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When Social Media Recruiting Goes Wrong: A Cautionary Tale of Sample Engagement

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Abstract

Doctoral candidates' experiences with recruiting participants vary in many ways. While some execute plans with ease, others implement their strategic plan for recruitment only to find that it does not work well or does not work at all. While successful recruitment is rarely reflected upon, the candidate who experiences unexpected difficulty with recruitment has several potential negative effects including increased time to degree completion, increased program and recruitment costs, and increased potential for dropout. In this case study, we present a cautionary tale of sample engagement from the gaming community where a doctoral candidate experienced doxxing, social media banning, and long-lasting effects during recruitment for their qualitative study. In addition to the narrative account, we, as a former student-committee member team, reflect on the situation and provide recommendations for preventative measures to avoid similar situations.

Keywords

qualitative, dissertation, recruitment, doctoral dropout, doxxing

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When Social Media Recruiting Goes Wrong: A Cautionary Tale of Sample Engagement

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Doctoral candidates' experiences with recruiting participants vary in many ways. While some execute plans with ease, others implement their strategic plan for recruitment only to find that it does not work well or does not work at all. While successful recruitment is rarely reflected upon, the candidate who experiences unexpected difficulty with recruitment has several potential negative effects including increased time to degree completion, increased program and recruitment costs, and increased potential for dropout. In this case study, we present a cautionary tale of sample engagement from the gaming community where a doctoral candidate experienced doxxing, social media banning, and long-lasting effects during recruitment for their qualitative study. In addition to the narrative account, we, as a former student-committee member team, reflect on the situation and provide recommendations for preventative measures to avoid similar situations.

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Introduction

Doctoral candidates' experiences with recruiting participants are highly variable, ranging from seamless execution to significant challenges that can hinder their progress. While some candidates find their recruitment efforts to be remarkably successful, others encounter obstacles that make the process cumbersome and frustrating. These difficulties often extend beyond mere inconvenience, potentially leading to increased costs, prolonged completion times, and heightened dropout rates (Horta et al., 2018). As recruitment is a critical phase in the doctoral research process, understanding the factors contributing to recruitment struggles is essential for mitigating negative outcomes. This paper explores a particularly challenging recruitment scenario experienced by a doctoral candidate, providing insights into how unexpected difficulties can arise and their impact on the candidate's research journey. By examining this case through established theoretical frameworks, we aim to offer a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play and provide practical recommendations for future researchers.

Background

Recruitment challenges in academic research are often shaped by the perceptions and social dynamics of potential participants. Understanding these factors is essential for effectively navigating and mitigating difficulties that arise during the recruitment process. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) offers insights into how individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups, which can significantly influence their attitudes and behaviors toward researchers and research initiatives. This theory explains how shifts in group sentiment can occur rapidly, with initial skepticism sometimes escalating into widespread

scrutiny or support based on group dynamics and the perceived identity of the researcher.

In parallel, Higgins's (1996) theory of knowledge accessibility provides a framework for understanding how the availability of personal information affects perceptions and interactions. The theory suggests that the ease with which information about oneself or others can be accessed impacts how legitimacy and intentions are assessed. In recruitment scenarios, the immediate visibility of personal details about the researcher can influence how potential participants perceive and trust the research. By examining these theoretical perspectives, we can better understand the underlying factors that contribute to recruitment challenges and offer informed recommendations to address these issues effectively.

Theoretical Framework

To grasp the complexities of recruitment challenges, it is beneficial to apply theories such as social identity theory and knowledge accessibility. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) explains how group dynamics and perceived identities affect behaviors and attitudes. This framework helps to understand how recruitment efforts can be influenced by social contexts, including potential skepticism or hostility from participants based on perceived group affiliations. Higgins's (1996) theory of knowledge accessibility further enhances our understanding by highlighting how the availability and visibility of personal information shape perceptions and interactions. This theory is particularly relevant in recruitment settings where the immediate access to personal details about the researcher can affect how their credibility and intentions are perceived. Integrating these theories allows us to provide a comprehensive background for analyzing recruitment challenges and developing practical recommendations based on a real-life case study.

Case Study

Recruitment Challenges and Insights

Doctoral candidates' experiences with recruiting participants vary in many ways. Some candidates set up a plan with the guidance of their chair and committee that works with ease, almost as if the potential participants were waiting for their recruitment post to appear before them. Other candidates implement their strategic plan for recruitment only to find that it does not work well or does not work at all. Although successful recruitment is rarely reflected upon, the candidates who experience unexpected difficulty with recruitment have several potential negative effects. We know doctoral dropout rates are impacted by financial challenges (Horta et al., 2018). Of course, candidates are spending money throughout their doctoral experience, but the recruitment phase is much more autonomous in many ways. Often an experienced candidate will recruit on their own, collect data (i.e., interview) on their own, and begin to analyze data on their own with minimal need for chair or committee input and guidance. So, when a recruitment plan does not work well, a candidate often experiences significant time delays as they continue to pay the university for their guidance. This contributes to increased average doctoral completion time of an additional year (van de Schoot et al., 2013). Candidates who are confronted with this delay may view their time and financial resources invested as wasted. However, the alternative for those candidates that do succeed at the recruitment phase is dropout. Many who do not experience success with their recruitment strategies are unaware that the struggles of dissertation research affect the recruitment and data collection processes as well.

Chairs and committees do not always prepare candidates to have alternative plans, perhaps because they do not want to have the candidate thinking negatively or pessimistically,

which could set up a low-effort recruitment. In other words, by not discussing backup recruitment plans, chairs and committees may try to foster confidence and competence in the candidate's plan, which could lead to unexpected difficulties if the plan does not work as intended. Candidates may be surprised and disconcerted if a plan ratified by their committee and Institutional Review Board (IRB) does not work easily. The reality is that the chair and committee cannot foresee all potential obstructions to the recruitment plan. Chairs and other dissertation committee members are familiar with recruitment strategies that work and guide students toward a recruitment plan that will work to the best of their knowledge and institution best practices. Candidates that experience this obstacle during recruitment seem to be more alarmed by this challenge (or threat) than other obstacles they have learned to engage with persistence in other areas of the iterative process of dissertation research (Mathiassen, 2017). Consequently, candidates are stunned and often panic when the recruitment efforts fail.

Candidates often experience significant hesitation and fear when they encounter obstacles in their recruitment strategies, potentially due to misplaced feelings of guilt or concerns about the impact on their candidacy. This hesitation can lead to reluctance to notify their dissertation chair about the issues they face. For instance, candidates may worry, "Does this mean I won't earn a Ph.D.?" when they report minimal progress, such as having only one interview or none over several weeks.

This reaction is understandable, as encountering difficulties with the primary recruitment strategy is undoubtedly frustrating and disheartening. Moreover, secondary strategies may also face challenges. Candidates frequently seek guidance from their chair, but it is important to acknowledge that chairs, despite their experience, cannot predict future outcomes. The initial recruitment strategy was developed based on the best available information from the candidate, committee, and IRB. Had the possibility of failure been anticipated, it is likely that alternative strategies would have been discussed. Implementing a secondary recruitment strategy, which often involves broadening inclusion criteria, enhancing incentive structures, or expanding recruitment efforts (e.g., through additional social media groups), may imply a reassessment of the initial plan's effectiveness.

There is significant pressure on the candidate and the chair, particularly when implementing alternative recruitment strategies, to achieve successful outcomes. As a chair, I feel there is a responsibility to maintain the candidate's motivation and optimism (Mirick et al., 2020). When the initial recruitment strategy encounters difficulties, candidates may begin to experience negative emotions that could lead to academic discouragement or a sense of frustration. If the secondary recruitment strategy also fails, the candidate may experience even greater pessimism, resulting in decreased motivation and effort. This decline in motivation may prompt the candidate to consider withdrawing from their program (van Rooij et al., 2021). They may begin to envision a scenario in which they do not complete their doctoral or educational degree.

Indeed, challenges in recruitment represent a critical juncture in the dissertation that must be managed carefully by the chair (Mirick et al., 2020). This phase can be a decisive moment in the dissertation process. It is estimated that one-third of enrolled doctoral candidates contemplate discontinuing their studies at some point, contributing to an attrition rate that can exceed 70% (Castelló et al., 2017; Jones, 2013). After completing the initial chapters, candidates may perceive a lack of immediate success in recruitment as indicative of a failed endeavor, potentially undermining their confidence in the study's viability.

These recruitment challenges, while not common, are experienced with enough regularity that they are anticipated in the process (van Rooij et al., 2021). Recruitment can be complex, necessitating ongoing adjustments and strategic modifications. However, this report focuses on a particularly severe case of recruitment difficulties that went beyond typical issues. In this instance, the recruitment process faced unforeseen and extreme difficulties.

Ezra Lockhart, a doctoral candidate in Psychology at the time, encountered significant challenges during the recruitment phase of his research study. His experience provides a unique case study in understanding the extreme difficulties that can arise in the recruitment process. Despite successfully earning his doctorate, Ezra's recruitment efforts were marked by severe adversities, including substantial threats and non-physical harm, which had profound implications for his personal safety and professional career. This editorial will explore Ezra's experience, highlighting the exceptional factors and lessons learned from this case to provide insights for improving future recruitment strategies.

Narrative Account: Ezra's Recruitment Experience

In my dissertation, titled *The Lived Experiences of Adult Massive Multi-User Online Role-Playing Game (MMORPG) Players: A Descriptive, Pre-Transcendental, Psychological Phenomenological Investigation of Problematic Online Gaming Behaviors*, I aimed to explore the experiences of adult MMORPG players who exhibit problematic online gaming behaviors. The goal of my study was to understand these experiences through a descriptive, psychological phenomenological lens, focusing on how such behaviors impact their daily lives and overall well-being.

The rationale for this research stemmed from the growing concern about the psychological impact of problematic gaming behaviors, which had not been extensively studied within the adult population. I sought to fill this gap by providing insights into how these behaviors manifest and affect individuals' lives. This research was crucial in contributing to a deeper understanding of the psychological dimensions of gaming and could offer valuable implications for both academic research and practical interventions.

To achieve the objectives of my study, I devised a recruitment strategy that focused on reaching out to adult MMORPG players through several online platforms. Specifically, I targeted relevant Facebook groups and specialized online gaming forums where my target population was active. I reached out to forum moderators seeking permission to post recruitment advertisements in various Facebook groups dedicated to MMORPG communities. These groups were selected based on their active membership and relevance to my research focus. The advertisements included a brief description of the study, its purpose, and the criteria for participation. I also provided a link to a detailed information sheet and contact details for those interested in participating. To avoid any indication of a pathological focus, I intentionally used neutral language in the advertisements, framing the study as an exploration of gaming experiences rather than focusing on problematic behaviors. I also provided a link to a detailed information sheet and contact details for those interested in participating.

In addition to Facebook groups, I engaged with online gaming forums that cater to MMORPG enthusiasts. On these forums, I created posts that outlined the research objectives, explained the importance of the study, and invited players who met the criteria to participate. These posts were designed to capture the attention of forum members by addressing common interests and experiences related to MMORPG gameplay. To enhance engagement, I used a combination of targeted messaging and interactive elements. For instance, I responded to comments and questions on the posts to clarify any doubts and encourage participation. I also monitored the forums and groups regularly to ensure that any issues or concerns raised by potential participants were addressed promptly. Despite these efforts and obtaining the necessary approvals from relevant committees, the recruitment phase encountered significant challenges, which I will detail in the following narrative.

I want to mention that 2020 was an extraordinary year with numerous challenges, and my experience with recruitment added to the sense of upheaval. On that Friday, I was anxiously awaiting IRB approval to begin recruiting participants for my study. The approval letter came

a few hours before lunch. I gathered my recruitment materials and a list of moderated, open Facebook groups and began the process of asking for permission from forum moderators to recruit from the specialty Facebook groups. Quickly, I received responses from several moderators granting me permission to post my recruitment material.

The first Facebook group I targeted was centered on an online roleplaying game active for over 20 years, with a well-established, longstanding community of gamers. The eligibility requirements of my study specified a narrow age range of 20 to 40 years old, focusing on a population at higher risk for addictive behaviors. Although I aimed to recruit from several newer online roleplaying games, this specific gaming community has been around for the majority of the 20-year history of this game. I made my first recruitment post 30 minutes before lunch and was excited to see a rapid influx of replies from potential participants. I felt a sense of eagerness and relief as my post garnered so much attention so quickly. I thought to myself, "I will have many recruits soon and will be able to start interviewing in no time." However, that relief was short-lived.

The first few posts were gamers who were interested in participating, but one gamer voiced their dissatisfaction that they were over 40 years old and would not be able to share their experience about gaming in the study. As quickly as that comment was made another community member came to the support of the dismayed gamer. The discussion that transpired between these two gamers focused on both comforting the fellow gamer and bashing the candidate researcher, me, for not realizing that most of the gamers on the forum would be over 40 years old given the age of the online game. This single response had a rallying effect, rapidly uniting and energizing the community against me. The term "rallying" in this context refers to the process of bringing people together and inspiring them to act with a common purpose. It implies that the response acted as a catalyst, uniting members of the community and galvanizing them to take collective action. Soon, in real-time, a large and vocal group of gamers began to question my identity and the legitimacy of the study. Initially, there was a division in the responses: one group believed I was a legitimate researcher, while another group suspected I might be attempting to "troll" them. In the context of online gaming, 'trolling' refers to the act of deliberately posting inflammatory, irrelevant, or offensive content to provoke or disrupt other participants (Buckels et al., 2014). Within minutes, I saw my personal information splattered all over the screen. Photos of me on vacation, posts about family events, my professional website, and more. Initially, seeing my personal information displayed online was quite shocking. However, since this information was publicly available on Facebook, I thought it might not be a significant issue. My hope was that sharing this information would help build trust within the gaming community and encourage participation in my study. However, that initial shock rapidly intensified as my employment history, indicating the contact information of my supervisors, the real estate listing of my recently purchased home, and other private details that I did not believe were publicly accessible were meticulously gathered and displayed by this organized group of gamers. Five minutes before lunch, I was preparing to address the critical comments, but then they suddenly stopped. I hoped this community has finally been convinced of my genuine identity, legitimacy as a researcher, and positive intentions. Instead, I realized I had been somehow logged out of Facebook. When I tried to sign back on, I was met with a message from the social media platform that I was banned. Apparently, gamers in the Facebook group had flagged my account in large numbers using the automated system to lock my account. However, this was not a temporary suspension of my account. It was a permanent ban given the sheer number of reports to Facebook.

Then it was lunchtime on a Friday heading into the weekend. I attempted to go through the unbanning automated process through Facebook, but to no avail. My entire account with all my personal contacts and family photos was inaccessible. I panicked for both my study and for my online personal identity. I contacted both my dissertation committee and the IRB at my

university to seek their guidance on the unusual and hostile response I encountered during my recruitment process. Both parties were unfamiliar with such a severe backlash, and my IRB did not anticipate the risks associated with using my personal Facebook account for recruitment purposes. This oversight highlighted a critical lapse in our research protocols, as my university's IRB should have mandated the creation of a separate, research-specific social media account to mitigate such risks and maintain participant privacy. Indeed, the workaround to move forward with recruitment was to use other social media platforms and online specialty forums, but what it did not address was the collateral damage to my online identity. To this day I do not have access to my Facebook account. Certainly, a Ph.D. is an amazing accomplishment, but it came at an unexpected cost. I had considered leaving Facebook every now and then, especially in recent years, but had kept it until that day for the utility of messaging, viewing photos, and interacting on the level that suited me during different phases of my life. I had lots of history, and many contacts attached to that account, which I lost when my account was banned. Despite the significant setback of being banned from Facebook, I find myself constantly reflecting on the events of that day, trying to understand and process the profound impact it had on my research and personal experience. It hurt. It scared me. I grieved over the loss of pictures and access to friends. I am glad it wasn't worse, but it was not a good day at all. I jokingly say that my chair and committee did not prepare me for this encounter. They were as dumbfounded as I was. Was this incident merely a reflection of the unique challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and social justice movements in 2020, or does it represent broader issues that doctoral candidates should be aware of when planning their recruitment strategies? The pandemic and related social upheavals varied significantly across different regions, influencing how research recruitment is perceived and conducted globally (Ali et al., 2020; Small et al., 2023). Understanding these dynamics can help candidates navigate similar challenges in the future.

After I defended, I began talking with Joel (Dr. Goodin) about the experience. He and I had both been familiar with the term doxxing. Doxxing is short for “dropping dox” or documenting the details that expose personally identifying information about a person such as the person's real name, address, place of work, phone number, email, and other personal information (e.g., financial information, family pictures; Eckert & Metzger-Riftkin, 2020). It is an aggressive, malicious act wherein a person and their private details are publicized without the victim's permission (Anguita, 2021). While doxxing can be somewhat benign in cases such as verifying that a person is real, it is often used injuriously. The act, in and of itself, of exposing hidden information often implies malicious intent and potential vulnerability for the victim that may confuse them, frustrate them, or scare them of uncertain next steps (Kukul, 2023). Doxxed information can be used against someone like blackmail, or it can be used as a first step toward destroying one's life (e.g., violence toward their home, harassment of family, calling on the employer to fire the doxxed individual; Douglas, 2016). In many jurisdictions, doxxing—defined as the act of publicly disclosing private information about an individual—may not be illegal if it involves accessing and sharing information that is legally obtained from public records (Kukul, 2023). However, if doxxing involves unauthorized access to private information through hacking or other illegal means, it may be subject to legal penalties (Nguyen & Tran, 2023). The legal consequences for doxxing can vary significantly depending on local laws and the methods used to obtain the information (Sanders, 2022). During this experience, the thought did cross my mind that I could have been swatted. The media has reported events where those from the gaming community have called in domestic terrorist threats to the police, which has resulted in police and swat team raids on other gamers' homes (Enzweiler, 2014). These events often result in, rape, bomb, and death threats (McNealy, 2018), and even death (Rosenberg & Wong, 2017). I seriously considered this after seeing my address and pictures of my home via Google Maps shared on the Facebook group from a seemingly

angry community with a clear target, with enough information to act, and a call to action to defend their community, identity, and gamer values. While I'm grateful that it wasn't worse, it was not by any stretch of the imagination a good experience. In an increasingly online reality, my unique ordeal could happen to others. At the very least, what happened is worthy of academic consideration.

Analysis and Potential Explanations

We live in a culture where online interactions often lack authenticity and can be misleading. Online personas are frequently constructed to present a curated or deceptive version of reality. This phenomenon is well-documented in the literature, indicating that digital deception and impersonation are significant issues in online environments. According to Paat and Markham (2021), adolescents and emerging adults are particularly vulnerable to digital crime and cyber risks, including online impersonation and deceptive practices. Glenski et al. (2020) highlight how user engagement with digital deception complicates interactions and trust online, while Damstra et al. (2021) review how intentional deception, including misinformation and disinformation, is prevalent in both news and social media. These issues underscore the challenges in discerning genuine interactions from manipulated or fabricated ones in the digital landscape.

Members of online social media groups often hesitate to trust research recruitment efforts, questioning whether such requests are genuine and non-malicious. In Ezra's situation, the primary concern raised by the group was his authenticity—whether he was indeed who he claimed to be. Although questioning the researcher's identity is not unique to Ezra's case, the context of his sample presented distinct challenges. The population Ezra was attempting to study was savvier with technology and perhaps more entrenched in what has become a level of reactive behavior exacerbated greatly in online platforms.

The use of personal social media accounts for research purposes can introduce significant risks, including breaches of privacy and unanticipated reactions from online communities. This case underscores the need for IRBs to enforce stringent guidelines regarding the use of social media in research, ensuring that researchers utilize distinct, purpose-built accounts to safeguard both their own and participants' information. This oversight in Ezra's study not only contributed to the recruitment challenges, but also illuminated the broader implications for research ethics and participant protection in the digital age.

I have long contended that gamers, especially young children interacting with teens or adults in online gaming, are thrust into a culture where the language can be perverse, aggressive, and inhumane. This perspective is substantiated by several key studies:

- **Normalization of Toxic Behavior.** Research by Beres et al. (2021) highlights how toxicity is normalized within online gaming communities. Their study demonstrates that hostile behavior and derogatory language are not only common but are often accepted and perpetuated by members of these communities. This normalization creates an environment where aggressive interactions become a routine part of the gaming experience.
- **Cultural Influences on Toxicity.** Kordyaka et al. (2023) explore how offline cultural environments influence toxic behavior tendencies in multiplayer online games. Their findings suggest that cultural attitudes toward aggression and toxicity in real-life contexts can shape how such behaviors manifest in online gaming spaces. This study emphasizes that the

gaming environment is deeply intertwined with broader cultural norms and values.

- **Identity Fusion and Extremism.** Kowert et al. (2022) investigate the concept of identity fusion in gaming cultures, linking it to extremism and aggressive behaviors. Their research shows that strong identification with gaming communities can lead to heightened in-group solidarity but also to exclusionary and hostile behaviors toward outsiders. This study provides insights into how deep emotional investments in gaming communities can influence behavior.
- **Normative Beliefs and Aggression.** Hilvert-Bruce and Neill (2020) focus on the role of normative beliefs in fostering aggressive behavior in online gaming. Their research highlights how the perceived acceptability of trolling and aggression within gaming communities can encourage individuals to engage in such behaviors. The study underscores the influence of community norms on personal conduct and the perpetuation of toxic interactions.
- **Normalization and Encouragement of Bullying.** Additionally, Jaffe (2020) points out that bullying is normalized and, to some extent, encouraged in many online gaming cultures. This normalization is not only prevalent but can also be actively reinforced by community norms and behaviors.

Together, these studies illustrate the multifaceted dynamics of online gaming environments and their profound impact on participants. They collectively highlight how toxicity is normalized within these communities, how offline cultural contexts can influence behavior, and the potential for fostering positive change. Additionally, they underscore the pervasive encouragement of bullying within these spaces, offering a detailed understanding of the complex challenges individuals face in such digital environments.

Recommendations

A potential solution or preventative measure to avoid a situation like what Ezra experienced would be to have the Facebook, social media, or specialty forum moderator post on your behalf. Specifically naming the moderator and adding a screenshot of moderator permission to post on the forum is another alternative. Both methods have the potential to lend insider group endorsement and a level of authentication to recruitment by means of the community itself. We suspect one of the issues Ezra encountered was that his perceived authenticity was in question. This method might help to address this question for the community members.

Another potential solution would be to post the university IRB study approval letter alongside electronic recruitment posts. This could lend credibility to the study for recruits and the sample population altogether, especially if the issue is that the recruits question whether there is an actual study taking place. The credibility of the study is of import to recruits since phishing is of real concern to the gaming community. Phishing is a term used to describe when someone attempts to collect identifying information to the extent of committing theft, especially identity theft. The gaming community has experience with these types of activities to obtain their virtual assets, player account information, and personal information including

credit card numbers (Yildiz Durak, 2019). Given these risks, this specific online population is extremely cautious, often demonstrating a level of vigilance that can border on paranoia. In Ezra's example, embolden individuals in the community to become reactionary and aggressive.

Yet another potential solution is for the university to build a database with a list of ongoing studies that is accessible to the public. A link to this database could be included via hyperlink or QR code with the recruitment material. This could aid in authentication of the candidate researcher and the study with the weight of the academic institution behind them. Overall, this could increase recruitment given the perceptions of the recruits and community in general.

One final thought about solutions or ways to avoid repeating Ezra's Facebook demise may be to spend the time to become an insider. It takes time to transition from outsider to insider in almost any group. Transitioning from outsider to insider in a group involves a complex process of social integration and acceptance. Qualitative research highlights that this transition often requires individuals to adapt their behavior, establish trust, and demonstrate shared values or norms to gain acceptance (Bourdieu, 1986; Goffman, 1959). The process is gradual and involves navigating social dynamics, where newcomers must prove their alignment with the group's expectations and build rapport to be fully integrated (Putnam, 2000). Candidates may identify recruiting territory long before they recruit. Get to know the other group members. Become a known entity. You're likely joining a group filled with the types of people that you hope to research; you're just doing it sooner and, perhaps, more strategically. By joining the group early, a candidate can "get to know" the group and be known by the group, long before the need for recruitment arises. In so doing, the hackles of the group members may soften and allow entry. They may be less likely to squint with suspicion and distrust when the candidate eventually posts a recruitment flyer.

Conclusion

Ezra will be okay. He has a Ph.D. now and doesn't miss Facebook much. Yet, his story elucidates aspects of recruiting that could affect almost any candidate. Among other strategies a candidate can implement, knowing and respecting their target population is good overall wisdom. Maybe that is what dissertation committees and IRBs can be more cognizant of when they create a recruiting strategy with the candidate. The unique qualities, skills, and eccentricities of the target population matter. By thoroughly understanding the characteristics and dynamics of the target population, candidates can anticipate and navigate potential challenges that might complicate the recruitment process.

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