Engagement in Social Media Environments for Individuals who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication

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INTRODUCTION

- For individuals with and without disabilities, communication environments have changed in the last five years, with increased recognition that maximizing communication participation extends well beyond face-to-face interactions (Shane, Blackstone, Vanderheiden, Williams, & DeRuyter, 2012).
- The nature of social media inherently provides a context for interaction with people within a meaningful task
- The literature related to social media and engagement, so far, has focused on consumer and organization interactions (Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurie, & Ilie, 2011; Hollebeek & Chen, 2014), with perspectives of engagement taken from vantage points of organizations engaging with consumers and vise-versa.
- Li (2010) proposed a framework for organization and consumer engagement on social media, which included five components: (1) watching, (2) sharing, (3) commenting, (4) producing, and (5) curating.
- The engagement activities, proposed by Li (2010), can be applicable to use of social media by individuals who use AAC.

Social Media Engagement Framework for individuals who use AAC
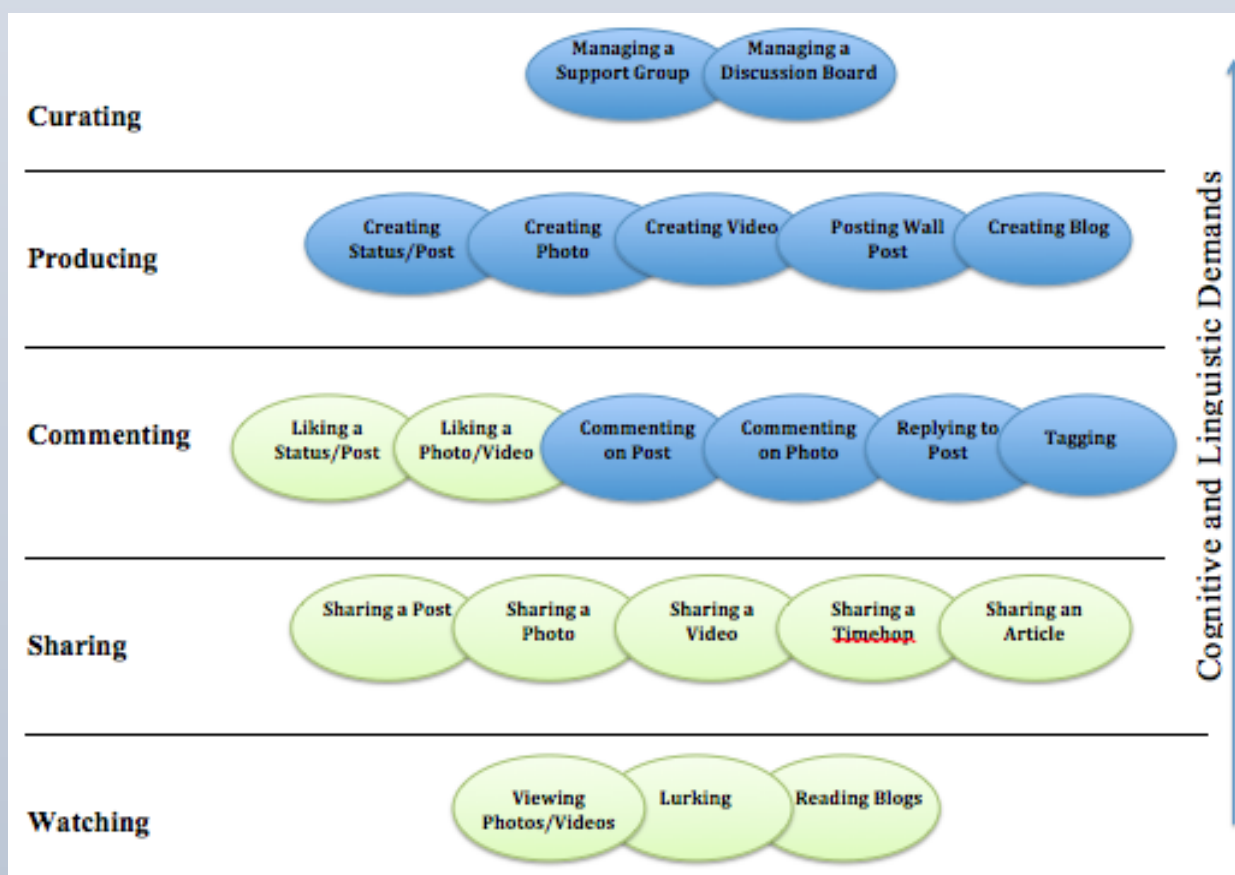

AIM

- To date, no research has observed individuals who use AAC interact in an online environment, over an extended period of time. This study aimed to use observations to systematically analyze common behaviors individuals who use AAC and social media engage in on Facebook (e.g., liking, commenting, sharing). These findings will be used to expand current understanding for the areas in which interventions should be developed

RESULTS
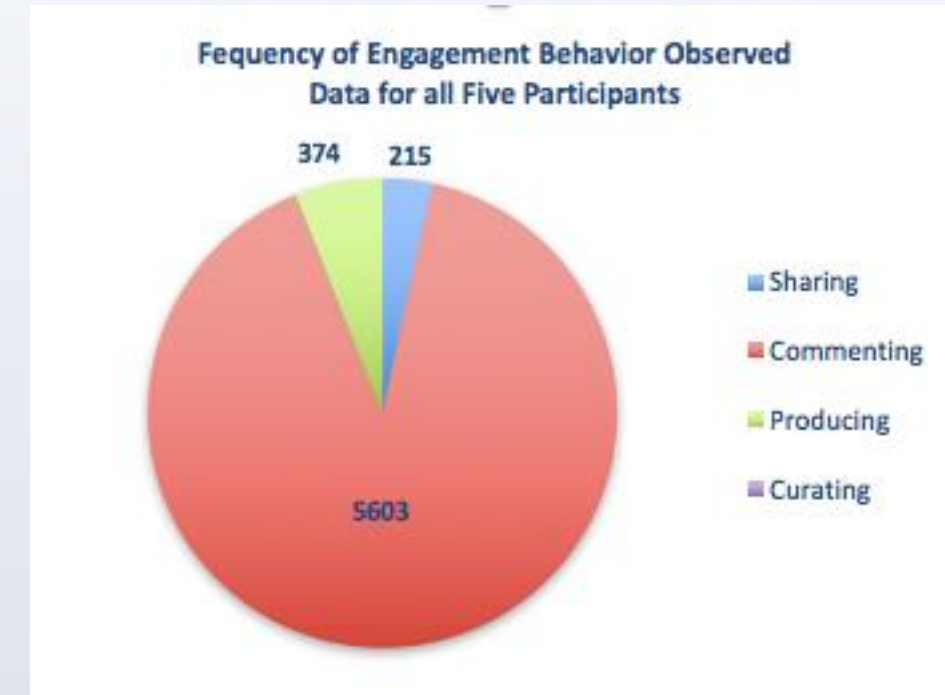
Total behaviors exhibited by all five participants combined. Commenting was the dominant behavior across all participants, with 5603 commenting behaviors observed across the participants. No participants engaged in curating behaviors.
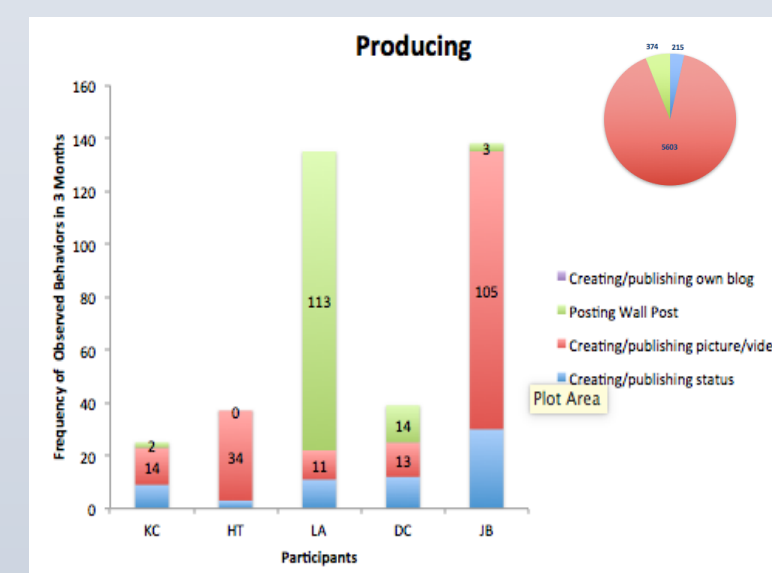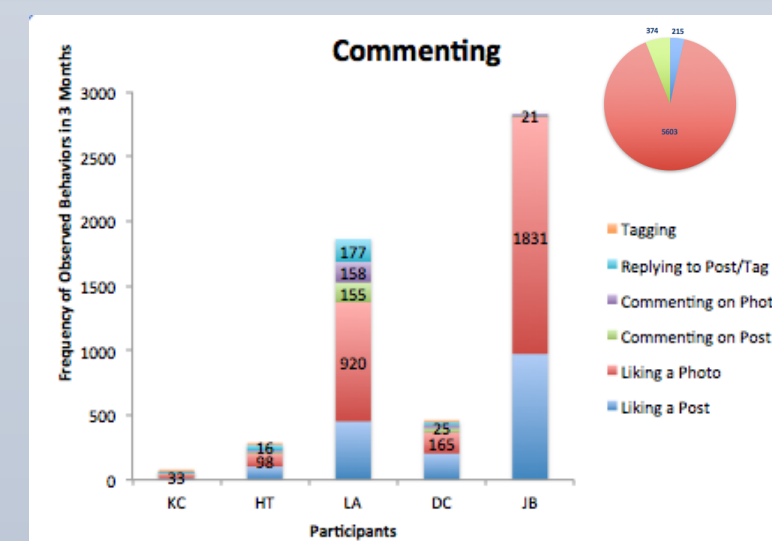

Number of Producing behaviors observed in each participant's Facebook activity.

Publishing a picture or video, or posting a status were the dominant behaviors in this category.
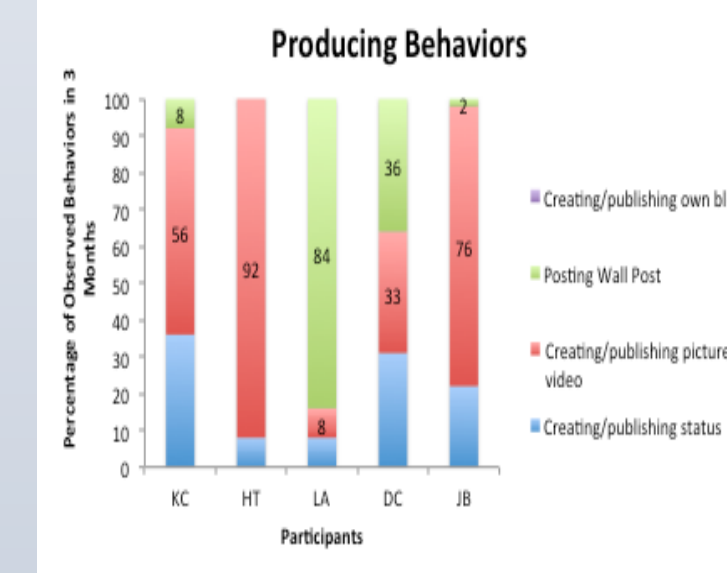
Percentages of Producing behaviors observed in each participant's Facebook activity.

Publishing a picture or video was the behavior observed with the highest percentage for all but one participant.
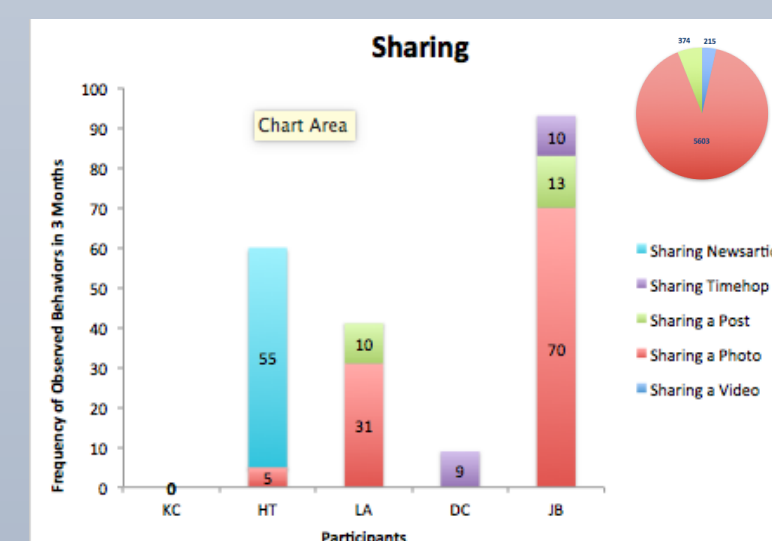

Number of Commenting behaviors observed in each participant's Facebook activity.

Liking a photo and liking a post were the dominant behaviors in this category for all participants.
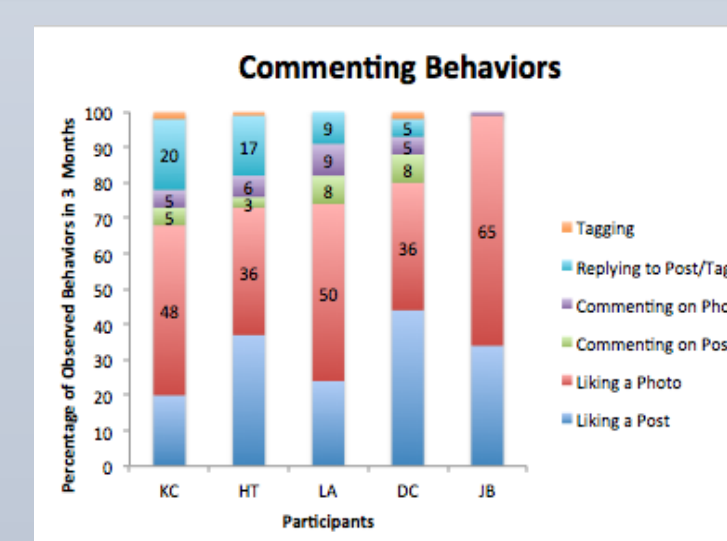
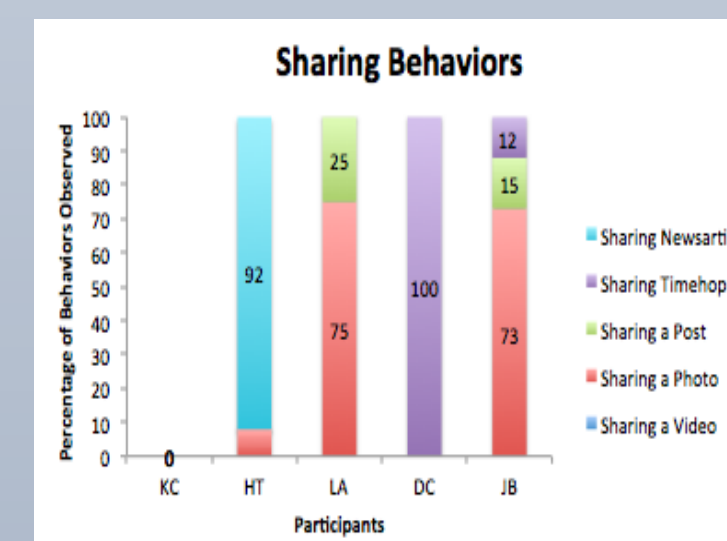Percentages of Commenting behaviors observed in each participant's Facebook activity.

Liking a photo occupied the highest percentage of behaviors, across all participants.

Number of Sharing behaviors observed in each participant's Facebook activity.

Overall, Sharing behaviors were observed significantly less frequently than Commenting behaviors despite the low demand on cognitive and linguistic skills.

Types of sharing behaviors varied.

Percentages of Sharing behaviors observed in each participant's Facebook activity.

Types of sharing behaviors varied across participants.

METHODS

- Design: Online observations were used to gather data across time, perspectives, and participants in the natural setting (i.e. the virtual setting of Facebook) (Patton, 2002)
- Procedures: Participants shared three months of their Facebook Activity Logs
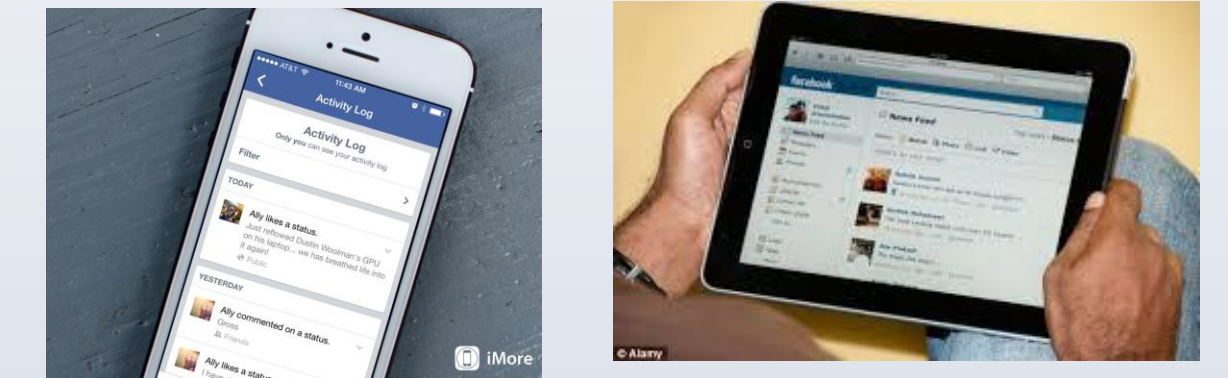
- Data Analysis: An *a priori* coding system was established to apply the components of social media engagement framework to Facebook Activity Logs (see Figure 1 for image of Engagement Framework)
- Participants: Participants included two females and three males, ranging in age from 20 to 36. All participants had been diagnosed with cerebral palsy and used a variety of means to communicate, including high-tech AAC.

CONCLUSIONS

- A limited range of engagement behaviors are observed by individuals who use AAC. Interventions to support and expand uses (e.g., tagging, commenting on a photo) are required in order to maximize the engagement in this communication content.

- As the digital world becomes more dominant in activities of daily living and communication, the risk of exclusion rises. It is imperative that stakeholders consider ways to provide optimal access, options for engagement, and support for use of online communication contexts to ensure it is a better world for all individuals, including those who use AAC.

FUTURE RESEARCH

- Expand current study to include more participants
- Investigate interventions to teach necessary linguistic, operational, social and strategic skills to individuals who require AAC and to determine the effects on communication effectiveness via social media.
- Investigate the use of social media as an intervention milieu.

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