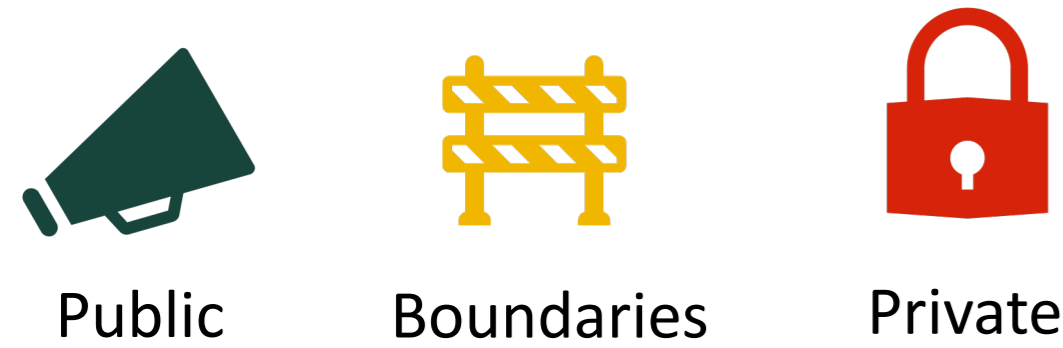# "You have to be hyperaware": PhD students' management of boundary turbulence when posting research-related information on social media

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How do science PhD students manage privacy boundaries when sharing research-related information on social media?
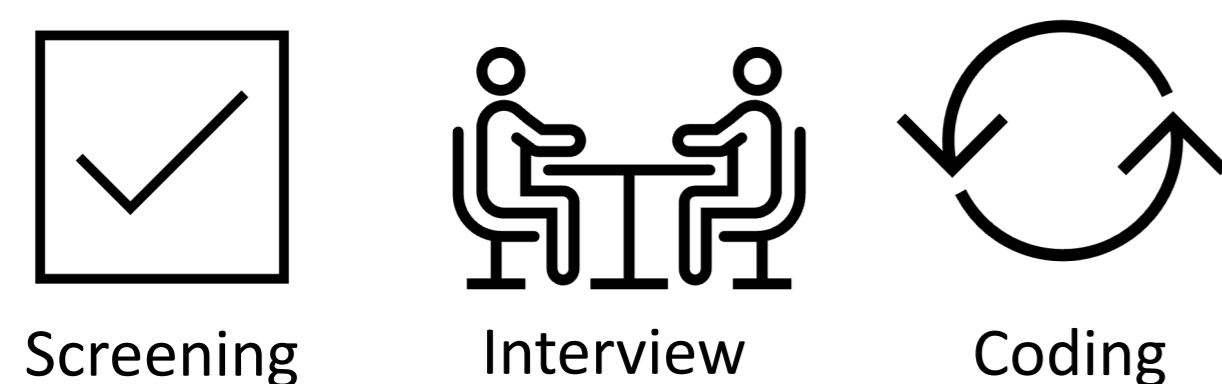
Theoretical Framework

Communication Privacy Management

Public   Boundaries   Private

Interview Participants

Philippines $\bar{x}_{age}=35$

USA $\bar{x}_{age}=26$

Method

Screening   Interview   Coding

KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

U7: "When you have the stakes that high … your funding's going to go down or someone's funding is going to get hurt, or someone's going to lose their job, or you're not going to get a job, then **you have to be hyperaware**."

- Approaches to manage potential boundary turbulence and perceived risks had limited effect
- Ambiguous privacy boundaries may amplify existing power dynamics and place vulnerable individuals at greater risk
- Future work in this area may explore strategies to improve boundary coordination

Perceived Outcomes of Sharing Research-Related Information

Career advancement & visibility
- Sharing work with "more readers (P5) and a "larger audience" (U4)

Fulfillment of obligations
- Allowed participants to meet standards/behavior perceived to be expected by others, particularly colleagues and employers

U6: "… it was made more apparent that having a Twitter … would also be beneficial down the road."

Impacts on professional career
- Concerns that research can be "scooped" (stolen) by other scientists
- "Unprofessional" conduct seen as leading to poorer future prospects

U2: "[My friend] lost two years. Because some other people just get it first, and it just happens sometimes."

Loss of control over context
- Information shared on social media may be interpreted or used by others, causing conflict and loss of control over privacy

P1: "I can't control everything in social media… there's still a possibility that what I posted [online] would be shared."

Approaches to Managing Risks

Keeping online disclosures 'correct' and 'factual'
- factual or verifiable = fewer negative outcomes if privacy violations occur
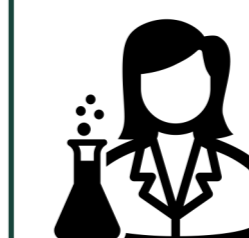- boundary turbulence still occurs

U3: "They're very sensitive […] They don't really like talking about their work or […] people talking about their work."

Being aware of when and where disclosures are appropriate
- appropriate = no/fewer chances of causing privacy violations or boundary turbulence
- boundaries hard to define except with confidentiality agreements & publication

P6: "Location is very important. You need to make sure that what you are putting on something is fit for that."