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A qualitative study of 4-H state and field faculty use of social media to communicate with youth, volunteers, and stakeholders

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF 4-H STATE AND FIELD FACULTY USE OF SOCIAL
MEDIA TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOUTH, VOLUNTEERS, AND STAKEHOLDERS

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of
Master of Science

in

The School of Human Resource Education and Workforce Development

by
Mary Christina Sorenson
B.S., Louisiana State University, 2001
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the type of social media technology utilized by 4-H field and state faculty to communicate with 4-H members, volunteers, and advisory board members. As youth increase their use of technology for communications it is critical for youth development agents to adapt to new communication methods

Qualitative research methods were used to explore this topic. Guiding questions were developed from the empirical literature. Responsive interviewing technique was used to gather data. A purposeful sample was chosen for this study. The sample consisted of field and state 4-H Cooperative Extension Service faculty located in a southeastern state in United States. Personal interviews were conducted with individuals who utilized various forms of social media to communicate with their youth, volunteers, and stakeholder.

The results of the study found that all the respondents communicate using social media and e-mail. All of the respondents communicate with youth by text-messaging and Facebook. Youth choose to use social media to communicate with youth development agents and volunteer. Youth will use phone calls as a last resort to communicate. Volunteers communicate with respondents mostly by e-mails and phone calls. Over half of the respondents communicate with their advisory board members through mail-outs and e-mails. All state and field faculty respondents continue to send newsletters, mail-outs and meet face to face with all of their cliental.

This research indicates that faculty use various types of technology to communicate with youth, volunteer, and stakeholders.. Most of the information necessary for youth to participate in various events are available in several different formats in order to reach all youth.

Facebook was used to inform and recruit new volunteers and advisory board members.

Twitter and Facebook were also used state and field faculty to keep parents abreast of their children's welfare during field trips and summer camp.

If Cooperative Extension is going to have an impact on the youth they must adopt the new technology and communication styles utilized by youth. All Cooperative Extension employees should be mandated to take professional development courses on utilizing technology in order to communicate with their stakeholders.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Technology can be defined as the practical application of knowledge especially in a particular area (Merriam Webster.com, n.d.). It can be material objects of use to humanity, such as machines, but can also encompass broader themes, including systems, methods of organization and techniques (Merriam Webster.com, n.d.). Recent technological advancements including the cell phone, internet, and other communication devices has decreased physical barriers of communication and allowed humans to be more connected on a global level (Merriam Webster.com, n.d.).

Technology use by teens today is growing by leaps and bounds. According to a study released in 2007 by Pew Internet and American Life Project, 93% of American teens, ages 12-17, use the internet, 55% of online teens use social networking websites, and 63% of all teens own a cell phone (Lenhart, 2007). The most popular form of communication teens use is their cell phone (Weiss, 2005).

Through use of text messages, instant messaging, and social networking websites, teens have developed their own language in which many adults find it hard comprehend (Bovitz, 2007). Some teens have reported that this new language they are using has caused them to receive lower grades on their school work (Bovitz, 2007). Schools have even started to restrict access to the social networking websites due to students gossiping and online bullying (Bovitz, 2007). Some employers have begun looking at these sites to learn more about the life styles of their potential employees (Bovitz, 2007).

Social networking has become a preferred method of communication among teenagers. (Davis, Rhoades, & Thomas, 2009). The mall, bowling alley and movie theaters are no longer

the only places that teenagers can “hang out” (Davis et al., 2009). Social networking websites have become a popular place for teenagers to network with their friends (Davis et al., 2009). These websites allow teenagers to create personal profiles and connect with others with similar interests. Many educators are beginning to reach out to youth through social networking websites. The Cooperative Extension Service is one of the organizations that is reaching out to 4-H youth in order to understand how they use this form of technology (Davis et al., 2009).

Cell phone usage by teens has increased significantly over the past five years. According to a survey conducted by Pew Internet & American Life Project, 71% of teens owned a cell phone in 2008 (Lenhart, 2009). Of those surveyed, older teens were more likely to own a cell phone over the younger teens (Lenhart, 2009). Landline phones are still the most widespread method of communication with their friends (Lenhart, 2009).

With technology being such a vital influence in a teen’s life, 4-H Youth Development Agents and other educators have begun to search for new ways to reach the teens they work with in their programs. The National Association of Extension 4-H Agents adopted a social media policy in January of 2010 to encourage proper use of the media by their agents. By communicating through these new forms of technology, teens will hopefully be able to be retained in the 4-H program.

Technology has also changed the perception of 4-H being just “cows & cooking.” Through the science, engineering and technology (SET) national mission mandate, youth are being exposed to projects in these areas that will help lead them to jobs in these fields in the near future (Barker, Grandgenett & Nugent, 2009). Young people today should possess more advanced skills like communicating effectively and efficiently, the ability to analyze complex information, and having good writing and presentation skills in order to thrive in the world

(Hall, 2006). Many youth seem to be more interested in technology-oriented programs when choices of activities are given, when staff provides support, and when youth are given the opportunity to reflect, discuss and interact during the process (Hall, 2006).

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the type of technology utilized by 4-H field and state faculty to communicate with 4-H members, volunteers, and advisory board members. As youth increase their use of technology for communications it is critical for youth development agents to adapt to new communication methods.

Objective

To explore what types of technology that field and state faculty were using to communicate with youth, volunteers, and advisory board members and to determine the extensiveness of state and field faculty's use of technology. The following guiding questions were used to address this objective:

1. Do you use the internet?
2. Do you send or receive e-mails?
3. What kinds of things do you do when you use the internet?
4. Do you own any of the following?
 - a.) A cell phone
 - b.) A desktop or laptop computer
 - c.) An iPod or mp3 player
 - d.) An X-box, Play Station or Wii
 - e.) iPad
5. Do you use the internet from your....

- a.) Cell phone
 - b.) Desktop/laptop computer
 - c.) Portable gaming device
 - d.) iPad
6. Tell me all the different ways you communicate with 4-H youth?
 7. Tell me all the different ways you socialize with 4-H youth?
 8. How do the 4-H youth communicate with you?
 9. How do you prefer the 4-H youth communicate with you?
 10. How do you communicate with volunteers?
 11. How do you communicate with Advisory Boards?
 12. How do you communicate with the State 4-H Office?
 13. On an average day, how many text messages do you receive from 4-H youth?
 14. Do you receive more text messages from 4-H youth during the school year or during the summer?
 15. Do you think you should be reimbursed for text messages from your employer?
 16. Do you ever see yourself creating a blog to communicate with youth, volunteers or Advisory Board?
 17. Regardless of your answer would you need training to develop a blog?
 18. Do you read any blogs?
 19. Do you have a 4-H Jr. Leader Facebook page?
 20. Are you in charge of it or a Jr. Leader?
 21. What other types of social media do you use to communicate with other agents or other youth?

Significance of the Study

Youth have significantly changed the way they communicate with each other and with the adults in their lives. As they begin to join youth development clubs they will be looking for organizations that have adapted to their communication styles. If the Cooperative Extension 4-H youth development organization does not alter the way they communicate with their youth and volunteers their youth enrollment numbers will decline and the volunteers will find other organizations.

The results of this study will help inform other 4-H state and field faculty about the changing communication styles used by youth and volunteers. This study should encourage professional development training for all extension individuals regarding the change in communication styles of our participants and the increased reliance on social media as an important tool for both recruitment of youth and volunteers. This study may also help cooperative extension recruit new volunteers and advisory members who due to their busy lives appreciate being able to attend meetings via web or Skype.

Limitations

Due to the nature of the methodology used in this study this researcher interviewed only a small number of individuals. Of the individuals interviewed only two were state 4-H faculty individuals with the rest being youth development field faculty, and thus the results may be limiting. The interviewees were purposely selected due to knowledge and skills using new methods of communication.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the researcher developed the following definitions to be utilized:

- **Blogs** – is a web site that contains an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and hyperlinks provided by the writer; also: (Merriam-Webster.com).
- **E-mail** – a means or system for transmitting messages electronically (Merriam-Webster.com).
- **Four-H Youth Development Agents** – persons who organizes and directs educational projects and activities of 4-H Clubs (researcher defined).
- **Instant Messaging** – a means or system for transmitting electronic messages instantly (Merriam-Webster.com).
- **Internet** – an electronic communications network that connects computer networks and organizational computer facilities around the world (Merriam-Webster.com).
- **I-pods** – was invented by Apple in 2001. It is a hand-held device that allows for playback of audio, video, image, and text files (tech-faq.com).
- **Jr. Leaders** – Middle and High School 4-H members who assist with parish-wide activities and serve as the teen leaders of the parish (researcher defined).
- **PDA's** – (personal digital assistance) – a small hand-held device equipped with a microprocessor that is used especially for storing and organizing personal information (as addresses and schedules) (Merriam-Webster.com).
- **SET** – (Science, Engineering & Technology) - a National 4-H Mission Mandate. National 4-H Mission Mandates are used to set priorities for the organization.
- **Social Media** – Social media is a medium that allows for interaction (social) for all users such as: Facebook, twitter, and blogs (researcher defined).

- **Social Networking** – a website where one connects with those sharing personal or professional interests, place of origin, education at a particular school, etc.
(www.dictionary.com)
- **Text - messaging** – the sending of short text messages electronically, especially from one cell phone to another (Merriam-Webster.com).
- **Virtual world** – is an interactive simulated environment accessed by multiple users through an online interface (virtualworldreview.com).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Over the last several decades there have been tremendous changes for young people in their learning, working, and social environments (Hall, 2006). They have had to become accustomed to learning how to use a computer and other forms of technology in order to thrive in the world today (Hall, 2006).

Instead of youth losing social skills, the net generation or N-Gen are broadening these skills at an earlier age than other generations in the past. (Sabatier & Sieber, 2003). Youth are learning about teamwork, peer relationships, friendships across the world, standing up for what they believe in and how to communicate their ideas effectively which will benefit them in the digital economy (Sabatier & Sieber, 2003).

Youth have a tendency to be early adopters of technology. By identifying the needs of the youth it helps to understand the new uses of technology in society (Sabatier & Sieber, 2003).

Youth communicate and interact through new forms of technology such as smart boards, chat tools, video conferencing, and electronic libraries (Sabatier & Sieber, 2003).

Many higher education institutions are investing in these new technologies for their students (Sabatier & Sieber, 2003). Computers and other new forms of technology allow students to have improved student-faculty relationships (Cooper, Dean & Lloyd, 2007). Many primary and secondary school teachers also communicate with their students through teacher websites. Teachers can now post projects, homework assignments, and even student grades on their websites.

Some studies have found many benefits of computers and e-mail but have also found many concerns. One major apprehension is “cocooning,” which is where students retreat to using

their computers and don't interact with others during activities on campus (Cooper et al., 2007). Other concerns include that students don't have access to technology that could affect the students' learning (Cooper et al., 2007).

Cooperative Extension Service

The Cooperative Extension Service is a very significant part of the land grant system, which is the largest educational delivery system in the world. In 1862, the Morrill Act was passed which provided for at least one college in each state to be established where "the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific or classical studies, to teach such branches as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts" (Brief Historical Perspective, 2009). This act was established to educate citizens in agriculture, home economics, and mechanical arts (USDA, 2009).

Then in 1887, the Hatch Act was passed which allowed the establishment of Agricultural Experiment Stations at one land grant college in each state. In 1914, Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act which provided the establishment of the Cooperative Extension Service. This act mandated that the Federal Government provide each state with funds. The Cooperative Extension Service also became the educational arm of the United States Department of Agriculture (History of Cooperative Extension Service, 2001).

The first County Demonstration Agent was hired in 1906 in Texas. The County Demonstration Agents were used to deliver information from the experiment stations to the people. Several years later, Home Demonstration Agents were added to address the issues of homemakers (Brief Historical Perspective, 2009).

In 1907, the first 4-H Club was organized in Holmes County, Mississippi. Through participation in the 4-H Club, youth were educated in agriculture and home economics and

provided information to their families from the research stations. By 1918, 4-H membership had grown to half a million members (History of Cooperative Extension Service, 2001).

During the Great Depression, Extension Agents taught farmers about marketing and assisted farm groups to organize both buying and selling cooperatives. At the same time, the Home Demonstration Agents taught farm women about good nutrition, canning surplus foods, house gardening, home nursing, furniture refinishing and sewing (USDA, 2009).

In 1961, the Smith-Lever Amendment was added. This allowed funding for special programs like resources and community development, farm safety, urban gardening, pest management and nonpoint pollution control (History & Formation, 2009). In 1972, the Federal Rural Development Act authorized expanded Extension work in rural communities in non-agricultural as well as agricultural fields (History & Formation, 2009). In 1973, Congress earmarked funds for 4-H work in urban areas and rural community development.

Focus Areas of Extension

There have been many changes for the Cooperative Extension Service over the last century. Today, the Cooperative Extension Service works mainly in six major areas:

- **4-H Youth Development** – educating youth in important life skills, character building, and assisting them in making appropriate life and career choices.
- **Agriculture** – through educational programs individuals learn new ways to produce income through alternative enterprises, improve management and marketing skills and strategies, and helps farmers and ranchers improve productivity.
- **Leadership Development** – training Extension professionals and volunteers to deliver programs in many different areas. Also allows for them to serve in leadership roles in their community.

- **Natural Resources** – educating landowners and homeowners of how to use natural resources wisely and to help protect the environment through educational programs.
- **Family and Consumer Sciences** – educating families to become resilient and healthy by teaching nutrition, food preparation skills, positive child care, and financial management.
- **Community and Economic Development** – helps local governments investigate and create viable options for economic and community development.

The 4-H Program

The 4-H Program in recent years has experienced two significant trends. One of which is the basic purpose of 4-H: the personal growth of the member. Through 4-H projects, members build skills they can use the rest of their lives. The educational experiences are built around life skills which focus on positive self-esteem, communication and decision making. These life skills are built into 4-H activities, events, and projects that enable the members to be contributing, productive, self-directing members of society (4-H History Timeline, 2010).

Today in 4-H, seven million American youth are offered many opportunities in communications, leadership, career development, livestock, home improvement, and computer technology. 4-H programs can be found in both rural and urban areas throughout the country.

The 4-H Program in Louisiana has over 220,000 members in grades fourth through twelfth grade in more than 1700 clubs. These members are in grades fourth through twelfth. A 4-H club is a group of youth in schools or in a community who want to learn and grow to improve themselves and their community. Each club elects officers and usually meets at least once a month as well as participating in many parish, regional, and state events and activities.

Each member chooses at least one project book to complete each year. The project books contain many activities that allow youth to learn by doing (Louisiana 4-H: “What is 4-H”, 2010).

Not only do youth belong to their local 4-H club, but they also may join a parish-wide club called a Junior Leadership Club. This club is designed for seventh through twelfth grade members. It usually meets once a month to help plan out community service activities, parish events, and social activities. Members join this club in order to develop their leadership, communication, and decision-making skills that they will use for the rest of their lives. These members have a variety of roles they serve in. The Jr. Leaders teach younger members, interact with other teens their own age, as well as serve in leadership positions. The 4-H agents and volunteer leaders really depend on Jr. Leaders, and they and give them duties which allow them to exhibit responsibility.

Social Media

Social Networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and My Space are very popular among the youth of today. These websites allow youth to network with their friends online, and post feel are a great way to communicate with them. Youth who are involved in organizations like 4-H have begun forming groups on websites like MySpace and Facebook. These sites enable 4-H members to post information about their 4-H projects and clubs. To stay abreast with the changing times, 4-H agents and volunteer leaders will have to change their ways of presenting educational materials as well as how they communicate with the youth. Four-H agents and volunteer leaders will also take on a new role of monitoring the 4-H members as to what is posted on these sites to make sure it is of good character and represents 4-H well (Rhoades, Thomas, & Davis, 2009).

Communications Devices

Hand-held devices have become extremely popular over the last several years (Economides & Grousopoulou, 2009). Some of the most popular ones include I-pods, cell phones, tablet personal computers and personal digital assistants (Economides & Grousopoulou, 2009). Students feel that the most important features of these devices are the battery life, mp3 player, video camera, photo camera, storage memory, Bluetooth, design, clock, calendar, organizer and reminder (Economides & Grousopoulou, 2009). According to a survey conducted, both genders are willing to spend extra money for such features (Economides & Grousopoulou, 2009). Most respondents don't feel the following features are very important: touch screen, voice commands, chat, teleconference, encryption and cryptography, common uses of files, and printing (Economides & Grousopoulou, 2009). For many people, especially youth, the mobile phone is considered a fashion object that enables them to chat and gossip (Economides & Grousopoulou, 2009). Studies have shown that students are the best consumers of mobile phones as well as the best audience for mobile applications (Economides & Grousopoulou, 2009)

Unlike previous generations, youth and young adults today are multi-taskers, social networkers, and electronic communicators (Karpinski & Kirschner, 2010). They are also the first to purchase new technology (Karpinski & Kirschner, 2010). The term Homo Zappiens has been created to describe this new generation of learners (Karpinski & Kirschner, 2010). Some researchers believe that human beings cannot really multitask but just switch quickly from one activity to another (Karpinski & Kirschner, 2010).

Social-networking is an extremely important part of a young adult's life (Karpinski & Kirschner, 2010). One of the most popular social networking sites is Facebook (Karpinski & Kirschner, 2010). It was originally designed for college students living in residence halls.

(Karpinski & Kirschner, 2010). Later, it was expanded outside the college and university system (Karpinski & Kirschner, 2010). The impact of technology on academic achievement and development of youth have been studied (Karpinski & Kirschner, 2010). It has been found that there are both positive and negative effects of technology on achievement (Karpinski & Kirschner, 2010). Technology that had a positive impact on academic achievement was not popular and not used frequently (Karpinski & Kirschner, 2010).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the use of technology utilized by 4-H field and state faculty to communicate with 4-H members, volunteers, and advisory board members. As youth increase their use of technology for communications it is critical for youth development faculty to adapt to new communication methods.

Qualitative Research

This is an exploratory study using qualitative research methods. Researchers use qualitative research to gain insight into people's attitudes, behaviors, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, cultures and lifestyles (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Exploratory research does not have concrete problem statements or objectives, thus allowing for emergence of various issues and data (Marchall & Rossman, 1989). Qualitative interviews are conversations in which a researcher gently guides a conversational partner in an extended discussion. The researcher elicits depth and detail about the research topic by following up on answers given by the interviewee during the discussion (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Methodology and Data Collection

The appropriate methodology for this research is structured interviews with probing questions. The researcher decided to use Rubin and Rubin's (2005) responsive interviewing model. This model's core concept is that interviewing is a dynamic process that allows for the differences in both the interviewer and interviewee to interact during their interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Interviews allow for the interviewee to share their knowledge or skill or opinions with others (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). It is crucial for the interviewer to build a rapport with

the individual being interviewed, and one way to do this is often for both the interviewer and the respondent to be engaged in the same line of work (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Both the interviewer and the respondents have worked for the Cooperative Extension Service for many years, and thus they share a common understanding of the roles and responsibilities and the culture of the organization. This research was approved by the researcher's Institutional Internal Review Board. The data were gathered by using interview method. The questions were developed based on the researchers review of the literature and her knowledge regarding the organization. Some of the interviews were conducted via phone due to the expense of a face-to-face interview, and the rest of the interviews were conducted face-to-face. The interviews were all digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. The first interview served as the pilot test for the guiding questions. After reviewing the transcript from the pilot test the researcher and her major professor determined that no changes were necessary to the guiding questions, and thus the first interviewee's data were included into the overall study.

The data were analyzed by reading and reviewing of each transcript several times, and then the data was coded according to categories that emerged from the data. The categories were then placed into themes. Some of the themes that were found in this research were consistent with what the empirical literature said regarding communication methods and youth.

Researcher's Role

At the time of this project, I had been a 4-H Agent in the Southern Region of the United States for eight years. Over the last several years, I have tried to keep myself abreast of the newest forms of technology. I own a variety of technological tools such as smartphone, laptop and iPad that I use to communicate with friends and family as well as the 4-H youth I work with. One of the main reasons that I purchased an iPad was to be able to have access to the internet

while I am away from my office and home. My iPad has the capabilities to allow me to take notes on it and save for later use. One of the features of the iPad that I really like is the ability to use it via WiFi or 3G.

The 4-H members that I work with are very technologically advanced. I communicate with them through several different forms of technology. Facebook and e-mails are the two main ways that I communicate with the 4-H youth. I work with an older group of 4-H youth who are members of the Jr. Leadership Club. A year ago I set up a Facebook page for the club to use to communicate with each other about upcoming events and activities going on in 4-H. The cellphone that I own is a smartphone, but I do not use the internet capabilities on it. It is a touchscreen so it allows me to text message very easily. I am looking forward to purchasing a new phone in September when my contract expires. I like my iPad so much that I may end up purchasing an iPhone.

I teach a summer sewing camp, and in that camp we teach youth on sewing machines that have a USB port. They are able to download embroidery patterns from the internet and load them into the sewing machine and are able to stitch them on their garments.

I have taken graduate-level courses in research methods, program evaluation, and qualitative research. I believe that qualitative research can help researcher examine new uses of technology.

Trustworthiness of Data

Qualitative research has often been suspect of not being very rigorous when compared to quantitative data (Patton, 1999). Quantitative data followed set standards whereas qualitative data are more creative. It is crucial for qualitative researcher to make their methodology and analysis transparent. The methodology must be clear and concise allowing other researchers to

replicate the method if they choose to with a similar population. The steps used to analyze the data must be complete with no areas left unaddressed.

One of the ways to assure the trustworthiness of the data is to ensure the creditability of the data. Patton (1999) discussed three methods that each qualitative researcher must address to ensure credibility and they are: rigorous data techniques; philosophical belief in qualitative research and the credibility of the researcher.

This researcher addressed the rigorous data techniques by:

- Developing the questions from the empirical literature
- Pilot testing the guiding questions in order to check that the data being gathered were in step with the research.
- Using a member check technique with the respondents regarding how they answered their questions. They were sent a copy of their transcripts so that they could review them for errors. None of the individuals interviewed changed any of their responses.
- Used my major professor also as another analysts to check the findings of her data. This method allows for consistency of findings.
- Used other data sources to check to see if the respondents to the interviews actually used the internet in the method they stated (triangulation of data sources).

The researcher addressed her credibility by stating her background in the use of technology and in the arena in which the data was focused which was working for the Cooperative Extension Service in a southeastern state in United States.

Program Participants

The program participants all are currently employed by a Southern Land Grant Doctoral Level Research Intensive University. These participants have been working for Cooperative

Extension for a minimum of 10 months and up to 26 years. Two of the participants were state 4-H faculty and the other participants were all 4-H Youth Development Agents. Five females and three males were interviewed.

Guiding Questions

The interview questions were developed to determine how 4-H state and field faculty communicate with youth, volunteers, and stakeholders.

Guiding questions used with 4-H Youth Development Field and State Faculty.

1. Do you use the internet?
2. Do you send or receive e-mails?
3. What kinds of things do you do when you use the internet?
4. Do you own any of the following?
 - a.) A cell phone
 - b.) A desktop or laptop computer
 - c.) An iPod or mp3 player
 - d.) An X-box, Play Station or Wii
 - e.) iPad
5. Do you use the internet from your....
 - a.) Cell phone
 - b.) Desktop/laptop computer
 - c.) Portable gaming device
 - d.) iPad
6. Tell me all the different ways you communicate with 4-H youth?
7. Tell me all the different ways you socialize with 4-H youth?

8. How do the 4-H youth communicate with you?
9. How do you prefer the 4-H youth communicate with you?
10. How do you communicate with volunteers?
11. How do you communicate with Advisory Boards?
12. How do you communicate with the State 4-H Office?
13. On an average day, how many text messages do you receive from 4-H youth?
14. Do you receive more text messages from 4-H youth during the school year or during the summer?
15. Do you think you should be reimbursed for text messages from your employer?
16. Do you ever see yourself creating a blog to communicate with youth, volunteers or Advisory Board?
17. Regardless of your answer would you need training to develop a blog?
18. Do you read any blogs?
19. Do you have a 4-H Jr. Leader Facebook page?
20. Are you in charge of it or a Jr. Leader?
21. What other types of social media do you use to communicate with other agents or other youth?

CHAPTER 4

OUTCOMES

The following chapter contains the results of the interviews by respondent. Each participant was asked the following questions:

1. Do you use the internet?
2. Do you send or receive e-mails?
3. What kinds of things do you do when you use the internet?
4. Do you own any of the following?
 - a.) A cell phone
 - b.) A desktop or laptop computer
 - c.) An iPod or mp3 player
 - d.) An X-box, Play Station or Wii
 - e.) iPad
5. Do you use the internet from your....
 - a.) Cell phone
 - b.) Desktop/laptop computer
 - c.) Portable gaming device
 - d.) iPad
6. Tell me all the different ways you communicate with 4-H youth?
7. Tell me all the different ways you socialize with 4-H youth?
8. How do the 4-H youth communicate with you?
9. How do you prefer the 4-H youth communicate with you?
10. How do you communicate with volunteers?
11. How do you communicate with Advisory Boards?

12. How do you communicate with the State 4-H Office?
13. On an average day, how many text messages do you receive from 4-H youth?
14. Do you receive more text messages from 4-H youth during the school year or during the summer?
15. Do you think you should be reimbursed for text messages from your employer?
16. Do you ever see yourself creating a blog to communicate with youth, volunteers or Advisory Board?
17. Regardless of your answer would you need training to develop a blog?
18. Do you read any blogs?
19. Do you have a 4-H Jr. Leader Facebook page?
20. Are you in charge of it or a Jr. Leader?
21. What other types of social media do you use to communicate with other agents or other youth?

Recordings

To properly record their responses, I used a RCA Digital Voice Recorder. The 4-H field and state faculty responses from the interviews were transcribed by the researcher. The 4-H field and state faculty names were changed to protect the respondents and are as follows: Abbey Taylor, Elizabeth Simpson, Chasity Baylor, John Benton, Susan Phillips, Martin Daniels, Sally Wood and Morgan Watts. All field faculty work with their respective 4-H Program in various parishes across the state. The state faculty are responsible for developing programs that are delivered by each field faculty in their parish. The respondents range in age from 24 to 49 years old and all have various years of experience.

Martin Daniels

Martin Daniels is a 46-years-old male. He has worked as a 4-H Agent for 25 years in a North Louisiana parish. He enjoys working with youth and has five of his own. Daniels holds a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Agriculture Education and a Master's Degree in Biology.

Martin Daniel's responses to the guiding questions as follows:

1. Do you use the internet?

- Yes

2. Do you send or receive e-mail?

- Yes

3. What kinds of things do you do when you use the internet?

- E-mail, look up information, instant messenger. We communicate with a lot of parents through instant messenger, Twitter and Facebook.

4. Do you own any of the following:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| a.) A cell phone | yes |
| b.) A desktop or laptop computer | yes |
| c.) An iPod or mp3 player | no |
| d.) An X-box, PlayStation, or Wii | yes |
| e.) iPad | no, not yet |

5. Do you use the internet from your:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| a.) A cell phone | yes |
| b.) A desktop or laptop computer | yes |
| c.) A portable gaming device | no |
| d.) iPad | no |

6. Tell me all the different ways you communicate with 4-H Youth?

- Text messaging
- Facebook
- E-mail
- Very rarely by telephone anymore.
- Communicate a whole lot better through text, e-mail and Facebook.
- They don't like to talk on the phone anymore.

7. Tell me all the different ways you socialize with 4-H Youth?

- We have our meetings. A lot of times we will have refreshments and things for them. We do different activities with them. On road trips we have more bonding experiences. I actually play basketball with a group of them about twice a week.
- Telephone, e-mail, Facebook and texting.

8. How do the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- Pretty much the same way I communicate with them.
- Facebook. I get a lot of communication when they have questions about things.
- They use Facebook before text messages or e-mails. Calling is their last resort.
- Facebook comes directly through my phone so I can respond easily.

9. How do you prefer the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- Facebook really seems to be the most effective way.
- Doesn't matter what time a day it is you are going to get an instant response from them and they get an instant response from you.

- Receives a text or e-mail almost every hour of the day. Even get them when they are in class. They are not suppose to be using them. They want to know a question about something going on and I get a response on Facebook or text message every hour of the day.

10. How do you communicate with volunteers?

- Mostly e-mail or personal visits.
- Most of the volunteers are 40 and above. They think e-mail is brand new. The quickest and easiest way for them to communicate is e-mail.

11. How do you communicate with Advisory Boards?

- Through e-mails and hard copy letters.

12. How do you communicate with the State 4-H Office?

- E-mail and Communicator (instant messenger) are the two main ways that I use.
- Very rarely do I have to call down there.
- Twenty years ago when I started working it was the telephone all the time. It was the only way to get to them. But, now you can jump on Communicator or send e-mails.

13. On an average day, how many text messages do you receive from 4-H youth?

- 20-25 text per day

14. Do you receive more text messages from 4-H youth during the school year or during the summer?

- School year

15. Do you think you should be reimbursed for text messages from your employer?

- No

16. Do you ever see yourself creating a blog to communicate with youth, volunteers, Advisory Boards?

- I don't think I would. I think as long as Facebook works like it works I would continue to use that. Advisory Boards are not real technologically driven. The way society is in six months it could change.

17. Regardless of your answer would you need training to develop a blog?

- No

18. Do you read any blogs?

- Yes

19. Do you have a 4-H Jr. Leader Facebook page?

- No, just a general 4-H Facebook page.

20. Are you in charge of it or a Jr. Leader?

- I am.

21. What other types of social media do you use to communicate with other agents or other youth?

- Other than Facebook, it would be Twitter. We don't get nearly the response with Twitter than we do with Facebook.
- Completely did away with our 4-H MySpace page about two years ago. For some reason they don't like MySpace anymore.

Susan Phillips

Susan Phillips is a 33-year old white female. She has served as a volunteer with the 4-H

Program for the past three years. She has one child who is an active 4-H member. She has a Bachelor's of Science Degree in ISDS (Information Systems and Decision Sciences).

Susan Phillip's responses to the guiding questions as follows:

1. **Do you use the internet?**

- Yes

2. **Do you send or receive e-mails?**

- Yes

3. **What kinds of things do you do when you use the internet?**

- They have a website through Facebook business page. Over the internet they communicate with each other, and I chime into their conversation when I need to communicate with them on that. Of course we post stuff to the LSU AgCenter website for them to get to it.

4. **Do you own any of the following?**

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| a.) A cell phone | Yes |
| b.) A desktop or laptop computer | Yes |
| c.) An iPod or mp3 player | No |
| d.) An X-box, PlayStation or Wii | Yes |
| e.) iPad | No |

5. **Do you use the internet from your...**

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| a.) Cell phone | Yes |
| b.) Desktop/laptop computer | Yes |
| c.) Portable gaming device | Yes |
| d.) iPad | No |

6. Tell me all the different ways you communicate with 4-H youth?

- I use e-mail and texting.
- I occasionally pick up the phone and make a phone call.
- I also use postal mail, Facebook and our website.

7. Tell me all the different ways you socialize with 4-H youth?

- That's in person normally and on Facebook.

8. How do the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- E-mail, Facebook and texting.
- One or two phone calls but not often.

9. How do you prefer the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- E-mail

10. How do you communicate with volunteers?

- Usually by e-mail or phone.

11. How do you communicate with Advisory Boards?

- I don't.

12. How do you communicate with the State 4-H Office?

- Phone, e-mail and physically walking down there.

13. On an average day, how many text messages do you receive from 4-H youth?

- I don't receive that many. I might receive 5 a month.

14. Do you receive more text messages from 4-H youth during the school year or during the summer?

- School year

15. Do you think you should be reimbursed for text messages from your employer?

- No, because I do this as a volunteer.

16. Do you ever see yourself creating a blog to communicate with youth, volunteers or Advisory Board?

- Yes, I sort of.....I use Twitter. It's a mini-blog.

17. Regardless of your answer would you need training to develop a blog?

- No

18. Do you read any blogs?

- Yes

19. Do you have a 4-H Jr. Leader Facebook page?

- No

20. Skipped question

21. What other types of social media do you use to communicate with other agents or other youth?

- I use Twitter.

Chasity Baylor

Chasity Baylor is a 24-year-old white female. She has been working as a 4-H Agent for two and a half years. She has one child of her own. Chasity has completed half of the course work required for her Master's Degree in Education. Baylor's responses to the guiding questions as follows:

1. Do you use the internet?

- Yes

2. Do you send or receive e-mails?

- Yes

3. What kinds of things do you do when you use the internet?

- I Tweet with my kids. I do the Facebook group with our Jr. Leaders. I also have a blog as well.

4. Do you own any of the following?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| a.) A cell phone | Yes |
| b.) A desktop or laptop computer | Yes |
| c.) An iPod or mp3 player | Yes |
| d.) An X-box, PlayStation or Wii | No |
| e.) iPad | No |

5. Do you use the internet from your...

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| a.) Cell phone | Yes |
| b.) Desktop/laptop computer | Yes |
| c.) Portable gaming device | No |
| d.) iPad | No |

6. Tell me all the different ways you communicate with 4-H youth?

- We have a Facebook page. We also do Twitter and the blog. But one new thing we are doing is the blanket e-mail. We send everything that we do. We send about three a week to the parents and 4-Her's.
- Yes, we do talk on the telephone too.
- No instant messages. We don't really use that. We do text a lot.

7. Tell me all the different ways you socialize with 4-H youth?

- Meetings. We text back and forth. They call me at all hours.
- We talk back and forth on Facebook.

- They Tweet about us and share meeting ideas and when we are meeting.
- We try to get new kids to come to the meetings.

8. How do the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- They call me, text, e-mail, Facebook chat and Tweet.
- Yes, we send out flyers in the mail. We try to move more towards e-mail.
- No, use of virtual websites.

9. How do you prefer the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- E-mail

10. How do you communicate with volunteers?

- E-mail and phone calls. Some are really good about text messaging.

11. How do you communicate with Advisory Boards?

- Mainly by mail and e-mail.

12. How do you communicate with the State 4-H Office?

- E-mail and phone.

13. On an average day, how many text messages do you receive from 4-H youth?

- 2

14. Do you receive more text messages from 4-H during the school year or during the summer?

- School year

15. Do you think you should be reimbursed for text messages from your employer?

- No

16. Do you ever see yourself creating a blog to communicate with youth, volunteers or Advisory Board?

- We have.

17. Regardless of your answer would you need training to develop a blog?

- No

18. Do you read any blogs?

- Yes

19. Do you have a 4-H Jr. Leader Facebook page?

- Yes

20. Are you in charge of it or a Jr. Leader?

- I am.

21. What other types of social media do you use to communicate with other agents or other youth

- None, besides the ones I mentioned.

John Benton

John Benton is a 24-year-old white male. He has only been working as a 4-H Agent for 10 months. He does not have any kids. He has a Master's Degree in Human Resource Education and Workforce Development with a concentration in Youth Development.

1. Do you use the internet?

- Yes, we do use the internet.

2. Do you send or receive e-mails?

- Yes

3. What kinds of things do you do when you use the internet?

- We use our webpage through the LSU AgCenter. We also use Facebook, Twitter,

and You Tube as the three forms of social media to interact with the students because that seems to be where they are.

4. Do you own any of the following?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| a.) A cell phone | Yes |
| b.) A desktop or laptop computer | No |
| c.) An iPod or mp3 player | mp3 player |
| d.) An X-box, PlayStation or Wii | X-box |
| e.) iPad | No |

5. Do you use the internet from your...

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| a.) Cell phone | Yes |
| b.) Desktop/laptop computer | both |
| c.) Portable gaming device | No |
| d.) iPad | No |

6. Tell me all the different ways you communicate with 4-H youth?

- I communicate with them via e-mail, internet via our website, via Facebook and Twitter, via sent in videos through You Tube. We also communicate through telephone messages and text messages.

7. Tell me all the different ways you socialize with 4-H youth?

- We have activities such as our Jr. Leader Club. We have meetings to let them get to know each other at the first of the year. Back to school party. This past year we called it the Meet and Greet. We also welcomed back the old members. We had a slip-n-slide. This was the way we had done it this year. I just started in May so that was our big social event that we had so far this year.

8. How do the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- They communicate with me through phone, e-mail, text message and we do have some of the youth that communicate through Facebook as well. They send comments, you know, posting pictures etc. Those are the ways they communicate us.
- No, I don't use instant messaging with the kids.
- Yes, we send out mail-outs pretty frequently to them because that way the information got home to the parents.
- No, we don't use virtual websites.

9. How do you prefer the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- Either by telephone, e-mail, text message is fine. That way I have a record of what they said so that I can refer to it. Sometimes it's kind of hard to remember what's going on if it's not just yes or no about an event. You know it is easier to have an e-mail...something tangible to refer to.

10. How do you communicate with volunteers?

- A lot of our volunteers are on Facebook as well but definitely through mail-outs, personal phone calls to them. They enjoy that because they are a little bit older and some are not as advanced through technology. They are even starting to text message as well. We will pretty much text message and e-mail them and are very minimum on Facebook, phone calls and mail-outs.

11. How do you communicate with Advisory Boards?

- Through mail-outs and phone primarily.

12. How do you communicate with the State 4-H Office?

- E-mail, phone and mail.

13. On an average day, how many text messages do you receive from 4-H youth?

- A lot of them just received my cell phone so it's kind of just getting started. But over the past 2 days I have probably received 5-6 text messages. Not many people have my cell phone number. About 5-6 on average. I would say probably every other day so 2 messages a day. It really depends on what's going on that week.

14. Do you receive more text messages from 4-H during the school year or during the summer?

- During the summer, because of all the summer activities going on.

15. Do you think you should be reimbursed for text messages from your employer?

- It would be nice but I have it anyway and it's unlimited. I'm paying for it regardless. I just assume use it because that is what the students seem to enjoy. It would be nice, I guess.

16. Do you ever see yourself creating a blog to communicate with youth, volunteers or Advisory Board?

- I've thought about it, and I could see it. I just started in May so I wanted to get my feet wet before I started something new like that. I could see myself using it to communicate more with advisory boards and volunteers. I think that is something that the older generation is used to using more than the social media at this point. It is definitely another way to get information out and it's a little easier to post pictures and updates to. And little small articles that they would be interested in. Yes, I definitely could see using it in the near future.

17. Regardless of your answer would you need training to develop a blog?

- No, I have a personal blog and have made them in the past. I have the ability to create a blog without training.

18. Do you read any blogs?

- Not on a regular basis.

19. Do you have a 4-H Jr. Leader Facebook page?

- We have a Facebook page for the parish but not one for our individual Jr. Leaders. That is something that I am thinking about doing. Have a place just for them to go.

20. Are you in charge of it or a Jr. Leader?

- We are in charge of the parish page. If I were to have a Jr. Leader page I would still be in charge but would allow them to post what they want to post and accessibility to it. Post pictures and stuff from different events. That way it is their page and I want it to be their own.

21. What other types of social media do you use to communicate with other agents or other youth?

- I have become fans of other parishes to see what they are doing on their Facebook page. We also use Twitter but I don't use it to the effect that I post status updates. I have it connected to our Facebook page where any updates we make via Facebook it is automatically updated on Twitter. So, it saves on our time and makes us a little more efficient. You put it in one place and it will automatically update in both places.

Elizabeth Simpson

Elizabeth Simpson is a 49-year-old white female. She has over 26 years of service with

the 4-H Program. She has two kids of her own. Elizabeth holds a Ph.D. in Vocational and Adult Education. Elizabeth Simpson's responses to the guiding questions as follow:

1. Do you use the internet?

- Yes, I do.

2. Do you send or receive e-mail?

- I do. E-mail is one of the major communication tools I use particularly with youth audiences.

3. What kinds of things do you do when you use the internet?

- I do web searches for research articles or just resources for 4-H.
- I communicate heavily through Facebook. I announce events and recruit volunteers. I also kind of check on 4-H programs across the state and give comments and encouragement on their Facebook pages. We also have a couple of Facebook pages associated with the Citizenship Board in which I work on. I work on and communicate with kids through the Citizenship Facebook page as well as a Service Learning Facebook page.
- In addition we are going to be starting a blog for youth development professionals.
- I use e-mail a lot both to communicate and we also tend to use things like share drives. I know that's not really the internet in terms of technology.
- I also use Zoomerang, which is an electronic online survey and I use Doodle which is a scheduling assistance.
- I have not used Second Life.

4. Do you own any of the following:

about 7 or 8 (7th – 12th graders). We get together probably on average every other month to plan the next couple of months activities. Then once a month they will actually teach the 4th – 6th graders in a food club.

- I pretty much socialize in these ways. I come and help at parish events. Of course I occasionally have a child that will come over to the house since I have a child in 4-H participating in different events.
- On a state-wide level you know you form relationships with kids and you see them at activities like JLC or other things like 4-H University. Then you have the board meetings and events that we have too. I actually check on their Facebook pages and make comments. It's a good way to keep up with them. I'm very careful...you know having an adult stalker is kind of scary. When they achieve something or when they are having a bad day I try and uplift them but I am very careful about what I put on it. If they are kind of have a running conversation that is sort of inappropriate I stay away from it. A lot of times I don't see that. There is one boy who you know that has definite political views so you know I just stay out of his politics and stuff like that. I respect the fact that he is probably more civic minded of youth that I know. And I believe one day that he will probably be the President of the United States. We have had a couple of Citizenship Board members that have won Student of the Year or gotten to go to Boys or Girls State so, I tend to take the information off Facebook that they have shared in a personal way and I take that and post it on the Citizenship Board Facebook page.

8. How do the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- Facebook and e-mail. Sometimes if I need to text message....like if I haven't heard from someone through Facebook or e-mail. Basically like when we have an event with the parish youth I send out an event so they usually respond. I've heard that they say they are coming....great. If I haven't heard I actually get my child to text message them to see if they are coming. Actually since they are all friends I find out that way too. My son has pretty much everyone's phone number so I let him do that for me. Another thing is I will like at an event touch base in a more personal way. I very rarely text message them it is all mainly through the internet.

9. How do you prefer the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- I like Facebook a lot.

10. How do you communicate with volunteers?

- Facebook and e-mail. Sometimes I do phone the volunteers. I would say that e-mail use to be the most frequent but it depends. When I'm recruiting volunteers I will use Facebook. I'll send out a message about an event and personalize it like we are in need of a cookery judge or we need this judge or I need someone to help here. I do that and then I have some e-mail lists that I use too. Sometimes I follow up in person and sometimes by phone. I have learned that when we recruit volunteers through Facebook and we need 12 I expect 8 to 10 volunteers to show up. So there is a certain amount of drop-out rate that happens. I've gotten to where I know people will commit and follow through and then I have some that I'm not sure of. Normally when I am recruiting volunteers to judge I say if you know someone that you would like

to bring please do. In a lot of cases they will bring someone with them. Even though I am biting my nails worrying sometimes it always turns out okay because you will have people that will drop but you will have people that bring others with them and it will be just fine.

11. How do you communicate with Advisory Boards?

- It would be purely by e-mail and phone. No text messaging.

12. How do you communicate with the State 4-H Office?

- Instant messenger and personal visits. Also, phone and cell phone quite a bit. E-mail some.

13. On an average day, how many text messages do you receive from 4-H youth?

- Less than one...not very many.

14. Do you receive more text messages from 4-H youth during the school year or during the summer?

- Summer

15. Do you think you should be reimbursed for text messages from your employer?

- Well, I have a university phone. I think for me personally it wouldn't be an issue. I have unlimited text.

16. Do you ever see yourself creating a blog to communicate with youth, volunteers, Advisory Boards?

- We are currently going to communicate and develop a blog that is going to focus on professional development and it's for volunteers & staff on youth development. We have done the messages but just have not uploaded them. I'm doing a series of messages....a lot at one time so we will have a month or

two worth of messages already written and just upload them periodically. The thing I'm a little bit concerned about a blog is it's suppose to be kind of living, breathing technology. I'm hoping that we can keep up with it. This is one of my concerns but I know LSU AgCenter administration is pushing us to do blogs. I'm going to try it. I felt like this would be a good way to try and hit the agents or volunteers at their convenience and reach other youth organizations at their convenience as well if we are talking about a topic of interest.

17. Regardless of your answer would you need training to develop a blog?

- I need training to know how to upload a blog. It's one of those things that for me I can figure it out, but I'm going to have to sit down with Robin to probably get her to show me. The AgCenter has developed a blogging software, and so it's suppose to be relatively easy.
- Last semesters' youth issues class we had to do blogs so we did a lesson on blogs. What they should know and how they researched it. So, I sort of knew what I was doing but in terms of uploading it's not suppose to be hard. It's suppose to be super easy but I've never done it so we will see.

18. Do you read any blogs?

- I do. I can't tell you what they are. They are youth development blogs.
- Basically, when I started wanting to have the vision of having a blog I went on and read a lot of blogs. They are really interesting. What I find is that a lot of the blogs that are on the computer were missing research. They tell something or can be very opinion driven versus fact or research. I wouldn't say I exhausted all potential youth development resources but I would say what I

found out there whether character development or anything else was mostly opinions. On a rare occasion there's one blog that had a lot of information and they quote according to the Gallop Poll. I would go back to the Gallop Poll and couldn't find anything on their references. I have no doubt they did at one time have references. I just couldn't find it. That's a niche that we can fill.

19. Do you have a 4-H Jr. Leader Facebook page?

- The parish that I am in does and would maybe consider the Citizenship one being a Jr. Leader page in a way.

20. Are you in charge of it or a Jr. Leader?

- Our administrator used to be one of our Collegiate 4-H members. Now, she has gone off and will be graduating. So, Sue and I will be taking over this responsibility. No, we do not have a member in charge at this time.

21. What other types of social media do you use to communicate with other agents or other youth?

- I really think that everything that you have mentioned I use. I don't know if you would really call Doodle a social media.
- I think besides Facebook, e-mail and instant messenger I use a lot of instant messenger with agents. It's terrible...I look at it to see if they are in their office. If it's an easy conversation I can have I use it. If it's a more serious conversation I do pick up the phone. Sometimes I do just have to call.

Sally Wood

Sally Wood is a 44-year-old white female. She has worked as a 4-H Agent for four and a half years in a South Louisiana parish. She has two kids of her own. Woods has a Master's

- c.) **A portable gaming device** no
- d.) **iPad** no

6. Tell me all the different ways you communicate with 4-H Youth?

- Newsletters
- During meetings
- E-mails
- Facebook pages
- Text messaging
- CMS postings
- Mail outs

7. Tell me all the different ways you socialize with 4-H Youth?

- Monthly meetings: Jr. Leader, Jr. Leader Officer, & 4-H Meetings.
- Facebook – they will ask questions or respond to posts.
- Text messages
- E-mails

8. How do the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- During meetings
- Text messages
- Pose questions on Facebook
- E-mail

9. How do you prefer the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- I really don't have a preference. It doesn't matter.

10. How do you communicate with volunteers?

- The majority of the time through regular mail. We send them newsletters and such.
- Some of them are on the social networking sites. I will request volunteers on Facebook when necessary.
- Text messaging – not as a whole, I might text message someone in particular.
- No, virtual websites. I'm interested to know what that is.

11. How do you communicate with Advisory Boards?

- Mostly through meetings. We notify them about meetings through mail-outs. None of them are “techy.”

12. How do you communicate with the State 4-H Office?

- Mostly through e-mail or using our instant messaging on Communicator if I have a quick question. A lot of times over the phone.

13. On an average day, how many text messages do you receive from 4-H youth?

- 1 per day

14. Do you receive more text messages from 4-H youth during the school year or during the summer?

- School year

15. Do you think you should be reimbursed for text messages from your employer?

- That would be nice. Although, I have a plan that is unlimited so it really doesn't bother me.

16. Do you ever see yourself creating a blog to communicate with youth, volunteers, Advisory Boards?

- I guess it is something to look forward to in the future. I just don't see my schedule having the time to do it right now.

17. Regardless of your answer would you need training to develop a blog?

- Yes

18. Do you read any blogs?

- Occasionally, but I don't follow any regularly.

19. Do you have a 4-H Jr. Leader Facebook page?

- Yes

20. Are you in charge of it or a Jr. Leader?

- I'm in charge of it.

21. What other types of social media do you use to communicate with other agents or other youth?

- Can't think of any other.

Abbey Taylor

Abbey Taylor is a 28-year-old white female. She has worked as a 4-H Agent for four and a half years in a South Louisiana parish. She has no children. Abbey is pursuing her Master's Degree in Youth Development. Abbey Taylor's responses to the guiding questions as follows:

1. Do you use the internet?

- Yes

2. Do you send or receive e-mail?

- Yes

3. What kinds of things do you do when you use the internet?

- Send out e-mails with information to my leaders and if parents have any questions they will e-mail me.
- For information and entertainment.
- No virtual worlds

4. Do you own any of the following:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| a.) A cell phone | yes |
| b.) A desktop or laptop computer | yes |
| c.) An iPod or mp3 player | yes |
| d.) An X-box, PlayStation, or Wii | no |
| e.) iPad | no |

5. Do you use the internet from your:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| a.) A cell phone | yes |
| b.) A desktop or laptop computer | yes |
| c.) A portable gaming device | no |
| d.) iPad | no |

6. Tell me all the different ways you communicate with 4-H Youth?

- Phone
- Text messaging
- Facebook
- In writing: letters & newsletters

7. Tell me all the different ways you socialize with 4-H Youth?

- Calling them
- Text messaging

- E-mail
- Facebook
- Instant messaging
- In person

8. How do the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- Through telephone calls
- E-mail
- Facebook: messages & posts
- Text messaging
- Coming by office

9. How do you prefer the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- I prefer text messages or e-mails.

10. How do you communicate with volunteers?

- Through phone conversations.
- Face to face in meetings.
- Print – letters & newsletter.
- Through e-mails.

11. How do you communicate with Advisory Boards?

- Through letters, e-mails and in meetings.

12. How do you communicate with the State 4-H Office?

- E-mail, phone calls, and face-to-face conversations.

13. On an average day, how many text messages do you receive from 4-H youth?

- 2

14. Do you receive more text messages from 4-H youth during the school year or during the summer?

- School year

15. Do you think you should be reimbursed for text messages from your employer?

- Yes

16. Do you ever see yourself creating a blog to communicate with youth, volunteers, Advisory Boards?

- I would if I had more training on blogs.

17. Regardless of your answer would you need training to develop a blog?

- Yes

18. Do you read any blogs?

- No

19. Do you have a 4-H Jr. Leader Facebook page?

- Yes, they actually do....the youth have created one.

20. Are you in charge of it or a Jr. Leader?

- Jr. Leader

21. What other types of social media do you use to communicate with other agents or other youth?

- With agents – Live Meetings & Communicator, Distance Ed. Meetings.
- Not so much with youth.

Morgan Watts

Morgan Watts is a 38-year-old white male. He has worked with the 4-H Program in various parishes for the past 14 years. He has two kids of his own. Watts has a Bachelor of

Science Degree & Master's Degree in Animal Science and a Ph.D. from the School of Human Resource Education and Workforce Development. Morgan Watts's responses to the guiding questions as follows:

1. Do you use the internet?

- Yes

2. Do you send or receive e-mail?

- Yes

3. What kinds of things do you do when you use the internet?

- Search out specific subject matter that relates to my job.
- Utilize it to get information when needed.
- Facebook – I have a page and people talk to me on it.
- I buy toys for my own kids online.
- I don't buy music or anything like that online.
- We have training online that volunteers can go to
- No, I do not use Second Life.

4. Do you own any of the following:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a.) A cell phone | yes |
| b.) A desktop or laptop computer | yes |
| c.) An iPod or mp3 player | yes, my daughter has one |
| d.) An X-box, PlayStation, or Wii | yes |
| e.) iPad | no, I want one. |

5. Do you use the internet from your:

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| a.) A cell phone | yes |
|------------------|-----|

- b.) A desktop or laptop computer yes
- c.) A portable gaming device no
- d.) iPad no

6. Tell me all the different ways you communicate with 4-H Youth?

- I text and e-mail. I do utilize Facebook. I communicate through websites and training modules. I also instant message.

7. Tell me all the different ways you socialize with 4-H Youth?

- Via Facebook, e-mail, texting.
- Phone – times are changing. I probably talk less on the phone now.

8. How do the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- Facebook, texting, phone, e-mail.

9. How do you prefer the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- E-mail is probably the best way to get to me. I'm learning to use Facebook more and the youth really ask a lot of questions through there.
- I actually had a meeting with Collegiate 4-H and they told me that they don't want to communicate with the group or with me other than Facebook and texting as far as getting information out.

10. How do you communicate with volunteers?

- Trying to communicate via the web training, phone calls, e-mails and texting.
I don't Facebook that much with volunteers.

11. How do you communicate with Advisory Boards?

- Face to face
- Via e-mail

- Live Meetings

12. How do you communicate with the State 4-H Office?

- E-mail
- Face to face
- Cell phone
- Communicator – use it on a daily basis.

13. On an average day, how many text messages do you receive from 4-H youth?

- 1 to 2

14. Do you receive more text messages from 4-H youth during the school year or during the summer?

- Summer

15. Do you think you should be reimbursed for text messages from your employer?

- I kind of am. I don't get text messages that often. So, I guess it is part of the plan. I don't use it enough for it to be a problem.

16. Do you ever see yourself creating a blog to communicate with youth, volunteers, Advisory Boards?

- Yes, we are actually in the process of doing that.

17. Regardless of your answer would you need training to develop a blog?

- Yes, I would like it. I know what they are and how they work but a training can't hurt me.

18. Do you read any blogs?

- Sometimes

19. Do you have a 4-H Jr. Leader Facebook page?

- I have an Executive Board Facebook page and a Collegiate 4-H Facebook page.

20. Are you in charge of it or a Jr. Leader?

- It's within my Facebook group page. Sue and Lauren are administrators for the Executive Board. Collegiate 4-H has their own Facebook, and they are in charge of it.

21. What other types of social media do you use to communicate with other agents or other youth?

- Communicator – This is how I answer a lot of questions.
- E-mail and phone.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

Compiled Summary of Guiding Questions

The researcher compiled and interpreted data collected from interviews with 4-H field faculty and state staff. The data has been compiled based on similarities, differences and categories. The following is a summary of the responses by the 4-H field faculty and state staff.

1. Do you use the internet?

- All 4-H Agents and Staff interviewed agreed that they use the internet.

2. Do you send or receive e-mails?

- All 4-H Agents and Staff agreed that they send and receive e-mails.

3. What kinds of things do you do when you use the internet?

- Three respondents indicated that one major way they use the internet is to send e-mails to 4-H members, leaders, and parents.
- Eighty-eight percent of the respondents stated that they communicate through Facebook with their clientele and co-workers.
- Two respondents said they use Twitter to communicate with youth.
- Four respondents reported that they utilize the internet to get information needed.
- Instant messenger was used by only one respondent.

4. Do you own any of the following?

a.) A cell phone

b.) A desktop/laptop computer

c.) An iPod or mp3 player

d.) An X-box, Play Station or Wii

e.) iPad

- All respondents indicated that they owned a cellphone.
- Only one respondent did not own a desktop/laptop computer.
- Sixty-three percent of the respondents state that they own an iPod or mp3 player.
- Only four of the respondents reported that they own a X-box, Play Station or Wii.
- No one indicated that they owned an iPad at this time. Three of the respondents said they are planning to purchase one in the near future.

5. Do you use the internet from your...

a.) A cell phone

b.) A desktop/laptop computer

c.) An iPod or mp3 player

d.) An X-box, Play Station or Wii

e.) iPad

- All respondents stated that they use the internet from their cell phone and desktop/laptop computers.
- Only one respondent indicated that they connect to the internet through a portable gaming device.
- No one said that they connected to the internet through an iPad.

6. Tell me all the different ways you communicate with 4-H youth?

- All respondents indicated that they communicate with their 4-H youth through text messages and Facebook.

- Seven out of the eight surveyed communicate with their 4-H youth by e-mail.
- More than half of the respondents communicate by landline or cell phone.
- Several respondents indicated that the 4-H youth don't really like to talk by phone. They would rather use other forms of communication.
- Half of the respondents stated that they even communicate with their 4-H youth through the LSU AgCenter website.
- One respondent stated they interact with their 4-H youth through You Tube.
- Half of those surveyed indicated that they still communicate with their youth through letters, mail-outs and newsletters.

7. Tell me all the different ways you socialize with 4-H youth?

- The majority of the respondents stated that they socialize with their 4-H youth through Facebook.
- Sixty-three percent of the respondents socialize directly with their youth at meetings.
- One of the respondents stated that they socialize with their 4-H youth when they go on road trips together. They feel they bond with them more.
- Another person indicated that they socialize with their 4-H youth by playing basketball with a group of them twice a week.

8. How do the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- All respondents indicated that the 4-H youth communicate with them through Facebook and text messages.
- Seventy-five percent of the respondents stated that the 4-H youth communicate with them through e-mail.

- More than half the respondents indicated that the 4-H youth communicate with them by phone. Calling is usually their last resort.
- One of the respondents indicated that if she hadn't heard from one of her youth through Facebook or e-mail that she would have her son text message them to see if they were coming to the event. Then at an event she will touch base in a more personal way.

9. How do you prefer the 4-H youth communicate with you?

- The majority of the respondents said that they prefer the 4-H youth communicate with them through e-mail.
- One respondent stated that if the 4-H youth e-mail him he has a record of what they said in case he needs to refer to it at a later time.
- Only one respondent indicated that they don't have a preference.

10. How do you communicate with volunteers?

- Six of the respondents indicated that they communicate with their volunteers through e-mails.
- More than half stated they have personal phone calls with their volunteers.
- One respondent indicated that the age of their volunteers had something to do with how they communicate with them. Some are not as technologically advanced as others. It is easier and quicker for the volunteers to send e-mail than any other way.
- One respondent indicated that they communicate with their volunteers through web trainings.

11. How do you communicate with Advisory Boards?

- Over half of the respondents indicated that they mainly communicate with their Advisory Boards through mail-outs and by e-mail.
- One of the respondents stated that their Advisory Boards are not very “techy.”
- One of the respondents indicated that given her position she would not communicate with Advisory Boards.

12. How do you communicate with the State 4-H Office?

- All respondents indicated that they communicate with the State 4-H Office through e-mail.
- Seven out of eight respondents use the telephone to communicate with the State 4-H Office.
- One indicated that 20 years ago when he first started working the telephone was one of the only ways to communicate with the State 4-H Office.
- Half of the respondents communicate with the State 4-H Office through Communicator (Instant Message) and by personal face-to-face visits.

13. On an average day, how many text messages do you receive from 4-H youth?

- Thirty-eight percent of respondents indicated that they receive two text messages from 4-H youth on an average day.
- One respondent stated he receives 20 to 25 text messages from 4-H youth on an average day.

14. Do you receive more text messages from 4-H youth during the school year or during the summer?

- Five out of the eight respondents indicated that they received more text messages from 4-H youth during the school year rather than during the summer.

15. Do you think you should be reimbursed for text messages from your employer?

- Of those surveyed only one respondent indicated that “yes” they think they should be reimbursed for text messages through their employer.
- Two of the respondents indicated that they had University phones.
- One of the respondents stated that they did not think they should be reimbursed because they were a volunteer.
- Two of the respondents said that it would be nice but they have an unlimited plan so it didn’t matter.

16. Do you ever see yourself creating a blog to communicate with youth, volunteers or Advisory Board?

- One respondent indicated that they actually already have a blog that they are using in there parish.
- Another respondent feels that as long as Facebook works like it works he probably would just continue to use Facebook.
- Two respondents indicated that they would like to have a blog in the future. They said that they just don’t have enough room to fit it in their schedule at this time.
- Two respondents said they are currently developing a blog that is going to focus on professional development and it’s for volunteers and staff of youth development.

17. Regardless of your answer would you need training to develop a blog?

- Half of the respondents indicated that they would need training to develop a blog. The LSU AgCenter has recently developed a blogging software that is suppose to make it easy for their employees to use.
- The other half of the respondents indicated that they do not need to be trained on how to blog.

18. Do you read any blogs?

- Fifty percent of the respondents indicated that they do read blogs.
- Three respondents said that they do not read blogs on a regular basis.
- One of the respondents stated that a lot of the blogs that she read online were missing research.

19. Do you have a 4-H Jr. Leader Facebook page?

- Fifty percent of those surveyed indicated that they do have a Jr. Leader Facebook page.
- Two respondents stated that they did not have a Jr. Leader page but did have a general parish Facebook page.
- Another respondent said that he did not have a Jr. Leader Facebook but does have a Collegiate 4-H and Executive Board Facebook page.

20. Are you in charge of it or a Jr. Leader?

- Half of the respondents indicated that they are in charge of the Jr. Leader Facebook page.
- Only one respondent allowed a Jr. Leader member to be in charge of their Facebook page.

21. What other types of social media do you use to communicate with other agents or other youth?

- Thirty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that they used Twitter as another form of communication with youth. They feel they don't get nearly the response they do with Facebook.
- One respondent indicated that they did away with their parish MySpace page two years ago because for some reason the youth didn't like it anymore.
- Another respondent indicated that she used Doodle, which is a scheduling assistance.
- Two respondents said they used Communicator which is an instant message program through the LSU AgCenter as another form of communication with other agents and staff.
- instant message program through the LSU AgCenter as another form of communication with other agents and staff.

Summary and Recommendations

This research showed that the youth development field and state faculty respondent's communicate with youth using various types of technology. Youth usually use the following social media site that is Facebook, they also use both e-mail or text. The respondents stated that youth use the same technology to communicate with them as well. Youth use direct phone calls as a last resort for communication with the youth development field and state faculty. Youth use their phones to communicate either through an app on their mobile phone that allows them to use their Facebook page or by e-mail sent by their mobile phones. Regardless of the type of communication used, many of the respondents stated that when they are at events with the youth

they take time to develop and reinforce their face-to-face relationship. This seems to be a standard behavior with both state and field faculty when working with youth.

The advancement in communication technology has not only expanded the ability of state and field faculty to communicate with all of their stakeholders but has also brought new challenges in managing this 24/7 technology. Some stakeholders have the perception that technology means that state and field faculty are available 24/7 to answer their questions or address their needs. This has become an area of concern in which the public needs to be educated about appropriate use of technology, and that even though state and field faculty may be contacted electronically their availability is limited and they too have the right to have regular office hours and downtime.

Twitter seems to be a communication method used by some of the state and field faculty as it allows for a 140-character message and is a cheap way to communicate on mobile phones. Youth are comfortable with communicating in short bursts with others.

Technology allows the youth development faculty to check in on their youth participants without being intrusive in their lives. If they have not seen or heard from a youth participant in awhile they can send an e-mail or text to check on the youth and this allows the youth to respond at their leisure. Field and State faculty use the technology to keep parents informed about the welfare of their youth during field trips and overnight camping. Keeping parents informed is an excellent use of technology.

Newsletters and mail-outs are still used by the field faculty to communicate with youth, and their parents but there was no information available about whether the youth were actually reading these mailings. Having to distribute information in so many different formats does require extra time and effort from field and state faculty but this ensures that all individuals have

access to information. Most of the information necessary for the youth to participate in various events are placed in several different formats in order to reach all youth.

All of the respondents have access to a Facebook page so that they could post information regarding youth or volunteer events. They used these pages to send messages to their youth and volunteers. This method did seem to be successful in reaching youth about upcoming events as many of the youth responded via Facebook. Field faculty are required to be in charge of the actual page and thus be able to censor what is being posted by the youth.

Volunteers and advisory board members are also communicating with field and state faculty by using e-mails as well. Age plays a part in the communication style of some of the volunteers and advisory board members. When working with volunteers and advisory board members it is critical to remember that sometimes a phone call is necessary as it can be difficult to express appreciation in an e-mail. State and Field faculty can also use their county/parish Facebook page to recruit new volunteers or advisory board members.

All individuals that work with youth should be utilizing various communication methods to keep the youth active and informed of club events. The communication methods should include newsletters and mail-outs to ensure that all youth are able to participate, even those with limited technology resources. This research reaffirms that youth are now using various technology to communicate with youth development faculty, and thus if Cooperative Extension is going to have an impact on youth they too must adopt new technology and communication styles. All employees who work for Cooperative Extension need to take professional development courses on utilizing technology to communicate with all of their stakeholders. These employees must not only take the courses but also change their behavior and begin to communicate with each other through these new delivery mediums as well.

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VITA

Mary Christina Sorenson was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She graduated from Denham Springs High School in 1996. Mary earned a Bachelor of Science degree in human ecology – apparel design from Louisiana State University in 2001. In May 2011, she will graduate from Louisiana State University with a Master of Science degree from the School of Human Resource Education and Workforce Development with a focus in youth development.

In January of 2002, Mary was hired by the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center as an intern in Livingston Parish. In September 2002, Mary was hired as a 4-H Agent in Livingston Parish. She has served in this position for the past eight years.

Mary has served as vice-president of membership for the Louisiana Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, corresponding secretary for the Pilot Club of Denham Springs, and has served on various committees through the LSU AgCenter.

In her parish, she has served on the American Cancer Society – Relay for Life Committee and was a member of the Pilot Club of Denham Springs. She is a member of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church.

Currently, Mary is a member of the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents (NAE4-HA), Louisiana Association of Extension 4-H Agents (LAE4-HA), American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS), Louisiana Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (LAFCS), Gamma Sigma Delta, LSU School of Human Ecology Alumni Association and College of Agriculture Alumni Association. Through NAE4-HA & LAE4-HA Mary received the National & Louisiana Achievement in Service Awards in 2006. She also received the National and Louisiana Distinguished Service Awards in 2010. Mary was promoted to Associate Extension Agent in July 2009.