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Making a mobile timeline [starter activity]

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This is an introductory activity participants share personal experiences with mobile phones and engages people through body movement and storytelling. You can expect participants to speak and hear about each other’s attitudes towards mobile phones and to share ways that they are using and accessing phones that are personal and meaningful to them.

This is similar to the activity, Women's wall of internet firsts, inviting participants to share their experiences of mobile technologies and to relate them to one another along a timeline. Through this activity, the trainer(s) can also become more familiar with the participants' experiences and relationships to mobiles.

Learning objectives this activity responds to

- An understanding of how mobile access and communications are gendered and intimate.

Who is this activity for?

This can work for anyone who uses a mobile phone or has used one.

Time required

This activity will require about 30 minutes.

Resources needed for this activity

Labels to mark a time line with dates in 5-year segments, 1990-2019. This can be numbers written on paper and laid on the ground (ex. 1990, 1995, 2000... etc).

Mechanics

Prepare a timeline in your room. Participants will stand along the timeline at specific dates in response to questions you ask. In a large group, ask participants to move to a time along the timeline in response to the following questions. When the timeline is created, ask what the first and last dates are, if there are clusters of people at certain areas of the timeline, ask them where they are.

Depending on your group size and how much time you have, choose 2 or more questions.

Ask 1-2 participants to respond to the specific questions, for example, "What was it like?"

Questions

- **When did you first have a phone?** What was it like? Did you share it with anyone? How old were you? What did you use it for?
- **When did you have your first smart phone?** What does that mean to you? Did you share it with anyone? What is your favorite app? Why?
- **When did you first connect to the internet using your phone?** What website did you access first? Why?
- **When did you first "retire" a phone?** What did you save from the phone (ie. Media like photos, text logs, hardware)? Why?

Debrief - 5-10 minutes

Ask participants if they have any comments or observations to share. Facilitator, debrief and connect what people have shared to intimacy and gendered access - consider what people have said about their attitudes towards their phones and the ways that they like to use their phones.

Intersectionality Flag: How is mobile access and privacy varying among participants based on their gender, sexuality, race, class?

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