Front- and backstage in "social media"

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Starting with two cases, in which bloggers reveal way to much about things that should be kept hidden, I will ask: What is it in "social media" as media and in the communicative situation of the person using them, that constitutes front- and backstage and the boarder dividing them?

In the paper I will analyze the cases mentioned above using some of Goffman´s conceps, the already-mentioned *frontstage* and *backstage* and also *expressions given* and *expressions given off*. I will also compare what might be called computer-to-computer interaction with face-to-face interaction by initially using the "model" of talk that Goffman developed in his article "Replies and Responses" (reprinted in the book *Forms of Talk* 1981). This "model" consists of eight different so called "system requirements and system constraints" (1981: 14-15).

I will also draw on results from an earlier study on mobile telephone calls in public places, where I gathered data by eavesdropping on, or rather overhearing, such calls (results published in Persson, Anders 2001 "Intimacy Among Strangers", in *Journal of Mundane Behavior* (Vol. 3, No. 3, October 2001) and in Persson, Anders 2003 *Social kompetens*. Lund: Studentlitteratur (a book in Swedish)). The tendency to reveal too much about private, sometimes intimate, things is evident in such calls – but to whom are the callers revealing them? Has this intimacy among strangers something to do with peculiarities of the mobile phone as a medium? According to Zygmunt Bauman (*The Individualized Society*, Polity Press 2001) the mobile phone gave the final blow to the connection between spiritual affinity and physical nearness. Or is it the communicative situation of the caller and his/her being an absorbed communicator that explains the tendency to reveal too much?

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