The Qualified Self: Social Media and the Accounting of Everyday Life

Lee Humphreys

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Introduction

Lee Humphreys

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[−] Abstract and Keywords

This introductory chapter provides an overview of the book's main themes. The book aims to highlight one of the very ordinary ways that people have used and continue to use media in their everyday lives. It identifies the ordinary within new media practices by comparing them with historical media practices. While it might seem new and extraordinary that people are tweeting what they had for breakfast, when put into context with historical diary practices, it reveals the ordinariness of the act itself. When we look across media over time, we see patterns of how people are incorporating media into their everyday lives. By focusing on what people do with media, rather than on the technology, we can see similarities otherwise obscured by the newness of the platform.

Keywords: media, everyday life, new media

On January 14, 1764, Mary Vial Holyoke wrote the following in her diary: “Buried.” She was writing about the death of her daughter, Polly, who had become ill only five days earlier. Her next diary entry was on January 17: “Small Pox began to spread at Boston.” For forty years, Ms. Holyoke documented daily life events; typically, her entries were no longer than a line or two.[1] She recorded the births, sicknesses, and deaths of those in her family and community in Salem, Massachusetts. She detailed the outbreak of small pox, snowstorms, and earthquakes. She recorded who visited her home, how food was prepared, and how much she paid for tea. She chronicled life not only for herself, but for her family and community. Her diary, like many diaries of the time, was also likely shared with friends and loved ones.

With the same brevity and abbreviation we now expect on platforms like Twitter or in texting, Elizabeth Sandwith Drinker of Philadelphia wrote in her diary on November 17, 1779:

> Stay’d at home all day—had a Beef cut up—S. Sansom spent the afternoon, S Swett, Hillory Baker Senr. & call[e]d—60 or 70 Cabbages brought in–cloudy

Drinker wrote about the people who came to visit, about work around the house, and the weather. As a woman in the late 1700s, her job was to take care of the house, as her husband was a local merchant. She used her diary to keep track of social calls, commercial transactions, and other household activities. Her diary was a blend of her work life and social life.[2]

When people traveled they often kept journals to document their journey and new experiences. But even the most exotic journeys involve mundane details. In the fall of 1861, twenty-year-old Ruth Bradford of Pennsylvania **(p.2)** accompanied her father and brother on a seven-month ship voyage to China. One month into the trip, she wrote:

> Sunday, Oct. 13th I have put myself on the sick list today. The ham, eggs, and chocolate which I took for breakfast does not agree with me. Then there is a very heavy sea on, and altogether I feel a little sea sick. Think I'm done with ham and eggs forever.

Bradford, like many on social media today, documented her travel and the food she ate along the way—even what made her sick. She is not reflecting on the exotic, but chronicling the mundane experiences that constitute much of travel. Indeed, travel is often only punctuated with the occasional visit to extraordinary monuments or ceremonial performances. It is through the everyday details of life even within exotic travel that we see glimpses into the human spirit. Indeed, the belly aches of life in many ways connect us to others.

What we think of today as a diary is probably a small book with a lock on it into which someone pours his or her inner most thoughts and feelings: "Dear Diary, today I fell in love with …" But this is a relatively modern notion of what a diary is. Throughout much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, diaries were often written with the intention of sharing with others.[3] When young women got married and moved away from their parents, they would send their diaries back home as a way of maintaining kin connections. When people would travel, it was not uncommon to send their diaries home so their families could read them and know what they were up to while away. When distant family would come to visit, it was common to have them read the diary or read through it together as a means of catching up. Historically, diaries, particularly those of women, chronicled everyday life activities and events of the household and community—who was born, who got sick, who died, who got married, who visited, what was planted, what was made, and so on. Women played an important role in the social chronicling of family and community events. Sometimes these events were tragic, sometimes they were mundane, but all were recorded in these diaries and most importantly, they were shared with others.

What's New Is Old

Diaries, like Holyoke's, Drinker's, and Bradshaw's, provide a lens that helps us historically situate contemporary social media. Today, people use social media to document and share their lives. People share on Facebook when **(p.3)** they are moving or have had a baby. They tweet about what they just saw on TV or what they had for breakfast. They post photos on Instagram of beautiful sunsets on their way home from work or their dog looking adorable. They post or check in from baseball games or concerts. These are all ways of using social media to document what people are doing and sharing this with others. These are things people used to do (and still do) with diaries, photo albums, and scrapbooks. In many ways people are using new media in similar ways to how people used old media.

So often novel media are compared with their immediate predecessors. In the case of social media, new platforms like YouTube and Facebook were contrasted with either Web 1.0 or television. Much of what was new about social media was the ability to let ordinary citizens have a platform from which to speak to the wider world or the ability to share content among peer networks. But diaries like Drinker's reveal how what seems new may actually be old. User-generated content only seems novel when contrasted with mid-to late-twentieth century understandings of media as broadcast mass media. By comparing and contrasting media across longer historical epochs, we can begin to understand some of the critical tensions surrounding social media differently. This book develops a framework for understanding the ways that people use media, broadly defined, to chronicle their lives and share it with others.[4]

Old and New Affordances

One way that we compare the differences between old and new media is through their technological affordances. The concept of affordances helps us to see how the characteristics of media technologies can invite us to use media in particular ways.[5] Understanding the materiality of the diaries has informed my understanding of technological affordances more broadly. We can see the shrinking of a diary page as a technology that invites us to write in particular ways. Of course, we could devote a whole journal to the chronicling of one day, but we don't. We take the smaller pages as an invitation to write less. Similarly, when dates were printed on journal pages, we took it as an opportunity to write about what happened on those days, even though we did not necessarily have to. When they started printing horizontal lines on the pages, we took it as an opportunity to write between those lines, even though there was nothing to stop us from writing perpendicularly to the lines. We take these characteristics of the technology as invitations to use the media in certain ways and always have.

(p.4) Diaries from previous centuries have ranged in size and shape, but most are relatively small—and portable. In the mid-nineteenth century, advances in the production of paper facilitated the production of smaller diaries. Historian Molly McCarthy describes these "pocket diaries" as about two inches by four inches in size and, as the name suggests, were intended to be tucked into pockets or waistbands.[6] The size of the journal afforded mobility such that people could carry it with them and jot things down in it throughout the day, rather than waiting until the end of the day to write things. It became a "real time" form of chronicling. The size of the pocket diaries also constrained the length of an entry to a sentence or two. Other nineteenth-century diaries were larger, but even these were designed so that there were only a couple lines per date on which to write.[7] There would typically be three dates printed on each page of the diary. These diaries were also just little books of mostly lined paper, which could be easily opened and shared with others.

The material characteristics of diaries (that is, small, mobile, space-constrained) are not all that different from the 140-character limit on Twitter. Originally put in place to ensure that Twitter was cross-platform, the 140-character limit allowed users to send and receive tweets via the web or SMS, which limited the length of a text message to 160 characters before breaking it into two messages. But beyond this technological reason, early adopters seemed to enjoy the length limit. Some of the earliest adopters of Twitter were bloggers, who likely saw the limit as a welcomed constraint, much like diarists of the mid-nineteenth century. As McCarthy writes,

> The space afforded by the pocket diary may have been limited, but it saved journalists with only minutes to spare from having to write long entries. And diarists appeared

> thankful for both the opportunity pocket diaries offered as well as the limitations they imposed.[8]

Technological constraints can be welcomed because they delimit what we might otherwise feel obliged to do. It’s not always about what we can do with a technology; sometimes its value is in what we *cannot* do with it.

For many of us in the developed world, we first came online through a computer that was plugged into the wall. However, we now access the Internet increasingly on mobile devices. For many people in the world today, the first time they access the Internet will be on a mobile phone.[9] Thus our experience of the Internet and social media is increasingly mobile, just like diaries.

(p.5) Ordinary Culture

My intention with this book is to highlight one of the very ordinary ways that people have used and continue to use media in their everyday lives. But the ordinary can be deceiving. Often, we miss it altogether. We don’t pay attention to it. It goes overlooked in the shadow of the moment. I believe this has happened to a degree with social media research. Much of the new media literature the past ten to fifteen years examines it for it extraordinariness, how networked media are different and new, how they are changing social interactions[10] and structures of publicness.[11] The role of social media in revolutions, political campaigns, and natural disasters has become a prominent lens through which we study and explore social media.[12] Even the role of social media around events like Eurovision or the Oscars has been an area of research.[13] But these events do not happen every day.

What happens in between awards ceremonies and natural disasters? What do people do with mobile and social media when they wake up in the morning, when they wait for the train, when they’re bored at work? I argue that we need understand the everyday routines and practices around social media for two main reasons. First, if people are going to use these technologies for eventful times, they need to be familiar and active on these technologies prior to and after such events. To study the discussion of Eurovision or the Egyptian Revolution on Twitter means to study the phenomenon itself. But to be able to study the discussions of the events, people had to be using the platform prior to the event. Part of how we know today about the small pox epidemic in Boston in the late eighteenth century is because people wrote about it in their dairies. These are the same diaries in which they wrote about planting corn and who visited. It was because the everyday was being recorded regularly that the eventful moments could be captured in these diaries as well. If we are to study Arab Spring, for example, through Twitter, then mobile phone adoption and use—the mode through which most people access Twitter[14]—had to be in place before the elections and demonstrations. If people are to capture police abuse on their camera phones, like they did in the case of Eric Garner, who died of a heart attack while New York City police were trying to arrest him in 2014, then people must have had them in their pockets to begin with. So these events raise the question of what happened before: What were people doing with their **(p.6)** smartphones in their pockets? Why were people writing down daily events and news in their diaries? What is so important about mobile media that people keep them so near to their bodies and use them every day? What makes media become so ordinary that they can help us capture the extraordinary when it happens in front of us?

The second reason we need to understand the everyday aspects of social media is because the ordinary can represent broader social values and systems that shape the human condition. In this case, it is essential to understand what I mean by ordinary. Ben Highmore writes:

> Ordinariness is a process (like habit) where things (practices, feelings, conditions, and so on) pass from unusual to usual, from irregular to regular, and can move the other way (what was an ordinary part of my life is no more). There is always the “being ordinary” but there is also the “becoming ordinary.”[15]

Much of my research has focused on media “becoming ordinary”—that is, the domestication and emergence of social norms surrounding mobile and social media use.[16] Carolyn Marvin argues that it is in the early stages of technology development and adoption that the tacit understandings and assumptions about media are made explicit.[17] The questions “What is this new media?” and “What is it doing to us?” are both actively discussed by people face to face as well in through other forms of media, such as online discussion forums, newspaper articles, and various how-to guides. My research over the last fifteen years has involved talking to people about their mobile and social media use. It is much easier to talk to people about their social media use compared to something like washing machine use because their social media use is still new. Therefore, they are still working things out. A common question I ask is, “How would you describe *X* to someone who has never used it before?” That question works because my participants can imagine that someone might actually not be familiar with a particular platform. In fact, they might have had to describe the mobile app that I’m studying to someone they know. The question becomes much harder when you imagine that everyone knows what *X* is. It is much trickier to describe a TV because one imagines that most people have some experience with it. TVs have already become ordinary for many of us today, but mobile and social media are still very much in the process of becoming ordinary. We can still imagine those who might not use them.

Ben Highmore argues that the ordinary is also very *connective*. The ordinary unites us in many ways. Often, we might not recognize the ordinary **(p.7)** because we are all doing it. We all eat breakfast (or should) every day. We all get sick. Of course, not all of us actually do these things. Not everyone can afford to have breakfast every day or has access to food. But when we do acknowledge and document our ordinary life and share it with others, we can be brought closer. Knowing the ordinary routines of someone can be a sign of intimacy. Connective rhythms of the quotidian, shared expectations, or understandings of daily routines may be tacit and normative, but they reflect a togetherness of ordinary culture.

The ordinary, however, is also highly *contextual*. What is extraordinary to one person may be ordinary to another. The first time one went on a social media platform, it may have felt extra ordinary. In our study of tweets, we found many people tweeting things like: “hello twitterverse, I’m here now” or “just joined, what now?” When someone is new to a social media platform, they might not know where the buttons are and they might not know where to read or how to write in a manner that’s typical for that platform. They do not know the norms, that is, the prescriptive collective ways of using a social media platform. It is often extraordinary to them.

The contextuality of ordinariness with regard to social media is not solely based on the length of experience with a platform. What is ordinary about social media use among some social circles may not transfer to other circles. What is ordinary social media use for a teen, might not be for an adult.[18] What one person’s Twitter or Facebook feed looks like may be very different from someone else’s—some call this a filter bubble.[19] Our understanding of what is ordinary on a particular platform is shaped by what people see on that platform which is particular to that individual. The collective and contextual nature of everyday media use is important to explore and understand because it is in those nuances that the humanity is experienced and we recognize ourselves as both unique to and part of a social collective.

My intention with this book is to identify the ordinary within new media practices by comparing them with historical media practices. While it might seem new and extraordinary that people are tweeting what they had for breakfast, when put into context with historical diary practices, it reveals the ordinariness of the act itself. When we look across media over time, we see patterns of how people are incorporating media into their everyday lives. By focusing on what people *do* with media, rather than on the technology, we can see similarities otherwise obscured by the newness of the platform.

(p.8) While this book is fundamentally about practices of media, I do assume that the materiality and affordances of the platform matter. Highly influenced by science and technology studies (STS), I also approach media in the book as fundamentally "media technologies."[20] To bring an STS framework to media means to understand how technologies are part of and embedded within socio-technical systems. In particular, I draw on the social construction of technology framework to focus on the importance of *users* in shaping how we come to understand what a certain technology does, a move common within STS.[21]

Before moving too far forward, it seems helpful to define some of the terms I use throughout the book. For example, I use "media" both broadly and inclusively. I do not mean merely electronic or digital media. Media has been defined as all the channels and means through which people share information that is not face to face[22] or the tools with which people communicate with others about a shared reality.[23] For the purposes of the book, I draw on both definitions and suggest media are *those tools and channels that connect people across time and space and allow for the sharing of meaning*. I use the term "meaning" rather than information or reality because I want to specifically highlight the identity expression and community-building that occur through media.

It might seem curious to suggest that diaries, scrapbooks, and photo albums should be thought of as media. While diaries have long been the subjects of disciplines like English or history, seldom have communication and media studies scholars found diaries to be within the purview of the discipline. Historical communication scholars have focused on broadcast and electronic media like radio,[24],television,[25] and the telegraph.[26] That said, I am not the first to argue that scrapbooks, portraiture, and snapshot photography fall under the purview of media studies, nor am I the first to suggest these are historical predecessors to contemporary social media.[27] But diaries have seldom been considered by communication scholars as communication or media. Instead, they have been relegated to methodology for studying media use.[28] For example, diaries become a way to track the TV shows that an audience member watches. However, diaries are not just a genre of personal writing but historically have been tools for collective and shared meaning-making, the social nature of which is fundamental to understanding diaries as media.

(p.9) Contemporary networked and social media have extended our definitions of media such that we can see beyond institutionalized broadcast media like newspapers, magazines, radio, film, and television. Media today include interpersonal forms of mediated communication,[29] and with this broader definition of media we can apply media frameworks to nonelectronic forms of mediated communication, like diaries, scrapbooks, and photo albums.

Media Accounting

Throughout this book, I develop a theory of media accounting. *Media accounting* can be described as the media practices that allow us to document our lives and the world around us, which can then be presented back to ourselves or others. I draw on Nick Couldry’s concept of “media practice” to describe the activities, uses, structures, and conceptualizations of and surrounding media.[30] A practice-oriented approach to media allows us to see similarities despite the differences in platforms or technologies. Identifying the key practices of media accounting focuses our attention on what people do with the media rather than focusing just on the media technologies themselves. This is not to say that the technologies themselves are unimportant, but, drawing on the social construction of technology, I ask, “What are the needs and understanding that people bring to the technology that shapes its usage?”

Media accounting involves the creation, circulation, and consumption of *media traces*. A trace is the mark or vestige remaining and indicating the former presence, existence, or action of something. Therefore, media traces are vestiges or marks that indicate our presence, existence, or action through media, that is, those tools and channels that connect people across time and space and allow for the sharing of meaning. At first, media traces might seem like digital footprints, defined as the record of online activities that people may or may not be aware of creating as they use the Internet.[31] But they are quite distinct: while media traces are constructed by and visible to the individuals who create them, digital footprints include both purposeful postings online as well as IP addresses, clickstream, and authorship data—data about people and their behaviors that many users are not aware exist.[32] Moreover, media traces are not necessarily digital. Media traces are **(p.10)** the texts, videos, and images created by people in their course of documenting their lives, what they do, where they go, who they are—and sharing this with others.

Media traces are essential to what it means to *document* through media accounting. Lisa Gitelman argues that to document essentially means to know through showing.[33] Therefore, media accounting is more likely to occur through certain media than others. Diaries, journals, scrapbooks, photo albums, videos, and social media posts all privilege the showable trace, whereas a landline phone or CB radio do not create showable records of the content exchanged to be revisited or shared at a later time. Media traces are central to the practice of media accounting. Three aspects of media accounting help us to understand the practices of media accounting: an account, accounting, and accountability.

An Account

The term *account* suggests that a collection of media traces created through social media is tied to identity. An account is associated with an offline identity; think of a bank account or a store credit card. It often is individual, but it may be collective. If we think about bank accounts, individuals can have an account but they can also be joint, among partners or family members. Organizations or groups can also have accounts. But all accounts are linked to some kind of identity.

Most social media platforms require users to create an account, typically requiring a username, password, and email address at minimum.[34] This is part of the process of tying an account to an identity. Sometimes fictional social media accounts are set up.[35] And sometimes there are accounts for bots within social media.[36] But the accounts are created by someone or someones and therefore are still tied to some kind of identity.

Historically, the connection of identity to media accounts has varied in formality. Often we think of diaries, scrapbooks and photo albums as belonging to a person. Indeed, the front pages of a journal frequently include an empty line on which the diarist is invited to write his or her name along with the date if it isn't already printed. Prompts such as "This diary belongs to _______" or "If found, please return to _______" are also formal ways to tie an identity to media accounts. Other times, diarists would just write their names in the front pages.

(p.11) But more than the penning one's names or username, the content of media accounts also is associated with identities. Who is described, mentioned, revealed, and photographed is another important means of linking media traces with identities. While an account may be tied to *an* identity, the content of media accounts is seldom confined to singular identities. Often authors include themselves within the content of their media traces, but they also include others. Various kinds of social relations—including friends, kin, enemies, frenemies, colleagues, followers, lovers, and love interests—make their way into the content of our media accounting. Their identities as well as our own are intertwined in our media traces.

All media accounting is tied to the identities of both the creators as well as the subjects, which may be one and the same, but not necessarily. Media accounting can be done with or for others. For example, archivists for various social groups or organizations create media accounts on behalf of the group. Similarly, sometimes blogs are associated with a single author and sometimes collaborative or parallel authors. Media accounting can be done not only collectively and collaboratively but also on behalf of others. It was common in the mid-nineteenth century for women to keep an account for the household—who visited, how much she paid for flour, who died.[37] Starting in the late nineteenth century, mothers kept baby books for their children, documenting social and developmental milestones.[38] In the late twentieth century it was often women who play the role of family historian, documenting and creating traces of their ancestral past.[39]

The term *account* also suggests a kind of subjectivity. For someone to give their account means they give their perspective or take on an event. It does not mean to encapsulate the entirety of the event but merely their version of it. Such subjectivity therefore conveys a partiality or incompleteness of one's account. This is true for media accounting practices as well. All media accounting practices are subjective and incomplete, though they may be vast. We can never document all of lived experience. While we can describe parts of it, photograph it, and even record it on video, these media traces are always already incomplete.

Like other forms of identity work, media accounting can represent strategic presentations of self.[40] The subjectivity of media accounting, is that one's version or take on something is both situated and performative. We **(p.12)** only know what we have experienced but we are also aware of our experiences as part of our various identity performances. As such, our media accounting both captures our versions of the world as well as our aspirations for it and for ourselves. The strategic nature of our media accounting is also related to the evaluative nature of accounting.

Economic sociologist David Stark ties the term *account* to organizational criteria for the evaluation of worth. He writes, "We keep accounts and we give accounts, and, most importantly, we can be called to account for our actions. It is always within accounts that we 'size up the situation.'"[41] In particular, Stark describes the contemporary mechanism of organizational performance evaluation as horizontal accountability rather than just hierarchical evaluation. People feel accountable not just to their bosses but also to their colleagues. Employees's sense of worth within the organization is based on the evaluation of those horizontal to them, not just above them. Outside of an organizational context, media accounting therefore can be thought of as an everyday way that people can evaluate the worth of actions, behaviors, events, and individuals.

The concept of an account also conveys the point that media accounting involves the *collection of media traces*. As a bank account is made up a series of documented financial transactions between parties, media accounting involves not just singular media traces but a collection or aggregation of traces indicating our presence, existence, and action. Sometimes media traces are referred to by their mode such as text, image or video; sometimes they are referred to as their platform such Tweet, blog post, diary entry, photograph, Instagram, updates, check-ins, or vlog post. All are traces indicating our presence, existence, and action and all involve connecting people across time and space to share meaning.

Accounting

Media accounting is also fundamentally about the practices of documenting, chronicling, and cataloging. Accounting is the action or process of reckoning. It can involve counting and enumerating and be aggregative and transactive. Accounting provides evidence for and explanation of. Media accounting is therefore the process of reckoning or providing evidence for and explanation of our presence, existence, and action through media.

Accounting is colloquially associated with financial information or economic entities, but we have long used media to reckon other kinds of **(p.13)** information in our lives. Since the eighteenth century in the US, we have used accounting to keep track of household information. We have used travel journals to keep track of how far we've traveled and where we've been. But there are others forms of information that we have reckoned with media accounting. We use our media traces to see the path of where we've been and how we got to where we are. From baby books to photo albums, we document the changes in our lives in real time or at least relatively defined as the "near past." When we look back on these books, we see trends and changes that we may not be able to see in our lived experiences. Accounting through media is fundamentally about chronicling various aspects of our lives so that we can remember, relive, recount, reconcile, and reckon at future points.

Enumerating activities, events, and experiences can be part of what we do when we engage in media accounting. Enumeration is easy to see in the contemporary social media environment where our profiles include the number of friends or followers we have or how many tweets we have posted. But we have long understood ourselves by various numbers: how many yarns of wool we spun, how many bales of hay we loaded, at what age did we take our first step. Accounting is a way of seeing patterns and gaining insights that might not otherwise be identified in our lived experience. By documenting activities or events through media, we can aggregate information over a season, a year, a lifetime—information that can provide explanation of our lives and our livelihoods.

Of course, media accounting is not only about enumeration. The meaning making that comes from the aggregation of information over time is indeed far more important to the accounting process than any single metricized trace. When we look back at ourselves in photos, we might see our hair differently than we did when we had it. We see our families differently as they grow and change. We see ourselves in our familial traces. Media traces allow us to gain distance and reflection on experiences and behaviors, but the *collection* of media traces allows us to gain additional insight than any individual trace may not convey. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. A photo album, a diary, a Facebook timeline, a Twitter stream conveys far more information about people’s existence, presence, and actions than their singular media traces. As such, media accounting tells a story, conveys information, and reveals explanations—media accounting is an important way through which we come to understand processes and change—changes about ourselves and others.

(p.14) But these aggregated media traces also help *others* understand us. Various social media companies, telecommunication companies, governments, and their partners can analyze, study, and examine our traces in order to better serve, protect, and market to us. Alison Hearn reminds us that our social media traces make up the reputation economy, which drives online business.[42] Diaries, scrapbooks, and photo albums can be passed down within a family, are collected by history buffs, or become part of archives which combine media accountings. These traces are evidence of behavior, relationships, and affinities which can be read by others. The aggregation of such traces can reveal trends across various historical periods or segments of the population.

Accountability

Media accounting also suggests the importance of accountability. Accountability is fundamentally about one’s liability to account for and answer for one’s conduct. There are three primary ways to understand accountability within media accounting. First, we are accountable to others for the traces we create. Second, we are accountable for the traces created about us by others. Third, we are accountable to others for the traces they create about themselves.

To say that we are accountable for the media traces we create is related to the evidentiary nature of media accounting. If I write a diary entry or a tweet that says someone died, I am accountable for the veracity of that information. The fact that it was written is evidence that it occurred—not fact, just evidence. Because I wrote it, I am accountable for it. If I write that I killed someone, then I am accountable for both the fact that I wrote it and the act itself. The distinction of accountability for both the content of the trace as well as the creation of the trace shapes the practice of media accounting.

Indeed, the accountability of media accounting is often persuasive. The earliest of diary keeping was for religious purposes, where diary writing was seen as a way to encourage pious behaviors.[43] During the Victorian era, diary writing was often seen as a way to reflect on and shape our behaviors. Historian Jane Hunter writes:

> Parents and authorities promoted diary-writing among girls as an effort to contain selfishness and encourage conformity to social expectations. Like the Catholic confessionals described by Foucault, diary-writing was an internalized discipline of the self.[44]

(p.15) We become accountable not just to others for the media traces we create, but to ourselves as well. Thus, media accounting can also be a means of shaping, influencing, and persuading future behaviors, actions, and thoughts.

Media accounting is presentist not only in its recording or chronicling but also in its reading. Past traces are experienced in the present and can dramatically influence our present understanding of self and others. As such, for better or worse people are responsible for their creation of media traces and traces about them sometimes long after the trace was created.

We are also accountable for our traces over time—traces we created in our youth or at a different time in our lives. For example, students are constantly reminded to delete Facebook photos of themselves holding red Solo cups before applying for college or going on the job market. While our beliefs or actions depicted in these traces may have been normative at the time, situations change, and interpretations of these can traces change as well.

Because media accounting is tied to an identity, it is also tied to roles and responsibilities. There are normative expectations that go along with various social roles such as being a good wife, mother, daughter, professor, friend, citizen, etc. In our media accounting, we are accountable to the same social roles. Therefore, we may strategically choose to create traces that reinforce or reflect these social roles. As a mother, I feel pressure to chronicle the lives of my children, to take photos of them on the first day of school or with their birthday cakes. The only thing that's changed is whether I post it on Facebook or put it in an album. But the middle-class norm to document the event or milestone has existed for a long time.[45]

We are also accountable for the media accounting involving us. Because media accounting is social in nature, we are often figured into the traces of others. Sometimes media traces are explicitly crafted about us *by* others, such as baby books; however, other times we figure more tangentially into the traces of others. When we visit someone who then writes or tweets about it, they are writing about themselves but it involves us. We go to a concert or a party with a friend who then posts a photo or writes about it. Sometimes traces are collectively made, such as school class photos, which are the traces of the schools, the teachers, and each of the students. If a teenager posts that she went to a bar with a friend who is underage, the underage friend must defend the trace as much as the original poster. Even **(p.16)** though we may not be the one creating the trace, we are accountable for our presence in the traces of others.

Lastly, we are our accountable to hear, watch, and read the media traces of others. Sometimes media accounting is a highly dialogic practice. We write with an audience in mind or with an expected response. When I wrote on my blog that I went to a special restaurant, I'm assuming that my mom was reading and would find it interesting because she loves food and me. She knows I kept this blog about our sabbatical experience in part to keep her updated on things. As such, she has a responsibility to read it. I think she genuinely wanted to read it, but there were expectations that she would read it as well.

When someone on Facebook posts good news, such as getting married, or has a birthday, we are accountable for receiving that information. And not just reading it, but by bearing witness, that is, by somehow communicating that we are receiving that information, in the ritual of receipt. Sometimes this is in the form of a response or a question—“Way to go! Where was that photo taken?” Sometimes, we subtly incorporate the information into future conversations: “You've been there, right?” Responses can be as minimal as clicking a Like button. Sometimes the ritual of receipt is a very physical act of receiving media accounting, such as sitting down with someone at the table to look through a scrapbook with them. Parents in Victorian times would read their children's diaries aloud at the end of the day.[46] It was very common throughout the mid and late twentieth century to sit through a friend or family member's projected slide show of trips or holidays.[47] Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, slide projectors were a popular means of sharing media traces. I still remember sitting through my grandfather's slides of his trip to China—lots of buildings and hills, few people. It lasted an hour—a long presentation, especially for a seven-year-old like myself. But there was a social obligation to watch the slideshow as my grandfather narrated. There was a social obligation to bear witness to the media traces he created of his journey and experiences. We had an accountability to do so. The rituals of receipt may vary, but there is accountability to receive the media accounting of others. These rituals of media accounting reinforce our social bonds.

The accountability for the media traces we consume has been tested when people have posted suicidal messages on social media. How accountable are **(p.17)** we for the media accounting of others? In short, it varies, depending on our relationship, the media, and the context. But the fact that various actors are accountable plays an important role in the value of media accounting and what makes it a powerful communicative act.

What Media Accounting Is Not

I do not want to suggest that all mobile and social media are reflected in media accounting. Indeed, there are a plethora of contexts and uses of mobile and social media and therefore no one theory can account for the complexity of practices that surround such media. Media accounting is not about the creative vernacular, to use Jean Burgess's term, prevalent on mobile and social media.[48] It is not about the wonderfully creative videos that artists, media producers, and aspiring influencers post.[49] Media accounting is not about political organizing or affective publics,[50] even though these also describe mobile and social media. Media accounting is not about how companies and corporations use social media to advertise their products and services or build their brands,[51] though advertising has been integral to and supported media accounting practices since the early twentieth century.

Instead, this book explores a discrete set of practices that various forms of media, digital and analogue, textual and visual, social and seemingly antisocial media have been used for. Just like there are many uses of social media, so too are there many uses of diaries and photo albums and scrapbooks. Looking across media to see patterns of communicative practice is not meant to belittle the significant differences in media platforms as distinct socio-technical systems situated within distinct historical periods. Rather, it is to highlight long-standing human needs to use media to record and share our versions of the world as a means of making sense of the world and our place in it.

The Qualified Self

I want to suggest that the sense of self that emerges from media accounting can be understood as the qualified self. As we create media traces of ourselves in writing, images, audio, and video, we create representations of ourselves to be consumed. These media can be read back to ourselves or **(p.18)** others. It is through the consumption of these media traces that we come to understand ourselves and others, sometimes in new ways. We can hear and see things in media traces about ourselves and others that we might not have noticed in real time. When we look at photos of ourselves or read what we have previously written about ourselves, we can engage, relive, and scrutinize ourselves from perspectives different from our lived experiences. The qualified self is the understanding of ourselves that emerges from creating and reengaging with media traces. The qualified self can be broken down into three aspects: quality, qualify, and qualification.

Quality

Media accounting conveys one's character, disposition or nature, that is, one's qualities. When we engage in media accounting we depict qualities about ourselves and others. The choice of what we decide to create a trace about conveys attributes about us. For example, I might post about something I read in *The New York Times* but I might not post something I read or (more accurately) looked at in *People* magazine. I read them both, but only chose to create a trace about one. The choice of *The New York Times* conveys attributes about me. Qualities can be implicitly or explicitly communicated as we create media traces about ourselves and others. Qualities can be given or given off.[52] Character or disposition can be strategically created in our traces or naively revealed in our media accounting. Regardless of intention or explicitness, a qualified self is defined by the qualities and attributes of people and their experiences as evidenced in their media accounting.

It is important to recognize that quality often conveys something desirable. A quality is often something valued, a virtue of someone. The qualified self therefore often focuses on people's qualities. The qualified self conveys strengths and virtues. Some might call this a positivity bias, that is, a tendency of humans to communicate more positively. A positivity bias has been shown to exist not just on social media,[53] but in language more broadly. Peter Dodds and colleagues found that across languages and cultures positive words are "more prevalent, more meaningful, more diversely used, and more readily learned."[54] The qualified self similarly belies a positivity bias with regard to the qualities that define the qualified self in media accounting.

(p.19) Qualify

The qualified self can also be understood as qualifying. To qualify can mean to describe or to designate in a particular way. The qualified self is therefore a described self, a characterized self. The aggregation of descriptions, of our media traces, and the media traces of others which feature us, convey a particular version of who we are, a qualified version. However, to qualify also means to modify or moderate. In this way, the qualified self is a modified version of the self. We cannot possibly create traces of everything in our lives. The qualified self is a modified and a selective version of the self represented in media traces to be interpreted by ourselves and others.

The qualified self is a described self that must be interpreted, not just analyzed. Harry Wolcott distinguishes analysis from interpretation through the results of the process.[55] Analysis results in patterns, but interpretation results in meaning. The qualified self privileges interpretation and reckoning over analysis. We find meaning in the juxtaposition of photos of the first and last day of school as evidence of not only our children's physical changes over the school year but also the changing emotions elicited, from anticipation to accomplishment. Our media traces of who we are and what we do circulate within modes of interpretation and meaning-making.

Qualification

The qualified self is also made up of our qualifications. Media traces are evidence of who we are and what we've done and therefore communicate our accomplishments. The qualified self is an aggregation not just of behaviors and experiences, but of achievements and milestones. The qualified self conveys our qualifications for our various social roles. When potential employers and romantic interests search for us, our media traces are taken into consideration for who we are and what we can do. Media traces of what we have done can become qualifications for future experiences as media accounting circulates.

The Self

Notions of *self* are essential to the qualified self. On a theoretical level, the term "self" implies both a subject and an object. A person engages in media accounting as a subject—that is, as a creator of traces—but also experiences oneself as an object through media accounting by seeing oneself in the **(p.20)** traces created by oneself or others. The qualified self is situated within sociological understandings of selfhood which position the self as essentially social. Sociologist George Hebert Mead writes:

> The self is something which has a development; it is not initially there, at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity, that is, develops in the given individual as a result of his relations to that process as whole and to other individuals within that process.[56]

For Mead, communication is the process by which individuals may become objects to themselves. Communication is an essential experience to the development of the self. Media accounting is therefore part of this social development of the qualified self. It is in and through media accounting that the qualified self develops both as a subject and an object. Moreover, the qualified self, to quote Mead again, “arises in social experience.”[57] This means the qualified self is a social self and media accounting is fundamentally a social experience. It is both in and through media accounting that the qualified self develops.

The qualified self is also based on feminist understandings of the self. Throughout the late eighteenth and into the nineteenth century, we see women in New England write and depict not just themselves.[58] Their kin and social relations figure prominently into their identity, their selfhood, and their media traces. Peter Heehs’s extensive history of the self is fundamentally the history of a masculine self.[59] Famous men of history write about themselves with a great sense of history, but the women in the diaries and scrapbooks more often create traces not just about themselves but others. The qualified self draws on feminist scholarship which draws our attention to the everyday wives and daughters who track themselves, their families, and communities in their pages and posts.[60] The qualified self is not necessarily a feminized form, but takes on a feminist logic which defines the self in relation to others.

The Qualified and Quantified Self

The term qualified self evokes the quantified self movement. This is a movement that has gained great traction within the last twenty years with the rise of networked and digital technologies. In her book, *The Quantified Self*, Deborah Lupton writes:

> While the quantified self overtly refers to using numbers as means of monitoring and measuring elements of everyday life and embodiment, it can be interpreted **(p.21)** more broadly as an ethos and apparatus of practices that has gathered momentum in this era of mobile and wearable digital devices and of increasing sensor-saturated physical environments.[61]

Lupton argues that the quantified self is broader than just the enumeration of behaviors. The quantified self is part of a lay movement to generate knowledge about bodies within a Foucaudian framework of self-knowledge and discipline. As a scholar of the sociology of health, Lupton frames the quantified self as a long-standing practice of self-tracking, which digital culture has made increasingly prominent as well as contested with regard to privacy, embodiment, surveillance, and knowledge production.

The term the quantified self, however, is contested. Gina Neff and Dawn Nafus argue that the Quantified Self is a specific and highly engaged community of self-trackers who seek to discover insights about themselves through their self-tracking practices.[62] To Neff and Nafus, the (lowercase) quantified self is a nebulous term that has been used in a variety of contexts as a catch-all term for any kind of Fitbit-or Apple Watch–wearing consumer. The Quantified Self community, however, has well-defined norms around the datafication of their bodies and health particularly for self-discovery rather than just self-improvement. The Quantified Self community rejects much of the normative tendencies of some self-tracking systems and technologies as it refocuses attention on *knowing* the self rather than *improving* the self.

Scholars of the quantified self agree that the term is fundamentally associated with the notion of “self-tracking” (Lutpon, 2016; Neff & Nafus, 2016). Self-tracking refers to the ways that people knowingly and purposefully collect information about themselves to analyze and reexamine. Media accounting, as I will show, is fundamentally a self-tracking process. To track means to trace the course or movements of something over time. Rather than using footprints on the ground, the qualified self uses media to keep track the various events in our lives so that we can retrace who we are and where we came from.

Self-tracking scholars acknowledge the variety of ways through which people can track themselves and have over many centuries. Gina Neff and Dawn Nafus argue, however, that the contemporary focus on self-tracking intersects with two key transformations which significantly change the nature of self-tracking. First, technological advancements in mobile computing and sensors enable a variety of new kinds of information to **(p.22)** be monitored, networked, and analyzed. Second, a biomedicalization of culture increasingly seeks biological or physiological explanation for life experiences. Together these developments have given rise to an increase in self-tracking practices particularly within the health domain.

The self-tracking associated with both the quantified self and the Quantified Self community describes turning bodies, experiences, or behaviors into data.[63] Gitelman argues this mode of knowing emerged in the nineteenth century.[64] She demonstrates how documentation became the primary mode through which knowledge was made and circulated. Here knowing became showing through documentation, which more recently we call data.

Overall the difference between the qualified self and quantified self is a matter of degrees and focus rather than categorical difference. Both can be understood as self-tracking, however, the definition of self and the processes of datafication and mediation change the nature of how we engender and experience the traces we and others create.

From Datafication to Mediation

While self-tracking is central to both the quantified and qualified self, a shift from the quantified self to the qualified self can best be described as a shift in prioritization from the processes of datafication to mediation. Viktor Mayer-Schönberger and Kenneth Kukier define datafication as the process of transforming a phenomenon into a quantifiable format so that is can analyzed.[65] Recording and analysis are central to the datafication of self-tracking and are processes not unique to digital culture. As Neff and Nafus argue, quantification is not the defining characteristic of self-tracking—datafication is.[66] The transformation of datafication involves collecting, recording, and analyzing information that is self-tracked.[67]

The qualified self might not feel or immediately look like data, but it can be. A diary in the hand of the diarist might not feel like data, especially if they never read what they have written, but to their grandchild or to a historian it is. The diary or scrapbook as a collection of media traces can constitute data about one’s ancestry or about a historical time period. It can be combined with other traces such as photo albums or archives to help us see patterns and personal as well as cultural meanings.

While the qualified self can be understood as datafication, the qualified self can be better understood as mediation. Roger Silverstone defines the analysis of mediation as understanding “how the processes of mediated **(p.23)** communication shape both society and culture, as well as the relationships that participants, both individual and institutional, have to their environment and each other.”[68] On an individual level, mediation processes ask what does it mean to create media traces of one’s life and the world around us, what are the communicative functions or uses of the creation and circulation of such traces, and, in turn, how do such media traces affect us and our social relations? On an institutional level, mediation examines the political economy of the institutions which both enable and entice media accounting. Here we can examine the roles of platforms and media technologies. For Silverstone, technology is essential for mediation.

> Media technologies are doubly articulated into the social both as technologies whose symbolic and functional characteristics claim a place in both institutional and individual practice, but also as media, conveying through the whole range of their communication the values, rules, and rhetorics of their centrality for the conduct of the quotidian.[69]

Within a mediation framework, the qualified self can be understood as both as a mediated reflection and refraction of us and the world around us.[70] Mediation presumes a bi-directional influence of media technologies onto us and us onto media. The qualified self is an assemblage of our media traces, enabling both multiplicity as well as contradictions to enter into our interpretations of selfhood.[71]

A shift from datafication to mediation can also suggest a shift from intrapersonal communication and toward interpersonal communication. The intrapersonal communication of the quantified self is not to say that self-trackers don’t also get together and share their data or their practices, but that the priority of their self-tracking can be understood as an intra-personal communicative process whereby people self-track to understand themselves. The qualified self suggests a shift in communication prioritization, that is, the interpersonal communication of media accounting privileges the exchange, the audience, and the social relations of the qualified self. A flower seen on a walk and shared on Instagram or a family gathering photographed for the family album presumes mediated interpersonal exchange. Mediation, rather than datafication, reveals the ways that others feature prominently in our representations of ourselves. Similarly, audience and sharing are default to the qualified self rather than the exception. The social content and practice of mediation are central to understanding the qualified self as distinct from the quantified self.

(p.24) A prioritization of mediation also suggests broadening the kinds of topics, activities, and events that people can track. The quantified self is often within an individual context, but the qualified self is often within a relational context. The qualified self is a qualified version of the self which is based on the qualities and qualifications of the media traces created by oneself and others. While the quantified self is more self-focused, the qualified self is more other-focused—both in audience and content.

Dialectics of Media Accounting

In this book, I use dialectics to understand contrasting forces that continually push and pull our motivations, actions, and understandings of media accounting. Dialectical frameworks are common in both interpersonal communication as well as media studies[72]—and help us explore the unresolvable tensions inherent in various processes. There are four dialectical pairs central to the definition of media accounting that I develop: public and private, individual and collective, work and leisure, and ephemerality and permanence.

Public–Private Tensions

First is the notion of public versus private. The contemporary moment is rife with debates about privacy and social media. What is privacy in these contexts? How is it manipulated by governments and the platforms themselves? In the smartphone era, when much of our communication occurs through mediated networks, how do we understand what is private or public? Rather than thinking of them as distinct spheres, a dialectical framework suggests they are oppositional forces that continually influence and shape our communication, our media accounting. The publicness and privateness are aspects of our media accounting that fluctuate and shift over time and depending on context.

As feminist scholars argue, contemporary divisions between public and private spheres as well as their associated gendered roles and responsibilities were never as clear-cut as we often assume.[73] While we often associate women with the domestic or private sphere and men with the public sphere, Susan Miller argues that these distinctions overly simplify complex social relations and roles that characterized much of nineteenth-century American white middle-class life.[74] Women and men have long had to negotiate **(p.25)** the continuum of publicness and privateness among our religious, political, and social interactions. Social media have not brought about the blurring of public and private life, but merely brought greater attention to it.

Individual versus collective is the second dialectical pair. Media accounting highlights the ways that we must continually manage ourselves and others through the representations we create. We create media traces of ourselves for others. We create traces of others for ourselves. We read the traces of others to understand them and ourselves. Distinct categories of the individual or collective do not convey the sociality at work in much of media accounting. There is continual social blurring that feministic scholarship has highlighted.[75]

Work versus leisure is the third dialectical pair. Again drawing on feminist scholarship,[76] this seeming dichotomy highlights the blurred distinction between what we can consider work and what we consider leisure. While industrialization of the nineteenth century brought about new distinctions between work and leisure,[77] women have never experienced such clear distinctions.[78] Media accounting can be experienced as enjoyable as well as taxing. The value of engaging in media accounting is both personal and collective, further blurring work/leisure distinctions.

Finally, ephemerality and permanence is the fourth dialectical pair. Media accounting is a process of taking life experiences and creating media traces of them. While the media traces are often static, their meanings are not. This dialectic is heightened in the contemporary social media environment where so many of our media traces are digital presented through our mobile devices. The seeming immateriality of these traces enhances a sense of ephemerality. However, the phone itself is quite material, as are the networks and servers storing such data. Here materiality and immateriality are replaced by visibility and invisibility. The more visible something is, the more permanent is feels. Media accounting allows us to manage the tensions that arise between the fleeting nature of the lived experience and of wanting to hold on to such life experiences.

The Book

The book explores four practices associated with media accounting. By organizing it around practice rather than the account, accounting, and accountability, I can 1) draw out the ordinary uses, technological affordances, **(p.26)** and historical parallels across media, 2) identify the account, accounting, and accountability aspects within each practice, and 3) focus on what people *do* with media. Each chapter explores a different practice, however, all practices are mutually enabled and constituted. Therefore, while certain social media platforms are used to explicate particular practices, any case could be used to identify each practice. For example, swapping out Facebook for Instagram could equally be used to explore any of the four practices.

Chapter 2 focuses on the first of four media accounting practices: the ways people document and share everyday aspects of their lives through media accounting. This chapter draws on theories of ritual, routine, and presence to reveal the ways that sharing mundane events and activities can be meaningful and important. I first review historical diarying to examine how people have used diaries for quotidian chronicling and sharing. I then draw on several key examples from my research on Twitter and mobile social networks to talk about the ways that people share small bits of their everyday lives, in ways that create meaning for them and those connected to them. Sharing what we read online is an important way that we sift and filter vast amounts of media. This kind of curation[79] allows us to share our own media consumption and is also an important part of performing identities (which will be discussed in chapter 3). Sharing the mundane also provides a new lens for understanding narcissistic critiques of social media. Therefore, I also explore issues of videologs or vlogs, which are often considered highly narcissistic yet mundane, to explain not just sharing the mundane but our collective interest in consuming and bearing witness to quotidian media accounting. People have shared their activities, routines, and locations with others through media as means of social interaction and integration. Within a longer history of media accounting, we can begin to understand the motivations for sharing and reading social and location-based personal information. Media accounting suggests a new lens to the debates on narcissism and social media by putting the practices into a longer historical trajectory of meaning sharing.

Chapter 3 explores the role of media accounting in identity performance and work by highlighting how media have always been important outlets for identity expression. I integrate dramaturgical theory with notions of middle-class cultural identity and visual media accounting. I suggest that visual modes of identity representation are means of social interaction. **(p.27)** Beginning with a review of the historical role of snapshot photography, I show the early interconnections between media, the family, and identity. I explore the representations of identities through the creation and sharing of images, comparing early Kodak with Instagram. I then review the rise of consumer culture and scrapbooks at the turn of the twentieth century, discussing the importance of performance, consumption, and identity on Pinterest. Two important aspects of identity representations are explored. First, I argue that identity is not an individualistic cognition or state, but fundamentally a dynamic and socially enacted process revealed through media accounting. Second, I argue that the ways people make choices about the small scraps, snapshots, and posts of their media accounting reflect identity work. Particularly related to the family, I argue the identity work of media accounting is a form of invisible labor often taken on by women.

Chapter 4 explores the practice of remembrancing. Media traces have long been a tool for remembering activities and experiences. This chapter examines the various ways that people create media traces as what José van Dijk calls mediated memories.[80] Historically, one of the most common kinds of diary keeping are travel journals. This was a way to record new events and experiences to savor at a later time and share with others. Similarly, today travel blogs and social media postings are both a way to share with others as well as relive these traces when returning home. Remembrancing is also a way to create media traces of particularly momentous events in our lives. This chapter explores the role of memorial photography and, in particular, postmortem infant photography as a means of understanding how and why we create traces of difficult experiences in our lives. Remembrancing is a media practice that ritualistically reinforces our social collectives.

Chapter 5 explores the practice of reckoning. Reckoning is the process of engaging with media traces to better understand ourselves and the world around us. This chapter examines the evidentiary nature of media traces. Drawing on Derrida's notion of the trace,[81] I examine the ways media accounting allows us to both prove and improve ourselves. I discuss the ways that various media traces are used as evidence. I draw on the GoPro camera and its community of YouTube users to demonstrate how everyday people create and share their videos to document and prove that something happened. But I also argue that reckoning comes from the aggregated nature of media accounting. We can see things in our traces over time that we cannot in our lived experience. This chapter examines various tensions that arise **(p.28)** when our media traces do not align with our sense of selves and describes a reconciliation process that we engage in through media accounting.

Finally, chapter 6 reviews the practices and dialectics of media accounting to explore what's really new about new media accounting practices. One of the goals of placing social media into a media accounting framework is that it allows us to see similarities in practices across time and technology. It also, however, allows us insights into the key differences. In this chapter I argue that the speed, size, and ownership of mobile and social media platforms are significantly different from previous forms of media accounting. I discuss the implications of what these differences are for individuals as well as the broader cultural implications. I also discuss what I see as a postdigital turn in media accounting whereby the media traces we create are made analogue in a tactical way—tactical both as a means of exerting power and influence but also in its material form.

Taken together this book reveals longstanding communication and media processes. For hundreds of years we have used media to talk about ourselves and the world around us. We do this to connect with others, to fulfill social roles and responsibilities, to help us hold on to and commemorate the people and things that are important to us, and to better understand our relational place in the world. Mobile and social media help us to do this today as our qualified selves are shaped and reshaped through our media traces and our sharing of them. In a very ordinary way, we have found great meaning and connection in using media to share our everyday activities and experiences.

Notes:

(1.) Margo Culley, ed., *A Day at a Time: The Diary Literature of American Women from 1764 to the Present* (New York: The Feminist Press at CUNY, 1985), 29–35.

(2.) Drinker's diary is archived in *North American Women's Letters and Diaries: Colonial to 1950*, https://alexanderstreet.com/products/north-american-womens-letters-and-diaries/.

(3.) Culley, *A Day at a Time*, 3–17.

(4.) There is a growing interest in media studies, science and technology studies, and information science in understanding the role of historical technologies as potential antecedents to the current social media environment. For example, Esther Milne's book *Letters, Postcards, Email: Technologies of Presence* reveals how postcards are an early form of locative media and Jill Walker Rettberg's *Seeing Ourselves* shows how self-portraits are an early form of selfies. It is this literature to which this book contributes.

(5.) See William W. Gaver, "Technology Affordances" (paper presented at the Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on human factors in computing systems: Reaching through technology, New Orleans, LA, April 27–May 2, 1991); and Lucas Graves, "Affordances of Blogging: A Case Study in Culture and Technological Effects," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 31, no. 4 (2007): 331–346. Many communication scholars actively eschew technological determinism as a means of understanding how technological impacts our lives; the concept of affordances offers a softer determinism. See also Lee Humphreys, "Technological Determinism," in *Encyclopedia of Science and Technology Communication*, ed. Susanna Hornig Priest (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2010), 869–972, for a discussion of hard versus soft technological determinism.

(6.) Molly McCarthy, "A Pocketful of Days: Pocket Diaries and Daily Record Keeping among Nineteenth-Century New England Women," *New England Quarterly* 73, no. 2 (2000): 282.

(7.) McCarthy, "A Pocketful of Days," 295.

(8.) McCarthy, 295.

(9.) Jonathan Donner, *After Access: Inclusion, Development, and a More Mobile Internet* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015).

(10.) See Nancy K. Baym, *Personal Connections in the Digital Age* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2010); danah boyd, *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014); Alice E. Marwick, *Status Update: Celebrity and Attention in the Social Media Age* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013); Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (New York: Basic Books, 2011).

(11.) Zizi Papacharissi, "The Virtual Sphere 2.0: The Internet, the Public Sphere, and Beyond," in *Handbook of Internet Politics*, eds. Andrew Chadwick and Phil Howard (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2008), 230–245.

(12.) See Clarissa C. David, Jonathan Corpus Ong, and Erika Fille T. Legara, "Tweeting Supertyphoon Haiyan: Evolving Functions of Twitter during and after a Disaster Event," *PLoS One* 11, no. 3 (2016): e0150190; Philip N. Howard and Muzammil M. Hussain, *Democracy's Fourth Wave?: Digital Media and the Arab Spring* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Zizi Papacharissi, *Affective Publics: Sentiment, Technology, and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Zeynep Tufekci and Christopher Wilson, "Social Media and the Decision to Participate in Political Protest: Observations from Tahrir Square," *Journal of Communication* 62, no. 2 (2012): 363–379.

(13.) Tim Highfield, Stephen Harrington, and Axel Bruns, "Twitter as a Technology for Audiencing and Fandom," *Information Communication and Society* 16, no. 3 (2013): 315–339; Mike Thelwall, Kevan Buckley, and Georgios Paltoglou, "Sentiment in Twitter Events," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 62, no. 2 (2011): 406–418.

(14.) Twitter, #Numbers, http://blog.twitter.com/2011/03/numbers.html, accessed June 9, 2017.

(15.) Ben Highmore, *Ordinary Lives: Studies in the Everyday* (London: Routledge, 2010), 6.

(16.) Roger Silverstone and Leslie Haddon, “Design and the Domestication of Information and Communication Technologies: Technical Change and Everyday Life,” in *Communication by Design. The Politics of Information and Communication Technologies*, eds. Robin Mansel and Roger Silverstone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 44–74.

(17.) Carolyn Marvin, *When Old Technologies Were New: Thinking about Electric Communication in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 5.

(18.) boyd, *It’s Complicated*.

(19.) Eli Pariser, *The Filter Bubble: How the New Personalized Web Is Changing What We Read and How We Think* (London: Penguin Books, 2012); Joseph Turow, *The Daily You: How the New Advertising Industry Is Defining Your Identity and Your Worth* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011).

(20.) Tarleton Gillespie, Pablo J. Boczkowski, and Kirsten A. Foot, “Introduction,” in *Media Technologies: Essays on Communication, Materiality, and Society*, eds. Tarleton Gillespie, Pablo J. Boczkowski, and Kirsten J. Foot (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), 1–16.

(21.) Trevor J. Pinch, and Wiebe E. Bijker, “The Social Construction of Facts and Arte-facts: Or How the Sociology of Science and the Sociology of Technology Might Benefit Each Other,” *Social Studies of Science* 14, no. 3 (1984): 399–441.

(22.) Joshua Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 331.

(23.) Klaus Bruhn Jensen, “Media,” in *International Encyclopedia of Communication*, edited by Wolfgang Donsbach (Blackwell Publishing, 2008), accessed September 12, 2017, http://doi.org/10.1111/b.9781405131995.2008.x

(24.) Susan J. Douglas, *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination* (New York: Times Books, 1999).

(25.) Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

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