

Boundary practices and social media: the case of teachers' use of Facebook to communicate with pupils

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The increasing integration of information and communication technologies in work life has fuelled the interest in boundary-blurring effects between work and home territories. Teachers comprise an occupational group that has been particularly fast to adopt social media as a work tool; however, little is known about how they use social media in relation to boundary-blurring effects. The aim of this study is to inquire into how teachers manage boundaries between home and work domains when using Facebook as a work tool to communicate with pupils. Group interviews were conducted with secondary teachers from three schools about their use of Facebook and their experiences of boundary work. The empirical material was inductively categorized according to the main practices deployed by the teachers and interpreted with the help of boundary theory. The findings are presented according to three main practices – virtual, physical, and communicative – which the teachers adopt to integrate and segment home and work domains using Facebook.

Keywords: social media, boundary practices, teachers, work life, work/home boundaries

The continuing evolution and increasing integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs), such as

computers, tablets, and mobile phones, are changing the ways work is organized in many job sectors. ICTs provide means for working individuals to be reachable by work associates and personal contacts, whether the individual is at work or at home. This sociotechnical development has led scholars in various fields to focus on potential consequences for the individual worker regarding the balance between work and home domains (Nam 2013). Scholarly attention has been given to how workers use ICTs and manage their work and home life, often in relation to work organization (Hall & Richter 1988; Valcour & Hunter 2005), home life and gender roles (Shumate & Fulk 2004; Kossek & Lambert 2005; Wajcman, Bittman & Brown 2008), and in regard to flexible forms of work life (Hochschild 1997; Kamp, Lambrecht Lund & Sondergaards Hvid 2011; Yeow 2014).

Research within this area has shown how workers' use of ICTs can have both positive and negative 'spillover' effects (Roehling *et al.* 2003). Boundaryless work through ICTs might positively affect productivity, higher morale, and flexibility among certain occupational groups (Tremblay 2002; Beutell & Wittig-Berman 2008). On the other hand, ICTs have been recognized to play a significant role in facilitating negative work/home spillover and may contribute to poor quality of sleep and recovery (Barber, Larissa & Jenkins 2014), work-related stress and illness (Towers *et al.* 2006; Wright *et al.* 2014), and work-family conflicts, inversely affecting job satisfaction (Kossek & Ozeki 1998; Frone 2003; Currie & Eveline 2011).

The individuals' experience of the work-life balance is very much about successfully manage the boundaries according to her liking (Rothbard, Phillips & Dumas 2005; Kreiner 2006; Park & Jex 2011; Dén-Nagy 2014; Wright *et al.* 2014; Yeow 2014). Observing and understanding how individuals manage boundaries between home and work provides practical knowledge that can be used by the individual to make informed choices to manage boundary-blurring effects when using social

media as a work tool, and to be better able to manage new demands in work life.

Teachers are an occupational group that has been particularly fast to integrate ICTs and social media as work tools (National Union of Teachers in Sweden 2010; Swedish National Agency for Education 2009, 2013; Persson & Thunman 2013). Much of the previous research about teachers' use of social media has focused on potential pedagogical benefits related to pupils' learning, and it has also focused on social and communicative aspects, such as changes in expectations, roles, and power shifts between teachers and pupils (Ekberg 2012). However, little is known about how the teachers use social media in relation to boundary-blurring effects in their work life.

The aim of the article is to examine boundary management when teachers use Facebook as a work tool to communicate with pupils. The study is based on two research questions: which practices are adopted by the teachers to a) integrate, and b) segment home and work domains using Facebook as a work tool?

The study is restricted to teachers in compulsory school, grades 7-9. It is in these grades that social media use takes off among the pupils (14-16 years old), and the fact that the pupils are underage makes boundary dilemmas even more important to handle in a responsible and professional manner.

The article begins with a presentation of the boundary work theory and research. Thereafter, we account for the empirical study. In the third section, the analysis is presented according to three identified practices which give expression to different aspects of the most central theme in the empirical material.

Boundary work

The notion of boundary work was originally developed by Gieryn (1983, 781), who demonstrated attempts by scientists to demarcate science from non-science or pseudoscience. In later years, the notion of boundary work evolved beyond science studies; it has been developed and applied to sociological

studies about adult work life in a broad sense focusing on people's mental and practical practices of integrating and segmenting between home (private) and work (professional) (Lamont & Molnar 2002; Nippert-Eng 1996; Bishop 1999; Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate 2000; Golden & Geisler 2007; Yeow 2014).

According to the boundary theory, boundaries between home and work can be constructed along a continuum from 'thin' (weak) to 'thick' (strong). Thin/weak boundaries are 'permeable' (open to influence) and 'integrating' (prone to merging aspects of categories), whereas thick/strong boundaries are 'impermeable' (closed to influence) and 'segmenting' (prone to dividing aspects of categories). The 'segmentors' prefer to keep two domains as separate as possible and maintain boundaries, for example, by keeping separate calendars for work and home activities or keeping two different key rings, one for each domain. In contrast, 'integrators' will put work and home activities on the same calendar, have one set of keys for work and home, invite work friends home for dinner, and so forth (Nippert-Eng 1996; Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate 2000).

A significant contribution to the development of boundary theory was made by Kreiner *et al.* (2009) when they identified specific practices used by individuals to perform boundary work. In their work, four broad types of practices were identified: behavioural, temporal, physical, and communicative. According to the researchers, behavioural practices are different ways of altering one's own behaviour in relation to other people in order to negotiate and manage boundaries to one's liking. Temporal practices are different ways of manipulating and adjusting one's work/home schedules. Physical practices involve different ways of manipulating physical borders between home and work, for example, erecting a fence around one's house, or moving farther away from or closer to work. Communicative practices involve ways to communicate expectations in advance of, or after a work-home boundary violation.

By identifying specific boundary work practices, Kreiner *et al.* (2009) created practical tools for analyzing individuals'

doing of boundary work by finding a fuller array of options in the specific practices available to individuals. Other scholars have studied boundary practices among different occupational groups, such as office workers (Park & Jex 2011), emergency personnel (Kvarnlöf & Johansson 2014), and project-based organization workers (Yeow 2014). Of relevance for the present article is Sayah's (2013) study on the managing of work-home boundaries with ICTs among independent contractors. Based on a qualitative interview study, Sayah showed how the contractors used a variety of ICT-mediated practices in order to shape their work-life boundaries; the practices were categorized into four broad types: 'switching off technological devices', 'selective use of devices', and ways of 'handling emails' and 'incoming calls'. Sayah categorized the identified boundary practices slightly differently from Kreiner *et al.* (2009) by stressing that boundary practices can be multifunctional, addressing temporal, psychological and spatial dimensions of segmentation or integration. For instance, individuals can have permeable work-life boundaries in the spatial dimension if they work at home, but impermeable work-life boundaries in the temporal dimension by defining strict time slots for work-related and private activities. At the same time, work-life boundaries might be permeable in the psychological dimension if individuals keep thinking about family issues at work.

Drawing upon previous research about boundary practices, we will address the spatial, temporal, physical, and communicative dimensions of the boundary practices adopted by the interviewed teachers. It should be noted that much empirical research about boundary work tends to focus on the segmenting aspects of boundary work, that is, practices that the individual worker may adopt to separate work from the home domain when faced with boundary conflicts (Kreiner *et al.* 2009, 726). It is our belief that a comprehensive model for analyzing individuals' constructions of boundaries between work and home domains must give as much attention to integrating as to segmenting actions. Without the possibility of performing actions

that both blend and separate, there could be no negotiation, or managing of boundaries in any true sense. When studying boundary practices it is important to recognize not only segmenting aspects, but also potential positive effects that the individual worker may experience by using technology to blend certain aspects of work and home domains in a conscious manner to enrich one or both domains.

About the study

Six group interviews were conducted with secondary teachers in four schools which are profiled as ICT-mature schools.¹ In total, 25 teachers (15 female and 10 male between the ages of 25 and 65) with extensive experience of using ICTs and social media in their work were recruited and interviewed. The interviewed teachers had access to personal school laptops which they used at school and at home; some of them also had access to school iPads. The teachers use various digital school platforms, such as V-School, Infomentor, and It's Learning, to manage schedules, assignments, emails, and attendance. Besides digital school platforms the teachers also used social media, Facebook in particular, to communicate with their pupils.

The common reason, stated by the teachers, for communicating using Facebook is to be able to get access to the pupils in a flexible way. 'We started the Facebook group because we thought like "where are the pupils?" They have Facebook, so we will be able to reach out to them quickly.' (Donna) The teachers use Facebook to provide information about school events, advise of changes in schedules, and post various reminders, but they also use it as forum for discussing school projects and assignments. The increasing use of social media as a work tool in formal education is mainly a bottom-up phenomenon. There are no demands or instructions from the school management to start using social media. Instead, it is individuals and groups of teachers who themselves introduce and create new ways to use social media for work purposes (National Union of Teachers in Sweden 2010; Bruhn 2016).

Group interviews were conducted, with four to six participants in each group. The reason for performing the interviews in groups, instead of individually, was to create a stimulating conversation in which the participants share their experiences and encourage each other to share theirs (Merton, Fiske & Kendall 1956/1990, 142). This form of information gathering reveals variations in perspective and attitude and a ready means, through subtle pitting of one against the other, for distinguishing between shared and variable perspectives. The pitting process hardly needs manipulation since the participants themselves, by speech and gesture, will naturally 'correct' each other's rendering or 'reality' (Schatzman & Strauss 1973, 87).

The group interviews were prompted with pre-specified topics, and open-ended questions allowed the discussion to evolve around these open-ended questions, facilitating interaction among the participants. This process allows participants to interject their own observations and understandings while also feeding off the ideas of other participants (Frey & Fontana 1991).

The interviews lasted one to two hours in total and took place in the participants' workplace, that is, at school, in late afternoons when the pupils had left and before the teachers went home. The interviews were conducted at school partly for practical reasons, for teachers' convenience, but also because the teachers were likely to feel comfortable and relaxed doing the interviews in their familiar work setting (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983, 118ff).

As part of a larger research project about teachers' professional use of social media and various boundary work dilemmas, the interview guide consisted of two broad topics: availability and ethics. In this article, we focus on the interview questions regarding the first topic, such as how and when social media are used by the teachers for communication with pupils, their experiences of being available for their pupils, and their strategies to integrate and segment work and home domains.

The second topic – work ethics – is discussed in a separate article (Thunman & Persson 2017).

The interviews with the teachers were audio recorded, and we started the interpretation process by transcribing the recordings. Thereafter, we read the transcriptions several times within an extended timeframe and took note of illustrative quotes. The teachers' accounts of their actions were collated into potential themes (Braun & Clarke 2006), that is, practices deployed by the teachers to integrate and to segment the two mental domains using social media. For the purpose of this article, three categories with similar meaning and traits were identified: Practices to manage a) virtual space, b) physical objects, and c) communication. Each category contains actions of both integrating and segmenting character.

Findings: Boundary practices

By identifying and categorizing the central themes in the empirical material, three common practices have been defined which should be seen as responses to work-life blurring effects when using social media as work tool. In the following sections we account for how the teachers adopt these practices to embrace (integrate) and combat (segment) boundary-blurring effects and to manage personal boundaries between home and work domains.

Managing virtual space

Facebook can be used in various ways to organize the virtual boundaries between home and work life. For example, Sayah (2013) has observed how workers may separate work and home domains by having different accounts (regarding email and social media) for work and personal matters. This way of using the social media is similar to what Kreiner *et al.* (2009) call 'leveraging technology'. In our study, we observe three distinct ways are identified of how the teachers use Facebook to facilitate boundary work: a) one Facebook account for both work and

personal communication; b) two separate accounts for work and personal communication; and c) the use of Facebook groups as separate work spheres for communication with pupils.

The most integrating way of using Facebook is when the teachers use one account for all kinds of communication, with friends, family, and pupils alike. Most of the teachers informed us that this is how they started using Facebook as a work tool, but they also spoke about becoming aware of the need to organize their Facebook contacts – separating the personal from the professional contacts.

I made a comment to a Facebook friend during the Eurovision Song Contest, and this girl – this pupil – read it, twisted it around, and took it personally. All my Facebook friends saw the weird conversation that followed, but there it was. (Mona)

Despite such experiences, Mona prefers to continue to integrate her personal and professional use of Facebook.

I'm actually friends with pupils on Facebook. But it depends on how you want it yourself, that is to say, how you want to use your personal Facebook account. And you have to think about what you post. (Mona)

The second way of managing virtual boundaries involves having two separate Facebook accounts: one personal and one professional (i.e. a teacher account). This way of using Facebook is quite common among the interviewed teachers and is considered a convenient way of keeping one's private and work domains separate. The personal account is dedicated to friends, family, relatives and other people with whom the teachers want to be able to communicate without the pupils' involvement. The professional Facebook account, on the other hand, is dedicated

to one's professional life, including communication with pupils, colleagues, and managers. This kind of account is often named with the teachers' first name and the prefix 'teacher', e.g. 'teacher Marcus', in order to signal its professional character.

Gary: 'I would never post the same things on my work Facebook as on my personal one. On my personal [account] I might, not only might but I do, express myself angrily or in other ways that you do not want your pupils to see. As in the last election. Sometimes you are angry at something and you write about it.'

Ian: 'Yes, there is no need to impose things like that on the children.'

Harold: 'Or maybe you put up a picture from a party or something that has nothing to do with your professional life. It's two completely different worlds.'

Although teachers adopt this kind of segmenting use of Facebook, some of them also reveal that they might use their personal and professional accounts simultaneously, by using them in separate web browsers – shifting from one to another depending on whom they are communicating with:

Like when the orienteering was cancelled last week, I could send out the information quickly through Facebook. I use my teacher profile to do stuff like that, not my personal account. Actually, I use them both simultaneously on two different browsers. (Nancy)

Using two different web browsers for personal and professional communication is an alternative to the third way of using Facebook, which involves creating and administrating certain Facebook groups for pupil communication. Administrating pupil groups is usually done using one's personal account. Some of the teachers informed us that they had several different Facebook groups, each for different classes or groups of pupils

engaged in certain extracurricular activities, such as drama or music.

I use my private profile and my pupils are members of a group. But the group can never see what I write in my private groups – with my friends or family – only what is published in the group. (Anna)

Administering Facebook groups in this way involves managing multiple and varied groups the same personal account; some groups may be of personal character (involving only friends, family, or groups of people sharing the same hobby or interests), and some groups may be of professional character (involving only pupils or other teachers).

The teachers who use Facebook groups (or two different web browsers) in this manner are not only switching between personal and professional groups, but also between personal and professional roles depending on whom the teacher is communicating with.

Managing physical objects

Teachers' boundary work does not only take place in the virtual realm but also in the material world. The management of physical boundaries between home and work can involve actions such as erecting a fence around one's house, or moving further away from or closer to the workplace (Kreiner *et al.* 2009, 721). Physical boundaries also involve the use of physical objects as material representations of the cultural life for creating boundaries between work and home domains (Nippert-Eng 1996; Kreiner *et al.* 2009). The obvious physical objects for investigation in this study are the digital devices that teachers used to communicate with pupils, that is, the teachers' managing of mobile phones, tablets, and computers for boundary work.

The computer (most often a laptop) is the only digital device the teachers use for Facebook that is owned by the school.

However, listening to the teachers, it is obvious that all of them also frequently use their own mobile phones and tablets for work purposes, such as to communicate with their pupils through Facebook. The dialogue between Jenny and Mary below illustrates a common way of thinking and acting among the interviewed teachers.

Jenny: ‘The only digital work tool I have got from the school is the computer, but that’s only one of many devices I use. I use what is closest at hand, my mobile phone or my iPad. They are my own.’

Mary: ‘Yeah, me too. I use what is available and easiest, like when I look at Monday’s schedule on Sunday. ... I can check my emails and stuff on my phone. Like when I don’t want to start up the computer, I use the app and check.’

As expressed in the dialogue between Jenny and Mary, availability and convenience were the two most common reasons found in the interview transcripts for the teachers using their own devices for work. The teachers in the study use whichever device is closest at hand to communicate with the pupils, no matter if it is their own device or a work device. Actually, when interviewed and asked about their use of digital devices, several teachers were surprised and did not understand the question, and it was clear that they had not given a lot of thought about their use of private devices for work purposes. Using personal digital devices for work purposes – in this case to communicate with pupils through Facebook – means that the teachers have access to their work life outside work hours.

On the other side of the integrating-segmenting spectrum we find those teachers who take a more segmented approach to managing their digital devices, distinguishing more clearly between objects that belong to either the work or home domain. As one teacher says:

I don’t bring my work computer home. I leave it here [at school], and I try to do all my work here. I want my time

after school to do other things. They [the pupils] are looking for you on Facebook and Instagram, and they are welcome to follow me, but I try to keep away from emails, Facebook and such things when I have left the school for the day.
(Gary)

Switching off the work devices or leaving them at work when going home is a practice that has been observed in previous research (Sayah 2013, 186ff). However, using social media for work purposes is trickier since it is integrated in the teachers' private life through their personal devices. Even if the teachers leave the work computer at the workplace when they go home, they might still have the Facebook app in their personal mobile phones and thereby have the means to communicate with pupils about school work.

Contrary to the teachers who are prone to integrating work and home domains by using personal devices to communicate with pupils, the teachers who manage their physical objects in a segmenting way express in various ways the need to 'find respite' (Kreiner *et al.* 2009; Sayah 2013) at home – as a place of recovery from work life. As Karen says: 'I am not available all the time. Some days and times I decide that, "no, it does not matter what happens, now I need to be completely free".' Even if the segmenting teachers might use their personal devices for work, they give various examples of how they shut down the communication or simply stay away from Facebook altogether, for example, during weekends or evenings.

If you throw out a question or something on Facebook on a Sunday afternoon then obviously you will get a lot of answers and comments. If I don't want that, if I don't want to communicate with my pupils on the weekend, it's really up to me to stay away from Facebook completely. (Irene)

Managing communication

With the ever-increasing use of digital technology in work life, individuals can make strategic choices about the temporal issues surrounding work, such as when and where they execute certain work tasks such as reading and answering messages through email and social media services. Many of the teachers in the study use Facebook to communicate with pupils outside the workplace and work hours. One reason for doing so, according to the teachers, is to save time, or at least minimize stress while at the workplace, for example, by putting in a few extra work hours the night before.

When I am putting my child to bed, and am lying there and am just dying of boredom, then I can just as well answer some messages. It's my choice to do so, and I find that my work stress decreases, because I know that I will not have time to deal with it tomorrow. (Ron)

This idea of saving time and reducing stress by integrating work into the home domain is clearly visible in the interviews with the teachers, and can be understood as a way of 'controlling work time' (Kreiner *et al.* 2009) in an integrating manner by using Facebook in a proactive way in order to organize their work effectively when at school. The teachers may start working on Sunday evening in order to be prepared when they get to school on Monday morning: 'checking emails, Facebook messages and stuff on the phone.' (Karen).

Some of the teachers indicated that they just read the messages the night before, without answering them, in order to be able to plan their work better for the next day. However, many of them – as Ron says above – engage fully in social media communication outside of school hours by posting messages as well as reading, liking, and commenting on pupils' messages. The behaviour is recognized from the study of how workers in other occupational groups 'justify' extra hours

worked as acceptable in various ways (Yeow 2014) and as trade-off for being given the autonomy to work flexibly (Levina & Vaast 2005).

The teachers who are most inclined to use Facebook in an integrating way are the ones that seem to prefer a sort of ‘on-going dialogue’ with their pupils. As one teacher says:

When I send a question to someone, I want an immediate reply back, as soon as possible anyway. If I see that a pupil has contacted me I cannot ignore it. If they want to send me anything or need help with anything, I will help them if I can. (Linda)

Thus, managing communication in an integrating manner means that the teacher purposely chooses to communicate with pupils at any given time of day. By doing so, the teachers are sending signals to the pupils that it is okay for them to call on the teacher whenever they need to.

However, other teachers manage the communication with pupils in more segmenting ways. Instead of favouring an on-going interaction, the teachers who prefer to separate work from home domains construct boundaries by communicating when they are available to the pupils. This communicative practice involves ways of ‘setting expectations’ (Kreiner *et al.* 2009, 722) in advance of a work-home boundary violation, thus establishing rules of availability. Most often it is the teacher who informs the pupils in advance that she will be online and ready to answer any questions between certain hours, for example:

Usually I write something like this, “Tomorrow is the test, I’m here between seven and eight, ask questions.” Then when I am online I write, “I’m here an hour ahead, ask questions if you are wondering about anything.” This way they know when I am available. (Jim)

While adopting the practice ‘managing communication’ in an integrating way might for some teachers be a result of a reflected choice, we understand that other teachers have gone from an integrating to a segmenting approach. Some teachers informed us that they had become aware of the need to establish certain rules, as one of them explains:

The first time I used Facebook as support before an examination I could hardly believe it. I had seven chats going on at the same time, plus the pupils who wrote in the flow, and those who sent me private messages. It was crazy. So we had to start establishing rules for how and when we communicate. Nowadays, I inform them that I am online only between this and that hour, and that everyone write all the questions in the flow, no private messages, so that everyone can see each other’s questions and can help each other. (Betty)

Through the experience of being overwhelmed by information, this teacher developed a communicative practice that suited her needs, which involves established rules and expectations. It should be noted that teachers in Sweden have ‘regulated’ and ‘trust’ time, the latter involving about 20% of the teachers’ annual working hours. The concept of ‘trust’ time refers to the working hours that the workers can use as they choose. ‘Trust’ time is primarily intended for work before and after school days, but also for spontaneous communication with the pupils and their parents, as well as for professional development (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions 2010, 14). Spontaneous communication with pupils on social media outside office hours may well be accounted for as a part of the teachers ‘trust’ time. We have no knowledge of how the teachers administrate their ‘trust’ time, or if the sum of their trust time has increased or decreased since they started using social media. However, as Betty described above, it is important to

stress the need for teachers to develop boundary practices so that their use of social media does not become overwhelming and time consuming, regardless of their individual integrating or segmenting preferences.

Conclusions

In this study we have found that the interviewed teachers engage in three distinct practices to manage home and work boundaries using Facebook. Each practice relates to a specific aspect of boundary work that is actuated by the affordances of social media including virtual, physical, and communicative functions. As observed in previous research, the practices interplay, that is, they ‘reinforce each other, creating a multipronged approach to negotiating the work-home boundary’ (Kreiner *et al.* 2009, 724). For example, the teachers who adopt an integrating approach to boundary work may use their personal digital devices and their personal Facebook account to communicate with pupils for work purposes at any time of the day without restrictions. On the other hand, the teachers prone to adopting a more segmenting way of performing boundary work may leave their digital work tools at work when they go home and be sure to establish restrictive rules regarding when they are available to their pupils. Different individuals have different personality traits and preferences in regard to their private and professional life. Some of the teachers express the role of being an ‘integrator’, like Ron, who answers emails while putting his child to bed, while other teachers adopt the role of ‘segmentors’, like Gary, who does not bring home work or work equipment. Having said this, it is important to stress that individuals are seldom simply ‘integrators’ *or* ‘segmentors’, but rather a unique mix of the two needs of ‘being part of’ and ‘apart from’ (Nippert-Eng 2010, 6). It is our understanding that the teachers adopt boundary practices to various degrees along an integrating-segmenting spectrum to best fit their personal needs in relation to the pupils and organizational settings.

Introducing new technology in work life often requires new ways of working and new sets of competencies for the worker, such as changed technical, cognitive, or social demands (Hagström & Hanson 2003). Integrating social media in education as a work tool not only demands technical and pedagogical skills to create a positive learning environment for pupils, but also skills to create a positive work environment for the teachers. The work situation for the teaching profession has always been characterized by a certain degree of flexibility and availability outside the school building, for example, contacting pupils and parents, or working at home preparing lessons or grading examinations. However, teachers' use of social media upsets the previously established rules of communication and social accessibility between teachers and pupils, and must be reconstructed using boundary practices. The three practices identified in this study are the result of the teachers' personal experiences of failed and the successful attempts to learn to use Facebook in favourable and productive ways in their work. Using social media such as Facebook for boundary work requires a set of technical and cognitive competencies to manage the boundaries in a successful manner so the teacher does not become overwhelmed by information and stressed, as we saw in Betty's story above.

Although we focus on teachers' boundary practices, it is worth mentioning that the work organization – the school administration – has a great responsibility to facilitate the practical resources (such as technological devices and software) and cognitive competencies (such as organizational guidelines and knowledge about appropriate behaviour) to support the teachers' professional use of social media so it can be as productive as possible without the risk of negative spillover effects.

As a possibility for future research is to look at the pupils' possibilities to engage in boundary management using social media. The teachers have a clear advantage over the pupils since it is the teachers who administrate the groups in which the communication takes place; the teachers can choose whether or not they will use a professional teacher account, and it is they

who set the rules for communication. The pupils have the option to create a 'pupil account' to be used only for school purposes, and thereby separate private and school domains. However, most pupils probably have only one account, but they might engage in other practices. Learning how to manage boundaries according to one's liking is as important for the teachers' as well as the pupils' well-being. Despite the fact that young people are growing up in a digital world, we know very little about their practices to integrate and separate different domains.

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1. The study proposal was reviewed and approved by the Regional ethical board in Uppsala (2014/202).

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