Social Interactions

ENCS 393 – Social and Ethical Dimensions of ICTs

Day 5 – May 20, 2020

Announcements

- Quiz on Wednesday, June 3rd
  - Class will not meet on this day
  - Take-home quiz: 24 hours to complete
  - Covers all material from the beginning of the course until June 1st
  - You may refer to your notes, course readings, posted slides, and recorded lectures while completing the quiz

- Final Project due Friday, June 19th
  - Critical technology assessment and re-design
  - 5-minute video
  - Complete alone or with a partner: your choice

how or whether or not human to human interaction is being changed due to people's increased use of different information and communication technology. The ways to relate to each other have been modified because of the widespread technologies.

Social Interactions *through* ICTs Information and Communications Technology

1   Related to this is the question about sort of whether people are addicted or can become addicted to online interactions.

2   Or two, use of technologies or just sort of kept technologically mediated social interactions and what the potential consequences of that addiction might be

- Changes in human-to-human interaction due to increased use of ICTs; addiction to online/technologically mediated interactions:

"The iPod is one of the pernicious developments of recent technological innovation. It, even more than electronic gaming, has fostered what seems to be the ideal environment for the social solipsist."

iPod has fostered this environment where people can be extremely socially focused on themselves. Turn the socially inward

"Above, it was also claimed that social skills are necessary for one to be a productive *member* of society. I would like to take this one step further. Social skills are necessary for there to be a productive *society*. Today we are experiencing an America in which social skills apparently are not deemed important."
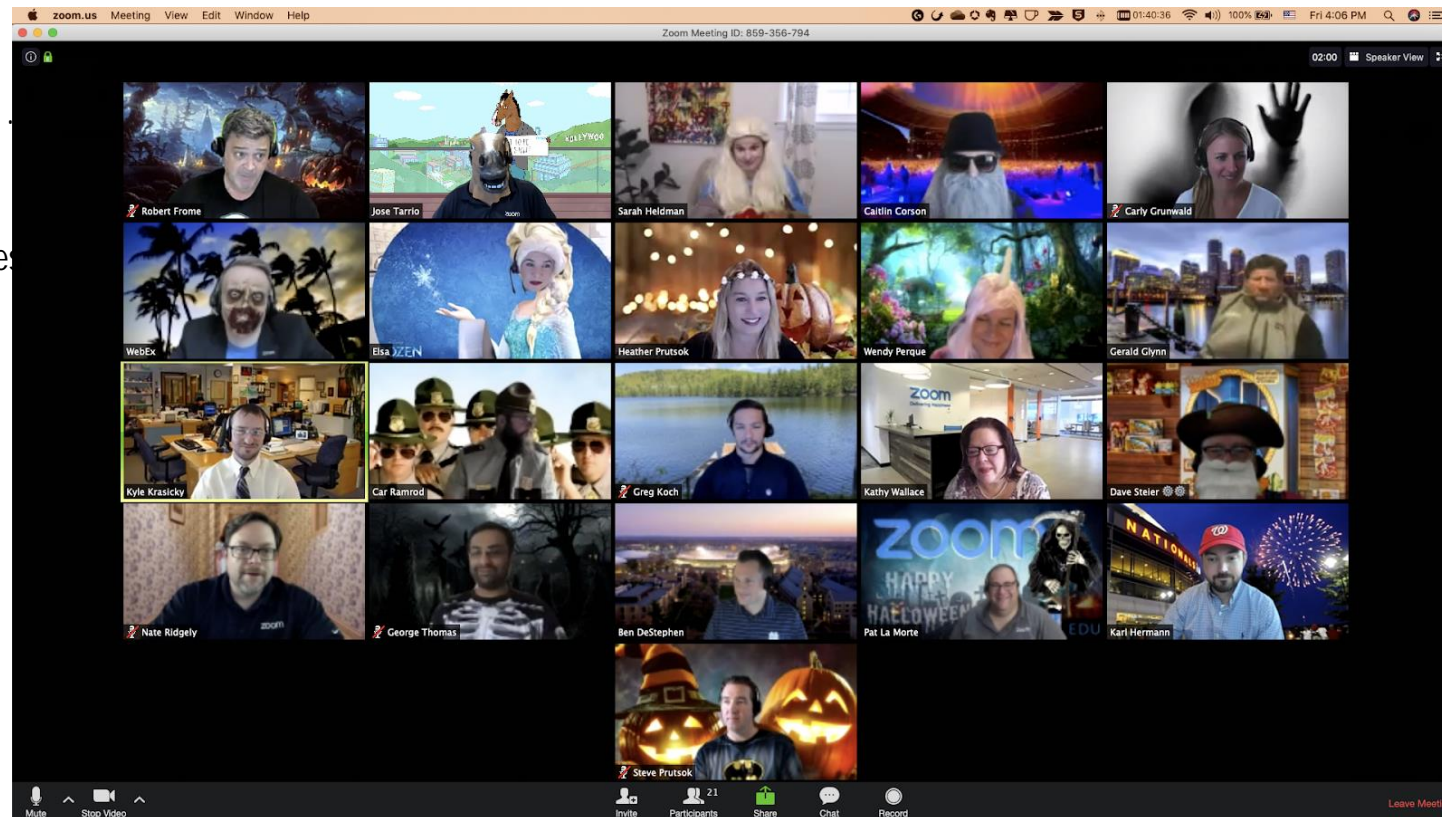
Joseph C. Pitt, "Don't Talk to Me," 2011

Social Interactions *through* ICTs

is there a difference between a friendship that we might have with someone that we've met online and have never known face to face and someone who we see in person regularly

- Quality of online/technologically mediated social relationships; differences between these interactions and face-to-face relationships

what quality does a relationship that's
maintained
through technology has?
And what are the qualitative differences
between technologically mediated
interactions, online interactions,
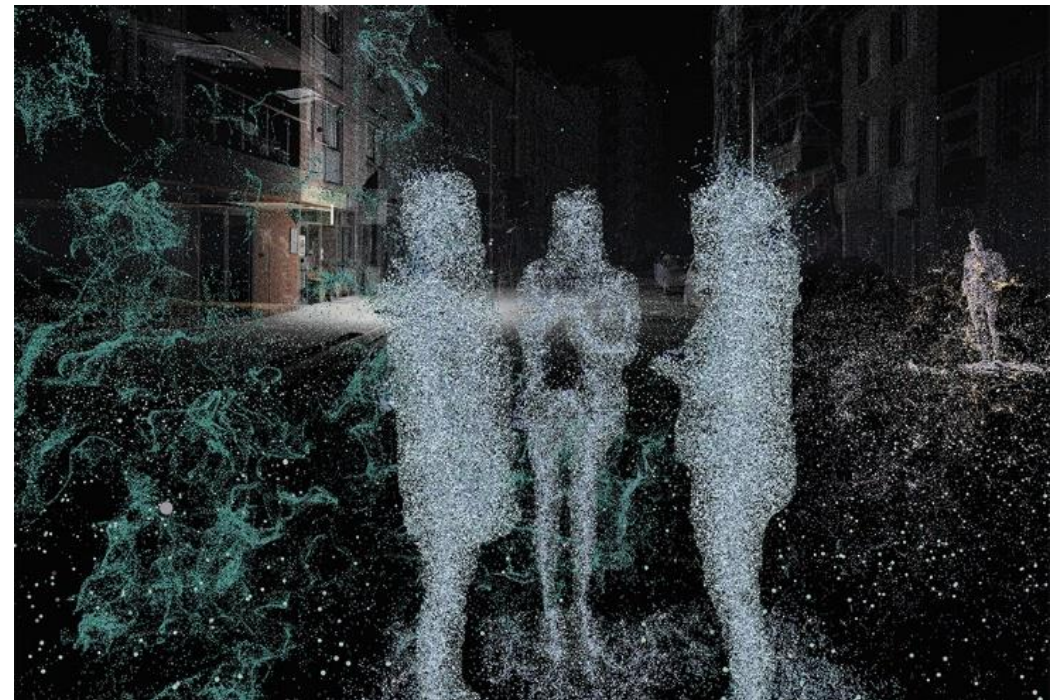and face to face social situation

Social Interactions *through* ICTs

- Place-making and social design of public spaces: ICT use within physical public spaces and social design of virtual spaces (Abdel-Aziz, Abdel-Salam, and El-Sayad, 2016)

Social Interactions *through* ICTs
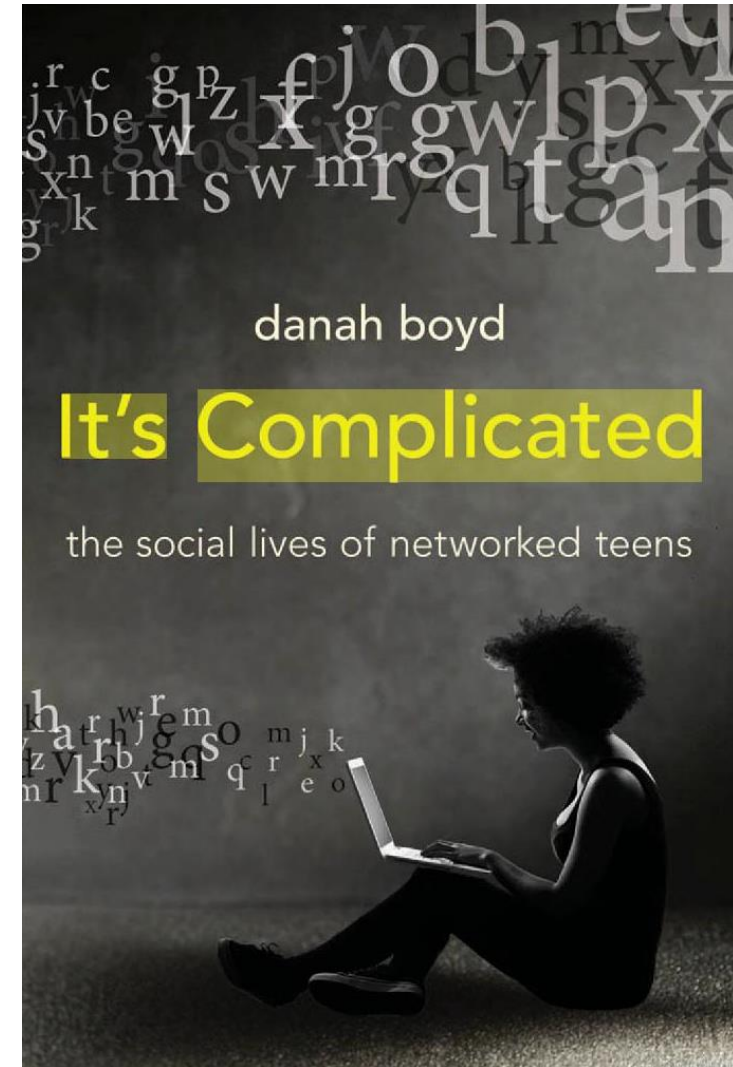
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How we create

xx

- (Creation of) social norms in online spaces/technologically mediated social relationships; acceptable and unacceptable behaviours

Zoom Ground Rules

No chat while teacher is talking	Be on time	Zoom from kitchen or living room
Mute yourself	Turn on video	Be prepared
Adult needs to be present	Raise your hand to talk	Be respectful

Lucky Little Learners

danah boyd, *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*

Creating Publics and Establishing Social Norms

"Rather than fighting to reclaim the places and spaces that earlier cohorts had occupied, many teens have taken a different approach: *they've created their own **publics***."

"Although laws provide concrete rules for what is and is not acceptable in a particular jurisdiction, ***social norms** shape most interactions*."

Digital Worlds as Legitimate Public Spaces

The Digital Ruins of a Forgotten Future

Second Life was supposed to be the future of the internet, but then Facebook came along. Yet many people still spend hours each day inhabiting this virtual realm. Their stories—and the world they've built—illuminate the promise and limitations of online life.

LESLIE JAMISON | DECEMBER 2017 ISSUE | TECHNOLOGY

What is a "Networked Public"?

"Networked publics serve as publics that both rely on networked technologies and also network people into meaningful imagined communities in new ways."

What is a "Networked Public"?

- Relating to networked publics indicates an interest in being a part of public life, not escaping it

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What is a "Networked Public"?

"In this way, the technical architecture of the system matters less than how users understand their relationship to it and how the public perceives any particular site...the nature of public-ness for teens ends up depending on how the people around them use available tools."

What is a "Networked Public"?

- Relating to networked publics indicates an interest in being a part of public life
- Networked publics remake "the nature of public-ness": public perceptions and people's **use** of digital tools matters as much as their design
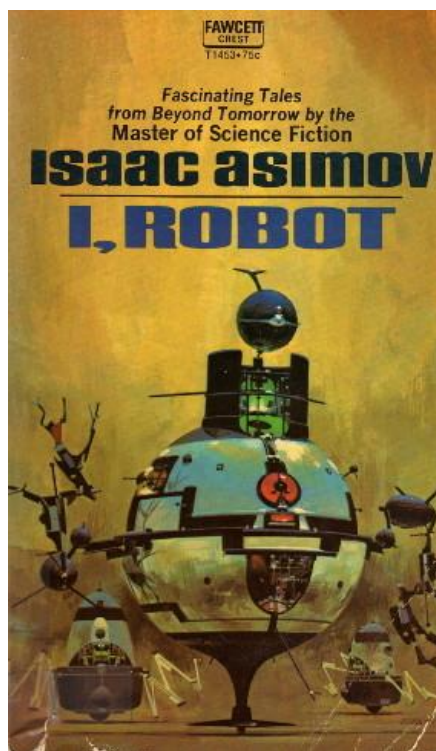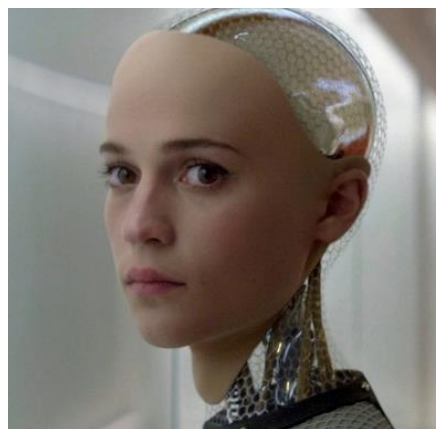- Not inherently political, but can be political – sometimes in unorthodox ways

"At the same time, teens are as they always have been, resilient and creative in repurposing technology to fulfill their desires and goals. When they embrace technology, they are imagining new possibilities, asserting control over their lives, and finding ways to be a part of public life."
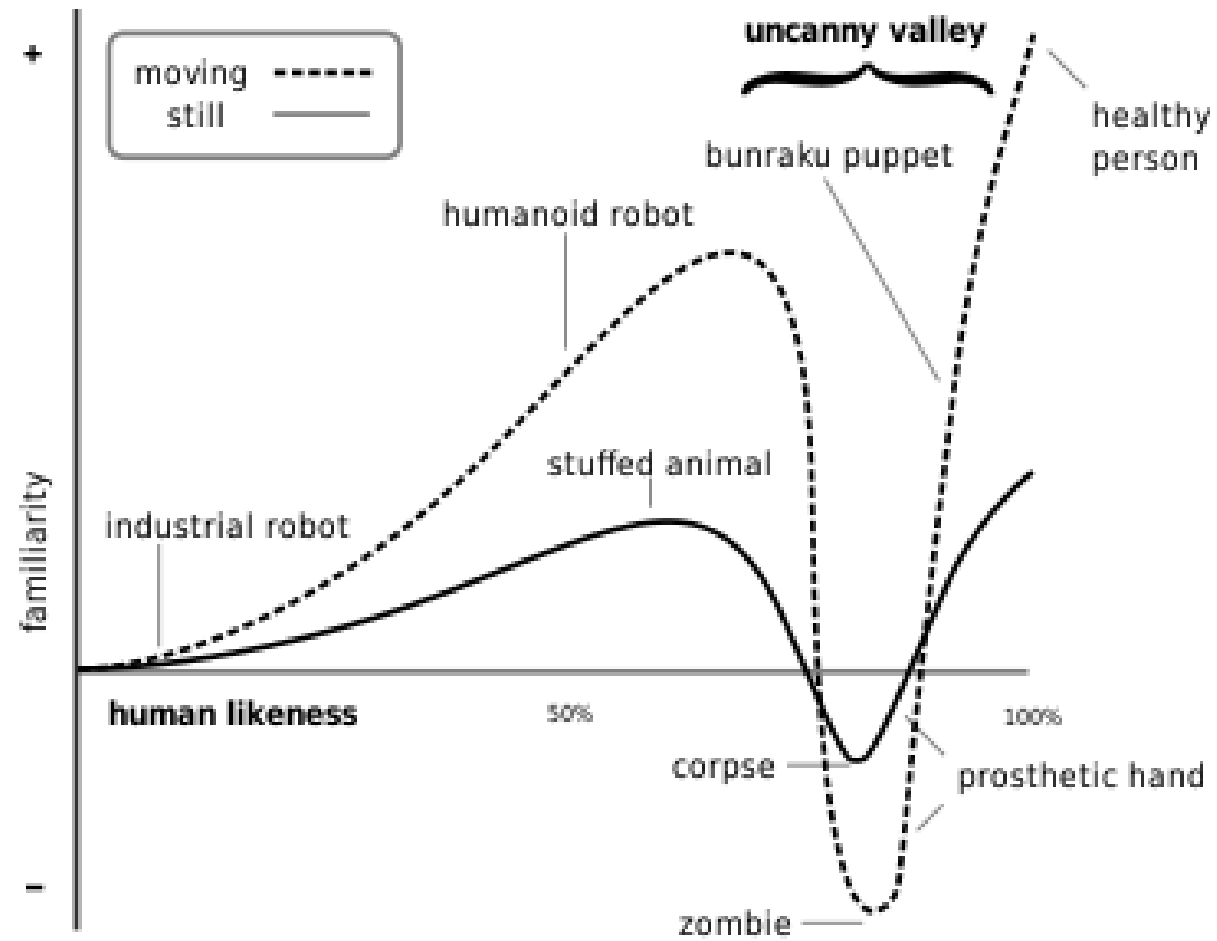
"Technology makes the struggles youth face visible, but it neither creates nor prevents harmful things from happening even if it can be a tool for both."

boyd's arguments about power and technological systems/architectures are arguably different than the conclusions of some other authors we've read (e.g. Winner, Lessig). What do you think about this difference?
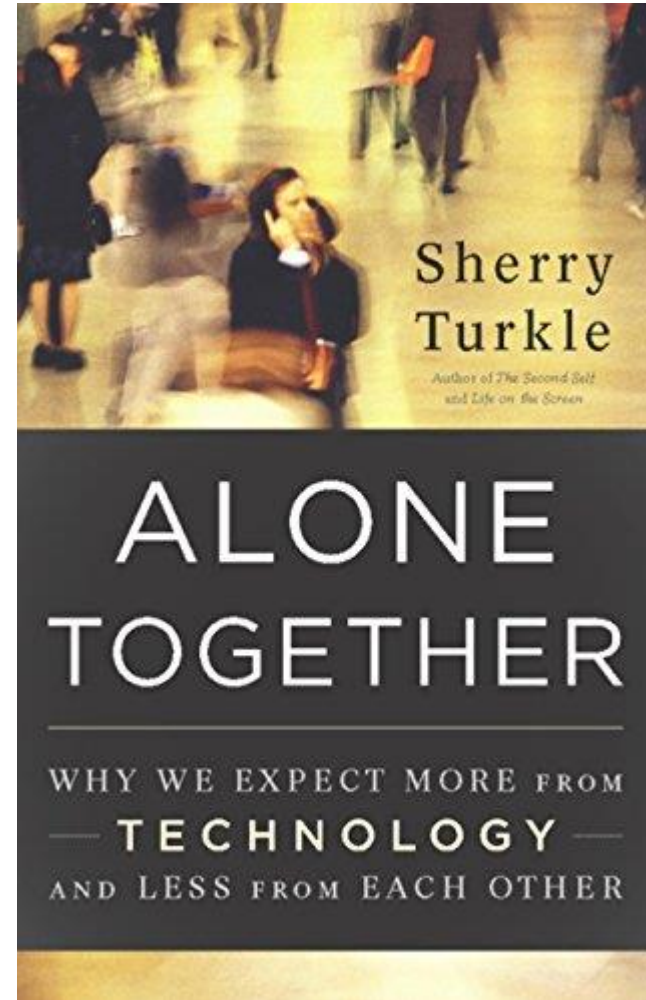
Social Interactions *with* ICTs

- Can we form social or emotional attachments with technologies themselves? How and why do these relationships develop? Are they healthy?

- Do social or emotional relationships with technologies change our relationships with other people? Do they change our understanding of what it means to be human, or to be alive?

- What constitutes ethical treatment of advanced technologies?

Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together*

"A Turing Test for the Heart"

New Ethical Terrain

"People are surprised by how upset they get in this theater of distress. And then they get upset that they are upset…Adults come to the upside-down test knowing two things: the Furby is a machine and they are not torturers. By the end, with a whimpering Furby in tow, they are on new ethical terrain."

From "Romantic Reaction" to "Robotic Moment"

Romantic Reaction:
- The belief that *shared understanding develops from shared human experiences*.
- There is something unique about the human spirit that robots and AIs will never fully be able to replicate.

Robotic Moment:
- A shift away from "romantic" thinking about humanity.
- A belief that, given enough time, access, and data, machines could develop enough emotional intelligence to become true human companions.
- Human "imperfection" as a liability rather than an asset.

From "Romantic Reaction" to "Robotic Moment"

"My story of this moment is not so much about advances in technology…rather, I call attention to our strong response to the relatively little that sociable robots offer…with each new robot, there is a ramp-up in our expectations. I find us vulnerable – a vulnerability, I believe, not without risk."

Mini-Assignment #4: ICT Self-Audit

Consider your own use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) over a typical 24-hour period.

- Think through your daily routine. Which ICTs do you use regularly? What social or emotional functions do they fulfill? (A single technology can have multiple functions!)
- How are ICTs involved in your relationships with other people?
- Consider the different ways in which you feel a sense of community, belonging, or group identity. How do ICTs play a role in this?
- How do you feel an emotional connection to ICTs themselves?

After considering these questions, pick one way in which you are emotionally connected with ICTs (with the ICT itself OR because an ICT facilitates an emotional connection with other people or a particular group/community). Describe this connection in 1-2 paragraphs and post your response on Moodle.

Reading Hints for Next Class

ICTs, Computer Science, and Gender

Janet Abbate, "Seeking the Perfect Programmer" from Recoding Gender

Nathan Ensmenger, "'Beards, Sandals, and Other Signs of Rugged Individualism': Masculine Culture within the Computing Professions"

- Neither of these texts are about gendered *technologies* per se, but rather about gendered *identities* in computer science.
- How are these two texts similar to and different from one another?
- What connections do they make between professional identities and the creation/design of technologies?