Lecture 3-1
Networked Communications
Participation Quiz

Which form of electronic communication is most central to your life?

A. email
B. facebook
C. instant messaging
D. text messaging
E. other
Recap

• Define:
  – Kantianism
  – Act Utilitarianism
  – Rule Utilitarianism
  – Social Contract Theory
  – Virtue Ethics

• What’s the “right” theory to use?
So much for ethical theories. Let’s transition to:

NETWORKED COMMUNICATIONS
The Spam Epidemic

- Spam: Unsolicited, bulk email
- Spam is profitable
  - More than 100 times cheaper than “junk mail”
  - Profitable even if only 1 in 100,000 buys product
- Amount of email that is spam has grown rapidly
  - 8% in 2001
  - 90% in 2009

...but things have gotten better

The Dying Business Of Email Spam

Spam email is on the wane. And no one on God’s green Earth is going to miss it.

The share of spam in email traffic decreased steadily throughout 2012 to hit a five year low, an unprecedented decrease. The main reason behind the decrease in spam volume is the overall heightened level of anti-spam protection, says the Moscow based junk mail and cyber crime fighting Kaspersky Lab.

Ethical Evaluations of Spamming

The book argues from each perspective that spamming is wrong. Let’s see if we can make the arguments ourselves:

- Kantian evaluation
- Act utilitarian evaluation
- Rule utilitarian evaluation
- Social contract theory evaluation
- Virtue ethics evaluation

Which of these do you find most/least convincing?
Need for Socio-Technical Solutions

• New technologies sometimes cause new social situations to emerge
  – Calculators → feminization of bookkeeping
  – Telephones → blurred work/home boundaries

• Spam is an example of this phenomenon
  – Email messages practically free
  – Profits increase with number of messages sent
  – Strong motivation to send more messages

• For communications to be perceived as fair, they need to be two-way (allowing consequences for misuse)
  – Internet design allows unfair, one-way communications
Government Control of the Internet

- Myanmar, Cuba, North Korea: Internet virtually inaccessible
- Saudi Arabia: centralized control center
- People’s Republic of China: “one of most sophisticated filtering systems in the world” as well as censorship
  - Current censorship of “occupy central” news on mainland
- Germany: Forbids access to neo-Nazi sites
- United States: limit access of minors to pornography
- *Can you think of other examples?*