Digital Writing: Privacy, Control, and Surveillance on the Internet
EMAC 4325

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Course Description:

"*You have zero privacy anyway. Get over it.*" -Scott McNealy, Sun Microsystems C.E.O.

The average citizen in London is caught on camera 300 times each day. In a recent interview Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook, proclaimed privacy is dead. China, as well as almost every other nation, restricts access to certain content on the internet. Cell phone carriers regularly track their customers movement. And, what content you access online is anything but anonymous. In the network age it would appear that the values of transparency, openness, sharing, and data collection have replaced those of anonymity and privacy. The ubiquitous presence of monitoring devices and seemingly never ending, and infinitely retained, amount of information being collected forces us to renegotiate our sense of the public and the private. Do people really not value privacy anymore? Who benefits from all this "publicness"? and who gets to decide? While many have suggested that the internet is the ultimate "panopticon," it is perhaps more correct to suggest, as Siva Vaidhyanathan has, that the internet is a "Non-opticon"—it works precisely because you don't know the extent to which you are being monitored and controlled. The goal of this class is to turn this "non-opticon" inside-out, to make viewable all the ways in which privacy, control, and surveillance are figured and refigured in the networked digital age.

Required Texts:

> *The internet.*

Seriously: the internet itself will be our "textbook": it is both are object and means of study. Most of the readings will be available online, in digital format. You will need to spend a lot of time on the internet, reading, writing, and engaging in discussions about the issues we raise in this class. Additionally, you need to purchase the three following books.

-*Blown to Bits: Your Life, Liberty, and Happiness After the Digital Explosion* Abelson, Ledeen, Lewis
-*The Anarchist in the Library*, Siva Vaidhyanathan
-*Access Controlled*, ed. Deibert et al.

Course Expectations:

First, let me say a bit about my pedagogy and the philosophy behind this course's construction. This class will reflect one of the fundamental principles underlying the strength of the internet: *None of us are smarter than all of us*. Or, if you prefer a slightly different take: *Knowledge is a communal process even if we have been taught to treat it as an individual product*.

As such, we are going to be engaging in a semester-long, group exploration of the issues raised by the internet in relation to privacy and control of the network. I am by no means the expert (or even an expert) in these matters. My hope, the goal for this class, is that collectively we can pool our knowledge, expertise, and interests to produce a body of knowledge that helps us all understand the

issues here in a more nuanced way. As such I am asking a great deal of you in this course, which is after all an advanced undergraduate course. Don't take this course unless you are willing to put in this time and effort. As I said this is a collective effort, and no free loaders are allowed. My experience here at UT Dallas has been that the undergrads are capable of tremendously impressive work. The more I tend to ask in class, the more I am impressed with the returns, and the more, I think, students learn, so expect me to ask a great deal, but expect the pay-off to be large.

The course's title is "Digital Writing," but rather than spending a whole semester looking at writing about writing on the internet (something that could, after a short time, be rather mundane) we are going to practice writing for the internet. Writing is perhaps too narrow a term, as it implies text only. To be sure, text is still king on the internet: it drives searches, code is written in it, and a majority of the discourse which takes place is still text-based. But, to be rhetorically effective on the net it is also useful to produce visualizations, maps, videos, audio and other non-text based content. Think of your work as producing critical content for the internet, not just writing in the narrow sense of the term. In short, we will all be responsible for producing internet content which engages the question of privacy, control, and surveillance in the internet era.

Class Requirements:

Given this class's focus on collaborative learning, it might seem somewhat awkward to evaluate people with individual grades. Nevertheless, you will receive a grade for the course. Some of the grade will be based on work you individually produce, while some of it will be an evaluation of collaborative effort.

Attendance, Reading, & Participation (25%): This is a crucial part of class. Students are expected to come to class on time, prepared, having completed the assigned reading and writing, and ready to contribute their thoughts to class discussions, to listen seriously and respectfully to the thoughts of others, and to participate in all in-class activities. I strongly urge you to attend every class, as most of the work done in class is necessary for successful completion of the course. Only one absence is permitted, and this should be used for illness or an emergency (i.e., this does not mean one absences plus one absence for illness etc.). Missing more than one class will affect your grade. More than two absences can result in failing the course. If you need to miss class for religious reasons, please speak to me ahead of time. Absences for religious purposes do not count against the permitted number (as long as prior notification is given). Lateness is also unacceptable; if you arrive late to class you will be marked as absent. Leaving early also counts as an absence. Your primary responsibility is to be in class and fully present. (Expect to spend 3 hours a week in class and roughly 3-4 hours a week doing reading for this class.)

Group Project (50%): A substantial portion of your grade will come from a semester-long group project. Each group will focus on one specific area of internet privacy, control, or surveillance. More detail will be given on the first day of class.

Social Media (10%): Class doesn't end at 3:15. Privacy and control are currently hot topics on the net. There is a great deal being written about these topics, governments are currently debating legislation, and technology companies are continuously developing new tools which alter the discussion (as I am writing this Facebook just launched their location-based service). It would be impossible for any one of us to keep up with the deluge of information, but by "crowdsourcing"the conversation we can cover more ground. In addition to the readings for each week you should spend some time reading up on the current conversation and sharing that with the class. Three key tools for doing this: 1. The class

website. 2. Twitter (everyone should have a Twitter account). 3. Tagging and bookmarking websites. The class tag (hashtag) is EMAC4325.

Individual Learning Record (15%): Every week you will need to write a short description chronicling what you did for the group project. This should be both descriptive and reflective, talking about what you did, what you were trying to accomplish, what worked, what did not work, and anything else you think is important. These need not be extensive, 200-300 words a week should suffice. It also does not need to be formal, but it should be polished and edited (i.e. you don't need to write eloquent artistic prose, but it does need to be error-free.) I will ask for these several times during the semester. And at the end of the semester you will turn in the entire record for the semester along with a summary.

Note: The University wide standard class policies, which apply to this course, can be found at: http://provost.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/

Course Website:
The course website for this class can we found at <http://emac4325.pbworks.com/>. You should get in the habit of checking this regularly as I will post suggestions and thoughts about the readings here, as well as links to other things that might interest the class. The syllabus can be found here as well, and any changes to the syllabus will be posted here. If you forget the web address you can always find it from <http://www.outsidethetext.com>, an easier url to remember.

A Note on Technology:
As much as technology makes life easier, at times it can also be difficult (computer crashes, deleted work, unavailable internet connections, etc). Plan accordingly: "the computer ate my homework" or "the internet was down" are not reasons to forgo doing the assigned work. It is in your best interest to leave extra time, especially at first, to ensure that technology does not get in the way of your work.

How to Reach Me:
The best way to reach me though is by email <dparry@utdallas.edu> or you can find me online at <http://www.outsidethetext.com>. I check email frequently throughout the day. If you email me and do not receive a response within 48 hours (usually I will get back to you within a day), please feel free to email me again (I might not have received your first one) and give me a reminder. I promise not to consider this harassing. Don't call my office phone, though; voice mail is annoying and I tend to check it less frequently than email.

My office hours are Monday after class 3:15-4:15, or by appointment. My office is ATEC 1.502. Feel free to drop by, or schedule an appointment (on the class site) if you want to make sure you won't overlap with someone else.

A Final Note:
Should any aspect of class confuse/concern/trouble you, or should you have questions about any of this, please see me.

Semester Projects

Each of you will have a semester-long project (in groups), the goal of which will be to examine one aspect of privacy, control, and surveillance on the internet. This course is designed to have you produce polished professional content for the web. As such each group will have a website which will analyze their subject matter. Think of your site as an open research project into your specific area. Each site should post links to relevant and important content, engage in critique, and produce original material. In short your goal is to join the conversation about privacy and control in the age of the internet. The content you produce need not, indeed should not, be limited to text. Instead think broadly about what can be done (make short videos that are relevant, interview people, produce a couple of podcasts, mashup data for visualization, create how-to guides). Your group's site should become a resource for people interested in your topic. You probably are not an expert on your group's topic right now, but by the end of class you should be.

Expectations:

As this project comprises half of your grade, beginning with the first week your group should begin posting material to your site. The site should not be just updated once a week, just before class, *instead it should have new material almost daily, with everyone in your group publishing items all week long.* I realize this is a lot of work, but that's why you are working in a group—one person could not possibly do this well by him or herself, but four to five can.

Each group should also have three marquis projects that are part of the group site, conducted over the course of the semester. These should be something more substantial than singular/weekly posts and content, but rather represent a synthesis of some of the material you have been collecting. Possible examples would be a short (3-5 minute) documentary interviewing people about privacy in relation to your topic, a substantial user's guide for privacy in relation to your topic area, writing a plugin for Firefox or WP which relates to your area, creating a significant data visualization, make an interactive timeline, etc. See timeline for more information.

Group Rules:

1. On the first day of class you will divide into groups and this will be your group for the rest of the semester. No switching groups.

2. By joining a group you are agreeing to stay in this class and work on a project for the entire semester. While dropping a class mid-semester usually only affects one student, obviously that is not the case for this class. It would be unfair to your fellow students to join a group only to leave after a few weeks.

3. Your group is more than a group; it is your community of researchers and learners for the semester. As such you should develop your own rules, guidelines, and expectations for each other. Be clear on what each member is willing and able to contribute, and what your goals are. What level of work are you expecting from each other? How will you be organized? How will you handle differences of opinion? Your community/group rules are due at the beginning of the first week of class, and everyone in your group should sign off on them.

Grading:

The grade for the project will be based on the content the group produces and the effort put forth (sometimes failure is just as important as success). *Everyone in your group will receive the same grade.* It is up to your group to obtain a grade with which everyone will be happy. (Note: Your Attendance, Social Media, and Learning Record are still individual.)

Dismissing a Member of Your Group:

If you decide that a member of your group is not contributing enough to the project you can remove them from the group. Your community rules should outline the means by which a member can be removed. The final step in the process should be a group meeting with me. If a member is removed from a group they can pursue a solo project (a difficult task given the amount of work required), or join another person who has been removed from a group.

Timeline

Week 1: Decide on groups and focus of each group.

Week 2: Draft layout of site should be up and running. Each group member should have posted several times. Community rules due in class.

Week 3: Polished (completed) site layout. In addition to regular postings you should also look to add other features (eg. a resource page, links page, illustrations, maps, etc.) Submit semester timeline/ plan for your group. This should include plan to complete first marquis project by midterm. The scope/ topic/idea for your first marquis project should be part of this plan, the second two can wait until after midterm.

Week 8: First marquis project due.

Week 9: Submit idea for second an third marquis project.

Week 13: Second marquis project due.

Week 16: Final marquis project due.

December 13th: All material, including individual learning records must be complete.

Ideas for Posts:

Here are just some possible ideas for weekly posts.

1. Comment/critique a contemporary privacy debate in relation to your topic. Example: A post about how Google-Verizon deal impacts your specific area.

2. A link post, one that highlights and frames a contemporary privacy debate. Link to and summarize several different positions and important posts that other should read in relation to your topic.

3. A how-to post. Discuss one area of privacy and demonstrate for your readers how to take control of their own privacy. Examples: How to select privacy settings on Facebook. How to use Tor to blog and hide your IP address.

4. Create an info graphic to help visualize an important issue in relation to your topic. Example: A graph which shows average number of times individuals are tracked by monetary transactions.

5. Link to another blog which covers something related to your topic, discuss why said blog is important.

Schedule of Readings

Week 1, August 23rd _Class Introduction_

Key Concepts & Organize Group Projects

Week 2, August 30th _The World We LIve In_

We Live in Public, Ondi Timoner (available on Netflix, iTunes, Amazon)

Erasing David, David Bond (available on iTunes, Amazon)

Week 3, September 6th

Labor Day, No Class

Week 4, September 13th _What is Privacy? Why Does it Matter?_

"Privacy" in Encyclopedia of Philosophy

http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/privacy/

History of Privacy Timeline

http://bit.ly/9wOfMP

Privacy in Context -Helen Fay Nissenbaum, Chps. 4 & 5

"The Assault" from Privacy: A Very Short Introduction Raymond Wacks

"A Declaration of Independence of Cyberspace" - John Perry Barlow

https://projects.eff.org/~barlow/Declaration-Final.html

Week 5, September 20th _Privacy and Information Part 1_

Blown to Bits, Chps. 1-4

Week 6, September 27th _Privacy and Information Part 2_

Blown to Bits, Chps. 5-8, Conclusion

Week 7, October 4th _The Fight for Control of the Network_

Anarchist in the Library, Siva Vaidhyanathan

Week 8, October 11th _Controlling the Protocols Legally and Technically_

Code 2.0 -Lawrence Lessig, Chps. 1,2,10,11,12

available via Creative Commons license at http://codev2.cc/

DMCA-entry on Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DMCA

DMCA Unitended Consequences: Ten Years Under the DMCA

http://www.eff.org/files/DMCAUnintended10.pdf

Week 9, October 18th _Government vs. Access_

Access Controlled, Part 1 and Selections from Part 2

Week 10, October 25th _Cyberwar?_

Cyberwar: The Next Threat to National Security and What to Do About It-Richard Clarke, Intro Chps 1&8

"The Future of the Internet and How to Stop it." -Talk by Jonathan Zittrain

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7UlYTFKFqY

"Has the Cyberwar Threat Been Exaggerated?" NPR Intelligence Squared Podcast

Two Parts available via iTunes: http://bit.ly/aJZEVW http://bit.ly/bzJsiL

Week 11, November 1st _Social Networks and Privacy_

"Social Networks: Public, Private, or What?" - danah boyd

http://kt.flexiblelearning.net.au/tkt2007/edition-13/social-network-sites-public-private-or-what/

"Making Sense of Privacy and Publicity" - danah boyd

http://www.danah.org/papers/talks/2010/SXSW2010.html

"Evolution of Privacy on Facebook"

http://mattmckeon.com/facebook-privacy/

"Facebook Friend Turns Into Big Brother"

"Evolution of Privacy on Facebook"

<u>**Schedule of Readings**</u>

"Facebook Friend Turns Into Big Brother"

> *http://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/article_0ff40f7a-d4d1-11de-afb3-001cc4c002e0.html*

"China's Cyberposse"

> *http://nyti.ms/cWM7vS*

Week 12, November 8th <u>Corporations and Your Information</u>

"Personal Data in the Marketplace" in Privacy in Peril James Rule

"What They Know" -Wall Street Journal

> *http://online.wsj.com/public/page/what-they-know-digital-privacy.html*

"Beyond Google and Evil" - Chris Jay Hoofnagle

> *http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2326/2156*

Week 13, November 15th <u>Cameras Everywhere</u>

Urban Wolf

> *http://www.urbanwolf.com/*

Every Step You Take by Nino Leitner (film available on Amazon)

"Some Thoughts on Google Street View in the US and UK"

> *http://www.googlizationofeverything.com/2009/03/some_thoughts_on_google_street.php*

Week 14, November 22nd <u>Location Aware Surveillance</u>

"Human Mobility" from Bursts Albert-Laszlo Barbasi

"Location Make Mobile Mobile" -Ted Morgan

> *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bIJyWi9YsYU&feature=player_embedded*

"Prison Without Walls" from Atlantic Monthly

> *http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/print/1969/12/prison-without-walls/8195/*

"Geofencing" -Venture Beat

> *http://venturebeat.com/2010/04/23/geofencing-pushes-services-to-phones/*

"Check-Ins, Geo-Fences, and the Future of Privacy" -Erick Schonfeld

> *http://techcrunch.com/2010/05/27/geo-fences-privacy/*

Week 15, November 29th <u>Control Through Prediction</u>

"Google predicts spread of flu using huge data search"

> *http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2008/nov/13/google-internet*

"Google, CIA Invest in 'Future' of Web Monitoring"

> *http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2010/07/exclusive-google-cia/*

"Crime Prediction Software is Here"

> *http://gizmodo.com/5517231/crime-prediction-software-is-here-and-its-a-very-bad-idea*

Week 16, December 6th

Final Presentations