

WHAT'S YOUR STATUS: EMPLOYEE FAIRNESS PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL  
MEDIA MONITORING

by

Kelsey Bishop

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Thesis Committee:

Dr. Patrick McCarthy

Dr. Judith Van Hein

## **ABSTRACT**

Social media has gained widespread popularity as a communication tool for individuals to share opinions, stories, and maintain relationships. For the individual user, this online activity might instinctively seem to be a personal expression among “friends”. However, many organizations are using social media activity to identify problem employees, which has created confusion regarding the ethical and legal boundaries of this issue. From an employer’s perspective, there is an immediate concern for monitoring their employees’ social media sites for any inappropriate, damaging, or confidential information they might share online that could seriously damage an employer’s reputation and brand. The employees, however, may feel this practice is unfair and violating their privacy when their organizations are terminating based on these personal social accounts. This study looked at the perspective of current employees on their perception of fairness when organizations monitor their employee’s social media activity. In particular, this study examined the relationship between privacy invasiveness, negative social media posts, and concerted activity and their effects on employee’s perceptions of fairness about social media monitoring. Key findings include a significant main effect for privacy invasiveness on ratings of both process fairness and decision fairness. Negative social media posts were also had significantly related to process fairness and decision fairness, but both of those relations showed small effect sizes. Concerted activity did not have any significant effects, and there were no significant interactions.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

For the majority of social media users, their profiles on social media are reflective of their personal and recreational images, not their professional ones. However, from some employer's perspective there is no separation of work and personal life when it comes to social media. Organizations have begun to use these sites as evidence for making character judgments and termination decisions on the grounds of legitimate business concerns. Despite how instinctively innocent it seems to post, comment, or even "like" other user's posts on these personal social media pages, are intended personal spaces, and being used for weighty organizational decisions (Quast, 2012).

Using social media for reviewing, snooping, or judging an individual's character or organizational fit hasn't been a comfortable progression for employees. A violation of employees' privacy has become the major outcry when it comes to monitoring this online activity. In 2012, Maryland became the first state to make it illegal for companies to ask or require their employees forfeit their social media passwords in order to get or keep their job ("Employer Access," 2012). As of May 2015, twenty-one states have enacted password protection laws, which protect applicants and employees whose company requires their login information (Lazzarotti, 2015).

However, organizations view monitoring social media as a way to proactively address potential harassment, negligent retention, defamation, and productivity issues. This paper will look at the controversies and perspectives of current employees on their perception of fairness of organizations monitoring employee's social media activity.

## **Social Networking Sites**

Social networking sites (SNS) are a classification of information-sharing, web-based media through which its users create personal profiles which allow them to communicate their opinions, likes, and feelings by leaving comments, voting, bookmarking, and having multiple conversations with other site users (Whitefield, 2013; Venezia, 2012). This collective sharing is typically done by “friending” or “following” other users, which allow users to choose who can view their activity and adjust the levels of privacy accordingly (Whitefield, 2013). The popularity of SNS has been advanced by technology that has made sharing on social media platforms extremely accessible for its users through computers, cell phones, and other internet-compatible devices. Even the types of communication are versatile when it comes to posting on SNS. Users can express thoughts through words, videos, pictures, or audio messages (Smith, 2012). Some of the most prominent SNS include Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Twitter (Cavico, Mujtaba, Muffler, & Samuel, 2013).

The popularity and ease of using social media has made it a norm for relationship-building and opinion-sharing, especially since users can connect with more people and more frequently than ever before (Ghoshray, 2013). The popularity of the sites is reflected in a 2010 report done by Jatana, Sandoval, and Glycer (2012) which found that 22% of people’s time spent online was for social media. Another study by The Pew Institute in 2014 found that 52% of online adults have accounts with at least two social media platforms. This same survey found that 56% of adults age 65 or older are active on Facebook (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart, & Madden, 2015). Pinterest, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn increased significantly in user participation from the previous year;

however, Facebook remains the most popular social media platform (Duggan et al., 2015). In fact, according to this survey, 45% of its users visit the site multiple times during the day, while another 70% check in at least once per day (Duggan et al., 2015).

### **Electronic Monitoring of Current Employees**

Even before social media became a potential source for information seeking, organizations have been monitoring their employees through tracking computer keystrokes, screening visited websites, swipe cards to monitor locations, telephone calls, and installing video cameras and webcams in the workplace (Petrecca, 2010). In more extreme cases, employers will track employees through global positioning systems on their cellphones (Alder & Tompkins, 1997; Petrecca, 2010). Monitoring current employees isn't a new issue, but the involvement of social media as a source for snooping has become another facet adding to the ethical and legal debate.

### **Employer's Legitimate Business Interests**

**Productivity.** Many organizations view internet monitoring as a preventive action to keep employees on-task (Alder, Schminke, Noel, & Kuenzi, 2007). Employees typically spend 1 to 5 hours online per week doing non-work-related surfing, which estimates to about a 30-40% productivity loss (Alder et al., 2007). A survey by Symantec recently found that of the companies polled, 90% of them noticed a loss in employee productivity because of social media use (Rosetta Stone, 2014). In support of this finding, another study by American Management Association (AMA) and The ePolicy Institute found that 50% of employers block Web access because of concerns about their employees using social media ("The Latest," 2014).



Non-work-related internet searching can be categorized into two categories of behaviors: cyberloafing and cyberslacking (Alder et al., 2007). Cyberloafing is defined as doing non-work-related internet searches on a more general level, such as checking personal email or other personal searches (Alder et al., 2007). However, cyberslacking, or online procrastination, is when an employee uses company time and resources to waste time on the job (Alder et al., 2007). This second behavior is more likely to be associated with viewing social media websites during work time because it involves an individual's need for social comfort and a lack of impulse control (Alder et al., 2007). Therefore, an employer might be concerned with the amount of on-duty time their employees are spending on social media, and would want to monitor this activity for the sake of productivity.

**Fraud.** Social media has also opened up the possibility to catch employees that are abusing worker's compensation, disability, or sick leave. In a recent Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals case of *Jaszczyszyn v. Advantage Health Physician Network*, Sara Jaszczyszyn, who was on Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave for a back injury, was fired from her job after her co-workers found pictures of the plaintiff enjoying a weekend festival on Facebook (*Sara Jaszczyszyn v. Advantage Health Physician Network*, 2012). Along with the plaintiff's poor communication pattern with her supervisor about her approved leave and the pictures negating her injury, the court ruled in favor of Advantage Health Physician Network. This case represents an example of how monitoring social media can protect the organization against employees that attempt fraud.

**Negligent Retention and Supervision.** For employers, not monitoring current employees' SNS activity could mean risking a case of negligent retention. Negligent retention refers to when an employer observes a current employee's unusual and potentially threatening behavior, and either ignores the findings or tolerates the behavior, which results in a negative impact in the workplace (Lewis & Gardner, 2000). Employers are held responsible for not conducting the proper searches of their employees, or not confronting suspicious activity, that ultimately puts a co-worker, customer, or other person in danger (Mooty, 2013). Likewise, negligent supervision becomes an issue if managers ignore or don't properly handle unusual employee behavior such as incidents of violence, substance abuse, or stalking behavior (Lewis & Gardner, 2000). In court, employers are evaluated on the "know or should have known" standard regarding the accused employee and any action that taken, such as reassignment or termination, as a response to the threatening behavior (Lewis & Gardner, 2000, p. 19). Although negligent retention may be more of a risk for jobs that require entrustment between the customer and the provider (e.g. healthcare), it is a potential risk in all industries (Lewis & Garder, 2000).

There are many preventive strategies for reducing the risk of negligent supervision and retention, such as investigating suspicious behavior (Lewis & Gardner, 2000). Monitoring employee's social media accounts could be a modern, cost-effective strategy to investigate these behaviors to prevent against negligent supervision and retention.

**Sharing of Confidential Information.** Another motivation to monitor employees' SNS is to guard against employees sharing the company's confidential and

proprietary information online. A report by Gartner hypothesized that by 2016, sixty percent of employers will be looking at their employee's social media accounts for security breaches (Beesley, 2012). The concern with all SNS communication is how quickly the information can spread, increasing the risk for major employment issues (Birmingham & Neumann, 2011). The bottom line is organizations want to protect their customer, client, or donor's confidential information, especially if the organization is legally obligated (Mooty, 2013). While, some employees might naively share secrets online, others may act out of malicious intent (Birmingham & Neumann, 2011). For example, if a disgruntled employee posts a co-worker's or client's medical records, drug testing records, social security numbers, or credit reports online, the organization is liable for that security breach (Mooty, 2013). However, no matter the intent of the information sharing, like any post online, once an employee exposes an organization's proprietary information, it can never be removed (Birmingham & Neumann, 2011).

**Employer Reputation.** Finally, an organization's brand or public image can suffer greatly from a post that illustrates the company in a negative light. Deloitte LLP's 2009 Ethics & Workplace telephone survey showed that 74% of 2,008 American employees believed that social media could damage an employer's brand ("Social Networking," 2009). For example, in 2009, two Domino's employees posted a video on YouTube of them putting cheese up their nose, nasal mucus on the sandwiches, and violating other health codes (Clifford, 2009). The video went viral. The prank surfaced as a top hit on Google and became a popular conversation on Twitter (Clifford, 2009). Even though Dominos fired the two employees, the company's reputation was damaged and public perception declined according to YouGov, an online survey site (Clifford, 2009).

A more recent example is the negative exposure the National Football League (NFL) has received over a viral video of Baltimore Raven's running back Ray Rice assaulting his fiancée (Freeman, 2014; Littmann, 2014). The Cable News Network (CNN) article wrote this about the incident, "Nothing less than the NFL's reputation is on the line, and possibly the job of the league's commissioner, Roger Goodell" (Payne & Almas, 2014). The Huffington Post said, "Rice deserves a loss of income for the damage he has caused to the NFL's reputation" (Abrams, 2014). Both of these real-life situations exhibit why employers want to put up a safeguard to protect themselves from their employees being irresponsible with their brand name.

Often times, when an employee does say inappropriate or damaging comments online the organization will try to distance themselves from the employee. In 2013, when Justine Sacco, a PR executive of IAC (operator of sites Match.com, The Daily Beast, and About.com), flew to Africa before tweeting "Going to Africa. Hope I don't get AIDS. Just Kidding. I'm White" (Stelter, 2013). While on the twelve-hour plane ride, her tweet got retweeted thousands of times, gaining notice across the internet. Before she landed, her employer published a statement recognizing the post as offensive and outrageous and saying that they would be taking appropriate action when she landed. Sacco was terminated the following day. Situations like this give employer's cause for wanting to regulate and monitor their employee's social media activity (Woodbury, Carter, Cooper, Lovell, & McNulty, 2014).

Moreover, organizations worry about their employee's badmouthing them online. According to a study by Social Media Today, 60% of employees have at some point voiced unhappiness with their job on social media (Rosetta Stone, 2014). An organization

can also face tort liability claims when an employee defames another co-worker, customer, or other parties online through social media (Mooty, 2013). Since companies, as an entity, are liable for their employee's actions on-line that may be discriminatory or illegal, it makes sense that organizations want to monitor and keep track of which employees are saying on-line about the company (Mooty, 2013).

### **Risks of Monitoring Current Employees through SNS**

Despite the number of legitimate business concerns for why an employer would want to monitor current employees' online activity, there are also many legal risks to searching through employees' SNS.

**Concerted Activity: National Labor Relations Board.** Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) was established for the protection of non-management employees and their right to engage in concerted activities, such as conversations about compensation or terms and conditions of employment "for collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection" ("Basic Guide," 1997; Mooty, 2013; Neal, 2012; Under this law, protected concerted activity guarantees all employees the right to join together "to improve terms and conditions of employment or otherwise improve their lot as employees (Mooty, 2013)," whether or not the employee is involved with a union ("Basic Guide," 1997). Despite its passing in 1935, far before the internet existed, the courts today are expanding on the drafter's intention to protect employee face-to-face conversations to include employee interactions on social media platforms (Neal, 2012). In doing so, the National Labor Relations Board has begun to distinguish which employee social media postings are protected under the NLRA and which ones do not qualify (Mooty, 2013).

Currently, there are three criteria that the NLRB will look for when considering if the posting is protected (Best, 2013). Only one of the following criteria need to be present for the Board to recognize the activity as concerted. The first requires the employee having previously expressed concern or informed their employer of the employment issue before the employee expressed the concern on social media (Best, 2013). In these instances, when the employee has expressed an initial request for change/improvement and the employer doesn't respond appropriately, then the SNS posting may be considered as justified (Best, 2013; O'Brien, 2014). For social media comments, the Board will use their judgment to the extent of the employee's intention for posting online (Best, 2013). In other words, the board determines whether the post was simply an angry vent (not concerted), or a plea for gathering supporters to evoke change (Best, 2013).

Second, the concerted activity in the form of a post on social media has to be directly related to the employee's initial complaint(s). This criterion comes from the case *Washington Aluminum Co.* where the employees complained to their supervisors about the cold temperature in the workplace, and when there were no changes, the employees formalized a walkout. Although, the walkout was not organized through social media, the precedent applies (Best, 2013).

Lastly, if the employee's post was followed by a co-worker's shared concern and the conversation becomes a discussion between co-workers to bring about positive change in the workplace, then it may be protected in its purpose for mutual aid and protection (Best, 2013; Mooty, 2013). The post must solicit help from other employees and together all parties must agree with the individual, rallying with the person who wrote the initial posting (Best, 2013). However, if the other employees denounce the

initial statement, then the post will not be considered protected under this criteria, as it would be more of an individual cathartic ranting (Best, 2013). In the context of Facebook, gaining group help can be done by specifically mentioning a name of a fellow employee in the post, by soliciting a comment through a status update, or by posting a comment on the receiver's wall (Best, 2013).

Section 8 of the NLRA prohibits employers "to interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees in the exercise of the rights guaranteed in section 7" ("National Labor," 2014). Under this section, employers are restricted in the action they can take against an employee that exhibits their Section 7 rights. Examples of this violation would be if the employer a) threatened to terminate, b) take away employee benefits, c) close the plant if they join or vote for a union, d) questions the employee about union membership or activity, e) pretend to spy or spying on union meetings, or f) give wage increases to discourage employees from unionizing. However, in 1953, the U. S. Supreme Court made an exception to this rule called the Jefferson Standard, which permits employers to discipline or terminate employees that behave in a way that is extremely disloyal to the organization (Abramson & Glendinning, 2009).

In recent years, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has resided over many cases involving employees being fired for a post(s) they wrote on social media, or "facebook firings" (Best, 2013; Mooty, 2013). One recent case reviewed by the NLRB was Triple Play Sports Bar and Grille v. Jillian Sanzone and Vincent Spinella (Gordon & Argento, 2014). In this case, employees of a sports bar suspected that their owners had inaccurately filled out tax information which resulted in the employees owing more money to the state of Connecticut. Some employees brought the complaint to the owners,

and a staff meeting was scheduled with the payroll provider to discuss the concerns. A month before the scheduled meeting, a former employee, Jamie LaFrance, of the bar posted a Facebook status saying, “Maybe someone should do the owners of Triple Play a favor and buy it from them. They can’t even do the tax paperwork correctly!!! Now I OWE money...Wtf!!!!” Vincent Spinella, a current employee, pushed the “Like” button under LaFrance’s initial post. Then, a customer of the bar added a post of sympathy and Jillian Sanzone, a second current employee, agreed with the initial statement by stating, “I owe too. Such an asshole.” As the conversation continued, a third current employee added that she was planning on bringing up the issue in the scheduled staff meeting. One current employee who was Facebook “friends” with LaFrance showed the exchange to one of the owners. When Sanzone showed up to work two days later, she was told that she was discharged because of the disloyal Facebook comment. The next day, Spinella was interrogated by the owners about the meaning behind his “Like” selection, the identity of the other contributors, and whether he had posted anything negative about the owners. The owners interpreted Spinella’s “Like” as an indication that he clearly wanted to work somewhere else, and fired him. The owner felt confident in the firing decisions because his attorney told him to terminate anyone who engaged in the Facebook discussion on the grounds of harming the organization’s reputation. However, the NLRB determined that the posting was concerted activity because 1) four current employees were involved in the exchange, 2) it was “part of an ongoing sequence” of conversations about the tax issue, and 3) the group was seeking group action. Furthermore, the activity was also protected because the conversation surrounded a workplace issue of tax withholding. With regards to the “Like” button, the NLRB ruled that Spinella was only



held accountable to the initial post and not the allegedly defamatory comments afterwards, because he did not like those comments individually. The Board notes that the “Like” post must be taken into context of which specific posting was “Liked” or endorsed by the employee. As a final conclusion from this case, the company’s social media policy was deemed unlawful because of its broad language. The policy stated that employees will be responsible for “engaging in inappropriate discussions about the company, management, and/or co-workers.” This broad language, argues the Board, is in direct contradiction with the employee’s rights to exercise their Section 7 rights.

*Employees’ perceptions of concerted activity.* There is a dearth of studies on the topic of concerted activity as it pertains to social media. Specifically unaddressed are employees’ perceptions of having their social media activity monitored by their employers, as well as their reactions to corrective actions against employees who wrote concerted posts. In fact, because applying NLRA protections to online behavior is relatively new, it is unclear how educated the average worker is regarding whether online posts are concerted versus not concerted. However, it may be reasonably assumed that many employees would find it unfair if an employee was fired for an effort to rally fellow co-workers to bring about positive workplace change. This is supported by the notion of procedural justice, which refers to the perceptions employees have about how the procedures and policies are managed by the organization (He, Zhu, & Zheng, 2014). Based on this concept, it is hypothesized that employees will find that the monitoring of their social media activity, especially posts that are concerted, as unjust.

**Protected Class and Genetic Information.** The United States’ Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has strict prohibitions against

organizations discriminating against certain legislatively protected demographics of people, or classes. Originally defined by the 1964 Civil Rights Act, it is illegal for employers to discriminate against someone's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin ("Laws and Guidance," 2014). Congress has since added more protected classes, e.g., those forty years or older, disabled individuals, and women who are pregnant or recently gave birth. Intentional use of internet searches to find and use data connected to these protected characteristics is prohibited (Davik, 2013). Even though employers are forbidden from asking or coercing protected-class information from individuals, employers viewing employee's social media profiles are risking the potential of uncovering this information and being legally responsible ("Workplace Privacy," 2014).

Uncovering an individual's genetic information on social media should also raise caution for employers wanting to monitor employees or prospective employees (Mooty, 2013). Under Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) of 2008, an employer or other affiliated entity is prohibited to "request, require, or purchase genetic information with respect to an employee or family member to of the employee" (Mooty, 2013, p. 5).

**Misidentification of Employees.** Another risk employers take when monitoring their employees' social media activity is finding and mistakenly using inaccurate information as evidence against their employees (Leonard, 2011). For example, some SNS users that are aware of monitoring practices have created two accounts. One profile is created using their real name for professional use and another profile with a pseudonym is used to post and communicate with others that is distinctly personal (Clark & Roberts, 2010). In this case, the information employers find on SNS could be unrepresentative of the individual (Gordon, 2011). Even greater, employers' may find a

profile that is a completely different person, but has the same name as their employee (Gordon, 2011). Another risk for employers that monitor is that some of their employees may not have any social media accounts, causing unfairness and inconsistency across personnel with the use of this information. In these instances, the ethical boundaries of monitoring employees' social media activity become blurred.

### **Employee's Fairness Perceptions**

**Invasion of Privacy.** The argument of employees' right to privacy has been the overwhelming stance in opposition of companies monitoring current employee's SNS. As an employee, there is a perception that there should be privacy when it relates to being in the work setting, including any activities done on company-provided internet and email (Whitefield, 2013). The U.S. Supreme Court noted in *City of Ontario v. Quon* (2010) that the current culture of technology and cell phone usage being an avenue for self-expression and self-identification could be contributing to the employee's expectation of privacy (Ghoshray, 2013). The privacy expectation is further reinforced by the assumption that by having strict privacy settings (as provided on the individual SNS) should protect them from unwanted viewers (Ghoshray, 2013). Although, these restrictions do help restrict access, it may not hide everything (Brandenburg, 2008).

When considering their privacy rights while using employer-owned equipment, employees have a lower expectation for privacy versus if their organizations are monitoring SNS activity that is done off-the-clock and on personal computers (Ghoshray, 2013). The issue of between posting on-work-time versus off-work-time becomes murky when the prevalence of status-updating is constant, further delineating the line between work and home (Ghoshray, 2013). This becomes especially true for those employees that

telecommute or work from home (Cavico, et al., 2013). Furthermore, the lines between personal and professional SNS activity becomes less clear when organizations themselves are using social media to promote their brand (Cavico, et al., 2013). In the outlook of the employee, there are ethical issues in distinguishing a boundary between professional and personal life. Some states have passed laws that prohibit employers from retaliating against an employee's off-duty posts, unless the employer can prove that the post on SNS can damage the company ("Workplace Privacy," 2014).

**Electronic Communications Privacy Act.** The Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA) was passed in 1986 to replace and expand on the previous federal wiretapping law and electronic eavesdropping provisions to include computer interface (Mooty, 2013). The act prohibits the interception of real-time electronic communication, or intercepted at the same time the communication is being made (Mooty, 2013). Its purpose was to create a "fair balance between the privacy expectations of citizens and the legitimate needs of law enforcement" (Mooty, 2013, p. 4).

A provision to the ECPA is the Stored Communications Act (SCA) which "prohibits the knowing or intentional unauthorized access to a facility through which an electronic communication service is provided" (Mooty, 2013, p 5). Prohibiting access to password-protected email and social media accounts would be protected under this act (Mooty, 2013). However, under situations where the person viewing the communication is the provider of the service or has been given authority to view the communication by the user, then there is no violation of the act (Mooty, 2013).

The New Jersey federal District Court's 2013 decision in *Ehling v. Monmouth Ocean Hospital Service* concluded that Facebook and social media in general is an

electronic communication that is provided through an electronic communication service, with restricted-access areas intended to be private, based on the privacy policies provided by the service (Grisham, n.d.). Therefore, an employer is highly restricted in the use of language and action in trying to procure online information that is a password-protected electronic service, such as social media. In the case where an employee will volunteer information about another employee's online profile, the employer should explicitly document that employee came to them on their own initiative with no probing from the employer (Grisham, n.d.). A more challenging situation is when an employee informs the employer of a posting but does not provide a copy of the posting, and then the employer must decide whether the threat is too big to ignore (Grisham, n.d.). If not, for legal purposes, the employer should make a formal request for a copy of the concerning post, to be careful not to imply pressure of compliance (Grisham, n.d.).

As previously mentioned, 21 states have passed password protection laws in their state, including Tennessee, Oklahoma, and California (Lazzarotti, 2015). In addition to these state laws, Facebook's Terms of Service states that no user is allowed to share their password, allow others access to their account, or anything else that threatens the account security (Beesly, 2012). Erin Egan, Facebook's Chief Privacy Officer of Policy, made a statement on Facebook that told users that the company has made it a violation of its Statement of Rights and Responsibilities to share or solicit passwords (Egan, 2012).

**Attitudes and Consequences of Electronic Monitoring.** The current research on employees' reactions to their employers' monitoring their online usage varies in tone based on the characteristics of the system of monitoring and on the operation of the monitoring system (Alder, et al., 2007). Most employees, in a study by YouGov, leaned

toward the view that employers should not have a right to monitor such personal employee activity as e-mail and internet use (Muhl, 2003). The Deloitte survey showed that 53% of employees responded that their social media activity is not part of their employer's business ("Social Networking," 2009). Another 27% said when posting on social media they don't consider the ethical consequences of their posts.

Monitoring social media can also lead to perceptions of organizational injustice and lowered organizational attractiveness. Stoughton, Thompson, and Mead (2013) looked at job applicant's reaction to employers looking at their social media accounts to make hiring decisions. They found that when an organization did pre-employment social media screening, the applicant's perceptions of invasion of privacy increased. Also, the applicants had lower perceptions of organizational justice, which led them to be less attracted to the organization, along with an increased intention to sue the company. This finding was consistent across applicants that were offered the job and with those that were not extended an offer. It is plausible that the same would be true of current employees.

The potential consequences of electronic monitoring on employees is an increased risk for stress-induced illness, and lowered perception of justice or fairness in the workplace. These that can affect work-life balance and the employee's perception of their rights to privacy (Alder et al., 2007; Tabak & Smith, 2005). Electronic monitoring of social media can also lead to issues with organizational morale, employee commitment, physical and psychological stress of employees, and increase absenteeism, turnover, and lowered productivity (Smith & Amick, 1989). Furthermore, the use of electronic monitoring can produce distrust in the work culture as well as create disrespect of

managers, leading to poor interpersonal relationships among employees and their supervisors or the organization as a whole (Alder et al., 2007).

### **Current Study**

This study focuses on the potential issues related to employees' perceptions of fairness concerning organizations monitoring their employee's social media activity. The employer may have legitimate reasons for monitoring and taking action against their employee's social media posts, but the reactions from their employees about this procedure could lead to negative workplace attitudes and behavior. This study will attempt to determine how different levels of privacy invasiveness, negative posts, and concerted activity will affect employee fairness perceptions. Hopefully, this study will help pinpoint how organizations can set up social media policies and procedures that will protect their reputation and not negatively impact organizational justice.

**Primary Research Focus.** One area of interest is employees' perceptions of how invasively the employer may violate employees' privacy to find information on social media, as well as its impact on their fairness perceptions. The level of invasiveness of finding any SNS activity of their employees is hypothesized to have an effect on fairness perceptions.

***Hypothesis 1:*** Privacy invasiveness in the monitoring practice will be negatively related to employee fairness perceptions. In other words, as the level of monitoring practices becomes more invasive, employee fairness perceptions will be lower.

Next, employee fairness perceptions of employers using social media for a reason of legitimate business concern will be tested. The legitimate business concern will be demonstrated through SNS posts that harm the organization's reputation (or negative posts). The concern of employers is that negative comments posted online about the organization from employee's social media accounts will threaten the organizational brand and reputation.

***Hypothesis 2:*** Negative posts will be positively related to employee fairness perceptions. Thus, as the level of negativity of the post increases, the employees' fairness perceptions of monitoring will also increase.

The third hypothesis is interested in how posts that are protected under the NLRA as concerted activity are perceived by employees. The distinction between not concerted and concerted posts is whether the employee posted negatively on social media as an outlet for their frustration versus if the employee posted in an effort to gain support for a workplace change from fellow co-workers. This hypothesis asks if the post is more concerted, will participants perceive monitoring of this scenario as being less fair.

***Hypothesis 3:*** Concerted activity is negatively related to fairness perceptions. In other words, if the post is concerted then participants will perceive the monitoring of that post to be less fair.

**Additional Research Question.** Lastly, this study is interested in how the three independent variables may interact regarding their effects on fairness perceptions. For instance, if the condition of one variable suggests the situation to be fair, but it is combined with a variable that suggests unfairness, how will this interaction affect the participant's perceptions?



***Research Question 1:*** Will there be an interaction between privacy invasiveness, negative posts, and the level of concerted activity? Are there any 2 way or 3 way interactions among the three independent variables?

## CHAPTER II: METHOD

### Participants

Participants were attained through (1) an online survey application called Amazon's Mechanical Turk (AMT) and (2) Facebook. AMT is a crowdsourcing database that shows representation of all internet users because its users are equally diverse (Ipeirotis, 2010). Facebook was used as a complimentary tool to collect data from active social media users. Only United States workers were allowed to participate.

Two criteria were used to screen the participants: (a) passing an instrument manipulation check and (b) completing the survey in a reasonable timeframe. Participant results were discarded if they completed the survey in less than 2 minutes. This standard was a precaution to remove any data where it was assumed that participants didn't take the appropriate amount of time to read and respond to each survey item. This resulted in 434 usable participants of the original 594 participants. Demographic information tables are provided in the Appendices A-F.

**Survey Source and Participants by Scenario.** Of the 434 participants that were used in this study, a total of 252 participants were solicited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (AMT). The remaining 182 participants got access to the survey via Facebook.

Since this study was a between-subjects design, each participant was randomly assigned 1 of the 12 scenarios. A breakdown of number of participants by scenario is provided in Appendix A. Further description of the scenarios and dependent variables are provided in the design and measures sections below.

**Age, Gender, and Ethnicity.** Participants were asked to self-report their age and gender. Among the 434 participants, 32.3% were male and 67.1% were female. The largest age group of all participants was 25-34, which resulted in being 39.6% of the

sample. The second largest was 18-24 (23.5% of total population) and the third largest was 35-50 years old (21.4%).

An ethnicity scale was used from the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), which also used in Kluesner's (2013) thesis. The MEIM is reported to have a Cronbach's alpha of .80 (Phinney, 1992). The majority (83.4%) of participants identified as being white or Caucasian. See Appendix B.

**Organizational Demographics.** Participants were asked to select which job level most represented their current job role. Options ranged from student to full-time employee. When asked about job level, 57.8% identified as full-time employees and 18.4% identified as part-time. The other 23.7% identified as either unemployed or as a student. See Appendix C for further detail.

All participants, no matter their job statuses, were asked to rate their agreeableness with the statements, "I am satisfied with my current (or last) boss." Using a 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree, 70.8% responded either "agree" or "strongly agree" with the above statement. A second question was asked of the participants: "I feel loyal to my current (or past) organization." The majority of participants (69.1%) answered "agree" or "strongly agree" to this question. Fourteen percent marked either "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with the second statement. See Appendix C.

Participants were also asked if their current or last organization has/had a union. Among the participants, 64.7% responded "no" to their organization having a union and 10.6% responded "yes." See Appendix C.

**Social Networking Demographics.** In regards to the usage of social media, 99.5% of participants responded “yes” to having at least one account on social media. Among those, 96.1% had a Facebook account, 51.4% had a Twitter account, 43.3% had a LinkedIn account, and 45.2% had an Instagram account. See Appendix D.

When asked about the frequency of visits on social media, 74.9% responded that they visit daily. Of those that selected daily, the majority (43.4%) spend 10-30 minutes on social media and another 35% spend less than 10 minutes social media sites. It is important to note that frequency of visits in one day was not asked of the participants. See Appendix D.

The Social Media Intensity scale was also used to understand how personally connected the participants are with social media sites. (See the measures section for further description of the scale.) Fifty-seven percent scored above a 3.0, suggesting a moderate to high sense of self-connection with social media. See Appendix D.

**Employee Monitoring Experience.** Among the participants, 75.8% responded “not applicable,” to the question about whether they personally had monitored or assisted in the monitoring of employees. Which suggests that the majority of the participants in this study have never conducted any form of employee monitoring. Among the remaining 24.2%, they disclosed using surveillance videos, email, background checks, and general internet monitoring. Moreover, 8.8% reported doing social media monitoring. See Appendix E for more details.

Additional demographic questions were adapted from Kluesner’s (2013) study asking about each participant’s experience with their employer(s) asking for their SNS login information, if they believe they or a friend/family member has be fired because of

social media, and if they have a separate professional social media account for work. For this demographic information, see Appendix F.

### **3x2x2 Factorial Design**

This study examined the effects of the three levels of privacy invasiveness (low, medium, and high) in monitoring social media activity with two levels of negative posts (medium and high) and two levels of concerted activity (not concerted and concerted) on perceptions of fairness for monitoring current employees SNS activity. The levels align with key distinctions often made among the legal cases surrounding the issue of these variables. The design of this study is a between-subjects 3x2x2 factorial design, as detailed in Table 1 and Table 2. Each cell of the 3x2x2 ANOVA was created into a “scenario” for participants to rate on the dependent variable items for fairness perceptions. In all scenarios, an employee posted a negative comment on social media about their boss and/or other organizational members. Once the boss becomes aware of the post, he fires the employee based on the comment they wrote on social media.

Under each scenario, a space was provided for open-ended comments about why the participant answered a particular way. This qualitative information provided supplementary information to help interpret the participant’s reasons for responding a particular way.

Table 1

*3x2 Factorial Design with Not Concerted Activity*

		Negative Posts		Not Concerted
Privacy Invasiveness		Low	High	
	Low	Public; Individual ranting that boss is an idiot;	Public; Individual ranting about boss and other organizational members being sexist and racist	
	Medium	Co-worker Notification; Individual ranting that boss is an idiot	Co-worker Notification; Individual ranting about boss and other organizational members being sexist and racist	
High	Boss friends employee and searches; Individual ranting that boss is an idiot	Boss friends employee and searches; Individual ranting about boss and other organizational members being sexist and racist		

Table 2

*3x2 Factorial Design with Concerted Activity*

		Negative Posts		
Privacy Invasiveness		Medium	High	Concerted
	Low	Public; Individual ranting that boss is an idiot	Public; Negative posts about boss and other organizational members being sexist and racist to gain group consensus	
	Medium	Co-worker Notification; Individual ranting that boss is an idiot	Co-worker Notification; Negative posts about boss and other organizational members being sexist and racist to gain group consensus	
	High	Boss friends employee and searches; Individual ranting that boss is an idiot	Boss friends employee and searches; Negative posts about the boss and other organizational members being sexist and racist to gain group consensus	

## **Procedure**

The survey was posted on two platforms: Amazon's Mechanical Turk (AMT) and Facebook. The survey was posted as a task on the Amazon's Mechanical Turk (AMT) website, where subscribers can choose to participate. As a standard practice on AMT, users were compensated for participating. In this study, each participant was paid \$0.15 for participating. The survey was also posted on Facebook where users followed the thread to the survey hosted on Qualtrics. The lead investigator shared it on her personal profile and asked her "friends" to share the survey among their Facebook connections. After the participants from either platform selected to participate in the task, they were given a brief description of the study and a link to the online survey hosted on Qualtrics.

Before participants began the survey, they were asked to provide electronic consent. Once they consented, each participant proceeded with the survey where they rated one scenario on three fairness perception items. The scenarios were randomly assigned so that each participant only answered one scenario from a potential scenario bank of twelve. Once each participant completed the scenario portion of the survey, they were asked to volunteer information about their current social media usage, their exposure to employer's monitoring SNS, and other demographic information (i.e. age, gender, and job level).

After submitting their responses, all participants were taken to a screen thanking them for their participation. The only difference in procedure was for the AMT participants they were given a survey code that they entered on Mechanical Turk's site verifying their completion of the survey. Once finished, those participants received compensation.



## CHAPTER III: RESULTS

### **Demographic Correlational Analyses**

Spearman's correlations display the relationships between several demographic items (e.g. use of social media, monitoring experience, frequency of employee monitoring, age, gender, social media intensity) and the dependent variables. See Appendix O for these correlation matrices.

### **Preliminary Analyses**

To determine whether the three dependent variable (fairness perception) survey items should remain separate items or if a combination of them should be combined into a scale, reliability analyses were conducted. Cronbach's alpha ranged from .79 to .89 across all twelve scenarios. For all of the scenarios, the reliability analyses showed that two of the three dependent variable items, "This monitoring practice is fair to the employee" and "The employer's decision to do this monitor practice is justified", were highly correlated. Cronbach's alpha was consistently higher with these two items combined than if left separately or if combined with the third item of "Terminating this employee based on this monitoring practice is justified." These results are provided in Appendix P. From these results, it was determined that the dependent variable items of "This monitoring practice is fair to the applicant" and "The employer's decision to do this monitoring practice is justified" would be combined into a scale of process fairness and the dependent variable item of "Terminating this employee based on this screening practice is justified" would remain as a rating of decision fairness.

Another point of interest was determining if there was a significant difference in fairness perceptions between participants by survey source (e.g. AMT and Facebook). An independent-samples t-test showed that there was a significant difference between AMT ( $M = 2.61$ ) and Facebook ( $M = 2.29$ ) when it relates to decision fairness ( $p = .010$ ). There was no difference between the sources regarding procedural fairness. Therefore, source was included with the independent variables in the ANOVA for decision fairness, but not for procedural fairness.

### **Primary Analyses**

To test the hypotheses and research question of primary interest, a 3x2x2 analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted for privacy invasiveness, concerted activity, and negative posts for procedural fairness. See Table 3 for the results.

For decision fairness, a 3x2x2x2 ANOVA was conducted for the independent variables of privacy invasiveness, concerted activity, negative posts, and survey source. See Table 4 for the results.

Welch analysis was used for both analyses because across survey source (AMT and Facebook) and for each scenario there are unequal sample sizes or unequal population variances for each group. Welch tests assume that each of the participants contributed one score and they are not influenced by other participants in the study.

**Procedural Fairness.** As shown in Table 3, there was a significant main effect for privacy invasiveness and for negative posts for procedural fairness. The 3x2x2 ANOVA analysis revealed that there was not a main effect for concerted activity. Table 3 also shows there were no two-way or three-way interactions between the three independent variables for procedural fairness.

*Post Hoc Analyses.* Since there was a main effect for privacy invasiveness and negative posts, additional analyses were done to determine which levels of the variable were significantly different.

For the variable privacy invasiveness, a One-Way ANOVA analysis using Games-Howell pairwise comparisons revealed that all three levels of privacy invasiveness (e.g. public profile, colleague notification, and boss friending employee) were significantly different from each other. Viewing a public profile (low level) was rated as higher in process fairness ( $M = 3.43$ ) than getting a SM post through a colleague (medium level) ( $M = 3.00$ ),  $p = .010$  and for high level of the boss finding the post by friending the employee ( $M = 2.65$ ),  $p = .042$ .

To test negative posts, a Welch t-test for independent samples ( $p = 0.010$ ) indicated that there is a difference in procedural fairness perceptions among posts that were low negative ( $M = 2.87$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ,  $n = 205$ ) and those that were high negative ( $M = 3.18$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ,  $n = 218$ ). In other words, the more negative the SM post was, the more fair the participants' perceptions were about monitoring that individual's social media account. However, looking at the eta squared, the effect size is very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.016$ ).

Table 3

*3x2x2 ANOVA Results for Procedural Fairness*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	66.391	11	6.036	4.176	.000	.101
Intercept	3785.144	1	3785.144	2618.810	.000	.864
Privacy Invasiveness	47.221	2	23.610	16.335	.000	.074
Negative Posts	11.959	1	11.959	8.274	.004	.020
Concerted	.969	1	.969	.671	.413	.002
Privacy Invasiveness * Negative Posts	.304	2	.152	.105	.900	.001
Privacy Invasiveness * Concerted	3.249	2	1.624	1.124	.326	.005
Negative Posts * Concerted	3.548	1	3.548	2.455	.118	.006
Privacy Invasiveness * Negative Posts * Concerted	.915	2	.457	.316	.729	.002
Error	594.046	411	1.445			
Total	4536.750	423				
Corrected Total	660.437	422				

**Decision Fairness.** As shown in Table 4, there was a significant main effect for privacy invasiveness and negative posts for decision fairness. However, similar to procedural fairness, there was no main effect for concerted activity.

Shown in Table 4, there was a significant interaction between concerted and negative posts; however, when looking closer at the eta square, the effect size is small ( $\eta^2 = 0.015$ ). In addition, when reanalyzing the ANOVA considering survey source (AMT or Facebook) the interaction dropped to non-significant ( $p = 0.058$ ). The p value is close to being significant, but after looking at the eta square ( $\eta^2 = 0.009$ ), it shows that the effect size is extremely small.

There was no significant interactions (2-way or 3-way) between privacy invasiveness, negative posts, concerted activity, and survey source for decision fairness.

**Post Hoc Analyses.** Pairwise comparisons for the main effect of privacy invasiveness revealed that only the low and high levels of privacy invasiveness were significantly different from each other. Viewing a public profile was rated as higher in process fairness ( $M = 2.75$ ), than the boss finding the post by friending the employee ( $M = 2.18$ ),  $p < .001$ .

To test the main effect of negative posts, a Welch t-test for independent samples ( $p = 0.010$ ) indicated that there is a difference in procedural fairness perceptions among posts that were low negative ( $M = 2.87$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ,  $n = 205$ ) and those that were high negative ( $M = 3.18$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ,  $n = 218$ ). In other words, the more negative the SM post was the more fair participants' perceptions about monitoring that individual's social media account. However, looking at the eta squared, the effect size is very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.016$ ).

Table 4

*3x2x2 ANOVA Results for Decision Fairness by Survey Source*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	104.882	23	4.560	3.045	.000	.151
Intercept	2275.812	1	2275.812	1519.640	.000	.794
Privacy Invasiveness	26.880	2	13.440	8.974	.000	.043
Negative Posts	40.830	1	40.830	27.264	.000	.065
Concerted	1.409	1	1.409	.941	.333	.002
Source	10.260	1	10.260	6.851	.009	.017
Privacy Invasiveness * Negative Posts	2.512	2	1.256	.839	.433	.004
Privacy Invasiveness * Concerted	3.786	2	1.893	1.264	.284	.006
Privacy Invasiveness * Source	.133	2	.066	.044	.957	.000
Negative Posts * Concerted	5.432	1	5.432	3.627	.058	.009
Negative Posts * Source	.077	1	.077	.051	.821	.000
Concerted * Source	.831	1	.831	.555	.457	.001
Privacy Invasiveness * Negative Posts * Concerted	.818	2	.409	.273	.761	.001
Privacy Invasiveness * Negative Posts * Source	.188	2	.094	.063	.939	.000
Privacy Invasiveness * Concerted * Source	4.594	2	2.297	1.534	.217	.008
Negative Posts * Concerted * Source	.033	1	.033	.022	.882	.000
Privacy Invasiveness * Negative Posts * Concerted * Source	5.998	2	2.999	2.002	.136	.010
Error	591.552	395	1.498			
Total	3258.000	419				
Corrected Total	696.434	418				

## Measures and Materials

### Dependent Variables.

#### *Fairness Perceptions.*

The dependent variable, fairness perceptions, was measured by three separate items relating to fairness perceptions, which were adapted from Kluesner's (2013) study. The participants rated the following three statements on a 5-point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree, 5-strongly agree).

- “This monitoring practice is fair to the employee”
- “The employer’s decision to do this monitoring practice is justified”
- “Terminating this employee based on this monitoring practice is justified.”

### Independent Variables.

#### *Privacy Invasiveness.*

Privacy invasiveness is described as the amount of effort the employer takes to find out information that would otherwise not be available to them. The levels of privacy invasiveness included: manager viewing only a public SNS profile, a manager uses SNS information that he asks a co-worker to bring to him, and the manager finds SNS information after sending a “friend request” to the employee. These are considered to be in order of least invasive to most invasive:

- Low: The employer did a public search on social media.
- Medium: The employer found out about an employee’s negative SNS posts because he overhears a co-worker talking about the post. The boss asks the co-worker to bring the post to him.

- High: The employer sent a “friend request” to the employee and the employee accepted so it wouldn’t be awkward at work. Then the employer monitored the employee's social networking profile.

***Legitimate Business Concern: Negative Posts.***

Legitimate business concern is defined as information found that was justification for firing an employee (legally defensible or not) because the post shows harm to organizational members who are extensions of the organization. It consisted of two different levels (low and high) as indicated below.

- Negative Posts:
  - Low: The employee posted on social media that their boss is awful and a lazy idiot.
  - High: The employee posted on social media that their boss and other organizational member are sexist and racist.

***Concerted Activity.***

Concerted Activity scenarios were divided into two categories: not concerted activity and concerted activity.

- Not Concerted: The employee posted negatively on social about their boss out of frustration.
- Concerted: The employee posted a negative comment on social media complaining that their boss is terrible and asking if his/her co-workers want to file a complaint

**Scenarios.** The scenarios used for this study were created by combining the identified levels of privacy invasiveness, negative posts, and concerted activity.



Descriptive in nature, each scenario illustrated a situation about a boss finding an employee's social media post. See Appendix H for scenarios.

**Manipulation Checks.** Four manipulation check items were created in order to make sure the participants were carefully reading through each question and not simply marking answers quickly. These are simple true/false questions similar to the ones Kluesner (2013) used in her study. The questions were randomized throughout the survey questions. See Appendix I.

**Social Networking Site Usage.** Participants were asked about which platforms of social media they have an account with (if applicable). Among those that answered "yes" to having at least one social media account, they were given an opportunity to report how often they visit social networking sites and how much time they spend on one of those sites. See Appendix J to review the items.

**Social Networking Site Intensity.** The Facebook Intensity scale was created to measure how personally connected the participant is with the social networking sites they use (Ellison, Steinfeld, & Lampe, 2007). The Cronbach's alpha has been reported at .83 (Ellison, Steinfeld, & Lampe, 2007). The complete scale has six items; however, for the purpose of this study only three of the items were utilized. Of the ones being omitted, two of the items ask the reader about their daily use of social media, which is redundant with the other scaled items in the demographics. The third item is outdated, which asks the reader if they are proud to be on social media. The three items that were retained inquire about the reader's personal connectedness to social media beyond the scope of social media usage. These three items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). See the Appendix K to review the scale.

**Employee Monitoring Experiences.** In order to understand the experience participants have had with SNS monitoring of current employees, two items were asked: (1) “Have you assisted with or conducted any type of current employee monitoring of social media platforms?” and (2) “How often does your current or previous job require you to monitor current employees?” The participants were only prompted to the second item if they indicated “yes” on the first question. See Appendix L to review the items.

**Participant Demographics.** See Appendix M-N to review the items asking participants about their job level, commitment to their organization, age, gender, and ethnicity.

## **Additional Results**

**Social Networking Site Usage Analyses.** A follow-up analysis looked at the extent participant's social media usage interacted with their perceptions for both process and decision fairness. It was suspected that participants with social media accounts would be more concerned with privacy, thus having lower fairness perceptions about social media monitoring. The items of interest were "How often do you visit a social networking site?" and "When you do visit social media, how much time do you spend on one social networking site?" See Appendix J, Q8-9.

Two One-Way Welch ANOVAs for both procedural and decision fairness were conducted to test the item "How often do you visit a social networking site?" There was no significant difference found for procedural ( $p = .660$ ) or for decision fairness ( $p = .148$ ). One Way ANOVAs were also conducted for the second question, "When you do visit social media, how much time do you spend on one social networking site?" There was no difference found between procedural fairness ( $p = .172$ ) and decision fairness ( $p = .541$ ).

**Qualitative Comments.** To assist interpretation and discussion of the quantitative data, one open-ended question was provided after the scenario that asked participants "Why did you react that way?" These responses provided further insight into the motivation behind the results, as addressed in the Discussion section. For a full descriptive presentation of the comments, see Appendix R.

## CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

This study revealed that the severity of privacy invasiveness and negative posts had an impact on employee's perceptions for both procedural and decision fairness as it relates to social media monitoring. Concerted activity did not have a significant impact on fairness perceptions of social media monitoring.

The main effect for privacy invasiveness indicates that the more invasive the monitoring practice, the less fair the practice is perceived by employees. This finding supports the first hypothesis which stated that as the level of monitoring practices becomes more invasive, employee fairness perceptions will be lower. A study by YouGov found a similar effect from its survey participants concluding that most employees view it a violation for their employers to have a right to monitor personal employee activity (Muhl, 2003). Also, a study by Deloitte showed that 53% of employees felt that their social media activity is not part of their employer's business ("Social Networking," 2009). In the current study, when participants were asked to explain their response, 42 comments (9.5% of total comments) or addressed the idea that what is said on social media, especially if the post was written off company time, should not impact work and employees should not be judged for their behavior on social media because it is meant to be personal. Furthermore, 13 of the participants mentioned freedom of speech and their belief that monitoring was a violation of that principle.

When asked about the low privacy invasive scenario (boss doing a public search), 8 comments stated that the boss was not in the wrong for finding publicly available information on social media, saying that it was "fair game" and the employee should have been more careful of what they posted online with the understanding that nothing

online is private. However, most interesting, is that these same individuals felt that the employee should not be fired for such an offense. One comment in particular is an excellent representative of this opinion:

I'm guessing this was a Facebook post. I personally view my Facebook account much like a journal of my life. You cannot persecute someone for their internal thoughts and feelings. I'm not saying that this person was wise for posting such a thing, knowing [his] boss was watching however.

These seemingly contradictory beliefs of knowing social media isn't private but still against SMS posts as a valid reason for termination further supports the decision to separate process and decision fairness into two separate constructs.

The second main effect found indicated that the two levels of negative posts (low and high) had a significant effect on participant's perceptions of both procedural and decision fairness; thus, supporting the second hypothesis. The more negative the post that the employee in the scenario wrote, the higher fairness perceptions were about monitoring the employee and firing the employee. Again, this result is supported by previous research. Deloitte LLP's 2009 Ethics & Workplace telephone survey showed that from a sample of 2,008 American, 74% of employees believed that social media could damage an employer's brand ("Social Networking," 2009). To this effect, in the open ended comments multiple statements were made that the "employee should have respect for his/her employer. A bad review could affect the company," "Associates represent their companies both inside and outside the office," and "If the person identified themselves as an employee of the company, it poorly reflects on the company

and the monitoring and firing is justified.” These individuals recognized the risk to the employer’s reputation saying to was “slander” and “very damaging.”

In regards to the third hypothesis, it was suspected that if the post was concerted, or rallying for change from fellow co-workers, then the participants would view social media monitoring as less fair. However, this was not found. This finding could be due to the fact that many employees/participants in this study are unaware of their rights to discuss workplace issues under the NLRA. The closest comment about any referral to concerted activity wrote about the employee’s protected right to pursue action against a racist and sexist boss. Despite the specific mention of the NLRA, there were a few comments referring to the company’s social media policy, which indicates that current organizations are taking the preventative steps in attempt to control employee SM behavior. Other comments suggested curiosity about the intention of the posting, whether it was a true statement or pure venting. Another individual questioned why freedom of expression should be different on social media versus venting at work.

Another possibility for why there wasn’t an effect for concerted activity, is that perhaps employees do not care whether a post is concerted, and the concern may be more about personal privacy and potentially negative consequences for the employee. Another explanation could be from a methodology artifact of expressing concerted activity in the scenarios. In future research, it would be beneficial to ask participants directly their awareness of laws such as the NLRA that protects employee’s rights to discuss work related conditions for the purpose of creating change. In the current study, participants were asked if their current organization had a union, but it is unclear whether those from

unionized organizations were more aware of the NLRA or its application to social media activities.

Another interesting finding was when considering participant source, there was a significant difference between participants from AMT and Facebook in terms of decision fairness. The mean score for decision fairness for Facebook participants was rated higher than those solicited on AMT. In other words, those from Facebook rated it fairer to fire an employee based on a social media post. This result was somewhat surprising, as it was assumed that Facebook participants may view firing an employee based on a SNS post as less fair since they are direct users of the social site. Perhaps this difference from the Facebook participants was because the participants were solicited through “friends” who may be viewed as a trusted source. This could have led to positive feelings because they were directly helping out a fellow social media connection and leading to being less skeptical. However, unlike this source effect on decision fairness, there was no source effect regarding perceptions of process fairness.

Besides the main effects, this study explored whether there would be significant interactions between the three independent variables and its effect on fairness perceptions. There was only one interaction that showed significance between negative posts and concerted activity. However, the effect size was quite small ( $\eta^2 = 0.015$ ). In addition, when reanalyzing the ANOVA considering source (AMT or Facebook) the interaction dropped to non-significance. Although it approached significance, again the eta square was extremely small ( $\eta^2 = 0.009$ ), signifying that any such potential effect would have a miniscule impact in the population. This was an exploratory study and it was unclear if the multiple levels and combination of levels for the independent variables

would affect participants' fairness perceptions. While no significant interactions were found in this study, future research should further explore potential interactions between negative posts, privacy invasiveness, and concerted activity.

This study was exploratory, since little research has previously addressed the impact of social media monitoring for current employees. In addition to our primary findings, another strength of this study is that the measures created for this study showed good reliability. The success of the measures is twofold as these findings were similar to Kluesner's (2013) thesis, which used variations of the items to study perceptions of screening applicant social media profiles.

A limitation of this study are that the participants were from a wide variety of work environments (and some were unemployed or students), therefore generalizability parameters may be difficult to precisely define until further replication studies have been established. Furthermore, since participants solicited from Facebook acted as a convenience sample, the demographics were less diverse. Another consideration is that there might be some historical bias from the participants when answering the scenarios based on the information in the scenarios and their own work-related history with social media. It is likely, that the participants have heard or have experienced first-hand a termination or corrective action of a co-worker because of social media activity. Even they themselves may have received discipline for their SNS activity.

Future research should consider using other variables of legitimate business concerns, such as finding ADA, GINA, and Title VII personal information about employees to test if these other influences have an effect on fairness perceptions concerning social media monitoring. More considerations may include the boss finding



risqué pictures of inappropriate behavior, information that contradicts workers compensation leave, misidentifying information, and slander against the organization's brand name. Another interesting study would be to research workplace safety concerns as it relates to negligent retention of a hostile employee. Moreover, whether posts are written on personal time or written on company time may also be a worthwhile addition to this research. Furthermore, it would be interesting to see whether or not perceptions are different for posts that are written using a work computer versus a personal computer. In conclusion, there is great potential for future research in the area of employee monitoring.

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## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A: SURVEY SOURCE AND PARTICIPANTS BY SCENARIO

### Survey Source

	Frequency	Percent
AMT	252	58.1
Facebook	182	41.9
Total	434	

### Participants by Scenario for Procedural Fairness

	Frequency
Scenario 1	35
Scenario 2	41
Scenario 3	30
Scenario 4	32
Scenario 5	32
Scenario 6	48
Scenario 7	39
Scenario 8	32
Scenario 9	33
Scenario 10	30
Scenario 11	36
Scenario 12	35
Total	423

### Participants by Scenario for Decision Fairness

	Frequency
Scenario 1	34
Scenario 2	40
Scenario 3	29
Scenario 4	32
Scenario 5	32
Scenario 6	48
Scenario 7	39
Scenario 8	32
Scenario 9	33
Scenario 10	30
Scenario 11	35
Scenario 12	35
Total	419

## APPENDIX B: AGE, GENDER, AND ETHNICITY

### Age

	Frequency	Percent
18-24	102	23.5
25-34	172	39.6
35-50	93	21.4
51 years or older	66	15.2
Missing	1	0.2
Total	433	

### Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	140	32.3
Female	291	67.1
Other	0	0
Missing	3	0.7
Total	434	

### Ethnicity

	Frequency	Percent
White	362	83.4
African American	28	6.5
Asian	16	3.7
Hispanic/Latino	14	3.2
Native American	3	.7
Mixed Ethnicity	9	2.1
Other	2	.5
Total	434	

*Note.* Multiple responses were permitted.

### APPENDIX C: ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

#### Job Level

	Frequency	Percent
Unemployed, seeking employment	34	7.8
Unemployed, not seeking employment	25	5.8
Part-time employee	80	18.4
Full-time employee	251	57.8
Student	44	10.1
Total	434	

*Note.* Multiple responses were permitted.

#### “I am satisfied with my current (or last) boss”

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	21	4.8
Disagree	37	8.5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	41	9.4
Agree	177	40.8
Strongly Agree	130	30.0
N/A	28	6.5
Total	434	

#### “I feel loyal to my current (or past) organization”

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	20	4.6
Disagree	41	9.4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	53	12.2
Agree	178	41.0
Strongly Agree	122	28.1
N/A	18	4.1
Missing	2	0.5
Total	432	

“If employed, does your current company have a union?”

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	46	10.6
No	281	64.7
I don't know	28	6.5
N/A	77	17.7
Missing	2	0.5
Total	432	

## APPENDIX D: SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE DEMOGRAPHICS

### Personal Accounts with Social Networking

	Frequency	Percent
Facebook	417	96.1
Twitter	223	51.4
LinkedIn	188	43.3
Instagram	196	45.2
Other	34	7.8

*Note.* Multiple responses were permitted.

### Frequency of Visits on Social Networking Sites

	Frequency	Percent
Once a month or less	17	3.9
A few times a month	14	3.2
Once a week	13	3
A few times a week	63	14.5
Daily	325	74.5

### Average Time Spent on Social Networking Sites

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 10 minutes	156	35.9
10-30 minutes	197	45.4
31-60 minutes	33	7.6
More than 1 hour, but less than 2 hours	23	5.3
More than 2 hours	23	5.3

### Average Scores on Social Media Intensity Scale

	Frequency	Percent
1.00-1.67	40	9.9
2.00-2.67	90	22.2
3.00-3.67	141	34.8
4.00-4.67	116	28.7
5.00	18	4.1
Total	405	100
Missing	29	

## APPENDIX E: MONITORING EXPERIENCE

### Type of Monitoring Conducted or Assisted

	Frequency	Percent
Surveillance Videos	65	15
Employee Email	24	5.5
Social Media Sites	38	8.8
Other	12	2.8
Not Applicable (N/A)	329	75.8
Total	434	

### Frequency of Monitoring

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely Required	54	12.4
Occasionally Required	35	8.1
Frequently Required	16	3.7
Total	105	



**APPENDIX F: CURRENT EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCES**

	Frequency	Percent
Asked to disclose login information		
Yes	13	3
No	403	92.9
Not sure	5	1.2
Not Applicable (N/A)	12	2.8
Asked to disclose browser history		
Yes	16	3.7
No	393	90.6
Not sure	12	2.8
Not Applicable (N/A)	10	2.3
Personally been fired from a job based on social networking site profile		
Yes	7	1.6
No	378	87.1
Not Sure	10	2.3
Not Applicable (N/A)	37	8.5
Friend or family member has been fired based on social networking profile		
Yes	53	12.2
No	312	71.9
Not Sure	49	11.3
Not Applicable (N/A)	19	4.4
Received job offer because of LinkedIn profile		
Yes	23	5.3
No	315	72.6
Not Sure	35	8.1
Not Applicable (N/A)	59	13.6
More than one Facebook page		
Yes	44	10.1
No	373	85.9
Not Sure	4	0.9
Not Applicable (N/A)	10	2.3
Carefully think about what is posted on social media		
Yes	358	82.5
No	55	12.7
Not Sure	8	1.9
Not Applicable (N/A)	10	2.3

### **APPENDIX G: WELCOME LETTER**

Welcome to this study! The purpose of this study is to understand current employees' fairness perceptions about their employers' monitoring their social media activity (i.e. Facebook and Twitter).

The survey is anonymous and participation is completely voluntary. The survey is about 20 questions long and should take about 15 minutes to complete. To be eligible for this survey, you must be at least 18 years old and a United States citizen.

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study! If you have questions or concerns, please contact the principal investigator, Kelsey Bishop, at [kmc5c@mtmail.mtsu.edu](mailto:kmc5c@mtmail.mtsu.edu).

If you agree to the terms above, please click the forward key below to be directed to the survey.

## APPENDIX H: SCENARIOS

Each participant read one scenario (randomly assigned) and selected their level of agreement with each statement in the matrix below:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The monitoring practice is fair to the employee.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The employer's decision to do this monitoring practice is justified.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Terminating this employee based on this monitoring practice is justified.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Scenario 1

Privacy Invasiveness	Negative Posts	Concerted Activity
Low	Low	Not Concerted

Doing a public search on social media, the boss found negative posts that one employee said about them online, saying “My boss is awful. Such a lazy idiot!”

### Scenario 2

Privacy Invasiveness	Negative Posts	Concerted Activity
Low	High	Not Concerted

Doing a public search on social media, the boss found negative posts that one employee said online about them, saying “My boss is a racist and sexist pig!! Do you wake up being a total asshole or is it something you have to warm up to throughout the day? ...Sad thing is that this whole place is crawling with these losers.”

### Scenario 3

Privacy Invasiveness	Negative Posts	Concerted Activity
Medium	Low	Not Concerted

The boss overheard Corie talking about a post that Jordan wrote on social media that said, “My boss is awful. Such a lazy idiot!” The boss asked Corie to bring him the post so he could confront Jordan.

### Scenario 4

Privacy Invasiveness	Negative Posts	Concerted Activity
Medium	High	Not Concerted

The boss overheard Corie talking about a post that Jordan wrote on social media that said, “My boss is a racist and sexist pig!! Do you wake up being a total asshole or is it something you have to warm up to throughout the day? ...Sad thing is that this whole place is crawling with these losers.” The boss asked Corie to bring him the post so he could confront Jordan.

### Scenario 5

Privacy Invasiveness	Negative Posts	Concerted Activity
High	Low	Not Concerted

Jordan’s boss sent him a “friend request” on social media. Jordan felt it would be awkward to not friend his boss, so he accepted the friendship. Sometime after accepting,

Jordan was confronted by his boss about a post he had written that read, “My boss is awful. Such a lazy idiot!”

### Scenario 6

Privacy Invasiveness	Negative Posts	Concerted Activity
High	High	Not Concerted

Jordan’s boss sent him a “friend request” on social media. Jordan felt it would be awkward to not friend his boss, so he accepted the friendship. Sometime after accepting, Jordan was confronted by his boss about a post he had written that read, “My boss is a racist and sexist pig!! Do you wake up being a total asshole or is it something you have to warm up to throughout the day? ...Sad thing is that this whole place is crawling with these losers.”

### Scenario 7

Privacy Invasiveness	Negative Posts	Concerted Activity
Low	Low	Concerted

Doing a public search on social media, the boss found negative posts that one employee said about them online, saying “My boss is awful. Such a lazy idiot! Who wants to join me and file a complaint?”

### Scenario 8

Privacy Invasiveness	Negative Posts	Concerted Activity
Low	High	Concerted

Doing a public search on social media, the boss found negative posts that one employee said about them online, saying “My boss is a racist and sexist pig!! Do you wake up being a total asshole or is it something you have to warm up to throughout the day? ...Sad

thing is that this whole place is crawling with these losers. Who wants to join me and file a complaint? ”

### Scenario 9

Privacy Invasiveness	Negative Posts	Concerted Activity
Medium	Low	Concerted

The boss overheard Corie talking about a post that Jordan wrote on social media that said, “My boss is awful. Such a lazy idiot! Who wants to join me and file a complaint?” The boss asked Corie to bring him the post so he could confront Jordan.

### Scenario 10

Privacy Invasiveness	Negative Posts	Concerted Activity
Medium	High	Concerted

The boss overheard Corie talking about a post that Jordan wrote on social media that said, “My boss is a racist and sexist pig!! Do you wake up being a total asshole or is it something you have to warm up to throughout the day? ...Sad thing is that this whole place is crawling with these losers. Who wants to join me and file a complaint?” The boss asked Corie to bring him the post so he could confront Jordan.

### Scenario 11

Privacy Invasiveness	Negative Posts	Concerted Activity
High	Low	Concerted

Jordan’s boss sent him a “friend request” on social media. Jordan felt it would be awkward to not friend his boss, so he accepted the friendship. Sometime after accepting, Jordan was confronted by his boss about a post he had written that read, “My boss is awful. Such a lazy idiot! Who wants to join me and file a complaint?”

**Scenario 12**

Privacy Invasiveness	Negative Posts	Concerted Activity
High	High	Concerted

Jordan's boss sent him a "friend request" on social media. Jordan felt it would be awkward to not friend his boss, so he accepted the friendship. Sometime after accepting, Jordan was confronted by his boss about a post he had written that read, "My boss is a racist and sexist pig!! Do you wake up being a total asshole or is it something you have to warm up to throughout the day? ...Sad thing is that this whole place is crawling with these losers. Who wants to join me and file a complaint?"

**APPENDIX I: MANIPULATION CHECKS**

Q2 The year in which you are taking the survey is 2015.

- True
- False

Q3 You currently live in United States of America.

- True
- False

Q4 This survey is conducted on Mechanical Turk/Facebook.

- True
- False

Q5 This survey is about employee's perspective on their employer's monitoring their social media sites.

- True
- False



**APPENDIX J: SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE USAGE**

Q6 Do you currently have a social networking site account (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.)?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

Q7 Which of the following social networking sites do you currently have an account with? (please check all that apply)

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- Others\_\_\_\_\_

Q8 How often do you visit a social networking site?

- Once a month or less
- A few times a month
- Once a week
- A few times a week
- Daily

Q9 When you do visit social media, how much time do you spend on one social networking site?

- Less than 10 minutes
- 10-30 minutes

- 31-60 minutes
- 1-2 hours
- 2-3 hours
- More than 3 hours

### APPENDIX K: SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE INTENSITY

Q10 Please select your level of agreement for the following statements regarding your social networking site usage.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel out of touch when I have not logged onto a social networking site for a while.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I am part of the social networking site communities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would be sorry if social networking sites were shut down.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### APPENDIX L: EMPLOYEE MONITORING EXPERIENCE

Q11 Of the following, which type(s) of employee monitoring have you either assisted with or conducted?

- Surveillance video
- Email screening
- Social networking site screening
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- N/A

If N/A Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

Q12 How often does your current or previous job require you to monitor current employees?

- Employee monitoring is rarely required in my current/previous job
- Employee monitoring is occasionally required in my current/previous job
- Employee monitoring is frequently required in my current/previous job

Q13 The following are items asking about your experience with social networking sites.

Please select the appropriate response for each item.

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Have you been asked to disclose your login information by an employer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you been asked to disclose your browser history by an employer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you believe you have been fired from a job based on information an employer found on your social networking site profile(s)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you believe a friend or family member has been fired from a job based on information an employer found on their social networking site profile(s)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you believe that you have received a job or a promotion because of your LinkedIn profile?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have more than one Facebook page (e.g. profile for work and a private profile for family and friends only)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you carefully think about what you post on social media because it is possible anyone could look at your public information?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**APPENDIX M: ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS**

Q17 Please select which job level(s) is most representative of your primary job position.

- Unemployed, not seeking employment
- Unemployed, seeking employment
- Part-Time Employee
- Full-Time Employee
- Student

Q18 How much do you agree with this statement: "I am satisfied with my current boss."  
If unemployed, how much do you agree with the statement: "I was satisfied with my last boss."

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Disagree or Agree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- N/A

Q19 How much do you agree with this statement: "I feel loyal to my current organization."

If unemployed, how much do you agree with the statement: "I felt loyal to my past organization?"

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Disagree or Agree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- N/A

Q20 If employed, does your current company have a union?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- N/A

**APPENDIX N: DEMOGRAPHICS**

Q14 What is your age?

- Under 18 years old
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-50
- 51 years or older

Q15 What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

Q16 What is your ethnicity?

- White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
- Black or African American
- Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
- Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
- American Indian/Native American
- Mixed; parents from two different ethnic groups
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX O: CORRELATIONS**

	Social Networking Site Frequency	Employee Monitoring Experience	Frequency of Employee Monitoring	Age
Employee Monitoring Experience	.028			
Frequency of Employee Monitoring	-.127	.214*		
Age	-.126*	.014	.127	
Social Networking Site Intensity	.390**	.141	.005	.035

*Note.*

*\*\*.* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*.\** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



	Procedural Fairness	Decision Fairness	I am satisfied with my current (or last) boss.	I feel loyal to my current (or last) company.	You have been fired from a job based SNS	A friend or family member has been fired from a job based on SNS
I am satisfied with my current (or last) boss.	.105*	.093				
I feel loyal to my current (or last) company.	.103*	.135**	.578**			
You have been fired from a job based SNS	.011	.019	.073	.056		
A friend or family member has been fired from a job based on SNS	.016	.036	.044	.047	.261**	
Does your company have a union?	-.028	-.015	.133**	.054	.034	.059

*Note.*

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

**APPENDIX P: SCALE RELIABILITY**

## Not Concerted Scales Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha if "Firing" Item Excluded
Public Profile, Low Negative	.885	.899
Public Profile, High Negative	.881	.967
Co-worker Notification, Low Negative	.819	.894
Co-worker Notification, High Negative	.835	.923
Boss Friend, Low Negative	.783	.892
Boss Friend, High Negative	.863	.906

## Concerted Scales Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha if "Firing" Item Excluded
Public Profile, Low Negative	.850	.899
Public Profile, High Negative	.789	.863
Co-worker Notification, Low Negative	.871	.954
Co-worker Notification, High Negative	.831	.883
Boss Friend, Low Negative	.822	.867
Boss Friend, High Negative	.791	.926

**APPENDIX Q: ANOVA INTERACTION RESULTS**

Procedural Fairness	Sig.	$\eta^2$
Privacy Invasiveness * Negative Posts	0.900	0.001
Privacy Invasiveness * Concerted	0.326	0.005
Negative Posts * Concerted	0.118	0.006
Privacy Invasiveness * Negative Posts * Concerted	0.729	0.002
Decision Fairness	Sig.	$\eta^2$
Privacy Invasiveness * Negative Posts	0.384	0.005
Privacy Invasiveness * Concerted	0.145	0.009
Negative Posts * Concerted	0.014	0.015
Privacy Invasiveness * Negative Posts * Concerted	0.664	0.002

## APPENDIX R: QUALITATIVE COMMENTS

### Number of Qualitative Comments by Scenario

	Frequency
Scenario 1	31
Scenario 2	41
Scenario 3	28
Scenario 4	29
Scenario 5	32
Scenario 6	46
Scenario 7	36
Scenario 8	29
Scenario 9	33
Scenario 10	29
Scenario 11	33
Scenario 12	32
Total	399

#### Scenario 1 Comments

---

The employee should have known better than to post such a personal attack on such a public forum. Everyone who uses social media should be aware that nothing you post is sacred. There are always ways of finding out what you put out there. The employer did a "public" search so it was not set to private

---

Would need further evidence on the employee's job performance.

---

An employer or business that chooses to monitor their employees has every right to do so. A company does not want dishonest, idiotic, and untrustworthy employees under their company name. Social media is a great way to monitor this. If something shouldn't be said, don't write it down.

---

I believe some type of meeting or confrontation would be OK, but to immediately fire the person because of speech seems overboard.

---

One should not be allowed to demean another employee at a company they work for

---

I reacted this way because you shouldn't use social media as an outlet to bash your job or boss, because you still represent the company at the end of the day .

---

People should expect social media posts to be publicly accessible, but employers shouldn't pry into social media of their employees.

---

If the employer was doing a public search, it's not their fault that they came across this comment. It would be wrong if they fired the employee because of this comment.

---

Employee should know not to post negative comments, but the evaluation of an employee should be based on job performance, not comments about the boss unless they were posted at work or the comments were said at work also.

---

---

Anyone has the right to publicly search anything. If you chose to post an opinion publicly, you must accept the repercussions and consequences of your actions. However, someone should not be fired for saying one mean thing. The boss should simply confront the employee about the complaint.

---

If you post something, be responsible. If your boss sees it, it is your fault for posting it on the World Wide Web. Is it fire worthy? Not that statement alone. If there were other threats, then possibly. They are a reflection on the boss's business.

---

The information is public, which can be seen by anyone. The employee should make it private if they do not wish for others to see their comments. Legally, however, they can only be fired if they speak publically against a company, not an employer in particular.

---

All depends on the office rules about social media---I responded based on my office's social rules.

---

If you post a mean comment for all of Facebook to see then you can't get mad about someone approaching you about it.

---

Being human means I will react and have a justified opinion of someone being a backstabber to his/her boss.

---

Because a business has a reputation to withhold. It's one thing when the community is saying awful things but when it's your own employees then it is worse. You have the chance to fix that problem

---

If you are employed then you should be grateful you have a job unless you are being treated unfair or being discriminated against there is no reason to be bad mouthing anyone else.

---

An employee should not complain about his or her job/boss on social media. The problem should be brought up with the supervisor or human resources.

---

I think social media can influence a boss' decision when they are in the hiring process, but social media monitoring current employees is an invasion of privacy. Firing would be unethical.

---

I think it's okay if the boss just happens upon it; however, it doesn't seem fair for the boss to be searching out employees' comments or making decisions based on them.

---

Freedom of speech.

---

It doesn't seem right that the employer would be monitoring their employees' social media habits outside of the office. It would be one thing if the employee mentioned the company by name, but just a broad generalization of their "boss" isn't something that they should be penalized by.

---

Because an employer shouldn't be able to fire you for something said or done outside of work.

---

**I THINK THINGS LIKE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS SHOULDN'T BE TIED TO ONE'S PERFORMANCE AT WORK.**

---

social media should not be monitored because that is personal space and has nothing to do with your work performance

---

Because people should be entitled to their opinions without fear of repercussions or reprisals.

---

---

A person should be judged by the work they do not by how vent about their work to friends! Probably not wise to vent on line with your posts public but everyone gets upset about boss or coworkers at some point! If it doesn't affect their quality of it shouldn't be cause to fire them!

---

I think the boss has no business nosing around in personal emails or posts

---

I guess they can monitor since it's in the public domain but the whole thing stinks on some level. It's totalitarian in nature and just an excuse to gain more control over employees.

---

It is unfair for the employer to randomly monitor the employees private social media account without prior notice.

---

I believe that people are entitled to some privacy, and definitely need to have their opinions protected because it is freedom of speech. There is way too much emphasis placed on political correctness these days.

---

Everything that goes on outside of work should be kept private. Before social media, the only way for people to express their opinions about work (whether positive or negative) would be actual social interaction which would be kept private. So why should his be any different?

---

Because, although it is a public social media account, it is still my profile not his. I can say what I wish. My boss knows sometimes he may annoy me and I may voice that. Facebook is more of a diary than a billboard.

---

## Scenario 2 Comments

---

You have to be careful what you do and don't say on social media. Everything you post that is not restricted by your privacy settings is fair game for anyone to see and use. Don't take your opinions to social media if you don't want to be held responsible for them.

---

The employer didn't have to do anything intensive to locate the employee's post and the content was specifically about an individual and defamatory.

---

The employee's post is unprofessional and reflects poorly on the employer and employee. The employee is using a public forum to vent and it's acceptable for the employer to view this.

---

people need to be responsible for their actions and know that there could be consequences for what they say and do

---

It would depend on their social media policy in their employee handbook.

---

If the employer was able to find the post so easily, then the employee deserves to suffer the consequences.

---

I think that a public post like that is threatening and inappropriate.

---

I think if an employee has something bad to say about their boss, it should be kept private, or ideally, dealt with face to face with the boss. public comments that are visible to hundreds of people are "fair game"

---

---

I think he should be warned that his postings are being monitored. He should be told that such negativity will not be tolerated. He should be asked to remove the negative comments and if he is a good worker I would give him another chance to save his job.

---

Because it is the employee's fault and responsibility once they put that online, that is public information and anyone that wants to, including their boss, can see it.

---

Social media is not a diary. The employee needs to go to the boss or HR with concerns.

---

What we say online is public and can affect others, either positively or negatively. If something is public and affects our employer, they are fair in bringing it to the workplace.

---

The employer has as much right as anyone to use social media to find out about a person, however, I think that unless it's a criminal activity or unsafe practice taking place it would be difficult to use that as reasoning for firing an employee.

---

The employee made this post publicly, so it's his own fault that the post was able to be traced back to him, and the boss is within his rights to look at public media. I'm not sure if this is enough to be a firable offense, but a reprimand is definitely reasonable.

---

That is slander on a public forum.

---

It's no different than gossiping to someone about your opinions on someone. I don't think it should be a fire-able offence, but if you're going to share a negative opinion publicly - expect people to hear it. Expect people to judge you for it. If they work alongside you or not.

---

If they are tweeting about their business like that, then they'll probably lose customers and you definitely don't want that. That's why I think it's justified to check your employees social media

---

If someone is that ignorant to post something so inflammatory about their work place, they deserve to be fired.

---

If it's public on the internet, it can be used against you at work.

---

I think the boss has the right to view someone else's opinion but don't feel boss has right to fire someone unless a contract was signed.... Freedom of speech. The boss has the right to discuss situation with employee to find out why they feel that way.

---

Hopefully both parties can learn from posing

---

I agree on monitoring the employees. Not so much what they have to say, but if they were to get robbed. Or to see if an employee was stealing.

---

Freedom of speech?

---

Even though it is within ones rights to say what they want, they should realize they represent a company and anything said can make the company look bad. However, I don't think they should be fired for stating opinion.

---

Employees always need to be accountable for their actions whether or not they are on the clock. Their behavior reflects on their employer at all times.

---

Because the boss was doing a general public search and the employee had that statement on their Facebook page for all to see, I think that the boss was justified in searching and finding this information. I think that a warning would be more justified than firing based off this information.

---

Because obviously the employee hates his boss and the people he works with. If I were the boss, I would want people that don't have THAT negative of an attitude

---

---

toward me and the other people. It's ok to disagree, but the employee was over the top belligerent.

---

Associates represent their companies both inside and outside the office. This associate chose to publicly criticize both the boss and the company, therefore it is acceptable for the boss to take action

---

An employee should have respect for his/her employer. A bad review could affect the company and, in turn, the employee's job. It is important for an employer to see what people are saying about the company so that necessary changes can be made.

---

If the employee is not happy with his/her work environment then he/she does not need to be there.

---

I feel that social media activity inherently comes with a risk of having one's words being known publicly, and the individual must be held responsible for what they say.

---

This person would not be an employee that I would want at my company.

---

If the person identified themselves as an employee of the company, it poorly reflects on the company and the monitoring and firing is justified. If they did not identify as an employee, it is not the employer's business.

---

BECAUSE I CANS SEE THE SITUATION BOTH WAYS I DO NOT AGREE WITH THE FIRING JUST BECAUSE WE HAVE FREEDOM OF SPEECH BUT IF I SEE A POST THATS SKETCHY THEN AS A SUPERVISOR I WOULD BE ON GUARD

---

It is unfair to fire her for what this person did in her personal time.

---

As long as they were off the clock when they posted this response, it doesn't really matter. The employer doesn't have to monitor and the employee doesn't have to post their every thought. They shouldn't be fired for this so long as they don't name their oss. That's slander.

---

Social media can be a knee jerk reaction and many people would couch their response differently if they knew their boss was looking!

---

I believe social media should be considered separate from the workplace. People act differently in their free time versus in a professional atmosphere.

---

because it is an opinion held outside of work. That said, I would never post something like this, because even if I feel that monitoring is unfair, I would never sacrifice my career for the ability to post this sort of thing.

---

Your personal life is none of your employer's business. E-Stalking is rude and invasive. It doesn't matter that the person is bitching about their job. Everyone bitches about their jobs.

---

it is social media the bosses need to stay off of it. the employee should not accept their employer but still it is like gossip

---

It is a freedom that is protected by our constitution

---

### Scenario 3 Comments

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The boss overheard the conversation, and wanted confirmation. The employee can't be fired for an opinion, tho

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---

Posts of that nature are not professional and are immature of the employee

---

It was unclear if the post happened during working hours or during company time.

---

I work in law enforcement and defense attorneys have been known to search facebook to undermine cases.

---

I believe there is no turning back from monitoring others on the internet in the workplace. That information is too public to dismiss. This doesn't sound like an offence to get fired over though.

---

An employee should not be posting negative comments about their company, fellow employees, or boss, where it could be explicitly known who the post is about. It can cause damage internally & externally to the company &/or those people. I do not however believe it should be a fire-able offense.

---

A post like that on social media gets around, and it could really tarnish the boss' reputation. It is not fair to do that to someone and unprofessional.

---

I am neutral on the subject of eaves dropping, because the scenario says over heard, but it did not say if his was accidental or intentional. I can accept the supervisor collecting information if he became aware of it. I do not agree with the person being fired for expressing his opinions.

---

Generally, employers have the right to monitor their employees' use of the Internet (including visiting social networking sites, checking e-mails, and instant messaging)

---

Because the person in power should have to confront the person who is posting on social media but at the same time this is a reason that social media is bad

---

It is not fair to the third party employee, Corie, as it puts her in an uncomfortable situation. However, Jordan's comment shows that he is not a team player and has no respect for his authority figures.

---

The boss has every right to ask about the post. It isn't like he/she was stalking their employee's page or anything but it would be going to far to fire the employee over it.

---

I don't feel they need to be fired. A punishment would be appropriate such as being written up or suspended.

---

This situation is not a reason for someone to lose their job. Sitting down and talking out the problem of why the employee feels this way would be a better option.

---

The words did not affect his job performance.

---

the employees work results/production should be the deciding factor on whether to fire him or not

---

In most cases, We can't hold associates accountable at work for what they post on their facebook.

---

If someone is not friends on FB with their boss then it is not their bosses business what they write on their FB. I believe that you should be cautious about what you write on FB only because you do have employers checking up on you and it could lead to problems for you at work.

---

Even though the information is public, it is not an employers job to try and monitor or sensor their own employees. The responsibility of a worker lies in being productive and successful at their occupation, and not how he or she might feel outside of the working environment.

---

Because the boss didn't even see it

---

---

As long as the employee did not post while at work. Just because someone doesn't like you doesn't mean they should get fired. The employee should know better than to post something like that, but freedom of speech

---

What is posted on Facebook is not the employers business.

---

I'm entitled to my opinion & they can't fire me for making a statement like that.

---

Because it is snooping into someone personal space.

---

What was the reason for the employees remark? Employees shouldn't make remarks concerning their jobs, employers & co-workers.

---

The employer did not see the post, therefore the employer has no right to punish the employee based on this post.

---

I do not believe that social media and personal life should have anything to do with job performance. Clearly, she was annoyed and shouldn't have said that, but personal thoughts on personal life related pages should not effect work.

---

Even though the post was negative, I felt it wasn't his place to question Corie about Jordan's post.

---

#### Scenario 4 Comments

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This is vile speech and certainly should not be done on company's time.

---

Because I feel that it's wrong to talk badly about your employer online. You are in a professional relationship with them, and dependent of their income - why would you bad-mouth them in public? Even if they do something you don't agree with, you should confront them professionally, not online.

---

You should not talk bad about your Boss no matter how much you dislike them. You should leave work at work its not for the Internet to see.

---

Well, the boss overheard another employee gossiping. It wasn't intentional monitoring.

---

The Boss overheard the info rather than gathered the info from a monitoring method

---

If the employee is on social media at work and using the company's computer, then the employer has the right to see. However, their should be warnings first before firing.

---

If I were the boss I wouldn't want any one of my employees talking like that. Its not about the personal attacks but the fact that he obviously isn't a team player and hates the company.

---

I think that bad-mouthing your boss on social media is the same as doing it in front of his face because it is a known fact that what you post on social media isn't confidential by any means.

---

I reacted this way because I didn't know enough about the situation to justify firing someone. For example, was the this the first time the reader was caught using social media, was the post made at the workplace or was it just being read at work?

---

I reacted that way because I believe part of being an employee is respecting your workplace.

---

I assume the poster has where he works on his page (as most people do). It is also libel and can hurt the image of the company. I dislike my boss but I won't go leaving it out

---

---

there for all to see on social media. The man should be fired for being stupid enough to post that online.

---

Employees need to watch what they post on social media, since that stuff is public. The posts on there are in the same domain and have the same effect as spoken words. No, I don't think you should be fired for an opinion, no matter how disagreeable. It all has to do with reasonable free speech.

---

Because that is your boss you should not talk negative about people.

---

As a boss I have been in this situation. I hear a lot of post from other employees, I can't react to all of them. I do confront employees if I feel it could cause future problems.

---

The boss has a right to confront the employee but not fire them.

---

The boss should be able to fire her if she is talking bad about him or her.

---

It is unfair to have another employee discuss something they did not write without the person who posted present.

---

The employer should not monitor an employee private social media as long as he doesn't access using company equipment.

---

should be spoken to the person who had posted this

---

While it may be silly to post such things on the internet when they are tied to your identity, there is no reason for the invasion of privacy by a boss. In addition, the invasion of privacy should never justify any legal action.

---

There's a private world and a business world and if Jordan is working fine as an employee, there's no issue.

---

The employer needs to do his or her own research and find the information instead of putting another employee in the middle of the decision. If the employer is unable to find the information then they may need to find another approach. The situation stated can't be the only reason to fire someone.

---

It is not the boss's business what she does outside of work. As long as she didn't state his name or personal information about the boss it's fair game and he has no reach outside of the office.

---

I think that social media is a way for us to vent. We may feel strongly about a situation or person at one time and will want to vent, but holding that over someone feels like you are babysitting which is inappropriate.

---

I do not think it is okay to monitor your employees online actions, but I also don't know that it would be worth keeping an employee that you are aware hates everyone. Would they work as hard? Not as much as they would if they enjoyed their coworkers and boss. Still, this monitoring is too invasive.

---

Because as long as the employee shows due respect at workplace, the boss doesn't have any rights to take action. Yes, he of course may have any personal opinion.

---

**BECAUSE HE SHOULD NEVER TALK ABOUT PEOPLE HE WORKS WITH LIKE THAT AND IF HE REALLY THINKS LIKE THAT HE'S NOT HAPPY IN HIS JOB ANYWAYS AND PROBABLY ISN'T DOING GOOD QUALITY WORK.**

---

Work and personal life should be separate, people should be able to act and say whatever they want outside of work without it affecting work

---

social media and work should be kept entirely separate

---

## Scenario 5 Comments

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Ultimately, it was the employee's fault for accepting the friend request which they did not have to accept. It was also their fault for making the post about their boss.

---

If you don't want your employer to see any private information, then keep it private and not "friend" your employer.

---

I think it's fine to monitor employees, but don't think they should be fired for their online activity.

---

I don't think it would be fair to terminate an employee due to the post. The employee could have been having a rough day at work and took it out on social media. Also, the employee never referred to his boss by name in the post.

---

He should monitor what he says on social media as a professional. However, I don't think firing him for it would be the right thing to do.

---

He could have not accepted the friendship. Firing is not necessary. Social media is not a place to state negativity.

---

Employers shouldn't be able to fire employees over social media posts in most cases

---

Because Jordan didn't have to friend his boss, and he should have known that if he did, his boss could see his profile and his posts.

---

The person shouldn't have added his boss and if hes going to add his boss, don't say bad things about the boss. That was silly

---

just for the benefits of the employees which is the priority that matters in the first place.

---

It seems right. The employee should be weary of what he puts on websites.

---

The comment the boss was upset over was on the employee's personal social media, so it's not fair to punish him for something done privately and off company time.

---

I can see from an employer's perspective how "friending" someone may help them get to know their employees better. However, employee's should be able to say things (as long as it's not threatening or illegal) without having to worry about someone else criticizing them.

---

The boss didn't have to request to be the employees friend.

---

There's a professional life and a personal life and we know certain things are allowed to happen in each one.

---

There is a tradition of common law and written law that employers should not be acting this way in general. Bosses getting into personal lives is nothing new; modern social media simply makes it easier. Common sense, laws, and etiquette should have this overed already.

---

The boss shouldn't have wanted to friend an employee with the motive of gleaning knowledge in this way.

---

Social media should not be monitored by your employer

---

It was a choice by both parties to friend each other on facebook. When both agree to those terms, transparency becomes part of the agreement. There should not be any reprocussions to the employee based on his personal opinion on his personal page.

---

Freedom of speech even if it is via social media. It was the employees opinion and does not justify any punishment.

---

---

A person's legal activities outside of the workplace should not be monitored nor policed by the workplace no more than their religious practices or voting activities should be monitored or controlled by an employer. It's a simple matter of personal freedom.

---

It has nothing to do with work related website, it's a public site and freedom of speech is an American right.

---

I feel the employee should not "friend" their boss. Especially if they use the social media a lot. It should also be practiced that a person monitor their social media for content to the people they are sharing with. The boss should have not sent a friendrequest to an employee.

---

I do not think employer's should be allowed to monitor the personal life of their employee's.

---

It really depends on if the boss is also a true friend. Then the friend request seems okay. But if they don't have any history together, then the boss shouldn't send a friend request. But the employee had the option not to "friend" him/her.

---

First the employee should not have posted anything negative about anyone or anything but that is his right. The employer should not friend someone if he is going to react to comments that are posted. Maybe the employer should try and do better and find out why his employees think he might be idiot.

---

Companies do not own their employee's What an employee does in his or her private is noneofbthe company's business.

---

Morally, the employee shouldn't have written that post. But he is exercising his right to free expression on his personal social media page. It would be different if he had posted such things as an administrator to a company site.

---

It's borderline illegal and the employee has the freedom of opinion

---

I don't think it is fair to "trick" people, I don't care if it is your superior.

---

i do not think it is right for employers to have access to employees social media, and if they are friends with a boss then anything on the social media is not to be intended to harm the employee on their job. Social media is not job related!!!!

---

I do not believe that one's boss should put them in an position where they can keep tabs on them. Privacy is important as well as keeping work and personal affairs separated.

---

#### Scenario 6 Comments

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He chose whether or not to accept the friend request. If he didn't want his boss monitoring his posts then he should keep his profile private and not accept friend requests from employers. I think him being fired is justified, because he's obviously not happy there and the hostility doesn't belong i

---

Because the employee accepted the friend request, he should have expected that anything he had previously posted about his boss would come to light. I definitely think the boss had a reason to confront the employee but I don't think he should be able to fire him for his post.

---

---

Because in this day in age you should be aware of things you post on social media especially if you friend your boss. Is this guy just plain dumb?

---

what he said was wrong and no one should say things like that whether they can see it or not

---

There are always people watching what you post, and whether or not they are your employer, you should try to watch what you say and post and be a respectable person. If you post something you wouldn't want your boss to see, maybe you shouldn't be posting it at all.

---

The employee did not have to accept the friend request. And, he could have limited the post from view of the employer even if he had accepted the friend request. We should be held accountable for our words and behaviors.

---

The employee accepted the friend request of his boss, making him aware that others were watching and responsible for his actions.

---

People need to be accountable for the things they post to social media.

---

Jordan's boss has every right to confront him about his post, but Jordan should have been a little more wary of what he posted or changed the settings so that his boss couldn't see what he wrote. He knew that he accepted his boss's friend request.

---

Jordan shouldn't talk smack on his boss after accepting his boss's friend request. He shouldn't be fired, but he should be ridiculed. His boss might be an asshole, but Jordan's an idiot.

---

It was the employee's decision to make his boss his friend. If he didn't want that to be public he should have not become his friend.

---

It is justified to be fired, because it doesn't really matter where that happens, if you talk like that to your boss or co worker you're going to get into some kind of trouble.

---

If Jordan didn't want his boss in his personal life then he shouldn't have accepted his friend request.

---

I mean, if you have posted things like that and somehow thought it was a good idea to accept your boss's friend request. That's your own fault.

---

He knew his boss was following him. It's the employee's responsibility to control what others can see on his social media account.

---

He chose to accept the friend request. He knew his boss would see his post. He could have changed his privacy settings so that his boss wouldn't see the post, but he didn't. It should be treated as if he said those things directly to the boss and employee.

---

Employees should not blast their boss/company on social media because 1) it's immature, 2) it paints a bad picture of everyone who works at said establishment without a chance of defense on their part and 3) if the employee has a problem they need to go to management and handle it like an adult.

---

Because it is just plain stupidity to make posts know who is one of your facebook friends. However, since it was outside of work I don't consider it a fire-able offense.

---

Because it was his choice to both post the post and to accept his boss's friend request. Therefore I think it is fine that his boss confronted him about it however I do not think it is grounds for firing him.

---

The employee didn't have to accept the friend request and could have deleted the post before friending his boss.

---

---

It would not be prudent to fire someone for expressing free speech outside of the workplace.

---

Because the boss was a racist and sexual pig.

---

Maybe the boss really wanted to be "friends" with their employee. It would be wrong to take disciplinary action against the employee though as she was voicing her opinion about a certain subject.

---

It wasn't required that he friend his boss. He should have remembered that he wrote about his boss and taken the post down. However, he shouldn't be fired about saying it. It's free speech.

---

The post did not mention a person's name or company name so the employee being fired for it would be unfair and unethical.

---

People write some of the most outrageous things on social media. It's almost like they think it's a private diary. I sometimes wonder if they realize just how many people see it. It's impulsive behavior that I just don't understand. I would never write such private thoughts for viewing.

---

I don't think we should look too deeply into the post, unless this is a consistent stream of information across time.

---

It can feel awkward to not accept a boss' friend request. However, the employee should have never posted that on his Facebook even if he was not friends with his boss on Facebook.

---

I believe a person has their right to an opinion

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Because the boss says racist and sexist things every now and then that I overhear, and I wanted to share that with others.

---

It seems unfair to be penalized for what you do outside of work unless it can be connected to harming the business. Employees feel socially pressured to accept friend status from superiors, and can't be expected to constantly censor themselves on social media.

---

It happened outside of work. To scrutinize everything a person says outside of work is abusive.

---

I need more information in order to come to a reliable conclusion in this instance. Specifically, I need to know more about how the boss behaved (did he exert pressure or send friend requests to all his employees, etc.) in person.

---

I don't think that was his post read was acceptable, however if his boss friended him that was his choice. Facebook is your personal space. Not a place a boss has control over your posts/content you decide to display.

---

I don't think employers should be able to monitor employees' activity outside of work

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I don't think an employer should fire an employee based on a statement an employee has made that is a statement of their opinion.

---

The boss should not have sent the employee a friend request this putting the employee in that situation.

---

Sending a friend request to an employee leaves them in a very uncomfortable position, so the boss shouldn't have done that in the first place. I also endorse telling friends about racism and sexism in your workplace. But why would you accept the request if you have a post like that?

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People have a right to privacy if they are not on the clock of their employers.

---

Jordan shouldn't be fired for a personal opinion, even if the Boss has a right to be angry.

---

It's not fair to judge what someone does on a relatively private forum while off the clock.

---

I'm sick and tired of encroaching surveillance and increasing lack of privacy in this world. It's disgusting. What Jordan posts for his friends and family to see is none of his boss's fucking business.

---

Freedom of speech.

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Frankly employers checking up on their employees through social sites is a no no to me.

---

Because outside of the workplace, the boss does not have a right to control what his employees think. We still have the right for free speech.

---

Because it is the employees personal account. He has the freedom to say what he pleases.

---

#### Scenario 7 Comments

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You should not put something on social media that you do not expect to get back to your boss.

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The information was publically available online. The employer has the right to terminate any employee he/she/they do not want to have working for them (as long as laws are followed).

---

It was a public search. You should expect everyone to see what you post, including your boss

---

I think employees should be held accountable for things they say about their jobs/employer online. It's called being a professional. The person should be confronted but not necessarily fired over the post.

---

I feel like if the person who posted the comment posted it on a public forum and did not take any measures to make the comment private then the boss has a right to see it just like any other web surfer.

---

Because it was extremely disrespectful for the employee to complain with personal attacks on his boss in public. The professional way to handle a problem with another employee is to go to human resources and file a complaint so it can be resolved in the crrect manner.

---

Social media is a public medium by which people communicate. Why then should an employer be banned from this? I think statements like this in our culture are dime a dozen, but still aren't permissible. Not sure if an employee should be fired over this kind of statement.

---

An employee should not bad talk his boss online

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Saying something stupid on social, probably when the employees temper is up, can land him in trouble, but doesn't mean he should lose his job. Disciplined, sure, but not necessarily fired.

---



The employer has a right to ascertain an employees presentation of the company out in public on social media. It is not right to fire the employee for expressing a negative opinion of the company on social media unless prior written warning has been given regarding such behavior.

---

Social media is intended for public consumption and no company should allow an employee to continue working there who speaks publicly in such a manner against his/her supervisor.

---

People these days don't put that much thought about what they put on the internet. It's good to have opinions, positive or negative, but you say it to certain people, not the whole world.

---

No employee should bash their employer on social media. That is poor taste and shows no class.

---

If the information is public (not using available privacy settings), then anyone can see it. Before firing them I think there should be a discussion about online activity.

---

If the employee is upset with someone in their work situation, they should speak to a higher up about it. It is anyone's right to do as they please on social media and to find that an employee is talking crap about the company or someone working within a company is not acceptable.

---

If something is posted publicly it is fair game, but free speech exists. the boss has no legal right to fire.

---

I feel that once you put anything about yourself onto social media, your leaving yourself open for anyone to see that is willing to look and one of these people may be your boss. I do not think it warrants a fire though. It warrants warning or conversatio. company has a right to protect themselves

---

Because you shouldn't be saying that on your social media anyway, and if you say that "in public," I wouldn't want them working for me.

---

The employee has a right to their own opinion being posted on their page.

---

People blow off steam on social media all the time. It's a forum for people to think out loud. It's public, so anyone can read it; therefore, fair game for anyone to READ. But not to be held accountable in a "real" way. It's a virtual world.

---

I reacted in this way because the boss of any corporation, while it looks like they might do very little, actually do a whole lot more than you think

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Depends on the situation, what type of job the person has, and if their posts are extremely offensive.

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The employee should not be fired or reprimanded, because in the U.S. we have the right to free speech.

---

Unless they are "friends" this was not directed to the boss and was unfairly unearthed.

---

People are entitled to their own opinion. Most bosses don't want their employees hanging out on social media during company time (unless the job requires it). I don't know how fair it is to ask your employees not to be on social media and then check it ourself.

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It's enough that our own government is spying on us. Now the employers are following suite. Dangerous precedence. And whatever happened to freedom of speech?

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It would be justified if no one else agreed with the employee and the employee continued to say negative things

---

He was mad at his boss. However this was the wrong way about venting his feelings towards his boss. Just plain stupid.

---

Because I don't think that companies should monitor their employees social media site. It's only that person opinion anyway.

---

What a person does on their on time is none of the employers business. However it is in poor taste to make those comments online. Old adage if you don't have anything good to say don't say anything...especially about your work.

---

I think companies should stay out of employee's business outside of work

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I feel it was not fair to monitor the employee, but at the same time the employer knows that the employee resents them now and might want them out of the company.

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First, and in general, a person's posts on social media should not be the concern of employers outside a select few exceptions, particularly when employers aren't mentioned by name; second, an employer could be abusing their authority to discipline a workr to escape scrutiny of his own wrongdoing.

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Because privacy

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Because it is an invasion of privacy, and everyone has a right to freedom of speech. You dont have to like your boss and if she is lazy you have a right to report her. The poster didnt do anything wrong.

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#### Scenario 8 Comments

The employee is not representing the company well and is disparaging their employer publically.

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Employees have no business posting things about work period, let alone negative and blatant comments about their workplace. It's unethical, immature, and stupid.

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This information is essentially public, so if someone is to come across information about themselves on a Facebook page, they should be justified in taking some action.

---

The employee is clearly in an envirnoment where, based on his attitude, where he will never contribute to the success of the organization.

---

I feel that as an employee of a company, you have a reasonable responsibility to respect your employers. Companies have a reputation to maintain and it can be very damaging to have employees being critical, especially on social media.

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Because was rudely put.

---

Airing your grievances as an employee is fine, asking for others to band together in a witch hunt is something else entirely.

---

Because if it's a work computer then anything u put on that computer should be work not personal

---

What goes on the Internet / social media is public and can never fully be removed. Employers should be forced to employ people who clearly are so unhappy in their position and so willing to deflamate publically.

What you post online becomes public knowledge and your boss is just as likely to see it as anyone else

Well, I think that anything that is posted on social media is fair game. However, just because someone has a problem with their boss it doesn't necessarily mean they are the one that should be fired. Maybe the boss should look at his own practices and see if there is some truth to the post first.

Someone else might have impersonated the employee so as to get them in trouble.

If this information was public, the boss is in no way wrong for finding it. The boss may decide it is a case of libel. But in many work places, an employee cannot be fired on the grounds of being stupid enough to insult their boss where the boss may see i.

I don't know if there is something in their handbook that discusses what is allowed on public networking sites. If there is and there is a signed document from the employee that they were made aware of the policy and they violated it, then disciplinary action can occur.

the information is in public domain - completely available to anyone

anything public is just that, public. there is no right to privacy with social media.

If you make something public, expect it to be seen by everyone. But if it's a good employee, working with HR would be better than firing them.

I don't think the employee should be fired. I think it's a good opportunity for the employee and employer to look at their work relationship and try to fix areas that are weak or broken. If an employee is unhappy with their job or management then the company should look at where the problems start.

I believe you would need to seek out the whole story before firing.

The question was a little confusing and I wasn't sure when if the monitoring started before or after finding the post or if it was casual searching. But the employee shouldn't be fired since it's their personal life, not their public life. But they should be reprimanded in some way

If it is publicly visible he is in his right to look at it, but he should respect the employees freedom to opinion.

There were no names mentioned of the boss they were referring to or the company.

The employee shouldn't have posted what they did. However, they didn't mention anyone by name. And in the scope of this survey it isn't mentioned whether what the employee said is actually true or just angry venting.

I reacted this way due to the fact that the person was employed by a controlling corporation that has no right to say you cant say anything negative about this company nor its leaders. i thinkj asdlfjlasdjflsjadlflsajflksjadlflkjdsjkslksladkjflkdsjfl

The search was public. People shouldn't post things that the public can see if they don't want their boss to find out. They shouldn't be fired for voicing their opinion though.

People need to be cautious of what they post on social media and how it will effect thier "real" life.. But no one deserves to lose their job over expressing their opinion and

maybe his/her boss really does suck. This person just needs a "what's appropriate for social media" seminar along with lots

---

It's fair to the employee in that it was a public post, and they should have known better, but it's not okay for the employer to fire them over it.

---

What a person does in their off-hours should not impact what happens on the clock. It goes against free speech to try to retaliate against this employee.

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Employees have a right to their views, which should be fairly unlimited. If the boss is a racist, sexist pig, there is great public utility in the employee pursuing action, which should be protected.

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### Scenario 9 Comments

If someone writes something on social media about their boss, they deserve to be reprimanded or even fired. You have to be ready to accept the consequences for something like that because nothing on social media is private.

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I reacted that way because posting something like that and then commenting about the post is awful. The employee deserves whatever they get, even if it's being fired.

---

I believe you shouldn't mouth dirty laundry on any social network about co-worker, boss or company you work for.

---

The employee should not express that type of comment on an easily read social media site. Issues with the boss should be brought up with HR.

---

It was a lapse in judgement for Jordan to post this on social media and think he would not be found out by the boss. He should not have written the post let alone post it online. He should be fired, it's just a shame since maybe he was a great worker. You have to watch out posting

---

The post reaches fellow employees, friends and family; the account owner is slandering management and the company. While the employee may not be fond of their boss, the "protest and join me" reaction to his employer is best left for private conversations, not social media.

---

The boss was reacting to a situation that occurred at work, not looking into personal posts. The firing of the employee would be up to work place policy, which was not listed. The boss should react to the situation, as it directly relates to the appearance of the workplace to the public.

---

The boss should try to gather feedback from employees to better his/her role as a manager; however, what they post on social media is their business and shouldn't be grounds for dismissal...maybe a discussion.

---

The Boss had overheard the conversation about the post, which gave him a reason to go look for the post itself. The post was also regarding work related issues so I think the boss had enough reason to look for it.

---

Posting to social media is just like talking at work. Don't say things you don't want people to hear you say. But he also shouldn't be fired for complaining, though the boss and him obviously need to talk.

---

It is Inappropriate to post such opinions on social media

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It has the time to make you see what is going on right now for that. Some take the time to walk into what has to be done for that for them.

---

If you put something into the public arena, it should be obvious it can be sued against you.

---

I think that Jordan should not have posted that on social media. Since the employer overheard about the post, he was not invading Jordan's privacy by stalking him on social media. The response is fair if the employer would have taken the same action for a verbal comment instead of a post.

---

he should not be fired for wanting to file a complaint. normally the complaint process prevents intimidation.

---

Employers have a right to know how their business is portrayed on social media by their employees. They should not be able to fire their employees without a specific rule being broken.

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Because there is no monitoring, they simply heard through word of mouth

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Some people don't understand that everything you post on the internet is essentially public (even if you think it is private). Perhaps ignorance is to blame for this mistake.

---

I feel like it's a justifiable action for the boss to do, but also that it is an invasion of privacy. If the employee does not have that post "publicly" available then the boss shouldn't be able to ask another employee to see the post.

---

I don't think he should be fired for posting something like that on social media if what he said is true. It's immature to post things like that and the employer has a right to investigate, but I also don't think he should subject another employee into rating Jordan out.

---

I am more lenient to the boss here because he was acting on information he happened to overhear rather than setting a policy of surveillance.

---

The employer can use social media like anyone else and if they want the evidence, should get it themselves. Regardless of what the employee said, it doesn't mean they aren't qualified for their job. I don't feel the employer should be wasting company time worrying about what others are saying about him

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The employee never mentioned the company and didn't say anything dangerous (not brand damaging, not workplace violence etc)

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People need to be aware that what they post in an on-line social media site or otherwise is fair game for anyone to see, and they should think twice about saying something they would not want someone to see, including friends, parents and employers. It's air game and it's a stupid thing to do.

---

I think that while the employee made that comment, the comment was made outside of work. During the time outside of work, the person was not in a role that requires him/her to look after the best interest of the workplace/company. To fire an employee over a comment made outside of work is excessive.

---

I think it is not fair to fire a worker for their own opinions I think sitting them aside and trying to find out how they are feeling and why would be best. I think the maneuver is sneaky to.

---

I feel that what the employee does on their private social media page is not the business of the boss. It seemed that the boss just happened to overhear what their employee had

---

said, and so it would not be fair to punish this employee when other employees might be saying similar things.

I don't think that he should make Corie bring it/show it, but if it is publicly available, that is okay.

Because the manager should not be able to use a post on the internet as a way of confronting employee for the way they think of him

Although it wasn't right of him to post that, it's not right for someone to be blabbing to the boss. Everyone just needs to keep it professional. No need to fire him but maybe addressing it will help.

The great thing about this country is we are free to say whatever we want. Plus, if the employee is writing this then their boss is probably a lazy idiot and is the one who deserves to get fired, not the employee.

The boss was eavesdropping on a conversation & did not see the post him/her self

Social media should never be brought into a job situation

#### Scenario 10 Comments

The individual posted rude comments about the boss on a social media site. It is justified to fire the employee.

If you are bad mouthing your employer on social media you are clearly unhappy in your working situation. If there is an issue the employee should be professional and address it with their boss.

You should be able to post your opinions on your own social media site without fear of consequences. Your personal life and professional life are not one in the same.

Posting on social media is public, no matter the privacy settings you set as your parameters. However, I do not think that disciplinary action should be taken without a conversation with the employee first.

Morality of Character as well as all the information that you post online is free to be examined!

If the boss found it on his or her own, it would definitely be fair. But, regardless of whether or not it was fair, the employee should absolutely be fired.

The employer has the right to hire and fire whomever they need. Jordan's attitude is destructive toward moral and work ethic. If allowed to continue it will become a cancer in the organization.

The employee was openly talking about the post in the workplace. Therefore, the boss is allowed to monitor and take the actions necessary to resolve the issue.

Defamatory statements about a specific person (the boss). The comment was overheard and discovered via FB stalking.

The employee was behaving completely inappropriately. If she is truly that concerned, she needs to file a complain and seek her coworkers help privately and professionally. She's reflecting badly on the whole company.

Wherever you work, you are always a representation and reflection on that business and you should act accordingly and responsibly in a manner that supports that business.

There should be discipline if this is stated in the employees contract, but she should be given a chance to change her behavior before she is fired. If her contract states social media will be monitored then she already agreed to this practice.

I feel that confronting is important to address employees concerns.

Because it depends on the place of the employment, and how important for the company that employees engage into work all day .

He overheard gossip

At this point it is hear say ~employment should not be levied based on hear say ~opportunity to ask employee if he has any concerns that need to be addressed

Tough situation. Right to free speech v. this is impacting the workplace. If worker was a repeated problem, I would address. If ofirst time, ignore and move on while watching

Cuz people have a right to speech

I'd really have to know more about the situation to make a decision one way or another, but I don't think a single potentially justified comment on social media warrants being fired unless it's not a first offense.

It could change others perceptions of their jobs or bosses.

because i believe that unless you are working a security government or like job what you do in your personal live is your business thats one problem these days you go for a job that you work for money for certain amount of hours a day and thats all you getpaid for yet they think they own your life

We are in a country where we have the freedom of speech. It may not have been smart to post that but someone shouldn't get fired for it.

The employer cannot demand a copy of the post and the employee does not have to present a copy of the post. I would have answered the question differently had the employer found the post themselves while perusing Facebook.

Privacy issues

It is personal opinion even though I don't agree that he should have posted it

Employers should not be on employees social media. It isn't there job to monitor what goes on in their lives outside of work.

I reacted that way, because I felt that it was the right thing to do.

it's called the 1st amendment... freedom of speech. On top of that, he "overheard" about the post and asked another employee to bring it to him. If they have a policy listed about social media, that should be noted and if not the employee can freely expess themselves.

Any issue outside the job isn't job related.

### Scenario 11 Comments

When you post on Social Media everyone can see what you post. Jordan took that chance when he put his feelings about his boss on Facebook. His boss could have seen the post even if they weren't friends if he was friends with other co-workers.

Sometimeswe need to keep feelings to ourselves.

Public post on social media is just like stand on stage and yelling. Everyone can hear you. While is public speech is legal by law and there will be no legal problem, a company can choose to discipline or fire the employee.

It was his decision to post the comment and his decision to accept his boss's friend request.

Anything on-line is fair game. One should be cautious and mindful of what is written.

It's unprofessional to speak that way about a colleague on social media.

Because facebook should be considered as the employee's personal space. If the boss added the employee as the friend just for malicious intent, that's not right.

as a employee you should watch what you say when you know you have befriended your boss. I would think you would have some common sense and know that your boss will know if you happen to post something not to good about them. I have this reaction because he employee should have known better.

He did not have to accept his boss's friend request. By doing so, he allowed his statements to be viewable by his employer, however a personal opinion should not be a fire-able offense but instead a means to open the door to communication as to where he considers the problem to be.

By friending someone, you allow them access to your information. But the boss should not have held it against the employee.

The employee had the right to say no to the friend request, or hide this post from his boss. However, the boss has no right to fire him over a complaint.

Because Jordon added him as a friend so he should have known better.

I think it was unfair of the boss to put his employee in the awkward situation to begin with, but once friends with his boss, the employee should have used better discretion.

the employee is expressing his views away from work

because work is not personal

Social media isn't a comment on how someone does their job. Jordan should not have used it to vent in that way, but what he does outside of work is not how he works on the job. He is hired to work scheduled hours and outside of those hours, he shouldn't hve to watch how he conducts himself.

He is not his boss on Facebook. He has all right to write about anything for anyone on Facebook as the account belongs to him.

Seems like trapping the employee. Clearly there is an imbalance in the relationship if the employee was uncomfortable with the friend request. However, I admit that it was kind of dumb to write something like that after he accepted the request. It still desn't make it OK to do.

First if i were the employee i would never have posted such a comment. Secondly I don't think the bosses intentions are fair to use against an employee.

I was upset at the moment!

I believe FaceBook is something separate and personal, even if people choose to share certain things they should not. That said, the Boss also has the right to look into those things. Basically I think you should be careful what you put out there. The Bos might look at it, but not "as your boss".



It is Jordan's personal Facebook page. It is not like Jordan mentioned this on the company page. However, I need more information. Did Jordan post this during work hours, or was he off company time?

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Everyone has a right to their own opinions.

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They are representing their company negatively through social media.

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I do not believe what a person does online after work as far as post's should affect employment with a business

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Because if you do something outside of work whether post it or say it you cannot be punished for it

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I think that a person's private feelings should not impact his status at work, as long as his performance has not decreased. However, the employee lacked any sense of judgment by posting that to the internet.

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It is ridiculous to think that any employer has the right to do this. Invasion of privacy. These are personal sites that have NOTHING to do with work.

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It is not fair for content posted on social media to be of actual harm especially when it comes to your real life job.

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I'm guessing this was a Facebook post. I personally view my Facebook account much like a journal of my life. You cannot persecute someone for their internal thoughts and feelings. I'm not saying that this person was wise for posting such a thing, knowing his boss was watching however.

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I feel people should be allowed to post what they want with out having to worry if it will lose their job.

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Because social media pages should be private if the individual desires, and no one should feel pressured to accept their boss.

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Because how we act on Facebook shouldn't matter at work.

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Bc expressing yourself on Facebook or social media should not interfere with how your workplace treats you.

#### Scenario 12 Comments

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I think that the employee is responsible for posts especially if they made the choice to accept friendship.

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What people post on a public to semi - public forum can affect the perceptions of prospective customers and affect their decisions. As an employee, you need to be putting forward the best face of your company and its management personnel.

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Part of working for a company is to be a representative of that company. If you can't use better judgement, they should have no reason to keep you employed.

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You should be careful what you post. You need a filter, especially when you are friends with boss's or co workers.

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Why not ?

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The man accepted the friend request of his boss, and knew he could see the post.

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People need to be aware of how they portray themselves and their company on social media but I think it warrants a conversation and shouldn't immediately be considered for firing.

Not knowing the organizational responsibility this "employee" has, my assumption is that s/he is a higher level employee. Being the face of an organization has responsibilities that extend beyond the walls of the business..... Especially if others make a immediate association w the business.

Nobody is forcing people to join social media or post their thoughts. People are foolish to post something they think is private on social media. They can expect negative consequences.

If the employee was dumb enough to leave that on their site before accepting the friend request, then they deserved to get in trouble for what was said.

I don't think it's appropriate to put something like that about your boss on any social media website, whether he/she is your friend on that site or not.

Because he should not be able to fire someone for something said outside of work.

It makes no sense not to

He chose to add his boss to his friends list and failed to use the privacy settings afforded by Facebook.

Whatever is written on social media during non-working hours, I believe, shouldn't be a reason to penalize a worker

Personal opinion of boss and coworker is not illegal

I don't think it's an employer's business what you say to your 'friends' on your private time. Not different than talk at Starbucks with friends. ALTHOUGH, I would not have accepted his friend request.

He was expressing his self which is his right, because he can voice his opinion as long as he isn't hurting anyone. I don't think he should have posting that information on his page knowing that he is friends with the person he is speaking about. However,I am uncertain if he should lose his job....

Bosses shouldn't make work place decisions based on a social media post, but that negative post would definitely make the boss think twice about employing him.

The employee was put in an awkward position that forced him to give his boss access to his comments. I do think that if he had posted things like that, he should not have friended his boss, but it is a personal comment about his boss. If it were overhead in the men's room, he shouldn't be fired.

personal social media should be off-limits to this sort of monitoring

Jordan chose to accept the friend request and chose to write to post. Work places have the right to protect their image from negative posts from employees when they are aware of them. A negative post from an employee is more damaging than from a customer

I could see how it would be justified to punish the employee - The employee is making his boss and his company look bad. However, the employee should be able to say what he wants.

Even if what the employee said sounded harsh and insulting to his boss, the employee is completely free to express whatever opinion he pleases on anybody, positive or negative.

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Because it's not right to be punished for something that was said outside of the work place

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Because I don't believe that someone should be fired for calling their co-worker a name.

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Your employer should have no say in your personal life. Facebook is a personal space. This is also why you should not accept a friend request from your boss.

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you shouldn't befriend coworkers on social media, especially your boss. The boss was in the wrong and so was the employee for accepting.

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Nice or not, Jordan has the freedom to post his thoughts as he wishes.

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It feels like the employer had set a trap.

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I feel like companies should not be worried about what you post and do after business hours,

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because it is a personal page.

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**APPENDIX S: IRB APPROVAL**

3/16/2015

Investigator(s): Kelsey Bishop, Patrick McCarthy  
Department: Psychology Investigator(s)  
Email Address: kmc5c@mtmail.mtsu.edu, [Patrick.McCarthy@mtsu.edu](mailto:Patrick.McCarthy@mtsu.edu)

Protocol Title: What's Your Status: Current Employee Perceptions on Social Media  
Monitoring Protocol Number: #15-204

Dear Investigator(s),

Your study has been designated to be exempt. The exemption is pursuant to 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) Educational Tests, Surveys, Interviews, or Observations. We will contact you annually on the status of your project. If it is completed, we will close it out of our system. You do not need to complete a progress report and you will not need to complete a final report. It is important to note that your study is approved for the life of the project and does not have an expiration date.

The following changes must be reported to the Office of Compliance before they are initiated:

- Adding new subject population
- Adding a new investigator
- Adding new procedures (e.g., new survey; new questions to your survey)
- A change in funding source
- Any change that makes the study no longer eligible for exemption.

The following changes do not need to be reported to the Office of Compliance:

- Editorial or administrative revisions to the consent or other study documents
- Increasing or decreasing the number of subjects from your proposed population

If you encounter any serious unanticipated problems to participants, or if you have any questions as you conduct your research, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Lauren K. Qualls,  
Graduate Assistant Office of Compliance  
615-494-8918