

# Chapter: 1

## Introduction

Social media is an electronic tool that serves to connect people remotely at their convenience. Some of the versions of this tool are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Viber, Imo, TikTok and many others. Nowadays, People, in modern life, cannot imagine to end a single day without having a peek in social medias. As a result, it has a strong chance to get anything viral easily. Most of the people don't think twice before clicking on the 'Share' button of any post or link. Many often rumors and personal scandals get viral for this crackpot characteristic of people. They continue posting and sharing things as they like.

In this paper, I will defend the topic that we should not do whatever we can in cyber world in reference to Utilitarianism, Deontology and Cyber Ethics because none of them support to perform any action which influences any other's right or pleasure negatively. Each human being wants happiness and pleasure and all of them have equal right on it.

## Chapter: 2

**Utilitarianism:** Utilitarianism is a family of consequentialist ethical theories that promotes actions that maximize happiness and well-being for the majority of a population.<sup>1</sup> It is one of the most powerful and persuasive approaches to normative ethics in the history of philosophy. Though not fully articulated until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, proto-utilitarian positions can be discerned throughout the history of ethical theory.

Though there are many varieties of the view discussed, utilitarianism is generally held to be the view that the morally right action is the action that produces the most good. There are many ways to spell out this general claim. One thing to note is that the theory is a form of consequentialism: the right action is understood entirely in terms of consequences produced. What distinguishes utilitarianism from egoism has to do with the scope of the relevant consequences. On the utilitarian view one ought to maximize the overall good — that is, consider the good of others as well as one's own good.<sup>2</sup>

John Stuart Mill's book *Utilitarianism* is a classic exposition and defense of utilitarianism in ethics. The essay first appeared as a series of three articles published in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1861 (vol. 64, p. 391-406, 525-534, 659-673); the articles were collected and reprinted as a single book in 1863.<sup>3</sup> Mill's aim in the book is to explain what utilitarianism is, to show why it is the best theory of ethics, and to defend it against a wide range of criticisms and misunderstandings. Though heavily criticized both in Mill's lifetime and in the years since,

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<sup>1</sup> Katarzyna de Lazari-Radek, Peter Singer. *Utilitarianism: A Very Short Introduction* (2017), p.xix, [ISBN 978-0-19-872879-5](#).

<sup>2</sup> Driver, Julia, "The History of Utilitarianism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.)

<sup>3</sup> Mill, John Stuart (1863). [Utilitarianism](#) (1 ed.). London: Parker, Son & Bourn, West Strand. Retrieved 6 June 2015. via Google Books

*Utilitarianism* did a great deal to popularize utilitarian ethics.<sup>4</sup> and has been considered "the most influential philosophical articulation of a liberal humanistic morality that was produced in the nineteenth century."<sup>5</sup>

Bentham's book *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* was printed in 1780 but not published until 1789. It is possible that Bentham was spurred on to publish after he saw the success of Paley's *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*.<sup>6</sup> Bentham's book was not an immediate success<sup>7</sup> but his ideas were spread further when Pierre Étienne Louis Dumont translated edited selections from a variety of Bentham's manuscripts into French. *Traité de législation civile et pénale* was published in 1802 and then later retranslated back into English by Hildreth as *The Theory of Legislation*, although by this time significant portions of Dumont's work had already been retranslated and incorporated into Sir John Bowring's edition of Bentham's works, which was issued in parts between 1838 and 1843.

Bentham's work opens with a statement of the principle of utility:<sup>8</sup>

Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do... By the principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever according to the tendency it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question: or, what is the same thing in other words to promote or

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<sup>4</sup> Henry Sidgwick, *Outlines of the History of Ethics*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988, p. 245. (Originally published in 1902.)

<sup>5</sup> J. B. Schneewind, "John Stuart Mill," in Paul Edwards, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 5. New York: Macmillan, 1967, p. 319.

<sup>6</sup> Rosen, Frederick (2003) *Classical Utilitarianism from Hume to Mill*. Routledge, p. 132

<sup>7</sup> Schneewind, J.B. (1977) *Sidgwick's Ethics and Victorian Moral Philosophy*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 122

<sup>8</sup> Bentham, Jeremy (2009). *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Dover Philosophical Classics. Dover Publications. p. 1. [ISBN 978-0486454528](https://www.doverpublications.com/9780486454528).

to oppose that happiness. I say of every action whatsoever, and therefore not only of every action of a private individual, but of every measure of government.

Mill rejects a purely quantitative measurement of utility and says:<sup>9</sup>

It is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognize the fact, that some kinds of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others. It would be absurd that while, in estimating all other things, quality is considered as well as quantity, the estimation of pleasures should be supposed to depend on quantity alone.

The word utility is used to mean general well-being or happiness, and Mill's view is that utility is the consequence of a good action. Utility, within the context of utilitarianism, refers to people performing actions for social utility. With social utility, he means the well-being of many people. Mill's explanation of the concept of utility in his work, *Utilitarianism*, is that people really do desire happiness, and since each individual desires their own happiness, it must follow that all of us desire the happiness of everyone, contributing to a larger social utility. Thus, an action that results in the greatest pleasure for the utility of society is the best action, or as Jeremy Bentham, the founder of early Utilitarianism put it, as the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

Because utilitarianism is not a single theory but a cluster of related theories that have been developed over two hundred years, criticisms can be made for different reasons and have different targets.

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<sup>9</sup> Mill, John Stuart (1998). Crisp, Roger (ed.). *Utilitarianism*. Oxford University Press. p. 56. [ISBN 978-0-19-875163-2](#).

**Cyber Ethics:** Cyber Ethics is the philosophic study of ethics pertaining to computers, encompassing user behavior and what computers are programmed to do, and how this affects individuals and society. For years, various governments have enacted regulations while organizations have defined policies about cyber ethics.<sup>10</sup>

In the late 19th century, the invention of cameras spurred similar ethical debates as the internet does today. During a seminar of *Harvard Law Review* in 1890, Warren and Brandeis defined privacy from an ethical and moral point of view to be:

"Central to dignity and individuality and personhood. Privacy is also indispensable to a sense of autonomy — to 'a feeling that there is an area of an individual's life that is totally under his or her control, an area that is free from outside intrusion.'

The deprivation of privacy can even endanger a person's health."<sup>11</sup>

Over 100 years later, the internet and proliferation of private data through governments<sup>12</sup> and ecommerce is an area which requires a new round of ethical debate involving a person's privacy.

Ethical debate has long included the concept of property. This concept has created many clashes in the world of cyber ethics. One philosophy of the internet is centered around the freedom of information. The controversy over ownership occurs when the property of information is infringed upon or uncertain.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Source: Wikipedia; URL: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyberethics>

<sup>11</sup> [\*Warren, Samuel\*](#); Brandeis, Louis (February 1998). "Privacy, photography, and the press". [\*Harvard Law Review\*](#). **111** (4): 1086–103. [doi:10.2307/1342012](#). [JSTOR 1342012](#)

<sup>12</sup> [\*"Privacy"\*](#). Electronic Frontier Foundation.

<sup>13</sup> [\*"Intellectual Property Policy and Programs"\*](#). Computer Crime & Intellectual Property Section. United States Department of Justice. Archived from [the original](#) on 15 January 2009.

Sexuality in terms of sexual orientation, infidelity, sex with or between minors, public display and pornography have always stirred ethical controversy. These issues are reflected online to varying degrees. In terms of its resonance, the historical development of the online pornography industry and user-generated content have been the studied by media academics.<sup>14</sup> One of the largest cyber ethical debates is over the regulation, distribution and accessibility of pornography online. Hardcore pornographic material is generally controlled by governments with laws regarding how old one has to be to obtain it and what forms are acceptable or not. The availability of pornography online calls into question jurisdiction as well as brings up the problem of regulation<sup>15</sup> in particular over child pornography,<sup>16</sup> which is illegal in most countries, as well as pornography involving violence or animals, which is restricted within most countries. The ethical values as defined in 1992 by the Computer Ethics Institute; a nonprofit organization whose mission is to advance technology by ethical means, lists these rules as a guide to computer ethics:

1. Thou shalt not use a computer to harm other people.
2. Thou shalt not interfere with other people's computer work.
3. Thou shalt not snoop around in other people's computer files.
4. Thou shalt not use a computer to steal.
5. Thou shalt not use a computer to bear false witness.

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<sup>14</sup> [\*Paasonen, Susanna\* \(2011\). \*Carnal resonance affect and online pornography\*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. ISBN 978-0-262-01631-5.](#)

<sup>15</sup> Summers, Chris (29 April 2008). ["When does kinky porn become illegal?"](#). Magazine. *BBC News*. Retrieved 2010-04-30.

<sup>16</sup> *Vicini, James* (21 January 2009). *Wiessler, David* (ed.). ["Online pornography law appeal denied"](#). *Reuters*.

6. Thou shalt not copy or use proprietary software for which you have not paid.
7. Thou shalt not use other people's computer resources without authorization or proper compensation.
8. Thou shalt not appropriate other people's intellectual output.
9. Thou shalt think about the social consequences of the program you are writing or the system you are designing.
10. Thou shalt always use a computer in ways that ensure consideration and respect for your fellow humans.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> [Computer Ethics Institute](#) (1992). ["The Ten Commandments of Computer Ethics"](#) (PDF). *Computer Ethics Institute*. Retrieved 2008-05-01.

## Chapter: 3

### Cyber Independence and Forthcomingness of Internet: Problems Arise when People

#### Don't Think Twice

Technology and social media has had a major impact on our everyday lives. It has changed the way we access information and communicate with those around us. With information being at our fingertips, it has allowed media companies to get news out quickly and the audience to engage. There are various different forms of Social Media network including Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Blogs, Micro-Blogs, etc. that allows the users, whether be, people or organizations to stay updated and connected. Of them, Facebook is most popular in Bangladesh. According to Facebook itself, People spend over 700 billion minutes per month on Facebook. Again, nowadays in Bangladesh, internet has become cheap and available everywhere. No matter what is the ability of a man is, people of any age are using internet. Their thinking capability is declining day by day. Any news or link they get; they share it without thinking of a single moment. They click 'share' button and it spreads more and more. They never think where they need to stop. Rough-neck people take the chance of the situation. They spread rumor either for their own benefits or to make loss of others. Let me discuss some recent happenings according to the situation described.

**News I- A rumor that triggers panic buying of salt:** Last month, at around 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> November, a rumor was being founded in social medias that there will be crisis of salt within a very short time and salt will be sold as 150-200 taka per kg. Current market price of salt is 35-36 taka per kg. As salt is a necessary good for cooking, people got mazes and started buying salts in bulk. Some businessman took benefits of this situation and made false shortages to make extra profits. But in reality, at present, 6.50 lakh metric tons of salt are in stock. The country saw



record salt production in 2018-2019 fiscal year – 12.24 lakh metric tons - which was much higher than the target.<sup>18</sup>

**News II-** Scandals and personal moments of random celebrities and common people get viral in such titles like **“Mithila's 'intimate' photo with Fahmi leaked!”<sup>19</sup>** or **“Bangladeshi Model Mithila-Fahmi’s video goes viral”<sup>20</sup>** etc. People also feel so lifeless that they share this news without hesitation. They continue taking fun with this and between their fun, the victim become more frustrated. People even don’t realize what thing to do and what not to do in cyber world. They don’t feel their a ‘share’ can ruin a life.

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<sup>18</sup> Bangla News 24, BDST: 1655 HRS, NOV 19, 2019

<sup>19</sup> Daily sun, URL: <https://www.daily-sun.com/post/436631/Mithilas-intimate-photo-with-Fahmi-leaked>

<sup>20</sup> Ekusher Bangladesh, URL: <https://bn.ekusherbangladesh.com.bd/bangladeshi-model-mithila-fahmis-video-goes-viral/>

## Chapter: 4

**My position:** I've discussed two situations in the previous chapter. As my opinion, both of them are wrong actions and should be avoided. People must not spread rumor and must not share any other's personal moments.

According to Utilitarianism, Rightness and wrongness of actions can lie in: action itself, intention or motivation of doer, effects on the recipients and combination of these 3 conditions. Spreading rumor is a wrong action itself, and the motivation of doer is not good also. Moreover, its effects on the recipients don't tend to pleasure or happiness. So clearly it's a wrong action. And it never maximizes pleasure for maximum amount of people. It has no intensity, fecundity and purity. So, in Utilitarianism, spreading a rumor like News-I is clearly a wrong action.

Again, spreading some other's personal data is a wrong action itself, and the motivation of doer is not good also. Moreover, its effects on the recipients may bring a short time happiness but the pain of the victim is out of description. It is a less pleasure and greater pain in terms of its intensity, duration, certainty, propinquity or remoteness, fecundity, purity and extent. So, in Utilitarianism, spreading personal scandal like News-II is clearly a wrong action also.

According to cyber ethics, one should not use a computer to harm other people, s/he should not interfere with other people's computer work, should not snoop around in other people's computer files and should not use a computer to bear false witness. So, both spreading rumors and other people's personal data is prohibited in cyber ethics. So we find both news I & II as wrong action according to cyber ethics.

**Possible arguments against my position:** It might be stated that someone can spread rumor and can share scandals and it's their personal matter. It's not their fault as they don't force anyone to see them or believe them. Again, as there is now law against this action, it can't be called illegal. So it can't be wrong action. They can do anything as they are independent to do so.

**Refutation of arguments against my argument:** First of all, spreading rumor and sharing other's scandal remain personal matter till there is no audience. But in social media, it gets a lot of audiences as it is an open platform. And sharing own scandal could be defined as personal matter, not other's.

Secondly, 'Ethics' and 'Law' aren't same things. Law goes as its own; so do ethics. Something unethical doesn't need to be illegal always. Sometimes legal things might be unethical also.

## Chapter: 5

### Conclusion

According to Utilitarianism, Rightness and wrongness of actions can lie in: action itself, intention or motivation of doer, effects on the recipients and combination of these 3 conditions. And actions are approved when they are such as to promote happiness, or pleasure, and are disapproved when they have a tendency to cause unhappiness, or pain. In cyber ethics, one should not use cyber media to spread false news and should not steal someone's personal data or spread it. Nowadays, in our country it has become a very common practice to make issues viral one after another. People don't pay attention whether the issue is ethical or non-ethical. We get something and share it whenever or wherever we want. We must not do it as it's a wrong action according to Utilitarianism and Cyber Ethics. We should think twice before sharing anything. We should learn where to stop.