

# Tutorial 5

## Question 1

Internet Service Providers monitor their chat rooms and expel users who violate their code of conduct. For example, users can be kicked off for insulting a person or a group of people based on their race, religion, or sexual orientation; is it wrong for an ISP to expel someone for hate speech?

Lets explore based on different ethical viewpoints

### Utilitarian Perspective:

- **Analysis:** From a utilitarian standpoint, the key question is whether expelling someone for hate speech maximizes overall well-being or utility. Hate speech can cause harm by fostering a hostile environment and negatively impacting individuals or groups.
- **Conclusion:** Expelling someone for hate speech may be considered morally right if it contributes to a safer and more inclusive online environment, promoting the well-being of a larger number of users.

### Deontological Perspective (Duty-Based Ethics):

- **Analysis:** Deontological ethics emphasizes adherence to moral rules and duties. Expelling someone for hate speech might be viewed as upholding a duty to create a respectful and non-discriminatory online community.
- **Conclusion:** From a deontological perspective, expelling someone for hate speech could be seen as morally justified based on the duty to maintain a certain level of ethical conduct within the online space.

### Virtue Ethics Perspective:

- **Analysis:** Virtue ethics focuses on the development of virtuous character traits. Expelling someone for hate speech might align with virtues such as fairness, compassion, and respect for others.
- **Conclusion:** Virtue ethics would likely support the expulsion of individuals engaging in hate speech, as it reflects a commitment to virtuous behavior and the promotion of a positive online community.

### Social Contract Theory Perspective:

- **Analysis:** Social Contract Theory examines actions in the context of an implicit or explicit agreement within a community. Users typically agree to certain rules when participating in online platforms, and hate speech may violate these agreements.
- **Conclusion:** Expelling someone for hate speech may be justified based on the breach of the social contract and the expectation of mutual respect within the online community.

In summary, the question of whether it is wrong for an ISP to expel someone for hate speech is multifaceted and depends on the ethical framework used for evaluation. Utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics, and social contract theory may all provide different perspectives, but in many cases, the expulsion of individuals engaging in hate speech aligns with principles of promoting overall well-being, upholding ethical duties, cultivating virtuous behavior, and respecting social agreements within the online community.

## Question 2

Suppose you are the director of the ISP that serves the email needs of 10,000 customers. You have received dozens of complaints from them every week about the amount of spam they are receiving. Meanwhile, American spammers are hacking into computers in Jamborea (an East Asian country) and using them to mail spam back to the United States. You estimate that at least 99 percent of email originating from Jamborea is spam. A few of the messages, however, are probably legitimate emails. Should you do anything to restrict the flow of email messages from Jamborea to customers?

### Utilitarian Perspective:

- **Analysis:** From a utilitarian standpoint, the goal is to maximize overall well-being. The complaints from 10,000 customers about the high volume of spam suggest that the current situation is causing significant inconvenience and potentially harm to the customers.
- **Conclusion:** Implementing measures to restrict the flow of email messages from Jamborea might be justified if it leads to a substantial reduction in spam and improves the overall well-being of the ISP's customers. However, care should be taken to minimize the impact on legitimate emails.

### Deontological Perspective (Duty-Based Ethics):

- **Analysis:** Deontological ethics emphasizes adherence to moral rules and duties. The duty here may involve protecting customers from an overwhelming amount of spam and maintaining the integrity of the email service.
- **Conclusion:** Taking action to restrict spam from Jamborea could be considered a fulfillment of the duty to provide a reliable and efficient email service to customers. However, it's important to balance this with a respect for the legitimate use of email services.

### Virtue Ethics Perspective:

- **Analysis:** Virtue ethics focuses on cultivating virtuous character traits. In this case, virtues such as responsibility, integrity, and customer care come into play.
- **Conclusion:** Taking measures to address the spam issue aligns with virtues that contribute to responsible and customer-focused business practices. However, virtue ethics also requires a nuanced approach to ensure fairness and avoid undue harm to innocent users.

### Social Contract Theory Perspective:

- **Analysis:** Social Contract Theory considers actions in the context of agreements within a community. Customers subscribe to the ISP with the expectation of a reasonably spam-free service.
- **Conclusion:** Restricting spam from Jamborea may be seen as upholding the implicit agreement with customers to provide a service that is not excessively burdened by unwanted emails.

### Question 3

What are the benefits and harms of Internet censorship?

Internet censorship is a complex and debated topic, with both benefits and harms depending on the perspective and the context in which it is implemented. Here are some of the general benefits and harms associated with internet censorship:

#### Benefits of Internet Censorship:

1. **Protection of National Security:** Governments may censor certain online content to prevent the dissemination of sensitive information that could pose a threat to national security.
2. **Prevention of Hate Speech and Extremism:** Censorship can be used to curb the spread of hate speech, extremist ideologies, and content that incites violence or discrimination.
3. **Child Protection:** Internet censorship may aim to protect children from exposure to inappropriate or harmful content, such as explicit material or online predators.
4. **Control Over Disinformation:** Censorship can be employed to combat the spread of false information and disinformation, particularly during times of crisis or elections.
5. **Cultural and Social Values:** Some governments use censorship to uphold cultural and social values, preventing the dissemination of content deemed offensive or contrary to societal norms.

#### Harms of Internet Censorship:

1. **Violation of Freedom of Expression:** One of the primary concerns is the potential infringement on individuals' freedom of expression, restricting their right to share ideas and opinions freely.
2. **Blocking Access to Information:** Censorship can limit access to valuable information, hindering education, research, and the free exchange of ideas that contribute to societal progress.
3. **Political Manipulation:** Governments may use censorship to suppress political dissent or control the narrative, limiting citizens' access to alternative perspectives and stifling democracy.
4. **Chilling Effect:** Fear of censorship can create a chilling effect, causing individuals to self-censor out of concern for potential consequences, even if their content is within legal and ethical boundaries.
5. **Circumvention and Evading Controls:** Internet users often find ways to circumvent censorship measures, leading to a cat-and-mouse game between censors and those seeking unrestricted access. This can contribute to the development of tools and technologies for evading controls, challenging the effectiveness of censorship.
6. **Economic Impacts:** Censorship can have economic repercussions by limiting access to online markets and hindering the free flow of information critical for innovation and entrepreneurship.

#### Question 4

Are there any circumstances under which sexting is morally

The moral assessment of sexting, the act of sending sexually explicit messages or images, is subjective and can vary based on cultural, societal, and individual perspectives. However, there are certain circumstances under which sexting might be considered morally acceptable or at least more justifiable:

1. **Consent and Mutual Agreement:**
  - If all parties involved are adults and willingly participate in sexting without any form of coercion or pressure, some individuals argue that it can be a consensual and private expression of intimacy.
2. **Established Trust in a Relationship:**
  - In the context of a consensual and trusting relationship, where both individuals feel comfortable and have communicated their boundaries, some people may view sexting as a way to enhance intimacy and maintain a connection.
3. **Communication and Relationship Enhancement:**
  - Sexting within the confines of a committed relationship, where both partners actively engage in such behavior as a form of communication or as a means of maintaining a romantic connection, may be considered morally acceptable by some.

#### **4. Adult and Informed Participants:**

- In cases where all participants are adults, fully aware of the potential consequences, and engage in sexting voluntarily, some argue that it can be viewed as a private and consensual expression of sexuality.

However, it's crucial to note that there are ethical concerns and potential risks associated with sexting, even in seemingly consensual situations. Some of these concerns include:

##### **1. Privacy and Security Risks:**

- Sexting involves the sharing of intimate content, which can lead to privacy breaches if the material is shared without consent or falls into the wrong hands.

##### **2. Potential for Exploitation:**

- In situations where there is a significant power imbalance or pressure, even if not explicitly coercive, there is a risk of exploitation, and the consensual nature of the interaction may be questionable.

##### **3. Legal Implications:**

- Depending on the age and jurisdiction, sexting involving minors may have legal consequences, even if it is consensual.

##### **4. Impact on Relationships:**

- Sexting can have unintended consequences on relationships, leading to misunderstandings, breaches of trust, or the misuse of intimate content in the event of a breakup.

### **Question 5**

What is the age at which a parent or guardian should provide a child with a cell phone? Should younger children be provided with cell phones having fewer features?

The decision of when to provide a child with a cell phone, as well as the type of phone and its features, is subjective and depends on various factors, including the child's maturity, needs, and the family's values. Here are some considerations:

##### **1. Maturity and Responsibility:**

- The child's level of maturity and responsibility is a crucial factor. Parents should assess whether their child can understand the responsibilities and potential risks associated with having a cell phone.

##### **2. Safety Concerns:**

- In some cases, providing a child with a cell phone can be a safety measure. It allows parents to stay in touch with their child, especially in emergencies or when they are away from home.

##### **3. Communication Needs:**

- Consider the child's need for communication. If a child is involved in extracurricular activities, spends time at friends' houses, or has other reasons to be away from home, a cell phone can be a convenient means of communication.

#### **4. Educational Use:**

- Some parents provide cell phones to children for educational purposes, allowing them access to learning apps, educational content, and online resources.

#### **5. Social Considerations:**

- As children enter adolescence, social considerations may come into play. Many peers may have cell phones, and not having one might affect a child's social interactions.

#### **6. Parental Controls and Monitoring:**

- If parents are concerned about the content their child can access or want to monitor usage, choosing a phone with parental controls and monitoring features becomes important.

#### **7. Type of Phone and Features:**

- Younger children may benefit from phones with fewer features to minimize distractions and potential exposure to inappropriate content. Basic phones that focus on calling and texting might be suitable for younger kids.

#### **8. Establishing Rules and Guidelines:**

- It's important for parents to establish clear rules and guidelines regarding phone usage. This may include limits on screen time, appropriate content, and when and where the phone can be used.

There is no specific age that universally determines when a child should have a cell phone. It's a decision that should be made based on individual circumstances and the child's readiness. Parents should engage in open communication with their children, consider the purpose of providing a phone, and set clear expectations regarding its use. Regularly reassessing the appropriateness of phone usage as the child grows is also advisable.