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There's an Off-line Community on the Line!*Pat Byrne*

Much of the current research on the role of technology and community is focused on online communities—people who are linked through computer networks in order to pursue common goals, including those of entertainment and friendship. This chapter, however, considers the term “community,” in its traditional sense, as persons who live and cooperate in a local area with shared goals and interests. Using a study of two sports clubs in the West of Ireland, I here look at the way in which electronically mediated communication (EMC) can be used to maintain the links between club members as individuals and, within them, as a group. In particular, the use of the mobile phone to send short message service (SMS) text messages helps to organize activities in a way that draws members closer, strengthening the effectiveness of the group as a whole and promoting social capital.

Off-Line Community

For many years, our primary experience of community members was those with whom we shared the local area where we lived. These were the people with whom we came together to work and play, to argue our rights, and to exploit our joint natural resources. Based on face-to-face relationships, and with shared life experiences, communities helped to form our identity. Now, however, increased mobility and developments in EMCs have opened up new opportunities for us to bond with people from both different and distant places. We are no longer bound by locale, but have become a “networked society” with personal selections defining the ties that we make:

Because connections are to people and not to places, the technology affords
shifting of work and community ties from linking people-in-places to linking
people at any place . . . This shift facilitates personal communities . . . that

supply the essentials of community separately to each individual: support, sociability, information, social identities and a sense of belonging. (Miyata et al., 2005: 431)

Such individually defined networks are looser and less permanent. We can join and leave at will, depending on our interests and life stages. For local community groups, this ensuing transience of membership brings changes and challenges, transforming their nature, size, and persistence:

Large groups with local chapters, long histories, multiple objectives and diverse constituencies are being replaced by more evanescent, single-purpose organisations, smaller groups that reflect the fluidity of our lives by allowing us to bond easily but to break our attachments with equivalent ease. (Putnam, 2000: 184)

These off-line communities not only struggle to retain the stability and cohesiveness they previously enjoyed, but are also at risk of losing some of the strength of their local social capital.

The concept of social capital has been defined and used in the fields of economics and sociology for some time (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Coleman, 1990; Hall, 1999; Portes, 1998), but has recently had a revival of attention with the widely publicized work of Robert Putnam (2000). In his book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Putnam documents the decline of civic participation in the United States in the latter half of the twentieth century, and with this the loss of social capital, which he defines as the “connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam, 2000: 19). There have been various interpretations of the meaning of social capital, but from a meta-analysis of the literature, Pigg and Crank (2004) have identified five key elements commonly found in its definition: networks, resources for action, reciprocity transactions, bounded solidarity, and enforceable trust. Social capital is generally acknowledged to be a property of a group, although created

and maintained through the action of individuals. It has two complementary sources: *civic engagement*, the degree to which we become involved in community affairs, and *social contact*, how we as individuals work our engagement with others through interpersonal communication patterns, including visits, encounters, phone calls, and social events (Quan-Haase and Wellman, 2004). As such, social capital might be thought of as a synergy created by the trust, reciprocity, and exchange mechanisms inherent in a given social network of which individual members benefit. There are also two recognized forms of social capital based on its effects. *Bonding* social capital ties a group together and *bridging* social capital allows for interaction between groups. The sense of comfort created in an environment of high social capital is seen as a positive contributor to the quality of life.

Social capital thrives within off-line communities that meet regularly, and EMCs can support its creation and continuation. There have been a number of published works that examine this, and two recent major European projects: *ICTs and Social Capital in the Knowledge Society* (Van Bavel et al., 2004) and *Social Capital, Quality of Life and Information Society Technologies* (SOCQUIT, 2006). These mainly focus on how the Internet enables community groups to gather and organize their activities, but a few studies have also examined the role of the mobile phone in enhancing social capital (e.g., Goodman, 2003; Ling et al., 2003; Sinha, 2005).

In his book *The Mobile Connection*, Rich Ling identifies the mobile phone as a tool that allows us to maintain our social networks in the same way as the fixed-line phone; empirical evidence shows that it is widely used to coordinate social activities (Ling, 2004). The mobile phone has the added advantages over its fixed-line counterpart in that it is direct (the caller need not be in a specific location) and individualized (calling a mobile phone targets a person, not a place). Ling also identifies the bonding aspect of mobile phone use in that the ubiquity and spontaneity provided by being in contact via mobile phone “serves to weld the

social group together” (Ling, 2004: 184). Where the telephone is limited as a medium is in the types of social networks that it can maintain. As Putnam quotes from earlier writings on telephone use, “The telephone is used to maintain personal relationships now severed by space. One does not meet new friends on the telephone” (Putnam, 2000: 168). In other words, the telephone can act as a bonding, but not a bridging, tool for social engagement, complementing the ways we contact those whom we already know.

Using the Mobile Phone in a Local Community

The study described here is part of a wider piece of research that seeks to examine how local community groups might use EMCs, specifically the mobile phone, to enable changes in their patterns of communication. Unlike work that puts the technology center stage, and (perhaps unintentionally) adopts an implicitly deterministic perspective, this study focuses on the community itself, examining how the technology has become integrated into its social fabric and contributes to the strength and cohesiveness of the group as a whole.

The local communities selected for study are two sports clubs in the West of Ireland. One of these is a rural club focused on hurling, a traditional Irish field game; the other is a women’s Gaelic football club based in an urban area. Hurling and football comprise the main sports administered by the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), the largest sporting body in Ireland, and members are drawn from all sections of the population and from all age groups.¹ Both games are played on a nonprofessional basis, and although the association has a sophisticated and well-structured administrative body in its Dublin headquarters, local clubs have autonomy over their activities and all work is voluntary.

As sporting clubs, both groups are dependent on face-to-face interaction for their very existence. They were set up before either computers or mobile phones were widespread and even before the fixed-line telephone became ubiquitous. Both the clubs in question are well-established, and attract members and supporters from the local area. In the rural club,

members have particularly strong bonds—they often have gone to school together, live close by, have family ties, and share a social circle. In essence, this is a traditional off-line community forming “a relatively stable unit with many short and overlapping communication lines and joint activities” (Van Dijk, 2006: 166), whose members meet regularly, at least weekly during the playing season. Although much of their focus is on the games played, each club also provides an active social life for members. Taking an existing, well-networked community as a starting point enables us to examine the integration of EMCs into individual communication patterns and how technology might contribute to the functioning of group interactions. It also enables us to make a link with local social capital. While it has been suggested that sports are not wholly responsible for sustaining communities or reinforcing social capital, “sports projects and the place of sport within both imagined and active senses of communities can make a valuable contribution” (Jarvie, 2006: 336).

The study includes twenty-two in-depth interviews, fifty-five questionnaires, and extensive observation of mobile phone use within the clubs, carried out during the summer of 2006. At this time, the penetration of mobile phones in the Irish population stood at 106 percent (Commission for Communications Regulation, 2006), and all of those contacted owned a mobile phone. In fact, no one could name a club member who did not carry their own phone. The interviews were carried out in person with club players, administrators, and supporters, ten females and twelve males, ranging from eighteen to fifty-five years of age. Questions asked included details on their own appropriation of the phone, including costs and payment methods. They were asked about what communication methods they used to keep in touch with friends, family, and club members, and how they might have made these same links prior to owning a mobile phone. Questions also probed the role of the mobile phone in supporting their own lifestyle, and their perception of changes, if any, in club communication patterns since mobile phones have become widespread. The questionnaires, completed by

those attending local games, were used to examine use within the wider club community. Questions covered phone appropriation, the frequency of using SMS and voice calls, and the caller's relationship with the person called. Most of the respondents were club supporters rather than active players and administrators, and their answers reflected a more passive contribution to intra-club communication.

One-to-One Communications in the Community: Voice Calls and SMS

The study found that both mobile voice calls and SMS text messaging are widely used in both clubs. During the playing season, meetings for training or matches may mean club members meet in person several times per week; in this case, mobile phone use is limited to refining or clarifying arrangements rather than chatting or gossiping. Members who are not able to meet regularly use their mobile phone to keep up with the news of the club. For those who work or live away from their home base (particularly students who are away at college yet retain their club ties), the regular use of texts ensures they keep current with gossip and news. Text messaging very much dominates communication lines throughout both clubs. Over 70 percent of the questionnaire respondents admitted to making use of text messaging several times per day, and the remainder sent a text at least weekly.

For many players in particular, their fellow club members form the immediate circle within which they socialize. Interviewees report using the mobile phone as a key tool to organize their social lives: arranging meetings, rescheduling when delayed, or texting to see if their friends were in the vicinity on a night out. This type of use is well recognized in research, and Ling has termed it the “micro-coordination” of life (Ling, 2004). Club members and players often text to gather a social group, as described by Danny, a player in the hurling club:

Pat: And most of your text use?

Danny: To see who's going for a pint. [*laughs*]

Pat: And before you got the mobile, how would you have made those contacts?

Danny: Ah, by chance meeting them. I wouldn't ring somebody's house now to see were they thinking about going out.

Pat: Okay. But you would ring their mobile?

Danny: Yeah.

Pat: So then, do you reckon you have more contacts with people?

Danny: With the mobile, yes. Easier contact. Even out of areas, text message, to where anybody is, where they are in town.

Pat: So in ways it has made your social life more active?

Danny: It has, more contact, yeah. (Male player)

Several interviewees report using text messages in this way, as texting enables a direct line to the recipient. Calling a fixed-line phone (which they often referred to as the "home phone") would possibly entail engaging in conversation with a third party, or having to leave a message that they could not ensure might be delivered, and would perhaps not reach the called person at all. By texting, they do not interfere in any way with family life.

Text messages in this type of scenario create a link that would otherwise not have formed at all. This forms a distinction in the role that mobile calls and texts have taken in the overall communication repertoire of club members. Respondents report that, to some extent, their mobile voice calls replace fixed-line calls, but text messages provide an additional line of communication. When these extra links end in a face-to-face meeting, it serves to tighten the circle of friends. One person acknowledged the effect of this:

It's very handy then when you can just text all your friends and meet up, like.

And I suppose the relationship is stronger, the more we see of each other.

(Male player).

No matter what the message content, any communications between meetings keeps a complex network in place.

Some members also report that sending texts on their mobile phones has not just brought existing friends closer, but also widened their set of friendships overall. One

interviewee describes getting the mobile phone number of players on opposing teams, which has widened his circle of friends:

It broadened [my circle of friends] more . . . Just, say I'd meet them once, and just take their number, and I can text them there an odd time, that's how we get on, then . . . Even people I met and play matches with, and talked to . . . and [I] text them later on, and meet them again. (Male player)

This pattern of behavior arose quite a few times in interviews. Swapping mobile numbers is something that is done very casually within the wider GAA community, for example, with anyone who strikes up a conversation or shares interest in the games. Getting a mobile number from someone also confers permission to contact them, even for a small query:

You can . . . it is very socially acceptable to text them. And it doesn't mean that you are friendly, or anything, it's just handy to ask them a question or something. (Male player)

This expands the closed organic community into the outside world—embracing a larger definition of the word. The list of numbers held on one's phone (referred to as the “phone book”) forms a gateway to a double layer of friends, regular close contacts and also more distant acquaintances:

There is a closed group. There is also an expanded group as well, [a] more outside group, from the point of view of just meeting friends, like . . . [for] my twenty-first [birthday party], I just invited people on my phone. I just went down through all my contacts . . . and they came. So my phone dictates my contacts. (Male player)

In both of these interviews, there is recognition of an inner and an outer circle of friends, where the club, the local community, is part of the inner circle. These are the contacts with whom they meet and interact regularly, while the outer circle are more peripheral to their lives and easier to lose touch with. However, interviewees explained how they use text messages to keep this outer circle alive. This could be prompted by casually browsing

through the phone book and seeing the name of someone they haven't spoken to for a while, which then results in sending a text just to "check in" and catch up with any news. It could also be a deliberate action: two interviewees who had studied in Dublin and had a set of friends there now use text messages to keep those contacts active.

The club players in particular are a very close group and often engage in the common Irish activity of "slagging" or teasing their teammates. Several players described using text messages to "slag off" others about their performance: "Why did you miss that goal?" (male player). This is an activity that seems particularly suited to text messages rather than voice, possibly because a text message is less loaded in its connotations and is less likely to embarrass the recipient. For senders, it also had the advantage of not having to experience a face-to-face retaliation while giving them the enjoyment of wondering about the other's reaction:

I suppose there are some people you get more fun out of texting than ringing .

.. slagging and teasing and—just messing. (Female player)

Slagging on a voice call could easily be misinterpreted, as the secondary signals that make this form of humor acceptable (such as smiles and nudges) are absent. There is also the danger that misinterpretation could cause insecurity in the recipient. This is still the case when sending a text although the inclusion of a simple emoticon—such as a "smiley face" ;)—will display the spirit in which the message is sent.

The one interaction that is generally not deemed suitable for a voice call (but which could be done by text) is a postmortem of the team's performance. This is either the subject of a short text to express an immediate reaction or else a social meeting for a more extended face-to-face analysis. The initial text is usually an expression of euphoria or disappointment:

I'd have one or two buddies, I suppose, that I would text. You might say, "I'm pissed off after that game" or "That was rubbish" or "That was brilliant." If

it's basic frustration or over-joyment [*sic*], or whatever, it could be text.

(Female player)

Practically everyone agrees that a more detailed post-match analysis is definitely something for face-to-face meetings, usually in the local pub. The idea of using an expensive voice call for such extended discussions or reminiscing is dismissed out of hand.

Over all, the use of text from a mobile phone in all these scenarios helps to create group bonds and keep the group active. As an extra communication line, texting tightens the links to existing ties by providing an easy way to gather and organize. The phone book acts as a repository for contact numbers, which widens one's circle and provides a ready means to maintain even loose ties.

Group Communications in the Community: Broadcast SMS

Text messages are important for maintaining social interaction in the clubs and have become a key tool in the successful administration of each club, which is done on a voluntary basis. Every GAA club has a formal committee responsible for the day-to-day running of the club and its premises (clubroom, social center, and pitches). They also have a number of team managers and trainers, each responsible for one of the several teams for different age groups and levels that may comprise the club. All of these personnel need to communicate directly and quickly with a defined set of members and use their own mobile phones to do so, using broadcast SMS (or "group text").

Sending an SMS message to a group of people at once can be done either through web-to-phone access or using the "distribution list" function found within the software of (some) handsets. All of the Irish mobile phone service providers offer a limited number of free texts—up to three hundred—per month through their Web sites, in a single transaction, to all members of a prespecified group. This works much like setting up an e-mail list. For instance, the manager of the under-18 hurling team may have the mobile numbers of all of the team set up as a list, and he or she then creates a text message to inform them of a change

in the venue of an upcoming match. The manager sends it once, and all on that list receive the message. This type of communication would originally have been done by the regular postal service or by face-to-face contacts—calling at houses, passing messages through others, or having an announcement made in the local church. In more recent years, use of the fixed-line telephone may have reduced the amount of work engendered, but burdened the sender with many calls to ensure everyone was informed. The use of group text messages renders the job simply and swiftly.

Using group texts offers a direct and speedy method of distributing information, particularly valuable for last-minute changes. It is much more convenient than using the fixed-line phone, and the managers, trainers, and committee members are all very enthusiastic about its affordance. Talking about her use of the technology, one manager says thus:

I do that a few times a week. I find it very, very good. To do it by landline, you'd have to hang up the phone, and lift it again, and dial every number, [and] engage in conversation, and sometimes the person wouldn't be there, and you'd have to go back and try that number again later. At least with a text message it's gone. And whether they read it there and then, or read it the next day, it will deliver eventually. It is fantastic. (Female manager)

The club members who receive the text are passive in this transaction—they reply only if they can't make the session. They too are very positive about its use and appreciate the timeliness and speed of the information they receive. In particular, getting immediate updates on a change of venue or cancellation of a match due to weather conditions often eliminates unnecessary travel, an important factor especially for rural dwellers. Everyone is aware that the texts that they receive are sent to the group, and it makes them feel included: as one put it, “[it] makes you feel inside the circle” (male player). This is particularly important for younger or newer members.

In the GAA clubs, administrators are regular club members who volunteer their time to the club, taking on their post usually for one year. When doing this voluntary work, they do not use a club-provided handset, in effect also volunteering the use of their own mobile phone and personally picking up any costs that might accrue. In the interviews, no one mentioned the added cost of keeping in touch with club members, probably because broadcast SMS is currently offered as a cheap feature (multiple sends for a single price or with free access through the Internet). Another important factor for the club is that since administrative jobs are greatly eased by text use, they are then more attractive to any potential incumbent. When a new member takes on an administrative post, the previous member can easily forward any numbers they need.

Although the use of broadcast SMS in the club has been positive in keeping the group together, there is a possibility that its overuse (or misuse) could have an adverse effect. The text messages usually come from one person, and are often directive in content, which could lead them to being considered as a form of control. It is a thin line between getting a simple reminder that helps to organize one's busy life and a feeling of being inundated with instructions on how to act. The texts could at some future time be viewed by club members as an "electronic leash" similar to the use of mobile phones by parents to keep tabs on their offspring (Ling and Yttri, 2006). Just as children "kick back" to subvert this, the members might ignore or resend the text messages. To minimize this possibility, it may be necessary to limit the number of texts and to ensure that their tone is encouraging rather than dictatorial. Just one interviewee mentioned dissatisfaction with the nature of the messages she received:

I would say that group texts are very impersonal. Say, for example, I get a text: "We definitely have training this evening at 7 o'clock." People might ignore it, and say, "That's a group text." Whereas if it was sent directly, "Hi Sandra, make sure you train this evening," you'd probably pay more heed to it. (Female player)

Although her point is valid, the suggested alternative solution of a tailored message negates the reduction in administrative burden engendered by sending a generic group message.

The group text message defines a closed loop for communication and, in doing so, excludes as well as includes members. This is currently not a problem in the clubs, as the creation of a text group is a very casual thing, and anyone who might need to know the information distributed can easily ask to join. Since the objective of the text is to bring people in, not to form an elitist group, widening the circle is not a problem. Having a restricted group might be seen as discriminatory, but there would be little advantage to having texts on, for instance, the timing of a meeting sent to everyone. Another source of potential problems would be if a text was written to inspire players but in a tone that provoked aggression toward the opposing team. While friendly rivalry is encouraged, the GAA as an association discourages any expression of aggression both on and off the pitch. Such text messages are not part of the ethos of the sport.

Although none of these points were raised in interview, they are all potential (negative) scenarios that could emerge from the use of group texts as practiced in the clubs. It might be seen that a delicate balance in the number and tone of texts sent needs to be maintained in order to keep their effect positive for all concerned.

Communicating Community with SMS

Both clubs have been in existence before the widespread use of mobile phones and have always needed to have extensive contact with their members to organize activities and inform about fixtures and results. Face-to-face meetings are, and will remain, the key way in which the clubs communicate and maintain their solidity. Now, text messaging has become an important medium for them for communication both between individual members and within the group as a whole. They are using the mobile phone as a mediator in maintaining and promoting the links that bind them together.

Individual club members have woven use of the mobile phone into their own personal social lives, which of course includes their sports activities. They report that text messages form an extra link in their communications repertoire and are often used between face-to-face meetings for reminders and keeping in contact. The more the group members interact with each other, the closer they become, tightening their social circle. Individual members are also aware of the benefits of receiving group texts. They get updates in club news directly and accurately, irrespective of their personal circumstances or location. They know that the message content often will save them time and travel.

It is not just the texts sent, but also the software features of the handset that help to keep links alive. When a text message is a reminder for an upcoming meeting or training, a bonus is that the receiver can keep the information stored on their mobile. The fact that text messages are stored until the receiver elects to delete them means that the handset can be used to retain details of upcoming meetings, and the message itself can act as a diary entry. Ling describes this use of the mobile as a “repository of personal history” (Ling, 2008), and it is a practice that is becoming more frequent: for example, airlines text flight reference numbers to travelers, replacing the need for paper records. Of course, the main use of the handset software is the phone book feature to record personal contacts. This enables the handset’s owner to call on any part of that social network, literally at the push of a button, and also enables him/her to collect and store new contacts easily. This eases maintenance of relationships both close and distant, and using text messages is a cheap and fast way to keep these connections active. Interestingly, for such functions, it is the mobile phone’s use as a piece of electronic technology (its data storage capacity), rather than its use as a communication tool, that delivers these benefits to the holder.

For the club as a community, use of the group text feature has many obvious advantages. There is a guarantee that the message is delivered directly to the targeted person,

with no need for an intermediary or the small talk that is part of the social protocol of a voice call. This also saves time for the sender and ensures message consistency compared to making multiple voice calls or separate texts. This means less panic over last-minute changes, as they are more easily able to respond to changes in match arrangements. This builds flexibility into club affairs. Also the ease of workload afforded by the mobile phone to the voluntary job of club administrator cannot be overlooked. Such jobs as managing a team or serving on a club committee can put serious demands on personal time, and any tool that eases the responsibility is positive for an administrator. Making administrative jobs simpler for, and thus more attractive to, volunteers is beneficial to the club as a whole, as a turnover in personnel helps to maintain enthusiasm and gives voice to representative contribution:

Community itself must mean more than just a common bond between individuals or a sense of belonging and obligation to others . . . [it must] mean in part democratic community in which members of the community or the club have a real say over decisions affecting them. (Jarvie, 2006: 331)

A regular turnover of those carrying out the club administration enables a wider group of people to share in the direction of their joint activities.

Using group texts also provides some indirect benefits to the club, mainly in bonding the group together. Getting a message from the club regularly reminds each member of their part within the community as a whole. The feelings of inclusion created here have been noted in other studies, such as that of Farnham and Keyani (2006), who implemented a group text message system among a number of socially active friends. In their analysis, members reported a strong sense of connection to the group, even for those who did not themselves ever broadcast messages. In a study of the impact of computer networking on community, Kavanaugh (1999) surveyed parents who were sent information through e-mail—the equivalent of a group text—by a school board. In this case, 91 percent of respondents reported that having news communicated to them through the list had made them feel more

involved in school issues. Being included in an information ring serves to automatically bind members to a group.

The promotion of equality is another unexpected side effect of the group texts. The fact that everyone is getting the same message at the same time is important to recipients, as it reassures them they are all on same footing. If such messages were to be delivered by a method that did not ensure simultaneous receipt, being forgotten from a list, or receiving a message after hearing it from someone else, could create the feeling of being marginalized. The chairman of one of the clubs acknowledged this:

People feel left out if they aren't informed of something. Whereas if quite a few people are informed, and you are the one who is not, you'd wonder why. You know, in other years, before mobiles, that was never a problem. (Male chairman)

The last piece of this comment also brings up another point. Before group texts were available, members accepted that messages could be delivered late or that they could be missed out in a complex relay system. Once this equity of information has been established in the club, ceasing it would have a negative effect.

There is no doubt that use of the mobile phone has a bonding effect within both clubs, drawing members together and keeping the ties between them active. Using the five elements of social capital defined earlier—networks, resources for action, reciprocity transactions, bounded solidarity, and enforceable trust (Pigg and Crank, 2004)—it can be seen that social capital is also fed through text interactions. The text messages themselves comprise a network of links that define the extent of the community as a group. The use of broadcast SMS to encourage members in their participation and contribution to club affairs acts as a resource for action. Enforceable trust within the group is fed by the shared understanding of expected behavior emanating from the text messages—attendance and contribution to

community as a whole. Reciprocity transactions are most likely to occur among those who regularly keep in touch with each other.

Conclusion

The “off-line” communities in this study have integrated mobile phone use into their communication patterns in innovative ways in order to help run, and successfully operate, their sports clubs. Regular meetings are the cornerstones of local community interaction, but the mediated links afforded by the mobile phone can help to keep it active when members go their separate ways:

Mediated interaction can enhance the broader co-present forms of interaction and can also function in its own right as a means through which members of a group can engage one another and develop a common sense of identity.

Indeed . . . the directness and ubiquity of the channel can lead to a tightening of the social bonds within a group. (Ling, 2008: 119)

The role of EMCs in contributing to active citizenship is paradoxical—it sometimes intervenes to distract us from our interaction with others, and yet it also facilitates it. As members of a sports club, these individuals contribute to the civic engagement portion of what defines social capital. When using their mobile phones, they contribute to the social action portion.

Old-style “place and purpose,” off-line community is alive not only in sports clubs in Ireland but also in neighborhood groups in Chicago, the community gardens in Havana and the barrios of Barcelona. In all of these cases, “real” community is practiced face-to-face, but technology can have a supportive role in keeping communications alive and facilitating the logistics of organizing the group. With just a little user innovation and careful use, the mobile phone can ensure it is part of this equation.

Note

1. Members of the GAA are from all segments of the population. Forty percent of members come from either the skilled or semiskilled manual working class and 33 percent come from the higher or lower professional class. There is a wide spread of ages, with 43 percent being over forty and 28 percent under twenty-five (Delaney and Fahey, 2005).

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