

M Nava

Reading Assignment 6

Research & Development Methods

March 7, 2019

This week the reading consisted of two articles, “Facebook Groups as Therapy” by Sarah Zhang and “Dating app Tinder can be a tool for journalists” from the Columbia Journalism Review. The first article on “Facebook Groups as Therapy” talks about privacy concerns that users on the website have when they join a group that focuses on sensitive topics. The article on “Dating app Tinder can be a tool for journalists” talks about journalists that are using dating apps like Tinder as a means of networking and interviewing people from all over the world.

Facebook’s original goal was to connect people, and then it began to evolve into, “Bringing people closer.” Facebook began to facilitate a space online where people could meet and talk about more personal and sensitive topics in closed groups. People felt exposed when the facebook group would expose members of a closed group and began to make their own, make-shift workarounds that would attempt to hide the identity of its members from the public. Groups such as the groups for unexpected biological parenting had set up a gateway group to advertise the existence of this group to the public while making the actual support group secret and unsearchable.

Some groups such as ones set up to attract sexual assault survivors had suddenly changed to a group sharing erotica. It was unclear if it was a hack by a third party or if this was the intention of the creators of the group from the beginning. Events like these made a group of women that

have tested positive for the BRCA gene that causes breast cancer, to submit a cease-and-desist letter to a Chrome browser extension that would allow marketers to steal memberships lists from closed groups. After, that Facebook changed their features, and now private groups no longer expose the members of the group.

Tinder and other apps have enabled this world connection feature in the last couple of years, Users now have the ability to meet people from all over the world, and journalists are using this feature to their own advantage. Journalists are now using dating apps such as Tinder and Grindr to reach out to locals of an area of interest because of an event that happened. People currently still view Tinder and these other apps as a place to meet people for intimate, romantic relationships, but journalists have begun to set-up work profiles that identify themselves as being a journalists, and asking to interview people. This has lead to the miscommunication of people thinking that the journalist is using their job title as a 'pick-up line' of sorts, only to be disappointed later, and find that the journalist only wants to discuss the current event that happens to be happening in the area they live in.

The problem with using tinder as a means of finding sources to interview includes possibly outing your source, the limit of the amount of information you can get, and the timing of the messaging. People may be on the app discreetly, and may not be open about their sexuality. People go into these apps not expecting to be potentially interviewed by a published journalist. This could lead to potential loss of career or harmful backlash from the interviewee community. The app is not frequently used by users, and you may not get a response to your question from a user until the event journalists are reporting has long passed.