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**CISC4001 Professionalism and Ethics in Computer Science**

**Ethical Issues in Monitoring Children's Online Activity**

**Date of Presentation: 17 April 2023**

**Professor: Miguel Gomes Da Costa Junior**

Group Members

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| Picture | 穿西装的男人站在一起  描述已自动生成 | 人站在建筑前  中度可信度描述已自动生成 | **年轻的男孩  描述已自动生成** |
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# 1. Introduction

Our project title is “Ethical Issues in Monitoring Children’s Online Activity”. The report will be written according to the table of contents. In PART 2, we are going to provide a brief introduction of the story card we get and show the understanding we have of this story card. PART 3, we will illustrate which Information card we chose, the reason for choosing them, and lastly discover what further information they can provide. PART 4, we will show which issue card we choose, the reason for choosing them, and at the same time, answer question 2 raised by the story card, which is “What’s the ethical issue of the story card”.

As a conclusion (PART 5), we will answer question 1 of the story card by summarizing analysis above and use what we learn in this lecture, and make a small conclusion for the whole project.

# 2. Story Card

## 2.1 Brief Introduction of the story card

The story card we get is Story Card 02, in which a mother of three teenage sons, Lindsey often logs into her children's social networking accounts and examines their browsing history. She thinks that this is the only way she can guarantee their safety and responsibility. Lindsey is of the opinion that she is acting properly and just has the interests of her family in mind. The story card raises 2 questions for us :

* Would you agree with Lindsey? (We will answer in PART 5)
* What are the ethical issues in this scenario? (We will answer in PART 4)

## 2.2 Understanding of the story card

In this part, we are going to discuss things from different perspectives. This is because most people will think Lindsey is doing something wrong at first glance. However, I think it’s important for us to take a neutral stance and try to understand why Lindsey is doing that.

Reason for Lindsey’s action :

* Their child is too young and doesn’t have the ability to use the Internet properly, protecting their children. If the child gets access to inappropriate content or is undergoing cyberbullying, the consequence is much worse.
* Ensure the safety of children and do not communicate with strangers with bad intentions.

Reason against Lindsey’s action :

* Lack of trust in her children
* Lindsey is a controlling individual, she would love to assert dominance and power over her children so that everything is under her control.

There are many others to mention in terms of the reasons for Lindsey's action.

However, with the limited information, we cannot guarantee what’s the true reason but to continue our discussion.

## 2.3 Supported information to the story card

The following are some examples of supported information to the above story card, for us to have more information in the real world :

* According to a survey by Pew Research Center, about half of parents of teenagers who use Facebook say they have used their child's password to log in and see what their child is posting.
* The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents have open communication with their children about online safety and set clear rules and boundaries.
* The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) is a federal law that requires websites to obtain parental consent before collecting personal information from children under 13 years old.

# 3. Information Card

## 3.1 Brief Introduction of Information Card 1

The first Information card we choose is Info Card 2: Safer Internet Day. Safer Internet Day aims to promote safer and more responsible use of online technology and mobile phones, especially among children and young people across the world. It is celebrated in February each year.

## 3.2 Connection with story card and What further information it provides

The connection between story card and information card 1 is that both Lindsey and Safer Internet Day believe there is a need to protect ourselves from the Internet to guarantee our safety. They both think it’s important to promote responsible online behavior.

Not only that, this implies another piece of information, which is that the Internet is actually not a safe place, especially for young people and children. They know too little about the real world and believe everything and everyone without question.

Moreover, young men spend the most time online, therefore it’s more important to raise awareness of emerging online issues and concurrent concerns so that everyone can benefit from a safer and better online environment.

Lastly, one thing to mention is, instead of hacking, Lindsey should use opportunities like Safer Internet Day to promote safe and responsible online behavior among her children. This can be done through open and honest conversations about the importance of online safety, the potential risks involved, and ways to stay safe online.

## 3.3 Brief Introduction of Information Card 2

The second Information card we choose is Info Card 13: Digital Native. Digital Natives is a term that refers to people who were born after the extensive introduction of digital technology and have grown up completely submerged into the world of the internet and modern technology.

## 3.4 Connection with story card and What further information it provides

Although there is no direct connection between the story card and the info card on Digital Native. The story card is about Lindsey, a mother who regularly hacks into her children's social network sites to monitor their online activity, while the info card on Digital Native explains the term used to refer to people born after the extensive introduction of digital technology.

However, we can draw an indirect connection between the two, as Lindsey's actions may be more prevalent among parents who are not digital natives and may not fully understand the implications of their actions in the digital age.

Digital natives, on the other hand, have grown up completely submerged in the world of the internet and modern technology and may have a better understanding of the importance of privacy and responsible online behavior. We choose this info card because we think the indirect connection, that the perspective of different generations to view a problem is also important and cannot be neglected.

# 4. Issues Card

## 4.1 Brief Introduction of Issue Card 1

The first issue card we choose is Issue Card 2: Privacy.

Questions it raises: Is privacy an issue that young people need to worry about? How would issues of privacy affect their lives, both online and in their everyday undertakings? What are the risks involved with privacy and the lack of regard for it?

## 4.2 Connection with story card

The connection between the two is that privacy is very important. Lindsey's actions highlight the importance of respecting other people's privacy, even if they are family members. The story card featuring Lindsey's actions of hacking into her children's social network sites to monitor their online activity raises important ethical concerns about privacy. (Will be further explained in PART 4.5)

The privacy issue card puts even more of a focus on how crucial privacy is to young people's lives, both online and in their regular activities. It raises concerns about the dangers of privacy and the disregard for it. The value of maintaining their privacy and the potential repercussions of disclosing personal information online must be made clear to young people.

## 4.3 Brief Introduction of Issue Card 2

The second issue card we choose is Issue Card 11: Violent Online Behavior.

Question it raises: Online gaming has always been popular, but recently there has been an influx of violent and disturbing games. Extremist sites that promote anger and violence are all over the Internet. Children that have come from stable backgrounds are gaining first-hand experience of violence from the Internet. What impact might this have on the moral and social development of children and young people?

## 4.4 Connection with story card

The connection between story card and issue card 2 is that because there is much violent online behavior now, therefore, we can understand Lindsey’s action. Violent online behaviors are spread online and can be easily accessed by anyone, including young kids. As a result, kids might be able to mimic the behavior and take it into their daily lifestyle. Lindsey is trying her best in her own way to prevent her child from being exploited with those contents.

## 4.5 Answer question 2 of the story card

Now, after we have fully understood the story card, got much further information from the info card, and built connections with the issue card, we can finally answer questions from the story card. The first question we are going to answer is question 2, “What ethical issues in this scenario?”.

Even if Lindsey may believe her acts are acceptable, there are several moral questions to take into account. First off, her acts can be seen as an invasion of her kids' privacy. Her sons have a right to their own personal space and privacy as teenagers, which includes their online activity. Without their knowledge or permission, Lindsey hacked into their accounts, violating their right to privacy.

Second, Lindsey's behavior can undermine her children's trust in her. They might think their mother doesn't trust them if she doesn't communicate her worries with them and instead turns to hacking. Relationship tension and a lack of open communication could result from this.

As a consequence, Lindsey's behavior can serve as a bad example for her kids. She is encouraging unethical behavior by breaking into their accounts and proving that it is permissible to violate someone's privacy for selfish reasons. Despite having good intentions, Lindsey's activities generate a number of moral questions. Parents must strike a balance between safeguarding their kids and upholding their right to privacy.

# 5. Conclusion

## 5.1 Answering question 1 of the story card

According to the analysis performed before, we make a conclusion now: Lindsay’s behavior is not acceptable.

In Kantianism, imagine a maxim in which all parents monitor the browser history of their children. If it was universalized, such a maxim would violate the important rule of respect for others. Children, as individuals, have a right to privacy. If the privacy of all children could be taken away at will, then the trust between parents and children would cease to exist and family harmony would be lost. Kant wrote that “Without rationality, the universe would be a waste, in vain, and without purpose.”

In virtue ethics, in the long run, it is possible that Lindsey's son will not acquire the values her mother expects but increase rebellion. Is this really profound happiness? Or is this prosperity on a spiritual level? The answer is no. Lindsey does not have the virtues expected of a good mother: Respect for her child's privacy, understanding of her child's behavior, and good communication with her child. She does not need to pry into her child's privacy to reassure herself but rather to communicate kindly to understand her child's true thoughts and thus teach him to develop reasonable value judgments.

Online violent issues are increasing, and kids might be able to mimic the bad behavior and take it into their daily lives. Lindsay has good intentions to protect her children. But unluckily, Lindsay is not a digital native. She didn’t have a chance to completely immerse herself into the world of the internet and modern technology at an early age, subsequently having a worse understanding of the importance of privacy and responsible online behavior. The right to privacy and the right to know is crucial to all including teenagers, otherwise, no trust will exist, and family harmony would disappear.

Above all, Lindsay’s behavior is not acceptable.

# 6. Reference

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# Appendix: Poster

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