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Author(s): Tammelin, Mia; Alakärppä, Outi

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TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT, NETWORKING POSITIONS,

AND WORK-LIFE BOUNDARIES AMONG ADULT WORKING STUDENTS

Abstract

In a digitalized life, crossing boundaries between life domains is increasingly easy. We are constantly faced with the need to define whether we are on- or offline, and technology management is an integral part of daily life and it is affected by the networking positions of the individuals. Technology management has different components: connectivity management, online self-presentation, and privacy management. The objective of this study is to explore technology management strategies among adult working students. The study identifies three networking positions: socio-affective enthusiasts, context-contingent pragmatists, and pragmatic avoiders. The three groups have specific approaches to technology management.

Keywords: work-life boundaries, technology management, networking positions

1. Introduction

In digitalized lives, it has become increasingly easy to cross borders from work to family/life, or from hobbies to interactions with work colleagues. In a culture of constant connectivity, we are constantly faced with the need to define whether we are on- or offline [1, 2, 3, 4]. Van Dijck [5] argues that social media has brought about this culture of connectivity, where numerous social media applications and mobile technology are constantly present and, as Marlowe et al. [6, p. 88] put it, “digital media is interwoven in the everyday fabric of sociality.” There is not only an increased use of various technologies and applications, but also increasing pressure to use them [6,5]. People adopt certain networking styles or positions [7] that form an overall strategy in the networked society. In this paper we follow the framework of networking positions used by Villar and Albertin [8] and Benson and Morgan [7].

The embeddedness of technological tools and digital applications in the fabric of daily life entails that the boundaries between life domains are fluid, and that there is a need for technology management. The ability to interweave different domains of life is a challenge for employees [9,10]. Ollier-Malaterre et al. [11, p. 432] define “technology management as work performed to gain control over technology and its associated social norms in order to align one’s use of technology with one’s values and goals.” Technology management has three components: connectivity management, online self-presentation, and privacy management. We refer to these components in our empirical analysis.

It is likely that some groups are even more pressured than others to develop technology management strategies—including adult students. Students are prone to use digital tools and

TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

applications, and to have various life domains to tie together. Since studying is increasingly independent of time and space, it also affects other life domains, and the penetration of technology into leisure and family/life is almost a necessity. Adult students are also pressured to use various digital applications because their studies include the building of online communities. This networked learning increases the demand for self-direction and self-regulation [12]. Therefore, adult students constitute an interesting group.

In this study, we use the concepts of technology management and networking position to explore what strategies working students form, and how their technology management and networking styles are associated with each other. We focus on their use of social media in particular. Social media is defined as a form of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content [13]. Thus, processes of technology management are a prerequisite for social media use.

The article proceeds as follows. First, we discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the study: technology management and networking positions. Second, we explain the setting of the study (adult students combining work, family/life, and studying). Third, we describe the aims, data, and analysis. The fourth part of the paper presents the findings, and we end with a discussion and conclusions.

2. Boundaries between life domains and technology management

TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

As digitalization has become an integral part of daily life, there is a need to constantly define the boundaries between domains. Ollier-Malaterre et al. [11] point out that technology now affects our choices, strategies, and practices for managing the interface between boundaries in many ways. It has become easier to cross boundaries, and the need to manage technology is important. People are forced to be active in boundary management, and this takes place in both the digital and nondigital worlds as a continuous, ongoing flow, often simultaneously. In particular, smartphones have enabled employees to stay connected across life domains [14, 15].

Boundary management refers to the process of individuals creating and maintaining boundaries between various domains [16, 17, 11]. A boundary management strategy consists in the principles individuals use to organize and separate role demands and expectations belonging to different domains [18, 19]. Rose [20] concludes that employees engage in multifaceted strategies to restrict boundary permeability.

Boundary theory proposes that individuals adopt specific styles [21], but it seems that there is no consensus as to the stability of these styles. Some authors suggest that the styles are rather stable over time [22], while others argue that they evolve and change [16,11]. An individual's reasons for adopting a particular style are guided by complex factors, such as their behavioral compliance and other personal preferences, but the collective norms, cultures, and perceptions of their various social communities, such as their workplace, also play an important role [15, 23].

Much of the research concentrates on temporal and spatial boundaries [11]. Temporal and spatial boundaries refer to the extent to which roles remain within specific times or places, and the extent to which they cross from one domain to another. The constant crossing of borders—

such as by repeatedly glancing at one's smartphone—is a possible threat to well-being, and might have a negative impact on the balance between work and family/life [15]. In the context of technology, boundaries often also include relational boundaries [11]. Relational boundaries refer to the extent to which persons are willing to mix and match social contacts from one life domain to another, e.g. between professional and private contacts [24]. This is particularly relevant for the use of social media. In this study we use the concept of boundaries to refer to these various dimensions.

Crossing boundaries requires technology management. Technology management is not only about managing boundaries between domains, but also includes components that constitute specific technology management styles. These components include decisions related to connectivity, online self-presentation, and privacy [11]. Radesky et al. [25] have used the concept “technology-based self-regulation” to refer to this. The strength of the concept of technology management lies in its ability to identify specific components. As yet, however, systematic empirical research remains scarce.

Nonwork social media use at work, for example, can be regarded as a border-crossing activity. Social media use at work may help employees to better coordinate their work and nonwork demands. Most of the research on the consequences of crossing borders suggests that impermeable boundaries might not be beneficial for employees if their work extends into the time and space of the home [26,27,28].

2.1 *Networking positions*

TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

In addition to adopting particular technology management styles, people have preferences regarding how they network. We need to avoid technological determinism, and to understand individuals as having agency [29]. A person's networking position depends on their objective in belonging to that network [7]. We follow the framework of networking positions used by Villar and Albertin [8] and Benson and Morgan [7].

The networking positions framework has been used to study networking among university students. A previous study by Benson and Morgan [7] identified three positions:

1. The socio-affective position, which explains the formation of ties and connections based on individuals' natural affinity and the human need to interact and communicate.
2. The pragmatic position, which recognizes the potential benefits of belonging to a social network, and involves strategic methods that are interpersonal or learned.
3. The context-contingent position, which changes frequently depending on circumstances, contexts, and relationships. Unlike the socio-affective position, which is influenced by personal interests and feelings, networking in context-contingent positions is fostered by similar objectives, shared challenges, and common tasks within the network.

In this study we explore how one's networking position is associated with the components of technology management, in order to understand the practices and strategies of technology management among adult students. Furthermore, we are interested in finding out what differentiation people might show in their technology management styles. Adult students have many different activities, responsibilities, and social ties, especially if they are also in paid work. For example, students' networking positions might differ if they are working while studying for

another profession, and/or if they have children and hence social networks related to the children's hobbies. We consider that individuals might have different positions across domains, but this has remained unstudied to date.

2.2. *Context of the study: working adult students and social media*

As part of the disruption of the so-called normal biography, it is increasingly common for people to continue to study in adulthood. This is the case in Finland, where a large number of higher-education students combine their studies with various life domains such as paid work, childcare, care of the elderly, and hobbies [30]. In our study we use the concept family/life to describe the domain outside paid work and studying. Not everyone has children, and therefore the concept of family alone seems too narrow.

Despite the growing numbers of adult students combining work, family/life, and studying, there is a lack of research on the topic [31,32]. Our paper helps to fill this research gap. Furthermore, we add another dimension, that is, digitalization and increased connectivity. Digitalization has become an integral part of daily life, including among students, since technology offers possibilities to study independently of time and place. Studying regularly benefits from networked learning, that is, learning in which information and communications technology is used to promote connections—between one learner and others, between learners and tutors, and between a learning community and its learning resources [12]. Consequently, online networking is a necessity, not an option, for adult students.

Students in particular need to use social media. Social media comprises web-based services that allow individuals to construct public or private profiles, to communicate with other users, and to view, comment on, and perform actions within their network and beyond [7]. Because of the multiple uses of social media, not only for studying and work but also for private socializing, those uses might blur, and there might be very little differentiation between private and public content [33,34]. This might be intentional or become an unintended outcome. For example, lapses may occur in professionalism, some of which may leave far-reaching digital footprints. Harrison et al. [33] report types of inappropriate social media posts by medical students. These include drunken behavior, sexually related content, derogatory humor, breaches of patient confidentiality, and defamation of organizations or individuals. While Harrison et al.'s [33] review suggests that students' roles blur between the public and the private in their use of social media, Josefsson et al.[34], following Jones et al. [35], find that students perceive a distinct divide between learning space and personal space.

Although our general suggestion is that studying requires participation in social networks, Marlowe et al. [6] suggest that “opting out” is also an alternative. This entails opting out not only from the necessities of studying, but also from the social networks that studying brings along with it.

3. Research methodology

This study stems from the need to understand technology management strategies. We have chosen to focus on working students, who have less choice to opt out of social media, so as to be

able to see the micro-mechanisms of daily life and the variations within a population that has many responsibilities and virtual networks as well as pressures to use social media.

Our specific research questions are: What are the informants' networking positions, and how are these associated with the three components of technology management? What do networking positions mean for the boundaries between domains? Do individuals adopt similar networking positions across different domains, rather than adopting different strategies? The study contributes to the understanding of how the different domains of paid work, family/life, and studying are intertwined.

3.1 Sample

This paper draws on data from qualitative interviews collected in 2016–2017 as part of the [name anonymised] project, funded by the Academy of Finland. The data comprises semi-structured individual interviews with 18 women and three men who were studying at a university of applied sciences. The interviews lasted between 26 and 76 minutes. The ages of interviewees ranged from 24 to 58 years, with a mean age of 43.4 years. One informant preferred not to reveal her exact age. The participants' life situations varied (see Table 1): eight had an upper-secondary education and were studying for a bachelor's degree, and 13 had a tertiary education and were studying for a master's degree.

All of the participants were employed, as this was a criterion for participation in the interviews. However, two informants were on short-term study leave. Fifteen had permanent

TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

jobs, and six had temporary jobs. Their working time arrangements varied, and while most did regular day work, five worked shifts. In addition, three were entrepreneurs, which allowed them some flexibility to organize their working hours according to their needs.

The living arrangements and family situations varied. Seventeen of the interviewees had spouses with whom they lived. Five of the participants were divorced, of whom three lived alone, one had a partner but lived alone, and one cohabited with a new spouse. Altogether, 18 of the interviewees had children; three of these lived apart from their children.

The call for interviews was delivered to a university of applied sciences with an extensive geographical catchment area; therefore the informants lived in various towns and cities. To protect participants' anonymity when we discuss the findings below, we group them into five-year age clusters, and we report only the gender and age cluster of each participant.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

The interviews were carried out via telephone by the authors. All the informants were given the option of a face-to-face interview, but all preferred phone interviews. As the informants were busy and had various schedules that had to be tied together, some of them used the time spent traveling between home and university or work to conduct the interviews in their cars. This method proved to be flexible, although it may have limited the deeper discussion of some topics. However, we noted that phone interviewing secured a certain level of anonymity for the informants, and we felt that some of them actually gave us rather intimate information: we had no visual images of the informants, and therefore we would not be able to identify them in a crowd. We conducted five pilot interviews, after which the interview template was only mildly

reformulated; because there was no need to change the interview template to a great extent, the pilot interviews were included in the data.

The themes of the semi-structured interviews were the characteristics of the informants' work and careers, their use of technology, the practice and extent of their social media use, their daily lives, and their time negotiations. The interviews also discussed their reasons for studying during adulthood, the practices related to it, and their experiences of combining paid work with studying and family/life. With regard to social media, the interviews especially discussed how it was used for studying.

The necessary permissions were obtained from the relevant institutions before the data collection was conducted. All the institutions and participants were given information in advance about the aims and implementation of the study and the ethical issues involved. Participation was voluntary, and participants were given the right to withdraw at any point during the interviews. All of the participants gave their consent to the use of the data for scientific purposes. The guidelines of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity [36] were followed throughout the research project.

3.2 *Analysis method*

Thematic analysis and typification were conducted to categorize the informants based on their networking positions. In the first phase of data analysis, Braun and Clarke's [37] inductive thematic analysis was conducted using the qualitative data analysis program ATLAS.ti. Both authors familiarized themselves with the data. In the second stage, information on networking positions was sought and coded. After that, the codes were combined to form initial themes,

which then provided indications of technology management dimensions. At this point the themes were reviewed, defined, and named by the authors.

In the first stage we explored the informants' networking positions. The analysis was inspired by the types identified by Benson and Morgan [7]. The analysis was guided by the following questions: How willing are informants to network and use social media across domains? What purposes do their usage patterns serve? How is technology managed, and what are the outcomes?

In the second stage we analyzed how the networking positions were associated with technology management styles and their components, and this comprised the third part of the analysis, i.e. it showed how permeable the boundaries between different life domains became. In our analysis we speak of boundaries as including temporal, spatial, and relational boundaries.

4. Findings

4.1. Technology management and networking styles among working adult students

We identified three different networking positions among participants, and we named them (a) context-contingent pragmatists, (b) socio-affective enthusiasts, and (c) pragmatic avoiders. Placing informants in these groups was relatively easy. Initially we expected to find greater variation among the positions adopted—for example, positions for studying versus family/life—but this did not prove to be the case. It seemed that most informants had relative stability in their positions across life domains, even those who took a context-contingent pragmatic position.

Below we explain the networking positions and characteristics of each group, the technology management strategies the informants outlined, and the components that we identified.

4.1.1. Social media utilizers: pragmatic, with strict boundaries

The largest category of informants was the context-contingent pragmatist group (n=9). This group used social media for reasons of practicality, but they actively restricted usage. Their position was clearly context-contingent: it was flexible, and was positioned in relation to the benefits of belonging to a social group.

Seven women and two men were in this group. Their ages varied from 24 to 56 years (mean 39), meaning that the younger informants fell into this category. The group included various living arrangements and family statuses, and interestingly, all of the informants who had children aged under five belonged to this group. This may reflect the time pressures faced by informants with small children, whose networking positions were perhaps influenced by their lack of time to invest in social media networking. This is contrary to the usual assumption that younger generations are especially prone to use social media.

Indeed, the time pressures on this group were reflected in their social media practices. Informants in this group explained that they did not have the time to use social media on a daily basis; their use of social media was scattered across the week, and was neither regular nor active. Furthermore, the use of social media among these context-contingent pragmatists was often passive: they followed social media streams but did not actively share discussions, information, links to interesting webpages, or pictures of their lives.

TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

Context-contingent pragmatists' technology management style included the restriction of connectivity, the minimization of online self-presentation, and concern for privacy. Practices related to the restriction of connectivity included not belonging to the same networks as other students. Social networking was positioned as a practice for carrying out one's studies effectively, for example by using networks for group work and information-sharing. Half of these informants claimed not to use any social media to communicate with peers. Social media also enabled real-time discussions with other students, thus easing communication on practical matters. It was characteristic of these informants that they concentrated on pragmatic reasons for networking and using social media.

Their use of social media in domains other than studying was also pragmatic. They used social media to organize everyday life, coordinate schedules, and get information, and only occasionally to share more personal messages with their networks. Even when they did share more personal messages, they did so for time-saving reasons, not for entertainment or socializing. Using social media makes it easier to organize schedules, and also occasionally to express emotional connectiveness—as one informant explained, just to say: “I have thought about you, and how are you doing?”(female, aged 40-45).

These informants' use of social media for leisure purposes was restricted. This was notable in their practices to avoid constant connectivity and define “time off” [38]. One informant explained that she set herself rules about time off, for example to secure time for her studies: “I have set some rules for myself, I have also been quite strict for the kids. So when the kids are in daycare, I also put the cell phone away, to prevent it crawling into my hand” (woman, aged 30–35). The development of smartphones has increased the affordability of technology, and more

self-regulation is needed. The conscious strategy of restricting the use of tools such as cell phones that give access to social media was effective. Another informant explained that they restricted and controlled their own connectivity by only using social media via websites, not via apps: this has also been reported elsewhere as a tool to restrict one's online presence [42].

Context-contingent pragmatic users took a conscious approach to their online self-presentation and were concerned about privacy. One informant explained this: "While it's a bane, it's also a good thing. It has both sides, if you think about it, but I like it by myself. But you need to be active in restricting your own borders and your information" (woman, aged 45–50). Overall, informants' positions and views on social media were pragmatic but somewhat contradictory within this group. Although social media was seen as an effective and practical tool to communicate during the workday, for example, it was also regarded as disruptive.

4.1.2. Social media enthusiasts: constant connectivity, with socio-affective positions

One third of participants (n=7) were socio-affective and enthusiastic. They not only used social media actively across all life domains, but they were also oriented to the establishment and maintenance of social ties, networks, and connections. They were very enthusiastic about using social media, and wanted take advantage of it to build networks. Informants in this socio-affective group fell into the middle-aged category, but the number of cases is too low to allow any definite analysis of demographic background information. This group did not show any specific characteristics compared with the other two groups.

It was characteristic of this group that they did not restrict their connectivity. Their use of social media was broad and multifaceted: they were constantly online and constantly connecting with others. They used between two and 11 different social media and communication programs.

The socio-affective enthusiasts' networking style was active, as one might expect. They were active sharers of discussions, information, and pictures, not mere followers of the information flow. Their networking position was for social interaction and the sharing of emotions, as well as to coordinate schedules. Their sharing and posting of information was not restricted to one particular life domain, but moved flexibly across domains. These informants said that social media was a tool for social interaction and communication, both at work and beyond, and a way to coordinate and organize family time. Social media thus had many functions for them.

Their constant connectivity was also seen in their networking positions and patterns of social media use during work. They were constantly online and reachable through social media throughout their workdays, and this was not experienced as a disturbance. Nevertheless, only two of these informants used social media as part of their work responsibilities. They also reported that their work and leisure time became mixed together when they used social media, but they saw this constant border-crossing as flexibility, not as a burden. One informant said: "It gives me a lot of freedom, because it's mobile. My work and leisure time are the same" (woman, aged 50–55).

In general, although the use of social media was perceived as positive, some vividly described constant connectivity as a dependency. They were addicted to being constantly online

and in social media networks. The addiction played out as a constant, automatic habit of checking networks: “I browse and glance all the time, and if the computer is on, Facebook is open, actually all the time” (man, aged 40–45).

These enthusiasts were active in crossing borders, and their use of social media with family members was active too, with agreements about everyday schedules taking place online. Social media was also used for other social groups such as friends, relatives, and hobbies, including involvements with nongovernmental organizations. It was seen as a useful means to advance social relations. This socio-affective position—the willingness and need to maintain social relations and share emotions—was characteristic of the enthusiasts.

Constant connectivity was characteristic of their approach to studying as well. It was typical for them to keep social media channels open while studying, and they also multitasked while studying in the evenings: “I’m logged in all the time, because I don’t bother to go back and forth” (woman, aged 40–45). Social media was also seen as an easy and quick tool for interaction with other students.

These socio-affective enthusiasts had little if any concern about either online self-presentation or privacy. As they used social media for entertainment, they also expressed pleasure in following others’ private posts—from holidays, for example. One informant explained: “I enjoy it when people update their holiday pictures from here or there.” She went on: “I use those pictures to think, maybe that place could be my next destination” (woman, aged 40–45).

4.1.3. Social media avoiders: reluctant and practical

Pragmatic avoiders ($n=5$) were also identified. It was characteristic of avoiders that they wanted to minimize their use of social media across life domains. This group comprised five women, and they used social media strictly for practical reasons. Their frequency of use was minimal, occasional, and consisted of short visits or glances during the week. The pragmatic avoiders were among the oldest respondents, and typically had very busy jobs in responsible positions. They also cited their own personal preference as a reason for not being online.

Pragmatic avoiders reported that they were “not interested” in social media, and they limited their own usage, with minimal connectivity. Unlike context-contingent pragmatists, pragmatic avoiders described no difficulty at all in choosing staying offline. It seemed that their networking position was almost an opt-out strategy. They explained that they held a strict but uncomplicated position to stay outside of networks.

Having very strict rules regarding online self-presentation and privacy concerns was characteristic of pragmatic avoiders. Their social media activity was mostly limited to a passive social media style, following only their closest friends and relatives, and sharing information only after considerable consideration. One informant explained: “Altogether, I’m really careful to post anything on Facebook. I rather follow, and I’m a little bit conservative in that sense, so I’m not that enthusiastic about making any updates of my own” (woman, aged 55–60). Avoiders explained that their use of social media was because of their lack of time for it, and they pondered: “I don’t understand how people grab the time to make updates and spend that much time there” (woman, age not given).

The pragmatic avoiders also implemented this position at work, where they rarely used social media. Some used social media at work to follow the activities of their employer, but this usage was still minimal. Their online activity was mainly influenced by the interests of their employer, and was linked to the context-contingent position. They applied the same networking style to their studies too. The use of social media as part of their studies played a minor role for these informants. Even though social media was seen as an effective way to share information, its usage was restricted.

Pragmatic avoiders relied on more traditional means of communication, such as phone calls and text messages. This was a strategy to keep strict boundaries between domains, especially while at work: muting the phone, and informing family and friends that the crossing of boundaries should be considered carefully, secured them undisturbed time at work. This strategy was linked to the demanding nature of their jobs, which called for undisturbed time. One informant expressed this as follows: “My work is so intense and hectic and so obligatory, so I have my phone on mute during workdays. I have also informed everyone that after four o’clock I have a look at the cellphone” (woman, aged 50–55)

While the pragmatic avoiders were not active social media users, they did use some apps to coordinate family responsibilities and schedules. This was concentrated on micro-coordination—fixing schedules—and not on other purposes such as emotional bonding or sharing. In general, for pragmatic avoiders the socio-affective position was not important: social media was not seen as a form of or substitute for face-to-face social interaction. Time offline and face-to-face interaction were highly appreciated.

4.2. *Networking positions and technology management*

Each of these three networking positions was associated in particular ways with a certain technology management style and its components. These styles are comprised of the boundaries between life domains, viewed from the viewpoint of technology in general and social media in particular. Table 2 summarizes the findings.

Within the socio-affective enthusiast group, connectivity management was ongoing but loose. They had loose/mixed views on online self-presentation, which were also context-contingent. They had a very little concern about privacy management. As a result, their boundaries between work and family/life were flexible or mixed, depending on the context.

Within the context-contingent pragmatist group, connectivity management was tight, but being online was a necessity. They often restricted their online self-presentation, and had a mixed orientation to privacy management. Their overall boundaries between various domains were strict to mixed, depending on the context.

Some informants almost opted out, and we categorized these as pragmatic avoiders. Their connectivity management was ongoing, and was related to their tight online self-presentation and privacy management. Their boundaries between life domains were strict.

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

5. Conclusions

As the micro-mechanisms of daily life are reformulated by digital transformation, it is interesting to see how technology management is played out as strategy. Our study focused on working adult students because we wanted to see the differences within this group, who have many responsibilities and perhaps multiple virtual networks to put together. It was evident that studying online enabled them to study while working, taking care of their families, and participating in other life domains.

Our first research question sought to identify the informants' networking positions and analyze how these were associated with the components of their technology management styles. Each networking position is oriented differently to connectivity management, online self-presentation, and privacy management, which forms the basis for understanding how fluid or flexible the boundaries are between work, family/life, and studying. Structural aspects of work and family/life, as well as individual networking preferences, play a role in this.

We identified three positions: (a) socio-affective enthusiasts, (b) context-contingent pragmatists, and (c) pragmatic avoiders. Each group had a specific way of orienting to connectivity management, online self-presentation, and privacy management, and this formed a basis for understanding how fluid or flexible their boundaries were between work, family/life, and studying.

Interestingly, the context-contingent pragmatists were among the youngest informants in the study, and all the informants who had children aged under five belonged to this group. It is likely that this group faced time pressures because of their intense life stage. Whereas having

TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

young children influenced some informants to adopt a style where they adapted to the needs of the environment, the oldest informants tended to be pragmatic avoiders. The structural aspects of their work in demanding and busy jobs affected this.

Finally, we aimed to explore whether individuals adopted similar networking positions across different domains, rather than adopting different positions. It was somewhat surprising that the networking positions proved to be similar across life domains among our informants. However, those in the context-contingent pragmatist group varied their position according to the environment. This did not seem to be an outcome of individual preferences, but rather a response to the needs of the environment.

In future it would be interesting to study the outcomes or effects of specific technology management strategies. Are particular strategies efficient for gaining social capital, for example, or for avoiding stress? Current studies on preferences to segment or integrate life domains have suggested that what is meaningful is the extent to which an individual is able to act according to their own preferences, rather than the strategy they use as such. A discrepancy between preference and practice may cause of feelings of conflict, for example. However, in the case of social media, leaving a specific digital footprint poses a somewhat different question: one might feel that one has balanced one's boundary-crossing behaviors in the present, but the outcomes of one's loose or strict boundaries might only become a reality in the long term. Panel-setting would be interesting to explore the stability of networking positions and technology management strategies. Furthermore, quantitative research on networking positions and technology management would enable an exploration with a wider population and hence the identification of

personal characteristics, such as the influence of age, generation, family status, and gender.

Methodologies for research on technology and work/life are currently expanding.

This study has limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, we have indicated some of the respondents' characteristics, but our sample is restricted. Second, the interviews focused on various topics, and the use of social media was just one topic analyzed among others. To have a rich understanding of the participants' various uses of social media for their studies, it would have been beneficial to have more in-depth knowledge, possibly with other material besides interviews, such as visualizations of their uses of technology. To add further dimensions to the analysis, it would also be important to identify further social media means and usage patterns, such as synchronous and asynchronous usage [40].

In addition to adding knowledge about networking positions and technology management, our study contributes to the understanding of how the domains of paid work, family/life, and studying are intertwined. Our analysis has shown that digital applications are integral for everyone, even pragmatic avoiders. We are all embedded in the digital environment, and we use it to coordinate our tasks, time, emotions, and social relations.

6. Implications

Understanding the implications of technology management styles is vital for understanding how different life domains are intertwined in digitalized society. Structural aspects of work and family, as well as individual networking preferences, play a role.

TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

We need to understand the implications of different technology management styles in order to understand how different life domains are intertwined in digitalized societies. Social networking offers practical tools for working families to manage schedules and gain emotional support. For educational institutions and employers, it is important to identify how people use social media differently to stay connected. Research therefore needs to consider the different dimensions involved when analyzing technology management as part of the work-family/life interface.

The management of boundaries between work and other domains of life is needed, for example, to avoid psychological strains caused by constant connectivity. These strategies are important, as people differ in their preferences regarding the permeability of such boundaries. It has been found that for boundaries between work and family/life, negative experiences might result from being prevented from acting according to one's preferences. Applied to technology management strategies and boundaries between work and family/life, this has important implications for educational organizations, for example: networked learning should be adapted to individual networking styles to avoid negative consequences.

For practitioners and professionals working with families or adult students, it is important to note that social networking offers practical tools to manage family schedules, and it also serves as a tool to provide emotional support. However, there might be a need to analyze technology management styles with people who are forced to belong to various networks: some may need guidance to set some rules, and the skills to set boundaries on time, space, or relationships, to be able to cope with the demands of different life domains.

TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

This study also has implications for research. Empirical research on the topic needs to consider the various dimensions of technology management, as well as the different types of boundary. It is the combination of connectivity, privacy management, and online self-presentation that comprises how flexible or strict the borders are between life domains.

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Table 1. Summary of networking positions, technology management styles, and boundaries

Networking position	Technology management style			Boundaries between domains
	Connectivity management	Online self-presentation	Privacy management	
Socio-affective enthusiasts	Ongoing, loose	Loose/mixed	Loose	Flexible/mixed
Context-contingent pragmatists	Necessary, tight, mixed	Limited/mixed	Mixed	Strict/mixed
Pragmatic avoiders	Ongoing, tight, strict	Limited	Tight	Strict