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Homework 2

Question 20, Page 149

“Cold calling” could be considered acceptable because of the popularity with caller ID. Since the recipient of the call can see who is calling they can let the phone ring and not answer it. Where as the recipient of spam has to take action to delete the spam that they have received. Based on Utilitarianism and that thought, the cold caller’s happiness would be positive because they get to do their job and try to promote their product. While the recipient’s happiness would go neither up nor down since they don’t have to do anything to get rid of the spam. As long as they don’t mind their phone tied up for a minute.

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Some benefits of internet censorship would be that things such as child pornography could not get through to the public, which would increase the happiness of the customer and the children but decrease the happiness of the producer of the porn. It would also be beneficial because the censors could prevent more predatory actions such as money schemes or scams.

It would be considered harmful though because they would be infringing on free speech and the happiness of the people involved might not balance out for the positive, making the action immoral. So a certain amount of censorship could be good but total censorship might be detrimental.

Question 26, Page 149

I believe that bloggers should be held responsible for their actions especially if they are fabricating false accusations. In the really world, without the anonymity that comes with the internet, they would be charged with libel and possibly harassment and held accountable for their actions. If we go by the ethical theory of Kantianism and universalized that action where every started throwing everyone else under the bus on the internet, there would be no trust in other people and nothing good could come from that.

Question 29, Page 150

Web versus the telephone system: The web has very few similarities with the telephone system. It is the same if the user wants to see or communicate with another address: they just dial them up. However, the web has a lot more pop-ups, which the user doesn't want to see. So in that way the web is spamming the user all the time versus the telephone system which only spams if the spammer calls the users. So there is a lot more control of what you want to see with the telephone system than there is on the web.

Web versus physical mail: The web is a little closer to physical mail than the telephone system. It is easier for spammers to get ahold of the user because they can just use mass email distribution to reach more people instead of dialing up one person at a time. In that way, the user gets about the same number of "pop-ups" that they would on the internet. Also physical mail is called "snail mail" for a reason where the user takes a while to contact the address than they do if they were to just use the internet.

Web versus bookstores: It takes users longer to look something up on a bookstore than it does on the internet. However, bookstores can be more direct and cleaner than internet search engines because on the internet the user might not get exactly what they are looking for and they could be bombarded with pop-ups and spam. While at the bookstore the only spam that happens are posters for upcoming books and things like that. So the user can go in there and expect to find what they are looking for with fewer distractions than if they are using the internet.

Web versus movie theaters: The web is somewhat closer to the movie theaters than other forms of communication. The user goes to the theater to see something that they want to see but they have to sit through the ads and upcoming movie trailers before their movie, which they might not want to see. It is the same on the web, if a user wants to see a video they often have to wait through a 30 second ad or they have to get through the pop-up ads on the page by exiting them before they can see the content of that page.

Web versus newspapers: The newspaper would have somewhat the same amount of ads on the sides of their articles that the web would have. In that way they are equal but the web would be faster to use and more focused toward the one user than the newspaper would be.

Web versus broadcast and cable TV: The web and broadcast and cable TV have about the same relationship as the web and the movie theaters have. The user has to sit through the commercials during the program that they want to see. The same as they would have to on the internet when watching a video. However, the commercials on the TV would be significantly longer than those on the web as a whole. I think of all the comparisons in this question, these two are the most closely related.

I think that governments should regulate the internet but only to uphold the laws such as prohibiting child pornography and preventing people from taking advantage of each other. However they shouldn't be able to prevent the users from seeing things that they think are unsuitable but not against the law. So they would have to uphold the users right to free speech and press. If they did regulate the internet they should be using the same laws that they do when they regulate TV or other medias. Nothing that infringes on the users rights but at the same time keeping the criminals out of the equation.

Question 31, Page 150

I think they should be given the same rights as newspaper and other media of that sort. However, they should also have to be held accountable for libel and other laws that the newspapers are also held accountable for. By taking away the anonymity that people on the internet seem to feel when they post stuff, it might actually make it a more friendly and prosperous media than it is now. That way the bloggers happiness still goes up because they can still post but also the blogger's subject's happiness is also positive because they aren't the target of false accusations.

Question 32, Page 150

I believe that children should be prevented from using some web sites which should be the responsibility of the parents. They could access the parental controls on the computer to make sure that their children don't get into anything. The parents shouldn't expect the websites to check to make sure that the user is age appropriate for the content (i.e. age checkpoints).

However, I think that the responsibility should fall on the parents to make sure that their children are accessing the correct age appropriate content. Especially since they will be seen as accountable by law enforcement if anything should come of the child viewing any material that is not age appropriate.

Question 42, Page 151

Using Utilitarianism, the happiness of BART would go up if they do block the cell phone signals to prevent another protest. The happiness of the protestors would go down because their protest would now become harder but the happiness of the commuters would go up because they wouldn't have to deal with the protestors especially if they did not feel the need to protest on the subject. So according to this BART's actions were justified and moral. However, this infringes on the rights of the protestor's to have free speech and assembly. BART could have coordinated with them and given them somewhere else to protest as long as they would protest peacefully and not break any laws.