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Perceived Difficulty of Friendship Maintenance Online: Geographic Factors

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ABSTRACT

Geographic location has an effect on the perceived ease of friendship maintenance online and may reflect physical space. Participants from the Northeastern United States rated maintaining friendships online as more difficult than those from other regions. Those with the highest anxiety level ratings were from the largest and most densely populated areas (metropolitan) and those who were the least anxious about their image (both online and offline) were from rural areas with the least population density. Those residing in metropolitan areas were the most trusting of online information posted by others and the town/small city group were the least trusting of others' online posted information (similar to the urban group), making those from rural areas nearly as trusting of others' information as the metropolitan group, though probably the result of entirely different influences.

KEYWORDS

Social Networking; Friendship; Geography; Relationship; Perceptions; Online

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