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### An App For The People

Have you ever heard of a website called WhatsApp? If you didn't, WhatsApp is an app that was founded in February 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan Koum, that allows you to communicate with others no matter where they are(WhatsApp). Did you also know that in November 2022, WhatsApp introduced this new feature called communities. According To WhatsApp, you are able to create a community and add or join groups that were created by others. While I don't use this feature in WhatsApp, it seems very interesting because you can learn new things from others, or even share your thoughts to others as well.

With a community feature being added to WhatsApp rules and guidelines will have to be enforced. While WhatsApp allows you to express yourself however you want in private messaging, when it comes to being apart of specific communities, rules a have to be set. According to the WhatsApp website, there are 4 quick tips to help make the communities a safer environment. One quick tip is "help members understand when to raise issues with admins or to WhatsApp". Taking this in, I'm understanding to avoid making drama or hate comments bigger than what they are by responding to that hateful comment and talk with the admins of the community or the WhatsApp help center. Another quick tip is to delete hateful comments as well as blocking, removing and reporting the members and their content that are inappropriate. This is big because we want to avoid others being hurt so the more that we eliminate the negativity the

better and more respectful community we will have. The last quick tip that WhatsApp has on their website is to “contact your local authorities if there’s a serious risk to a safety”. This is also important a guideline to have because lets be honest, the world is a crazy place, someone may start saying threats like they will bomb a place or god forbid more worse stuff that no one wants to hear and it’s best to report that because no one wants to be at risk of anything so if we can report to the police and the police can possibly track them down and stop them even if it was a lie, peoples lives will be much better

If there’s no safe space between people in these communities things would get our of hand and I doubt anyone would want to be apart of that community. These guidelines also apply to one on one conversations because who knows may be you decide to text someone you dislike hateful messages for no reason. According “In Pursuit of a “Safe” Space for Political Participation: A Study of Selected WhatsApp Communities in Kenya” by Gloria Anyango Ooko, Ooko states “July 2017, just before Kenya’s general election, the Chairman of the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) announced that they were investigating hate- speech mongers on 21 WhatsApp groups and warned that the administrators of groups involved in hate speech would be arrested”(Ooko 512). Ooko explains that hate speech is not something that is allowed, it is something that can be taken to authorizes because bullying is not right and it can lead to different types of punishment such as bringing arrested.

When it comes to the communities in WhatsApp, anyone is allowed to use it. Now there maybe specific communities that is justly for people of color, or for the LGBTQ+ community but the communities are open to anyone to create and to join. According to Acton and Koum, they state “Here’s where Communities comes in. Communities on WhatsApp will enable people to bring together separate groups under one umbrella with a structure that works for them”(Acton

Koum-1). Both Acton and Koum view when creating communities in WhatsApp is to allow people to come together and have people talk to about stuff they enjoy talk, in about, sharing thoughts, but mainly communicating. They also explain that communities are mainly used by school, local clubs and no profit organization because after the pandemic, it was hard for people to communicate with the distance we had between us so they had to find creative ways to allow us to communicate.

People talk in different ways when it comes to communicating through text through WhatsApp. People on the app are always treating each other, saying goodbye, giving thanks and responding to one another but a study explained by in “Illocutionary Context and Management Allocation of Emoji and Other Graphicons in Mexican Parent School WhatsApp Communities” by Elizabeth Floires-Salgado shows that the use of emojis, is a common way for people to communicate. According to the table that shows the outcome of the frequency distribution of graphic on in speech act, 71.3% is emoji, 27.3% is through phone call, .8% is through stickers, .45% through video, .10% through memes and 0.5% through gifs (Flores-Salgado 29). This shows that people mainly use emojis, showing that people are now communicating with these little cartoon like pictures that make it easier to either express their feelings, or it can just be a literal meaning of what the emoji mean.

This study also shows that a lot of different ages use emojis. Many people think that Emojis are mainly used by younger people because we mainly understand it, but because this exam was done on Mexican Parents it shows that more than just kids communicate in WhatsApp through the use of emojis and other ways that are not words or voice notes. WhatsApp is for anyone and everyone who understands the use of it which is good that the community portion

was also created because you are able to get help or just chat with people about a common interest that you all share through the community groups.

Before reading articles and learning about WhatsApp community I really had no interest in being apart of one of the communities in WhatsApp but learning more about it makes me rethink. The WhatsApp community is such a safe environment because there's lots of rules and guidelines to avoid problems happening. I'm someone who hates bullying especially cyberbullying and to see that it won't happen or rarely happen because its being taken care of makes it better for people to join. I also like that there's a lot of inclusivity. As shown with the article that talked about the emojis, it shows also that a lot of Hispanics use it. This is a good thing because we are able to communicate with anyone around the world no matter what time, date or place and it wont cost you a four time because WhatsApp runs on WiFi. I also respect that the communities are open to anyone despite their age, race, gender, their likes, dislikes, beliefs and more. Because there are guidelines, no one would be bullied because of certain stuff if they enter a random group and they would most likely be welcomed and not get hurt for being in a community "they don't belong in". Overall I enjoyed doing this research on the WhatsApp community because I do have WhatsApp for my family, work and my classes but I never knew that communities can be more than just a group chat or individual chat. I think everyone should try and see how WhatsApp communities work for you and I would love to learn about everyone's experience with it.

MLA Citation:

- 1) “About Us: WhatsApp.” *WhatsApp.Com*, [www.whatsapp.com/about](http://www.whatsapp.com/about).
- 2) “Enforcing Community Rules and Managing Members: WhatsApp.” *WhatsApp.Com*, [www.whatsapp.com/communities/learning/enforcingrules](http://www.whatsapp.com/communities/learning/enforcingrules).
- 3) Flores-Salgado, Elizabeth. “Illocutionary Context and Management Allocation of Emoji and Other Graphicons in Mexican Parent School WhatsApp Communities.” *Redirecting*, 2023, doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2023.03.013. Accessed 29 Mar. 2024.
- 4) Ooko, Gloria Anyango. “In Pursuit of a ‘Safe’ Space for Political Participation: A Study of Selected WhatsApp Communities in Kenya.” *Journalism and Media*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2023, pp. 506–29, <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia4020032>.
- 5) Acton, Brian, and Jan Koum. “Sharing Our Vision for Communities on WhatsApp.” *Meta*, 3 Nov. 2022, [about.fb.com/news/2022/04/our-vision-for-communities-on-whatsapp/](https://about.fb.com/news/2022/04/our-vision-for-communities-on-whatsapp/). Accessed 27 Mar. 2024.

When I first started this essay my main online community was going to be facebook marketplace. I was trying to do research on it for a couple of days but I couldn't find anything that sounded interesting and that didn't just say what the purpose of what it was for. I then gave up on the idea of the facebook marketplace and decided to change to WhatsApp community. I decided to change to it because my family has WhatsApp, and I know a lot of people who use that online community for their work life, school life or even their private life so I just said let me do it and learn more about it. The process was pretty easy, when I wanted to focus on a particular part I was able to find it. I enjoyed that I was able to find more than just words and actual graphs and stuff along those lines. The reason I say this is because there's more proof as to who uses the community, how the people in the community talk, and what they use to communicate through the communities and its all shown by numbers from research that was done by people instead of just saying "I think this is what is being said in the communities and etc". Even though I already had a feeling that the emojis would be the main used, I still found it interesting to see that it was more than 50% of it being used. In this age in time everyone is using emojis, well except the older generation because I've never seen any of my aunts, uncles, mom, dad, and grandparents use emojis unless its just my family but I was still shocked about it. Doing this research it made me want to join a community and I joined the theater community that CCNY has to stay connected with my fellow classmates and friends. Even though I don't really use it because i'm a very big introvert, when I do use it I do have lots of laughs and fun.