



MEDIA@LSE

Dissertation submitted to the Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science, August 2013, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MSc in Global Media and Communications. Supervised by Professor Terhi Rantanen.

The Author can be contacted at: eliz.lockwood@gmail.com.

*You're not alone: virtual communities,
online relationships and modern identities
in the Military Spouse Blogging Community*

Elizabeth M. Lockwood

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

Virtual Communities

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Thematic analysis

Difficulties encountered

H

B

L

M

M

A

J

A

B

L

E

MODERN IDENTITY

REFERENCES

P C ,2

R : *T*

C *H* *B* 24

N *G* *C* , *o*

M *C* *R* *M*

M : *I*

B : *T*

A

I

J

P ,14

Q

R

,10

PL S ONE

References to Appendix A

E *J* *C* *S* 16

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

Blogging

T

-
-
-
-

?

-

-

H

?

-

D

?

-

-

D

?

?

?

-

?

?

Questions about Virtual Communities

Questions about Online interactions

T , , (. . ,
?)
o



o

?

o

D

' '

?

?H

,

Wrapping up

?

H

?

?D

'

?A

F

,

.

o

o

o

o

?A

?A

I

?

A

I

'*?O*

'

?

D

?

Closing



This dissertation is a work of love, inspired by the service members and military families I met over the course of my years as a communications consultant with the Department of Defense. While many Americans hear “DoD” and think guns, uniforms and bad politics, I’ve learned it’s a much warmer place. It’s full of people truly dedicated to their everyday jobs and families who bear the sacrifice. It’s an organization that should be proud of its inspirational humanitarian programs, incredible scientific advancements, outstanding research and world-class health care.

And yet, this paper is not a political statement. It’s an examination into the lives of those often unseen. The people back home who don’t make it on the news. And, I hope, a tribute to them and an eye-opener to us.

The journey I’ve made from college to this, my last assignment at the LSE, is a long one. There are multiple people who deserve credit for helping me construct this path, take the first step and remind me not to veer off. From my friend who submitted my CV, to the supervisors I’ve learned under, to the many co-workers, friends and peers, I say thank you. To the students in my classes, the faculty in St. Clement’s, and even (especially) the baristas who fueled this long year, I’m grateful for every conversation, lecture and espresso.

To my amazing advisor, Terhi Rantanen, who helped me compare and contrast definitions of globalization until I’d finally constructed one of my own: Your encouragement, advice and sincere belief that I’d make it through has left me with so much more than an education about communication. Thank you.

For my family, I’m not sure I have words. It will come as no surprise that you are my daily inspirations. You never retreat, you never surrender, and you still manage to cradle every spark of this life. Without you, I’d be adrift in this big world, taking no risks, accepting no challenges and probably laughing about an eighth as much. But because of you, here we are.

And lastly, to the women in this paper: You took a chance, opened up to a stranger, and let me glimpse the inner moments of your lives, all in the name of education. I am forever indebted.

