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### Ethnography Assignment

For my observation on the use of smartphones and texting by teenagers and young adults, I placed myself in the lobby of Winthrop University's Phelps Hall between 5:21pm and 6:21pm. Phelps Hall is conveniently located near the center of campus right by the cafeteria. With it being Sunday afternoon, I knew that many people would be coming back to campus after the end of the weekend; additionally, I suspected I would also get traffic from those who wished to get in the front of the dinner line in Thomson. Therefore, this was a prime time to catch students going about their habitual, mindless activities. I chose a seat in the lobby where I could see the front door, the door to the stairs, as well as the entire lobby area; the back door was right behind me. On the left and right of me stretched ramps that lead from one side of the room to the other. Interestingly enough, I encountered my first observation after only two minutes of sitting down.

At 5:23pm, a Caucasian male approximately 20 years old walked down a side ramp. He was nicely dressed with glasses and a thick brown winter coat. He continued to hesitantly walk from one side of the ramp to the other, but as he reached the middle of the room, he paused momentarily. From the moment I saw him tip-toeing down the ramp, he was looking down at his phone seemingly texting, which caused his hesitation. After he paused, still looking down, he proceeded to blindly move forward only to nearly walk straight into the railing along the side of the ramp. Fortunately, he abruptly caught

himself before a collision occurred and continued on his way...still texting. Similarly, about six minutes later at 5:29pm, a well-dressed African American male of around the same age walked into the front door while he was on the phone and almost tripped over the rug at the entrance of the room.

At 5:41pm, a young Caucasian female with Greek letters on her bag walked out from the stairs door. From this door to the main door, there are approximately seven steps. In the entire time it took her to walk out the building, she had her phone lifted up to her face with one hand. She did not falter once, even when she had trouble opening the door because she was using her only one free hand to push down the latch. She was dressed in a black dress with heels, and her hair was up in a bun. Shortly thereafter at 5:43pm, three female Caucasian athletes walked through the lobby; one of the females had her phone out. She was the only one talking out of the three, but she was looking at her phone the entire walk through the lobby. Although she was communicating with her friends, she was simultaneously reading the screen of her phone the whole time. Another interesting observation occurred at 5:56pm when a young Caucasian female, who appeared slightly unkempt wearing jeans and a T-shirt, stepped out from the stairway heading out the front door. In this particular incident, she took the seven steps forward while holding her phone out in front of her with both hands; she was texting, and did not look up once. As she approached the door, instead of putting the phone down or even holding it with only one hand, she maintained her texting position, turned her body 180 degrees, and pushed the door open with her back. She leaned on the latch with the weight of her body and continued her texting conversation even when her body weight had

difficulty opening the door. Eventually, she successfully made it outside and walked away—still texting.

During my hour-long observation, I encountered over 25 people in total, and around 12 of them were seen with their smartphones in hand. The above narration is simply a small selection of the various incidents I witnessed. Additionally, even those who were not texting or browsing on their phones still had it visible either in their pockets or within reach somewhere on their person. Drawing from this information, I can safely deduct that half of the people I saw were texting and/or using their smartphones. Nevertheless, this statistic is by no means shocking. Smartphones are increasingly becoming more popular, and with them comes the accessibility of instant communication and social media at our fingertips. From an IMC perspective, this piece of technology can be a huge asset to advertising products and building customer relationships. Using emails effectively to attain feedback from brand loyal consumers and sending mass texts to advertise local deals on products would be beneficial tactics to implement. In such ways, an IMC campaign needs to make its objectives conveniently achieved by its consumers by using smartphones to its advantage. Furthermore, I would argue that any physical ad that might have been placed in the lobby would not have even been noticed by more than half of the people I observed; so, effective advertisements that can be marketed through social media forums on smartphones would be well worth the time, energy, and money because that is where this particular demographic seems to focus its eyes and mind on a regular basis.