
Writer's Statement about "Reddit's Diverse Platform: Transforming the Social Media Landscape Through Its Communities"

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Ever since I got my own phone, I have been an avid social media user. From older platforms such as Facebook to newer ones like Snapchat, they have played an immense role in my life. Once Professor Roozen asked our class to select a "writing-based literacy" we were currently involved in, I instantly thought of my posts and comments on Reddit. The assignment asked for an "autoethnographic" approach to examining my literacy activity and to provide a detailed analysis that would contribute to relevant scholarly conversations. Writing in an autoethnographic style allowed me to develop relevant ideas from my own observations without much outsider research. Out of all social media I use, Reddit is the one I most consistently visit and see as a community I am a part of. Since there was not much existing research on Reddit in literacy studies, I felt my personal experience with its unique features and community-style layout would greatly benefit existing social media research.

Initially, I struggled to think of how I wanted to introduce my topic to my audience. Coming up with an anecdote that would capture the reader's attention while also leading into my central argument was very difficult. After many different drafts of various interactions on Reddit, I thought, "Why not just write about what brought me to Reddit in the first place and why I still use it so frequently to this day?" Another struggle I faced was choosing what aspect of Reddit I wanted to focus on for the paper. Between discussing how participating on Reddit shows and transforms one's identity and how Reddit can serve as a personal community for over millions of topics, I wondered which better suits Reddit's main purpose as a social media platform and showed its uniqueness from others. Thus, I chose how Reddit allowed me to become part of multiple communities, both tightknit and enormous, as my main topic. In addition, part of the assignment's criteria was to use the CARS model to explain to readers the existing scholarly conversations and lines of inquiry related to my topic. Having never used it before, I was at first intimidated by its sheer complexity (at least in my opinion). However, after reading multiple examples, I was finally able to successfully implement it on my own.

In class, we read Deborah Brandt's *The Rise of Writing: Redefining Mass Literacy*, which opened my eyes up to how much writing actually plays a role in my life. I learned about the notion of writing to heal and realized that most of the times I posted on Reddit, I did so as a way to de-

stress myself by talking about what I enjoy most. Moreover, my paper's audience is the literacy scholars in the social media field. There has been so much research done recently on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), as it serves as one of the newer modes for writing, but almost none has been done on Reddit. I was very surprised, as Reddit is one of the most popular websites used today. My writing responded to how Reddit—specifically, through its subreddits—allows for meaningful conversation to take place among likeminded individuals.

If I were to do this project all over again, I would do several things differently. First and foremost, I would provide more sample texts to show more examples of community. Additionally, I would try to find more scholarly research done on social media, so I could find more ways to relate my research with those in the field already. Lastly, I would spend more time on planning and outlining my paper. Instead of writing my paper head on, it would have been better to outline my main ideas for each section.

Writing this paper has been a great learning experience for me as I have never written about anything as in depth and personal as this. I have learned a great deal more about writing and how much it affects me in the real world. It is a great honor to be selected for publishing, and I would like to thank Professor Roozen, the editors, and my peer reviewers (especially Michael Ferrara) for helping me along the way.