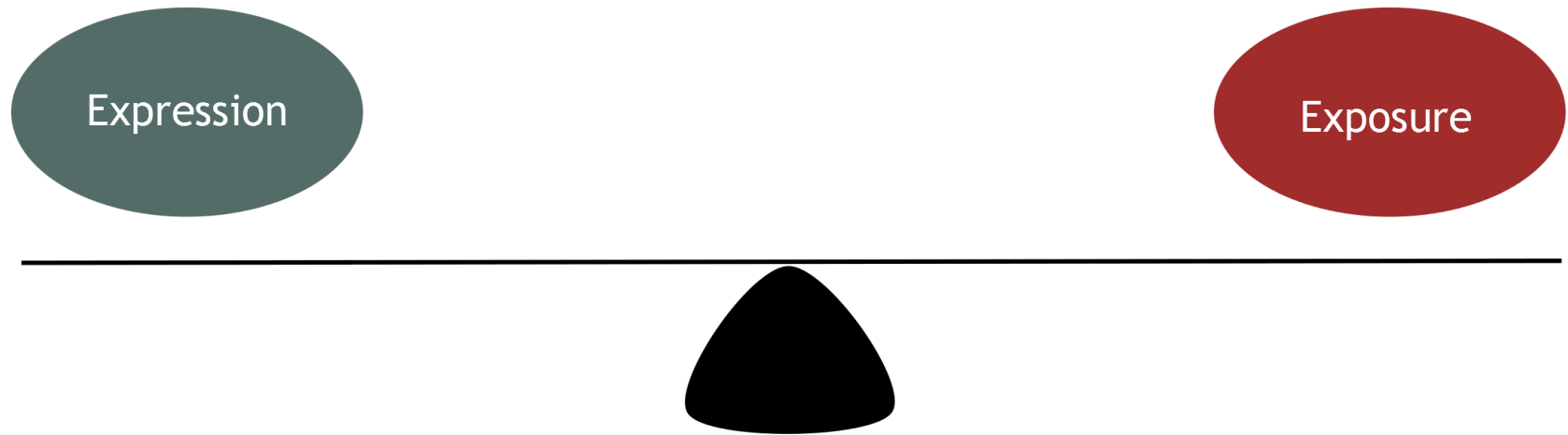
Prof. Dr. Miriam Meckel

Background and Rationale for the Topic

- A range of studies have researched **information overload at the workplace**. (Eppler & Mengis, 2004)
- Recently, many studies have researched **downsides of Social Network Sites**, such as cyber bullying, stalking, distraction and negative academic performance , unfriending, narcissism and envy. (e. g. Junco, 2011; Krasnova et al., 2013; Lyndon et al., 2011; Mehdizadeh, 2010; Sibona, 2013)
- Still, **feelings of stress and overexposure caused by SNS** are so far understudied, both for teenagers and other age groups: We do know next to nothing about the phenomenon. (Hargittai et al., 2012)
- For teenagers, social media induced stress and overexposure might have (especially) serious consequences.



Theoretical Background: Digital Identities



Theoretical Background: Digital Divide

- Different **forms of divides** in terms of Internet access, skills, use, participation and motivation
- SES and age as important predictors of different divides (van Dijk, 2006)
- Also gender plays a role (Helsper, 2010)
- We suspect differences in SNS induced stress and propose an *overload divide*
- Interplay of SNS overexposure and digital identities



Research Question: Overload Divide

How do demographic
characteristics and status influence
teenagers' exposure to SNS
overload?

Follow Up Question: Digital Identities

What do differences in SNS
overexposure and stress mean in
terms of digital identities?

Sample

- Survey of visitors of exposition «Kommunizieren Gefährdet» in Berne (Switzerland) 2012: 23'878 respondents in total
- **6989 teenagers** aged 13-18
- Gender: 54.8 percent female, 45.2 percent male.
- Age:

Age in years	Frequency	Percent	Mean
13	1302	18.6	15.26
14	1275	18.2	
15	1310	18.7	
16	1281	18.3	
17	1081	15.5	
18	740	10.6	
Total	6989	100	

Analysis: Two Steps

1) Descriptive Analysis

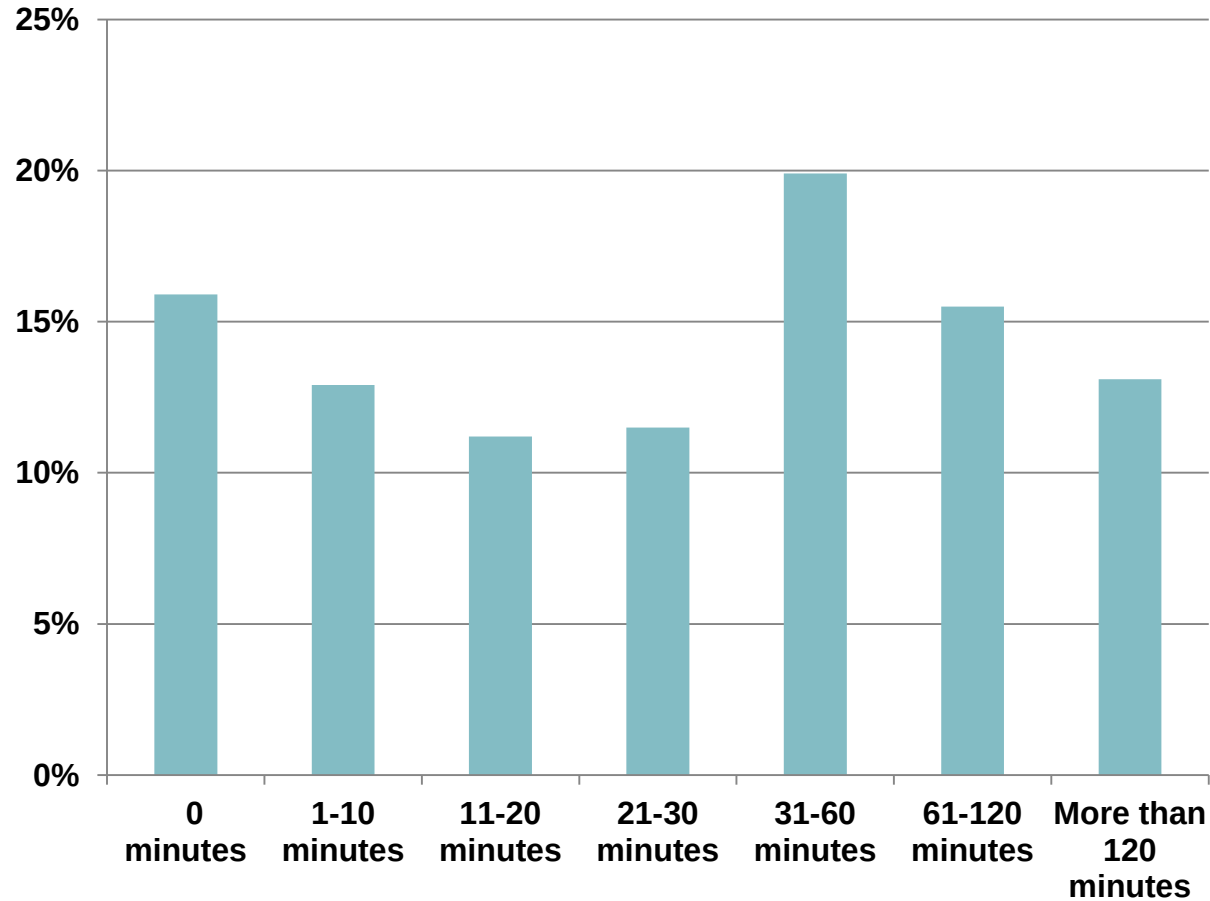
How stressed and overexposed are Swiss teenagers visiting the exhibition?

2) Logistic Regression

How can we explain such differences?



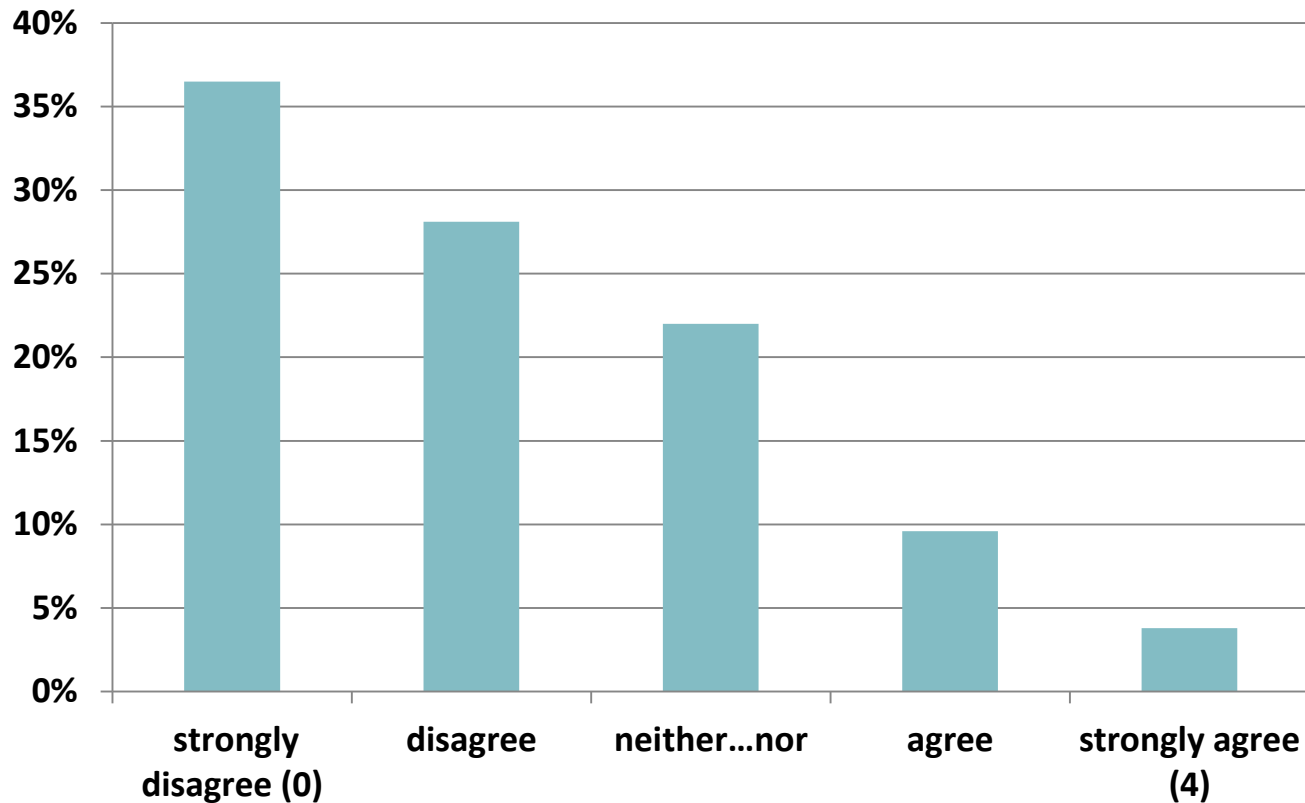
Descriptive Analysis: SNS Use



- Average Use of SNS and Online Communities of 70 minutes per day
- Median of 30 minutes might be more accurate
- 16 percent non-users (1110 out of 6989)
- About 13 percent heavy users

Descriptive Analysis: Strain and Stress Caused by SNS

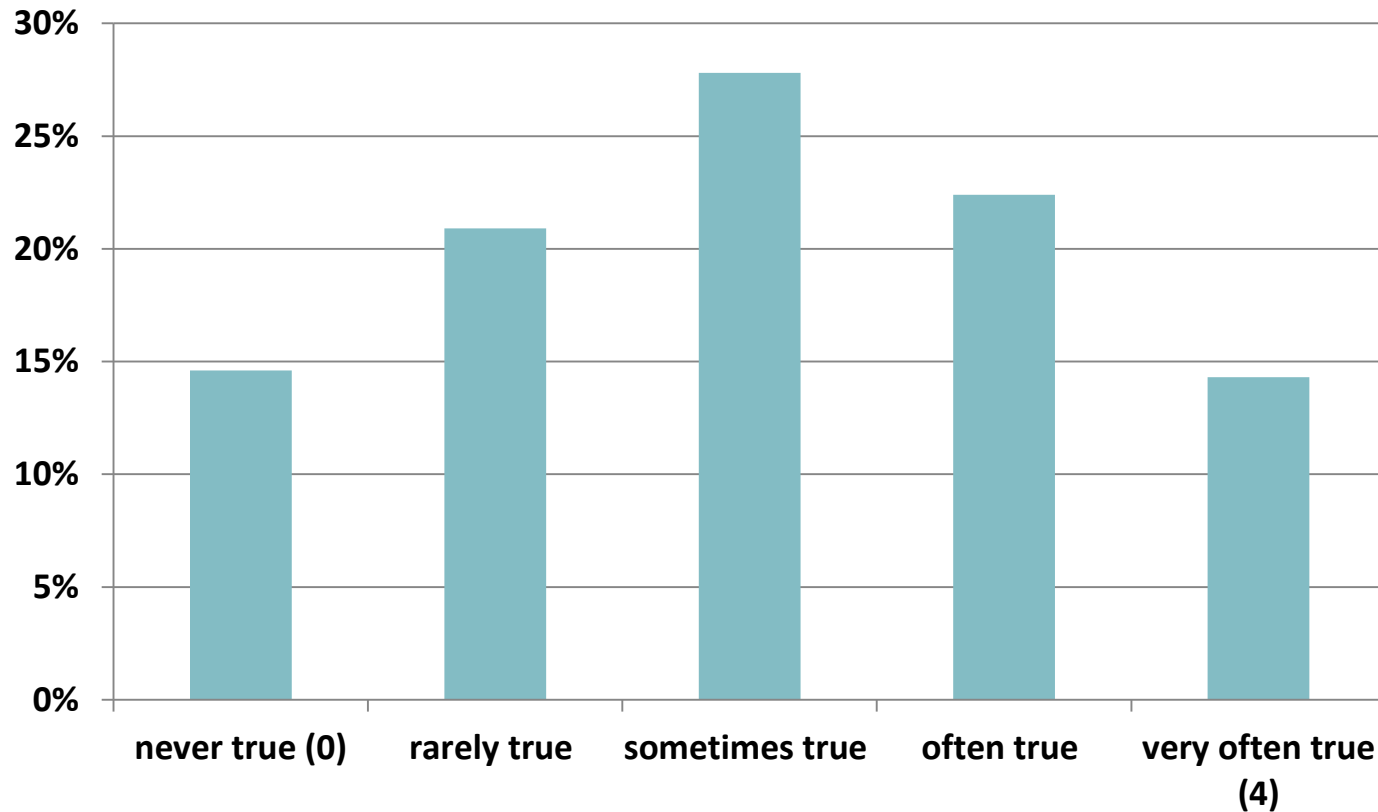
«Social Network Sites stress me out.»



- Vast majority is not stressed by SNS and does not perceive them as a burden
- Average value of 1.16 points to relatively little stress and burden in general
- About 13 percent stressed or very stressed

Descriptive Analysis: SNS Overexposure

«Do you have the feeling you spend too much time with SNS?»



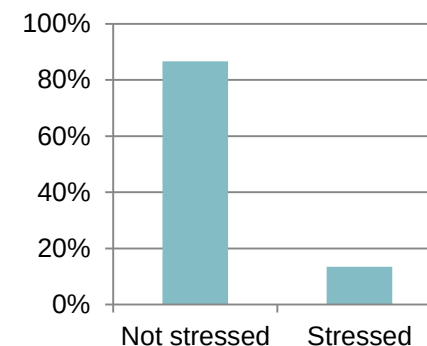
- Normal distribution
- Average value of 2.01 says teenagers spend occasionally too much time with SNS
- About 37 percent has the feeling to often or very often spend too much time with SNS

Explanation: Logistic Regression «SNS Stress»

Independent Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>p Value</i>	<i>OR</i>
Age	.15	.000	1.17
Language: French (0/Reference=German)	.72	.000	2.01
SNS Minutes	.00	n. s.	n. s.
Gender: Female (0/Reference=Male)	-.18	.030	.84
Residence: Suburb (0/Reference=Countryside)	.11	n. s.	n. s.
Residence: City (0/Reference=Countryside)	.30	0.01	1.35
Still in School (SES) (0/Reference=Apprenticeship)	.14	n. s.	n. s.

Model $\chi^2 = 98.588$, $df = 7$, $p < .001$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.034$; -2 Log likelihood=4087.18

- Age, Language, Gender and Residence (City) are significant predictors of SNS stress
- SNS use intensity not significant
- Low explanatory power

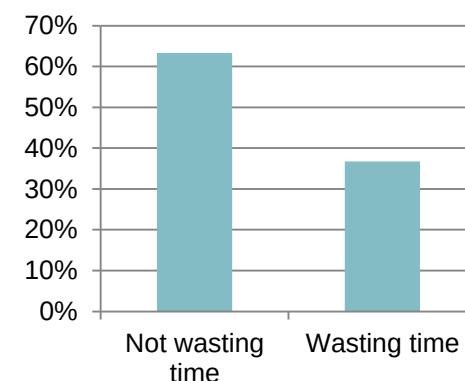


Explanation: Logistic Regression «SNS Overexposure»

Independent Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>p Value</i>	<i>OR</i>
Age	.11	.000	1.12
Language: French (0/Reference=German)	.43	.000	1.53
SNS Minutes	.01	.000	1.01
Gender: Female (0/Reference=Male)	.33	.000	1.39
Residence: Suburb (0/Reference=Countryside)	.17	.040	1.18
Residence: City (0/Reference=Countryside)	.34	.000	1.41
Still in School (SES) (0/Reference=Apprenticeship)	.21	.012	1.23

Model $\chi^2 = 431.171$, $df = 7$, $p < .001$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.105$; -2 Log likelihood=6662.99

- Age, Language, Gender, SNS use, Residence and Employment are significant predictors of SNS stress
- SNS use intensity strongly significant
- Better explanatory power



Key Findings



- **Age** differences consistent across overexposure and stress: older teenagers are more likely to feel stressed and overexposed

=> Age 13-18 as a transformational period with increased autonomy and larger network over time

- Noteworthy **gender** effects: male teenagers have higher propensity to feel stressed out by SNS, but female teens are more likely to (have the feeling to) waste time on SNS

=> Viewed in terms of self-expression and digital identities, this results very interesting.

Key Findings

- **Place of residence** weighs heavily: differences between city and countryside kids

=> Different networks and options for leisure activities
- **Time spent on SNS** not a significant predictor of stress, but of wasted time.
- **Language** and cultural context as decisive.



Wrap Up and Conclusion



- Overload divide exists: significant differences in coping with SNS between different teenager groups
- Generally, most teenagers in the sample are able to cope with the affordances of SNS, especially younger ones
- Indication of an overload divide that is connected to teenagers' lifeworlds and their identity management on SNS

Limitations and Directions for Further Research

- Relatively superficial **quantitative study**: qualitative in depth interviews and observations (ethnography or ethnomethodology) needed to explore the interconnections of different aspects that cause SNS stress and overexposure
- **Only one country**: extension to other countries would increase our understanding of cultural and contextual aspects of SNS stress and overexposure
- **Cross-sectional study**: dynamics of SNS stress and overexposure





Thank You For Your **Attention**

Institute for Media and Communications Management
University of St. Gallen
Blumenbergplatz 9
CH-9000 St. Gallen

Contact

Christoph Lutz

Research Assistant and PhD Student

Institute for Media and Communications
Management
Blumenbergplatz 9
9000 St. Gallen – Switzerland

christoph.lutz@unisg.ch
Twitter: @lutzid

Giulia Ranzini

Research Assistant and PhD Student

Institute for Media and Communications
Management
Blumenbergplatz 9
9000 St. Gallen – Switzerland

giulia.ranzini@unisg.ch
Twitter: @giuliaranzini

Feel free to contact us if you're interested in our research or in collaborations!

Resources

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