

Privacy

Changing Definitions
Challenges in a Digital Environment

Monday, October 1, 2012

LIB 1201

What is privacy?

Dictionary definitions

The state or condition of being alone, undisturbed, or free from public attention, as a matter of choice or right; seclusion; freedom from interference or intrusion¹

a : the quality or state of being apart from company or observation : seclusion *b* : freedom from unauthorized intrusion²

What constitutes an invasion of privacy?

How does the definition of privacy change depending on the context?

Is privacy a universal concept in all cultures and societies? If not, what does this mean in a networked, transnational context?

Your thoughts?

1."privacy, n.". OED Online. November 2010. Oxford University Press. 26 February 2012
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/151596?redirectedFrom=privacy>

2. "privacy, n". Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online. 27 February 2012. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/privacy>.

The legal environment

Is privacy a right?

4th Amendment to the US Constitution:

“The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated...”

ECPA (Electronic Communications Privacy Act) passed in 1986; primary criticism of this law is that it offers little consumer protection against government agencies' requests for data

California's Reader Privacy Act (2011) protects privacy of readers' book purchases, ebook downloads

Social context

- How do you protect your personal information and still have a public presence?
 - What’s personal, anyway?
- Analog/Offline vs. Digital/Online
 - What’s the difference, with respect to your expectations and behaviors regarding privacy?
 - boyd, p. 18: “Information is not private because no one knows it; it is private because the knowing is limited and controlled.” True for analog/offline info also?
 - How do online networks change the limits and controls on knowing?

Privacy in a digital, networked environment

- Website use tracking, cookies – for what purpose?
- Targeted advertising & differential marketing
 - Arguments for and against regulations (Marshall, p.949)
- Privacy policies & disclosure
- Mobile devices & location-based services
 - (United States v. Jones, 2012)
- Driven by government regulations or corporate self-regulating? Or driven by users' control over their own account settings?

Ethical aspects of privacy

- What about informed consent?
- Is it unethical to write privacy policies in very technical legalese and make them difficult to find on a website?
- What about site members' use of content for personal, creative, professional uses without consent of other members?
 - Journalists, fiction writers, designers, etc.

Google's privacy policy effective 3/1/12

- One data & activity collection policy across all features & services → more personalized ads and search results (see Pariser, *The Filter Bubble* [TED talk](#) & [book](#))
- Uses your data, search history, language preferences “to refine and improve your experience” across Google
- Want to [opt out](#)? You can disable Web History, but Google will still gather and store your information
- Google Mobile: what good is Android without signing into Google?

For Wednesday, October 3

Discussion: Information Ethics: plagiarism

Reading: Isserman, [Plagiarism, A Lie of the Mind](#)
Widdicombe, [The Plagiarist's Tale](#)

Blogging: one reading response blog post

Questions about the research topic proposal? Get in touch!