CS305 - Social, Ethical, and Legal Implications of Computing

- **Lecture 2b: Ethics and the Internet** -
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Topics

- In this chapter:
  - Spam
  - Political Censorship
  - Social Censorship
  - "Sexting"
  - "Internet Addiction"
  - "Cyberbullying"
  - ~~Identity Theft~~

- Should also talk about
  - ~~"Hacking"~~
  - "Net Neutrality"
  - Advertising

Spam in the Course Text

- Kantian Analysis: "Treat targets as a means to an end"

- Act Utilitarian Analysis: Bogus economic analysis

- Rule Utilitarian Analysis: "It is in our interest for as many people as possible to use email accounts"

- "Making Direct Mail Moral": source, subject and solicitation

More About Spam

- Targets the mentally infirm

- Gray areas

  - "Opt-out opt-in" click boxes

  - Highly targeted UCE

  - Unsolicited Non-commercial Email

- Legal and network situation

  - "CAN-SPAM Act"

  - Blackhole lists

  - Botnets

  - Phone spam, postal spam

Political Censorship

- Great Firewall of China

  - Other countries are following suit

  - c.f. recent Egypt Internet takedown

- US Political Censorship

  - Legal framework: "National Security"

  - c.f. Wikileaks

Social Censorship

- Book, HW cover "freedom of speech", CIPA, COPA etc well

- Internet's ability to instantly transmit huge quantities of data to a huge number of people anonymously highlights existing social questions

  - Not just about sex: racism and other forms of discrimination, violence, etc.

  - Pace of change

"Sexting"

- People used to photocopy their butt. Now...

- Unintended (?) consequence of child porn laws is to criminalize innocent (?) behavior

- Again, tech hits a broader context hard

"Cyberbullying"

- What is the ethical onus on participants in an Internet conversation? What factors affect the ethicality of your Internet utterances?

- In what ways is "cyberbullying" just bullying? In what ways is it different?

- What legal questions arise?

"Internet Addiction"

- Is this real? c.f. "Book addiction"

- Is it unique to the Internet, or just plain ol' mental illness?

- How does it relate to "flow state" and "immersive"? Are these always bad?

- The amazing scary case of China's "Internet Addiction Boot Camps"

"Net Neutrality"

- The Internet is historically like the Interstate: a freely, equally shared resource. But things change.

- What should the limits on this be?

- Who should get to decide which content moves how and how it is paid for?

- What should they decide?

Advertising

- Shift of the net from collaborative to broadcast model

- Ability to very directly (and intrusively) target messages

  - Social network analysis

  - Inference from clever sources

- What are the ethical bounds on Internet advertising?

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