Week 1 Asynch, Coursework:

Pajaro and Betancourt defined national information policy as “the array

of guidelines and directives guiding preparation of planned actions to

guarantee universal access to information in order to pursue all kinds

of activities (social, economic and political), thereby helping achieve a

country’s development goals” (23).

Information policy can best be understood as the set of specific goals

created by governments to shape the creation, access, management, exchange,

security, display, collection, and other uses of information. (Mc-

Clure and Jaeger, 257)

Information policy [is] the combination of laws, regulations, rules, and

guidelines that steer the creation, management, and use of information.

(Jaeger, 841)

**Definitions of information**

have furthermore been classified into four groups relative to information

policy, as: “a resource,” “a commodity,” “perception,” and “a constitutive

force in society” (Browne, 266).

**Key Concepts:**

Public Goods

Information Good

Difference between Laws/Regulations/Guidelines

We define policy within the context of a nation as: **A plan of action approved by policy makers to achieve a goal**

Laws are: **Approved legislation by Congress/Parliament**

Regulations are: **A directive or order issued by ministries or secretariats**

Guidelines are: Proposed expected actions issued by a regulatory agency

**Reference Slides:**

[C:\Users\jdine\Desktop\SYracuse\Term 6\Information Policy\Week (1)](file:///C:\Users\jdine\Desktop\SYracuse\Term%206\Information%20Policy\Week%20(1))

**Please identify other examples in our information field that could be considered public goods.**

One example that I found through research is public defense, which could be defined by the armed forces, or local/regional law enforcement. Both examples fit the main points of emphasis of a public good - They are nonexcludable, and nonrivalrous. If we look at our armed forces here in America, no matter ones' point of view in regard to morality or, economically, looking at government spending, an individual is still protected under by the public good. Each party of the relationship cannot cease being part of the relationship by exclusion. The same holds true for all levels of law enforcement - Someone else using the public good does not constrain one from also using the good, making it nonrivalrous, as well as fitting the definition of nonexclusion. Source: khanacademy.org

**Please identify an example where a company in our information field has taken advantage of this property of our field to its advantage, and explain your answer.**

I think we could look to a social networking behemoth like Facebook to find an example of a company that exposes network externalities. As the previous lecture states, consumers are most likely to choose the network with the most branches (users, in this case), because the degree of resources and knowledge is higher. Facebook isn't necessarily a monopoly in the social media sector, eg. twitter, instagram, pinterest, but they have used their large network to create barriers to entry for start ups. More people are likely to join facebook as opposed to an up and coming SM site because of the size of the network and the resulting resources that users have access to.

**Given the unusual costs of information, how would you price an information good?**

I don't think there's an arbitrary price-point for an information good. Even though they aren't bound by some of the variable costs of traditional goods, they are still subject to economic laws of supply and demand. I'd argue that an information good is worth what the market is willing to pay for that good. Discovering what the market is willing to pay would be reflective of market analysis, as well as sensitivity analysis on price-points to determine which price yields the largest return. Hal R. Varian, Berkeley, subjects that information goods are segmented among consumer groups. If we look at something like a DVD, there are different qualities of releases available to purchase. "Quality discrimination is commonplace". http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~hal/Papers/japan/

I am assuming that you will be working in the information field.

**Let's assume for a moment that you will be a freelancer. So you can choose whatever information good you want to provide. You could be an indexer for an author writing a book, you could be a web designer, a database manager and so on. Knowing what you know about this field unusual properties what would you consider to price your services?**

Let's propose a situation where one is freelancing as a data scientist/machine learning professional for an online marketing company. The goal of online marketing varies by the stage of the consumer purchasing cycle, but let's say the overall goal is to identify and target users with a propensity to purchase a specific product. Success would be measured by online purchases, or customer lifetime value projections, or something along those lines. In order to price your services, your likely accounting for the time taken to perform statistical analysis on past user behavior, feature engineering, model construction, model deployment, and so on. You'd also account for the scarcity of the good your providing in the market. Another potential way to price your services would be to take a lesser fixed cost up front, and receive points on the back end for successful prospecting/customer acquisition (This is a hypothetical that I pulled from how the film industry works). Value would be defined by the success of the models, not by their existence.

**If instead you are working for a company and are doing the same task as the one you selected as a freelancer, would that help you to determine the salary you would like to get? Why or why not?**

I think, in this case, yes. I'd argue that freelancers/solutions consultants are paid more off of reputation. Their network and past successes are more reflective of their asking prices. With a salaried position, there are benchmarks in place that are not as flexible in regard to monetary compensation - A salaried employee may deviate from the average to a degree, but there is more market information available to suggest a baseline. Another idea of the differences between the two, sometimes you're paying the freelancer to leave. In other words, a salaried position generally indicates a long term relationship, whereas a freelancer denotes a flexible relationship. You may pay more up front to a freelancer to avoid paying more in the long run to a salaried employee (You have to think about things like bonuses and benefits here).

**Assuming that you are working and have had to make decisions now or in the past, think of a situation where information would be or would have been helpful.Using the information cycle and the information for decisions, think about the type of data you would need or have needed and the value that you could get or make sure you have at every stage of the information cycle process, and then describe how this information could have informed the decision.**

I think about my work in the field of business intelligence, and specifically in manufacturing dashboards for client consumption (contracting). I think that I pass through stages of the information cycle when I work, specifically creation, distribution, and access. Often times, because I work remotely, I am left in the dark on idiosyncrasies of particular clients, and their needs. This often leads to an information gap, where it is my responsibility to construct what I believe to be an accessible construction of data into informative renderings. Information on the needs, and really the goals of what the client is trying to accomplish would completely change my mindset, and the respective outputs. If that information were available to me, I would be able to manufacture information that served a much larger purpose than I believe it to be doing right now. The value of that information would allow for me to produce more valuable information that could lead the clients to making an informed decision relative to their prospective goals.

**Look at some news events, and select some that you think have some relationship to this notion of information policy. Which news events did you choose? Why did they attract your attention? What makes them an information policy issue?**

Look no further then the Cambridge Analytica scandal involving Facebook to see a recent news event with a relationship to the notion of information policy. This attracted my attention, as well as the attention of many American citizens, because the resulting regulations could serve to have a lasting impact on the way networking, and the internet work in general. The main reason this issue has arisen is due to the notion of foreign interference in election cycles through the widespread manipulation of falsified news. This is an information policy issue because many were victims of the attack based on data that was questionably obtained. The real issue, as Zuckerburg testified to Congress, wasn't that information was distributed for the x00,000's of Americans that opted in, it was that the data of known associates of those people were also distributed without their consent, which equated to close to 100mm people being impacted. In my opinion, the notion of 'Opting In' is going to be closely scrutinized. We're mainly met with hundred page EULAs that we blindly disregard, and as a result we don't really know what we are making accessible. Very, very few people are going to sift through the agreements they are engaging in, and it'll be interesting if something changes there.

**Please identify the different reasons that Galbraith provided for the need for regulation.**

The main points that Galbraith provided for the need for regulation were derived from his time in China, where he noted that there weren't heavy regulations regarding things like drinking water, food, electrical appliances, and others. What he suggested was that there was a correlated lack of consumer trust associated with disregard for regulatory agencies, and regulations in general. If there is a level of distrust stemming from the consumer side of things, there is an increased likelihood that a product or service stops being a viable option for said consumer. It isn't certain if alternatives were presented in situations where regulations were null enforced.

**Given the unusual properties of our information field, do you think we would need to have some regulation? Provide an example.**

Yes. I think that most things do need to be regulated, because most companies, no matter how harmless they seem, are most concerned with keeping their stakeholders happy and satisfied. We have seen, time and time again, companies taking shortcuts to improve their bottom line that either put consumers at some level of risk, or disregard them entirely for the sake of profitability. Without regulations, this would be the new norm, or the old norm before regulations I guess. The idea now is that these breakages of consumer trust are supposed to be the exception, rather than the norm, although there are an awful lot of exceptions lately. The thing with some of these regulations that are currently in place is that they don't, with 100% certainty, negate companies from making mistakes that border on regulatory infractions. I look to a company like Wells Fargo, which is constantly mired in scandal, or Equifax, whose data breach impacted most Americans. There are regulations in place to make sure things like this don't happen, but when they do the fines are comparatively insignificant, and don't safeguard such occurrences from continually occurring.

**In the previous section of this lecture I asked you to identify a news event that you though represented an issue in our information field for which policy was necessary. Go back to your example, and let us know whether you think any laws or regulations would be necessary and why.**

I kind of touched upon this in my response earlier, but I think that there was a violation of regulation incurred by Facebook in the Cambridge Analytica scandal. The people who opted in to have their data shared also unknowingly shared the data of people within their network, without their expressed consent to do such. So people who did not opt in to the survey (I believe it was a survey) had their rights violated to an extent. This would be a case where regulations, as is, are not currently up to par, and more needs to be done to ensure the protection of users' data and privacy.

**Live session 2 notes:**

Professor to remark on Policy Analysis Paper. Adjust and resubmit by Sunday for partial points.

“Information policy is the result of a process of developing rules, regulations, or guidelines affecting the information cycle, encompassing issues related to the creation, production, distribution, access, and use of information.” (298)

Ethics:

Utilitarianist – Concerned with raw outcomes

Consequentialist – Concerned with the morality of decision making

Deontologist – Do right, all the time, no matter the outcome.

Policy regrade – Due Wednesday 5/2

Consulting Report – Due next Wednesday 9PM est 5/9/2018

Universal Service Assignment – Due 5/16

**Week 4: Economics**

Economics = science of decision making within constrained situations.

Market Clearing = Equilibrium. Supply is equal to demand.

Elasticity: Demand depends on price. Elastic – When increasing the price demand goes down, vice versa. Inelastic is when price sensitivity isn’t a problem.