Kent State University

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Balancing Privacy and Access in Personal Digital Archives

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Balancing Privacy & Access in Personal Digital Archives

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Privacy

“Privacy, like an elephant, is more readily recognized than described.” (John Young, 1978)

- Privacy is not a given, universal right
- Often societally defined, but individuals often have their own definitions of a personal application or framework
- Many have regarded privacy as a luxury afforded only to the living
- Privacy rights can be waived by an individual, but not transferred
- Certain protection under some current US laws
Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

- Name
  - Full name, maiden name, alias
- Personal identification number
  - Social Security number, passport number, driver’s license number, taxpayer identification number, credit card number
- Address
  - Postal address, email
- Asset information
  - IP/MAC address, other host-specific persistent static identifier
Telephone numbers

Information around personal property
  ○ VIN number, title, etc.

Information that reveals an individual’s date of birth, place of birth, race, religion, geographical indications, employment information, medical, education, financial

*Taken from:* National Institute of Standards and Technology, “Guide to Protecting the Confidentiality of Personal Identifiable Information”
Privacy violations via dissemination

- Exposure of personal information, in the publication into a wider arena of access and discovery
- In some scenarios, privacy violations may be unintentional
- Acknowledge the potential of harm by the publication of private information
- Loss of control of protected information once published
Balancing access & privacy

Now that everything in the connected world can serve as metadata, knowledge is empowered beyond fathoming. (Weinberger, 2007)

- Moving from analog/offline entities into connective, discoverable digital entities
- Creation of accessible inlets through metadata records & full text indexing has increased search and access portals
Privacy review strategies & assessment

- Create a process of review, identification and redaction of private information before publication/dissemination
- Work towards fair information practices
  - Developing a culture of privacy (George, 2004)
- Increase transparency of practice(s)
  - Policy, Protocols, etc.
Ethical models for decision-making

Ethical issues are most often in conflict in uncertain conditions that involve many individuals, interests and values, and one by default will use personal ethical standards when no organizational ones are present. (Trevino, 1986)

- Some cases may not be as clear in regard to a potential privacy violation
- Models can assist with identifying issues and providing points for further conversation
Curtin’s 6-step model

1. Perception of the problem
2. Identification of the ethical components
3. Clarification of person(s) involved
4. Exploration of options
5. Application of ethical theory
6. Resolution/evaluation
DeWolf’s model

1. ID all outcomes (foreseeable, actual/known, possible)
2. ID the outcomes associated with each option
3. ID the probability that the option will produce the desired result
4. ID the importance the decision-maker ascribes to each possible option
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individuals affected</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>What can we do?</th>
<th>Worldviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the types or categories of individuals affected by the product or service, such as men/women, user/non-user, age-category, etc.</td>
<td>Discuss problematic changes to individual behaviour that may be prompted by the application e.g. differences in habits, time-schedules, choice of activities, people behaving more individualistic or collectivist, people behaving more or less materialistic.</td>
<td>Select the four most important Ethical impacts you discussed. Identify ways of solving these Impacts by changing your project’s product/service design, organisation. Or by providing recommendations for its use or spelling out more clearly to users the values driving the design.</td>
<td>Discuss how the general perception of somebody’s role in society can be affected by the project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relations</th>
<th>Group Conflicts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss problematic differences in individual behaviour such as differences in habits, time-schedules, choice of activities, etc.</td>
<td>Discuss the impact on the relationships between the groups identified, e.g. employers and unions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Screenshot of the Ethics Canvas, available: [https://www.ethicscanvas.org/](https://www.ethicscanvas.org/)
Embedding privacy review

1. Privacy review as part of regular digital project parameters
2. ID situations where permission should be sought before dissemination
3. Create internal guidelines/documentation for privacy review for consistent practice
4. Use an ethical decision-making model in working group discussions around privacy and gauging harm
Framing questions

Posed to the original item/collection (digital or analog)

1. What was the original context of the information/collection?
2. What was the original purpose of the information/collection?
3. Who was the original audience of the information/collection?
More framing questions

Questions geared towards **original content creator** (if known)

1. Who retains *control* of the information (or perhaps more importantly, who should)?

2. Should *consent* be attained before disseminating information broadly?

3. What level of *awareness* has been made to any constituents as to the planned publication and distribution of the information?
Example #1

- On Our Backs, Lesbian erotica serial publication (1984-2006)
- Reveal Digital: Independent Voices
- “Permission” obtained (?)
Example 2

- Kent State May 4 Collection
- Faculty papers, unpublished
- FERPA-y
- Consulted General Counsel & redacted directory info

“Correspondence: Students to Fishel,” Kent State University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives, accessed April 30, 2019, https://omeka.library.kent.edu/special-collections/items/show/2815
Conclusion

- Difficult to make cookie cutter decision guides around privacy and balance access
- Consensus may not always be attained, and use ethical decision making models
- Create internal documentation for more **consistent** review points
- Call for transparency in practice & decision-making
● Published August 2018 by Morgan & Claypool

● 20% discount with code DRESSLER

https://www.morganclaypool.com/doi/abs/10.2200/S00863ED1V01Y201807ICR064
Works cited

● Curtin, L. (1978). A proposed Critical Model for Ethical Analysis. *Nursing Forum* 17(1), 12-17
● Ethics canvas. [https://www.ethicscanvas.org/](https://www.ethicscanvas.org/) (Adapted from Alex Osterwalder’s Business Model Canvas)
Thank you!!

Questions/comments?
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