9. The playful use of mobile phones and its link to social cohesion

Rich Ling

Introduction

This chapter will examine how people’s playful use of the mobile phone supports social cohesion. It is true that there are a variety of ways that we use mobile telephones. We can use them to tell time, take pictures, listen to music, keep our appointment calendar, and note down memos. On advanced phones we can surf the web, sign up to play commercial multiplayer games, find directions, and sign in on social network sites. Among all these flashy applications it is important to remember that we can also talk to and text one another. Indeed it is these last functions that are the most critical when thinking of how mobile communication affects social cohesion. The use of the mobile phone to develop and maintain social cohesion is one of the interesting social consequences of the device (Ling 2008). It has been shown by many researchers that talking and texting via the mobile phone supports bounded solidarity in the intimate sphere (Hampton and Ling 2013; Ishii 2006; Kim et al. 2006; Reid and Reid 2004; Smoreda and Thomas 2001; Wei and Lo 2006). These findings suggest that there is indeed social cohesion being produced, but not how it is being done. Influenced by work of Durkheim (1995), Goffman (1967), and Collins (2004), we maintain that it is important to look at the role of ritual interaction, i.e. a mutually focused activity that engenders a common mood, in order to understand the generation of social cohesion. There are several types of socially mediated rituals that we can examine. They include gossip, flirting, and the use of in-group slang in texts. Playful banter and simple joking with one another via the phone is also a form of ritual interaction. These exchanges are banal and mundane. This does not mean, however, that they are not important. It is through these seemingly prosaic exchanges, which are most likely only entertaining to the immediate participants, that we weave the threads of social cohesion. It is how we develop a sense of our interlocutors and how “our gang of friends” develops the bonds that tie them together.

It is often beguiling to look to the flashy and technically advanced applications in mobile phones and on the Internet. Surfing the net via mobile phones is exciting. Using commercially scripted gaming applications can be
exciting and personally engrossing and there are important lessons to be learned by observing these activities. However, these activities are relatively rare when compared with the ubiquity of common social interaction via the phone. When thinking of how the mobile phone ties us to our friends and family, it is our talking and texting that is most central.

Commercially scripted vs. mediated interpersonal play

In general I am suspicious of the idea that commercially based gaming – what I am calling commercially scripted play – is having nearly the impact of mundane interaction via the mobile phone. Although the players of *World of Warcraft* will undoubtedly muster their guilds for an all-out attack on this position, when we take a broad look at computer-based gaming it is still a very small-scale affair. Data from Norway shows that only about one person in 20 (4.5%) plays a computer/console-based game on a daily basis (Vaage 2010). The most intense use was by young people in their mid-teen years. If we look globally, commercial gaming is even smaller, particularly when compared to the social impact of mobile telephony. This is not to say that computer-based games are not an arena in which important social interaction takes place (Sicart 2009; Williams et al. 2006). Commercially scripted gaming touches the lives of some, but it is not nearly as widespread or central as is simple social interaction via the mobile phone. If we move outside of the commercial gaming arena, and look instead at mediated interpersonal playfulness (in other words simply joking around with one another over the phone), then the numbers are much larger. We are talking of billions and not millions of people.

For those people who play computer- and net-based games there are important social dimensions that are being exercised. However, computer and console-based gaming is not an arena for the vast majority of sociation. It is not a place where we chat with friends. We do not meet and work out the details of daily life, etc. By contrast about 70% of Norwegians sent a text message and 75% have a mobile phone conversation on a normal day. On a worldwide basis, the sheer number of mobile phones overwhelms access to PCs, gaming devices, and the Internet. It is true that there are some games on mobile phones, but as we will see, these are not the main attraction of mobile phones.

Not all interaction via the phone is playful, but people all over the world are increasingly expected to be available to one another via the mobile phone. To not be available to friends and family represents a serious breach
(Ling 2009). Indeed in some cases it can lead to suspicion and marital rifts (Lasen 2011). It is simple mundane interaction (joking, gossiping, or telling jokes) that is central to understanding the role of mobile telephony as a tool with which to build social cohesion.

**Access and forms of mobile phone use**

In order to analyze the use of mobile phones for the purpose of play, it is important to understand how many people engaged in this behavior and to examine the role of play vis-à-vis other activities. One way to do this is to look at the ratio of the different types of traffic that pass through the mobile network.² Mobile-based commercial games largely employ the net-based functionality of the mobile phone. By contrast, mobile mediated interpersonal play is mostly carried out when we are using the voice and the texting functionality of the mobile phone. I argue that it is the latter of these two that has the greater social consequence since it is through this type of interaction that we are in touch with close friends and family and it is through these types of interactions that we create and maintain social cohesion.

Mobile telephony originated as a tool for interpersonal mediation. Its designers were concerned with the ability to talk and eventually text other individuals using a mobile device (Goggin 2006; Hillebrand et al. 2010). In this phase, the mobile phone was often used almost exclusively for interpersonal interaction. While we were adapting to the system, the design and capabilities of these devices took off. Mobile phones are now multi-dimensional personal access and information terminals. These terminals assist us in a variety of tasks (calendars, telephone lists, access to weather reports, note taking, etc.) (Ling and Donner 2009). However, even as these possibilities have developed, the main use of the mobile phone has remained the mediation of interpersonal interaction. Of all the actions taken on a mobile phone (i.e. sending text messages, making calls, or clicking on links), less than 10% are related to Internet use. That is, over 90% of what is done on a mobile phone is interpersonal interaction (see Figure 1). Moreover, half of our calls and texts go to less than five persons (Ling, Bertil, and Sundsøy 2010). These are the statistics for Norway where mobile Internet is relatively well developed. In other parts of the world, where mobile Internet capabilities are less well developed, that percentage is even lower. The clear preponderance of use of the mobile phone, i.e. the number of events, were talking and texting. This finding supports the notion suggested above that
It is the mundane use of mobile telephony, including our playful and our ritual interactions, that is central to this form of mediation.

It is possible to argue that with the rise of so-called smartphones, this development is moving in yet new directions and this is true to some degree. Mobile phones are increasingly providing access to the Internet. Applications (or apps) allow us to download small programs that can have innumerable functions. There are apps that let us write notes (some with little effort) and do lists. There are applications that help us carry out tasks and there are those that help us entertain ourselves. There are even applications for weather reports and stock prices, among many others. There are things we can use to waste time or to budget it. There are fanciful applications and those that are useful. In the context of this paper, this development might augur towards the use of commercial mobile games, and it no doubt does to the degree that this is a general trend. However, I argue that this trend is marginal when compared with mediated interpersonal playfulness.

This development changes, in some ways, the profile of the mobile phone. Where it has been an arena for social interaction, there has been a turn towards more solitary use. The mobile phone is not only for talking with friends, but it is also a device for cloistered use. The functionality of the system is moving away from being more or less exclusively for person-to-person mediation to including other applications, some of which draw us in from potential social interaction.
The rise of smartphones has seemingly taken our attention away from the idea of the simpler connections that are supported by the mobile phone. Smartphones, and in particular the iPhone, add some new dimensions and complexity to the situation. There is the sense that this will be “the Eldorado” moment for mobile Internet, and in some ways this may be true. In the case of the iPhone the numbers of events are about equally divided between talking, texting, and data (see Figure 2). Much of the data may be intentional use of the device to look up things. However, the nature of some apps can generate events even when we are not aware of it. For example, weather applications or stock market applications might continually download information.

Figure 2 shows the relative distribution of events for a sample of iPhone users in the Telenor net. It is clear that the iPhone users are far more active in their use of the mobile net. This can be for a wide variety of instrumental, as well as expressive activities. While about one third of the events are IP traffic for iPhone users, only about 8% of the events are IP for the standard user. This means that iPhone users are far more likely to use their phones to access the Internet. It does not tell us what they are doing on the net, only that they are far more likely to be accessing it.

It is perhaps encouraging for those who see the future as dominated by smartphones to read these numbers. However, it is perhaps a bit more sobering to understand that iPhone users are only a small part of the total mobile phone population. Indeed they made up only about 5% of the total...
number of users in the entire Norwegian sample as late as 2010. To put it differently, if the total population on the telephone network were the size of an apple (a piece of fruit, not the computer) the iPhone users would be a little larger than the 0 on this page. If we were to add in Android devices and other devices in this category, the number doubles, and this is still a relatively small portion of all phones that are in use (Nielsen and Fjuk 2010). While this group of users has a lot of good press, they are in reality very small. It is clear that this is a dynamic situation and that this ratio can change. Still, if we compare this with all the mobile phones in use in the world (estimated to be around 5.3 billion), the comparison becomes even more lopsided (ITU-D 2010). While there have been very healthy sales of iPhones, Android-based devices, and other smartphones; they are still a very small actor on the broader stage. Drawing on the previous form of comparison, if all the phones in the world were the size of an apple, the iPhones would be about the size of the period at the end of this sentence. It is fair to say that the iPhone is not the only smartphone. If we were to say that on a world basis there are twice as many or five times as many when considering all different types of smartphones, however that is defined, there are still not that many around. The message is that there are extraordinarily few smartphones when compared to the more traditional handsets. Thus while these devices clearly encourage people to use the Internet more, and by extension, are likely to be encouraged to engage more commercially based gaming, this is still for only a small minority. The vast majority of people in the world have far more basic phones and use them far more cautiously. For example, about 75% of the 50 million or so telephones in Bangladesh are Nokia 1000 series phones. Many of these have a simple black and white screen and basic voice/text functionality.

Play as ritual

To bring our discussion back to the work of Durkheim, Goffman, and Collins and the importance of play in social life, it is perhaps best to think of play, to the degree that it is done using the mobile phone, as being non-commercial ritual interaction, i.e. it is a mutually focused activity, engendering a common mood. When thought of in this way, it is a ritual that supports the development of social cohesion. It is perhaps more important to focus on the mundane use of the device as opposed to the flashier uses of the device for commercially scripted gaming.
The link between play and the mobile phone is specifically that the former can be carried out via the latter and result in a socially binding ritual. When I use the word ritual, I understand it to mean mutually focused activity that engenders a common mood in a bounded group. It is through this intense interaction that we, in effect, let down our barriers to others and are open to establishing and maintaining social bonds (Ling 2008). This understanding of ritual has been developed in the work of Durkheim, Goffman, and Collins. It is clear that play is a type of ritual and therefore it fits into this general framework. Mobile-based joking with one another has a ritual dimension. Indeed these interactions help us to account for how the mobile phone is so extremely important for the most immediate sphere of family and friends (Ishii 2006). In the words of Christian Licoppe, it gives us “connected presence” (2004). Among other things, we use the mobile phone to interact in a playful way with our closest friends and family. The way we greet a spouse when they call on the phone often includes special phrases and cadences with which we mark the relationship and further cultivate our intimate connection. We can share an inside joke that, in its telling, reconfirms our tight bond. This mundane form of playfulness is a far more profound and widespread, but far less flashy, than the commercial mobile (or net-based) multiplayer games.

The playfulness of missed calls

When considering socially integrative playful rituals via the mobile phone, what perhaps comes to mind are talking and texting. However, our proclivity for sociation and the use of ritual interaction means that we can engage in social integration using the simplest forms of mediated interaction. Indeed there is not even the need to use words in order to cultivate relationships when using the mobile phone. It is possible to see playfulness in the simple use of missed calls (Geirbo, Helmersen, and Engø-Monsen 2007). Missed calls are widely used in developing countries as a way to signal to one another without it incurring the cost of a call or a text. It uses only the ringing sound of the mobile phone and the caller ID function. One of the interlocutors calls the other, lets the phone ring once or twice and then hangs up. The person receiving the call sees who has called and, provided that they have agreed on the meaning of the call, they act accordingly. For example, if a husband is supposed to pick up his wife after work, they will agree that when she sends him a missed call, he will come to pick her up. This is an exceedingly common form of interaction in some countries
(Donner 2007). While they are often related to functional interaction they can also be used more playfully. To use the words of Asma, an 18-year-old Bangladeshi woman, who confided that: “My friend has a very charming welcome tone that I often want to hear. So I give him three miss-calls to say that I just want to listen to his welcome tone so not to receive my call.”

Missed calls are not an isolated phenomena. Indeed in some countries the large majority of calls that are dialed are not answered, that is, they are missed calls. It is also clear from the data that it is not just a functional thing. As noted by Tasmia, a 19-year-old Bangladeshi woman, “I have a special friend but I have not met him. [...] I gave him a missed call. He called me and asked me who I am. [...] Then I told him so that he can talk to me.” Thus, this practice can take on flirtatious dimensions. The material in Figure 3 shows that one individual sent 300 missed calls to a single recipient. There are also cases of people sending hundreds and even thousands of missed calls to the same number. There may be an element of control in these cases, but there can also be an element of flirting or play. It could simply be the desire to hear the ringtone, or it could just be the desire to give the object of one’s adoration what Ito and Okabe (2005) call a virtual tap on the shoulder many times over. It is easy to see that the playful exchange
of missed calls fits the notion of a ritual, i.e. the engendering of a common mood through a focused activity in a bounded group. It is through these types of interactions that social cohesion is developed.

**Ricoeur: The tension between individual and group identity**

We will now move our discussion to the other intellectual guidepost of the project, Paul Ricoeur, in order to pursue the question of individual as opposed to group identity. The Playful Identities project maintains that there are several different moments to the ludic self-construction of identity. Quoting somewhat loosely from the project outline, these include:

- Lived experience;
- Expression of this implicitly experienced ludic nexus in the player;
- The individual understands her/himself from the perspective of this space of possible actions;
- The space is reflectively applied to the self and internalized.

Each of these points is important in understanding the individual identity, but the progression is individualistic. We are constructing our own identities. There is the sense that social identities are also a part of the picture, but this portion of the discussion has not been elaborated on. The focus is on the individual.

**Narrative identity**

I argue that when examining identity construction it is worth considering the social dimension of ICT since mediated communication is inherently social. Considering the mobile phone that has been largely a mediation device, it is important that we look beyond individual identity construction to more group-based dynamics. Ricoeur believed we construct a narrative history out of memories in our past. By the same token, the group constructs its sense of identity out of similar materials. Indeed it is these collective events that result in group identity. We remember the time we had a beer with the gang after the game. We remember the family’s summer holiday. We reflect on our Grandmother’s 85th birthday party and recall how nice (or how tedious) it was to gather the entire family together for the evening. In each case, the specific event represents both a new episode, a new opportunity to gather memories, and a chance to cultivate and rearrange our past memories.
It is these collective times that provide the raw material for group identity development. As these situations move into the past we start to set them into a broader narrative line. We abstract the essence of them and come to some type of agreement within the group that, for example, Aunt Marge always needs to be at the center of attention by telling awkward jokes or that just like last year Tom bet Frank that the New York Yankees would beat the Boston Red Sox but it always seems like Boston chokes in the last inning. In other words, the specific events of the group are collected, arranged into a mosaic that is again used to characterize expectations for the current and future interactions. Indeed, for married couples the actual facts are often bent and formed into a narration that supports a collectively founded sense of “who we are” (Berger and Kellner 1964).

It is also the responsibility of members – however they are defined – to maintain the lore of the group. Tom and Frank need to keep track (in some vague way) of how many times Boston has choked. Uncle George (Marge’s brother) knows that when she starts to wind up for a story, he can usually move her onto another track by telling stories of their youth. Another dimension of this is that access to the narrative history of the group has boundary issues associated with it. People have varying access to this narration. Some people only get the superficial version while others are steeped in the details. Access depends to a large degree on the level of trust that group members are willing to afford the newbie. Access to the narration is accumulated and eventually a new member has participated in enough of the interactions so that they also build a reservoir of insight. In a like way, a new person’s participation will, over time, become an element in the narration of the group. Obviously, there can be received elements in the narration of the group. Drawing on the work of Burger and Luckmann there can be the sense that the group does particular things, “because that is the way we do that” (Berger and Luckmann 1967). This legitimation is developed at some point in the history of the group and it becomes institutionalized. To the degree that it is orthodoxy, there is an ethics associated with the decision to respect the narration.

The mobile phone is involved in this to the degree that we use it to engage in social interaction. Just as the trip to the bar with the gang, the instrumental but more likely the expressive and phatic messages that are exchanged between individuals can become the raw material for group identity. We might remember the joke sent by a good friend, the nice chat we had with our Aunt Marge, some juicy gossip, or the text message from our now ex-boy/girlfriend that told us they need “more space” and that they would like to stop meeting.
And analogously, there are the sets of memories that individuals share with other members of their group. Through this “collective memory”, a group of people has access to past events and deeds that have been reconstructed and recounted to them. Indeed, from one perspective, this collective memory antedates individual memories.

This ties us to Ricoeur’s notion of narrative identity. With this concept, he makes the abstract idea of time into a way of understanding individual identity. This notion of identity pulls together our understanding of different events and dealings in our individual past into a single, more or less unified account. It takes the raw history of different incidents and gives us a broader sense of who we are and how we are positioned in society. There is the sense that “I have always liked pizza,” that blue is my color, or the idea that our latest adventure was just like all the times before. At a personal level, we match the emerging situation with our sense of who we are with the various exigencies that need to be dealt with (what shirt to buy, which bar to choose, whether to spend the day reading or practicing our backhand shot, etc.).

If left at the level of individual identity, the notion of narrative identity would perhaps be of interest to psychologists. However, there is also a reciprocal social dimension to this. It is here that the communicative dimension of the mobile phone becomes interesting. The design or the type of mobile phone we consume might be an element in the integration of our personal identity. We can, for example, be a person who always has a Nokia, or insists on having a red mobile phone, etc. We can be the type of person who always wants to have a technically advanced device, one with a touch screen or we may take pride in having an old scratched up phone that is held together with tape and where the “#” key does not work. Our insistence on having a specific device can be a way for us to make sense of ourselves. We might not feel comfortable having a particular type of mobile phone and may have the sense that it is out of kilter with who we are. In this way, this decision has resonance with Ricoeur’s individual notion of identity construction.

I suggest that it is also important to examine this at the group level. We construct an individual identity, but just as importantly we construct group identities. We have a notion of our family or circle of friends, our bowling team or our work colleagues. We have episodes in our past that we collectively work into a narrative of how the group came together and how it functions. If these narratives are abused too much, then the group has a reduced reservoir of cohesion. We develop these narratives by collectively experiencing things such as playfulness. More importantly we develop the group cohesion by discussing and elaborating these elements into a single
narrative. It is here that the communicative practices of the group become important. The mobile phone, along with many other forms of mediation, provides us with a channel through which we construct these narrative identities. Mobile telephony has the advantages of being able to do this more or less immediately and it also allows for us to reach one another regardless of where we might be. Thus it can make the events of the group more intense and vibrant. We can get the call that Susie has been in a car crash and that our wife is on the way to the hospital and that we need to pick up another child, almost as the events unfold. Cohen, Lemish, and Schejter (2007) describe this type of drama mediated through the phone. The fact that dramatic events, or for that matter indescribably happy events (“Hi Dad, I just got engaged!”), can be mediated so quickly and so directly to the relevant individuals, means that there is a real vibrancy to the use of the device.

Thus, at the level of both personal integration and also the cohesion of the group, the mobile phone gives us both a physical object and a communication channel through which these messages can be mediated. At both the level of the individual and the level of the group, the mobile phone provides us with a way to work out our narrative identity.

Metaphoricity

Another notion that contributes to group cohesion suggested by Ricoeur is the notion of metaphoricity. He starts by noting that we use leaps of imagination and literary flourishes to underscore the meaning of certain events. These metaphoric assemblages are important since they underscore the importance of the event and give it a memorable character. The metaphors, however, have a limited shelf life. To use them too often means that they become worn and they lose their ability to describe the special nature of the instance. This is reminiscent of Simmel’s notion of fashion. Simmel (1904) described fashion along two dimensions. The first is quite similar to the notion of metaphoricity in that our use can be described as being on a continuum between either being progressive or dated, or being avant-garde or dowdy. He also used another dimension, namely the degree to which a particular fashion can be seen as being a sign of inclusion. Our adoption or rejection of a particular fashion item marks our interest and indeed our ability to be a member of a particular social group.

Mobile phone practices can be seen using these dimensions (Fortunati 2005; Ling 2003). There are waves of popularity associated with them and
our ability to adroitly deal with these dynamic phenomena. Our stylized orthography, newly popular smiley, cool new phone, or even our app *de jure* all place us in a particular place in the fashion terrain. We will be at some point on the continuum between being unrecognizably ahead of the coming fashion or laughably behind. In addition, our use of these symbolic devices will allow others to determine our status vis-à-vis membership in the broader group. It is also possible to think of how language in texting is used. Quite often, text message language is simple and it is mundane, i.e. messages such as “Hi. Can you call me?” sent by a 35-year-old male or “What time are you coming home” sent by a 45-year-old woman. These all reflect simple interactions that are of importance at the moment, but do not really draw on any literary flourishes. However, in the same corpus a 17-year-old Norwegian male reported sending the text “Cy la8ter.” This is in itself an interesting text. It plays on the more common CUL8R that again is a rendition of the phrase “see you later”. In the teen’s version the exact phrasing is off. He used y instead of a u, he used a space between the Cy and the la8ter and he also reported actually spelling out the whole word “later” in addition to inserting the 8. Some of this may have been because he was not operating in his mother tongue and some of it may have simply been typing mistakes. Regardless he was using non-standard language on the mobile phone. His use of the phrase was not particularly early in the life cycle of such abbreviations, but it is still interesting that he chose to use it. This type of mediated “playing” with the language can also elicit special responses from his friends who in turn play on his text.

Although we do not have the total context of this interaction, the exchange that included the phrase was likely a way to underscore the group membership and develop a social bond based on a slight, though recognizable literary flourish. The use of this literary device was likely simply a closing to a series of text messages that covered another topic. However, it was also, in a small way, a recognition that both interaction partners shared the facility to use text messages and that they were both hip enough to use this phrase. Thus it fits into the landscape described by Simmel and also Ricoeur.

At the time of its use in Norway, it had a slightly dulled but still cutting-edge tone to it, and it was a marker of common membership in some social grouping. It has since lost that edginess. Middle-aged cubicle occupants along with the parents of 17-year-olds can even imagine using such a phrase with suitable ironic distance. Thus there has been a career associated with the phrase CUL8TR where it has gone from being a hip way of binding together teen interlocutors to being a more staid or even a time-bound
antiquated phrase such as “23 skidoo” from the 1920s or “hot rod” from the 1950s or “groovy” in the 1960s and 1970s. At the time of their vogue, their correct use signified that the user was knowledgeable of the current lingo. In another work, I have described how Norwegian teens use purposely misspelled Swedish phrases in their texting as a way to mark social cohesion (Ling 2008). Indeed, early in their popularity curve, these terms often signify those persons who are avant-garde. As it becomes popular its ability to identify the cutting edge is blunted and eventually it can even become kitsch. Thus the mobile phone has been, and in many ways still is, an arena where metaphors are used to help define ourselves and our social sphere.

Conclusion

Mobile telephony helps us to maintain social cohesion. One of the ways that this is done is through playful interaction. While the mobile phone allows for both commercially scripted forms of play, it more importantly allows for non-commercial and unscripted forms of interaction. It is the latter that has the most profound social consequences. Commercial gaming via the Internet and increasingly on mobile platforms is often the focus of our attention. While this receives much of the current attention, there are still relatively few people on a global basis that use these. By comparison, there are many more mobile phones. Mobile gamers number in the millions while mobile phone users number in the billions. Thus, when looking at mobile telephony as an arena for playfulness and as an arena for the construction of social cohesion, it is more fruitful to look at mundane interpersonal interaction. It is when people are informally joking with one another, or when they are purposely constructing misspelled texts that play with inner group understandings, that the work of social cohesion is being done. To be sure, there is a social dimension to commercial gaming and it has many of the same outcomes. However, looking broadly, it is legacy of everyday social interactions via the mobile phone that helps the group to build a narrative identity.

The mediated artifacts, i.e. the in-group phrases and the forms of address used by interlocutors play on commonly held elements of the group lore. The way of telling a joke, announcing a party, or saying good bye serves to generate social cohesion, albeit in small increments. There is a phatic element to these interactions which extend beyond their communicative purpose expressing also a meta-message to show that the relationship of the two partners is still as it should be.
By looking at the use of mobile telephony, play, and social cohesion, we have seen that playful practices, such as purposefully misspelling words in texts, are a type of ritual interaction where there is a mutually focused activity engendering a common mood among the participants. It is in this way that the mobile phone helps us to maintain friends and to keep the lines of communication open within our social sphere.

Notes

1. These numbers come from Statistics Norway and their nationally representative sample of 1700 persons who were asked about their media use in 2009.
2. This is as opposed to the open Internet. When a person is connected to the mobile network, the Internet (or Internet protocol) traffic goes through the mobile telephone network before it moves into the more traditional Internet.
3. An event in the case of voice is a call, in the case of SMS it is a text message and in the case of IP it is a link being activated.
4. Other smartphone users were not as active on this front as iPhone users were.
5. By way of comparison there are about 2 billion Internet users on all platforms.
6. The definition of smartphones is contested. Often there are categories for 1) “high-end” smartphones such as HTCs and iPhones, 2) Smartphones that are somewhat more downscale, 3) feature phones, 4) high-end entry phones, and 5) entry phones.
7. Obviously there is a commercial dimension in our relationship with the mobile phone operator. However, they have a much different role than a commercial game provider.
8. It is clear that this kind of play can also take place in the context of commercial games, such as World of Warcraft and Second Life, despite the commercial aspects of the software.
9. This is quite close to the idea of group cohesion associated with ritual (Collins 2004; Ling 2008).
10. These text messages have been translated from Norwegian.
11. This is a verbatim rendition with no translation.

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