Lecture 10
Networked Communications
Participation Quiz

Which movie did you like best?
A. Lion King II: Simba’s Pride
B. Star Trek Insurrection
C. Shawshank Redemption
D. Citizen Kane
E. Star Wars: in 3D
Ethical Perspectives on Censorship

• Kant opposed censorship
  – Product of the Enlightenment: reaction to institutional control
  – “Have courage to use your own reason”

• Mill opposed censorship
  1. No one is infallible: we may silence the truth.
  2. Even if not, an opinion may contain a kernel of truth.
  3. Even if not, the truth must be rationally tested and validated.
  4. Ideas are most persuasive if they’re tested rigorously.

Principle of harm:

“The only ground on which intervention is justified is to prevent harm to others; the individual’s own good is not a sufficient condition.”
Freedom of Expression: History

- De Scandalis Magnatum (England, 1275)
  - You could be imprisoned for weakening loyalty to the King
  - Not so different from lese-majesty laws today, esp. in Thailand, Morocco (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lese-majesty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lese-majesty))

- 18th century: freedom of the press in England
  - Anyone could print what they liked
  - Punishment for libel: publication causing harm, even if truth

- American states adopted bills of rights including freedom of expression
  - Freedom of expression in 1st amendment to U.S. Constitution: “Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press”
2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

(a) freedom of conscience and religion;
(b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;
(c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and
(d) freedom of association.
Freedom of Expression is not an Absolute Right

• Right to freedom of expression must be balanced against the public good

• Various restrictions on freedom of expression exist

• Discuss and Debate: Which restrictions on freedom of expression do you think are justified?
US Child Internet Protection Act

• Libraries receiving federal networking funds must filter pages containing obscenity or child pornography
• U.S. Supreme Court ruled CIPA did not violate 1st Amendment guarantees (6-3 decision in June 2003)
Children in Libraries

At the beginning of the course, we asked:

“For the protection of children, computers in libraries should be configured to block objectionable content.”

Let’s revisit this question. Examine it in groups, and then discuss the question from the perspective of the ethical theories we’ve studied so far.
**Sexting**

- Definition: sexually suggestive text messages or emails with nude or nearly nude photographs
- In a 2009 survey, 9% of U.S. teenagers admitted to sending a sext, 17% admitted to receiving a sext
- Case of Jesse Logan
  - killed herself after ex-boyfriend shared pictures
- Case of Phillip Alpert
  - just turned 18; sent pictures of his 16 year-old girlfriend.
  - sentenced and registered as a sex offender for child pornography
- Case of Ting-Yi Oei
  - principal kept a copy of a picture as evidence
  - angry parent sued him
  - lost job over child pornography charges
- How should society respond to sexting?
Cyberbullying

- Cyberbullying: Use of the Internet or phone system to inflict psychological harm
- In a 2009 survey, 10% admitted to cyberbullying, and 19% said they had been cyberbullied
- Case of Ghyslain Raza “the Star Wars kid”
  - videotape fell into the wrong hands, shared online, went viral
  - harassed at school, eventually dropped out
- Case of Megan Meier
  - 13 yr old girl met 16 yr old boy on myspace, flirted online
  - then he broke up: “you are a bad person and everyone hates you”
  - she killed herself
  - the boyfriend didn’t exist: 2 neighborhood girls and their mom
  - there was no law against what they did; no charges
- Megan Meier Cyberbullying Prevention Act
  - penalties for “communication intended to coerce, intimidate, harass, or cause substantial emotional distress to another person using electronic means to support severe, repeated, hostile behaviour”
  - What do you think of this law?
Girl allegedly commits suicide after being bullied

A Vancouver area teen who told a heart-breaking story in a YouTube video of cyberbullying that led to an all-out schoolyard attack has committed suicide.

In stories and posts flooding Vancouver's social media networks, #RIPAmanda is trending as people post news and condolences for the teen, Amanda Todd. Amanda died in Coquitlam last night.

The young teen went to school in Maple Ridge but had changed schools and was living in Coquitlam. She joined YouTube on September 6 and posted her video September 7. Her last YouTube activity was when she added a Hunter Hayes music video to her favourites on YouTube.

On September 7, she also uploaded a presentation Cyber Bullying on Prezi in which she explains what cyberbullying is and gives advice on dealing with it.

In what could turn out to be her own very sad legacy, Todd urged people to stand up to bullies and to help their victims:

"If you see that someone is being bullied, don't be afraid to tell the bully to stop doing what they are doing. Make sure to tell them that it's wrong and that they shouldn't bully other kids."

To parents, Todd urged them "to always give your child emotional support" and help them if they are being bullied.

The Amanda Michelle Todd memorial Facebook page, posted early this morning, already has 2,000 people "liking" it.
Cyberbullying

Ashneel writes: “We had a small chat after class on Thursday about this bullying issue that has gone viral on Youtube. I find this very applicable to the internet chapter, as it focuses on cyber bullying as the primary issue. 

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUOpqd0rQSo

Facts:

• A man sent this news anchor a private letter.
• The letter was then posted to her husband's (another news anchor) work Facebook account.
• The man is being accused of cyber bullying.

Questions of ethics/ morality:

• Does she misrepresent the letter?
• Is it wrong to turn something intended to be private into something public?
• Who is the real bully here?”
Identity Theft

- Identity theft: when a person uses another person’s electronic identity
- More than 1 million Americans were victims of identity theft in 2008 due to their online activities
- Phishing: use of email to attempt to deceive people into revealing personal information
Chat-Room Predators

• Chat room: supports real-time discussions among many people connected to network
• Instant messaging and chat rooms replacing telephone for many people
• Some pedophiles meeting children through chat rooms
• Police countering with “sting” operations

Are chatroom “stings” ethical?
Is Internet Addiction Real?

• Some liken compulsive computer use to pathological gambling

• Traditional definition of addiction:
  – Compulsive use of harmful substance or drug
  – Knowledge of its long-term harm

• Some people spend 40-80 hours/week on the Internet, with individual sessions lasting up to 20 hours
Is Internet Addiction Real?

• Kimberly Young created test for Internet addiction
  – Sample question: “Have you repeatedly made unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop Internet use?”
  – Patients who answer “yes” to at least 5 of 8 questions may be addicted

• Others disagree, noting
  – Computer use is generally considered a positive activity
  – Excessive use does not lead to criminal activity
  – More accurate to call excessive use a compulsion

Discuss: do you believe that internet addiction is real?
  Does society bear an ethical responsibility for it?