ELECTRONICALLY MEDIATED COMMUNICATION (EMC)
Communication sent via a channel such as a cell phone or the Internet (versus face-to-face).

Examples of EMC
- Cell phones
- Computer-conferencing
- Discussion boards
- Electronic mail
- Instant messages
- Photo-sharing communities
- Social networks (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, Twitter)
- Texting
- Blogs
- Videologs (Vlogs)
- VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol technology, such as Skyping and YouTube)

Differences between EMC & F2F
- **Time**: Synchronous vs. asynchronous
- **Anonymity**: Varies
- **Honesty**: Potential for Deception is greater
- **Nonverbal cues**: More difficult to assess
- **Language**: Relies upon written word; varies on formality (and spelling)
- **Distance**: Proximity isn't as vital
Hyperpersonal Relationships

- Relationships formed primarily through EMC that become even more personal than the equivalent F2F relationship
- Due to:
  - Absence of distracting external cues (physical appearance)
  - Smaller (selective) amounts of personal information being disclosed
  - Idealization of the communication partner

Joseph Walther (1996)

EMC Theories

- **Cues-Filtered-Out Theory:** Nonverbal cues are limited
  - Nonverbal emotional expression is restricted with text messages
  - We are less likely to use EMC to manage continuing relationships
- **Media Richness Theory:** 4 criteria
  - Amount of feedback available to communicators
  - Number of cues the channel can convey (that can be interpreted by a receiver)
  - Variety of language used
  - Potential for expressing emotions and relational messages
- **Social Information-Processing Theory:** Can communicate emotions & feelings, but takes longer

Technology is changing our understanding of conversations

- Awareness of audience
- Degree of conversational spontaneity
- Abruptness of disengagement
- Multiplicity of conversations
- Acceptance of interruptions
- Notions of Privacy

Who is receiving the message? How much planning goes into the message? When does the conversation end? Who else is involved in this (or other) conversations? Who is more important? Interruptions inevitable? Who is able to access the “conversation”? 
What are the pro's and cons you experience with EMC?

Don’t assume:

- Others hold the same attitudes toward EMC as you do
- The receiver is the only person receiving your message and/or actually received your message
- Others know who you are
  - Identify yourself
  - Leave name & contact information (2x on phone)
- Others are able or willing to respond/communicate at that time
Beware of...

- **Sexting** - the sending of nude, semi-nude, or erotic pictures or video via cell phone
- **Cyberbullying** (AKA digital harassment) – mistreatment that takes place using an electronic medium (includes Cyberstalking)
- **Phishing** – attempting to acquire sensitive information such as usernames, passwords, and credit card details by posing as a trustworthy entity in an electronic communication.
- **Forwarded “funnies”/warnings** – electronic communication that originates from another source than the sender; often unwanted and/or untrue

Use common sense!

- Refuse to pass along unwanted, unverified messages
- **Remember privacy:**
  - Limit access to your social network sites
  - Never post or share your personal information online, including sex & relational status
  - Never share your passwords
  - Create a gender neutral email name and use business-like email signatures
  - Use virus and tracking detection programs
  - Delete questionable documents without opening them
  - Get a “spam” email account
- **Cyber-bullying:**
  - If you find yourself being victimized, the classic advice is to ignore the stalker. Even responding to their E-mail to say, “leave me alone,” just encourages them.
  - Block and report cyber-bullying to the proper authorities
  - Be careful about meeting face-to-face

Cell Phone Etiquette

- If engaged in F2F communication, ignore cell phone
  - Tell others in advance if you are waiting for an important call
  - When you answer a phone call during a conversation with another person, you are saying "you’re not as important to me as the person on the phone.”
- Turn off (silent or vibrate might be okay):
  - Theater, musical, film, public speaking events
  - Classrooms, libraries, meetings, worship service, court
Cell Phone Etiquette (cont.)

- Maintain privacy
  - Remove yourself from others so you can speak privately
  - Avoid using the speaker phone & keep your volume down
  - Bad connection? Hang up and find a better place to make the call
  - Avoid discussing personal matters if you are in a public space
- Screen calls (use voice mail & caller ID)

Email & Text

- Adapt to the communication situation
  - Don't use text abbreviations when emailing an employer, a professor, etc.
  - Email or text may not be the best channel; be flexible
- AVOID SHOUTING!
- Take advantage of delayed feedback—plan your message
- Take into account the absence of nonverbal cues to meaning
- Don't say anything in an email or text that you wouldn't say in person—and that you wouldn't want forwarded or kept for a later time

Email guidelines

- If you are responding, include the wording that you are responding to or reference it
- Identify yourself in the message
- Use the subject line appropriately
- Use common abbreviations sparingly, if at all
- Use proper capitalization, spelling, & punctuation
  - I know you want vs. i no u wnt
- Be respectful and polite
- Keep in mind that e-mail messages are not secure and can live forever!
TXTNG

- Don’t text
  - When you are with someone else (without apologizing)
  - If you are intoxicated
  - While driving
  - When a phone call or face-to-face would be more effective
- Don’t send bad news by text
- Don’t assume that all people text

Beware of problems from TXTNG

- General deterioration of writing skills
- Cheating in academic settings
- Lessened ability to make own decisions because constantly consulting friends
- Texting can be addictive