Dedicated Semester EXPO

Matthew Austin

Fontbonne University

Quagliata

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At the Dedicated Semester Expo, many TEDx videos were shown to inform students who are venturing into the information security and information technician, as well as students who wanted to learned more about issues pertaining to those field. This Tedx talk focused more on the American and international national security. To present this information in a new and fresh way artists Mathias Jud and Christoph Wachter were given a opportunity to share their unique experience with interacting with America’s National Security Agency (NSA) and the UK’s Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ). The reason their experiment was significant was due to Germany finding out that the NSA and GCHQ spied on it’s government regularly causing outrage and distrust between the countries regarding their digital and telecommunication security. Along with uncovering distrust within the two nations it open discussion on other social issues as well. Those issues regard government laws, citizens privacy, and where to draw the line between intrusion and safety which then transforms into a discussion about inclusivity of all into the world of communication.

Before delving into the issues directly, the two artists journey to Berlin, Germany to experience both perspectives of the countries silently at conflict. The two artists we invited to the Swiss Embassy, which is a rare event as it it the oldest governmental building that survived the World War II. In close proximity to the Embassy is the US and Britain Embassy. Unlike the countries colleagues that practice free speech and communication the German government differs in the acceptance of its citizens speech. Rarely are people pardon when tried unlaw german law for using their speech in a negative way against the government or even neutrally for that matter as everything has to follow specific rules and guidelines.. That's why the two artists we thrilled when they found out that they were granted the opportunity to boundlessly express their freedom of speech artistically within the German government.

Typically everyones communication and speech are heavily monitored in their government, and ironically the US and Britain embassy having NSA and GCHQ technologies was closely monitoring the German government. The two secrete services has been listening to the entire district down to individually superiors including the mobile phone of Angela merkel, the Chancellor of Germany. The reason that the two government were able to monitor the german government without suspicious was because the technologies were cleverly hidden outside or within their embassies. To transition to how this affects social issues the two artists state that “since these countries are spying on us they have to listen”. With that statement in mind, the artists and the Institute of Art proceed to create multiple makeshift can antennas on top of the Swiss Embassy, that distributed free wifi for those within range thus creating the their project called “Can You Hear Me?”. While creating and using the embassy all of the governments had helicopters and agents watching them at all times.

Even though the government is known for having “rules and guidelines” along with consequences for ill form of speech and communication, citizens are able to freely communicate as there are not any laws that specifically inhibit citizens from communicating as they please. Therefore the artist's creation was perfectly legal even though they didn't inform the Chancellor of their actions and she was not please about it. Supristing through, without hesitant their makeshift network was being used by the government. Classified documents and other sensitive files were transmitted using the network. This revealed that no one is safe from surveillance not even the parliament of any government but on the bright-side everyone has access to the internet and the ability to communicate, except for Romani or gypsies throughout Europe. The Romani people are always discriminated against, exiled and harshly persecuted with limiting freedom of speech within any government that they reside in.

The artists continue by telling the story of their journey to Australia. They were easily accepted and included without hesitant due to them have European passports. Unfortunately for those who arrive by boats seeking asylum are deported or taken to prison open the discussion of inclusion and exclusion of communication between peoples. The processes of those seeking asylum and being inputted into the Australian national system without trial regardless of age or ethnicity are called secret operations of the Australian government. To bring it back to freedom of communication the artists created an excited that allowed Australian citizens to talk to current or past asylum seeking prisoners and hear their story. The artist's goal was to include those who are always exclude from communication to finally share their stories that are generally ignored by others. In the end the artists made the point that everyone needs the right to communication and everyone's information is important regardless of the speaker being the government or an asylum seeker.