WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE IN CYBERSPACE: HOW BOUNDARY WORK IN ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS IMPACTS PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

ARIANE OLLIER-MALATERRE
Rouen Business School and Université du Québec à Montréal

NANCY P. ROTHBARD
JUSTIN M. BERG
University of Pennsylvania

As employees increasingly interact with their professional contacts in online social networks that are personal in nature, such as Facebook or Twitter, they are likely to experience a collision of their professional and personal identities unique to this new and expanding social space. In particular, online social networks present employees with boundary management and identity negotiation opportunities and challenges because they invite nontailored self-disclosure to broad audiences while offering few of the physical and social cues that normally guide social interactions. How and why do employees manage the boundaries between their professional and personal identities in online social networks, and how do these behaviors impact the way they are regarded by professional contacts? We build a framework to theorize about how work-nonwork boundary preferences and self-evaluation motives drive the adoption of four archetypical sets of online boundary management behaviors (open, audience, content, and hybrid) and the consequences of these behaviors for respect and liking in professional relationships. Content and hybrid behaviors are more likely to increase respect and liking than open and audience behaviors; audience and hybrid behaviors are less risky for respect and liking than open and content behaviors but more difficult to maintain over time.

As the world becomes increasingly connected through social media, employees are interacting more with coworkers, supervisors, and other professional contacts in online social networks. Some of these online networks, such as Facebook and Twitter, are social spaces where interactions can be personal as well as professional. Participation in such networks results in a potential collision of professional and personal worlds that may open up opportunities as well as create challenges for employees as they

strive to establish and maintain respect and liking in the eyes of their professional contacts (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Kossek, Noe, & DeMarr, 1999; Phillips, Rothbard, & Dumas, 2009). When interacting in online social networks, employees move from offline interactions, where disclosure and feedback are tailored within particular conversations and guided by clear physical cues (Goffman, 1956), to interactions characterized by open disclosure to broad audiences, some of which are not readily visible (Boyd, 2007; Donath & Boyd, 2004; Ryan, 2008). Thus, in the new world of work, collisions of one's professional and personal domains are increasingly frequent online. This presents new opportunities and challenges for boundary management and identity negotiation in cyberspace that are not directly addressed in past theory and research on these processes in physical space (e.g., Ashforth et al., 2000; Kreiner, 2006; Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009; Nippert-Eng, 1995; Rothbard, Phillips, & Dumas, 2005; Swann,

Johnson, & Bosson, 2009). Although scholars have begun to investigate challenges for individuals using social media more generally (Donath & Boyd, 2004; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Forest & Wood, 2012), little is known about how employees manage the boundary between their professional and personal identities in online social networks and what this means for their professional relationships.

To guide theory and research on online boundary management, we build a framework that extends boundary theory into the new and expanding world of online social networks. We propose that employees' online boundary management behaviors are driven by a combination of their preferences for segmentation versus integration of their professional and personal identities (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kreiner, 2006; Rothbard et al., 2005) and their motives for self-enhancement or self-verification (Brown, 1990, 1991; Kwang & Swann, 2010; Pfeffer & Fong, 2005; Sedikides & Strube, 1995; Swann, 1983, 1990; Wiesenfeld, Swann, Brockner, & Bartel, 2007). We identify four sets of online boundary management behaviors that employees enact in response to these drivers and theorize about how these behaviors influence the degree to which employees are respected and liked by professional contacts.

We focus on respect and liking as important elements of professional relationships for two reasons. First, respect and liking tap into the two core dimensions by which people formulate judgments of others: competence and warmth (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, & Glick, 1999; Hamilton & Fallot, 1974). Moreover, judgments of professional contacts on these two dimensions may diverge based on interactions in online social networks that mix the professional and personal. Second, respect and liking are highly desirable in organizations and have been related to a number of important outcomes (Cuddy, Glick, & Beninger, 2011), including supervisory performance ratings (Lefkowitz, 2000; Robbins & DeNisi, 1994), group commitment (Tyler & Blader, 2003), leader-member exchange (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Wayne & Ferris, 1990), and group performance (Gruenfeld, Mannix, Williams, & Neale, 1996; Jehn & Shah, 1997). Recent studies show that self-disclosure in online social networks can significantly affect liking and individuals' impressions of others more

generally (Forest & Wood, 2012; Weisbuch, Ivcevic, & Ambady, 2009). In this way employees' boundary management behaviors in online social networks can help or hurt their professional relationships and, thus, hinder their career success (Cuddy et al., 2011; Dutta, 2010).

Because research on social media is still relatively new, many empirical questions concerning employees' experiences in online social networks remain unanswered. However, a recent review of Facebook-related research (Wilson, Gosling, & Graham, 2012) points to benefits such as keeping in touch with strong and weak ties and, in particular, crystallizing otherwise ephemeral relationships (Ellison et al., 2007). Yet the review also points to evidence that employees are struggling with issues of identity presentation and relationships among groups and individuals. For instance, studies focusing on hiring decisions show that the chances applicants will be offered a job increase if their Facebook profile emphasizes family values or professionalism, but the chances decrease if their profile contains inappropriate material, such as alcohol and drugs (Bohnert & Ross, 2010). While management research to date has not directly examined the impact of employees' behavior in online social networks on their professional relationships, we draw on this emergent body of evidence to argue that the way employees interact with their professional contacts in online social networks impacts the respect and liking they receive from them (Stopfer & Gosling, 2012). Thus, by building a theoretical framework of online boundary management, we open up new lines of research on a fast-growing phenomenon that has important implications for employees, managers, and organizations.

BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT: FROM PHYSICAL SPACE TO CYBERSPACE

Boundary management of multiple identities is a classic organizational challenge. Following the Second Industrial Revolution, the boundary between professional and personal life was cited as one of the essential features of a bureaucratized society (Weber, 1968), leading employees to enact different identities when they interacted in a professional setting versus a personal setting with family and friends (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kossek et al., 1999; Nippert-Eng, 1995;

Rothbard et al., 2005). Scholars have defined boundaries as "mental fences" (Zerubavel, 1991: 2) used to simplify and order the environment, or "physical, temporal, emotional, cognitive, and/or relational limits that define entities as separate from one another" (Ashforth et al., 2000: 474). Employees have come to rely on boundaries to delineate their professional and personal domains and avoid the coactivation of incongruent facets of their identities (Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009). To some extent these boundaries are reified through social cues regarding norms and expectations that guide behavior in each of these domains (Nippert-Eng, 1995). However, boundary management is an active, ongoing process (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000), and employees either reinforce or lessen boundaries during social interactions. For example, they may befriend work colleagues and invite them into their homes.

A key reason why employees navigate their multiple identities in this way is to maintain or enhance their professional relationships (Dumas, Phillips, & Rothbard, in press; Phillips et al., 2009; Roberts, 2005). On the one hand, the professional domain often includes strong and clear norms and expectations of what constitutes appropriate professional behavior (Bloor & Dawson, 1994; Pratt, Rockmann, & Kaufmann, 2006). Thus, employees who enact their personal identities in ways that are seen as inappropriate in the professional domain lose respect in the eyes of their professional contacts. On the other hand, employees' professional contacts may appreciate seeing aspects of their personal identities, since personal self-disclosure and frequent interactions tend to increase liking (Collins & Miller, 1994; Saegert, Swap, & Zajonc, 1973). Therefore, if employees can effectively manage the boundaries between their professional and personal identities such that they engage in some personal disclosure in their interactions, but without violating professional norms, they will be more respected and liked by professional contacts.

However, to date, little theory has shed light on the boundary work that employees do when interacting in online social networks. Here we focus on online social networks that are personal in nature and pervasive enough such that employees receive connection requests from professional contacts (e.g., Facebook or Twitter). With a variety of features, including biographi-

cal profiles, photo sharing, and public comments (Boyd, 2007), these online social networks are becoming a key forum for relationship development and maintenance (Ellison et al., 2007). Recent data point to a blurring of the professional and personal domains in these online networks, which exacerbates the need for active boundary management. For instance, younger employees are connected to an average of 16 coworkers on Facebook (Millennial Branding, 2012), and 41 percent of Facebook users think it is irresponsible to ignore a friend request from a coworker (Ketchum Global Research Network for Liberty Mutual, 2011). While most of the literature on online social networks focuses on privacy (see, for instance, Boyd, 2007; Lewis, Kaufman, & Christakis, 2008; Martin, 2009; Solove, 2007), a few studies report evidence of individuals conducting online boundary work through self-censoring (Lampinen, Tamminen, & Oulasvirta, 2009; Skeels & Grudin, 2009), adjusting profile visibility (Tufekci, 2008), customizing profiles to disclose different information to different individuals (Donath & Boyd, 2004; Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008), and creating multiple profiles (Stutzman & Hartzog, 2012).

A great deal of personal information is often disclosed in these online forums. However, a key feature that distinguishes such online interaction is that the information disclosed is much less tailored to a particular conversation. In face-to-face and other individualized interactions, such as email or phone calls, employees can manage the boundary between their professional and personal identities by controlling the amount and nature of personal information they disclose to professional contacts over time and by adapting such disclosure to particular dyadic relationships (Collins, 1981; Goffman, 1956). In online social networks, personal information is disclosed in a nontailored fashion. Compared with feedback and comments made in offline work interactions, for instance, online information is shared with a potentially broader audience and is also persistent in time and easily searchable (Boyd, 2007). Because of this, when two professional contacts first connect in a primarily personal online social network like Facebook, they are granted access to a bevy of personal information about each other all at once, perhaps including content the focal person was unaware of or had forgotten. When a new relationship starts offline, individuals also ex-

change a large amount of personal information initially, yet this information is tailored and directed in a personalized manner in the conversation between the individuals (Goffman, 1956; Taylor, 1968; Worthy, Gary, & Kahn, 1969). In contrast, connecting in online social networks unleashes a flood of self-disclosure in the form of an archive of information that is not tailored to the particular relationship or situation, and its original context and meaning may be skewed (Boyd, 2008). The recent "timeline" feature of Facebook is a vivid illustration of a nontailored chronological display of a vast amount of information. In addition, this information may be easily searchable and retrievable using search engines and websites that collect available information on a given individual and his or her connections (Boyd, 2007). Such a flood of nontailored self-disclosure—especially at the beginning of a professional relationship—is an experience that seems to be unique to connecting in online social networks.

A second key feature of online interaction is that even after the initial flood of self-disclosure, the sharing of personal information continues between the contacts, without access to the visible social cues—including facial expressions, vocal tones, and body language (Mehrabian, 1971)—that normally help reinforce norms and scripts in physical space by providing critical information about how one should behave in social interactions (Collins, 1981, 2004; Goffman, 1959). Online social networks that are personal in nature essentially put users in one large, invisible room with "friends" or connections from various social worlds, which often include both the professional and personal. Employees interact with a *visible audience* (e.g., contacts who frequently interact with the employee or are available to chat at the time the employee logs in) that makes salient particular social identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This prompts them to use the social scripts they associate with these particular ingroups (Tajfel, 1970). Meanwhile, outgroup members might be in the *invisible audience*—that is, all the other contacts, including professional contacts, who may not be salient in employees' minds as they share information (Boyd, 2007). Employees often use the visible audience as a guide to recreate social cues and post information that is appropriate for these contacts. However, in doing so they also unwittingly disclose that information to invisible au-

diences, for which the personal information might not be as appropriate. To some extent, employees can navigate online social networks without physical cues using self-categorization processes (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Yet without the physical and social cues that typically help communicate and enforce norms in physical space, they are more likely to fall prey to false consensus biases (Ross, Greene, & House, 1977) and to overestimate how much their professional contacts share their understanding of what constitutes appropriate disclosure of information in online social networks.

In addition to the challenges of managing the information employees disclose about themselves in online social networks, employees also need to manage what information their professional or personal contacts disclose about them, as well as the public or semi-public feedback their contacts give on information the employees disclose themselves (Boyd, 2007). For instance, an employee may suffer reputational consequences from a coworker's comment implying that she does not work hard, even if that is actually not the case. Employees could also be embarrassed by personal comments made by their friends and family members that their professional contacts see as well. The asynchronous and public or semi-public nature of the interactions thus constrains employees' choices regarding boundary management and identity negotiation, since employees need to consider to whom it might be appropriate to connect and what information to share—not only in terms of what they themselves disclose online but also what others may disclose about them.

Taken together, these challenges suggest that managing boundaries between the professional and the personal is qualitatively different in cyberspace than in physical space, and for many employees such boundary management is more difficult online than offline (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kossek et al., 1999). If employees want a boundary between their professional and personal identities in online social networks, they have to actively construct and maintain it themselves. This creates ongoing challenges for employees who face social pressure to enact different norms, roles, and scripts within their professional and personal domains. The ways in which employees deal with these challenges significantly influence the degree to which their

professional contacts like and respect them, as suggested by emerging empirical evidence (e.g., Bohnert & Ross, 2010; Forest & Wood, 2012). However, theory and research to date have not directly addressed how and why employees manage boundaries between their professional and personal identities in online social networks, or how this affects the way their professional contacts regard them.

ONLINE BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Motivational Drivers and Online Boundary Management Behaviors

We develop a framework to explain the motivational drivers of online boundary management behaviors. Drawing on social network theory, we build on the premise that employees, when interacting in online social networks, address two fundamental questions: how they structure their ties in the networks and what type of information they share with their ties (Burt, 2004; Granovetter, 1973; Podolny, 2005). On the one hand, employees can manage their structural social capital—that is, to whom they are connected in the network (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). In particular, they can choose whether to be connected to professional contacts at all or to keep professional contacts separate from personal contacts. On the other hand, employees can manage their relational social capital—that is, the nature and richness of the information that is exchanged with their connections (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Thus, they can choose what and how much personal information to disclose to their professional contacts. Employees' answers to these questions about *with whom* they communicate and *what* they communicate in their online social networks form the basis of our framework.

Two key identity navigation processes may guide employees' answers to these two fundamental questions: boundary work as informed by work-nonwork boundary preferences (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kreiner, 2006; Rothbard et al., 2005) and identity negotiation as informed by self-evaluation motives (Sedikides, 1993; Swann, Pelham, & Krull, 1989). We use *identity navigation* as a broad term encompassing both boundary work—that is, constructing mental frameworks to delineate how roles and social

identities are merged or separated (Ashforth et al., 2000)—and identity negotiation—that is, processes "whereby relationship partners reach agreements regarding 'who is who'" (Swann et al., 2009: 81). First, we contend that employees' answers to the question of with whom they communicate in online social networks primarily correspond to whether they prefer to mentally organize their social worlds such that facets of their professional and personal identities are segmented versus integrated (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kreiner, 2006; Rothbard et al., 2005). Second, we contend that employees' answers to the question of what they communicate in online social networks primarily correspond to whether they choose to present themselves to the world in ways that verify or enhance their existing self-views (Sedikides, 1993; Swann et al., 1989). The interactions of these two separate cognitive processes drive employees' boundary management behaviors in important and predictable ways.

First, based on prior work on boundary management, we expect that the preference to segment versus integrate professional and personal identities is an important driver of with whom employees are motivated to connect in online social networks and how they structure these ties (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kreiner, 2006; Rothbard et al., 2005). In particular, employees who have a greater desire to segment their professional and personal identities are likely more attentive to and concerned with classifying the domain in which their contacts belong; in response, they will engage in efforts to keep different classifications of contacts separated in their online social world (just as they do in the physical world). Segmenting domains enables employees to avoid the psychological discomfort and conflict caused by the coactivation of personal and professional identities that are not compatible (Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009). For instance, employees who prefer to segment their identities may feel uncomfortable posting family pictures in online social networks if their supervisor, coworkers, or other professional contacts can see them. In contrast, employees who prefer integrating their identities are not likely to manage their online audience as actively. Instead, they are more likely to deliberately seek out network ties across domains, creating a large pooled audience of both professional and personal contacts. Thus, segmentors should be

motivated to more actively construct boundaries between their professional and personal contacts in online social networks than integrators.

Second, employees' motives to present themselves to others in a positive and socially desirable manner (self-enhancement) or to behave in a manner that confirms their own positive and negative self-views (self-verification) are likely to play an important role in shaping the content they disclose in online social networks. We focus on self-enhancement and self-verification because these two self-evaluation motives have received extensive attention and empirical support and have been contrasted frequently in the literature (see Anseel & Lievens, 2006; Sedikides, 1993; Swann, 1990; Swann et al., 1989; see Kwang & Swann, 2010, for a meta-analysis). In addition, both involve evaluations of the self that concern how people want to be seen by others (and thus the content they share online), rather than more internally focused self-evaluation motives, such as self-assessment and self-improvement. Whereas preferences for segmentation versus integration lie on opposite ends of a continuum (Rothbard et al., 2005), self-enhancement and self-verification are essentially different routes to self-evaluation rather than opposite motives. Self-enhancement suggests that when people self-evaluate, they want to enhance their positive self-concept and protect it from negative information. Thus, they will selectively attend to and promote self-relevant information that has favorable implications for the self and avoid such information that has negative implications (Sedikides, 1993). In contrast, self-verification drives people to seek affirmation of their preexisting self-concept such that they will attend to and promote either positive or negative self-relevant information as long as it is consistent with their self-views (for reviews see Swann, 1983, 1990). Therefore, although not on a continuum, self-enhancement and self-verification represent very different approaches to self-evaluation and identity negotiation.[1]

Although online social networks create new opportunity structures to display identity cues and select interaction partners (Swann, 1987), they also constrain the flexibility of self-presentational behaviors, because disclosure and interactions cannot be easily tailored to dyadic interactions and roles are often enacted simultaneously. In offline interactions where people activate and enact situated identities (Alexander & Weil, 1969) and role-specific conceptions (Swann et al., 2009), employees can choose to self-enhance with specific professional contacts, such as supervisors, and to self-verify with others, such as peers. However, when interacting online, employees must make dominant or macro choices that apply to broad groups of contacts. For instance, if their dominant choice is to self-verify, perhaps because they are connected with mostly peers or because their personal contacts are most salient in their minds, then their other professional contacts (supervisors, subordinates, etc.) may access the same self-verifying information, restricting employees' ability to self-enhance toward these contacts. Even if they tend to first verify positive self-views, over time they are bound to also share negative information about themselves, perhaps when seeking emotional support (Ellison et al., 2007). This self-verifying disclosure of vulnerability may have very different implications for respect and liking in the eyes of professional contacts than a macro choice driven by self-enhancement.

Employees seeking self-enhancement are more likely to try to share information that helps manage the impressions others form of them (Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker, 1980; Swann et al., 1989). Since employees who self-enhance have a desire to see themselves and their actions, traits, and attitudes in the most positive light (Pfeffer & Fong, 2005), we expect that they will seek favorable evaluations and feedback so as to achieve a high level of personal worth (Morrison & Bies, 1991; Sedikides & Strube, 1995).

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[1] Research examining self-enhancement and self-verification motives suggests that individual differences, such as narcissism (John & Robins, 1994; Paulhus, 1998), self-esteem (Baumeister, Tice, Hutton, 1989), self-certainty (e.g., Pelham & Swann, 1994; Swann & Ely, 1984), and uncertainty avoidance (Roney & Sorrentino, 1995); the rushed versus calm nature of the environment (Hixon & Swann, 1993; Swann & Schroeder, 1995); and the stage of the relationship (i.e., qualifying or established) influence which motive will be used by an individual at a particular time (Swann, 1990). For example, narcissists are more likely to self-enhance (John & Robins, 1994; Paulhus, 1998). Also, individuals are more likely to suspend their motive to self-verify when relationships are in a "qualifying stage," where they are trying to prove themselves to one another, especially in the context of asymmetric relationships with superiors (Swann et al., 2009).

Thus, they will actively try to make positive impressions (Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Roberts, 2005; Schlenker, 1980) and be more likely to regulate the information they share in online social networks, as well as the information disclosed by others about them. In contrast, employees who prefer to ensure the consistency and stability of their self-views (i.e., self-verification; Swann, 1983) may disclose a more diverse array of positive and negative self-relevant information, with the expectation that the audience they reach, or part of this audience, will give them feedback that confirms their positive and negative self-views. In sum, self-enhancers are motivated to actively control the information they disclose online as a way to positively impress professional contacts (Brown, 1990, 1991; Sedikides & Strube, 1995), whereas self-verifiers are more likely to share both positive and more negative information as a way to receive confirmation of their self-views (Kwang & Swann, 2010; Swann, 1983, 1990; Swann et al., 1989; Wiesenfeld et al., 2007).[2]

By crossing these two identity navigation processes in a 2 × 2 matrix, we develop a conceptual framework of four motivational drivers of online boundary management and four corre-

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[2] We conceptualize the temporal nature of online boundary management behaviors as analogous to personal projects, which are defined by Little as "a set of interrelated acts extending over time . . . intended to maintain or attain a state of affairs foreseen by the individual" (1983: 273). This conceptualization places individuals in a specific, stable context that shapes their motivations to engage in online boundary management for a meaningful but not permanent stretch of time (Little, 1983; McGregor & Little, 1998). This is in line with the notion that the two motivational drivers in our framework have been construed as stable individual preferences within a given social context but are not personality traits and, thus, may change over an individual's life course. Specifically, scholars have posited that preferences for segmentation versus integration are stable in a given life stage (Kossek & Lautsch, 2012) and that self-enhancement and self-verification motives are associated with firmly held self-views, which are also likely to be relatively stable within a given set of relationships or contexts but are not permanent over time (Swann et al., 1989; Swann, Polzer, Seyle, & Ko, 2004). Thus, employees' motivations may shift as a result of significant life events and changes, such as switching to a new workgroup, job, occupation, or organization that is more or less open to personal self-disclosure than the previous one (Edmondson, 1999; Polzer, Milton, & Swann, 2002). As such, employees are most likely to enact particular boundary management behaviors for an extended stretch of their career but are unlikely to enact the same behaviors throughout their entire career.

sponding sets of archetypal online boundary management behaviors (see Figure 1). While the motivational drivers capture employees' desires regarding with whom they connect and what they share in online social networks, the archetypal behaviors capture the actions these desires are likely to drive employees to take in online social networks to construct and maintain their professional and personal identities over time. Table 1 provides examples of these four sets of behaviors, which are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive.

Open boundary management. Employees who make a macro choice to self-verify in online social networks, perhaps because they are mostly connected with peers and personal contacts, and who also prefer to integrate their professional and personal identities are unlikely to perceive many boundary challenges. These employees may therefore engage in *open behaviors*, which we define as a very simplified approach in which employees do not construct boundaries separating their professional and personal identities but, instead, present themselves as the person they perceive themselves to be and fully enact their personal identity in online social networks to a broad audience. Open behaviors result in no active boundary management across professional and personal identities. They entail disclosure of both positive and negative self-verifying content and acceptance of disclosures and feedback provided by their connections. For instance, employees might show positive unconventional facets of themselves that are not usually expressed in their work environment (such as an investment banker writing children's comic books) or negative facets of themselves (such as discussing a professional setback or an ongoing divorce) to receive confirmation of their self-views (Swann, 1983). In this case professional and personal domains are often merged as employees strive for consistency in their self-views and integration across both domains (see Table 1 for examples).

> *Proposition 1: Employees are more likely to engage in open boundary management behaviors in online social networks when they combine self-verification motives and preferences for integration of their professional and personal identities.*

FIGURE 1
Online Boundary Management Drivers, Behaviors, and Consequences

Preferences for segmentation versus integration
of professional and personal identities

		Integration	Segmentation
Self-evaluation motives	Self-verification	**Open boundary management behaviors** • *Decrease average respect* • *Decrease average liking*	**Audience boundary management behaviors** • *Protect but do not increase average respect* • *Decrease average liking*
	Self-enhancement	**Content boundary management behaviors** • *Increase average respect* • *Increase average liking* • *Moderated by online boundary management capabilities*	**Hybrid boundary management behaviors** • *Increase average respect* • *Increase average liking* • *Moderated by online boundary management capabilities (most demanding behaviors)*

Audience boundary management. Not all employees who make a macro choice to self-verify in online social networks are comfortable integrating their professional and personal identities. Some prefer to segment these identities and, thus, are more likely to engage in *audience behaviors*, which we define as the construction and maintenance of a boundary between employees' professional and personal contacts by restricting professional contacts from online social networks that employees deem personal in nature. An example is setting up private profiles and ignoring or denying connection requests from certain professional contacts (see Table 1 for more examples). Employees who prefer to keep their professional and personal identities separate (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kreiner, 2006; Rothbard et al., 2005) and seek to display self-verifying identity cues to selected interaction partners (Swann, 1983, 1987) are likely to protect their online identities from unsolicited disclosures and feedback and to reach out to contacts who may validate their self-views. They may strive to avoid coactivation of their professional and personal identities that might cause them psychological discomfort (Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009). In particular, these employees may want to self-verify by posting personal and family pictures and expressing intimate feelings or views of the world, yet at the same time not want to share this personal information with their professional contacts and have them comment on it. Indeed, self-verification does not mean that individuals necessarily disclose self-verifying information to everyone they encounter; rather, when they do disclose information, they look to confirm their self-views (Swann et al., 2004). Thus, those employees who wish to self-verify but also wish to segment their professional and personal identities will see the boundary challenges in online social networks as about restricting the professional contacts with whom they are willing to connect in those networks that are personal in nature so that they can more freely share personal information and interact with those they do accept as connections. In this way, audience behaviors enable the disclosure of positive and negative self-

TABLE 1
Illustrative Examples of Boundary Management Behaviors in Online Social Networks

Archetypal Boundary Management Behaviors	Examples of Behaviors (Not Exhaustive)
Open	• Set up public searchable profile • Disclose both positive and negative information in professional and personal domain • Let others comment publicly on posts and tag one in pictures
Audience	• Set up private profile and ignore or deny connection requests from certain professional contacts in online social networks deemed as personal • Use different sites to segment audiences—for instance, a LinkedIn account for professional contacts and a Facebook account for personal contacts (Stutzman & Hartzog, 2012) • Use nicknames (Tufekci, 2008) or make the profile unsearchable to avoid unsolicited requests from professional contacts
Content	• Disclose information that is flattering (e.g., achievements, good picture), glamorous (e.g., travel observations and pictures), or makes one look smart (e.g., interesting news articles) • Keep postings noncontroversial (e.g., refrain from discussing politics, religion, or sexual orientation) • Control pictures in which one is tagged or prevent others from tagging one in pictures • Monitor comments by others on profile or prevent others from commenting on profile
Hybrid	• Create and maintain lists of contacts and manage what content each of these subgroups can access—for example, create a "professional list" including all professional contacts and then exclude this list from posts containing personal information (Donath & Boyd, 2004; Zhao et al., 2008; cf. Google+ Circles) • Clean up profile when transitioning from one life or career stage to another (e.g., students transitioning to first job; DiMicco & Millen, 2007) • Educate connections to recognize that some conversations are personal or professional and to therefore refrain from commenting in ways that would cause embarrassment

verifying personal information within the personal domain and prevent its disclosure to certain professional contacts.

> *Proposition 2: Employees are more likely to engage in audience boundary management behaviors in online social networks when they combine self-verification motives and preferences for segmentation of their professional and personal identities.*

Content boundary management. In contrast to employees who make a macro choice to self-verify in online social networks, some employees present themselves online in a primarily self-enhancing way, perhaps because of personality traits (e.g., John & Robins, 1994) or because important relationships are still in a qualifying stage when they make their macro choices (Swann et al., 2009). When these employees also prefer integration of their professional and personal identities, they are likely to engage in *content behaviors*, which we define as managing their identities primarily through actively

controlling what information they disclose—but not the people to whom they disclose—in online social networks. They may, for instance, broadcast professional achievements they are proud of or post polished family pictures that might enhance their status or likability (see Table 1 for more examples). Their desire for integration means they are motivated to connect with their professional contacts online rather than exclude them from their online personal lives. However, because they strive to enhance their image in the eyes of their professional contacts (Sedikides, 1993; Sedikides & Strube, 1995), they are likely to be concerned with managing the information they share with this integrated audience. As such they may purposefully select professional and personal information that they believe will enhance the impressions their professional contacts have of them and that may elicit positive feedback (Lampinen et al., 2009). In short, employees who use content behaviors think of the boundary challenges as about presenting the most ideal image of themselves to a

broad set of professional and personal contacts (Roberts, 2005).

> *Proposition 3: Employees are more likely to engage in content boundary management behaviors in online social networks when they combine self-enhancement motives and preferences for integration of their professional and personal identities.*

Hybrid boundary management. While audience and content behaviors are relatively straightforward, they do not work well for employees who prefer to both keep their professional and personal contacts separate (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kreiner, 2006; Rothbard et al., 2005) and enhance their image in the eyes of professional contacts in online social networks (Sedikides, 1993; Sedikides & Strube, 1995). These employees may not want to forego the benefit of connecting and sharing information with professional contacts in online social networks. They view boundary control as entailing both with whom they connect in online social networks and what information they communicate to their connections. In response to these dual challenges, such employees may craft more sophisticated online boundary management behaviors, which we term *hybrid behaviors*, defined as the concurrent management of audience and content boundaries such that employees divide their professional and personal contacts into separate audiences and tailor the content they disclose to each audience. For instance, managing lists in online social networks (as illustrated in Table 1) is an attempt to recreate separate spaces in which one can disclose different information and receive feedback in a separate and more tailored manner. In implicit recognition of the hybrid approach, Google+, one of the newer online social networks, has enabled users to more easily categorize people from different life domains into separate "Circles." Other hybrid behaviors are temporal, such as when employees adjust the content in and access to their profiles when transitioning to a new career stage (DiMicco & Millen, 2007). Employees who use hybrid behaviors may be driven to match their content to their audience because they not only have a focus on preventing inappropriate information from spilling over from the personal to the professional domain but also have an equally strong desire

to actively construct and enact a positive professional image (Roberts, 2005).

> *Proposition 4: Employees are more likely to engage in hybrid boundary management behaviors in online social networks when they combine self-enhancement motives and preferences for segmentation of their professional and personal identities.*

Consequences of Online Boundary Management Behaviors for Respect and Liking

Having theorized about how and why employees use different online boundary management behaviors, we next examine how using each of these behaviors influences the degree to which employees' professional contacts respect and like them. Respect and liking are separate dimensions of positive regard that can have different predictors and consequences (Hamilton & Fallot, 1974; Prestwich & Lalljee, 2009) and therefore often need to be distinguished (Wojciszke, Abele, & Baryla, 2009). Drawing on Wojciszke and colleagues' (2009) distinction between respect and liking, we define *respect* as the degree of deference or positive regard with which one views another person and *liking* as the degree to which one is fond of and feels a sense of attachment to another person. Respect judgments are based on agentic information, such as the appropriateness and intellectual quality of the information being shared (Wojciszke et al., 2009). Respect is a key component of perceived competence (Fiske et al., 2007) and contributes to maintaining a positive social identity, which is an antecedent of self-esteem, well-being, psychological engagement with the group, group inclusion and cooperation, and career success (Cuddy et al., 2011; Tyler & Blader, 2000). Liking judgments are based on communal information, such as the warmth and valence of the information being shared (Wojciszke et al., 2009). Liking is an important component of perceived warmth (Fiske et al., 2007) and contributes to trusting relationships and friendships at work (Brass, 1984). Respect and liking, thus, contribute to positive interpersonal relationships, group commitment, and cooperation, which, in turn, may lead to enhanced decision making and performance (Jehn & Shah, 1997).

We build on the premise that the respect and liking of employees in the eyes of their profes-

sional contacts depend on employees' ability to manage their professional and personal identities online in ways that mirror what their professional contacts would consider appropriate behavior in offline interactions. Because work organizations are usually strong situations (Mischel, 1973) where employees face institutional pressures to behave in a rational, professional manner (Bloor & Dawson, 1994; Pratt et al., 2006), the norms, roles, and scripts within employees' professional domains may be especially salient, strong, and actively enforced in the minds of their professional contacts (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). However, in online social networks, professional contacts have access to personal information that they otherwise would not have seen in the context of an offline tailored conversation. As such, respect and liking are only protected or enhanced when employees' online behaviors conform to the norms, roles, and scripts that their professional contacts expect of them in offline interactions.

Because we are interested in the consequences of using online boundary management behaviors for workplace outcomes, we focus on *average degree of respect and liking*, defined as the aggregation of the judgments of the focal employee by each of his or her professional contacts. Our propositions concern the impact online boundary management behaviors have on the average degree of respect and liking as compared to if the focal employee did not participate in online social networks at all. Thus, in our definition of average degree of respect and liking, we include all professional contacts, not just those with whom an employee is connected online. We focus on average—as opposed to dyadic—respect and liking because employees' online behaviors are nontailored by nature and are therefore seen by groups of multiple contacts (at best, separate groups of contacts in the case of hybrid boundary management). In addition, compared to dyadic respect and liking, average respect and liking are more likely to impact collective organizational outcomes (Lincoln & Miller, 1979), such as group performance (Gruenfeld et al., 1996), group-serving behaviors (Tyler & Blader, 2000), or resource mobilization and information sharing in groups.

There are several reasons self-disclosure in online social networks might influence the degree to which a focal employee is respected and liked by his or her professional contacts. First,

professional norms may influence these relationships. Norm violations are especially harmful to respect and liking in work contexts where strong norms convey clear images of what constitutes appropriate professional behavior (Bloor & Dawson, 1994; Chreim, Williams, & Hinings, 2007). Employees who are not consistent in online social networks with how their professional contacts, on average, expect them to behave in offline interactions will lose credibility or upset their professional contacts because they violate norms enforced by the group. What constitutes normative acceptable self-disclosure will vary across professional relationships, depending on how formal each dyadic relationship is. However, professional norms generally impose limitations on personal self-disclosure offline and online. For instance, posting a picture of oneself in a bathing suit on one's online profile might be well received by a coworker who is also a close friend, but not by more formal professional contacts, who may be in the invisible audience and, hence, not salient in the employee's mind. Thus, enacting one's professional and personal identities online in ways that fail to mirror the degree and nature of personal disclosure that is expected of one in offline interactions harms the way one is regarded *on average* by professional contacts. Because individuals tend to forget part of their audience online (Boyd, 2007), employees often unintentionally fail to mirror their offline professional norms by disclosing too much or inappropriate personal information. Conversely, highly cautious employees end up disclosing too little about themselves or being too controlling about the feedback they receive (e.g., by deleting others' comments or preventing anyone from commenting on their profiles). Consequently, they can be perceived as uptight or cold by online professional contacts, since warmth and likability are associated with the degree and nature of personal self-disclosure in online social networks (Forest & Wood, 2012; Rothbard, Berg, & Ollier-Malaterre, 2012; Weisbuch et al., 2009).

Even in work environments where norms are unclear, weakly enforced, or open to personal disclosure, a second reason online social network behaviors impact average respect and liking is that the information that employees disclose can make them appear to be less prototypical members of the group (Tyler & Blader, 2000) and therefore not a good fit with the

organization. For instance, coworkers in an oil drilling company might respect and like an employee less who posts about active involvement in environmental protection groups. Below we first discuss the specific consequences of the four sets of online boundary management behaviors in our framework for average respect and liking and then the role of employees' capabilities, as well as social feedback and organizational norms in shaping these behaviors and consequences.

Consequences of open behaviors. Open boundary management behaviors are consistent with the underlying philosophy of social media that privacy is obsolete and that sharing is preferable to hiding (Boyd, 2008). Yet, as discussed above, this may not be the best approach in many professional contexts, where online personal disclosures may violate offline norms. Because employees who use open behaviors may reveal too much or inappropriate personal information given the norms in their professional domains (Pratt et al., 2006), or let their contacts reveal too much or inappropriate personal information about them, professional contacts may feel that the open employee does not understand or is incapable of upholding the norms and scripts required of him or her in the professional domain and so does not fit with the group (Tyler & Blader, 2002). In this way, employees who use open boundary management behaviors can inadvertently lose respect by revealing too much or inappropriate information to a broad audience of professional contacts (Phillips et al., 2009) and, in turn, may be perceived as not worthy of trust regarding important decisions or sensitive information (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Williams, 2001, 2007; Zand, 1972).

An extreme example is offered by the case of a young professional who complained about her boss in unprofessional terms on Facebook while having him as a contact and, consequently, was publicly ridiculed by her boss on her Facebook Wall and then fired (World News Australia, 2009). Because of the nontailored nature of interactions in online social networks and the potential for others to comment and provide public feedback, open boundary management behaviors offer little protection for average respect in the eyes of a professional audience.

Proposition 5a: Open boundary management behaviors are likely to undermine average respect among one's professional contacts because of the vast amount of nontailored professional and personal information that is self-disclosed or revealed by one's connections to a broad audience.

Open boundary management behaviors also have implications for the degree to which an employee is liked by his or her professional contacts. Because liking is often based on homophily, or individuals' attraction to similar others (Blau, 1977; Byrne, 1971), open behaviors may increase liking in the eyes of some professional colleagues—for example, when a coworker shares the focal employee's values. However, research on homophily suggests that organizations are more heterogeneous than friendship networks in that organizations offer fewer opportunities for choice homophily—the propensity to choose similar others—such that professional contacts are likely to be much more diverse in terms of values (McPherson & Smith-Lovin, 1987). While disclosed homophilous values may lead some professional contacts to like employees who use open behaviors, dissimilar values that are disclosed by employees themselves or their contacts may lead many professional contacts to like them less (Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998; Phillips et al., 2009). Therefore, we contend that while there are some professional relationships in which open behaviors do not harm and even increase liking, on average, open behaviors are more likely to undermine liking in the eyes of a broad set of professional contacts.

Proposition 5b: Open boundary management behaviors are likely to undermine average liking among one's professional contacts because of the vast amount of nontailored information that is self-disclosed or revealed by one's connections to a broad audience.

Consequences of audience behaviors. Audience boundary management behaviors impact the way one is regarded in several ways. Contrary to open behaviors, audience behaviors protect employees from losing respect by preventing the overdisclosure of information by

themselves or others to a broad audience. For instance, young employees or new graduates applying for jobs maintain respect by excluding professional contacts from their profiles on networks that are personal in nature, perhaps because their profiles include provocative party photos, so that their visible online behavior mirrors offline professional norms. In professional settings that value discretion, audience behaviors help employees to be seen as worthy of trust regarding important decisions or sensitive information (Mayer et al., 1995; Williams, 2001), rather than as careless, indiscreet, or unaware of boundaries. However, since audience behaviors are based on the segmentation of professional and personal contacts and on self-verification motives, they deprive employees of opportunities to enhance their professional image through broadcasting their competence and achievements to professional contacts. Thus, while audience behaviors help maintain respect at work, they are unlikely to help increase it relative to the baseline of not participating in online social networks.

> *Proposition 6a: Audience boundary management behaviors are likely to maintain but not increase average respect among one's professional contacts because they do not allow one to broadcast competencies and achievements to broadly relevant work audiences.*

Audience boundary management behaviors have costs in terms of liking because they can lead employees to exclude some professional contacts from the selected audience. Ignoring or denying connection requests might be socially off-putting or embarrassing because it makes the boundary highly visible. Despite employees' own preferences for segmenting their professional and personal identities, some of their professional contacts may expect to connect and share with them in online social networks (Skeels & Grudin, 2009). When the boundary is more visible—in particular, in triadic settings where professional contacts are connected to a mutual acquaintance and can see that the focal employee who uses audience behaviors has accepted this mutual acquaintance's connection request and not theirs—they may feel excluded. Further, since employees who use audience behaviors prefer to keep professional and personal

identities separate, they can miss out on interpersonal connections online that could help enhance liking in the offline relationship. Ignoring connection requests or accepting them only in networks that are professional in nature, such as LinkedIn, may signal distrust (Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998) and, thus, paint the employee as cold (Fiske et al., 2007) and less likable. Therefore, we propose that audience behaviors may have negative consequences for average liking.

> *Proposition 6b: Audience boundary management behaviors are likely to undermine average liking among one's professional contacts because they make professional contacts feel excluded from one's online life.*

Consequences of content behaviors. Employees who use content behaviors make conscious efforts to present themselves in a way that is likely to generate approval from members of their broad audience. To do so they will typically downplay attributes making them seem less attractive and emphasize attributes leading to a positive assessment of them by others. Deciding what content to disclose therefore enables employees to manage their professional identities, promoting an appearance of competence and suitability for a professional role (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Thus, unlike audience behaviors, content behaviors enable employees to accept connection requests from professional contacts and to share information that might be of interest or helpful to their professional contacts. A key benefit to this approach is promoting oneself to a broad professional audience by choosing content that is interesting, appealing, or indicative of expertise or high status—for example, flattering family pictures, impressive achievements, or glamorous activities (Schlenker & Weingold, 1992).

Further, unlike open behaviors, content behaviors entail a careful monitoring of the information disclosed by oneself and others, thereby enabling employees to keep potential mismatches between their beliefs and values and those of their professional contacts private. Thus, in professional settings that value limited disclosure of information, content boundary management behaviors enable employees to mirror their offline behavior and to interact in a socially appropriate way (Van Maanen &

Schein, 1979). Therefore, content behaviors are likely to enhance average respect among one's professional contacts.

> *Proposition 7a: Content boundary management behaviors are likely to increase average respect among one's professional contacts because they allow one to broadcast self-enhancing information to a broad set of work audiences.*

In addition, because content behaviors enable employees to share personal information—even if it is carefully monitored—they can enhance liking of employees by their professional contacts (Collins & Miller, 1994; Cozby, 1973). Provided that the exchange of information remains appropriate, sharing details about each other's personal lives, thoughts, and desires indicates trust and allows individuals to discover common perspectives (Jourard, 1959; Jourard & Lasakow, 1958; Worthy et al., 1969). Moreover, employees may benefit from boundary crossovers that lead to reciprocal exchanges of information, thereby enriching professional relationships (Rothbard, 2001; Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009). For instance, an employee may build stronger bonds with long-distance coworkers by sharing selected professional and personal information with them and giving positive feedback—for instance, by regularly "Liking" their posts or commenting on them. The fact that they interact with each other not only on a professional basis but also on a personal one may help build greater closeness and liking.

> *Proposition 7b: Content boundary management behaviors are likely to increase average liking among one's professional contacts because they allow one to broadcast personal and professional information to a broad set of work audiences.*

Consequences of hybrid behaviors. Hybrid boundary management behaviors, driven by both self-enhancement motives and segmentation preferences, may help individuals span domain boundaries when role identities are compatible and yet keep information separate when professional and personal identities are incompatible (Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009). As a result, employees may be able to customize the match between content and audience, which

should maximize respect and liking (Phillips et al., 2009). Because employees are aware of what content they share with which audience, hybrid behaviors can help alleviate online social networks' challenges by encouraging more tailored disclosures. In particular, hybrid behaviors make invisible audiences more salient and limit the potential for one's contacts to provide inappropriate information across domains, since a disclosure would be seen only by contacts for whom the initial information was intended. Hybrid behaviors thus enable employees to best mirror the tailored nature of offline relationships, where some professional relationships—for instance, with friendly coworkers—are less formal and allow for more personal disclosure than others—for instance, with supervisors, subordinates, or customers. Hybrid behaviors thus combine the benefits of positive professional impression management (Roberts, 2005) with careful and personalized segmentation of professional and personal identities (Ashforth et al., 2000) and, as such, are likely to increase both average respect and liking among professional contacts.

> *Proposition 8a: Hybrid boundary management behaviors are likely to increase average respect among one's professional contacts because of the sharing of self-enhancing information.*

> *Proposition 8b: Hybrid boundary management behaviors are likely to increase average liking among one's professional contacts because of the tailored disclosure of personal and professional information.*

Trade-offs Between Online Boundary Management Behaviors

So far we have proposed that content and hybrid behaviors potentially have more positive consequences for average respect and liking by professional contacts than open and audience behaviors. However, employees using content and hybrid behaviors need to keep potential mismatches between their beliefs and values and those of their professional contacts private (Sedikides & Strube, 1995). This requires ongoing effort because the underlying philosophy and technical structure of online social networks encourages unrestricted and transparent sharing

of information as the norm and default (Boyd, 2008). Open behaviors are very easy to use, and audience behaviors do not require much skill in that they only demand a series of one-time decisions about whether to include a contact or not. In contrast, content and hybrid behaviors require ongoing effort and skillful decision making about what content to share. And hybrid behaviors also entail decisions about with whom to share what content, requiring that individuals invest effort and skill in setting up and maintaining lists and privacy settings to delineate their separate audiences. Moreover, content and hybrid behaviors can be undermined by one's own mistakes as well as unwanted disclosures by one's connections, which can decrease respect and liking in the eyes of professional contacts if the information disclosed is incongruent with the self-enhanced image one has been promoting such that one appears inauthentic (Brumbaugh, 1971).

To cope with the complexity of executing content and hybrid behaviors effectively and to capitalize on the potential benefits offered by them for respect and liking, we contend that employees need *online boundary management capabilities*, which consist of the time, effort, and technical skill required to avoid the accidental disclosure of too much or inappropriate content to professional contacts. Consistent with the strategic management literature (e.g., Nelson & Winter, 1982; Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997), we use the term *capabilities* to capture not only technical ability but also required resources (i.e., time and energy). We argue that the effectiveness of content and hybrid behaviors depends on these capabilities such that compared with open and audience behaviors, content and hybrid behaviors have greater *potential* for increasing average respect and liking yet may actually decrease respect and liking if employees are low in online boundary management capabilities.

Content behaviors may expose employees to accidental overdisclosure of personal information. Overdisclosure may occur when employees inadvertently reveal information to the wrong professional contacts because they have forgotten about the invisible audience (Boyd, 2007). In offline interactions individuals tend to disclose intimate information only once they have formed a dyadic boundary with someone (Derlega & Chaikin, 1977), ensuring that information disclosed to the person will not be leaked to mutual acquaintances. In online social networks, however, employees may mistakenly think they are disclosing information to only a specific person (while answering a question on someone's Facebook Wall, for instance). Numerous incidents illustrate poor online boundary management capabilities. A particularly colorful example was when a fraud fugitive was arrested because he boasted on Facebook about enjoying himself in a luxury resort, the location of which he disclosed, forgetting that police agents were part of the audience (BBC News, 2009). In addition, personal contacts can accidentally or purposefully violate the boundary between the employee's professional and personal identities. Skeels and Grudin (2009: 101) mention an informant whose personal friends, in an effort at humor, "poked" her manager on Facebook, which she felt was embarrassing and may have lessened her manager's respect for her. Thus, online boundary management capabilities may well extend to managing one's connections by, for instance, restricting the ability of others to post information on one's profile or by educating one's personal contacts not to violate the boundary.

Compared with content behaviors, hybrid behaviors are costlier in terms of the time, effort, and skill required. In essence, hybrid behaviors are about pairing the appropriate content with the corresponding audience (either professional or personal). To enact hybrid behaviors effectively, employees need to be familiar with privacy settings in the given online social network and be able to set them up and manage them over time (Zhao et al., 2008). They must make the effort to devise and implement the chosen behaviors (e.g., assign connections to sublists) and then make myriad small decisions on an ongoing basis to pair information with ties, and they also need to adjust their behaviors to frequent website changes (Strater & Lipford, 2008). Further, as employees' career or life stages change and they gather more online contacts, change jobs, move organizations, or perhaps switch industries, the way they have segmented their online audiences may no longer be ideal (e.g., a former peer could become a subordinate or boss).

In sum, monitoring and managing the content that is available to different audiences may require considerable time, effort, and technical

skill, and, thus, the positive impact of hybrid behaviors on respect and liking depends on employees' online boundary management capabilities. Mistakes easily happen, such as employees accidentally posting negative comments about a coworker in another department (that the coworker can see or hear about from someone else) or accidentally posting family pictures to the wrong sublist of contacts, thus disclosing more than intended and prompting their professional contacts to realize that the employees probably share more online than they thought, yet not with them. In addition to mistakes, faux pas also occur when employees' contacts share pictures or comments that are dissonant with what the employees themselves share. Such incidents decrease professional contacts' respect for employees if they reveal behavior that does not mirror the contacts' expectations (e.g., inappropriate disclosure) or makes the employees appear inauthentic (Brumbaugh, 1971; Halpin & Croft, 1966). These mistakes can also decrease liking by signaling distrust and making professional contacts feel excluded from the personal online world of the employee, much as with the audience behaviors (Lewicki et al., 1998).

> *Proposition 9a: Employees' online boundary management capabilities moderate the consequences of content and hybrid behaviors such that content and hybrid behaviors will increase average respect and liking if employees are high in these capabilities but decrease average respect and liking if they are low in these capabilities.*

In addition, because the goal of online social networks is to connect people, and their primary modus operandi is therefore to integrate individuals' social worlds (Donath & Boyd, 2004), identity segmentation in online social networks often requires more time, effort, and skill than identity integration. As a result, employees who want to segment their personal and professional identities in online social networks must devote energy and develop knowledge to make the online tools work for them.

> *Proposition 9b: Hybrid behaviors require greater online boundary man-*

agement capabilities than content behaviors.

Extending the Framework: The Dynamic Nature of Online Boundary Management

We have argued thus far that employees' online boundary management behaviors are relatively stable in given social contexts, such as specific phases of the career and life cycles (Little, 1983). An important aspect of this is that once employees begin to enact a set of online boundary management behaviors, path dependencies and, eventually, inertia (e.g., Sydow, Schreyögg, & Koch, 2009) are established as a result of the macro choices they make about whom their contacts should be and what information they should disclose to whom. For example, having accepted connections with professional contacts makes it difficult to then exclude them if one shifts to audience behaviors; removing a connection may hurt liking in the relationship, and closing one's account in order to remove connections before starting again may raise questions and suspicions. Also, having disclosed or having let others disclose inappropriate information makes it difficult to shift to content behaviors unless one goes back to clean up one's profile and asks connections to clean up their comments too.

However, we also suggest that the macro choices employees make based on their self-evaluation motives and on their preferences for segmentation or integration of their professional and personal identities are not set in stone but, rather, evolve and shift over time. The temporal nature of online boundary management is likely to follow a pattern of punctuated equilibrium, in which employees engage in the same basic set of behaviors for multiple weeks, months, and perhaps even years, but then shift their behavior in response to significant events or changes in their lives. Thus, we suggest that it takes concerted time, thought, and effort to shift one's online boundary management behaviors and that this is not likely to happen on a day-to-day basis. What, then, prompts employees to reexamine their macro choices and corresponding online boundary management behaviors?

First, there are important turning points that people encounter, stemming from significant changes to their roles, careers, or life stages or

from critical events that are likely to compel them to reexamine their online boundary management. A clear example of this is when students apply for jobs. They often shift from a situation where the majority of their interactions are characterized by self-verification motives to one where self-enhancement is the dominant motive. It may not be until they have passed the "qualifying" stage of obtaining a new job, settling into the company, and feeling comfortable with others that they shift back to a state where their self-verification motives are dominant again. In this scenario we would suggest that individuals are likely to change their online behaviors from either open or audience behaviors to either content or hybrid behaviors, depending on their preferences for integration or segmentation. Another example of how going through a particular career or life stage alters one's online behaviors is employees who have opted for more time-consuming behaviors, such as hybrid behaviors, making conscious decisions to change to content behaviors, which are simpler and easier to use, when they enter a career or life stage in which they lack time. Such a shift may be reversed when they regain enough time to act in line with their full preferences. In addition, critical events can make employees aware of the need to manage boundaries in online social networks. For instance, an employee may realize that she has been disclosing more information than intended, such as the songs she was listening to on the Internet or photos from long ago. Likewise, witnessing a colleague or friend's online faux pas might prompt employees to revisit their macro choices so that they disclose less information (content behaviors) or disclose to a more targeted audience (audience or hybrid behaviors).

Second, the feedback employees receive from their professional and personal contacts also triggers shifts in macro choices. Such feedback is provided through processes of (1) iterative identity negotiation (Swann et al., 2009) and (2) enforcement of organizational and occupational norms (Bloor & Dawson, 1994; Pratt et al., 2006). While online social networks offer new opportunities for employees to make identity claims, these claims are made in a public or semi-public context where others assess their reliability and provide feedback accordingly (Boyd, 2007). Thus, online boundary management is typically not a one-way imposition of the self's

desires on the audience but, rather, an iterative process that is negotiated between self and audience over time. Since clarity, continuity, and compatibility are important premises of successful identity negotiation (Swann et al., 2009), employees may, for instance, tone down exaggerated self-enhancement behaviors if their professional contacts make comments that undermine or fail to support their impression management efforts. In contrast, employees may disclose more because of interaction rituals (Collins, 1981, 2004) in which sharing personal information and receiving positive feedback about it, such as "Likes" and encouraging comments from professional contacts, generate emotional energy.

In addition, feedback stemming from organizational and occupational norms (Bloor & Dawson, 1994; Pratt et al., 2006) interacts with employees' individual preferences as they choose online boundary management behaviors. In particular, employees may tone down their self-verification strivings if they receive feedback in the workplace that information they had disclosed violated organizational norms. Similar feedback processes can lead employees to shift from integration behaviors to more segmented ones, or vice versa. Employees might revise open boundary management behaviors that have backfired and transition to audience behaviors where they can self-verify but with a segmented audience. Or, conversely, they might transition from audience to content or hybrid behaviors if they become aware of strong norms to be connected online after receiving professional connection requests. Skeels and Grudin (2009: 101) cite such a situation where an informant felt he had to accept customers' connection requests on Facebook and subsequently started monitoring his information disclosure. Last, norms around technology, particularly around what is appropriate to disclose to whom in a given industry or workplace, may evolve and even be codified into formal rules, triggering reexaminations of employees' online boundary management behaviors.

In sum, despite their stability and inertia in the relative short term, online boundary management behaviors may be dynamic when examined over a longer term. Employees may shift their behaviors because of pivotal turning points, feedback, or norms. In turn, these shifts are likely to come with important implications

for the average respect and liking employees receive from their professional contacts. While average respect and liking may decrease abruptly because of an accidental egregious disclosure by employees who lack the capabilities to effectively execute content or hybrid behaviors, average respect and liking may also change more gradually over time as employees' connections respond to their behaviors online.

DISCUSSION

Online social networks pose new, complex, and often challenging opportunity structures for enacting professional and personal identities. How employees manage boundaries within these structures may help or harm their professional relationships in important ways. We have proposed a conceptual framework of online boundary management, theorizing about the key underlying drivers of four archetypal online boundary management behaviors and the consequences of these behaviors for average respect and liking among employees' professional contacts. In so doing, we contribute to existing theory and research on boundary work (Ashforth et al., 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1995; Rothbard et al., 2005) and self-evaluation motives that guide identity negotiation (Brown, 1990; Sedikides & Strube, 1995; Swann, 1983; Wiesenfeld et al., 2007) by extending both to the virtual world of cyberspace, where these processes are shaped by dynamics different from those in physical space. In particular, this framework guides future research on boundary work and identity negotiation in a social space characterized by open disclosure to broad audiences and public or semi-public feedback (Boyd, 2007; Donath, 2007; Donath & Boyd, 2004), rather than the tailored disclosure and private feedback that characterize interactions in physical space. In addition, by examining employees' boundary preferences and self-evaluation motives together, this framework highlights the double-edged sword of online boundary management—although all four combinations in the 2 × 2 framework offer potential benefits, none of the four is free of significant risk, challenge, or difficulty.

Further, this framework opens up new lines of research on the dynamics between liking and respect or warmth and competence more generally (Fiske et al., 2007; Hamilton & Fallot, 1974;

Prestwich & Lalljee, 2009; Wojciszke et al., 2009). Our framework is consistent with past work showing how it is often difficult for individuals to be seen as both warm and competent at the same time (Cuddy et al., 2011; Fiske et al., 2002, 2007), but it also sheds new light on how this notion may be further complicated when it comes to online boundary management. Whereas past work on social judgments in physical space has suggested that the trade-off between warmth and competence can be overcome by sending nonverbal cues to signal both warmth and competence (Cuddy et al., 2011), our framework suggests that online social networks that are personal in nature present opportunities for sending both warmth and competence cues to professional contacts through the information one discloses. However, employees may only be able to do so through content and hybrid behaviors, which are effective only when they are implemented with few mistakes. This suggests that employees' online boundary management capabilities are critical for these behaviors to successfully enhance both liking and respect. Compared to hybrid and content behaviors, audience and open behaviors are less beneficial overall, in that audience behaviors likely have neutral outcomes for average respect and negative outcomes for average liking, whereas open behaviors likely have negative outcomes for both average respect and liking because of the risks they entail. A key insight derived from our framework is that hybrid behaviors, when well executed, are the most likely to maximize both liking and respect, since hybrid behaviors enable employees to more closely approximate the customized disclosure prevalent in offline interactions by sending both warmth and competence cues tailored to their professional contacts.

Self-verification and self-enhancement motives are key in shaping whether employees who participate in online social networks stand to increase respect and liking among their professional contacts, in that behaviors driven by self-verification (open and audience) may be less likely to increase respect and liking than behaviors driven by self-enhancement (content and hybrid). However, preferences for segmentation versus integration are key in determining the ratio between risk and difficulty involved in online boundary management, in that the two behaviors stemming from a preference for seg-

mentation (audience and hybrid) may be less risky but more difficult to maintain over time compared to the two behaviors stemming from a preference for integration (open and content). This is because the technical structure of online social networks is typically geared toward integration behaviors such that segmentation requires an ongoing set of macro choices regarding the contacts with whom one is connected. This is also because initial macro choices create inertia and path dependencies, which may be difficult to revise as employees experience changes in their professional and personal lives or try to revisit their online boundary management behaviors to address social feedback and workplace norms.

Future Research

The framework we have proposed opens up important new issues for researchers considering boundary work, identity negotiation, and respect and liking in cyberspace. First, it may be fruitful to apply our framework at the dyadic level. For instance, research is needed on the role that social exchange and reciprocity norms (Gouldner, 1960) may play in shaping respect and liking in a dyad, as well as the impact on respect and liking in a dyad when an employee using one set of behaviors, such as open behaviors, interacts with an employee using another set, such as content behaviors. This may be particularly interesting for key dyads, such as the supervisor-subordinate dyad, which is important for supervisory performance ratings (Lefkowitz, 2000; Robbins & DeNisi, 1994) and leader-member exchange (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Wayne & Ferris, 1990). In addition, future research should pay attention to triadic and group dynamics in online social networks, which can impact respect and liking, as discussed in the example of an employee's boss being "poked" by her personal friends. For instance, it is likely that in online social networks that are personal in nature, the pattern of connection requests being sent and accepted in a team provides information on cohesion and ingroup and outgroup dynamics. Furthermore, in addition to *average* respect and liking, future research should investigate the potential *variance* in respect and liking that online boundary management behaviors may produce. For instance, some behaviors, such as audience or open behaviors, may polarize professional contacts' respect and liking for an employee.

Second, our premise that employees need to mirror their offline professional relationships when online prompts further examination of boundary work across the different social spaces in which individuals interact. In particular, occupational and organizational norms may interact with individual preferences (Stutzman & Hartzog, 2012). Some occupations, such as journalism, entail a greater need to collect information from a broad variety of sources and to monitor the information one discloses, whereas others, such as real estate agents, novelists, or self-employed freelance consultants, involve a greater need to disseminate information and advertise one's accomplishments. Since content or hybrid boundary management behaviors might be better suited to this latter set of occupations than audience or open behaviors, employees who recognize these norms may either adapt their online boundary management behaviors or change occupations if the conflict with their preferences is too strong. In contrast, some occupational norms require strict professionalism, where audience behaviors may be optimal. For instance, physicians are advised to not break the physician-patient boundary in online social networks (McLean Hospital, 2010), and employees of the U.S. Department of Justice are warned against connecting with judges, defense counsels, jurors, and witnesses, as well as discussing a case in online social networks (U.S. Department of Justice, 2010). Future research could extend the focus of our framework on individual preferences and investigate how organizational and occupational norms might interact with individual preferences, perhaps depending on the strength of employees' professional and organizational identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) and on the relative salience of their professional and personal identities (Ashforth et al., 2000; Rothbard & Edwards, 2003). Also, while our framework focuses on online social networks that are personal in nature, boundary management may also be needed on professional collaboration sites, such as Yammer, where employees may choose to keep their interactions strictly professional (i.e., segmentation) or to engage in some level of personal disclosure (i.e., integration).

Third, future research may be able to provide further nuance to our framework by considering the intensity with which employees engage in online social networks. Indeed, employees may experience the need to self-enhance or self-verify with greater or lesser intensity, and they may have stronger or weaker preferences for segmentation or integration of their professional and personal identities. Thus, employees who experience these motives with low intensity may enact passive and possibly less consistent online boundary management behaviors, whereas employees who experience these motives with high intensity might be torn between self-enhancement and self-verification or between segmentation and integration and be unable to satisfy all their motives simultaneously. These employees may experience ambivalence and devise even more integratively complex (Tetlock, 1983) ways to manage their boundaries in the effort to self-enhance and self-verify or to segment and integrate their identities.

Fourth, future research should examine other boundaries, such as hierarchical or age boundaries, that are likely to require careful management, since they, too, collide in online social networks. Hierarchical boundaries are typically institutionalized—for instance, by physical barriers at the workplace, such as distinct floors or areas for different types of employees, or by norms that restrict socializing to members of one's own rank (Ashforth et al., 2000; Goffman, 1956). This institutionalization does not extend to online social networks such that professional contacts from other ranks (supervisors or subordinates) may create unique challenges for online boundary management (Boyd, 2007; Ryan, 2008; Tufekci, 2008)—for example, perhaps they might use online social networks to cross boundaries that are otherwise well established (Lewis et al., 2008). Also, social norms regarding acceptable disclosure of information in online social networks might differ according to one's generation and/or life stage (Pfeil, Arjan, & Zaphiris, 2009).

Last, while technology is likely to change, the psychological motives and challenges that people face given the realities of this new online world are fairly fundamental. Since the purpose of social media is to connect people and share information, the default technical structure and philosophy of social media platforms has been—and appears will continue to be—disclo-

sure to as broad an audience as possible (Boyd, 2007, 2008; Donath, 2007; Donath & Boyd, 2004). Thus, participating in online social networks will involve tension between disclosure and discretion (Petronio, 2002) and between the professional and personal, regardless of the specifics of the technological platforms. The technology itself may evolve, changing the specific tactics employees use, but the underlying motives and archetypical behaviors we have outlined will likely endure. As social media technology develops, these questions should be revisited, and new opportunities for research on online boundary management may be created.

Practical Implications and Conclusion

Our framework of online boundary management offers practical implications for employees and organizations. Being able to create and maintain appropriate boundaries and to negotiate one's identities online are quickly becoming critical skills that most employees now need to master. Our framework highlights that employees are faced with a menu of different boundary management options, which may have positive or negative consequences for the way they are regarded by professional contacts and which entail varying degrees of risk, opportunity, and difficulty. Online boundary management may even lead employees to revisit offline interactions at the workplace. For instance, they may reconsider who they view as trustworthy or not discuss online social networks with coworkers from whom they would not want to receive an online connection request. Another implication of our framework is that rather than assume that their own choices are shared by others (Ross et al., 1977), employees and employers should be aware that others' online behaviors might be driven by motives and circumstances different from their own. To help employees with online boundary management, organizations may consider implementing policies regarding online connections and interactions with professional contacts, as well as provide training to support employees as they develop online boundary management capabilities. As the vast amount of social interaction that already occurs in cyberspace continues to grow, employees will inevitably encounter collisions of their professional and personal identities online. We hope that our framework serves as a spark and guide for fu-

ture research on how employees manage these inevitable—yet highly consequential—collisions of their social worlds within the relatively new world of social media.

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Ariane Ollier-Malaterre (aom@rouenbs.fr; ollier.ariane@uqam.ca) is associate professor of management at Rouen Business School and professor of management at Université du Québec à Montréal. She earned her Ph.D. at ESSEC Business School and CNAM. Her research focuses on the work-nonwork interface at the individual, the organizational, and the country levels.

Nancy P. Rothbard (nrothbard@wharton.upenn.edu) is the David Pottruck Associate Professor of Management at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. Her research examines how factors outside the workplace influence people's engagement with their work. She has also examined how people cope with these potential spillovers by segmenting work and nonwork roles.

Justin M. Berg (bergj@wharton.upenn.edu) is a doctoral candidate in management at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. His research focuses on creativity, proactivity, and the meaning of work in organizations.