ISTE 110: Ethics in Computing

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China and the Great Firewall

Skype, when doing business in China, had to follow the guidelines on appropriate content. They had to censor content according to the Chinese government. The Chinese government employs more than 2 million people to prowl the Internet for dissent and forbidden content. More than 100 million tweets a day are monitored in China, in contrast to the CIA, which monitors around 5 million tweets. Any company seeking to do business in China needs to agree to their terms of censorship. But what determines what is obscene?

Gateways

All Internet traffic through China has to come through government firewalls. It allows for inappropriate content to be censored. Despite the extensive and sophisticated efforts for censorship, people have been getting around the censorship efforts. China has roughly 731 million internet users out of 1,357,000,000 people.

Perspectives

Pro-censorship:
A people devoid of distractions are more distractions. The government can ensure national security by monitoring the communications the people. Censorship allows them to maintain control by stifling dissent and encouraging national pride.
Anti-censorship:

Democratizing internet usage allows for the free exchange of ideas and innovation. People don't have to be afraid to speak their thoughts, there is more diversity of speech and thought, which allows for growth and improvement. The individuals of the society have the freedom to pursue their own interests.

Egypt

Internet usage has rapidly expanded across Egypt and played a major role in the 2011 revolution. In 2010, 31.4% of the population were Internet users, with the number currently at 49.6%.

Kill Switch

In 2010, a bill was proposed to give the president a kill switch, shutting off the Internet in the event of a national security emergency. The president would have emergency power over the Internet. Assuming this were even possible, it certainly not be a good idea due to the amount of infrastructure dependent on the Internet. Does this give too much power to the president and is it an infringement on the freedom of speech?

What are our options?

What are the pros and cons to a kill switch? Should we allow control of the internet to control news content? What are the ethical obligations of a government?

Reminders and Homework

The Article Review is due on Sunday, April 23rd, 2017. Work on your final project and paper.

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