PRIVACY AND CONTROL IN MARK ZUCKERBERG'S DISCOURSE ON FACBEOOK

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The dominance of online social networking sites, such as Facebook, in much of contemporary life necessarily sparks various questions and concerns in terms of information privacy (boyd & Ellison, 2008; Gross & Acquisti, 2005; Mayer-Schšnberger, 2011; Solove, 2007), online identity and representation (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2006; Marwick, 2013), and, broadly, the complexities of social life online (Baym, 2013; boyd, 2014; Dijck, 2013). As users and scholars of such platforms, we are increasingly confronted with new questions like:

- What is the purpose and value of sharing information online?
- What are reasonable expectations of privacy in social networking environments?
- What kind of control should users have over their information?
- How are the rights and responsibilities of users defined and distributed throughout social networking sites themselves?
- Should law or policy exist to manage how social networking providers can access and utilize users personal information?

An important step towards addressing these concerns is to gain a better understanding of how Facebook – the world's largest social networking site – approaches these debates, how it frames issues of privacy and user rights within its own discourse, and how this framing might be reflected in the design of the platform and the affordances it provides (see, for example, Cheney, Christensen, Conrad, & Lair, 2004). Since the messages propagated by a technology's purveyors can play a particularly influential role in the development of our knowledge and understanding of that technology (Pfaffenberger, 1992), this paper will approach these questions through the lens of Facebook's founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg's own language.

Making use of "The Zuckerberg Files" (Zimmer, 2013) – a digital archive of all public utterances by Facebook's founder and CEO totaling over 100,000 words – this paper

reports the results of a discourse analysis of Zuckerberg's public language as it relates to related concepts of information privacy and control—as well as attendant concepts of sharing, openness, and the ownership of data.

As an analytical method, discourse analysis allows us to systematically address Zuckerberg's framing of these important topics, understanding his language as not "simply a neutral means of reflecting or describing the world" (Gill, 2000, p. 172). Instead, his use of language is purposeful – "performative and functional" (Rapley, 2008, p. 2) – and helps shape available conceptions of online social life in ways that serve Facebook's interests. In the end, this discourse analysis represents an important contribution to understanding the ways in which the founder and CEO of the world's largest social network conceptualizes the role of information privacy and control— concepts indispensible to navigating online social life today.

By gaining a better understanding of how Facebook's founder and CEO conceptualizes the political, social, and ethical debates surrounding social networking, we will be better suited to critically engage in a dialogue on privacy and Facebook, inform design and policy recommendations, and increase user awareness and literacy.

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