

Privacy

Lecture 5-2

Computers & Society (CPSC 430)

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CPSC 430 – Grading Demonstration

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Rosalyn CaRR

Google offers many services to people such as an extensive web searching feature, e-mail hosting, limited amount of free drive storage, and much more. For Google to conduct business in China, it had to agree to limit the information it would make available through their services in order to comply with China's censorship laws. Arguing from an act utilitarian perspective, Google has made the correct business decision, as now citizens of China are able to benefit from the vast amount of services Google has to offer resulting in the overall increased happiness for those citizens.

Act utilitarianism states that an action is moral if for all affected parties involved it results in an overall increased amount of happiness; an act would be deemed unmoral if the action resulting in an overall decrease of happiness. Because Google's services are unparalleled to most other companies throughout the world and allows for people to have free e-mail, social networking, cloud storage, and many other features, people who use Google have reason to be happier with regards to their Internet options. For example, if someone wanted to look up a recipe to make bread, Google's search engine is so advanced the highest rated bread recipes will appear within milliseconds of your search. Without Google, one could be searching for a bread recipe for much longer, and not know for certain whether the recipe is any good.

Based on the reason that Google provides a service that increases the overall happiness for those who use it, and act utilitarianism argues this to be what makes an action moral, Google has done the right thing by complying with China's censorship laws in order to do business in China.

Background

Optional: Which ethical theory?

What side of the argument are you taking?

What arguments are you making?

Background on ethical theory

Evidence

Relation to Ethical Theory

Example

Conclusion

Background

Act Utilitarianism

Google is correct to limit info
Chinese people can be happier

Background on ethical theory

Google has lots of services
Services make people happy

Example: Bread recipes

Conclusion

Was the essay WELL STRUCTURED, stating a thesis, supporting it with argument(s) that are clearly related to this point and (if relevant) distinct from one another, and linking these arguments in a logical way?

- (0) It is unclear what this essay is arguing.
- (1) It is apparent what is being argued, but much of the reasoning is unsound, unclear, or unrelated.
- (2) The thesis is clearly stated, and some claims support the thesis, but others are irrelevant and/or redundant.
- (3) All claims lend support to a clearly stated thesis, but they are insufficiently distinct and/or poorly linked together.
- (4) All claims lend support to a clearly stated thesis, which in turn relates appropriately to the question asked. The claims are distinct from one another and build well on each other in a logical progression.
- (5) Very well structured: the thesis is clear and well related to the question asked; the logical structure of arguments does an excellent job of supporting this thesis.

- **It is clear what the essay is arguing**
- **Background section is a bit long, and there is a lot of time spent restating parts of the ethical theory in the second paragraph**
- **No “linking” between claims as there is only one**
- **Conclusion links back to the introduction**

Google offers many services to people **such as an extensive web searching feature, e-mail hosting, limited amount of free drive storage**, and much more. For Google to conduct business in China, it had to agree to limit the information it would make available through their services in order to comply with China's censorship laws. Arguing from an act utilitarian perspective, Google has made the correct business decision, as now citizens of China are able to benefit from the vast amount of services Google has to offer resulting in the overall increased happiness for those citizens.

Act utilitarianism states that an action is moral if for all affected parties involved it results in an overall increased amount of happiness; an act would be deemed **unmoral** if the action resulting in an overall decrease of happiness. Because Google's services are unparalleled to most other companies throughout the world and allows for people to have **free e-mail, social networking, cloud storage, and many other features**, people who use Google have reason to be happier with regards to their Internet options. *For example, if someone wanted to look up a recipe to make bread, Google's search engine is so advanced the highest rated bread recipes will appear within milliseconds of your search. Without Google, one could be searching for a bread recipe for much longer, and not know for certain whether the recipe is any good.*

Based on the reason that Google provides a service that increases the overall happiness for those who use it, and act utilitarianism argues this to be what makes an action moral, Google has done the right thing by complying with China's censorship laws in order to do business in China.

Information is repeated

Wrong word – course relevant

Information is repeated

Excessively long example

Was the essay presented CLEARLY AND IN CORRECT ENGLISH?

- (0) Completely indecipherable
- (1) Very difficult to understand
- (2) Weak presentation; errors that impede understanding
- (3) Mostly correct, fairly clear writing
- (4) Clear and correct writing
- (5) Very clear and correct writing

- Some parts are repetitive and restate the same information
- Example is really long
- “Unmoral” should be “Immoral” (which is something you should have encountered a lot with this course)

Information is repeated

Unmoral vs Immoral

Information is repeated

Excessively long example

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Background

Clearly understand which ethical theory is being used**

Why? According to what?

Example – is it very relevant?

Background Restated

Did the essay do a GOOD JOB OF MAKING ITS CASE, choosing relevant arguments, backing them up with evidence and examples at an appropriate level of detail, and responding to contrary views as appropriate?

- (0) Claims are asserted with no further support, or not asserted at all.
- (1) The essay stated many facts about the topic in question, but there is not a clear separation between argument and evidence.
- (2) The essay makes recognizable arguments and backs them up with evidence, but relevance and/or level of detail are very inappropriate and/or extremely relevant contrary views are disregarded.
- (3) Arguments are clearly stated and generally support the thesis; these arguments are backed up with generally relevant evidence at a broadly appropriate level of detail. No extremely relevant contrary view undermines these arguments, though such arguments may or may not be explicitly addressed in the essay.
- (4) All claims are grounded in relevant and specific arguments at an appropriate level of detail; some attempt is made to respond to alternate points of view.
- (5) Whether or not I personally agree with the essay's thesis, it makes a compelling argument for its point of view. Arguments are very relevant, backed up with evidence at an appropriate level of detail, and (within space available) responses are offered to obvious objections.

- Missing key arguments used with Utilitarianism**
- Am I convinced, or do I still have questions?
- No counter argument
- Weak Example

Background

We can tell it's Act Utilitarianism because it says so, but there are important features missing (like Utilitarian Calculus)

How do you know that access to these services makes people happier?

What do people use right now instead?

What do they lose by accepting Google?

Are there not more consequential situations?

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Identifiable Theory**

Correct Statement about theory

Oversimplification

Did the essay demonstrate a good UNDERSTANDING OF THE COURSE'S SUBJECT MATTER, including both the topic and the wider context?

- (0) Profound and fundamental misunderstanding of the subject matter.
 - (1) Poor understanding of the subject matter; major errors.
 - (2) Factual errors that substantially undermined the essay's main point.
 - (3) Generally correct understanding, but minor errors and/or errors of omission (failure to introduce important facts).
 - (4) Correct understanding, generally balanced presentation at an appropriate level of detail.
 - (5) Insightful understanding, creative and balanced use of the course's subject matter.
-
- **Correct statements about the Act Utilitarianism (maximize happiness)**
 - ****While stating “I am using Act Utilitarianism” isn’t required, we will look for key statements that relate and give us clues:**
 - **Utilitarian calculus**
 - **Consequentialism – what are the outcomes?**
 - **The only workable knowledge presented is an oversimplification that is missing key facts.**

Act Utilitarianism**

Correct Statement about Act Util.

Oversimplification – What about Utilitarian Calculus?

Decision-making made on a purely rational, algorithmic basis, such as utilitarianism, introduces the problem of reducing decision making into measurable units, that can calculate morality by weighing the costs and benefits of actions and rules. By treating the process of decision making like a calculator, it **voids flexibility in decision making**, and fails to address the principle of distributive justice, **resulting in unjust treatment of marginalized communities.**

Utilitarianism calculates the morality of actions by weighing their costs and benefits to yield the greatest net increase in happiness. However, this means that those outside the net-beneficiaries are stuck with the adverse consequences. For example, using the utilitarian line of reasoning, suppose the global demand for salmon has been rapidly increasing. In order to meet the demand, a fishing-farm corporation proposes a salmon farm in the waters of Clayoquot Sound, an area rich in salmon located along the northern coast of Vancouver Island. The cost of the project is 5 units, while the benefits to the corporation and consumers are 30 units of good. In contrast, the cost to indigenous communities is 8 units, and benefits are 15 units of good. After tallying everything up, the rational decision is to allow the project to continue because it produces the greatest amount of good (30 to 15). Yet despite the greater cost to indigenous folk, the greater good takes precedence over the resulting decrease in economic and food stability, the lost of fishing traditions, and the increase in dependence on aid or other less-lucrative forms of economic activities. Thus, by valuing a net increase in happiness, utilitarianism inadvertently promotes the unjust treatment of individuals outside of the net-beneficiaries list.

While some argue that acting on purely rational, calculated terms offer an unbiased way to guide our decision-making, it assumes a rigid process by ignoring the differences and flexibility in human decision-making. More often than not, our morality is influenced by different values, intuition and emotion. For instance, some may agree on a salmon farm because they believe it creates more economic-good than harm. However, others may believe the harm or injustice resulting from how the consequences were distributed, outweighs the greater good for allowing such actions to be permissible. Ultimately, pure rationality at times, ignores marginalized individuals resulting in their unfair treatment.

Correct statement, Consequentialism

Thesis, generally clear which side is being taken, claims are clear (**voids flexibility, unjust treatment**)

Clear statement

Long example, but we use it walk through the **utilitarian calculus**. I don't personally expect this level of detail always, but it's a strong example.

Clear statement about unjust treatment

Counter Argument

Clear statement about flexibility
Tied back to same example

No conclusion

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The thesis was easy to find, and the essays flowed well. No conclusion.

I think either a 4 or a 5 could be warranted, I would personally give a 4 (the central paragraph is really long) but calibration was a 5.

Was the essay presented **CLEARLY AND IN CORRECT ENGLISH?**

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- (1) Very difficult to understand
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A couple small typos (ex: “lost” instead of “loss), and some of the sentences are pretty long. There are arguable a couple comma splices and run-on sentences.

These don’t impact the essay enough for me, I would personally give a 5, calibration was a 4.

Did the essay do a **GOOD JOB OF MAKING ITS CASE**, choosing relevant arguments, backing them up with evidence and examples at an appropriate level of detail, and responding to contrary views as appropriate?

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The use of the same example throughout lead to a consistent angle, and the actual breakdown was very convincing. There was a counter argument, also well debunked.

Myself and calibration gave a 5.

We hit the key facts of utilitarianism, without missing anything. The understanding was correct. The example was what was really “insightful”, as it was a simple enough situation to understand while still showing nuance well.

Myself and calibration gave a 5.

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Ways Information Becomes Public

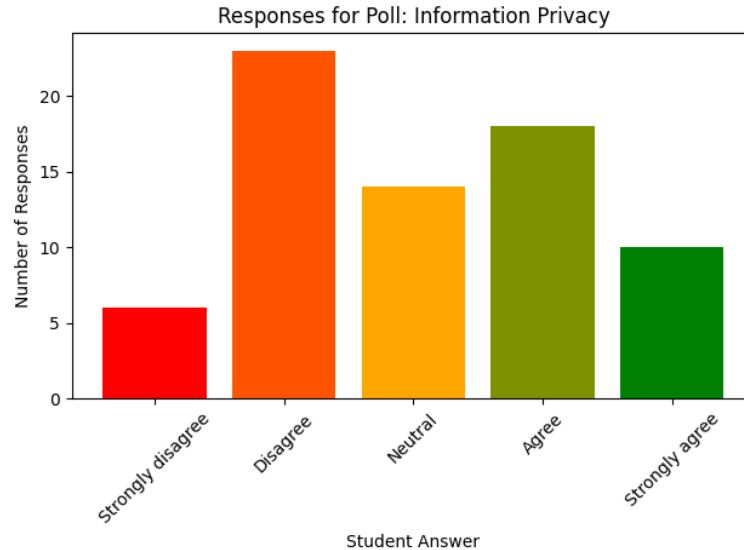
- Rewards or loyalty programs
- Body scanners
- Digital video recorders
- Automobile “black boxes”
- Enhanced 911 service
- RFIDs
- Implanted chips
- Cookies
- Spyware



...can you think of others?

Information Privacy

“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 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 info about 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”?*