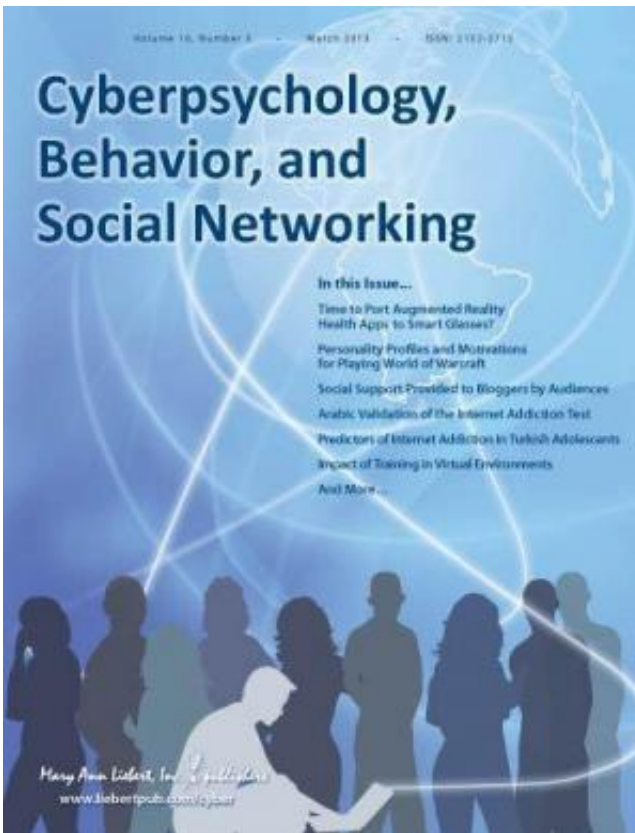


Do students judge professors based on their Facebook profiles?

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More than 800 million people worldwide use the social networking site Facebook, and 93% of college students have an active Facebook account, according to a recent estimate. As both students and faculty on college campuses increasingly use Facebook as a means of

communication, the sharing of personal information, likes and dislikes, or religious and political beliefs, for example, may affect what students think of professors and expect from their classes. This phenomenon is explored in a study published in *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*.

In "[Professors' Facebook Content Affects Students' Perceptions and Expectations](#)," Merry Sleight and coauthors described the reactions of undergraduates who viewed fictitious Facebook profiles created for a male professor. Each student randomly viewed one of six different profiles designed to represent the professor as being either politically conservative or liberal, religious, family or socially oriented, or professional.

The results of the study indicate that the professors' Facebook profiles did affect students' perceptions, but did not affect their course decisions. The authors describe how the students' perceptions of the professors changed depending on whether the professor appeared to be more or less socially oriented and politically liberal or conservative. Students used the professors' Facebook content to make assumptions about how friendly, skilled, and respected by their colleagues they are and how difficult their class would be.

"It is clear that others form perceptions of us based on what we disclose," says Brenda K. Wiederhold, PhD, MBA, BCIA, Editor-in-Chief of *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, from the [Interactive Media](#) Institute, San Diego, CA. "As [Facebook](#) continues to evolve, we must remain cognizant of what we self-disclose."

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