

**Rich LING**

***Trust, Cohesion and Social Networks***  
***The Case of Quasi-illicit Photos in a Teen Peer Group***

This paper examines the way that trust and group cohesion were used by teens in the taking and sharing of photos. Internal group cohesion in voluntary groups is based on trust among the members and on their willingness to protect the secrets and the lore of the group. Social cohesion is a group process that helps to regulate social life through the possession of specialized internal knowledge from the group objectifies the group's identity. There are different processes that can contribute to the cohesion of the group. For example, the process of taking a photo is a group ritual and as with other rituals, it is the source of group cohesion. Data for this analysis was collected through the use of communication diaries and group interviews. This form of data collection, when examined for the whole group, resulted in a universal diary of interactions within the group. Four different teen/young adult groups were included in the data collection. The material examined in this paper focuses on a group of teen boys who often snowboarded together. Unlike some of the other groups, this was a "loose" group where not all members were directly connected. The diary material allows us to understand the inner structure of the group while the qualitative material surrounding the posting of quasi-illicit group photos illuminates how the group members applied their sense of "local ethics". The analysis shows that photos helped to mark the group boundary in that only some photos were posted and the posting might be limited to trusted audiences. In this way, the analysis of the material shows how trust and group cohesion are actively developed and maintained in a local context.

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