Lecture 5-2
Privacy
Is There a Natural Right to Privacy?

- Morton Levine: Privacy rights stem from property rights: “a man’s home is his castle”
- Warren and Brandeis: An explicit “right to be let alone”
  - Noted that libel and slander laws don’t prevent people from saying mean, true things about you
- Thomson: violations of “Privacy rights” are necessarily also violations of other rights
  - So, we don’t need to treat privacy separately
- Benn and Reiman: Some amount of privacy is necessary for people to be autonomous, moral agents, to develop healthy relationships, and to act as free citizens.

Discuss:
- Is privacy a right?
- Is it a “prudential right”?
  - worth recognizing for the good of society, though not a natural right
- Or do we have no such right at all?
Privacy and Trust

- Modern life more private
- Challenge: living among strangers
- Remedy: establishing reputations
  - Ordeal, such as lie detector test or drug test
  - Credential, such as driver’s license, key, ID card, college degree
- Establishing reputation is done at the cost of reducing privacy
Ways Information Becomes Public

- Rewards or loyalty programs
- Body scanners
- Digital video recorders
- Automobile “black boxes”
- Enhanced 911 service
- RFIDs
- Implanted chips
- Cookies
- Spyware

...can you think of others?
“It should be illegal for shopping malls to install cameras for tracking customer behavior.”
Data Mining

• Data mining
  – Searching for patterns or relationships in one or more databases
  – This info typically provided by the customer for another purpose

• Many internet services are essentially provided as an opportunity to gather valuable data
  – Google; Facebook; free online courses

• Also performed by the government
  – Efforts to detect terrorism via phone, bank, travel records
  – Tax audits

• Questions:
  – Ownership: do you have any rights over information arising from transactions in which you participated?
  – Ethics: what data mining activities are unethical? Which are ethical?
  – Does it make a difference whether DM is opt-in or opt-out?
  – At what point does DM become “creepy”?
  – Should we worry about ending up in a “personalization bubble”?