A1-handout

CSC300 - Assignment #1   Fall 2016

Introduction

In lecture and tutorial, we have talked about the expansion of computers into everyday society, and how this seemingly innocuous and benign technology has resulted in unforeseen consequences. We have also discussed argumentation as an important form of academic scholarship and how a thesis statement defines an argument for the reader.

Learning Objective

Through this assignment, you will examine an ethical problem, determine the most appropriate solution, take a position, and identify evidence in support of your position.

Submission Requirements

The name of the pdf file is important! We have chosen this naming convention so that when the papers are printed out in alphabetic order (by filename) it is easy to split up the resulting pile by TA. This simplifies our paper handling significantly. (Get it wrong and your paper will probably wind up in the wrong TAs heap)

File Type: .pdf
File Name: <L1 or L5>_<UTORID>_A1.pdf (for example L1_zaleskim_A1.pdf)

Submit your assignment through MarkUs: https://markus.teach.cs.toronto.edu/csc300-2016-09
Deadline: Sunday, Oct 2, 2016 at 23:59. (one minute before midnight Sunday night)
Retry Deadline: Sunday, Oct 16, 2016 at 23:59.

Assignment Requirements

We have selected four Assignment #1 Scenarios (see attached scenarios).
Review all the scenarios and select one of them to discuss. Pretend you are going to write an argumentative position paper* for this scenario. For your chosen scenario, you are required to write a **thesis statement** following the three characteristics of a good thesis statement discussed in class and answering the question posed at the end of the scenario. Assume that your thesis statement paragraph immediately follows the "Introduction" paragraph provided.

In addition to your thesis statement, you are required to sketch out the **main claims in your argument and their supporting evidence** in bullet form. You can either use sentence fragments or full sentences in this sketch but your evidence must be presented hierarchically (see sample).

You may (but are not required to) conduct research to determine what evidence you will use to support your claims. If you choose to use external sources, create a References section and list the websites/books used. We will discuss proper citation practises later in the course so do not worry about formatting your references in this assignment.

Evaluation

Your assignment will be evaluated (out of 10) for the quality of your thesis statement, claims, and supporting evidence, as well as the clarity of your writing and adherence to the formatting requirements.

Formatting Requirements

Use the formatting requirements below to give evaluators sufficient space for feedback and ensure the accurate printing and transfer of your assignment to your tutorial TA for return.
  • You will work on this assignment independently.
  • Your assignment must not exceed **TWO** pages (including any references).
  • Use Times New Roman or Modern No. 20 in font size 12. Use 8.5"x11" paper with 1" margins, double spaced.
  • When submitting your assignment you should NOT have a title or cover page. Instead: Centred at the top of every page (or in a header below the 1" margin) should be: - <Student Name> - **<CDF ID>** - <Lecture Section and Tutorial Room #> For example: "John Smith - **smithj** - L5BA1200". Bold your CDF ID.
  • Include the scenario title and number just below the header on the first page (see sample).
  • If your assignment is more than one page long please also include the page number at the bottom.
  • Proof-read your work, check for grammar, spelling and punctuation.
  • Warning: google doc users have had difficulties in the past with the header being clipped when they save their paper as a PDF.

<div align="center">John Smith - smithj - L5 SS2127</div>

Topic: Scenario #4 - Girls Around Me

Thesis Statements: thesis statement goes here.

Supporting Claim 1: claim 1

> • evidence in support of claim 1

>> • sub-evidence

> • …

- …

Supporting Claim 2: claim 2

- • evidence in support of claim 2

- • …

- • …

…

Supporting Claim N: claim N

- • evidence in support of claim N

- • …

- • …

References

[1] my reference

CSC300 - Assignment #1 Scenarios   Fall 2016

Scenario #1 - Facebook Psychology Experiment

Introduction: For one week in 2012, half a million Facebook users took part in a massive psychological experiment aimed at discovering if emotions could be spread through social media. The problem? Users had no idea it was happening. It turns out Facebook routinely runs experiments on users; in fact every Facebook user has been a subject at some point, whether it be slight modifications in formatting or major feature changes.
Just about every Internet service does experiments, but this one altered users' news feeds to highlight items with either positive or negative emotional content, and then measured if it affected the emotional content in each user's future posts.
While it is agreed the experiment was legal, critics argue this type of testing crosses the line, particularly when consent is buried in a terms of service. Facebook researchers have taken to social media to apologize for the study, but the company's official statement is that Facebook users agree to these types of experiments as part of the terms of service.
Question: Does Facebook need more explicit consent for this type of experiment? For all experiments?

Scenario #2 - University Email

Introduction: Robert is on the baseball team at a small college in Texas. He's a high profile player on the team, and as a result he has a lot of followers on Twitter and a large network on Facebook. For this reason, the members of the athletic board at his college think it's necessary to monitor his social media accounts. In Texas, there is no law to prevent schools from requiring individuals to give up their personal social media login and password information, so Robert is forced to hand over his social media account information. University officials say that the intent of monitoring is to identify potential compliance and behavioural issues early on, enabling athletic departments to educate athletes on how to present themselves online. They regularly check what Robert posts and flag certain postings they have issues with.

One day Robert tweets "Skipping class to break bad #schoolsucks #bettercallsaul #breakingbad." Since Robert publicly admits to skipping class, school officials flag the post and decide to also start monitoring Robert's email account without informing him. Since the school provides an email account as a service to its students and faculty, it reserves the right to search its own system's stored data. According to the college's student handbook, administrators may access student email accounts in order to safeguard the system or "to ensure compliance with other University rules." The policy does not mention whether or not account owners have to be notified that their emails are searched. When searching Robert's email account, university officials find several questionable emails between Robert and his tutor. It seems that Robert's tutor has been sending him all answers to homework assignments and quizzes. As a result of the investigation, Robert is placed on athletic probation and his tutor is fired.

Question: Should universities be allowed to monitor student email and social media accounts (and under what circumstances)?

Scenario #3 - Cyber Security Breach

Introduction: Cyber attacks on American companies have become increasingly more common, but not all companies respond to security breaches the same way. Companies such as Facebook, Twitter and Apple, have voluntarily gone public with their security troubles. Alternatively, a number of companies have continued to deny cyber attacks, despite reports stating otherwise; including, Exxon Mobil, Coca-Cola, Baker Hughes, and others. The U.S. government has encouraged transparency on cyber attacks as part of a wider effort to protect American intellectual property. Advocates of disclosing breaches claim it will set a precedent for other companies to get more active in fighting cyber attacks. The majority of company lawyers advise not to disclose, pointing to potential shareholder lawsuits, embarrassment and fear of inciting future attacks. Health and insurance companies must disclose breaches of patient information, and publicly traded companies must when an incident affects earnings.

Question: Should companies disclose cyber security breaches? What policy should companies adopt when dealing with a cyber security breach?

Scenario #4 - Girls Around Me

Introduction: In late March 2012, a flurry of blog entries and articles focused on an app called "Girls Around Me." The app, which was produced by a Russian developer and available through the iTunes App Store, presented itself as "a revolutionary new city scanner app that turns your town into a dating paradise!" The app's website asked, "In the mood for love, or just after a one-night stand? Girls Around Me puts you in control! Reveal the hottest nightspots, who's in them, and how to reach them… Browse photos of lovely local ladies and tap their thumbnail to find out more about them." The "lovely local ladies" were not people who had signed up to be associated with this app. They had either chosen to make their Facebook and Foursquare profiles public, or had simply not reset the default privacy settings on their Facebook and Foursquare accounts. By its own description, "Girls Around Me" mashed the publicly available data from Facebook and Foursquare and plotted it onto a map. Users of the app would see a map of their surroundings, with thumbnail photos from publicly available profiles of women who had recently "checked into" particular locations in the neighbourhood. Some of those thumbnails might be clustered in busy locations (restaurants, bars, etc.). By clicking on a thumbnail, the app user would get access to the Facebook account of the woman in the picture, and be able to access all the information available there; the user would also be able to send a message to that woman. After "Cult of Mac"blogger John Brownlee wrote about "Girls Around Me" as well as about the reactions of his women friends when he showed them the app, Foursquare revoked the app's access to Foursquare data—alleging that it violated Foursquare's terms of use. The move rendered the app unusable. In response to the outcry over the "creepiness" of "Girls Around Me," the app's developer, i-Free Innovations, provided a statement to the Wall Street Journal. In it, the company argued that it had been made a "scapegoat" in regard to privacy concerns, when "many other mobile apps provide the same or more extended functionality…" It stressed that "Girls Around Me" does not "search for extra information apart from the information that users share with others. … The Facebook accounts shown as available to send a message are the

accounts that Foursquare users make public in their profiles." It also added that the app had been available "for several months already and … was downloaded more than 70,000 times. … We were planning to continue developing the app and limit it to showing only public places and venues. … [W]e intended to bring our best effort to … develop filters to limit user access only to public venues shared by other users." The company vowed to try to enable current users to keep using the app, and stated that it had received "numerous positive comments from users who claimed that the app helped them to discover 'hot spots'—venues that are popular among girls and boys." Although many commentators continued to describe "Girls Around Me" as a "creepy girl-stalking app," some others argued that the fault, if any, lay with the people who allowed their profiles to be public, taking no measures to protect their own privacy. Yet others, like blogger Kashmir Hill, wrote that the women who showed up on "Girls Around Me" may have made a conscious choice to make their information public: "Many of us," she wrote, "have become comfortable putting ourselves out there publicly in the hopes of making connections with friends and strangers … It's only natural that this digital openness will transfer over to the 'real world,' and that we will start proactively projecting our digital selves to facilitate in-person interactions."
Question: Should companies be allowed to aggregate user data in this manner? Under what circumstances is data aggregation appropriate?

Reprinted with permission of the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University (www.scu.edu/ethics).