

SLACK App Use in Local BSA Committee

One Pack's Experience

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to describe the uses and gratifications of the SLACK app for adult leaders of a particular Boy Scouts of America cub scout pack committee. Through multiple data sources, results revealed ten themes about the comparison between SLACK interaction and face to face interaction. The small group roles of gatekeeper, scribe, generator, critic, and unifier are present in SLACK interaction but are not fully functional without united participation of all committee members in the SLACK forum. The SLACK app was used more by committee members who were previously computer adaptable. Successful application of SLACK requires much effort from the group leader. The SLACK app reduced the number of tasks for members, allowing broad and permanent communication with and access to documents for all other members without multiple emails. Slack cannot replace face to face committee meetings. The overall finding of the study is that SLACK has the potential to service a small group but will not realize that potential without the united consent and participation of the group members.

Key Words: Case Study, Uses and Gratification Theory (U&G), Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), SLACK app, Small Group Decision Making, Teamwork, Virtual Teams, Face to Face (FtF), Hybrid Teams, Boy Scouts of America (BSA), Community Council, Volunteerism.

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Introduction

As a young girl without brothers, I never thought I would be involved in Boy Scouts of America. Now, I find myself fully entrenched in this delightful organization. I have volunteered for 13 years in 7 different positions, counseled and signed over 100 merit badge cards in five different types of merit badges, completed North Star and Wood Badge training, earned the Second Miler Award, have two Eagle scout sons and another still involved in youth scouting. I have come to see that leaders in scouting are feverishly busy people who freely give their time, talents, and money because they have come to believe that BSA is a great organization to prepare youth for adult success while creating lasting memories of childhood joy. These selfless volunteers are citizens who serve in multiple local community leadership positions.

During the time in which I conducted this study, I served as the committee chair of Pack 357. It is the responsibility of the committee chair to arrange and conduct committee meetings, track the budget, facilitate income and expenses, track information pertinent to annual re-chartering with the national BSA organization, communicate with district and council leaders, fill in when any committee position is vacant, and answer questions or problems that other committee members cannot resolve.

Pack 357 consistently maintains more than twenty cub scouts in three dens. Dens meet on a weekly basis for activities that fulfill specific requirements to earn awards. Parents can also work with their sons at home to fulfill requirements for cub awards. The dens are Wolf, Bear, and Webelos. Wolf scouts are age eight, Bears are age nine, and Webelos¹ are age ten. We welcome a Webelos from another pack of which he is a lone den member. We also have a Webelos who is officially a member of the Hurricane Special Needs cub unit, but who lives

¹ The term Webelos is both singular and plural, standing for WE-BE-LOYal-Scouts. Webelo would mean we-be-loyal without the scouts.

within our unit's area boundary. Both participate weekly with our Webelos den, so we communicate with their packs for record keeping purposes. Our cubs and their parents belong to various religious denominations and family circumstances. We strive to include all boys in our geographic area. Due to our current high numbers and special circumstances, our committee includes eighteen adult leaders, not including parents who do not hold a formal leadership position. We invite parents to be actively involved even if they are not registered BSA leaders. Each den could be considered a subgroup because each has two assigned leaders as well as associated parents. Thus, our committee members have a wide range of expectations, values, experiences, and contacts.

Finding a time for monthly face-to-face (FtF) meetings that accommodates everyone's busy schedules is challenging. Typically, less than half of our committee members attend the monthly FtF committee meetings. Although I spend a significant amount of time repeating information and seeking everyone's opinions, I feel our committee members are not fully in sync. I regularly send group e-mails, but individuals usually forget to use the reply-all option; therefore, some members miss important parts of the conversation. We text, call, visit each other's homes, and catch each other at church to ask questions, plan events, resolve problems, and tie up loose ends. These one-to-one communication methods seem inefficient when there are 18 members of the group who need to work together as one.

There is a growing number of computer mediated communication (CMC) resources for small groups aimed at remedying issues similar to those our pack leadership encounter. Small group resources continue to be adapted to smart phone apps, as well. I began searching for an app that would allow asynchronous access to all issues, allow for brainstorming and sharing documents such as the cub budget and calendar, and instantly update everyone on all input.

Our cub committee began using ScoutBook to track awards and advancement in January of 2017. We find it to be awesome in coordinating parent and leader work with boys. ScoutBook allows immediate communication as requirements are fulfilled, whether in the weekly den meeting or at home. It facilitates communication among parents, den leaders, advancement chair, cubmaster, and committee chair that decreases misunderstandings as we prepare for each monthly pack meeting. We regularly have more than 30 awards per month, each consisting of numerous requirements. The advancement chair easily prints out a list of all the completed awards for the month, eliminating the need for countless phone calls about specific details before purchasing awards for the monthly pack meeting. It is at the monthly pack meetings where the cubmaster presents awards. Parents and siblings attend the monthly pack meetings to celebrate each cub's awards and enjoy a recreational evening together. ScoutBook makes our pack meetings less stressful for everyone. A large pack, such as ours, greatly benefits from streamlined communication. However, ScoutBook does not address other committee needs such as event planning, budgeting, and problem solving.

We seek a technology tool which will allow the regular benefits of small group decision making at the convenience of each member's personal schedule. FtF meetings foster social bonding and cohesion. FtF meetings allow the generation of new ideas to be tested in a synergistic manner. FtF meetings benefit from a member who regulates communication by eliciting input from shy members and filtering extraneous and distracting information. FtF meetings also require some sort of record keeping in order to hold members accountable to make progress. Is there a CMC tool which maintains all the benefits of FtF meetings while eliminating the impediment of time and space requirements? Is there an app which will allow us to

communicate as a group from the comfort of our own home at our own schedule? ScoutBook does not answer that need.

I experimented with Poll Everywhere during the summer of 2017 and discovered that it does not answer the need, either. Poll Everywhere facilitates presenter interaction with large audiences. A presenter will post a question to which the audience members may respond. The presenter can immediately share results with the audience. It could be used in a classroom, conference, or convention, but it does not allow asynchronous group interaction outside of FtF meetings. In fact, it requires the group to be together to utilize its function. Therefore, it did not meet the specific need I sought for our pack committee. It does not free participants from time and space restraints. After the Poll Everywhere experiment, one of my committee members suggested SLACK.

SLACK is a CMC app that allows groups to follow several issues simultaneously. Topics are posted separately on channels. Any given channel maintains the complete history of everyone's discussion on that given topic including uploaded documents and pictures. All group members can discuss issues and upload documents on the pertinent channel for all to view. No one has to remember to select "reply all." Also, a particular topic is not lost in the sea of information as seen in email conversations. A channel on an annual event, such as the Pinewood Derby, would maintain all conversation from one year to the next. All members would be able to review the decisions and reasons behind those reasons without depending on one person reading back old minutes. I wondered if SLACK could answer the needs of our large committee by allowing everyone to view items at their personal convenience, post pertinent resources, and suggest/respond to ideas. SLACK seemed to have the qualities for which we were looking. I wondered if SLACK could serve our needs better than our ill attended monthly FtF meetings. I

will discuss pertinent literature on small group, my investigational methods for this project, the results, as well as the limitations and implications.

Literature Review

Despite our increasingly globalized and digitalized world, small group research remains pertinent (Berger, 2010; Gastil, 2008; Harrington & Fine, 2000; McGrath, Arrow, & Berdahl, 2000; Wuthnow, 1994). In fact, because proficiency in team work is one of the most valued skills for corporations' new hires, educators are increasingly required to teach group skills (Opt & Sims, 2015). I will look at previous research in roles for small groups and how technology has influenced them. I will then look at how virtual teams function, and I will compare computer mediated communication CMC to FtF communication. Lastly, I will examine community councils' use of CMC.

Old Roles

There are many tools in small group decision making, too many to examine in this project. Some of these tools are specific roles group members perform. I will examine five essential roles: gatekeeper, scribe, generator, critic, and unifier. In an overview, these group roles maximize quality outcome on the group's specific purpose by, respectively, regulating interaction, ensuring accountability, generating ideas, testing those ideas, and fostering cohesion.

One of the most beneficial roles in successful small groups is that of gatekeeper. The gatekeeper facilitates group interaction by engaging every member's participation (Mudd & Sillars, 1976; Johnson, 1977; Hirokawa & Pace, 1983; Crowell, 1993; Heise, 2013), asking epistemic questions (Tracy, 2002), "processing and disseminating information" (Fisher, 1980, p. 85), clarifying (Hirokawa & Scheerhorn, 1985), reclassifying or chunking (Fisher, 1980), encouraging rigorous examination of topics (Hirokawa & Pace, 1983) and filtering distracting or

cumbersome messages (Fisher, 1980). Group members need to be influenced to share new information because they naturally feel more comfortable discussing information that is already known (Schittekatte, 1996); thus, the gatekeeper encourages new information. Without the gatekeeper, meetings turn into long, capricious visits that do not culminate in meaningful progress. It is the gatekeeper who keeps the discussion on task and productive. When a skilled gatekeeper is in the group, every person contributes his/her strengths to the cause because the gatekeeper draws out participation by seeking out each member's talents and applying them to specific aspects of group work. All group members may function in the gatekeeper role. In fact, it is advantageous to have members other than a designated leader perform gatekeeper duties (Ketrow & Schultz, 1995). The gatekeeper has been essential in successful FtF groups.

Working in conjunction with the gatekeeper is the scribe. Recording the discussion aids the decision making and goal achieving process (Endres, 1990; Fisher, 1980). It is the scribe's written account of interaction that holds members accountable, ensuring that promised actions are not forgotten (Magleby, 2018). Though gatekeeper and scribe are vital roles in the small group, regulating and recording information is pointless without the flow of ideas.

It is the generator who offers ideas. The gatekeeper invites all to participate in the role of generator. Discovery is one of the functions of deliberation (Hirokawa & Scheerhorn, 1985). Examining many ideas increases the likelihood that the end product will be of better quality (Fisher, 1980). Indeed, sharing empowers group members to change their beliefs and actions (Morgan, 2013). Of course, generating and sharing ideas precipitates a thorough examination of each suggestion.

Ideas must be tested with a candid discussion of benefits and liabilities. Group members need to feel comfortable expressing concerns in the role of the critic. They need to openly and

honestly express prophesies of doom. Groupthink is the enemy of success (Janis, 1982).

Groupthink occurs when all members sacrifice honest reservations in order to be cohesive and unified. Groupthink is a false feeling that all is well. Because the critic defies groupthink, she/he may be the most valuable voice in the group. The negative member holds people accountable for explaining their ideas (Yilmaz & Pena, 2015). Listening to the deviant voice can even save lives (Avon & Hirodawa, 2001). As is the case with the role of generator, all members can function in the role of critic; indeed, it is ideal that all members both generate and test ideas. Giving new ideas and expressing concern require risk taking. How will the idea or criticism be received? All roles, especially those of generator and critic, rely on group cohesiveness.

The unifier is an integral part of building cohesion and morale. In fact, it is the unifier role which marries small group research with interpersonal communication. Although groupthink can be caused by the desire to be cohesive (Fisher, 1980), there must be some measure of safety and mutual respect to keep the critic in the group and to have courage to speak up (Folger & Poole, 1984; Kanisin-Overton, McCalister, Kelly, & MacVicar, 2009). Both generator and critic need to feel safe in speaking their minds. Friendliness has been a foundational part of small group research (Bales, 1950). Likewise, unity and relationships are also inherently vital parts of small group research (Hirokawa & Scheerhorn, 1985). Unifying techniques which foster social cohesion while encouraging open critique include listening (Ketrow & Schultz, 1995), defining the criticism as focused on the idea not the individual (Fisher & Ury, 1983), identifying common ground (Simons, 1976), and nonverbal signals (Adler, Rosenfeld, & Towne, 1983). As with the other roles, the unifier role may be claimed by more than one member. Group members may function in more than one role, and each role may be fulfilled by multiple members. All five traditional roles aid a successful small group decision making process.

New Influences

Much of the current research asks how CMC influences small groups and how virtual teams compare to the past century's findings in FtF small groups. In fact, the effects of CMC on small group communication has been investigated long before social media and apps were prevalent (Communication News, 1994). An examination of the literature reveals some of CMC's influence on the specific group roles of gatekeeper, scribe, generator, critic, and unifier.

We will first look at CMC's influence on the role of gatekeeper. Scott (2013) examined Scrum software with the global and virtual Team Amit. Scott's research is an example of how a specific CMC channel influences several basic small group roles. Scrum is group facilitating software, but it is also a method that was developed in the 1990's and continues to be popular in corporate, volunteer, and educational teams (Opt & Sims, 2015). Scrum requires group members to report at regular intervals. Reports include progress on the project and obstacles that require assistance. These 15 minute reports are followed by a debriefing. Scrum performs duties of the gatekeeper in requiring participation from every member and specifying types of contributions (Scott, 2013; Opt & Sims, 2015). Eliciting every member's input has been a gatekeeping function, but we see that software can facilitate the gatekeeping role. However, gatekeeping is still necessary in CMC interaction. An example is found when Sivunen and Nordback (2015) documented that group members lose interest when one member gets long winded, the same reaction as in FtF meetings. Although CMC can fulfill some gatekeeping functions, it is not yet able to entirely replace the human role. Someone still needs to regulate information exchange. In fact, the role of managing virtual teams requires more effort than managing FtF teams (Berry, 2011).

In contrast, the scribe's role may become easier. The textual nature of much of CMC could fortify and possibly simplify the scribe's role. Every member takes part in the scribe role if each types his/her own information. The Scrum software is an example of how each person's contribution is recorded and how the software tracks progress and ensures accountability (Scott, 2013).

How does CMC influence the generator's role? One of the great advantages of modern technology is the ease and speed of interaction. One example is how cell phones and internet increase political involvement (Campbell & Kwak, 2010). People are able to partake of the information and respond to it. CMC accommodates more voices and more ideas. People can be more involved by sharing their opinions. When small group members can easily access an app to immediately record ideas, there can be more ideas in the flow of communication. Scrum software ensures contributions from every team member by structuring and requiring input from all (Scott, 2013). Therefore, CMC can facilitate idea contributions from all members.

Closely associated with generating ideas is critiquing those ideas. Scrum requires regular self reports of what is not going well (Opt & Sims, 2015). When members foresee problems, they may discuss during Scrum's debriefing. However, the use of debriefing may depend more upon the individual team than the forum. Team Amit, for instance, emphasized unity, "We are one team" (Scott, 2013, p. 313). Groupthink may or may not be a problem for Team Amit. As with all groups, individual members strengthen or weaken productivity. Yilmaz and Pena (2015) examined interpersonal behavior in virtual teams. They discovered, "Negatively communicating members can more effectively engage others using their challenging and probing communication styles" (p 438). In other words, the divergent voice stimulates conversation. Yilmaz and Pena pointed out the importance of the negative communicating member in preventing groupthink; the

critic's role remains vital in virtual teams. Being able to critique without burning cohesion is one of the important skills necessary in productive groups. One of the aspects of CMC's influence is that anonymity improves the virtual team members' contributions (Berg, 2012). This harkens back to the safety to speak idea. If the contributor's identity is unknown, the person feels safe. Of course, small group contribution generally is not anonymous. Team members want to know what each member thinks. Therefore, safety is very important. Enhancing genuine cohesion in which team members are safe to give honest feedback, both in generating new ideas and critiquing those ideas, is an inherent aspect of productive teams. Unfortunately, one of the weaknesses found in virtual teams is negative conflict management (Zornoza, Ripoll, & Peiro, 2002). Therefore, a CMC channel which fosters interpersonal connections is desirable.

Looking between the lines, we can infer CMC's affect on the role of unifier. Recent researchers examined the effect of CMC interchange on cohesion, trust building, and productivity. Distance complicates virtual team effectiveness due to trust issues that in turn cause conflict (Scott, 2013). However, complicating efforts is not the same as eliminating possible success. There is a positive correlation between a Psychologically Safe Communication Climate (PSCC) and the amount of online communication (Zhao, 2010). Trust in virtual teams is built through behavior (Yilmaz & Pena, 2014). Altschuller & Benbunan-Fich (2010) defined virtual copresence as consistent availability. Virtual copresence positively affects trust and productivity in virtual teams, "(V)irtual copresence is a critical ingredient in virtual team interactions" (Altschuller & Benbunan-Fich, 2010, p. 42). Altschuller and Benbunan-Fich found that virtual copresence is possible if physically distant team members meet synchronously allowing immediate responses; meeting synchronously aids cohesion. Thus, CMC helps physically distant team members better if they meet at the same time.

However, CMC also helps asynchronous teams. Berry (2011) discovered that asynchronous virtual teams can be as effective as FtF teams, but it takes much more effort. One of the great benefits of FtF is that team members respond immediately to each other. Cohesion and trust in virtual teams increase when group members are responsive (Timmerman & Scott, 2006). Virtual copresence mimics and answers the need for listening and responding. Not only does listening enhance relationship building, Berger (2011) found that listening is an important part of achieving action. Given the importance of listening and responding, it is not a surprise that mobile phones contribute to cohesion (Ling & Stald, 2010). Mobile phones can decrease the time in between interactions and increase the number of interactions even if the team members are not exactly synchronous. Availability to listen to each other is part of that interpersonal piece that makes small groups powerful. Therefore, there is much support for Altschuller and Benbunan-Fich's findings that virtual copresence affects trust and productivity. There is a logical connection between the unifier's work and the productivity of the group as a whole. Social presence in virtual environments comes and goes with groups and subgroups but does become stronger over time (Sivunen & Nordback, 2015). The unifier finds other ways to work in the CMC domain such as compensating for nonverbal FtF cues through emojis and visual images (Maben, Edwards, & Malone, 2014) and expressing emotion (Nekrassova, 2006). The unifier's role remains important in virtual teams. In fact, all the roles remain important and viable in virtual teams. Virtual teams can bridge the gap between time and space (Berry, 2011; Robey, Khoo, & Powers, 2000; Staples & Webster, 2007; Timmerman & Scott, 2006; Zhang & Poole, 2007) without losing vital benefits of FtF interaction.

Virtual Teams

So far, we have examined group roles in traditional small groups and in virtual teams. Let us examine virtual teams in and of themselves. What is a virtual team? Ahmed (2007) defines virtual teams as separated by distance. However, teams should not be classified as either virtual or nonvirtual since technological advances give all teams useful CMC tools (Gibson & Gibbs, 2005). Therefore, all modern small groups are potentially hybrid teams employing both FtF and CMC tools. Nevertheless, the literature often distinguishes between them. For the purposes of this discussion, we will examine them separately in order to delineate their beneficial and detrimental qualities.

Much of the literature on virtual teams relates to global corporate teams (Gibson & Gibbs, 2005; Grosse, 2002; Johnson, Bettenhausen, & Gibbons, 2009; Nekrassova, 2006; Ruppel, Gong, & Tworoger, 2013; Scott, 2013). Organizations are moving more and more to virtual teams (Johnson, Bettenhausen, & Gibbons, 2009; Berry, 2011, p. 200; Altschuller and Benbunan-Fich, 2010). In fact, virtual teams have become as prevalent as FtF small groups (Staples & Webster, 2007). Small group research must take into consideration the changes in technology (McGrath, Arrow, & Berdahl, 2000). Ahmed (2007) calls for increased research on virtual teams and the development of technology to support them. Instant messaging has highly varying expectations and norms in virtual teams and needs more study (Darics, 2014). Companies continue to employ new technology in collaboration, especially apps such as Airtable that allow freedom in time and space (Zwier, 2018). New virtual team apps available on the market include Airtable, Asana, and SLACK. LeanKit offers a Scrum app (Opt & Sims, 2015).

The observed uses and gratifications of apps are 1) availability, 2) novelty, 3) entertainment, and 4) instrumentality (Apps, Apps, and More Apps: A Uses and Gratification Study of App Use, 2012). The number of apps designed to accommodate group interaction are increasing.

CMC vs FtF

Weighing the benefits and deficits of virtual and FtF teams is in order. FtF have many benefits over CMC. Team members prefer FtF above CMC in trust building, networking, and respect (Grosse, 2002). Staples and Webster (2007) warned that when teams include both proximate and distant members, team members favor their FtF counterparts while virtual team members are isolated. Virtual teams have lower positive affect and commitment (Johnson, Bettenhausen, & Gibbons, 2009). FtF small groups are better for planning than virtual groups (Ansarimoghaddam, Tan, & Yong, 2017). Thus, the deficits of virtual teams seem to revolve around interpersonal issues such as relationships, discussion, and commitment. The literature reveals some possible answers for these concerns. We alluded to some when we discussed the role of the unifier in cohesion. Feng-yang and Chia-ping (2009) found that initial trust correlates with later cohesiveness. Therefore, initial efforts to build unity are important in virtual teams. One way the literature suggests to welcome new members is that virtual teams can benefit from a description or bio of each other when members are new to the team (Rusman, Bruggen, Corvers, Sloep, & Koper, 2009). Virtual groups can overcome the relationship problems of CMC interaction. In fact, CMC has been successful in aiding volatile groups. Mollov & Schwartz (2010) discovered that adding CMC to FtF interaction enhanced relationship building efforts among Israelis and Palestinians. The unifier role is possible in virtual teams.

We discussed earlier how utilizing technology increases the potential to be responsive. Responsiveness is listening and expressing appropriate emotion. Global virtual team members

are able and do find ways to express their emotions (Nekrassova, 2006). Emojis, humor, visual images, and other methods aid the emotional needs of human interaction. Maben, Edwards, and Malone (2014) observed humor and other evidence of relationship building in Facebook groups, thus emulating FtF benefits. Relationship building techniques are different and more complicated in virtual teams. Because distance complicates trust (Scott, 2013), virtual teams must plan FtF time to build relationships (Robey, Khoo, & Powers, 2000). North and south teams of a certain corporate virtual team regularly traveled to be together, not for FtF meetings, but to recreate and build relationships (Robey et al, 2000). We see that virtual teams can build trust more easily if they meet together physically.

While the literature gives clues to how virtual teams might claim the strengths of FtF interaction, it also reveals strengths inherent in virtual teams. Berry (2011) explored asynchronous meetings to find that virtual teams reduce travel expense and allow convenience in scheduling individual time to dedicate to group issues. Virtual teams have other benefits over FtF. Wiki groups are stronger than FtF groups in revising and editing essays (Ansarimoghaddam, Tan, & Yong, 2017). Maben, Edwards, Malone's case study (2014) found that FtF college classes benefited by using Facebook to fulfill group assignments; students created digital scrapbooks with photos and videos; students quickly responded to each other to share ideas. Thus, Maben et al pointed out that CMC can benefit teams that meet FtF and are not separated by distance by easing time restraints. Musa, Mohamed, Mufti, Latiff, and Amin (2015) also found that college groups benefit from Facebook collaboration; FtF interaction is better for clarification and building relationships, but Facebook was better for freedom from time and space restraints. Another advantage observed in educational settings is that participation is more evenly distributed, power status is less of a concern, and members' work is simultaneous

(Turman, 2005). Being able to work simultaneously allows multiple people to "talk" at the same time without actually interrupting each other. Both Maben et al and Turman's educational examples demonstrate that physically proximate teams can benefit from CMC interaction. CMC tools allow groups to escape the limits of both time and space. Perhaps the most encouraging: among virtual teams that successfully outperform FtF teams, Staples and Webster (2007) identified self-efficacy among the most important characteristics. In other words, if the team members believe they can be as productive through virtual channels, they can be!

What does the literature reveal about how team members make choices about CMC and FtF interaction? Face-to-face is still preferred above CMC channels, but email is the most commonly used for international virtual teams; 75 to 80% of international teams used email (Grosse, 2002). Unsurprisingly, the more distant the locations of team members, the more CMC is utilized; conversely, the closer proximity, the more FtF interaction is demonstrated (Timmerman & Scott, 2006). Take a careful note that Timmerman and Scott did not find that CMC interaction decreases with proximity. Their distinction may be explained by Zhao's findings; the more frequently a team meets FtF, the more frequently they will utilize online communication; also, the more psychological safety is in the FtF climate, the more members will use online communication (Zhao, 2010).

What kinds of CMC choices are made? Professional managers chose the CMC channel that protected their life/work balance rather than the channel their team members preferred (Ruppel, Gong, & Tworoger, 2013). Groups who choose a channel that will increase connectedness do better than choosing channels for cultural reasons (Timmerman & Scott, 2006). As noted in the above investigations, CMC use is rising. However, there is a point at which CMC interaction becomes too much. Using CMC for more than 90% of team interactions

is detrimental to productivity; that is to say that teams who use CMC more than 90% of all their interactions are less effective than those who use CMC less than 90% of their interactions (Johnson, Bettenhausen, & Gibbons, 2009). Sivunen and Nordback (2015) find another limit to CMC aid, too many channels become distracting. There can be too much CMC, so group members must take care which media they choose. The advertising community feels strongly that CMC cannot replace FtF (Patel, 2012). FtF interaction remains important.

Community Councils

We have perused much literature on global virtual teams and see that CMC alleviates the constraints of time and distance. We have seen a few examples of teams that are not separated by distance, such as educationally based teams, in which CMC interaction positively augments FtF interactions. Much of the research is motivated by global corporate need for virtual teams. Let us turn our attention to volunteer centered, hybrid teams. Volunteer group members separated by distance use email the most even though they place a higher value on conference calls' benefit in interpersonal/relationship maintenance (Zhang & Poole, 2007). A Singapore study found that online communication boosted friend, family, and other organizational groups in becoming more politically active (Skoric, Ying, & Ying, 2009). Thus physically distant volunteer groups utilize CMC tools.

Locally based volunteerism also benefits from CMC. The Nehemiah Group managed tension through narratives, prayer, and reframing while serving the greater community; data was collected through their web page as well as FtF methods (Driskill, Meyer, & Mirivel, 2012). A Los Angeles community group used online, email, and traditional communication methods to meet their objectives. (Broad, Ball-Rokeach, Ognyanova, Stokes, Picasso, & Villanueva, 2013). A community group in Blacksburg, Virginia utilized online as well as traditional communication

methods to inform and activate neighbors on civic and political issues; there is a relationship between Internet use and civic involvement (Kim, Kavanaugh, & Hult, 2011). Home owner community groups used the internet to meet their objectives (Britt, 2005). We see that more and more non-profit groups are hybrid teams whether or not the team members are separated by distance. Virtual interaction is not necessarily synchronous. Despite various goals and group dynamics, CMC tools aid teams in meeting their objectives.

Notably absent in the literature is SLACK and local BSA pack committee hybrid teams. Therefore, I focus my investigation on the following research questions:

RQ1: How does SLACK influence traditional small group roles?

RQ2: How does SLACK influence group interaction?

RQ3: How well does SLACK communication serve in the place of monthly FtF pack committee meetings?

Method

I chaired Pack 357 for two and a half years during which time I kept attendance records, which I use in comparing FtF and SLACK participation (see Table 1). There were 18 committee members ranging in age from the mid 30's to mid 70's, 89% female, and 94% Caucasian. Scout leadership experience ranged from 1 to 40 years. I obtained IRB approval (Appendix A) and BSA Institutional Head's (bishop) permission (Appendix B). Early in the process, participants were made aware of the study, institutional review board and bishop's approval.

Table 1

2017 FtF Attendance	January	February	October	November	December
# of people who attended	6	9	4	7	6
# of people on the committee	13	15	16	16	18

Percent of attendance	46%	60%	25%	44%	33%

Sample was self selecting in that although 100% of the committee members were invited to participate, only those who wished to do so actually joined the study. Because I was the committee chair, I was sensitive to group members' perception of power imbalance (Creswell, 2013, p. 55-56). To compensate for any inferred pressure to unwillingly participate and to mitigate sample bias, I 1) instituted an anonymous survey response, 2) provided self addressed stamped envelopes with my address as both the sender and receiver, 3) reassured committee members that my master's project would be successful whether all or few participated, 4) explained that both positive and negative responses aided the data collection process because SLACK was being judged, not me in that I would be the one analyzing the data, not my professors. I assured participants that there was no predetermined desirable outcome about SLACK's usefulness for our committee.

The opening survey (Appendix D) was sent with the participant explanatory letter and permission form (Appendix C) with two stamped envelopes pre-addressed to me. Instructions directed participants to keep the survey anonymous. One envelope was for the survey and the other was for the permission letter, thus further ensuring anonymity. The opening survey was a Likert scale (Baxter & Babbie, 2003). Although this is a qualitative study, the Likert scale helped me ascertain participants' attitudes about small group roles and FtF meetings. I received eight (44%) completed opening surveys and separately received eight signed permission forms. I sent all committee members an invitation to join SLACK. I also emailed all committee members

with a personal invitation for me to come to their homes to train them on SLACK. No one responded that they wanted me to visit them for SLACK training.

On December 1st, I opened the SLACK account, invited committee members to join, created several channels, and started posting messages. At the December monthly cub committee meeting, I explained the study, the SLACK app, and answered questions, thus beginning SLACK training. The committee was very supportive of the project; however, no one wanted me to come to their homes for SLACK training. I had some permission forms on the table for committee members to sign. I mentioned that I had already received many and that I had placed them there if there is anyone who wanted to sign it but had not already signed it. The forms were not mentioned again. They were placed off to the side where people could take or ignore them without fanfare.

It was the original plan to skip the FtF January and February meetings. In my initial explanatory letter, I wrote, "At any time, if someone feels that we need a face-to-face meeting, we will have one. I do not want this study to interfere with our cub committee" (Appendix C). One of the committee members expressed concern that because our next two pack meetings required a great deal of planning, that she wanted to meet FtF. The Blue and Gold Banquet and the Pinewood Derby are annual events that are important highlights for the year. We have a lot of guests and special arrangements for those two pack meetings. As promised, I called FtF committee meetings during January and February.

Eight people (44%) attended the FtF January committee meeting (see Table 2). During the January FtF meeting, some asked questions about SLACK. The younger committee members enthusiastically helped those who were inquiring. I felt that their enthusiasm was more than sufficiently high to negate more than nominal input from myself at that time. Additional

committee members registered on SLACK immediately following that FtF meeting. I continued to discuss SLACK with committee members throughout the investigation as one on one conversations provided interview data. Eight people (44%) attended the FtF February committee meeting.

Table 2

2017 FtF Attendance	January	February	October	November	December
# of people who attended	6	9	4	7	6
# of people on the committee	13	15	16	16	18
Percent of attendance	46%	60%	25%	44%	33%
2018 FtF Attendance	January	February			
# of people who attended	8	8			
# of people on the committee	18	18			
Percent of attendance	44%	44%			

Eight people (44%) registered on SLACK. I opened 12 channels, which are topics of discussion. Three people used the "april-pack-meeting" channel and 6 people used the "general" channel. There were 7 messages on the "april-pack-meeting" channel and 54 total messages on the "general" channel. Direct messaging was used by at least three people. Direct messages are not accessible to all members of the committee, only to the two people who are messaging each other. Direct messages with one person included 11 messages, and there were 12 messages with another. Two people who registered on SLACK never used it at all. The rest used direct messaging with me somewhere in between. We regularly posted messages on SLACK channels

and direct messages until March 3rd. One participant used SLACK on April 25th and another on June 16th.

In March, I mailed the closing survey (Appendix E), explanatory (Appendix F) and thank you letters (Appendix G) to all committee members. Again, anonymity was assured by including a self addressed stamped envelope with all surveys. I received six completed closing surveys.

For this investigation, I chose case study for a number of reasons. Case study has been used to compare CMC with FtF small groups. The literature review highlighted several such case studies including Israeli and Palestinian interaction (Mollov & Schwartz, 2010), college class collaboration (Maben, Edwards, Malone, 2014), and team essay writing (Ansarimoghaddam, Tan, & Yong, 2017) in CMC and FtF comparisons. I also discussed case studies that focused specifically on virtual teams including introductory bio (Rusman, Bruggen, Corvers, Sloep, & Koper, 2009), teams separated by distance, (Zhang & Poole, 2007), and best practices (Staples & Webster, 2007). This case study focuses on CMC but naturally included FtF data. The steps of conducting a case study are to identify the entity, limit the case by setting boundaries, identify the sample, collect data, analyze the data, identify specific themes, interpret the meaning (Creswell, 2013, 100-101).

I have additional reasons for choosing case study for this specific investigation. First, a case study identifies a concrete entity (Creswell, 2013, p. 98). The entity for this investigation is BSA pack 357. Second, the study is bounded by time and place (Creswell, 2013, pp 97-98). A bounded system specifies the exact parameters of the investigation to a specific time period and to a specific place. Limiting a case study to a specific time period and to a specific group is important in a case study; because the investigation is of a real life situation, the study would not

have a natural start and end spot. Without fabricating a break, the study would go on indefinitely. Thus, the investigator must determine a beginning and end for the inquiry. This case study was bounded from November 2017 to June 2018. Although the committee has the option to continue using SLACK, I cut off data at that point. It was also bounded by the participants, who are members of the BSA pack 357 committee. This investigation focuses on interaction among committee members. Third, case study investigates a specific real life situation (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). The case study approach reveals application to specific situations, real-life complexity, and practice in diagnosing and managing problems (Braithwaite & Wood, 2000, p. 5). The current investigation looks at a real pack committee to find an application to a real life complex problem. Our pack leadership has tried several CMC tools and now investigates whether or not SLACK can answer our unmet needs. During this case study, our pack investigated the SLACK option and decided whether or not to adopt it in our continued committee communication. Fourth, the intent of the case study is to illustrate a unique case (Creswell, 2013, p. 98). Investigating a BSA pack committee's use of SLACK is unique in current literature. Fifth, the case study is an in-depth look at the situation through multiple sources (Creswell, 2013, p. 98, 100). This investigation looks at multiple aspects of SLACK communication including five traditional group roles and five other themes which emerge from the data. It looks at participant opinions and statements through surveys, direct observations, physical artifacts, documents, interviews, SLACK transcript, and other communication to get an in depth description of the case to identify themes. Sixth, the case study will offer a description of the case while identifying specific themes. "Cases also encourage us to apply concepts, theories, and principles to identify options for interpretation and behavior and to generate understanding and effective courses of action" (Braithwaite & Wood, 2000, p. 5). Data was

gathered and described on each of ten themes. And seventh, case studies highlight interaction (Braithwaite & Wood, 2000, p. 7). This investigation analyses and compares the interaction among committee members through SLACK and other methods.

In accordance with the above criteria, data was collected from multiple sources before analysis began. The SLACK transcript and surveys were coded onto a 34 page document. The data was read several times with note taking to ascertain general themes. Careful attention was paid for specific needs from the participants and how those needs were met or not met by the SLACK app. Uses and gratifications (U&G) framework guided the inquiry on the audience's choices about how SLACK could help them achieve their goals. One coder coded the transcripts and surveys for themes then rechecked for consistency in the coding. Frequency of code categories was numbered and compared against total messages for percentages. The purpose of measuring code categories was to "search for patterned regularities in the data" (Cresswell, 2013, p. 198). Data was analyzed to identify patterns and to ascertain how the participants' needs were met through the use of the SLACK tool. Data was triangulated by analyzing each theme through multiple data types. Survey answers and the SLACK transcript were the most comprehensive in representing the various themes, but data from observation, texts, emails, and interviews completed the picture. Specific examples of each theme was pulled from the data.

For this investigation, I wanted to allow the participants to discover, define, and decide the usefulness of SLACK for our committee. Because we were looking at how SLACK meets our needs, I utilized uses and gratification theory. One of the reasons U&G is particularly fitting for CMC research is that U&G allows the audience to define the need. "(W)hat combinations of attributes may render different media more or less adequate for the satisfaction of different needs" (Katz, Blumler, Gurevitch, 1973, p. 514). Not only does U&G allow the audience to

determine the usefulness of a medium, U&G focuses "on the consumer - the audience member - rather than the message" (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011, p. 351). Thus, U&G is appropriate for my desire to find the usefulness of SLACK for our committee. U&G framework provides the committee members the versatility to define and determine how SLACK meets or does not meet their psychological needs.

U&G fits for other reasons. "(U)ses and gratifications has always provided a cutting-edge theoretical approach in the initial stages of each new mass communications medium: newspapers, radio and television, and now the Internet" (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 3). U&G is a significant theory in computer mediated communication because it is the first theory used to understand new media (Lee, 2004). For instance, U&G was used to find that mobile phone and internet use foster civic and political involvement (Campbell & Kwak, 2010). Sundar and Limperos (2013) cautioned that using measures from old media when investigating new media is too narrow; they found that more U&G studies are needed to capture nuanced gratifications of new media. Other types of CMC uses still need to be discovered, and U&G is a viable source for these investigations.

(T)he uses and gratifications perspective has proven to be an axiomatic theory in that it is readily applicable to wide ranging situations involving mediated communication.

Succinctly put, the strength of this theory is its ability to allow researchers to study mediated communication situations via a single or multiple sets of psychological needs, psychological motives, communication channels, communication content, and psychological gratifications within a particular or cross-cultural context. Capitalizing on this versatile nature, a flurry of studies have created a rich body of literature addressing a variety of theoretical and/or empirical research issues. (Lin, 1996, para. 1)

Thus, U&G is fitting to investigate SLACK, a new CMC tool. SLACK has not been studied enough to determine its usefulness. Since it is a new tool, it is appropriate to use U&G theory to introduce the medium into academic investigation.

To analyze the data for this U&G case study, I coded the surveys and SLACK comments for role functions and for themes on the 34 page document. Messages and comments were coded for group roles, types of interaction, and other emerging themes. I found all the group roles present in the SLACK comments. I observed that participants looked for the needs of 1) correlation/efficiency, 2) personal identity, and 3) cultural or socialization.

Cub leaders spend a great deal of time every week preparing den meetings and working with boys to accomplish advancement requirements. They also spend time recording and turning in reports, so the boys can receive awards at the monthly pack meetings. BSA requires several hours of training for leaders. Due to the extensive time commitment, easing the workload is a primary need. Initial interest in participating in my SLACK investigation was motivated by the desire to decrease monthly meetings. Minimizing time and effort is highly desirable. What is the easiest way to fulfill assignment, to exchange necessary information to get job done for the boys in as little time and effort as possible? This typology of audience gratification is "correlation" (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973, p. 215) and efficiency.

Some committee members desire a quality activity for their sons, grandsons, and neighbor children and are willing to provide the means to create and maintain such a program. There is the need to fulfill their care and concern for youth. Their question is whether or not SLACK better helps them provide a quality program for the youth in their respective dens. I categorize this need as "personal identity" (Katz et al, 1973, p. 215) because these people see themselves as providing a need in the community. "(T)he need to feel that one is spending one's

time in a worthwhile way" (Katz, Blumler, Gurevitch, 1973, p. 514) is one of the needs pertinent to scout volunteerism. Pertaining to SLACK use, this need is also answered through the need for efficiency. Others desire to affiliate with adults, a social need fulfilled while working on the cub committee. These committee members look to see if SLACK fulfills their "cultural or socialization" (Katz et al, 1973, p. 215) needs as effectively as FtF meetings. These needs were used to analyze the data.

Results/Discussion

This study explored the usefulness of SLACK for a volunteer BSA pack committee. As would be expected with U&G approach, there was a wide range of data from the various sources. The accumulation gave a detailed insight into the uses and gratifications of SLACK in our pack committee. From collected data, ten themes emerged, which answer three research questions. Five themes directly related to RQ1: How does SLACK influence traditional small group roles? Those themes are specific to each of the five small group roles: gatekeeper, scribe, generator, critic, and unifier. There was sufficient data on all of the five roles to draw a conclusion of SLACK's affect on each role. Each role was filled by different people in constant fluctuation much as is seen in FtF dialogue. I was able to delineate specific functions for each role as I analyzed the data. In addition to the role themes which emerged from the data, one theme related to RQ2: How does SLACK influence group interaction? And four themes related to RQ3: How well does SLACK communication serve in the place of monthly FtF pack committee meetings? The four themes of adaptability, effort, efficiency, and replacement give a definitive answer about whether or not SLACK could replace FtF committee meetings. I will name, define, illustrate, and interpret each of the ten themes.

Gatekeeper

The gatekeeper role was strongly expressed in the SLACK forum. During the study, there were 113 posts on SLACK. Of them 62 (55%) were gatekeeping messages, more than half. There was discernable data on most of the five gatekeeper functions: Focus discussion, focus content, utilize members, transfer information, update information, and arrange logistics. I will discuss each of the functions.

The gatekeeper's first function is to focus discussion by asking essential questions such as how, where, why, what, when, and who. Many of the participants posted gatekeeping messages. In fact, of the 113 posts on SLACK, 46 (41%) were questions. Examples found in the data include: "How expensive?" "What is our theme for April?" "Does anyone have a key fob who can come open the church for Webelos right now?" These are examples of direct questions calling for specific information or task completion. Further analysis of the last question reveals how SLACK influences the gatekeeping function of focusing discussion. The question about the key was asked on a group channels where every group member could see the question and the answers without having to select "reply all" or forward the response. When relying on texting or email, people lose access to the chain of discussion if a person replies only to the last sender. Several people might have separately attempted to answer the need for a key before realizing that the need was already met. The SLACK post allowed all participants to see that the key was found, so that others did not waste time driving to the church after it was open. One post allowed all group members to see the full discussion including the culminating response. Focusing discussion through asking essential questions is an essential gatekeeping function. SLACK does allow a gatekeeper to focus discussion by asking essential questions. In fact, SLACK is a tool that facilitates a gatekeeper to ask many questions where everyone can see and

get answers without waiting for the FtF meeting or having to duplicate the message as often happens in texts and emails.

The gatekeeper's second function is to focus content by filtering out distracting information and redirecting off topic conversations. In the opening survey, one of the respondents cited "Getting off topic" as one of the problems of FtF meetings. Three respondents selected "strongly agree" to the question #21 "The group frequently gets off topic." However, some disagreed that getting off topic was a problem in FtF meetings. Four respondents selected "disagree" to the same question and two respondents selected "neutral." In contrast, in the closing survey question #21, there was no one who felt that getting off topic was an issue. Responses were "I thought it was always very to the point" "(T)he times I was on, it was easy to stay on the topic" and "Mostly, people kept to the topic. Definitely cut out side topics and conversations which constantly spring up in F-t-F meetings." One closing survey respondent who did not use SLACK very much answered "HAVE NO IDEA." An examination of the channels revealed that all were free from side conversations. As evidence that SLACK developers know the realities of group work, SLACK provides a place for off topic conversation in their channel "random." Random's description is "A place for non-work-related flimflam, faffing, hodge-podge or jibber-jabber you'd prefer to keep out of more focused work-related channels." There were zero posts on this channel during our investigation. Clearly, one of the benefits of SLACK collaboration was that it was free from distracting side topics. The gatekeeping function to focus content was met by SLACK better than by FtF meetings.

A gatekeeper's third function is to utilize every member by matching skills to group needs. SLACK did not prove effective in this gatekeeping function. Although participants called for members' input on specific questions that required knowledge or a particular skill set, these

questions were left unanswered when asked of members who did not chose to utilize SLACK. As reported above, 46 SLACK posts were questions. Exactly half of those questions, 23, were left unanswered. Participants sought to draw in aloof members by requesting their particular skill set, which is a gatekeeping function. However, those aloof members were not drawn in. Nor did the gatekeeper function of distributing assignments to pertinent members prove successful on SLACK. One of the questions on the closing survey asked "How did SLACK affect your understanding of what was expected of you?" Answers included "I didn't feel like many expectations were communicated to me on slack" and "I know when I could give answers from my knowledge." This last response indicates that the member used her/his own prior knowledge rather than getting an explanation through SLACK interaction. There was one response which illustrated a success on SLACK,

It helped me coordinate rank advancements for ScoutBook - when the Bear leader & I used Slack's direct messaging. Also, when the wolf leader needed me to make an update on Scoutbook, she posted a picture of the ScoutBook screen to show me where I could find what I needed.

With the one exception, leader expectations was not facilitated by SLACK. In contrast, the respondents in the opening survey agreed that they understand expectations during FtF meetings. Matching skills to team members works better in FtF collaboration than in SLACK.

A gatekeeper's fourth function is to transfer information to those who need it and ensure that questions are answered. SLACK's success for this gatekeeper function was mixed. There are two parts to this issue: 1) answering questions and 2) accessing messages. Opening survey respondents agreed that FtF meetings "give me the help which I need to fulfill my calling." However, closing survey respondents reported mixed results about SLACK's success. Some felt

it was successful, "I thought it was a helpful place to get answers and I gave input." A longer example of success, "One boy's records were partially complete. I needed to update them accurately on ScoutBook. The wolf leader posted a picture of the ScoutBook screen on the Slack direct messaging. This helped me navigate ScoutBook to solve the problem." However, others did not feel SLACK was successful at relaying necessary information, "It only helped slightly. It helped when other members used it. Usually members used texting or e-mail, not Slack."

Other types of information also met with mixed results. Some posted questions were answered quickly. An example of getting information to those who asked includes, "What time is our Pinewood derby this next Saturday?" which was immediately answered, "It's at 12:00 and weigh in is Friday night" and supplemented by another participant "Friday at 7:00." However, only 50% of posted questions were answered. Part of the reason was that the person with the information was not participating on SLACK. SLACK provides a place for specific topic discussion which is accessible to all. An example is when four participants brainstormed ideas for a needed last minute change on the channel "april-pack-meeting." A fifth person's input was wanted. One of the participants texted the fifth person then relayed the answer back to the conversation on SLACK.

This leads to the second part of this issue: accessing messages. Our pack committee frequently uses texting and emails. One of the difficulties of texting and emails is that the message is not seen by everyone. People forget to select "reply all" or use group messaging. If a message is pertinent to others, one of the parties must take time to forward the message. Usually, the message is not forwarded. Even though not all committee members wished to utilize SLACK, in the above example SLACK facilitated the transfer of the texted message to a forum where everyone could have access. SLACK has the potential to overcome the problem

inherent in texting and email; each message is accessible to everyone. Therefore, although SLACK has a great potential for getting information to the full group, because not everyone in our committee utilized SLACK, the affect was not realized.

Closely related to the former is the gatekeeper's fifth function, which is to update all members on current information. This function was manifested on SLACK with similar results as the former function. An example of this function on SLACK: "Cub committee meeting postponed until Sunday, February 25." This message was also emailed to all committee members. Since most committee members did not register for SLACK, the affect was limited. The message could have been posted once for all to see. However, because not everyone participated on SLACK, the email was necessary. Sending a message on email works well unless someone replies to the original sender without selecting "reply all." The rest of the group will not see the response on email unless someone takes an extra step of forwarding it to everyone. On SLACK, all responses are immediately accessible. Another aspect of email is that different threads of the conversation may be lost on various emails. On SLACK the entire conversation is together and remains together, so everyone can access the entire discussion. SLACK has the potential to be better than email. SLACK allows immediate discussion without waiting for a FtF meeting. Again, effectiveness can be realized only to the extent that people utilize SLACK.

The last function, gatekeepers take care of logistics by arranging for practical needs such as building reservations. This function was not executed through SLACK; however, it was reported on SLACK. Examples: "I scheduled the building" and "We have successfully synced our ScoutBook to BSA official. Whew!" This function is not generally executed during FtF meetings, either. Arranging logistics is usually a behind the scenes activity. This gatekeeping

function is similar on SLACK as it is in FtF meetings; arranging logistics is reported to the group at FtF and SLACK interaction.

The gatekeeping role was functional in SLACK. The influence was that gatekeepers were able to respond quickly and in a method that had the potential to be accessible to all without extra steps. Without SLACK, the gatekeeper must forward or repeating texts and emails to each committee member. SLACK eliminates the concern that members will forget to select "reply all" when responding to group emails. All messages on channels are visible to all members. SLACK can be set to notify via email when someone posts. Thus, even if the gatekeeper does not check SLACK regularly, s/he can be on top of posts and can respond quickly to questions. Effectiveness depends upon unified participation of the committee. For the most part, SLACK offers the potential for the gatekeeper role to be fully functional, but the substantive result depends on uniform participation.

Scribe

Much of the scribe function was greatly improved by SLACK. Duties of scribe are: Record discussion, record information, record assignments, and record history. The scribe's first function is to record discussion by making an accurate transcription. Transcribing is a difficult task in FtF meetings but inherent in SLACK collaboration. Since our pack committee does not audio record our FtF meetings, we rely on individual notes. Committee members receive a blank agenda for each meeting. Each member writes her/her own notes on the individual copy of the agenda. We do not have a secretary who later types up the minutes for disbursement, so everyone's written notes is limited to their own undertaking. In contrast, 100% of dialogue on SLACK continues to be available to all group members. In addition to recording all information, SLACK has the added benefit of grouping the discussion by topic through the forum of

"channels." Discussion about the April pack meeting was successfully contained to one location. However, information about the pinewood derby was not consistently placed in the pinewood-derby channel. A question about the logistics of the pinewood derby was asked in the "general" channel, which was the largest channel and subsequently most difficult channel to sort through for specific topics. Although the transcript of discussion is retained with 100% accuracy, it was not organized for optimal retrieval. One of the advantages of SLACK over email is that topic threads are grouped together. Information transported via email is lost in a sea of information from numberless sources. However, SLACK's precision is only realized to the extent to which participants maintain channel integrity. Nevertheless, SLACK is successful at maintaining an accurate, if not perfectly organized, transcription of discussion.

The second function of the scribe is to record information. The gatekeeper works closely with the scribe to keep everyone current on facts. The gatekeeper makes sure everyone has access, but it is the scribe who tracks and records factual information. SLACK has the potential to fulfill both in one step. This function is difficult in FtF meetings because it requires that members attend in order to receive the hard copy information. CMC facilitates the process. Our committee uses email to distribute factual information such as agenda and budget; unless the individual copies the document onto a frequently used file, those documents are buried in the mass of emails. Of the 113 SLACK posts, 8% were scribe messages in and of themselves. The budget was updated and posted three times, and agendas were consistently shared prior to FtF meetings. All these items were readily accessible long after the post without an extra step. In addition to posting documents, there were posts about recording data on the other commonly used CMC, ScoutBook. Thus, part of the 8% were documents and part were reporting that information was posted on ScoutBook. Closing surveys also reveal the effectiveness of SLACK

in recording facts. Responses about the benefits of SLACK included "did help track award progress when utilized" and "It helped me coordinate rank advancements for ScoutBook."

SLACK greatly facilitates document posting for everyone's permanent access. This is another function in which SLACK interaction is superior to FtF interaction.

The third function of the scribe is to record assignments to hold members accountable to follow through with responsibilities. This function was unfulfilled through SLACK use during this investigation. Although questions were asked, they were not consistently answered. The questions "How are things going in the Bear Den?" "Have you and (name of den leader) talked about Wolf Den, yet?" and "Did (name of boy) and (name of boy) get their correct awards at yesterday's pack meeting?" were among the 23 unanswered questions. Although the assignments were recorded in the manner of a question, there was not a specific assignment location to which members could refer. A channel could be created for such a purpose, but our committee did not do that. Holding members accountable to follow through with assignments is better fulfilled through FtF meetings.

The last scribe function is to record the history of the group by documenting factual details of events. This investigation did not find evidence of success in this function. Opening survey respondents agreed that FtF meetings are helpful in reporting past activities. However, closing surveys had mixed results about SLACK's effectiveness in the such: "I thought it was good for reporting activities" and "AVERAGE." One respondent answered in detail.

Did not utilize this aspect much. Mainly used for future events or asking questions. I did report syncing completion. I asked for feedback on Pinewood derby but got zero response. FtF meeting: I always get a report of - outdoor activities, -service activities and - Webelos activities with 11 yr scouts. These I track all year long for our Journey to

Excellence Report. I asked for these on Slack but did not get any response. Also - asked for suggestions & problems w/ B&G - no one reported it on Slack. lengthy discussion in FtF meeting. -Ask a question about training - no response.

The above response discusses the question posted in the pinewood-derby channel. "What suggestions do people have about next year's pinewood derby? Were there problems this year?" It invited numerous posts. Yet, this question was the final post on the pinewood-derby channel. It is among the 23 unanswered questions. Following the posting, however, was an in-depth discussion about the successes, weaknesses, and future plans about pinewood derby in the FtF meeting. Clearly, FtF wins in this function. Also, on SLACK there was no record of the time, place, nor preparations for the pinewood derby in the pinewood-derby channel. The only mention of the time and location was in the general channel where the question was asked and answered. One closing survey respondent summarized the matter:

(SLACK) is really good for separating topics & keeping past conversations available, unlike e-mail. The channels retain all conversation. This would be helpful for annual events such as Blue & Gold or Pinewood Derby. To see what went well & what needed improvement from year to year. We would see details of what we did. Right now, that information is buried in e-mails. or one person may have a good record. Slack would allow everyone access to the written record.

As with other benefits of SLACK, the potential is only realized to the extent that members participate. Clearly, for our pack, FtF is a better forum for reflecting on past events.

Overall, SLACK greatly facilitates the scribe role in maintaining a 100% accurate and accessible record of discussion. Posting documents is also very time efficient in that one action allows everyone continued access. However, this SLACK investigation did not show evidence

of records of assignments nor history. A channel could be created specifically to track assignments. Also, channels could be used to record event planning as well as details about how the event ultimately panned out. That record could be a great help in planning annual events. Details such as these could be ironed out with continued use. The longer a committee used SLACK, the more effective the committee could become at using it. The potential is there. However, this investigation is bounded to a short period.

Generator

The generator role was unfulfilled in the SLACK forum. It is the generator's job to create ideas. Of the 113 posts only 5 (4%) were generator messages. The investigation found that creative innovation was attempted through two functions: brainstorming and problem solving. However, in all cases, final decisions were made through other media. One example of the first generator function, brainstorming, occurred on the april-pack-meeting channel. The April pack meeting had been designated for the raingutter regatta during the August 2017 annual planning meeting. BSA offers regatta kits which are easy to assemble and allow individual creativity. We intended to deliver the kits to the boys at the March pack meeting, so they would have a month to build their boats. The advancement chair visits the scout store every month to purchase awards. The pack regularly puts money on a BSA charge card for that purpose. However, when the advancement chair purchased the March pack meeting awards, there was not enough money to buy the regatta kits. The charge card ran short for that large of a purchase. Committee members brainstormed solutions on the april-pack-meeting channel. Ultimately, the resolution came through a text message. That text message was relayed to the SLACK april-pack-meeting channel where everyone could see the final decision. Respondents referred to this issue on the closing surveys. "April pack meeting ideas were discussed by 3 members brainstorming &

informing. The final decision was communicated via texting." "We did resolve some issues about the rain gutter regatta, which was useful - but one person who has a lot of leadership responsibility had a hard time with slack and still had to be contacted face to face." And a longer response,

March 3rd discussion about the Rain gutter regatta: We couldn't purchase the kits in time due to the need to recharge the BSA card. We discussed alternate plans for the next pack meeting. However, the key individual did not join the conversation on Slack. She used email, text, and FtF meeting.

Brainstorming on SLACK allowed everyone to see the full discussion. The problem was that not everyone chose to participate. Brainstorming on SLACK was more effective than the pack's usual CMC methods of email or texting because more people were part of the full discussion. Even though a key person was not part of the SLACK discussion, her message was easily relayed to the rest of the group with one quick post. The April pack meeting is an example of where the generator role was attempted through brainstorming, but the discussion was limited to too few people to be effective on SLACK alone. SLACK enhanced interaction for those who actively participated, but SLACK's potential was not fully realized due to lack of participation. Discussions posted where all could see. The problem was that key individuals were not part of the discussion. Texting, email, and personal visits were needed to fully resolve the issue. SLACK's usefulness was limited to the number of people who utilized it.

Survey questions yielded more insight into the generator's function of brainstorming. The closing survey question #2 "How did SLACK affect planning future activities?" was answered, "It was useful a little, but I felt face to face got a lot more done in a more organized way" "VERY LITTLE" and "gave feedback on plans or questions." Another closing survey

response was, "I found we asked a lot of questions there (on SLACK), and information was given, but to plan the blue and gold, it worked a lot better to get together and talk about it." Also, closing survey question #5 "How did SLACK affect giving ideas?" was answered, "I thought it was a good place for throwing out a lot of ideas" and "Brainstorming for April's ideas - 4 people took part. examples - Removing boys who moved from records. - Super Nova activity." The last answer referred to SLACK discussion about how to transfer records when boys moved out of our area. It also referred to a specific den activity, Super Nova, that was briefly mentioned on SLACK but not planned on an open SLACK channel. Perhaps it was planned on a private SLACK messaging channel between two committee members. Brainstorming to plan for these activities was fulfilled through FtF and other CMC media. Brainstorming by the committee for specific events on SLACK was minimal. The closing survey question #6 "How did SLACK affect sharing ideas?" added the answers "Those that participated were able to communicate back & forth with ideas" and "Direct Messaging helped share ideas of problem solving. Channel on April pack meeting shared ideas & asked question, answered those questions." To question #17 "How did SLACK affect sharing your ideas?" respondents answered "The people who used it asked questions & shared ideas, but not everyone joined the discussion" and "It made it easy to share." In the opening survey about FtF meetings, a respondent pointed out that "Sometimes things come up in discussion that might not be expressed at any other time!" Brainstorming was more successful in FtF meetings but occasionally occurred through texting and emails.

The second generator function was problem solving, which also was more successful in FtF meetings, texts, and emails. A closing survey response describes an experience.

During the case study, our pack needed to sync ScoutBook to the official BSA website and BSA records. This was fraught with multiple issues. One major issue we discovered

was that our autumn rechartering had not been completed! We were able to discuss issues and share information about the entire process on Slack. Those who participated were able to add ideas and information. However, key individuals were not part of the Slack discussion. The discussion involved email, texting, personal visits before it was resolved. SLACK simplified the process because people could readily see what was happening in the process and contribute aid. Although other media were utilized, SLACK was one part of obtaining the final success. SLACK facilitated success. Nevertheless, the problem could not be solved on SLACK alone because not everyone participated on SLACK. SLACK was successful in communicating progress; posts allowed everyone to access the most up to date information on the urgent matter. Emails and texts do not allow universal access to all posts the way that SLACK allows.

The generator role was more successful in FtF meetings than on SLACK. New ideas did not happen much on SLACK. However, respondents recognize that SLACK has the potential to meet the generator role in groups with members who will use it. SLACK has the potential for generators to brainstorm and problem solve without time and place restraints. Committee members could access everyone else's thoughts and add their own at their personal convenience. However, this investigation concurs with Ansarimoghaddam, Tan, and Yong (2017) that FtF is better for planning. Group members prefer FtF discussion to generate new ideas.

Critic

It is wise to heed the critic's voice. It may be annoying, but it leads to a safer end. If the critic is nurtured and appreciated, this frank though discordant voice will find ways to convey distress and forestall calamity. Opening survey results varify that FtF meetings are helpful in answering questions, resolving problems, and expressing concerns; the critic functions in Pack

357 FtF meetings. Definitely, the critic role was a major player in this investigation, as well. The critic role manifested itself more frequently than the generator role in SLACK interaction. Of all SLACK posts, 11 (10%) were critic messages. Critic messages were more than double the number of generator messages. Functions of the critic that were identified from the data were: Test ideas, express concern, and seek holes. The investigation provided evidence of all three functions in the SLACK posts. Each critic function meets with varying degrees of success in the SLACK posts. The critic functions also manifested in other ways during the investigation.

The first critic function is to test ideas. The critic is the quality control of the group. The critic helps make sure that an idea will accomplish what the group intends. Since critic messages are a test of generated ideas, we see that these critiques were not of the ideas generated in this forum. A careful inspection reveals that of the eleven critic messages only one was in direct response to an idea generated on SLACK. The remaining 10 critic messages were in response to details outside of SLACK. SLACK provided a forum to test ideas generated in other media. Idea testing examples included, "(Name of family) have moved out of the ward, but we don't want to delete their ScoutBook accounts" and "BSA charge card ran out." The first example was a direct refutation of a suggestion to delete a boy's ScoutBook account, an idea posted on SLACK. The second example was testing the purchasing procedure. Both led to positive actions. Therefore, we see that SLACK allowed group members to test ideas from any source. However, most idea testing during the investigation came from other means. During the FtF meeting, many ideas were generated and tested about the various upcoming events. Group members preferred FtF discussion to test ideas.

The second critic function is expressing concerns, frustration, fear, consternation, even anger. These emotions are sometimes labeled as negative, but they serve as an important

warning signal of impending doom. Group members must feel comfortable articulating misgivings and foreseeing disadvantages. There is quite a bit of data on this function. There were some expressions in SLACK which fall into this category. "Can someone remind me why (name of scout) isn't in Scoutbook yet?" "Does anyone know what's going on with (name of scout) not having any rank advancements, even Bobcat? He should have, right?" "He reported to me on Monday that our rechartering had not be finalized and that the deadline was Feb 28.... My question is, why didn't they tell us sooner?" Vocalizing these concerns drew the group's attention to problems which needed immediate attention. These are examples of the critic expressing concern in posts. SLACK provided a forum to express concern about pack related issues and to help the committee address those concerns. In all three of the above examples, the committee was able to rally together to resolve the issues. Thus, in SLACK the critic did function in warning the group so that the group fixed problems that came up.

The closing survey reveals more. Responses to question #8 "How did SLACK affect answering your questions?" were "It made it easier for most" and "Answered questions: 8 times. 3 people answered questions, usually the same 2 people. Unanswered questions: 20 times. 29% of my questions getting answers." These answers reveal that critic questions were met with mixed results. Question #20 "How did SLACK affect you in feeling comfortable expressing your concerns?" was answered, "DIDN'T USE FOR THAT" and "I like it because I knew everyone could see it. On e-mails, texts, or phone calls, most of the committee misses the discussion." Question #9 "How did SLACK affect resolving problems?" was answered "It helped gathering info / getting info out, but ultimately some problems had to be resolved person to person" "VERY LITTLE - A SIMPLE TEXT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASIER" and "Usually resolved problems when the issue related to the 2 other people who actively used Slack. In these

situations, it helped a lot. All issues related to other people were resolved using texting, e-mail, phone, personal visits, FtF meeting." These survey answers reveal that SLACK was not as useful as other methods in expressing concerns and resolving problems.

Other indicators reveal more about the critic function of expressing concern. The literature identifies one problem with CMC of being that people miss nonverbal cues which are prevalent in FtF interaction. People often express their emotions nonverbally. The literature identifies some methods people have developed to compensate for the lack of nonverbal signals in CMC; emojis, humor, and other expressions of emotion are examples of compensations (Maben, Edwards, & Malone, 2014; Nekrassova, 2006). During this investigation, there were two critic emojis in posts: frown and rolling laughter to tears. Both were used to express angst for circumstances outside of SLACK interaction. There was one use of humor for self criticism, "Can someone remind me when the pinewood derby is? I'm sorry I did not take good notes at our last meeting. I was in a Christmas sugar coma or something." All three instances demonstrate efforts to replace nonverbal signals that would have been natural in a FtF setting. SLACK is no better nor worse than other CMC in compensating for nonverbal signals. FtF is superior to CMC in nonverbal cues in interaction.

Another manifestation of the first critic function was in the initial misgivings about the study itself. My initial explanatory letter stated that we would miss the January and February FtF meeting, but if anyone felt uncomfortable about it, we would hold those FtF meeting. More than one committee member expressed the desire to have the regular monthly FtF meetings. The concern was noted and addressed. We had both January and February FtF committee meetings. Several expressed relief when the decision was announced. It was because of the critic that they

study was altered, thus assuring the investigation did not interfere with the productivity of the group.

Another instance of a critic expressing angst was manifested during the closing survey. A respondent, to whom I will refer as the Investigation-Critic, expressed angst through tone of answers more than denotative meaning of answers. The Investigation-Critic's answers were usually short and in all capitalized letters. The message was that the study itself was a bother. It is important to note that this Investigation-Critic was among the 33% who voluntarily completed the closing survey. S/he did not like the SLACK study; nevertheless, s/he cooperated with it. This is important for two reasons. First, the investigation had a full representation of the five roles. Participants varied in their responses, which gives a better view of the big picture of the study. Second, the Investigation-Critic agreed with the rest of the group in the final assessment of the usefulness of SLACK, an assessment that will be explained in detail in the tenth and final theme in this result/discussion section. Overall, SLACK was a catalyst for expressing concerns but not as useful as other CMC methods and FtF interaction.

The third critic function is to seek out holes which need attention. Finding neglected areas is another way that the critic serves as quality control for the group; the critic points out what is missing. An example in SLACK postings: "I believe we only lack one Youth Protection. How are we doing with Leader Specific Training?" The person who needed Youth Protection did not participate in SLACK and did not immediately fulfill the required Youth Protection training. Youth Protection is the BSA's program to educate leaders on preventing, identifying, and dealing with sexual assault. National BSA requires that all leaders renew this training every two years. Our local BSA leadership has asked that we renew the training annually. One leader's annual training had lapsed, but the leader was still in compliance with the national requirement of bi-

annual training. The critic who pointed out the matter on SLACK was attempting to encourage the annual renewal. That person's efforts were not effective through the SLACK forum. Other examples of SLACK postings to seek out holes did prove effective: "I'm quite certain he had his bear as well. Something must be wrong if those are not marked." "(Name of scout) and (name of scout) are both showing blank, and I know I've personally inputted achievements for them."

These concerns were remedied as a result of the critic's posts. Another example shows when the critic's post was not effective: "Have the Webelos planned an activity with the 11 year scouts for some time in the future?" Like the Youth Protection example, the Webelos' activity with the 11 year scouts was encouraged through SLACK interaction but not effectively deployed. The committee was able to utilize SLACK to perform the critic function of identifying holes. Some of the above examples were remedied after they were noted in SLACK. Others were not. Thus, the function of finding holes was attempted but not always successful in the SLACK forum.

The critic role has the potential for allowing members to test ideas without time and place restraints. Committee members could access everyone else's thoughts and add their own at their personal convenience. However, the data indicate that the role of critic in idea checking, expressing concern, and locating holes was limited in effectiveness. The potential is seen but not realized in this investigation.

Unifier

A group gains balance by having active generators and critics because the discussion is stretched in a synergetic tug-of-war. It is the unifier which keeps that deliberation from denigrating into a war of words that alienates one or both parties. This investigation identified three functions of the unifier role: Welcome members, express appreciation, and monitor and balance the group's social/emotional health. Of all SLACK posts 32 (28%) were unifier

messages. The unifier presence on posts was statistically double that of the generator and critic posts combined. Recall, there were 5 generator and 11 critic messages.

The first unifier function is to welcome members with warm, inviting acceptance. SLACK auto-posts an announcement when anyone registers on the group's account. There were eight committee members who registered. There were four welcoming posts, one of which welcomed several people who joined near the same time. Everyone received a spontaneous welcome from someone when joining SLACK. An example of a welcoming post is, "Hi (name of committee member)!" Unlike the example in the literature about the bio sketch for new members (Rusman et al., 2009), there is not a specified part of SLACK for information about new members. Of course, a group could make a channel for that purpose, but we did not do that during the investigation. Everyone was welcomed, and SLACK has the potential to welcome new members in a greater degree. The welcoming function was present but not prodigious.

The second unifier function is to express appreciation by acknowledging efforts. There were 21 expressions of appreciation (19% of all messages). Examples include, "Thank you to all of you for giving as much time and support as work schedule and other demands allowed. You are awesome!" and "Good job setting it up!" Appreciation posts were from nearly every participant. There were two survey questions about appreciation. The opening survey respondents agreed that our pack is proficient in expressing appreciation in FtF meetings. The closing survey question #18 "How did SLACK affect you in feeling appreciated for your work in cub scouts?" was answered "Words of affirmation are not my primary love language, so while it was nice to hear of being appreciated, it didn't do a lot for me." "NONE - DIDN'T AFFECT." A longer response was:

There was a problem with syncing ScoutBook with the official BSA site. We had a deadline. Because of our 2 boys in other packs who meet with us, our sync steps were not taking affect the way they were supposed to. I had to jump through several additional hoops to complete the process. The cubmaster said, 'How did you get that done?' and 'You are so persistent and amazing! Thank you.' That felt good. Another member said, 'Yes, thanks!'

While appreciation was not viewed as necessary, committee members still took the opportunity on SLACK to express it. The closing survey question #19 "How did SLACK affect you in feeling comfortable praising other group members' work with cubs?" was answered "I have an easier time doing that in person because Quality Time is important to me, and worry I'll sound patronizing in writing, even though I don't think other people are. Just a quirk of mine." "DIDN'T AFFECT - MORE APPROPRIATE FACE TO FACE (IN PERSON)" and "I like to praise people. I do it a lot. Slack gave me another medium to do that." Appreciative posts were a significant part of SLACK collaboration; nevertheless, committee members prefer FtF interaction for this function. SLACK interaction was successful in the unifier role of expressing appreciation, but FtF is preferred.

The third unifier function is to monitor and balance the group's social/emotional health. He/she will explain delicate situations, correct misconceptions, or redefine uncomfortable or distasteful issues in a more positive, enjoyable light. The unifier maintains a They are the apologists of small group interaction. As noted above (Maben, Edwards, & Malone, 2014; Nekrassova, 2006), emojis are a method to compensating for the absence of FtF nonverbal signals. Within SLACK posts, 38 positive emojis were used: smiles, thumbs up, heart, cry of relief, and Santa. These emojis were added to posts to attempt to compensate for nonverbal

signals present in FtF interaction. In addition to the evidence of emojis, there was evidence from the surveys. Three survey questions pertained to monitoring the social/emotional aspect.

Question #1 related to enjoying meetings. Opening survey respondents were neutral about enjoying FtF meetings. However, later in the opening survey respondents reported "We learn to respect each other and appreciate The Team work generated" and "I enjoy the comradery & the synergy." Closing survey answers to question #1 about enjoying SLACK committee communication included "Neutral. It was helpful with some people, but others weren't on."

Based on the opening and closing answers to question #1, participants enjoy FtF meetings more than SLACK interaction. Question #10 was about influencing working relationships. The opening survey was unanimous that FtF meetings are helpful in establishing working relationships. The closing survey question #10, "How did SLACK affect establishing working relationships?" included the response, "I felt like it was simply an online extension of similar working relationships that already existed." SLACK did not establish working relationships but continued what was established during FtF interaction. Question #11 about establishing social relationships was similar. The opening survey was nearly unanimous that FtF meetings are helpful in establishing social relationships; one respondent selected "neutral" for the answer. The closing survey #11, "How did SLACK affect establishing social relationships?" was answered, "Same as 10, (I felt like it was simply an online extension of similar working relationships that already existed) but I do prefer socializing in person" "It helped me feel closer to the two other members who used it" and "I just like to see my friends better than text bits from them." Most respondents agreed that SLACK did not affect previously established relationships nor significantly help the social/emotional aspect. The one exception was the respondent who

felt SLACK helped build a relationship among those who frequently used it. Thus, the potential for SLACK's usefulness in this area was not fully explored in this investigation.

The role of unifier was present in SLACK interaction. However, the investigation did not establish that SLACK enhanced unifier functions significantly. FtF was a better forum for unifier functions. The unifier role is not fulfilled through SLACK by itself. The relationships of the committee members rely on FtF interaction. The study supports the conclusions in the literature (Robey, Khoo, & Powers, 2000;) that virtual teams need FtF time. SLACK can aid virtual copresence because it allows faster responses among all members. However, the evidence suggests that actual relationship building does not occur on SLACK, itself. Relationships are built through FtF. SLACK unifier activities are an extension of those pre-existing FtF relationships.

Interaction

The second research question asks how SLACK influences group interaction. The closing survey question, "If you did register to use SLACK, please describe your use of it as a tool of communication" was answered, "I used it to ask and answer questions in the group" "Used to participate in conversation & answering question" and "I used it several times to post group information and questions, but I got little response from my posts." SLACK was used for questions, to get information. Analysis of interaction was woven throughout the analysis of the five roles. Gatekeepers were able to quickly respond to questions and report new information. SLACK eliminated distracting side conversations, which frequently de-rail FtF discussion. SLACK preserved 100% of interaction with complete accuracy because everyone typed their own posts and those posts remained on the SLACK record. Generating new ideas through brainstorming did not work very well, supporting Zhang and Poole (2007) findings that email did

not work well for brainstorming. However, SLACK did provide a way to express concerns and appreciation. Overall, SLACK augmented interaction that mainly occurred in FtF, texting, and emails. It was a place to uniformly relay information from other media where everyone had access. SLACK did not have a large influence on interaction for the committee but did influence those few who fully participated. The potential was not realized.

Independent from data about roles was data about how committee members chose to interact. The committee members who participated on SLACK were also fully engaged in FtF interaction.

Table 2

2017 FtF Attendance	January	February	October	November	December
# of people who attended	6	9	4	7	6
# of people on the committee	13	15	16	16	18
Percent of attendance	46%	60%	25%	44%	33%
2018 FtF Attendance	January	February			
# of people who attended	8	8			
# of people on the committee	18	18			
Percent of attendance	44%	44%			

Of the eight people who attended the January and February 2018 FtF meetings, six participated on SLACK. This data supports Zhao's (2010) finding that the more FtF meetings, the more CMC interaction.

Computer Adaptability

A significant theme emerging from the data was the computer adaptability of participants. The two most willing participants were among the youngest and most computer literate of the committee. Both were well accustomed to CMC. The closing survey asked why participants did not use SLACK. Answers included, "slothfulness" and "I'm not a computer person." When asked what was problematic about SLACK, a closing survey respondent answered, "The biggest problem was non-usage. Not everyone wanted to try it. Younger team members used it. Older members didn't want to try it." Another question was answered, "(SLACK) helped me communicate with the two women who utilized it regularly. They are both in their 30's and computer savvy." Question #14 of the closing survey asked, "SLACK was problematic in other aspects" to which respondents relied, "DIDN'T USE IT - SO DON'T KNOW" and "not everyone registered." Discomfort with technology was an inhibiting factor in committee members' desire to try it. Many of our committee are older women who are more accustomed to traditional collaborative methods.

Effort

Sivunen and Nordback (2015) caution that there is a point of diminishing returns. Too many CMC tools can become a distraction. Closing survey respondents stated SLACK was "CUMBERSOM" and "A SIMPLE TEXT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASIER." Our committee needs to find something that gives enough advantage to warrant eliminating other media. SLACK organizes messages by topic where the full discussion is preserved for universal and perpetual access. In one easy step, participants can post ideas, concerns, information, and documents where all can see. The difficulty is in overcoming people's habits. During this

investigation, committee members relied on old favorites - text, email, and phone - for technology assisted interaction. Adding an additional CMC proved cumbersome for most.

Some felt an additional medium, SLACK, was cumbersome. Logging into SLACK was not part of an established daily routine in the way that checking email and texting has become. There is an optional notification setting on SLACK so that members may get an email notice if someone posts something on SLACK. A few weeks after the study ended, I received an email notification that someone had posted on SLACK to ask a question. I was able to immediately respond even though I had ended my practice of regularly checking SLACK. Overall, SLACK facilitated interaction among its users, but it took extra effort to get used to a new tool.

Another theme which emerged from the data was that using SLACK successfully required a great deal of effort from the group leader or gatekeeper. A private interview with one of the older committee members illustrates this theme. She apologized for not using SLACK and said she did not know what to write on the closing survey. I asked her why she did not register for SLACK.

"I wasn't adequately trained."

"Then write that on the survey."

"But I don't want you to look bad."

"I won't look bad. I'm the one analyzing the surveys."

Clearly, my email, written, and verbal invitations to train were not enough. If I intended SLACK use as a permanent addition to our cub committee, I would need to make personal phone calls and home visits to each person in the manner necessary for Youth Protection training, which is a BSA mandatory training. Pushing SLACK with that level of force was not appropriate for this inquiry. If SLACK did not ease our work load, then it did not meet our

needs. This committee member did not feel it was worth the effort to respond to my invitations to visit her home for training. She puts in many hours a week for scouting. She was not required to add to her effort, which brings me to the next theme. This investigation concurs with Berry's (2011) findings that successful virtual teams require more effort from the group leader. If everyone used it, it would save the chair a lot of leg work. As it was, the chair had to take a lot of extra steps to carry messages and gain input from all members.

Efficiency

All scout leaders spend many hours a week volunteering. The original motive for this inquiry was to ease the burden by decreasing meetings and by finding a method that was not dependent on everyone collaborating at the same time and in the same place. Committee members want to know they are spending time in a worthwhile endeavor, in a quality program, serving children in the neighborhood. (Katz et al, 1973). An efficient use of their time is a high priority. Before the study began, committee members expressed interest in using online technology to decrease the number of FtF meetings. That interest continued during the opening survey. Question #12 was a Likert scale "Monthly committee meetings are held at a convenient time for my schedule." Two strongly agreed, two agreed, three were neutral, and one strongly disagreed. Thus, only half of respondents agreed that the meeting time was convenient. In answer to question #15 "Do you believe online meetings could serve the same purpose as face-to-face meetings?" one participant answered Yes, "So long as we still have face to face in pack & den meetings." Another respondent answered No but amended, "It could supplement - make the meetings shorter." The third respondent was certain from the beginning, No, "I am a face to face person - I am uplifted by the Spirit shared from personal communicating." The fourth respondent checked both Yes and No and explained, "Online is never the same as face to face in my opinion.

I like the efficiency. I could go for 2 online / 1 face per quarter." This participant did not feel that CMC could replace FtF entirely, but felt that it could be used more frequently than FtF.

Another forecast in the opening survey was

Using technology through Scoutbook has improved my ability to report immediately & consistently. I can see how using online communication software could be another way to be more immediate in resolving concerns, needs, or confusion. Its weakness is a lack of nonverbal communication & the potential for tone to be misinterpreted. Face to face meetings (pack & den) could resolve this.

Question #14 "Monthly committee meetings are problematic in other aspects" was answered "Everyone's time schedules can Limit everyone's attending" "It requires my spouse to get the kids ready for church alone" "Getting off topic. Poor attendance. Finding a time to meet.

Keeping the meeting to one hour." Question #22 "The meetings are longer than necessary" had responses of two strongly agree, two neutral, and four disagree. Half disagreed that FtF meetings were too long. However, most committee members agreed before the study and during the opening survey that online collaboration would be beneficial.

Attitudes shifted as SLACK registration got underway; only eight (44%) registered on SLACK. Committee members were relieved that the January and February FtF meetings would be held, after all. In fact, attendance was higher at these two committee meetings than usual with eight in attendance both months. The closing survey responses further identified the shift in opinion, that FtF was preferred. Closing survey respondents commented on efficiency, "... I felt face to face got a lot more done in a more organized way" and using SLACK was "CUMBERSOM" and "A SIMPLE TEXT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASIER."

However, closing survey respondents indicated the SLACK forum was better for their personal schedules. Closing survey question #12, "How convenient was SLACK in fitting into your schedule?" was answered, "Massively convenient - the schedule issue was the best thing about it" "was nice to be able to work checking, asking, answering into my schedule" "The non linear time thing is so helpful - I can get to things when I can rather than interrupting or making time" and "It was nice to respond when convenient, not having to get together." A more detailed answer:

Not as convenient as email but more convenient in posting messages for everyone

because we didn't have to remember to select 'reply all.' I had to remember to log in. But gmail gave me notices when others posted on Slack.

Question #22 "How did SLACK affect cub communication taking up your time?" was answered "I would say it took minimal time" and

This part was really good. It took a lot less time to put a message out for everyone & ensure all discussion was visible to everyone. On e-mail, people forget to use 'Reply All.'

The conversation on e-mail gets lost in the abundance of messages from all sources.

Slack shows me the entire discussion at once.

Most of the respondents agreed that SLACK fit into their daily routines better. Nevertheless, they did not agree that SLACK was better at organizing time. Although SLACK has the potential to free group members from the restraints of time and place, most felt the benefit did not outweigh the results, which leads into the last theme.

Replacement

There was consummate discussion on whether or not SLACK could replace FtF committee meetings. That decision was no. However, all agreed that SLACK was a valuable

asset. Closing survey question #15 "Do you believe SLACK serves the same purpose as face-to-face meetings? __Yes __ No Why?" had three "No" answers selected. Half of the respondents declined to decide yes or no for this question. Comments from those who answered "No" were: "I think slack is more for after thoughts, Questions, and general picking up slack" "face to face you can judge reactions by facial expression, more people at a time to express ideas" and "Although we have poor attendance at FtF, we have worse participation with Slack." A respondent who declined to select Yes or No explained "OKAY TO USE AT THE BEGINNING TO GET IDEAS - THEN FACE-TO-FACE WAS MORE EFFECTIVE: WAY LESS TIME CONSUMING." Question #23 was "Which do you personally prefer? Why?" with options "Face-to-face monthly committee meetings," "Online monthly committee meetings," or "A combination of both." Four respondents selected "a combination of both." No one selected the other two options. Explanations included "I think both serve a purpose, that we can be more efficient with online tools and have fewer meetings, but the live meetings are very useful for solving problems and making decisions and plans" "GIVE OUT THE PROPOSED AGENDA SO MEMBERS CAN PREPARE FOR INPUT - HAVE MEMBERS INCLUDED IN THE AMENDED AGENDA - FOLLOW THE AGENDA IN A FACE-TO-FACE MTG IF NECESSARY - STAY ON TRACK (NOT JUMP AROUND)" "Slack is a good filler for questions, concerns, and ideas that arise between meetings - Better than a one on one phone call when more responses are needed" and

If people would use Slack, it could serve our needs 1- everyone seeing the discussion 2- keep a record of annual events a everyone's disposal, 3- people could utilize it completely at their own schedule convenience. F-t-F is preferred because we like to get together & talk; we are too social to eliminate F-t-F meetings.

Question #24 "Please rank your preference for contacting other cub leader, 1 being your favorite method, 7 being your least preferred method." FtF and texting tied for first. Email was ranked third. SLACK was fourth. The phone call option was fifth. Sixth was catch another leader at the church building. Seventh was visit another leader's home. It is interesting that the investigator-critic marked a four way tie for seventh place. In his/her estimation SLACK was on equally negative terms with email, visiting another leader's home, and catch another leader at the church building. S/he marked phone calls as six. S/he had no choice for 3rd, 4th, or 5th. However, s/he indicated that a combination of both online and FtF meetings was optimal. Overall, respondents ranked FtF, texting, and email above SLACK. However, SLACK ranked higher than phone calls, catching each other at the church building, and visiting another leader's home.

Table 3

Method	Rank	Ranking Votes	Mean Vote Rank	Note
SLACK	4	57462	4.8	The second respondent marked 4 methods as 7th.
FtF	1 tie	42311	2.2	
Email	3	37233	3.6	
Texting	1 tie	11144	2.2	
Phone Call	5	66526	5	Second respondent did not mark a 3rd, 4th, or 5th. If s/he had ranked this 3rd the mean vote would have been 4.4, placing phone call as 4th overall rank, above SLACK.
Home Visit	7	77757	6.6	
Catch at Church	6	27675	5.4	

Survey question #15 asked if SLACK could serve the same purpose as FtF. For the opening survey, half believed online meetings could serve the same purpose as FtF meetings. By the closing survey, opinions changed. Three said SLACK could not serve the same purpose as FtF; the other respondents did not choose yes nor no. Interesting to note that all closing survey

respondents felt that SLACK could be useful. No one answered that they preferred to use FtF alone. Even the Investigation-Critic responded that a combination of both would be his/her preference. These findings support those of Grosse (2002) that FtF is preferred above CMC. Grosse also found that email is the favored CMC, where this investigation indicates that email is second to texting.

Conclusion

Volunteer groups are utilizing CMC tools with increasing frequency because volunteers are busy people who want to make the most efficient use of their time. Communication researchers are looking at Facebook (Maben et al., 2014; Musa et al., 2015), Scrum (Opt & Sims, 2015), and other CMC tools to ascertain their usefulness for small groups. This case study focused on SLACK by investigating its usefulness of for a particular BSA cub scout pack committee. Although participants did not engage enough in this short time period to discover its full potential, we can draw some conclusions about SLACK's usefulness to other voluntary committees. From uses and gratification theory perspective (Katz et al., 1973) evidence from surveys, direct observations, physical artifacts, documents, interviews, SLACK transcript, and other communication proves SLACK to be useful to a BSA pack committee, but is not able to replace FtF interaction.

Research question #1, "How does SLACK influence traditional small group roles?" was answered with a plethora of data. The gatekeeper's function of focusing discussion was shared among group members; essential questions were posted where all group members could see all members' responses. The gatekeeper's function of focusing content was very successful as there were no side conversations to distract the group from the task at hand, answering a common problem in FtF meetings. The gatekeeper's function of utilizing members' skills and matching

them to tasks was not demonstrated on SLACK in this investigation. The gatekeeper's function of transferring information to ensure that questions were answered had mixed results. When information was needed from SLACK participants, the transfer of information worked well. Unfortunately, 50% of questions were unanswered, often because the person with the information was not participating on SLACK. However, information that was posted on SLACK was available to all and continued to be accessible without a difficult search as is frequently required of information transferred via email. The gatekeeper's function of keeping all members current on the most up to date information was easier on SLACK than through other meeting methods. It was easier than in FtF meetings because not everyone attends monthly meetings. It was easier than texting and email because people did not need to select "reply all" for everyone to get the various responses and comments on the distributed information. The full conversation was immediately accessible to all. As is the case with FtF meetings, the gatekeeper's function of arranging logistics was not carried out during the meeting, but was reported successfully through SLACK interaction. The scribe's function of recording discussion was 100% successful because everyone typed their own comments, and the post was accessible to all indefinitely. The scribe's function of recording information was efficiently combined with the gatekeeper's function of keeping everyone up to date on current information; with one step, both functions are fulfilled. The scribe's function of recording assignments and holding individuals accountable to follow through was not fulfilled in SLACK because assignments were not recorded on SLACK and people easily avoided attempts to inquire into progress. The scribe's function of recording history was not successful on SLACK because post event discussion occurred in FtF meetings rather than on SLACK. Likewise, the generator's function of creating ideas was carried out in FtF meetings rather than through SLACK discussion. SLACK provided a forum for the critic's

functions of testing ideas, expressing concerns, and seeking holes. The unifier's function of welcoming members occurred but was minimal. The unifier's function of express appreciation was frequent in SLACK posts. The unifier's function of monitoring and balancing the group's social/emotional health was not as successful as through FtF meetings. Overall, SLACK was successful in providing a forum friendly to many small group roles and their functions.

However, they were not all fully executed during this investigation. Some functions are better served in a FtF environment. Other functions were not realized because of low participation by committee members.

Research question #2, "How does SLACK influence group interaction?" was answered by data showing that those committee members who participated in FtF meetings were more likely to participate in SLACK,, supporting Zhao's (2010) finding that the more FtF meetings, the more CMC interaction. Research question #3, "How well does SLACK communication serve in the place of monthly FtF pack committee meetings?" was answered in four themes. Successful use of SLACK was correlated with previous computer adaptability. SLACK reduces effort in relaying information as every post reaches all members and is organized by topic without the effort of forwarding messages or searching past emails or texts for messages. However, SLACK requires more effort from the group leader, concurring with Berry's (2011) findings that successful virtual teams requires more effort from group leaders. SLACK was successful in freeing individuals from time and space constraints; committee members could participate in discussions completely at their personal convenience. Overall, SLACK is a useful tool for group members but definitely cannot replace FtF meetings. Respondents agreed that using a combination of FtF and SLACK was better than the option of choosing between the two. However, SLACK was ranked below email. FtF and texting were the highest preferred

communication methods. SLACK was ranked above phone calls, home visits, and catching someone at church.

This investigation was limited by lots of errors and inefficiencies due to my lack of experience. Conducting studies during classes and this capstone project has helped me better understand the process of academic inquiry. This master's degree learning experience will serve me well in future studies as I will better envision the end when I initiate my next investigation. Also, this investigation was limited to the willingness of committee members to participate. Many were not comfortable using a new app. Evidence suggests that SLACK's potential was unmet during this investigation. An investigation with computer adaptable group members may yield different results. Also, this investigation was too broad in looking at all the small group roles in one study. There is a gold mine of possible studies on how each role can function in the various new CMC tools. Narrowing an investigation to one role in one CMC tool would yield specific information. We need more investigations comparing email, texting, SLACK, Facebook, Scrum, and other CMC tools in small group success. Virtual teams are in use because they are mandated by the circumstances: as the world shrinks, people communicate across expansive distance. This study confirms the strength of FtF over virtual. However, we are grateful for the option of virtual. As, Berry (2011) noted, virtual team performance takes more effort, but it is possible to make virtual teams as productive as FtF teams. Modern small groups must make that greater effort because of the increasingly global nature of many groups.

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Appendix A: IRB Permission

Southern Utah University
Institutional Review Board
351 W. University Blvd., GC 308
Cedar City, UT 84720
(435) 586-7889

Institutional Review Board

To: Mary Thayer (PI) & Matthew Barton (Faculty Supervisor)

From: Garrett Strosser, SUU IRB Chair

Date: 15 November 2017

RE: IRB Exemption Consideration of Exempt Research: *SLACK App Use in Local BSA Committee*

Your exemption request has been assessed and reviewed by the SUU Institutional Review Board and has been approved. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Please notify me
immediately should
any unexpected
risks to the
participants become
evident. (To be filled in
by the IRB)

Signed by Garrett Strosser on 11-15-17

PROTOCOL CONTINUING REVIEW DATE: One year from approval

IRB APPROVAL EXPIRATION DATE: One year from approval

If data collection is not completed by the expiration date, the researcher must seek IRB approval for a continuation.

IRB APPROVAL #15-112017a

Appendix B: BSA Institutional Head Permission

e-mail permission 11-18-17

"I would think that conducting the experience for the two months mentioned would be ok for your capstone.

As for continuing the SLACK program going forward, I would not approve. We do not have a distance factor or other circumstance that would make meeting as a committee a hardship for anyone (unless I am unaware of some special circumstance). All councils and committee meetings on a stake and ward level, church wide, are held face to face (except for rare situations). There is wisdom in following this pattern given us by the leadership of the church. If that were to change, as directed by the first presidency, then we would adapt to that pattern. But until then, I feel we need to continue to follow the established pattern by our leaders.

Thank you for doing such a great job as chair for the cub committee. I was just talking to my mother about the cubs on a trip up north and she could not speak more highly of how well you are doing.

Bishop ..."

e-mail permission 11-20-17

"For the sake of your course objectives and to help with your capstone project, the use of SLACK for the two months of January and February would be okay. To ask which they prefer would not be a problem. Using it as a communication tool between meetings, similar to text, email or Facebook messaging wouldn't be a problem either. Just not to replace the face to face meetings each month as you've described above.

I hope that makes sense. Please let me know if you have questions. Again, thanks for all you do.

Bishop ..."

Appendix C: Initial Explanatory Letter and Participant Permission Form

Saturday, November 20, 2017

Cub Committee,

As many of you know, I am in my final year of my master's degree in Professional Communication at Southern Utah University. My focus of interest is with small group decision making. Some of you may remember that I tried using Poll Everywhere during the summer. I hoped that it could help us take care of cub planning more efficiently, so we could shorten our monthly committee meetings and possibly skip some months. President Boyd K. Packer said, "It takes a pretty good meeting to be better than no meeting at all." It seemed that last summer everyone was in favor of finding a way to decrease our meetings. However, Poll Everywhere did not meet our needs.

Katrina told me about SLACK. Brother Jeppson uses SLACK at work. I have since learned of several people I know who use it. I have heard many positive things about it and no complaints, so far. The SLACK website is <https://slack.com/features>. Please feel welcome to investigate it.

For my master's degree capstone project I would like to conduct a small study using SLACK in our cub committee. The study would start with a short survey. I would teach each of you how to use SLACK. We would use SLACK for our January and February cub committee meetings. Then there would be a follow-up survey to see how you feel about using SLACK.

Bishop Elison has given me permission to conduct this study. However, participation is completely voluntary. The surveys will be anonymous. I provide you a self addressed stamped envelope. No one will put their names on the surveys. I will not know who participates in the survey and who does not. At any time, if someone feels that we need a face-to-face meeting, we will have one. I do not want this study to interfere with our cub committee. If SLACK does not seem to meet our needs, we are not tied to using it during January and February. No one has any obligation to participate. Even if no one wants to participate, I can use the data that no one wants to use SLACK to complete my study. I emphasize, participation is completely voluntary. Choosing to not participate will not hurt my master's efforts in any way.

----- detach and return to Mary separately from the survey ----- detach -----

I know of no risks associated with this study.

When I write about my findings for my capstone project, I will not include individuals' identities. It is vitally important to me that your privacy is respected. If you would like a copy of the study after I am finished, I will gladly share it with you.

We will definitely resume face-to-face monthly meetings in March of 2018. If we like SLACK, we may continue to use it as a communication aid just as we use e-mails and texts, but Bishop Elison does not give us permission to replace face-to-face meetings for more than January and February.

I am required to ask for your signed permission to participate in the study. Signing this paper does not mean that you are required to participate. If you do not fill out the survey, I will not know, as the surveys are anonymous. Please return the below signed permission statement separately from the survey.

Thank you,
Mary Thayer

P.S. I found President Packer's quote in Elder W. Rolfe Kerr's speech "Where Generations Meeting" August 3, 2004.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20050704084537/http://www.lds.org/library/display/0,4945,5344-1-2783-2,00.html>

----- detach and return to Mary separately from the survey----- detach-----

Mary Thayer has my permission to use my anonymous survey answers and use of SLACK during January and February of 2018 in her study. I understand that my name including identifying information will not be used in her paper and that I may request a copy of the final paper. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

This project is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the master's of Professional Communication requirements for Southern Utah University. This study is in compliance with the requirements of SUU's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Appendix D: Opening Survey

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements as they relate to Pack 357 monthly committee meetings. Also, if you would like to elaborate, there is space provided. If you would like more space to write comments, please feel welcome to use the back of the page.

1. I enjoy attending monthly committee meetings.
☐strongly agree, ☐agree, ☐neutral, ☐disagree, ☐strongly disagree

2. Monthly committee meetings are helpful in planning future activities.
☐strongly agree, ☐agree, ☐neutral, ☐disagree, ☐strongly disagree

3. Monthly committee meetings inform me of what is expected of me.
☐strongly agree, ☐agree, ☐neutral, ☐disagree, ☐strongly disagree

4. Monthly committee meetings are helpful in reporting past activities.
☐strongly agree, ☐agree, ☐neutral, ☐disagree, ☐strongly disagree

5. Monthly committee meetings are helpful in giving me ideas.
☐strongly agree, ☐agree, ☐neutral, ☐disagree, ☐strongly disagree

6. Monthly committee meetings are helpful in sharing my ideas.
☐strongly agree, ☐agree, ☐neutral, ☐disagree, ☐strongly disagree

7. Monthly committee meetings give me the help which I need to fulfill my calling.
☐strongly agree, ☐agree, ☐neutral, ☐disagree, ☐strongly disagree

8. Monthly committee meetings are helpful in answering my questions.
☐strongly agree, ☐agree, ☐neutral, ☐disagree, ☐strongly disagree

9. Monthly committee meetings are helpful in resolving problems.
☐strongly agree, ☐agree, ☐neutral, ☐disagree, ☐strongly disagree

10. Monthly committee meetings are helpful in establishing working relationships.
☐strongly agree, ☐agree, ☐neutral, ☐disagree, ☐strongly disagree

11. Monthly committee meetings are helpful in establishing social relationships.
☐strongly agree, ☐agree, ☐neutral, ☐disagree, ☐strongly disagree

12. Monthly committee meetings are held at a convenient time for my schedule.
☐strongly agree, ☐agree, ☐neutral, ☐disagree, ☐strongly disagree

13. Monthly committee meetings are helpful in other aspects: List here:

14. Monthly committee meetings are problematic in other aspects: List here:

15. Do you believe online meetings could serve the same purpose as face-to-face meetings?
__ yes __ no Comments:

16. On the back of this paper, please describe an experience which illustrates your opinion about monthly committee meetings.

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements as they relate to our Pack 357 monthly committee meetings. Again, if you would like to elaborate, there is space provided. If you would like more space to write comments, please feel welcome to use the back of the page.

17. I feel comfortable sharing my ideas.

__strongly agree, __agree, __neutral, __disagree, __strongly disagree

18. I feel appreciated for my work in cub scouts.

__strongly agree, __agree, __neutral, __disagree, __strongly disagree

19. I feel comfortable praising other group members' work with cubs.

__strongly agree, __agree, __neutral, __disagree, __strongly disagree

20. I feel comfortable expressing my concerns.

__strongly agree, __agree, __neutral, __disagree, __strongly disagree

21. The group frequently gets off topic.

__strongly agree, __agree, __neutral, __disagree, __strongly disagree

22. The meetings are longer than necessary.

__strongly agree, __agree, __neutral, __disagree, __strongly disagree

Appendix E: Closing Survey

Thank you for participating in this study on using SLACK online collaboration in our Boy Scout Pack Committee. Please answer the questions as they pertain to our January and February online Pack 357 committee meetings. If you want to write more than the space allows, please use the back of the paper, indicating the question number with your answer. You may skip questions which are not pertinent to you.

If you did not register to use SLACK, please explain why.

If you did register to use SLACK, please describe your use of it as a tool of communication.

1. How did SLACK affect your enjoyment of committee communication?

2. How did SLACK affect planning future activities?

3. How did SLACK affect your understanding of what was expected of you?

4. How did SLACK affect reporting past activities?

5. How did SLACK affect giving ideas?

6. How did SLACK affect sharing ideas?

Do you have an example of one or more of questions 1-6? If so, please share:

7. How did SLACK affect your ability to fulfill your leadership position?

8. How did SLACK affect answering your questions?

9. How did SLACK affect resolving problems?

10. How did SLACK affect establishing working relationships?

11. How did SLACK affect establishing social relationships?

12. How convenient was SLACK in fitting into your schedule?

Do you have an example of one or more of questions 7-12? If so, please share:

13. SLACK was helpful in other aspects: Explain here:

14. SLACK was problematic in other aspects: Explain here:

15. Do you believe SLACK serves the same purpose as face-to-face meetings? Why?

☐ yes ☐ no

Comments:

16. Please describe an experience which illustrates your opinion about SLACK.

17. How did SLACK affect sharing your ideas?

18. How did SLACK affect you in feeling appreciated for your work in cub scouts?

19. How did SLACK affect you in feeling comfortable praising other group members' work with cubs?

20. How did SLACK affect you in feeling comfortable expressing your concerns?

21. How did SLACK affect the group get off topic?

22. How did SLACK affect cub communication taking up your time?

Do you have an example of one or more of questions 17-22? If so, please share:

23. Which do you personally prefer? Why?

- ☐ Face-to-face monthly committee meetings
- ☐ Online monthly committee meetings
- ☐ A combination of both

24. Please rank your preference for contacting other cub leader, 1 being your favorite method, 7 being your least preferred method.

- ☐ SLACK
- ☐ Face-to-face committee meetings
- ☐ email
- ☐ text messaging
- ☐ phone calls
- ☐ visit another leader's home
- ☐ catch another leader at the church building

Appendix F: Closing Survey Explanatory Letter

Wednesday, March 14, 2018

Cub Committee,

As many of you know, I am in my final few months of my master's degree in Professional Communication at Southern Utah University. My focus of interest is with small group decision making. Thank you for your cooperation with my study on SLACK online group communication. Many of you filled out the opening survey. Here is the closing survey. Again, it is completely anonymous. I will not know who fills it out and who does not. The surveys help me a lot with this final project for school. Even if you never used SLACK, filling out the survey helps me. However, participation is completely voluntary.

I provide you a self addressed stamped envelope.

I know of no risks associated with this study.

When I write about my findings for my capstone project, I will not include individuals' identities. It is vitally important to me that your privacy is respected.

If you would like a copy of the study after I am finished, I will gladly share it with you.

You do not have to answer every question. I recommend that you read through the survey completely before you start answering questions, then answer those questions which best pertain to you. The more description you give, the better I can understand why and how SLACK was or was not useful for our purposes.

Thank you very much!

You are a most awesome committee!

Mary Thayer
435-635-2409

Please return within a week

Appendix G: Thank You Letter

Dear, wonderful pack committee members,

You are awesome! Thank you for your support with my master's capstone project investigating the use of online small group collaboration using the SLACK app.

If you would like access to my final paper, please let me know. I will send it to you via e-mail. I will have summer semester to wrap it up. During summer term, I will also take my very last required class. Thus, I should complete my master's program in July. It has been a long journey. This has been very supportive of our family. Thank you! Bless you.

I love you very much,

Mary Thayer