

**College Students Usage of Facebook as a Resource:  
Forming Opinions and Perceptions About the  
Safety of the U.S. Food System**

Jessica Holt  
Graduate Student  
310 Rolfs Hall  
P.O. Box 110540  
Gainesville, FL 32611  
352-273-2614  
Fax: 352-392-9585  
jessica.holt@ufl.edu

**College Students Usage of Facebook as a Resource:  
Forming Opinions and Perceptions About the  
Safety of the U.S. Food System**

**Abstract**

Social media sites have been growing in popularity over the past decade, specifically the social media site Facebook. Previous studies have shown an increased reliance upon social media sites by individuals for information happening in society. This study examines college-aged Facebook users and their use of the site to gather information and form opinions about the safety of the U.S. food system. The theory of media dependency is used to examine the relationship between Facebook usage and food safety perceptions. This research utilized an online survey to determine if Facebook usage does impact the user's perception about the safety of the U.S. food system. The survey revealed that Facebook usage did impact the knowledge-seeking behaviors related to media and U.S. food safety of the users on the social media site.

*Keywords:* Facebook, perceptions, food safety, U.S. food system, media dependency theory, agricultural industry opinions, and social media