

***CAN I  
'FRIEND'  
YOU?***

***SOCIAL MEDIA USES  
BY STUDENTS IN AN AGRICULTURAL  
ORIENTATION COURSE***

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# Background



- 93% of 12- to 19-year-olds use the Internet, and of those connected to the Internet, 73% use social media sites daily (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010).
- Social media allows faster and earlier connections with students (Constantinides & Zinck Stagno, 2011).
- Using technology outside of the classroom helps students perform better in the classroom (Rhoades, Irani, Telg, & Myers, 2008).
- Social media platforms for universities should highlight student connections to break down barriers and encourage communication (DeAndrea, Ellison, LaRose, Steinfield, & Fiore, 2012).
- By having networks and support systems, students can transition into college easier (McCarthy, 2010).
- First-year college students commonly need different types of support (Thompson & Mazer, 2009).

# Background



- The key goal of social media communication is sharing items with people with whom an individual associates quickly (Agregta & Bough, 2011).
- 74% of college students connect to others via laptops or handheld devices wirelessly (Angela, 2010).
- Platforms include social networking; social bookmarking; microblogging; video, image and audio sharing; and virtual worlds (Joosten, 2012).
- Facebook is the most globally accepted and easy-to-use social media platform and remains the most utilized social media platform (McCathy, 2010; Duggan & Brenner, 2013).
- “Social networking sites offer a unique opportunity to promote socialization to the college environment” (DeAndrea, Ellison, LaRose, Steinfield, & Fiore, 2012, p. 16).

# Problem Statement



- Although the Oklahoma State University College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) has used three social media outlets for more than four years, no formal research had been conducted concerning the usage of the outlets by students. Therefore, formal research of social media use of CASNR students in the AG 1011 course is needed to assist those administering CASNR social media efforts.

# Objectives



1. Describe selected personal and academic characteristics of students enrolled in AG 1011;
2. Describe the self-reported communications channels used by students enrolled in AG 1011;
3. Describe the self-reported social media use of students enrolled in AG 1011; and
4. Describe the usefulness of CASNR social media outlets as perceived by students enrolled in AG 1011.

# Theoretical Framework: Uses and Gratifications Theory



- The uses and gratifications theory outlines the different types of media and content that may or may not satisfy audiences' social and psychological needs (Haas, Katz, & Gurevitch, 1973).
- Originally, UGT focused on the promotion of mass communication devices such as radio, television, computers, and the Internet (Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004).
- The use of social media gratifies the social needs of people because it is convenient and efficient to use. Social media's convenience can gratify the needs of current students (Wang, Tchernev & Solloway, 2012).
- Because persons using mass media are active, media use can become second-nature. A person's individual needs may cause use of one media tool before another rather than find gratification from different media (Rosengren, Wenner, & Palmgreen, 1985).

# Instrument Design, Population, & Data Collection



- Researcher-developed electronic questionnaire built-in and hosted by [www.Qualtrics.com](http://www.Qualtrics.com).
- 17 items in three sections: demographical information, social media platform usage, and OSU/CASNR social media platform usage.
- The population of this study included all OSU CASNR students enrolled in the eight 50-minute sections of AG 1011 Agricultural Orientation course in Fall 2012 (N = 425).
- The population received a link to the instrument via Oklahoma State University email addresses. Email addresses were obtained through the online classroom portal Desire 2 Learn (D2L) with permission from IRB.

# Validity and Reliability



- To ensure validity, a panel of experts reviewed the instrument (Creswell).
- A Cronbach's alpha of .90 was calculated post-hoc on the ordinal-scaled Facebook perceptions.



# Findings as Related to Objective 1



- Sex
  - Male: 34.51% ( $f = 117$ )
  - Female: 65.49% ( $f = 222$ )
- Previous Residence
  - Large town of 10,000 to 50,000 population: 24.71% ( $f = 84$ )
  - In a large city of 50,000 or more population: 19.70% ( $f = 67$ )
  - In a small town of 10,000 or less population: 17.65% ( $f = 60$ )
- Largest Majors
  - Animal Science Pre-Vet: 27.35% ( $f = 93$ )
  - Animal Science 14.12% ( $f = 48$ )
  - Agribusiness 11.18% ( $f = 38$ )
  - Biochemistry and Molecular Biology 10.29% ( $f = 35$ )
- High School Organization:
  - National Honor Society 57.14% ( $f = 198$ )
  - Other: 53.85% ( $f = 204$ )
  - sports (baseball, basketball, football, softball, wrestling) 15.82% ( $f = 31$ )
  - music groups (choir, band, orchestra) 14.71% ( $f = 30$ )

# Findings as related to Objective 2



- OSU CASNR AG 1011 Student's Self-reported Use of Communication Channels to Find Information
  - Ten investigated information types:
    - **Career Fair**
    - **Club Meetings**
    - Scholarships
    - **College Events**
    - Departmental events
    - Alumni Events
    - **Available Internships**
    - **Available jobs**
    - **News about Agricultural legislation**
    - **News about Production Agriculture**
  - Ten possible communication channels:
    - **In my Classes**
    - Club Meetings
    - **Email**
    - Signs, Posters or fliers
    - CASNR Social Media
    - CASNR Website
    - Student Success Center
    - *Cowboy Journal* Magazine
    - **Personal contact with professors**
    - Personal contact with students

# Findings as related to Objective 3



## Self-reported Use of Social Media Platforms by OSU CASNR AG 1011 Students

Social Media Platform	<i>f</i>	%
Facebook	320	94.12
YouTube	222	65.29
Twitter	176	51.76
Pinterest	121	35.59
Other	70	20.59
Foursquare	5	1.47
LinkedIn	3	0.88

# Findings as related to Objective 3



## CASNR AG 1011 Student's Self-reported Usage of OSU Social Media Platforms

	<i>f</i>	%
<b>Facebook</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>42.39</b>
Twitter	49	14.63
YouTube	31	9.25
LinkedIn	3	0.90
Foursquare	0	0.00
Scavenger	0	0.00

# Findings as related to Objective 3



## CASNR AG 1011 Students Self-reported Usage of CASNR Social Media Platforms

Use	<i>(n = 340)</i>	
	<i>f</i>	%
CASNR social media platforms		
<b>Facebook</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>30.95</b>
Twitter	24	7.14
LinkedIn	1	0.30

# Findings as related to Objective 3



## OSU CASNR AG 1011 Students Level of Importance Concerning Use of Social Media Platforms

- Most important to least important:
  1. Connecting with friends
  2. Connecting with family
  3. Finding information about school events
  4. Finding a job
  4. Shopping or searching for special offers
  5. Finding and internship
  6. Other

# Findings as related to Objective 4



## Self-reported Agreement with Facebook by OSU CASNR AG 1011 Students

- Respondents (n = 104) *Agree...*
  - The academic information on the OSU CASNR Facebook site is useful.
  - I would use the OSU CASNR Facebook site to request information about upcoming activities.
  - I would seek the academic support (tutors, advising, etc.) I need from the OSU CASNR Facebook site.
  - The OSU CASNR Facebook site strengthens my personal connection to CASNR.
  - I find the OSU CASNR Facebook site easily accessible.
  - I would use the OSU CASNR Facebook site to request information about scholarships.
  - The OSU CASNR Facebook site answers all of my career-related (résumé critique, job postings, etc.) questions.

# Findings as related to Objective 4



## OSU CASNR AG 1011 Students Self-reported Need from OSU CASNR Social Media Platforms

- Ranked from most needed to least as perceived by AG 1011 students:
  - Upcoming CASNR events
  - Information about scholarships
  - Available internships
  - Club meeting information
  - Available jobs
  - Tutoring/ class work assistance
  - Departmental fun facts
  - College fun facts
  - News about production agriculture
  - News about agriculture legislation
  - Alumni events
  - Alumni information



# Conclusions and Discussion



- **Objective 1**
  - Typical Respondent
    - 18-year-old female
    - Was a member of National Honor Society and/ or another student organization
  - One in two respondents indicated a major in animal science or one of five pre-veterinary science options in CASNR

# Conclusions and Discussion



- **Objective 2**

- AG 1011 students used email as the primary method to find information about club meetings, scholarships, college events, alumni events, available internships, available jobs, news about agriculture legislation and news about production agriculture.
- Students are learning about career fair and departmental events in their classes. Additionally, students used signs posters and fliers; club meetings; and personal contact with students.

# Conclusions and Discussion



- **Objective 3**

- The typical AG 1011 student had Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube accounts. However, she was more likely to have a Pinterest or Instagram than LinkedIn.
- Most important reason to use Facebook was to connect with friends. Most highly unlikely to use Facebook to find an internship.
- As a whole, students are not using OSU nor CASNR social media platforms.

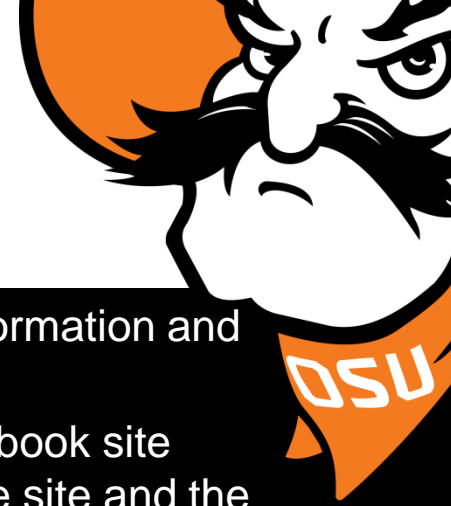
# Conclusions and Discussion



- **Objective 4**

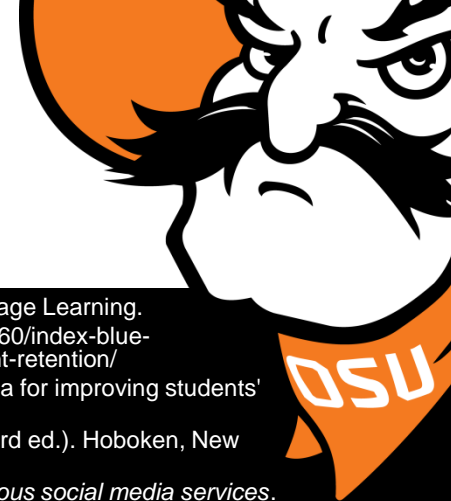
- Students using OSU CASNR Facebook find its content useful as well as accessible and would use it to request information.
- Most importantly, the OSU CASNR Facebook site strengthens the students' connection to the college.
- Students who follow CASNR via Facebook and Twitter want to see information about upcoming CASNR events, information about scholarships, internships, and jobs; club meetings; college and departmental “fun facts”; and tutoring and classwork assistance.

# Primary Recommendations



1. Email should be used as the primary communication tool to share information and maintain contact with AG 1011 students.
2. While the OSU CASNR AG 1011 students who use the CASNR Facebook site found it useful, an effort should be made to increase awareness of the site and the information it provides among all students.
3. The OSU CASNR Student Success Center should maintain its social media presence to promote and encourage a connection to the college.
4. Future research should be conducted to see if previous involvement in various organizations affects usage of social media platforms.
5. Future research should be done to determine the usage of social media platforms of students at various academic levels as well as of CASNR alumni at the professional levels.
6. While this research focused on students' use of social media platforms, it appears the demographic characteristics of students in the OSU College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources is changing over time in terms of where students were raised and their involvement in student organizations. This potential trend should be monitored through future research to assist faculty with their approach to agricultural curricula.

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***QUESTIONS?***

**Thank You!**

