

Private Connections

Unique Privacy Provisions for a Neurodiverse Community

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Introduction

Connection: An in-development application from Western Washington University aims to accomplish the following:

- Function as a better platform for those self-identifying as Neurodiverse to forge relationships online
- Create an *inclusive* space that encourages Neurodiverse and Neurotypical membership and participation
- Facilitate both romantic relationships and friendships using the same networking platform [1]

Research Questions

1. What are (if any) particular privacy concerns of future Neurodiverse users of *Connection*?
2. Which existing social media and dating site privacy protocols/vulnerabilities would encourage or preclude users from using *Connection*?

Methodology

We performed separate literature reviews on each research question to address the above using the queries shown in figures 1 and 2:

Autism and Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities
dating **AND** (priva* **OR** secur*) **AND**
(internet **OR** online)

IEEE Xplore and ACM Library
(autis* **OR** asperger*) **AND**
(priva* **OR** secur*)

Figure 1: Search strings used for research question 1

IEEE Xplore and ACM Library
dating **AND** (priva* **OR** secur*) **AND**
(online **OR** relati* **OR** app)

Figure 2: Search strings used for research question 2

We compiled our results as exported citation lists in a Mendeley database with the following statistics:

- 486 articles returned from all databases
- 43 articles remaining after duplicates and excluded articles removed
- 13 articles cited in the ongoing paper so far.

Our criteria excluded articles pertaining to:

- Medical treatment
- Screening
- Intervention
- Neurotypical parents
- Children less than adolescent age
- Developer/marketing access to user information

Findings

A significant sample of Neurodiverse community members choose not to disclose their status. This population often identifies as female [2, 3]

A. *Connection* must protect the identities of these users to remain a viable platform.

But, Neurodiverse adolescents and young adults face online instances of cyber-bullying and harassment at greater rates [4]. So,

B. *Connection* must also avoid problems with anonymous online spaces which facilitate this type of negative online behavior.

How can *Connections* accomplish both goals on the same platform?

Implementations

- Recruit and encourage a large body of Neurotypical users to participate
- ‘Group’-based visibility (ex. Google+, LinkedIn) enhance user privacy [5]
- Maintain a strict 1-user per account policy with registration verification for accountability
- Disable Location Based Services and Facebook connectivity which can create unwanted user-disclosures [6, 7]

References

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