

Soc 596: Computational Social Science

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01-03-Ethics



- ▶ SWBAT *explain* why ethics is important in CSS
- ▶ SWBAT *apply* ethical principles and frameworks to specific research projects
- ▶ SWBAT *describe* approaches to common ethical challenges

Think about ethics as continuous not discrete

Why care about ethics?

In the past, what we could do has been the limitation, increasingly what we should do will be the limitation.
Research ethics will become increasingly central; it will become harder and harder to avoid.

I want you to be able to:

- ▶ design ethically thoughtful research
- ▶ explain your decisions to others

- ▶ Rules-based approach
- ▶ Ad-hoc approach
- ▶ Principles-based approach

- ▶ Emotional contagion
- ▶ Taste, Ties, and Time
- ▶ Encore

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- ▶ Taste, Ties, and Time
- ▶ Encore
- ▶ Think-pair-share other examples?

Consider Emotional contagion.

Should academic researchers and companies
follow the same rules?

Think-pair-share

How should we handle these challenges?

Ethical Frameworks

Consequentialism
Deontology



Principles

Respect for Persons
Beneficence
Justice
Respect for Law and Public Interest



Rules

Common Rule

- ▶ Respect for persons

Respect for persons:
Participants decide not you

- ▶ Respect for persons
- ▶ Beneficence

Beneficence:

Minimize risk, maximize benefits, then decide

- ▶ Respect for persons
- ▶ Beneficence
- ▶ Justice

Justice:
distribution of burdens and benefits of research

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- ▶ poorly education and disenfranchised citizens
- ▶ prisoners
- ▶ institutionalized and mentally disabled children
- ▶ old and debilitated hospital patients

Justice:

distribution of burdens and benefits of research

- ▶ poorly education and disenfranchised citizens
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Also includes access to benefits of research

- ▶ Respect for persons
- ▶ Beneficence
- ▶ Justice
- ▶ Respect for Law and Public Interest

Terms of service agreements

MapWatch: Detecting and Monitoring International Border Personalization on Online Maps

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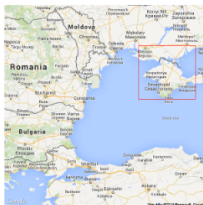
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2872427.2883016>

Abstract:

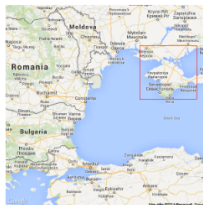
“Maps have long played a crucial role in enabling people to conceptualize and navigate the world around them. However, maps also encode the world-views of their creators. Disputed international borders are one example of this: governments may mandate that cartographers produce maps that conform to their view of a territorial dispute. Today, online maps maintained by private corporations have become the norm. However, these new maps are still subject to old debates. Companies like Google and Bing resolve these disputes by localizing their maps to meet government requirements and user preferences, i.e., users in different locations are shown maps with different international boundaries. We argue that this non-transparent personalization of maps may exacerbate nationalistic disputes by promoting divergent views of geopolitical realities.”

Abstract, part 2:

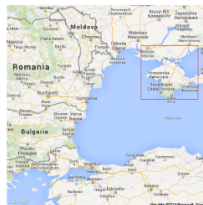
“To address this problem, we present MapWatch, our system for detecting and cataloging personalization of international borders in online maps. Our system continuously crawls all map tiles from Google and Bing maps, and leverages crowdworkers to identify border personalization. In this paper, we present the architecture of MapWatch, and analyze the instances of border personalization on Google and Bing, including one border change that MapWatch identified live, as Google was rolling out the update.”



(a) Russia



(b) Ukraine



(c) All countries except Russia and Ukraine

Figure 5: Border changes separating the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine on Google Maps. Map Data ©2014 AutoNavi Google.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2872427.2883016>

Ethics. Many Web platforms discourage all automated crawling outside the API, and even within the API a platform may prohibit “research” in its online Terms of Service document (usually for competitive reasons). We agree with [57] that non-commercial research for the public good that deals with issues of societal importance must be able to access public Web resources for research purposes as long as automated processes do not produce an unreasonable load. This was our guiding philosophy in this research design.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2872427.2883016>

Researchers (with the support of the ACLU) have filed a case challenging the CFAA, Sandvig v Lynch:

[https://www.aclu.org/cases/](https://www.aclu.org/cases/sandvig-v-lynch-challenge-cfaa-prohibition-uncovering-racial-discrimination-online)

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- ▶ Respect for persons
- ▶ Beneficence
- ▶ Justice
- ▶ Respect for Law and Public Interest

How do you balance these four principles?

- ▶ Consequentialism
- ▶ Deontology

Ethical Frameworks

Consequentialism
Deontology



Principles

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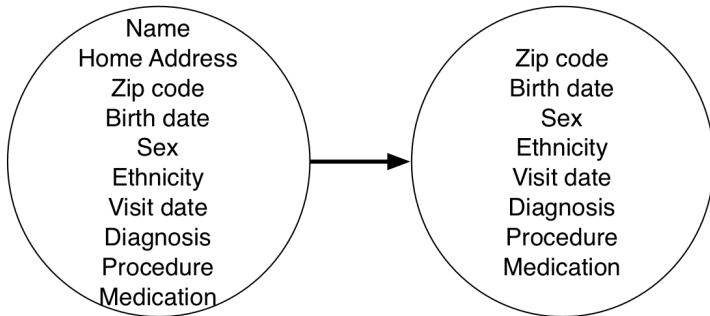


Rules

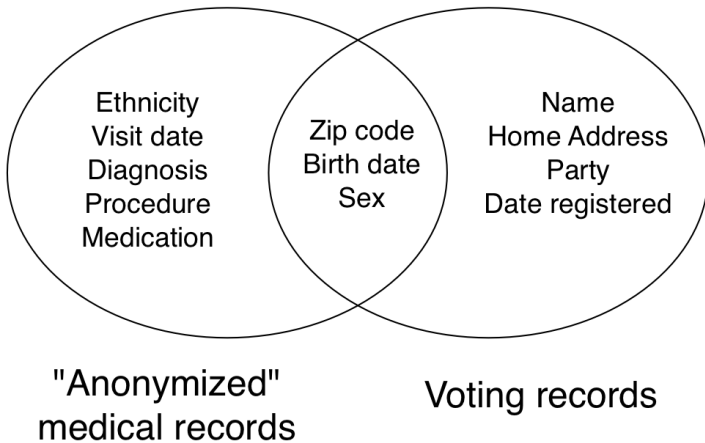
Common Rule

Informed consent

Understanding and managing informational risk



"Anonymization"



Privacy

Making decisions in the face of uncertainty

- ▶ IRB is a floor not a ceiling

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- ▶ Put yourself in everyone else's shoes

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