- **Project Title:** User-Created Content: How Social Networking Translates to Social Capital

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Project Summary:

The purpose of this study was to analyze the effects of user-generated content on social networking sites on the creation of social capital. Social networking sites rely on content created by the millions of users who develop profiles, communicate with friends, meet people, participate in communities, post comments to Web logs, and create multimedia. A survey was administered to users of social networking sites, and it revealed that users performed a wide variety of social networking activities and did so for varied reasons and motivations, but primarily for bonding activities supporting friendship and community. And, while some of the motivations were influenced by demographic factors like gender and age, more variability was described by experience with social networking, measured by frequency of login and years using social networking. Concerns regarding privacy and copyright emerged across categories.

Social networking trends not only create a sense of urgency for news media to adopt these features, but provide an indication of where competitive endeavors might be emerging. At the heart, however, is a user base that remains engaged and interested in participation, yet concerned about issues of identity, privacy, and the legality of their online actions.