

Possible Research Topics

traditional print media & journalism

digital text & online versions of print media

zines and alternative print media

blogs, wikis and alternative electronic media

non-text media: images, audio, video

participatory media & web 2.0

social networking

privacy

ethics, including plagiarism

copyright and fair use; open access

Refining the research question

Vague: Should young people be spending so much time using online social networks? Which is better, online networking or face-to-face networking?

Better: What are the long-term effects of use of social networking sites like Facebook on adolescents, and how are they detrimental to developing communication skills?

Refining the research question

Vague: Should music sampling be protected under Fair Use guidelines?

Better: How can Creative Commons licenses be best used to stimulate the recording industry so that artists and record labels are fairly compensated?

Privacy

Changing Definitions

Challenges in a Digital Environment

Monday, February 27, 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) was passed in 1986; primary criticism of this law is that it offers little consumer protection against government agencies' requests for data

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 vs. Jones)
- 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.

Current example: Google's new 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*)
- 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, February 29

Discussion: Information Ethics: plagiarism

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

Blogging: comment on at least one blog post