A Networked Self:
Identity Performance and Sociability on Social Network Sites

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The self, in late modern societies, is expressed as fluid abstraction, reified through the individual's association with a reality that may be equally flexible. The process of self presentation becomes an ever-evolving cycle through which individual identity is presented, compared, adjusted or defended against a constellation of social, cultural, economic, or political realities. The architecture of the technology that belies these networked platforms of interaction rests upon principles of convergence, which enable multiple and overlapping connections between varieties of distinct social spheres. The social platforms or spaces sustained by convergent technologies accentuate confluence, flexibility, and reflexivity of media content. This paper examines the role of media theory and constructs in the contemporary context of convergent architectures. Theories and constructs that have been instrumental in understanding personal differences in mass media use, including audience activity and audience involvement are reviewed so as to examine their relevance in the context of personalizable media that serve converged needs, through converged practices, and in converged media spaces. Behaviors emerging on social network sites are interpreted in this light, and empirical data that reveal a more converged understanding of media experiences are employed to suggest theoretical directions and constructs that may be more meaningful in moving communication research forward. Socio-culturally driven theoretical approaches that examine communication as ritual and processes through which individuals respond to and adjust the polysemic architectural affordances of online spaces are integrated into a 'remediation' of media theory.