



FACULTY OF ARTS

Adelaide Summer Research Scholarship 2019-2020

Gen X and online identity construction through social media

Supervisor: Dr Kim Barbour, Department of Media

School of Humanities

The successful student in this project will kick-start their advanced secondary research skills in literature searching and analysis, and scholarly writing; these skills are central to all theoretical and empirical research projects. The student's involvement in this project will provide the foundational definitions and theoretical context for Dr Barbour's proposed 3 year project on the ways that Generation X navigate the construction of online personas during life changes. Social media users regularly negotiate different potential audiences for their posts, but audiences often have different expectations of what they will see from others. This six week project will work to jumpstart the longer project by identifying key themes in existing literature on generational differences in social media use, translating these into a journal article that outlines the definitional and theoretical touchpoints for studying social media use by those in mid-life.

Working under the supervision of Dr Barbour, the student will conduct a substantial literature search, identifying the most significant publications on social media use (particularly by those over 40), producing a significant annotated bibliography and Zotero resource library. The student will critically analyse these texts, building on existing skills to identify themes across a number of papers from media, internet studies, and other disciplines. From this point, the student will work with Dr Barbour to write up these findings, with the frame of a literature review style journal article on generational differences in social media use to be in place at the conclusion of the six weeks of the project. Although Dr Barbour will be responsible for completing the writing of this paper, providing their contributions are in line with authorship requirements at the university, the student will be second author of the paper, and have an opportunity to continue reviewing drafts and providing feedback until publication.

The student will gain the following research skills and experience;

- Co-publication with Project Supervisor
- Work on an existing competitive grant
- Identify high quality sources
- Literature analysis
- Extrapolate key themes from across a range of material