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Discordant Communities

An imagined community, according to Anderson, is a group of people who imagine that they belong to one another without being in proximity of each other. After Latin became obsolete, by the "revolutionary vernacularizing thrust of capitalism", and other versions of language (such as French and English) became more popular, the Latin-speaking imagined community disappeared (39). But Anderson's theories about what constitute an imagined community still apply to the current world. Now people can interact not just through print and text, but through electronic technologies like cell phones and computers. A few examples of these technologies include Facebook groups, Twitter, and an app called Discord.

Discord can be downloaded on your computer or cell phone. The logo, a video game controller (I'd always thought it was a cute face) shows that it was created for "gamers" (those who often play video games and who know a good deal about video games) to connect with one another while they play their games. When my friends and I use it, some of which are not gamers, we also use it as a chatting app. It's a bit like Skype, but at this time there isn't a video chat or video message option. You can create servers which you can invite others to. Often, you have to have a link/invite to the server in order to become part of it. In that way, I think it's like a Facebook group, but it is unlike a Facebook group in that you can't ever see the server before you're given an invite. Those who create the servers become the "leaders" or "moderators" of the chat. They can kick people out if they want to or change the color of your username. They can also assign you [meaningless] roles in the chat. For example, in the main server on which my

friends and I talk, my roles are wife, Lies and Slander, Pink Team, and Ultimate B-Team. The roles mean nothing, but they're fun to assign.

In Discord, the name of our server is always changing. Right now it's called #you-ever-drink-baileys-from-a-shoe. (I'm not sure why, I must not have been online when that happened.) Discord is also good for people who enjoy coding or creating "bots." From what I understand about bots, they are artificial intelligence robots which can respond to a very limited amount of prompting and who need to be updated from time to time to make sure that they're in working condition. You can ask them to record chats or you can get them to search YouTube or the Internet for videos or gifs.

Within Discord, you can have separate, one-on-one conversations with individual people that are also members of your server. There's an element of exclusion to Discord because you can take a conversation out of the "main" chat and continue it with one specific person in your own "personal" chat. You can also add them as "friends", but you don't have to be "friends" in order to speak to them. You can remain anonymous to the members of your chat by changing your name or profile picture. If you're new to the group, current members often scramble (hilariously, I might add) to figure out who you are and how you relate to the group. I've found that new members typically don't last long in the server, and I think this is because they often have *one* person that they know. If that person isn't online, they'll feel less inclined (due to awkwardness or feelings of alienation) to stick around and meet the others in the server.

My friends on Discord (the ones who have stuck around) are from all over the United States, there's one who lives in California, two who live in Arizona, one who lives in Oklahoma, one who lives in Canada, and one who lives in Texas. We come from all walks of life and we all have different interests. The main thing that keeps us together as a community is that we like

each other and miss each other. Every once in a while, we are able to make our imagined community a real one by organizing meet-ups—usually at Disneyland.

When we're not at Disneyland, and when we're not chatting in the main chat, we're RPing in other chats—another thing Discord is good for. RPing stands for roleplaying, which includes but isn't limited to Dungeons and Dragons. I create stories with my friends, and we get to laugh about and bond over the antics that our characters get into. In this way, our characters have their own communities in our imaginations through the stories we've created together.

Recently, a lot of us have been busy with our own personal lives so we don't have as much time to talk or RP with each other, which is sad, but we always have Discord to come back to. And when we do come back, we have the best time talking to each other and catching each other up on what we've been doing outside of our imagined community.