CSCI 245: Life, Computers, and Everything

Are networking technologies making
us be alone together?

Image source

What do mobile communication technologies do for you?

Cell phones
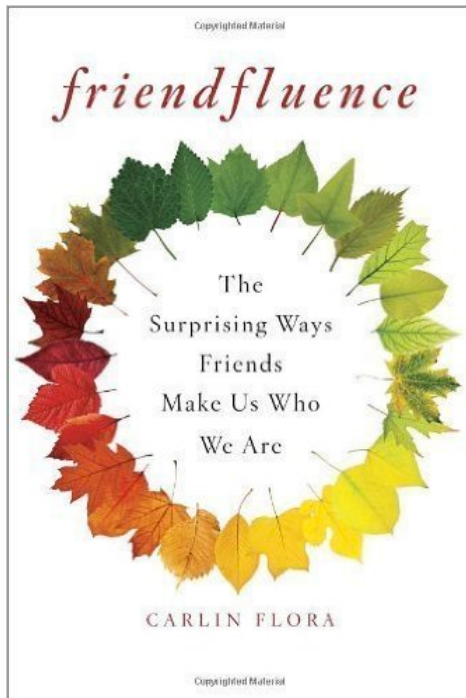
Music players

Cameras

Social Applications

What do social networking technologies do for you?

Friendship

You've also evolved to want **at least one person** in your portfolio **who reads your mind fairly well**. Also worthy are those who want the same things you want. Such people will work to "make the world suitable for themselves," and thereby for you, too. And finally, you'll tend to fill a friendship slot with **someone who considers you difficult to replace**.
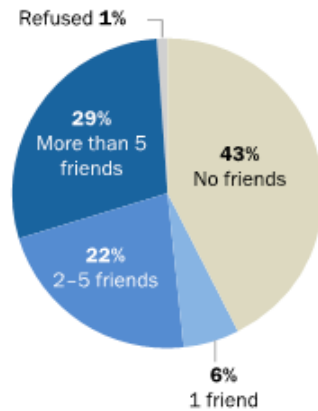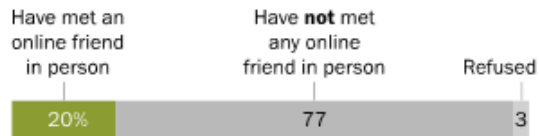
Friendship

57% of All Teens Have Made New Friends Online
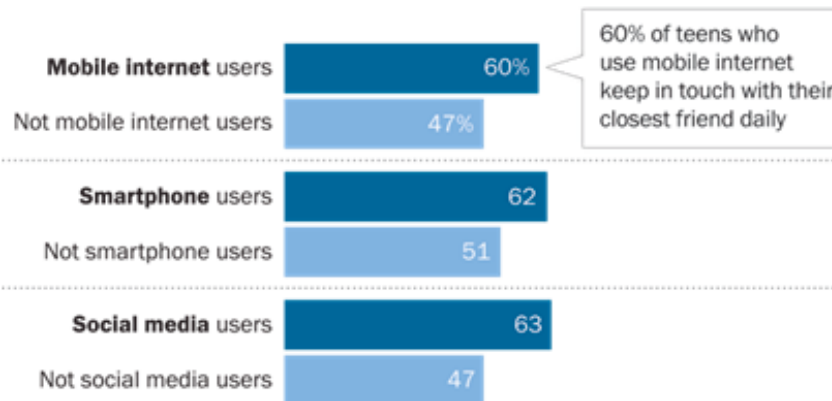
% of all teens who have made ____ friends online

- Refused **1%**
- **29%** More than 5 friends
- **43%** No friends
- **22%** 2–5 friends
- **6%** 1 friend

% of all teens who ...

Have met an online friend in person	Have **not** met any online friend in person	Refused
20%	77	3

Teens With Technology Access More Likely to Be in Daily Touch

% of teens who keep in touch daily with their closest friend, by technology access...

- **Mobile internet** users — 60%
- Not mobile internet users — 47%

> 60% of teens who use mobile internet keep in touch with their closest friend daily

- **Smartphone** users — 62
- Not smartphone users — 51

- **Social media** users — 63
- Not social media users — 47

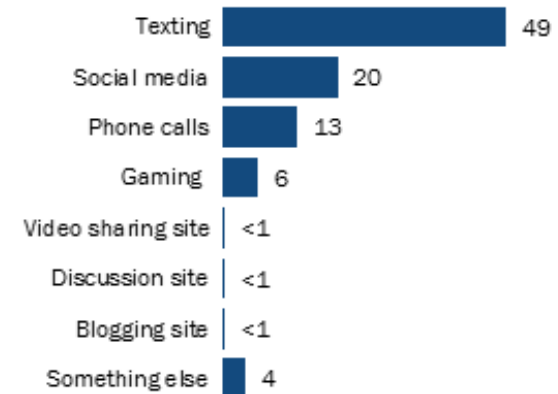http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/08/06/teens-technology-and-friendships/

Teens & Friends

- 49% of teens say text messaging (including on messaging apps) is their first choice of platform for communicating with their closest friend.

- 20% say social media is their first-choice communication tool when talking with their closest friend.

- 13% say phone calls are the method they would choose first to talk with their closest friend.

- 6% say video games are their first-choice platform for talking with their closest friend.

Texting Is Most Common Way Teens Get in Touch With Closest Friend

% of teens who say ... is the most common way they get in touch with their closest friend online or on a phone

Texting	49
Social media	20
Phone calls	13
Gaming	6
Video sharing site	<1
Discussion site	<1
Blogging site	<1
Something else	4

Source: Pew Research Center Teens Relationships Survey, Sept. 25-Oct. 9, 2014, and Feb. 10-March 16, 2015. (n=1,009 teens ages 13 to 17 with a close friend).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/08/06/teens-technology-and-friendships/

Social Networks and Friendship

Does the **number of friends** your have in social networks make you feel that you have a large support network?

Social Networks and Friendship

R.I.M. Dunbar: "In effect, we have **five intimate friends**. Fifteen close friends, 50 good friends, 150 friends."

Friendfluence: The Surprising Ways Friends Make Us Who We Are), Carlin Flora

http://www.amazon.com/Friendfluence-Surprising-Friends-Carlin-Hardcover/dp/B00ZT1UVZ4/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1454954965&sr=1-2

Social Networks and Friendship

An important feature of natural social networks in both humans and non-human primates is that they are structured into a distinctive series of hierarchically inclusive layers that have a natural scaling ratio of approximately 3. These layers reflect both **interaction frequencies** and, at least in humans, **emotional closeness**. In humans, these layers have values that approximate 5, 15, 50 and 150, and extend beyond this in at least two further layers to 500 and 1500.

The Social Brain: Psychological Underpinnings and Implications for the Structure of Organizations, R.I.M. Dunbar, Curr. Directions in Psychological Science, Vol. 23(2), 2014.

http://cdp.sagepub.com/content/23/2/109.full.pdf+html

Social Networks and Friendship

"… there is a **cognitive constraint** on the size of social networks that even the communication advantages of online media are unable to overcome."

Do online social media cut through the constraints that limit the size of offline social networks? R.I.M. Dunbar, Royal Society Open Science, December 2015.

http://rsos.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/royopensci/3/1/150292.full.pdf
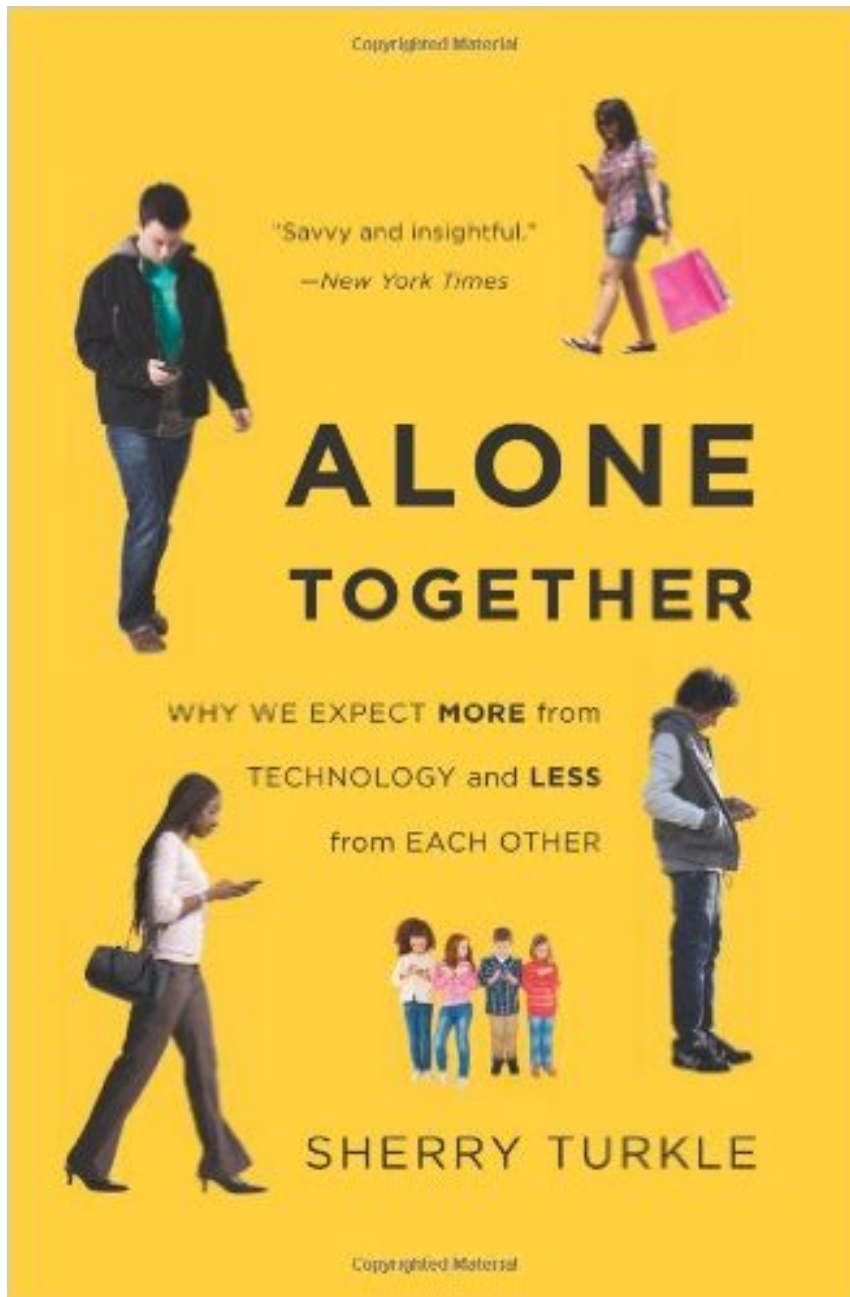
Romantic Relationships

- "People who **struggle with offline relationships** seem to frequently prefer online relationships as a safer medium (Buote, Wood, & Pratt, 2009)"

- "… the use of texting with cell phones can increase intimacy by making partners more available and expanding their repertoire of connection (Henline, 2006)."

- "Research has supported the theory that when individuals have attachment partners who are accessible in moments of high need, they experience lower levels of distress and higher levels of mental resiliency (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007)"

- **"As communication tools change, it is worthwhile for researchers to be aware of trends in how these tools might affect basic human relationships."**

Louis C.K. Hates Cell Phones

ALONE TOGETHER

"Savvy and insightful."
—New York Times

WHY WE EXPECT **MORE** from TECHNOLOGY and **LESS** from EACH OTHER

SHERRY TURKLE

"If someone doesn't have time to talk to me, I can text a greeting, and they will know that I am thinking of them, caring about them."

"In fact, being alone can start to seem like a precondition for being together because it's easier to communicate if you can focus, without interruption, on your screen."

Alone Together, Sherry Turkle, 2011

"When people have phone conversations in public spaces, their sense of privacy is sustained by the presumption that those around them will treat them not only as anonymous but as if absent."

Alone Together, Sherry Turkle, 2011

"It is those on the phone who mark themselves as absent. Sometimes people signal their departure by putting a phone to their ear, but it often happens in more subtle ways - there may be a glance down at a mobile device during dinner or a meeting."

Alone Together, Sherry Turkle, 2011

Connected, but alone?

Sherry Turkle

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rv0g8TsnA6c

Challenge

Develop a moral dilemma centered on the creation of a communication technology that promotes less face to face interaction.

Crisis of empathy?

Sherry Turkle

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_H4NgVZoaE

Dilemma

How do you develop and nurture a personal or professional relationship that meets your needs?

    a) Only face to face

    b) Only texting

    c) Only social networking

    d) Face to face plus texting

    e) Face to face plus social networking

    f) Face to face plus texting and social networking

    g) etc.