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Ethical and legal issues computing

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Homework 3

1. Who is the author? What is the place of publication? What do those things tell you about the point of view of the article?

The author of this article is Nicholas Bramble. He graduated from Harvard law school and then went to Yale law school where he spent two years as the Director of Law and Media Program. The following year was spent working for the US treasury, which he ended up leaving in 2013 for a senior policy specialist position at Google. Since then, he got promoted as a Senior Counsel for Trade Policy at Google[[1]](#footnote-1). From the author’s twitter page, I was able to see he mainly posts about sports and often talks about high school performance whether physically or academically[[2]](#footnote-2).

This article was published by slate.com, which describes itself as a daily magazine on the web that offers analysis and commentary about politics, news, business, technology, and culture[[3]](#footnote-3). However, Slate.com is owned by another company called Graham Holdings, whose goal is to deliver quality products and services to today’s students, viewers, customers, and advertisers[[4]](#footnote-4).

Based on who the author is and the owners of Slate.com, the point of view of the article would point more towards being favorable to the use of social network sites at school. First, the author himself finds it useful to use Twitter to share new findings about schools and how they are doing so he would most likely encourage the use of social networks to share things among students in a more effective way. Next, Graham Holdings would not want to be against the use of social network either because their company is part of what we call “social network”. If students are denied that access, they would not be able to benefit from the quality products and services that Graham Holdings offers to students particularly.

1. What facts underlie the argument of the article? How are those facts documented as evidence? Are any of the things presented as facts disputable?
2. What values, beliefs, and assumptions are implicit in the article?

While writing articles, there are often assumptions that are made, as well as beliefs and values that are held in order to support the main argument of the author. In our case for example, the author made quite a few assumptions. He assumed that students will be trustworthy and not use social networks for anything else, that parents will be okay with their kids using social networks, that students would be happy learning how to share schoolwork on social networks… There are a lot more assumptions that can be made, but the ones we just cited are critical. As we read the article, we can also notice some implicit beliefs and values from the author. He for example believes that social network would be an efficient way to improve data sharing among students, that student would be able to assimilate things faster using computers, and that any online threat made from one student to another would be seen by professors. Values like honesty and seriousness from the students are also assumed by Nicholas Bramble.

1. To really understand the issues better, what facts would you like to know/know more about?
2. How does the author use language to help make the point?

Persuasion is not only about finding evidence, but it also involves how that evidence is presented to the audience. Nicholas Bramble uses what we call an appeal to emotions in order to make readers shift towards his point of view. He gave the example of a 13-year-old girl in Missouri that committed suicide due to cyber bullying from a classmate’s mother. However, he also gave the solution to how that situation could have been avoided and by doing so, the readers will not see social network as something so harmful anymore since there are solutions to the problems. Another thing that the other does right is providing a lot of examples for the points he makes and using connecting words such as a result of, consequently for the evidence and argument to be coherent. Lastly, the author did not use any tone in particular for his writing, but he was still able to help readers imagine the setting of the different examples. This was done by giving the location of where the example happened.

1. What might someone on the other side of the controversy argue? List three key points.

Whether or not schools should allow network sites has been a controversial topic for a long time, which means that there are two parties that are created in regards to this issue.

1. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nbramble> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://twitter.com/nickbramble?lang=en> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://slate.com/about> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.ghco.com> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)