

## **Domain of Interest** Social Communication

**My interest in it** Man is a social animal. Today, there are many novel ways of socializing. We have different groups of friends – college friends, high school friends, “online friends”, blog friends, colleagues, same hobby club friends, friends of friends. Though, we have host of tools to keep in touch with the people we know, there is no effective solution which provides a synergy between an easy and quick way to get-in-touch, share life and yet maintain one’s own privacy. I am interested in this domain because I feel privacy is at compromise at such social communication tools. Social communication tools are here to stay, we have graduated from telephone to mobile phone, letter to e-mail, conveying message through another friend to dedicating a song on a radio station. We have to look towards security issues under all these settings and provide user a convenient channel of usage.

**Target people group** Young professionals who lead a “living out of suitcase” lifestyle.

## **Glimpses of the social life**

The office cubicle



The colleagues



The bike adventure with friends and colleagues



On a fish trawler



The bike



One of the outings



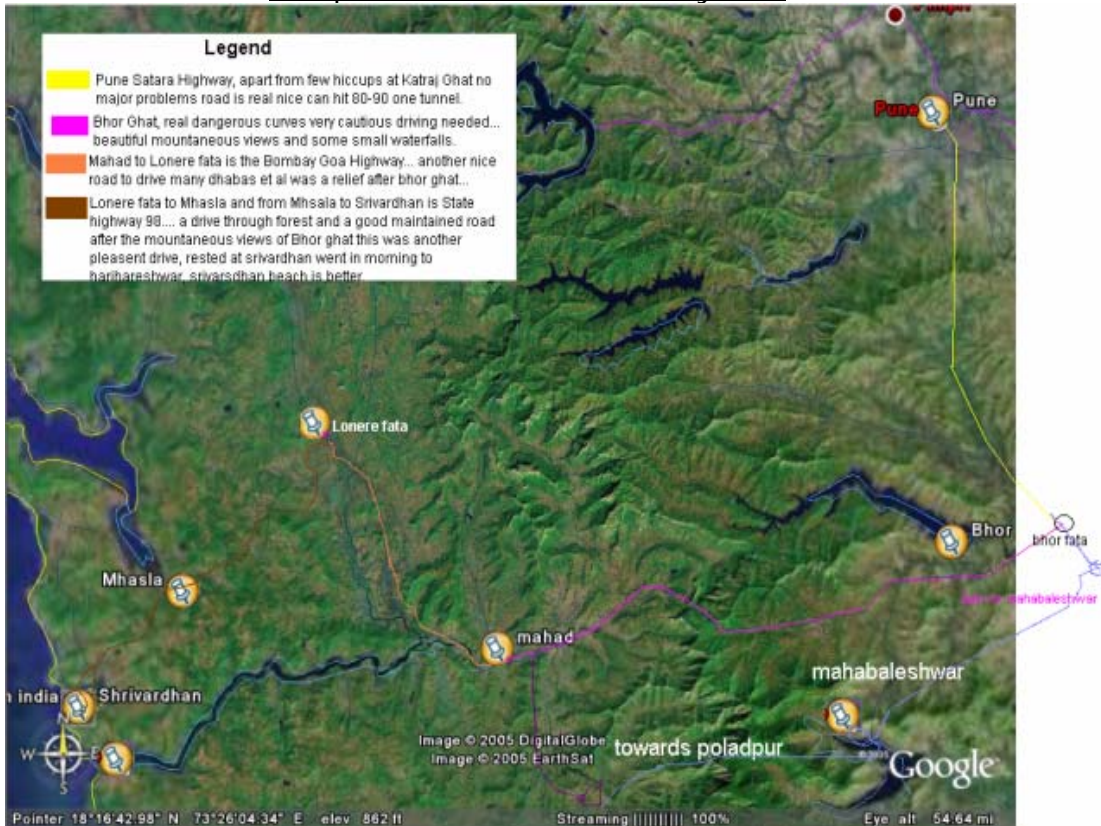
One of the favorite sights



Some beautiful memories



The places I have been on my bike\*



\* Although this is not a photograph, but I decided to include this snapshot as it helps determining the personality of the person

By Shruti Bhandari  
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My lovely niece



Most memorable birthday party till now



One of my favorite vacations with friends



Big fun with friends



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### **Summary of the interview**

The interviewee is successful and well-respected at his work. He is a valuable and indispensable member of his team. Even though, he is quiet young, he is assigned and many a times self-manages the critical situations at work His team is spread over the world across several geographic locations. He interacts daily with them. He feels knowing colleagues, creates better, effective and more productive work environment. Hence, his picture with his team members from other country is important to him. Since, it is these people with whom he interacts daily, but still does not even get to look at their faces.

For him, a big part of his life is spent in his cubicle. Hence, he likes to decorate his cubicle with several souvenirs and other personal memorabilia. He likes his cubicle to be his "Comfort Zone".

Though he likes partying, he is not a party animal. He instead prefers to spend time with his family and friends. As a person, he is bit reserved but to a fair extent he is social. He does not have any immediate pressing privacy issues or concerns.

He unwinds by biking which is nearly a passion with him. He likes to explore new roads and areas on his bike.

He dabbles with technology in his daily life and likes to be up to date with the new technology.

He is a food lover. He likes to try the tastes around the world. He is proud of new and uncommon things he has eaten.

### **Insights from the interview**

The thing that struck me was that this person pays a lot of emphasis to know people he works with and deals with. Though, sample size of 1 is too small to conclude any trend/result, it is interesting to note this esp. given the development of remote and virtual office software. The interviewee is also quite satisfied with the tools available for social communication and he is ***not unsatisfied*** with the privacy measures. This part of him is reflection of his daily life where he appears to be very social, demands certain amount of privacy but is not very picky about these issues. Though, he does not feel need of any other tool but the suggestion of a integrated centralized tool where he can manage his contacts, their information and communicate with other popular social communication tools appealed to him. I am of personal opinion that in this busy world where life moves with a fast pace, no



one would like to dedicate a part of his time filling up forms and giving data.

### **Design Implications**

Though we can think of new hardware that brings together all the communication sources and centralizes their use, a software solution would be more apt in this situation, given that the hardware devices would be using Network Layer to communicate. The possible solution can be an online tool which integrates other popular social communication tools eg. Facebook, 360 by Yahoo! and can also integrate services of mobile phone, pager. A user should not be bothered to fill the data in this tool from scratch. The tool should be good enough to pull the data from other tools that the user uses (after the consent of the user). This however poses a potential for identity theft as all the information reside at one place, hence this tool would have to focus heavily on security and maintaining privacy of the individual on its system. The tool should also incorporate email management and should provide IM facility.

The tool can be further developed to provide storage for user's photographs and online space.

The tool can be like mini-desktop online. However, the design must be such that situation of over-information does not arise and it does not overwhelm the user. This tends to wean away the user from the system since the system becomes very unusable. The interface should be matched with an equally good CMS (Content Management System).