ISTE 110: Ethics in Computing

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The Digital Divide

Does the meeting of cultures cause us to re-examine our own culture in light of another?
Is there a loss of traditional values and practices as many yearn to become American?
Have we endangered humanity with the internet? Or did that happen with TV? Or video games? The economy?

View video

What is the Digital Divide?

"The perceived gap between those who have access to the latest information technologies and those who do not."
The Digital Divide: Facing a Crisis or Creating a Myth
Benjamin Compaine, 2000

Is the Divide Singular

In 2000, roughly 400,000,000 people in the entire world had online access. In 2016, roughly 3,000,000,000 people had online access. Technology is slowly expanding across the world and more and more peple are gaining access.
Al Gore claimed in 1990 that he invented the Internet. Since then, he has promoted a global information infrastructure that pushed for universal access to cybertechnology.

2010 UN Special Report

"Given that the Internet has become an indispensable tool for realizing a range of human rights, combating inequality, and accelerating development and human progress, ensuring universal access to the Internet should be a priority for all States. Each State should thus develop a concrete and effective policy, in consultation with individuals from all sections of society including the private sector and relevant government ministries to make the Internet widely available, accessible, and affordable to all segments of the population."

Problems

Literacy, logistics, and language are barriers to Internet access, especially for developing nations. In countries like Africa, even basic features of the Internet are difficult to access because of the prohibitive fees and slow speed.

The US Digital Divide

- 85% of Americans use the internet
- 94% White Americans
- 78% African Americans
- 81% Hispanic Americans
- 97% Asian-American
- 19% of students who have not graduated high school use the internet
- 66% of high school graduates use the internet
- 95% of college graduates use the internet

Key Issue

Do we need a universal service policy?

The Argument for Universal Service

Why is a policy that ensures universal service, as opposed to universal access, necessary?

The Counterargument

Why is a policy that ensures universal service, as opposed to universal acess, unncessary?

Is this an Ethical Issue?

There are those of us who have, and those of us who have not. There are divisions between pockets of society. But this is a question of "I want" rather than a question of "I need".

Disadvantages Without Internet

Access to knowledge is significantly limited. Do we have a moral obligation to provide internet access to those who are disadvantaged?

Disabilities

"The power of the Web is in its universality. Access by everyone regardless of disability is an essential aspect"
Tim Berners Lee
Director, World Wide Wee Consortium (W3C)

Demographics

African Americans and Whites differ in their usage pattern and demographic characteristics.
Has the internet eliminated or helped to reduce racism? Is it blind to color?
Does information technology make the reemergence of prejudicial messages and attitudes swifter and more likely?
Does the internet's wide range of distribution make for more followers?

Reminders and Homework

Watch the "Sneakers" movie on MyCourses. Assignemnt: "Sneakers" Movie Reaction Paper, due in Dropbox by Sunday, February 12th, at 11:59pm. You must submit a Word document, please do not submit a PDF. Bring a printout of your topics of discussion.

You can find all my notes at `http://omgimanerd.tech/notes`. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, feel free to contact me at alvin@omgimanerd.tech