2011 THE WEB WIRING OUR WORLD

UNIS-UN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE WORKING PAPER

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The Web:
Wiring Our World

Working Paper

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FOREWORD

The Internet is one of the most widely used tools of the twenty-first century. From generating new social dynamics to revolutionizing the world of politics and economics, the Internet has touched upon a myriad of societal facets. Today, we often hear about the Internet as the "Great Equalizer." Through anonymity and rapid-fire speed of communication, information, which is quickly becoming equated with power in our society, can reach people who previously did not have access to it. In this way, the Internet is increasing inclusion; a larger percentage of the population now has access to this massive network of information and communication. However, as we come to rely more and more on the Internet, we must be cautious. As of 2010, only about 28% of the world's population has access to the Internet and most of these Internet users live in developed countries, where information is already much more readily available. If we listen to the voices we hear around us, we begin to realize something. The voices we hear, the opinions we understand, and the perspectives we encounter, are those of people who come from socio-economic strata similar to our own. The Internet has the potential to change this, but we are deluding ourselves if we believe that this is what has happened; it is our intention to investigate the impacts and the future potential of the Internet.

This exploration spans the diverse bridge between topics such as virtual communities and social networking (which we regularly confront as modern teenagers) and the more high-brow intricacies of sociopolitical issues like net neutrality. Our intention, through the numerous articles provided in this Working Paper, is to display how rapid advancements in Internet technology have catalyzed and generated great change in a short time. From the Internet's inception, our perception of the world has changed, and accompanying this change comes a re-evaluation of our values. The goal of the conference is to provide insight into this phenomenon that society has embraced without fully understanding its transformational powers. The conference examines issues such as the role of the Internet in political movements; the moral and ethical questions concerning the privacy of information; the potential use of the Internet during conflicts (or more formally, cyber-warfare); and on a more theoretical note, how the Internet has affected our thought processes and our worldview. At the forefront of the issues facing us today, the Internet is of colossal importance; a recent and prominent example is how a Facebook page ignited a people's revolution in Egypt, uniting those of different religions, beliefs and classes for a common cause. This is the great power of the Internet; at the tips of our cursors we can delve into potent reservoirs of information. Although the network has brought us interconnectivity and ease of communication, we must recognize the limits of this power and our potential to abuse it.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNET

Today, "the wild" technological world of the Internet is most renowned for its multimedia entertainment and social networking. However, most of the public is unaware of the Internet's true origins and intentions. The development of the Internet began in 1957 in America after the Soviet Union launched the first satellite, Sputnik. This was a great achievement as it was the start of global telecommunications. America felt threatened by the Soviet Union's technological advancement and thus created the Advanced Research Projects Agency (APRA) within the Department of Defense (DoD) to try and bring the U.S. to the forefront in science and technology and then apply their research to the military. There were various developments between 1958-1968, and finally in 1969, the Internet was born. The very first computer networks were exclusive systems named SABRE, used by American Airlines to make reservations, and AUTODIN I, a data communications service used by the US Department of Defense. In the late 1960s, the Internet allowed scientists to test and prove theories on how the Internet can be used to benefit humankind. J.C.R Licklider, an important figure in computer science was probably the first to write about the Internet. He developed a theory called the "Galactic Network" in which he posited that there should be an entire network of computers through which everyone could have access to other sites and programs.

During the same time, commercial computer companies began advancing rapidly by adding time-sharing systems to their products, allowing multiple users to access data from a single digital computer, known as a host, almost simultaneously. ARPA (Advanced Research Projects Agency) soon realized the potential of this new connection, and started the ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network) project in 1966, with Licklider as head of the computer research program. In 1969, ARPA established its first host-to-host connection, which is an encrypted connection between two systems. Government-funded research sites and key universities in America used and explored this connection, but it swiftly became a vital tool for computer scientists as well. Later, in 1972, Ray Tomlinson implemented the use of simple mail transferring, known as e-mail today, into ARPANET. Over time, DARPA (originally ARPA) decided to develop and expand their network to a point where it could connect to other networks in Europe and a blueprint for a global network, where single interfaces could be connected by "gateways", was made.

In 1974, the Internet Protocol, or IP, was the essential addressing tool to ensure that the data packets arrived at their destination. The U.S. DoD adopted this system in 1980 and eventually this system plan was integrated into networks all around the world. By 1981, over 200 computers were linked to ARPANET. Then, the US military divided the network into two organizations: ARPANET and a military network. During the 1980's ARPANET was held by NSFNET, a more advanced network developed by the National Science Foundation, which was an independent agency of the federal government. Before long, this collection of networks was known as the Internet.

By the late 1980s, some of the entities that were involved with networking included NASA and the National Science Foundation (NSF). The latter collaborated with DARPA (the Defense Advance Research Projects Agency) to make the newly formed Internet

available to all government-affiliated sites. In turn, NSFNET was created as a national connection between these sites. However, as commercial networks sprung up, such as the Commercial Internet Exchange, NSFNET became obsolete, as these commercial networks were able to support the scientific community. The invention of the personal computer and Ethernet in the late 1980s fueled the growing commercialization of the Internet. Computers became more accessible to the middle class and the commercial e-mail provider was created.
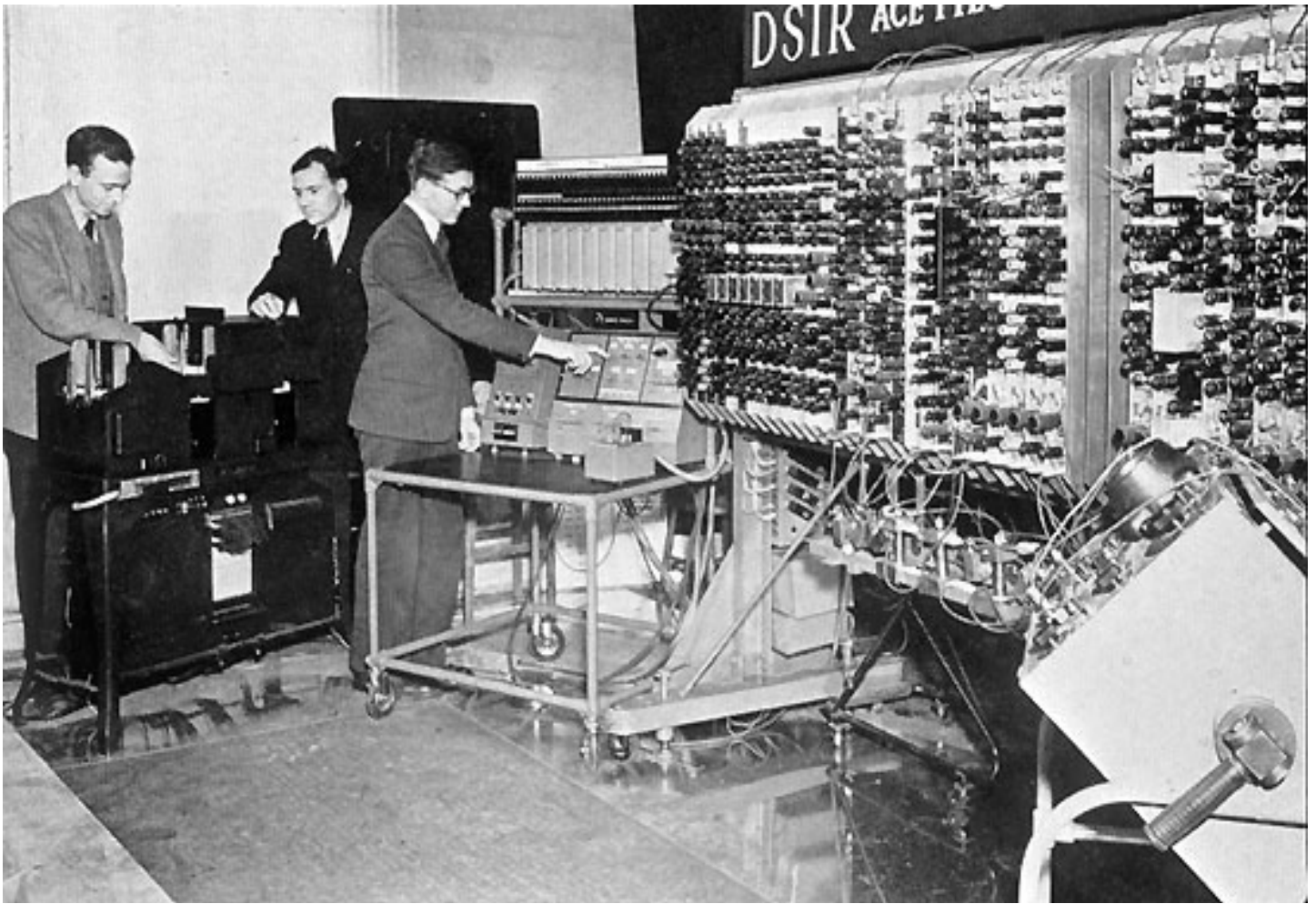
The Internet's breakthrough came in 1991 when the World Wide Web was created. Tim Berners-Lee, a British computer scientist at the European Organization for Nuclear Research, developed the Web. An important characteristic of the Web that stood out to people was its capacity to deliver multimedia. 1993 marked the next stage of evolution for the Internet. Mosaic, a browser created by Marc Andreessen, featured a new and friendly point-and-click interface rather than one that required an extensive knowledge of programming. It also integrated the use of file retrieval on the Internet. Soon after, business giant Microsoft Corporation began to create its own Internet-supported applications, including Internet Explorer. Later in the decade, there were more than 10,000 Internet service providers. During the same time, many businesses saw this as an opportunity for profit and began Internet based businesses. However, only a few business companies made a profit and by early 2000, most of these companies were out of business. Then, there were arrangements made to merge these small companies into larger ones; some of those companies include AOL, Yahoo! and Excite.

At the turn of the century, high-speed wireless Internet became the forefront of networking. In September 2000, up to 20 million websites occupied the Internet and by February of the same year, that number had doubled. Commercial giants such as YouTube and Facebook emerged later in that decade. The Internet continues to evolve. It is gradually being even more integrated into a greater variety of technologies including televisions, smart phones, and home appliances. In addition, the idea of virtual reality, where expansive, realistic environments connect friends from all around the globe, is not a far off possibility. The Internet has come a long way, and in just a few decades, it has become an integral part of our society.

CHAPTER 1 POLITICS ON THE INTERNET
CENSORSHIP

Censorship on the Internet can be defined as the suppression of access to certain content that has been deemed "inappropriate" for political, cultural, or personal reasons. It ranges from protecting young viewers from accessing undesirable material, to governments restricting information the general public can see. The controversy over censorship on the Internet is similar to that of offline censorship of books, newspapers, and other publications.

Most nations censor Internet content to some degree. Even in the United States, according to the Google censorship map, there are over 125 removal requests in the past six months. China has one of the most advanced filter systems in the world. Despite the fact that China has some of the world's strictest censorship laws, they don't block specific genres of websites, such as ones that display pornography, but rather they filter content by searching for specific key words to censor. Some of the most visited sites on the web, including YouTube, Wikipedia and Facebook, are blocked in certain regions. China's "Golden Shield Project" (also known as "The Great Firewall"), operated by the government's Ministry of Public Security, is a project that aims to filter web content and has been active since 1998. Australia also plans to implement such a firewall in order to blacklist websites that show child pornography, child abuse, or instructions on how to make weapons.

There are many countries including North Korea, Tunisia, Vietnam, Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt that have very strict Internet censorship policies and block users from many websites. Governments implement these policies to try and curtail political demonstrations; an example of this occurred in 2009 in Iran, when the government realized that people were posting on Twitter in order to recruit thousands of protesters. In response, the government cut Internet access, thus crippling the organizational structure, because the protests were predominantly planned via the Internet. Another reason governments limit access to information on the web is that they don't want their citizens to be aware of negative sentiments towards the country's political body. This sort of censorship can lead people to have a very biased view on situations and isolate them from the global political perspective. Even in the U.S., which is often considered the epicenter of freedom of speech, websites that attempt to bring about government transparency are being censored. For example, the U.S.

government has made several attempts to block the whistle-blowing website WikiLeaks.

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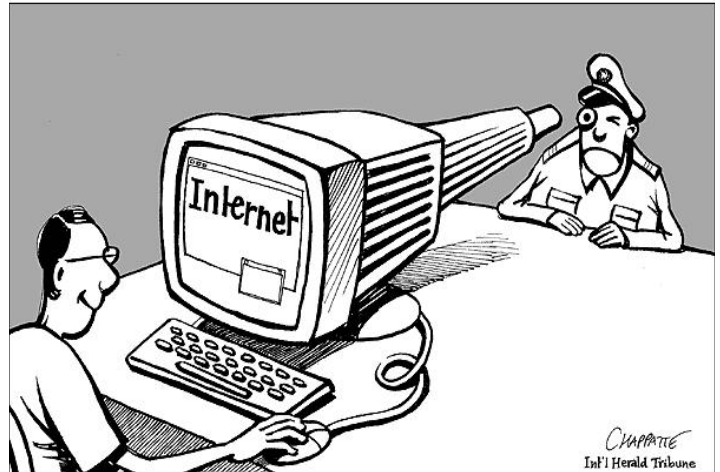
Some nations' censorship laws are so strict that journalists and other people are imprisoned, beaten, and otherwise punished by governmental forces for sharing classified or offensive information on the web. For example, Iranian reporter, Siamak Qaderi, was sentenced to four years in prison as well as 60 lashes after his arrest in August of 2010. He was prosecuted for posting interviews with homosexuals on his blog. Also, more recently, in Cairo, there have been numerous reports of attacks against journalists covering the recent protests (now christened the January 25th Revolution). For example, CNN reporter Anderson Cooper was beaten twice in the streets by Mubarak loyalists (it is unclear whether or not these men were sponsored by the government). Also, the offices of Al Jazeera, the news network credited for galvanizing the movement through its 24 hour live streaming of the situation in Tahrir Square and other parts of the country, were set on fire.

It is the goal of non-governmental organizations like Reporters Without Borders to fight for freedom of the press around the world. They survey censorship in countries across the globe, including Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, Afghanistan, and many more. Their aim is to protect journalists that are prosecuted for publishing controversial material, combat censorship laws, and provide financial aid for families of jailed journalists. In 2009, the organization won the Roland Berger Human Dignity Award that aims to "promote peaceful cooperation in the world."

The Freenet Project is another organization dedicated to combating Internet censorship. It is a free software program that allows people to access "freesites," which are normally blocked by censors, and thus are only accessible through the Freenet. It is a decentralized network, so its users are protected and it is very difficult to trace the people who request certain information. This software is a means for people living in heavily censored areas to view information which would otherwise be impossible to access.

The Internet provides a wide range of opportunities for learning; however, inappropriate content is too easily accessed. The Internet provides us not only with entertainment, information, and methods of communication, but also displays violence, hate-sites, and pornography. It is concerning to some parents how easily this content can be viewed, which has led to the blocking and censoring of certain websites in addition to parental control blocks.

Internet censorship restricts media coverage, so people in many regions are only exposed to small bits of what is happening in the world, or even within their own nation. Blocking information can lead the public to develop a very biased and one-dimensional view on a problem, and it is often thought that censorship violates the rights to freedom of press and expression. However, on one hand, there is classified information that politicians might not want to share with the public, and on the other hand, websites showing child pornography are everywhere; but what are the limits on what should be allowed to be openly viewed by the world? The purposes of Internet censorship range from protecting younger web-users from inappropriate content to governments restricting what their citizens are allowed to know; the argument over how much information should be controlled is fraught with controversies.

POLITICS AND THE INTERNET

The Internet has provided a foundation for politicians to interact with their constituents, and for the common masses to collaborate, in a way that has forever altered the course of political history. The campaign tactics of only ten years ago are no longer adequate in today's world. In fact, because of the obvious success of the Internet, in 2003 Arizona became the first state to enable online voter registration. As the Internet has become a substantial part of politics, the entire political spectrum, from Socialism to Conservatism, has been forced to accelerate at an impossible speed. Politicians must not only compete amongst themselves; they must also compete against the people of the Internet—those sitting behind the com puter screens of blogs, Twitter, Facebook and other popular social media sites.

The history of the collision of Internet and political campaigns began in 1997, just one year before the creation of Google, when the Republican Party founded the Internet forum FreeRepublic. The site, still in existence today, was created with the intention of spreading the GOP message. Because its users were free to post whatever they wanted, attacks on the Democratic Party were frequent and the material was biased. The forum, revolutionary at the time of its initiation, inspired many other political organizations to create their own sites, thereby utilizing the Internet as a tool to reach out to potential voters without spending money on advertisements and door-to-door campaigners.

In 2000, the Internet's use in politics once again took a radical turn. In less than 24 hours, US Senator John McCain raised more than $500,000 through online donations following his primary win in New Hampshire against Governor George W. Bush during the 2000 presidential elections. Sen. McCain's use of the Internet to elicit campaign donations was a lifesaver for his nearly bankrupt campaign and it marked the start of the Internet as a fundraising tool. Eight years later, Senator Barack Obama successfully raised $800 million in donations, mostly through his online campaign tactics. Sen. Obama was lauded for his skillful use of social media, which directly contributed to his success in inspiring America's youth. "Through a steady stream of texts and Tweets, experts agree Obama has managed to excite young voters by meeting them where they live — online," writes Melissa Dahl of MSNBC. In the 2008 election, according to Dahl, youth voters preferred Obama over Republican opponent John McCain by a margin of 68 to 30 percent, which was a significant difference that greatly reflected Obama's online presence. Voters with a Facebook account had the ability to 'like' then-candidate Obama's profile and leave posts on his wall, providing Americans with the feeling that their voice was truly being heard by a politician. Americans felt more connected with the election, which was vital for attracting people, specifically the youth, to vote. As Obama said in 2008, "there's no more powerful tool for grass-roots organizing than the Internet." Malcolm Gladwell adds: "With Facebook and Twitter and the like, the traditional relationship between political authority and popular will has been upended, making it easier for the powerless to collaborate, coordinate, and give voice to their concerns." According to a survey by the Pew Research Center, 50 million Americans go on the Internet for news every day therefore suggesting that the use of online ads and campaigns can significantly improve a politician's popularity and acceptance.

In 2005, the now popular video sharing site, YouTube, was created and launched by Steve Chen, Chad Hurley and Jawed Karim. The site, along with others, has made a huge impact on politics as it allows users to post campaign speeches as well as their own videos on YouTube with their thoughts on different campaigns. Many politicians, including President Barack Obama, have used YouTube as a means to post videos and therefore communicate with a variety of audiences. In fact, President Obama's speech on race has about 6.7 million views on YouTube thus demonstrating just effective such sites can be.

But apart from political campaigns, the Internet in recent years has also served as a tool of empowerment for social injustices. On June 12, 2009, the U.S. State Department asked the social networking site Twitter to postpone its scheduled maintenance time to allow Iranians to continue the protest over the presidential elections. Following the announcement of incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's victory in the elections against Mir-Hossein Moussavi, hundreds of thousands of Iranians, as well as concerned members of the international community, fled to Twitter to fight what protesters believed to be an unfair election. Later dubbed the 'Twitter Revolution,' the aftermath of the Iranian election marked just how effective the Internet was as a tool to draw together supporters around the world. Ultimately, protesters were defeated and Ahmadinejad was named the winner of the election, but the protesters' battle was a remarkable event in the history of the web.

In a world that has become more and more dependent on the Internet, it is necessary to consider the web not only as a tool of political awareness and empowerment, but also as a threat to the legitimization of sources.

As users of the Internet are for the most part eligible for freedom of speech and press, information published on the Internet is often not entirely accurate and it is often difficult for users to decipher between valid and invalid sources. Because anyone with a computer can write complete falsifications about a political figure and impose on other web users their opinions, the Internet is not an impartial source of information. For example, during the 2008 presidential elections, anti-Obama bloggers claimed that the candidate was not American and therefore could not run for president, causing uproar on Internet sites that ultimately forced Obama to personally address the accusations.

The Internet, although useful and efficient, has also provided a platform for people to gain access into confidential sources, as demonstrated by the organization WikiLeaks. In November 2010, WikiLeaks published over 250,000 U.S. diplomatic cables online with the intention of letting the American public become aware of the secret affairs of the government. The whistleblowing organization has been accused of damaging international relations and violating secrecy laws. Although some may argue that governments should not have anything to hide from the general public, document-dumping sites such as WikiLeaks undoubtedly demonstrate the problems of free press on the web. In the long run, lawmakers that once battled the issues of freedom of press for news organizations are now facing the disadvantages of what they were once fighting for. With the Internet being such a place where users can demonstrate their right to freedom of speech, questions such as whether or not the government has the right to monitor and maybe even censor online postings begin to rise. Do the advancements in technology and the Internet affect the people's right to freedom of speech regardless of whether they are online or not?

In any case, the Internet has undoubtedly changed the world of politics forever. Politicians are subjected to 24-hour scrutiny by the public therefore eliminating any discretion that might have existed. Anyone with a message now has the platform to share his or her views and people in any corner of the Earth have the power to affect someone in a completely different continent. However, because the Internet has both incredible benefits as well as damaging faults, we must ask ourselves: at what point, if at all, do the negatives outweigh the positives?

PRIVACY AND SURVEILLANCE

Monitoring Internet usage has both benefits and drawbacks that make it difficult for governments to decide what should be tracked and what should be left private. As a result, the surveillance of the Internet has started to become an ethical issue.

Web monitoring, or surveillance, is the act of observing and recording one's history of websites one visits for the purpose of maintaining security. Although surveillance can be a way to keep people safe, there is a fine line between maintaining security and breaching privacy. When people are online at home, their web history is being recorded, which some may perceive as an invasion of personal space. The Internet, although useful and effective, is not a safe place to send vital information that can be used against the user. There are certain types of software

e-mails, thus can gather information that the sender presumes is private. This lack of privacy threatens computer users and generates arguments with the companies that track information on personal computers.

The ethical question raised in this situation is whether or not computer users have a right to privacy on the Internet. This issue usually arises in companies where complaints from employees are directed towards their employers. Employees usually use computers belonging to the company where they work, and employers who own the computers can view employee's private information such as e-mails and pictures. The next question then becomes whether or not this surveillance is fair, because they own the computers, or unfair because employees have rights to their privacy.

In the U.S., the Supreme Court has not yet issued a judgment on such actions, but the federal government is working on regulating the Internet to reduce the amount of circulating harmful software. Some states have laws allowing and affirming the right to privacy in electronic communications. These laws originate from the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986. Some cases are taken to court with employees complaining about web monitoring. With technology and the Internet rapidly growing and users increasing, it is nearly impossible for Congress to keep up with these court cases. The Notice of Electronic Monitoring Act was adopted in 1999 to ensure that the employer must notify its employee before any web monitoring is in effect. Recently, the U.S. subpoenaed the Twitter accounts of several people affiliated with the whistle-blowing organization WikiLeaks, including Icelandic parliament member Birgitta Jonsdottir.
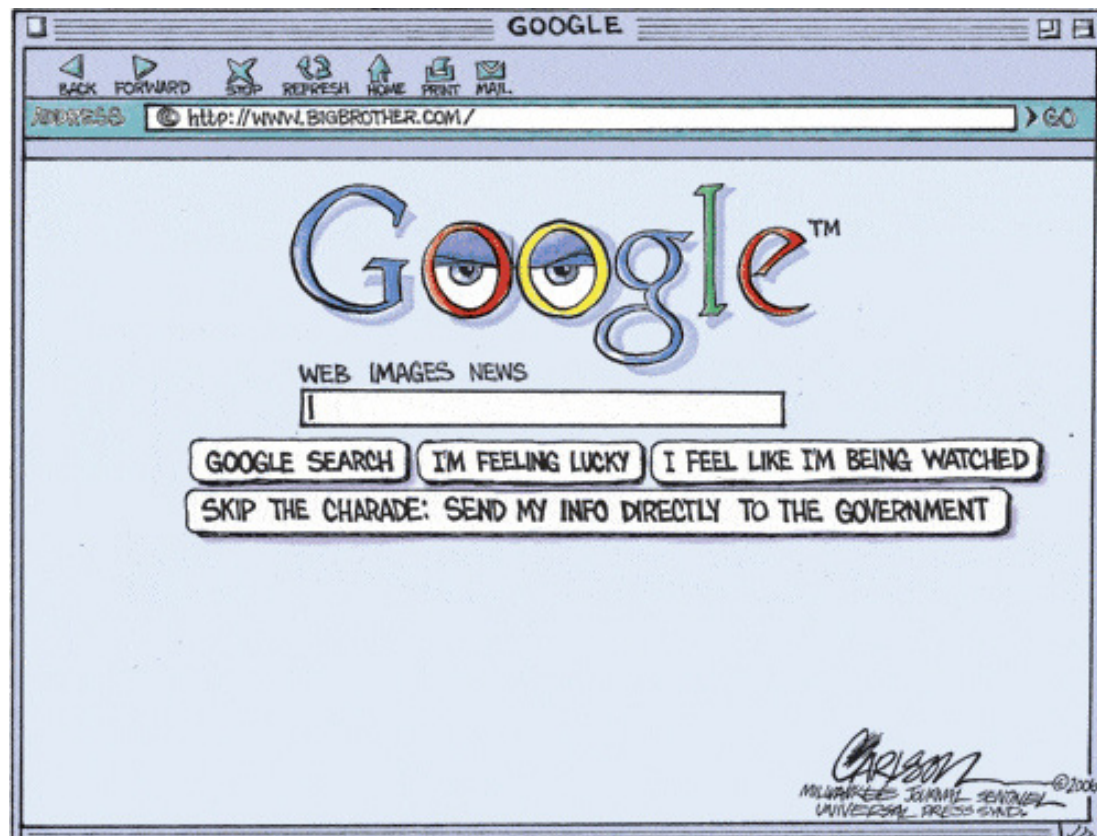
that can track e-mails being sent and relay information concerning the files attached to the e-mail or the location from which the e-mail was sent. ISP, or the Internet Service Provider, keeps a copy of every e-mail you have ever sent. E-mails go through the ISP software before they are actually sent to the recipient. This is a threat because any person who has access to the ISP server can easily read personal

Twitter was not required to even notify those whose accounts were subpoenaed, but it did, and now, Jonsdottir and other WikiLeaks supporters and volunteers are attempting to fight the court order. Internet privacy and surveillance is a question of ethical opinion. Would Internet users allow their private information

to be publicly viewed, thus exposing themselves to potential threats to their safety? Or is it okay for surveillance software to monitor computers by protecting against viruses in e-mails or any other reasons? The debate between these two sides goes on. On one hand, Internet users rightfully demand their privacy, but conversely, the Internet poses many threats to users and may not be safe without some sort of monitoring.

CYBER-WARFARE

The methods in which war has been conducted have evolved over time: simple skirmishes on land moved to the seas and later, to the skies. In the late 1950s, with the launch of Sputnik, even outer space became another potential frontier for war. Presently, our global society is growing increasingly dependent on technology, and as a result, the Internet has become the latest battlefield. This so-called "cyber-warfare" is technically the theft or sabotage of another nation's private data.

There are numerous dangers posed by cyber-warfare: with the ability to control another nation's technology and advanced infrastructure, the people conducting such warfare could cut off power supplies, telecommunication lines, obtain sensitive information and sabotage military equipment. While cyber-warfare is a relatively nascent concept, it is of great importance to protect one's nation from such threats, because if such data sabotage transpires, the consequences can be enormous. When President Obama's talks of American digital infrastructure as a "strategic national asset," and the formation of the "U.S. Cyber Command," a special division of the Armed Forces dedicated to protecting America's military networks, he calls attention to this new phenomenon, this new threat. Nations worldwide such as China, Russia, England, and North Korea have taken similar measures towards cyber defense.

As with all kinds of conflicts, there are those who vehemently object to cyber-warfare. People such as Alexander Merezhko, a professor of International Law in Ukraine, consider the Internet to be the "common heritage of mankind;" an international resource that has become a fundamental aspect of daily life for most people in the developed world. As such, those who oppose cyber-warfare believe that the Internet should be kept free of conflict. General Keith B. Alexander, head of the U.S. Cyber command, responds to such beliefs: "This command is not about an effort to militarize cyber space. Rather, it's about safeguarding our military assets."

Another important issue of cyber-warfare is the lack of rules that govern its practice: there are no Geneva Conventions concerning the Internet. Due to its disparity from traditional 'kinetic' warfare, the established rules do not and cannot be applied. In normal 'kinetic' warfare, there are clear signs that mark the start of conflict, i.e., physically attacking a foreign country. In cyber-warfare, the anonymity of the Internet makes it difficult to know who the invader is.

Although it is generally accepted that cyber-warfare implies some sort of combat over the Internet (hence its name), a concrete and internationally accepted definition has yet to be made. According to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, cyber-warfare is the distribution of propaganda "harmful to the spiritual, moral and cultural spheres of other states."
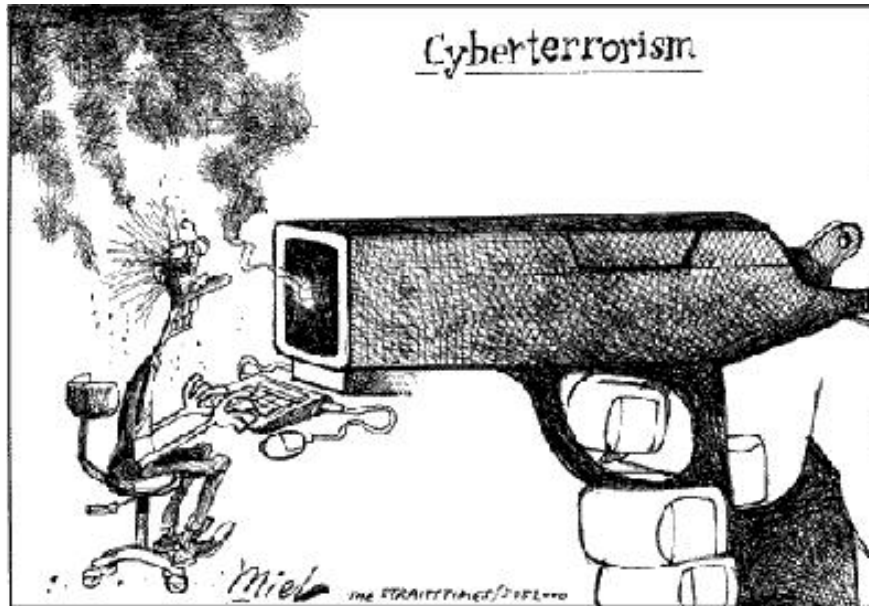
In contrast, the United States believes that cyber-warfare is the damaging to a nation's infrastructure, and measures similar to those taken in physical combat should be taken in order to defend against cyber-attacks.

However, the potentially devastating implications of cyber-warfare ensure that it will greatly influence the future of war. With the ability to destroy the infrastructure of another nation by simply typing on a keyboard, rules and regulations must be set forth. Given that dependency on the Internet and technology is rising at a rapid rate, it is important that such international regulations be made sooner rather than later.

INTERNET AS A HUMAN RIGHT EDITORIAL (PRO)

The Internet should be entitled to everyone as a human right. Access to the Web is no longer just a tool or luxury but a necessity as it has become a part of our everyday lives. The Internet is invaluable as an educational tool, social network, and news and information outlet. Its efficiency and endless spring of information helps us maintain the up-to-speed lifestyle many people have now adopted in the 21st century. Because of these essential uses of the Internet and the integral part the Web has in a society's infrastructure, it is unethical to deny anyone access to it.

Educators today have already realized that computer labs are a fundamental element in schools. There is no doubt that the Internet provides a wide range of valuable aids for both elementary and higher education. Teachers use the Internet to retrieve information for classes using articles, photographs, and videos posted on the Web. Students use the Internet to conduct research and educate themselves through online newspapers and learning programs.

Authority figures can easily skew, distort, and completely erase or ignore historical or current happenings if they do not pertain to or are unfavorable to that ruling powers' country. The Internet, when uncensored, is impartial and unbiased; it displays and broadcasts all opinions and angles on world events making it an essential tool for people living in oppressed regions that do not have free press. The Internet is a vital component in the news and information industry, connecting countries to each other, and supplying people with current news about every corner of the Earth. The Web is the only efficient way of informing people of important events around the world. Thanks to the Internet's high speed, information now has the ability to travel around the world in a matter of minutes.

Countries such as Finland and Estonia have declared Internet as a human right for their citizens. Starting in July 2009, 5.2 million citizens of Finland received their right to an Internet connection. "We think it's something you cannot live without in modern society. Like banking services, water, electricity, you need Internet connection," the authorities stated. Finland is one of the most wired countries in the world where 95% of the population is connected to the Internet and the law will facilitate the Web in rural areas where connection is more difficult due to geographic challenges. Other nations that believe the Internet should become a human right include the United Kingdom, France, and South Korea.

In our society, it is critical for all to be able to express themselves and their ideas and viewpoints freely, and many choose to do so through the Internet, using blogs, social networking sites, and online forums. It is important that everyone has equal opportunities to access knowledge through the Internet. Having federal governments mandating universal access helps establish the increased presence of the Internet in underdeveloped or rural areas. People who have less access to the Internet compared to people in countries that provide their residents with free Internet access are put at a disadvantage because they do not have the scope of information or potential for education, and that's why everyone should have equal opportunity to access the Web. In a world that has become increasingly wired access to the Internet needs to be a fundamental human right.

BASIC HUMAN RIGHT
INTERNET
ACCESS FOR ALL

INTERNET AS A HUMAN RIGHT EDITORIAL (CON)

What is a human right? Is it a law? Something we inherit? Something we can purchase? According to Princeton University, a human right is "any basic right or freedom to which all human beings are entitled and in whose exercise a government may not interfere, including rights to life and liberty as well as freedom of thought and expression and equality before the law." Typically, when we think of human rights we think of the right to food, water and education. Today, however, a new debate has emerged concerning human rights: should the Internet be a human right? BBC's poll, taken in March of 2010, found that fifty percent of the 27,000 people (from 26 nations) they interviewed strongly agreed that the Internet should be a human right. Some countries, including Mexico, Brazil and Turkey, are prominent in their support for the Internet as a human right. However, when we read the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," we see the right to liberty, to express

our opinions, and to practice religion; these are rights and liberties that we need to live in peace. Imagine reading the Declaration and seeing, "the right to the Internet." Something doesn't fit. The Internet is not at par with other necessities such as food, water and shelter. Can we live without the Internet? Are we exaggerating the Internet's importance? Our world has many other items on its agenda, and before we go adding one more far less important right, we should focus on finding cures, ending hunger, and improving education systems. A global survey commissioned by the BBC for the Superpower Season suggests that the vast majority of us, 80%, believe that access to the Internet is now a fundamental right. But only around one in every four people actually has access to the Web. Access to the Internet should not be a human right.

Including a right to Internet access in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is to degrade the other human rights. Human rights are universal, Inalienable rights. The Internet, for all its advantages and information is not on the level of ideals such as liberty and education or more practical concerns such as food and access to clean water. Is access to the Internet really on par with the others? How can one equate checking e-mail or visiting Facebook with access to clean food and water, the basic necessities for life? The Internet, though important for communication and easy access to information, should remain a luxury. With only 28.7% of the world's population connected to the Internet, how can it be considered a "universal" human right?

Though hard to believe, according to the UNDP's Human Development Report 2000, 1 billion people are still without safe water and more than 2.4 billion without basic sanitation while roughly 8 times as many have access to the Internet across the world. We need to prioritize our efforts to assist where aid is most needed.

Norman Lewis, the Chief Innovation Officer and Managing Partner at Open-Knowledge UK, believes "technological development impacts the world and forces everyone to adapt or die." Is this true? While modernization sets milestones in all of history, we seem to think that we must change every aspect of our world to be more advanced and keep up with the times. Look at transportation, fashion, food, technology; all aspects of life that affect people daily, all of which have modernized. While this is true, we also seem to ignore the fact that people lived successfully in the past without the Internet, and are still able to do so now. Luke Appleby states, "Perhaps it's time for a reality check, and to re-examine which of our 'rights' are truly important." We need to realize that the Internet is only a privilege and once we reach that understanding we must continue to work on larger global issues.

CHAPTER 2 ECONOMICS AND THE INTERNET
E-COMMERCE

The traditional concept of commerce is the act of buying or selling products from a store or a company. Currently, with new technology, commerce has undergone a massive change, making it part of the global movement of modernization. After the emergence of the Internet, typical commerce has become electronic commerce or e-commerce. E-commerce is similar to regular commerce in that commodities are being bought and sold, however, the key feature is that it takes place over the Internet.

Like traditional commerce, e-commerce re-

quires a product, a place where the product can be advertised, and a way to provide customer service such as through e-mail and FAQ (frequently asked questions). In fact, ever since its inception, e-commerce has gained much popularity as it provides a more efficient way of buying and selling, especially for people with busy lives. This is because it is generally faster and more cost-effective; for instance, instead of standing in long lines in crowded stores or driving from store to store in suburban areas, e-commerce provides an environmentally friendly and stress-free alternative to traditional shopping. In the end, this easy alternative requires less energy as the buyer merely has to peruse the contents of an e-commerce website as opposed to meandering through the aisles of an actual store. Also, e-commerce saves money for producers by cutting the costs of rent, wages for employees, and storage. People can also shop for international products, as opposed to having them imported to an actual store.

When using e-commerce, consumers can compare prices much more easily. With a Google search, they can bring up the various distributors who sell the product they are interested in, and easily pick the one with the lowest price. When shopping in an actual store, this process is much more difficult and can often involve several trips to many different stores to find the best value for a particular product.

Nevertheless, e-commerce has its own disadvantages. To make an online purchase, one must have a computer, access to the Internet, a bank account, and most importantly a credit or debit card. Although we may gain time by shopping online, sometimes these transactions are not secure. It is easier for criminals to scam consumers or commit fraud when transactions take place online. Furthermore, as e-commerce grows in popularity it is also robbing many people of their jobs. With e-commerce, there is no need to hire many employees. All that is needed is a computer with an Internet connection.

A crucial problem with e-commerce is the lack of control over the Internet markets. On the Internet, one can buy almost anything, legal or illegal; the drug trade has been exacerbated by the increasing amount of e-commerce. Moreover, with all the illegal products, children of this generation are also being affected. They can, willingly or unwillingly, buy various products on the Internet that aren't safe for them. Therefore, the easily accessible and available harmful goods via e-commerce represent a great problem that needs to be addressed instantly.

According to senior industry analyst at Frost Sullivan, Mukul Krishna, e-commerce and the 'new economy' is "evolutionary, not revolutionary." E-commerce is just another factor that causes humans to become more self-independent and antisocial. The bond between consumer and producer is broken with the unfamiliarity and anonymity of the Internet. The idea of having a 'loyal clientele,' completely disappears with e-commerce because there isn't the mutual friendship formed between buyer and seller. With e-commerce, all traditions such as Christmas shopping will become history. It is not clear whether the benefits outweigh the disadvantages, but e-commerce is certainly convenient. However, the price of that convenience is quite high; on the Internet, there are risks like identify theft and scamming that diminish the appeal of e-commerce.

SHIFTING INDUSTRIES (MUSIC, TV, PRINT)

Following the peak of journalism in the mid-18th century, it seems as if newspapers are succumbing to a prolonged dispute regarding the Internet and the modernization of today's world. Likewise, the fortitude of the music and television industries is wavering with the developments of various online media and as a result, essentially everything, from the latest top single, to breaking news, is readily accessible online. With the most recent music videos, television series and news articles only a click or search away on the Internet, the demand for these industries in the physical world is rapidly disappearing.

Newspapers were once symbolic of the American work ethic, but in the current era the most important quality of the products we consume is the availability. According to Robert Picard, editor of the Journal of Media Business Studies, before 1840, 15% of the United States population spent approximately $4 a day for a newspaper. Today, the case cannot be more different. About 67% of houses now have Internet connection which leaves no need for the 85% extra costs for the transportation, ink, and paper of newspapers. Some may argue that advertisements might keep the newspaper industry afloat but with fewer individuals actually reading newspapers, the Newspaper Association of America reported that 2008 sales decreased by 16.5%. Newspapers are now downsizing to meet lower demands as they are overwhelmed by more efficient, often free, online competition. Many newspapers have gone out of business, such as the Cincinnati Post, the Baltimore Examiner, and the Kentucky Post. Even the newspapers that haven't gone defunct have undergone massive staff and budget cuts. The future for newspapers seems all but lost and more efficient digital newspapers seem to hold more promise.

According to CNNMoney.com U.S. music sales decreased an estimated $8.3 billion between 1999 and 2009. At the beginning of that 10-year period the total revenue from U.S. music sales was about $14.6 billion. In 2009, the total revenue was reported to be around $6.3 billion. CD sales are massively declining due to websites such as YouTube and digital formats that are easily available for downloading on illegal websites. Another problem affecting the music industry significantly is piracy. According to the Recording Industry Association of America the amount of pirated CDs had increased from 36,857 to 84,965 between the years 1991 and 1995. The amount has since steadily increased in countries around the world such as Russia, China, and Brazil.

Purchasable music has been widely available on a program called iTunes for many years but the overall prices per song have been increased from $.99 to $1.29. Even so, before this price change, the majority of teens and young adults found it a hassle and a waste of money to actually pay for their own music. There was always the perfectly legal way of viewing music videos on YouTube but because of the many websites that offer permanent, illegal solutions instead of watching a music video or song only once on YouTube, the modern day Internet user can permanently download music for free with little chance of being caught. Some websites even offer a clip converter that switches the video from YouTube into an audio file for a music player. Because piracy is so easily done on the Internet, it has become a problem that is affecting many other countries around the world such as Indonesia and India. In fact, some governments have been trying to eradicate piracy because of the major threat it poses to their economies, but it is becoming more and more apparent that it is very difficult to eliminate all avatars of piracy.

Another industry that has to deal with the shifting circumstances is television. Conventionally,

television was watched constantly so one could be kept up to date with the storyline of a TV show. Now, however, there are websites, which are sponsored by the very companies that make the TV shows, which display many of the previously shown episodes online. Hulu, for example, is a site which is completely free and legal as it is sponsored by News Corp, FOX, ABC, and others. Though there are some ads, the amount of time designated to commercials is much lower and in addition, because Hulu does not require a cable TV to watch cable shows, it is becoming an extremely popular site. Now, instead of purchasing many unwanted channels with cable, people can

simply go on Hulu and watch all of their favorite shows in one place. Another example of such a website is Netflix which serves the same purpose as Hulu but with no ads whatsoever, and you also get unlimited use of it for a flat fee. With these new websites which allow users to basically watch TV online, it is no wonder the television industry is changing so drastically.

Although shifts to the Internet are environmentally sound due to the decreased amount of trash that fills the world's landfills, these changes have affected employment on a large scale. The hours of many post offices have had to be shortened due to decreased demand, which means that post office employees are now paid less. Unlike cutbacks in other industries that take place as a result of a particularly bad economic environment, in industries that depend on print media, it is unlikely that these jobs will ever be needed again; as a result it has become increasingly difficult for journalists to become successful. With the developments of blogs, even people who do not have the necessary qualifications to be journalists are able to post their views on issues of the world. They attract readers and thus threatening the legitimacy of "real," professional journalists.

There is no doubt that there are both pros and cons to industries shifting online, but perhaps the problem we should be most concerned with is whether or not we will be able to handle the significant responsibilities that come with the Internet.

NETWORK NEUTRALITY

Network neutrality or net neutrality is a principle founded on the notion that all information found on the Internet should be treated equally, meaning that all information across the Internet should be equally accessible. It stipulates that there should be no restriction on downloading, uploading or communicating; having net neutrality guarantees that Internet content will not be banned, slowed down or sped up; it is a guarantee of information equality.

The most important and widely accepted advantage of net neutrality is that it will help to boost the national economy. This is because net neutrality inspires competition; if the products of all companies are equally accessible, naturally they should compete for more customers. They will invest more in advertising, and consumers will buy more, stimulating the economy. In the absence of net neutrality, larger

companies would be able to dominate and monopolize the Internet, making it impossible for smaller companies to rise up. Those who advocate net neutrality, such as the "Save the Internet Coalition," and the "Open Internet Coalition," believe net neutrality is beneficial for users as well; due to the increased competition, they will ultimately end up using the best Internet service provider. Another known advantage of net neutrality is that it encourages creative expression; websites like YouTube, Google, and eBay would have not have had as much success if net neutrality were not in effect.

BUT THEY SAY WE'LL ALL BE BETTER OFF THIS WAY...

In spite of these benefits, net neutrality has a downside. Making laws concerning net neutrality may ultimately do more harm than good; given that situations and technology on the Internet can rapidly evolve, having incomplete or deficient legislation might obstruct safety on the Internet as well as provide loopholes in which depraved activities may occur. Those who oppose net neutrality argue that having a hierarchy of Internet access could lead to benefits for all Internet users. Similar to cell phone plans, where users can pick a designated number of messages or talking minutes, having tiered access to the Internet could benefit most users. If larger companies would be willing to pay for prioritization of their advertising, the profits gained might go towards improving Internet service.

As a result of its constitutional notions, net neutrality is often considered to be an extension of the First Amendment. The Encyclopedia Britannica states the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States as, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom

of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." In simpler terms, people have the right to say and express what they want, and it is in this light that net neutrality is similar to the First Amendment. During an interview on February 1, 2010, United States President Barack Obama stated that he was indeed a strong supporter of net neutrality because he agreed with the idea of freedom within the Internet, and he liked the idea of people being able to create or access any website or application they desire.

Whether or not to implement net neutrality is an ongoing battle between Internet Service Providers; enacting it would be in the spirit of supporting freedom and access to information, and suppressing it would allow ISPs (Internet Service Providers) to make more money as larger companies pay them to discontinue Internet user access to their business competitors. Presently, Internet users enjoy the benefits of net neutrality; they are able to gain access to any piece of information, regardless of its topic, given that it has been published on the Internet. On December 21, 2010, the Federal Communications Commission (F.C.C.) approved a compromise for the implementation of network neutrality. Internet Service Providers would be unable to absolutely ban content, but companies would be allowed 'paid prioritization,' meaning that the companies can pay for their material and advertisements to be disseminated at a more rapid rate.

ducers, the consumers are often less content with advertising on the Internet. Certain types of advertising can be sent to personal e-mails (more commonly known as 'spam') or disguised as operating system messages to trick users into clicking on them. There are other types of advertisements, called 'malware,' that can be extremely harmful to the user's computer. The initiators of such advertisements create links hidden in inconspicuous web utilities, such as search bars and operating system messages; when these links are clicked on, a type of program called 'spyware' is installed on the user's computer. This program collects information, like web surfing habits, hobbies, and interests about the user in order to personalize advertising. For instance, an individual who frequents a recipe website might receive advertisements concerning culinary equipment. Spyware usually slows down a user's computer and collects this information without the user's knowledge or consent. This type of advertising is considered invasive and unethical. Apart from spyware, there are methods of tracking Internet users with "third party cookies." Although the technicalities behind this are very complicated, in essence, "cookies" are bits of information that are saved when a website loads its content (like images, links, etc.). The advertiser is able to track these cookies and thus personalize advertisements without having to resort to spyware. Many users are entirely unaware that they leave behind tracks (i.e., "cookies") that others can track, and those who are aware of it feel that such tracking is a violation of their privacy.

ADVERTISING

To advertise, with or without the Internet, is to draw attention to a product or service in a public medium to attract consumers and promote sales. Advertising on the Internet has undoubtedly increased in recent years; there is hardly a website without some sort of goods being promoted. The question is, why have producers taken the Internet as the 'public medium' on which to attract consumers? The Internet is universal and has no geographical limitations. Unlike a newspaper or periodical, everything on the Internet can be seen anywhere, and therefore the producer's target market can grow extensively. The increase in Internet-based advertising is clearly affecting more traditional forms of advertising: the Wall Street Journal speculated that advertising in print directories is expected to fall 39% in the next four years.

Although there are obvious benefits for pro

In addition to malware, there are other types of advertising that consumers find unpleasant or irritating. These usually take the form of pop-up windows or videos, and are so blatantly flashy that consumers are often discouraged from considering what they have to offer. Equally discouraging to potential consumers is the plethora of nameless and brand-less advertising that transpires over the Internet. Those who frequently peruse the Internet have come to dismiss such advertisements as untrustworthy, and undesirable. In the words of Sam Vaknin, the Economic Advisor to the Government of Macedonia, these advertisements are laden with "scams, false promises, faulty products, non-existent customer care, broken links, or all of the above [.]" Consumers have come to associate brand-less advertising with poorer quality or negligent service; this has formed an almost blanket stereotype on such advertising.

When advertising is completely legitimate, (i.e., made by a respected name or guaranteeing a degree of consumer care) there are certainly benefits for consumers and producers. Not only can consumers access products more easily (this is becoming more clear, especially with the popularity of online retail like "amazon.com"), producers can also make more profit. As with most aspects of the Internet, there are both an upside and a downside. The disadvantage is that there is an enormous amount of shady and illegitimate advertising that only discourages and irritates consumers. According to Sam Vaknin again, these unfavorable advertisements belong nowhere except in our "mental dust bins."

CHAPTER 3 INTERNET RESPONSIBILITY
RESPONSIBILITY ON THE INTERNET

Along with the immeasurable benefits that the Internet—including the freedom of expression, communication and access to hoards of information—has brought about, there are also disadvantages and downsides. These include cyber bullying, loss of privacy, censorship, identity theft, piracy and viral cyber-warfare. The large number of malicious activities allowed on the Internet, which was previously a largely autonomous, unregulated space, has led to laws that regulate its use and to the development of standards of good cyber-citizenship.

Over the years, the main purpose of Internet regulation has been to control classified information, pornography, e-trade, intellectual property rights, copyright infringement, and data privacy on the web. Although the Internet is a global platform, most of these regulations operate at a local or national level. A recent example regarding the need for such regulation is the WikiLeaks' exposure of US government diplomatic cables. WikiLeaks and other such websites have generated heated debates concerning whether the people who make such websites are information heroes fighting for democracy and the right to information, or simply criminals threatening national and international security.

The debate in balancing what is available to the public and what is private is especially complicated in the area of social media. According to surveys, more than half of all 13 to 17 year olds in the US have online profiles and socialize on the web. They use the Internet and other technologies, like smart phones, to e-mail, create Web sites, post personal opinions on blogs and discussion boards, and send text messages and pictures. Although there are many more methods in which young people socialize on the web, it is clear that they put quite a bit of personal information online. Websites have been created and devoted to the purpose of warning such people of the dangers of posting personal information on the Internet. Such information not only reaches the hands of identity thieves, but also the eyes of college admissions officers and future employers. In fact, many corporations and institutions have rejected job candidates based solely on their online profiles. There are many reasons that online profiles are so popular for corporations and colleges when judging character of future employees or students. Chief among them is that people believe they are not responsible for their activities on the web; looking at a person's online profile delivers a sense of how an individual behaves when presented with a situation in which social standards and etiquette do not apply. As a result of this, people have started to realize that they have to manage their reputations online. They have started to become more and more aware of what happens on the Internet and have taken the necessary steps towards safer Internet use.

Although many are taking the Internet more seriously, the rules issued about responsibility on the Internet are debatable. Such regulations pertain mainly to the "blogosphere," where Internet users are often held liable for expressing their opinions about their institutional employers. The debatable problem here is finding the balance between individual rights of expression and the interests of the corporation or the government employer. Promoters of bloggers' rights claim that blogging forces employers to be accountable and honest, (because if they

are otherwise, an employee can shame them in a blog post) and is a way to exercise free speech. However, a number of institutions argue that blogs by employees should appear or claim to represent the company's interests or views.

Another responsibility that users of the Internet are shouldering is the policing of cyber-citizenship, which refers to the usage of the Internet to commit acts of violence. Over the years the rate of cyber bullying has increased rapidly with the advancements of the Internet. As a result there are increasing concerns regarding teens harassing their peers or engaging in cyber-bullying. Cyber bullying is extremely hard to eradicate, partially because it is only a reflection of what occurs in real life. With all great freedom and empowerment comes a responsibility: the Internet is not different. The Internet is quite revealing of the fact that as long as we have irresponsibility in society, there will be irresponsibility on the Internet. The only issue is that the Internet's reach extends far beyond what is possible in real life, so the methods to control and regulate the Internet must often be more stringent than those that are applicable in real life.

INTERNET DEPENDENCY

Our dependency on the Internet has increased dramatically over the past few years. The number of users on the Internet has exploded from 16 million in December 1995, to nearly two billion in September 2010.

In today's society, many vital organizations run on the Internet. Banks, schools, hospitals, and other institutions that are needed to administrate the economy are not capable of operating without the Internet. If the Internet was not available due to technical issues, it would result in a massive disturbance and potential collapse of businesses, governments, countries and perhaps the developed world.

The Internet interferes with one's ability to function as a normal participant of society. This can be seen from a comparison of how two Korean families view their social experiment of living one-week of "no-Internet." One family said that without the Internet, one can "rediscover lost time." While not on the Internet, people are free to discover old hobbies and to spend their time doing outdoor activities or playing sports. At the same time they also realized how convenient the Internet is in facilitating leisure, education, transportation, banking, shopping and socializing.

However, the impact of the Internet is not internationally standardized. Due to the variations in social systems, the degree of the Internet's diffusion varies widely. South Korea is the most wired country on the planet with 97% broadband penetration, while parts of Africa don't have any access to the Internet. This one privilege can result in the two extremely varying lifestyles. For example, a society with access to the Internet is more likely to have a greater percentage of people spending their time sitting in front of a computer finishing all their daily chores such as shopping, researching, banking, etc. On the other hand, people from a society without access to the Internet may be less exposed to the rest of the world, but more active in the place where they live. They would conduct their everyday tasks such as shopping and banking by physically going to the store or bank, and interacting with the community.

The global distribution of Internet penetration and use is far from uniform. Developed countries and some emerging countries such as China account for a disproportionately high number of Internet users worldwide. For instance, 21.4% of the world's Internet users live in China, but they account for less than 19.5% of the world's population, while India's percentage of Internet users is 6.9%, and yet it accounts for 17.8% of the world's population. The discrepancy is even steeper for the number of Internet hosts worldwide: North America and Europe account for almost 90% of Internet hosts, whereas Asia and the Pacific, with over 60% of the world's population and 44% of the world's Internet users, contribute only 8% of the total number of Internet hosts worldwide.

The widespread technology of the Internet has caused its own unique disadvantages, such as Internet dependency. Acute dependency, also called Internet Addiction Disorder, (IAD) can cause physical illnesses like obesity; it also amplifies chances of disorders that impact one's social interactions, moods, personality, work ethic, relationships, and thought processes. It may also cause sleep deprivation and eyestrain. It has also been found that apart from generating disorders in your body, Internet addiction can cause various other compulsive issues, such as the need to shop online, gamble, and view pornography. Internet addiction can also lead to poor academic achievement and difficulty finding employment.

Internet dependency can be reduced. Having an "offline day" could help people become more aware that the Internet is not absolutely necessary. Also, having different e-mail accounts for home and work can let you concentrate exactly on what you are doing. Having a time limit to surf the Web has also become very popular to curb the use of the Internet. Even going to the closest public library and asking for membership would relieve the symptoms of Internet dependency to a certain degree.
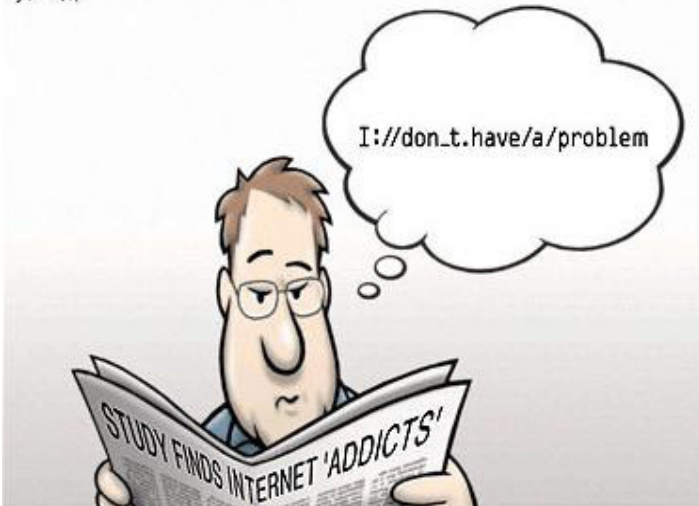
The Internet has become a huge part of our lives. Without it, we would be out of touch, but with it, we tend to overuse it. It helps us and it hurts us. Nonetheless, with the right balance and self-control, the Internet can be a priceless source of information and an invaluable fountain of knowledge. It can be a tool of service, not a master to serve.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism occurs when an individual uses another person's work without properly citing or crediting the original author. It is illegal and considered by many to be unethical. Plagiarism negatively affects the author of the work, as his or her ideas are being copied and possibly misused without consent. A financial ramification of plagiarism is that the original author often does not receive payment for another's use of their work. Internet plagiarism is one of the more popular forms of plagiarism because of how incredibly simple it is to access information.

Internet plagiarism is tempting to many because of how easy it is to copy and paste material from a website. People plagiarize because they see it as a time-saver and an easy way to lessen the amount of work. However, there are websites that detect plagiarism, such as 'Turnitin.com,' which discourage some people from using another person's work without citation. These services are widely used because of the vast amount of plagiarism that occurs. Most schools now require students to sign a form stating that they agree to always practice academic integrity; (i.e., avoid plagiarism) some schools go as far as having students declare this on every assignment they turn in.

Plagiarism is not necessarily directly copying and pasting someone else's work verbatim; minimally modifying someone else's sentence structures or ideas is also considered to be plagiarism. For example, a popular website among students is SparkNotes, a site that is useful for completing English homework. The website contains summaries and analyses of thousands of literary works that are studied in English classes across the world. Students often use this website and copy the ideas found in it and use them in their essays as if they were their own. Directly copying ideas and sentences from SparkNotes has become less popular because it is easy for teachers to recognize inconsistencies in writing ability (i.e., from a past assignment done individually and another assignment done using SparkNotes). Instead, it has become popular to skim a SparkNotes article, siphon ideas and put them into the student's own writing.

However, copying and pasting someone else's words is not the only type of plagiarism. Self-plagiarism is also a form of plagiarism in which a person is not allowed to copy his or her own work that he or she may have done previously. This pertains primarily to published materials; if an author publishes something online, he or she must cite himself or herself if he or she wishes to use the same material in another

using it again is not plagiarism.

Academic work is not the only place where plagiarism occurs. There have been more publicized examples of plagiarism in the music industry. This is highly relevant to the Internet because with the advent of piracy and 'music sharing,' many artists do not receive the credit for which they are entitled.

Plagiarism is a moral offense because it fails to credit the original author for a piece of work. With the easy accessibility that the Internet provides us, this act is becoming more common, especially with the youth who do not see plagiarism as something that is against the law. They think that due to the diversity and sheer size of the Internet, the copying of material from only one source will not be easy to uncover.

INTERNET EXPLOITATION

The Internet, although rising rapidly in popularity, has brought new safety concerns to the global society. Upon its introduction, the Internet heralded a new age of technology, progressed education, and innumerable possibilities; however, the unconstructive use of such opportunities has resulted in an increase in exploitation of information, companies and individuals; the anonymity and volatility of the web allows us to target and exploit anything we desire.

Behind a mask of anonymity, pedophiles may use the Internet to track down victims and get in contact with them. The Internet allows abusers to hide their identities and their intentions. A forty-year old man, for example, can easily obtain the skills to pose as a sixteen-year-old who wants a sociable companion, while really seeking a target to fulfill his desires. Drawing in a child under the disguise of a "friendly relationship" is very common, and usually

ends up in rape, use for ransom, or murder. The Internet has been a gateway for rapists and assassins as it provides an almost infinite database of vulnerable victims.

Studies have found that approximately one in every seven youths online ages ten to seventeen years old, received a sexual solicitation or approach on the Internet. Four percent have received an aggressive sexual solicitation where a stranger asks to meet them somewhere through the use of telephone or e-mail, bribing them with money or gifts. Thirty-four percent have had exposure to sexual material and many images have been passed on from a child to a parent for guidance on what to do about it. Forty-two percent of the children revealed their distressing encounters and episodes of upset or trauma to an adult. Finally, it is a shocking fact that one in every five girls and one in every ten boys has been sexually victimized before reaching adulthood. Organizations including "The Canadian Coalition Against Internet Child Exploitation" (CCAICE) and "Internet Crimes Against Children" (ICAC) are working to end these malicious crimes.

Under the cover of anonymity, child pornography becomes easily accessible through video sharing media. The first act to avoid being exploited on the Internet is to assume one's own responsibility. No matter how many preventive measures are taken, it is up to the individual to judge whether it is safe to communicate with strangers. As long as young people open up to individuals whose identity is unknown, they put themselves at risk of victimization, molestation and stalking.

Within the United States alone, the sexual exploitation of children on the Internet is a 20 billion dollar industry. "Craigslist," a key perpetrator of the problem, has been called out time and time again for the numerous cases of prostitution that occur on as a result of its site. Sex advertisements comprise about thirty percent of the total revenue for the site. While prostitution is one of the most common forms of Internet exploitation, "instant messaging," and online chat rooms continue to be locations where predators can befriend and stalk adolescents. The trafficking of wives is another vehicle that has become increasingly common in Asia. Purchasing brides has become easier due to the easy access of online credit cards payments.

The inclination of Internet exploitation has led to parents' concern for the safety of their children. Websites such as "Facebook" have implemented new security measures in the past few years in an attempt to increase the safety of their younger users. Moreover, several groups such as the "NetSmartz Workshop" aim to teach children about their safety on the Internet, but have not eliminated the problem. Showing children websites concerning the securities and insecurities of the Internet or having them read books like, "Kids Online: Protecting your Children in

The inclination of Internet exploitation has led to parents' concern for the safety of their children. Websites such as Facebook.com have implemented new security measures in the past few years in an attempt to increase the safety of their younger users. Moreover, several groups such as the "NetSmartz Workshop" aim to teach children about their safety on the Internet, but have not eliminated the problem. Showing children websites concerning the securities and insecurities of the Internet or having them read books like, "Kids Online: Protecting your Children in Cyberspace," can only do so much as to raise their awareness.

Europe has taken action against exploitation for both adults and children, by establishing organizations such as "Cospol Internet Related Child Abusive Material Project" (CIRCAMP). "CIRCAMP" was made to create methods of Internet policing, which detect and abolish websites responsible for child trafficking and other threatening acts toward children. Organizations such as these represent a united front in the campaign against exploitation on the Internet.

YOU SAID YOU WERE THIRTY!

Another case of twisted kids using the Internet to exploit grown-ups.

UNHEALTHY LIFESTYLES

In today's world, those who have access to the Internet are finding it extremely useful due to its convenience, speed, and wealth of information. For this reason, people are spending more time on the Internet, which often leads to sedentary and unhealthy lifestyles. There are a number of issues associated with such lifestyles, one being the development of bad eating habits. Those who are constantly eating food in front of a computer monitor have a tendency to not only consume more but to also eat junk food. A likely explanation for this is that people are distracted by the various multimedia on the Internet, and aren't aware of the extent of their continual consumption. Even if people eat the freshest and most nutritious food during computer use, the food is not digested properly because of bad sitting posture. Hunching over to look at a screen inhibits the gastrointestinal tract, leading to indigestion. Along with indigestion, sitting in front of the computer for a long period of time causes muscle tension; as somebody becomes absorbed in the Internet, they tend to become rigid as they forget to move. Moreover, excessive time in front of a computer screen has harmful effects on the body's blood flow. This results in mental fatigue and less resistance to common illnesses due to the lack of proper oxygen circulation throughout the body. A study in England has shown that the main reason for middle-aged women to have chronic back pain is because they sit in front of the computer for an extended amount of time. The study showed that 78% of women suffered chronic back pain and 18% of women suffered daily backaches as a result of spending too much time on a computer.

Although issues like back pain and indigestion might not be immediately apparent to Internet users, some effects, such as eyestrain and stress, are instantly clear. Internet users harm their eyes after looking at an illuminated screen for a long stretch of time. Headaches and migraines are common as a result of such eyestrain. In addition, an Internet user is usually multi-tasking, and thus has a tendency to get sidetracked by distractions on the Web while trying to do work. Such behavior, commonly known as procrastination, can contribute to higher stress levels.

Along with physical health problems, there are many mental health risks that manifest with excessive Internet use. People who spend most of their time on the Internet spend less time outdoors, and spend less time with family and friends. Norman Nie, a political scientist at Stanford University, conducted a large-scale survey of the impact of the Internet on society. He summarized: "the more hours people use the Internet, the less time they spend with real human beings." Excessive Internet use contributes to

anti-social behavior, depression, failure at work and/or school, and feelings of isolation, especially among teens and college students. Internet communication media like Facebook, Myspace, and Skype pave the way for further inactive lifestyles. With these fast and simple communication tools, most people stay on their computers all day talking to friends, instead of going out to meet them. A study by COM Score Media Metrix showed that more than 250 million people use Instant Messaging daily. Also, AOL senior director of corporate communications, Krista Thomas, stated that AOL instant messenger users are known to spend six hours a day on average with their accounts signed on.

Even so, there are some positive ramifications of using the Internet. For example, it is undeniable that using the Internet has benefits: it allows friends to communicate from opposite ends of the globe, and the user has easy access to information. However, excessive use, which is becoming more and more common, is unhealthy. The Internet should be used with moderation, as it is clear that adverse effects can develop with prolonged and uncontrolled usage.

CYBER-BULLYING

Cyber-bullying is the harassment of one party by another, by means of the Internet or any electronic devices. Although cyber-bullying is often thought to occur between two people who know each other, it can also take place between any number of people who have never previously met. Cyber-bullying often unfolds in a fairly predictable fashion: a teenager starts to use a social networking site and soon becomes engrossed in what it has to offer. The adolescent will begin to see the Internet as a means of obtaining immediate popularity. However, because there is no quantifiable method of measuring popularity, superficial criteria, such as the number of friends, become its main indicators. This triggers an obsession in the teenager, a limitless hunger for more and more friends. Normally, youths would become 'friends' online with people they know personally, i.e., people from their school. However, in time, these adolescents become 'friends' with friends of people they know, and friends of their friends; the degree of distance between them increases. During this process of adding more and more friends, the teenager, unfortunately, accepts friend requests from people they do not know. As a result, the stranger gains access to the teenager's personal information and consequently the door to cyber-bullying is opened.

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Cyber-bullying can be prevented by parents restricting their child's access to certain sites, and regulating whom their child contacts. However, it is often hard to take these precautionary steps, because children do not necessarily reveal everything to their parents and therefore parents are often oblivious of the fact that their children may be victims of bullying. In addition, Internet users can remain anonymous which means that you never truly know whether someone is who they say they are on the Internet.

Studies have shown that children who have a history of bullying other children are more likely to drop out of school, get into fights and vandalize property. In fact, in the United States, 60% of boys who were identified as bullies during their academic years later had at least one criminal conviction by the age of 24.

In any case, since the Internet provides a certain distance between the bully and the victim, it has become easier and even more appealing for people to bully others whether under their own name or anonymously. On October 17, 2006, Megan Meier, a 13-year-old girl, committed suicide in her house in O'Fallon, Missouri after being bullied on her MySpace page by a boy named 'Josh Evans.' Josh had claimed to be a 16-year-old boy who had recently moved to the area, but after the investigation, it was discovered that Josh was the 47-year-old mother of one of Meier's former friends. This incident sparked an increased awareness within the general public regarding the various forms of cyber-bullying.

A less-publicized example of cyber-bullying is the case of the suicide of 15-year-old Phoebe Prince. She was harassed over text messages and social networking sites to the point where she took her own life; even after her death, the same "cyber-bullies" proceeded to mock her death on the same social networking sites.

On the Internet, we believe our actions will not be traced back to us: bullying can transpire under a veil of anonymity and detachment. We think they will have little effect; however, the case of Megan Meier is testament to the fact that cyber-bullying can have deadly consequences. Cyber-bullying can be as bad, if not worse, than physical bullying, because on the Internet we may come to think that the opinion expressed by a stranger is not just the opinion of one person, but an expression of public opinion. In a playground setting, the bully is a specific individual who may be avoided; on the Internet, such cyber-bullies are more difficult to avoid and harder to identify.

CHAPTER 4 INCLUSION AND ALIENATION
EDUCATION

The Internet, although popular for leisure activity and communication, is also useful as an educational tool for students and teachers. Educational facilities are attracted to the convenience, speed, accessibility, and diversity of information provided online; as a result the Internet is deeply integrated into many academic curricula. The Internet has revolutionized education in the last thirty years; it is an effective, easy, and efficient medium for researching information. However, the Internet, unrestricted as it is, also contains hoards of tenuous or unreliable information. While it may certainly assist a student in learning, it can also aid and abet cheating.

Students around the world use the Internet to complete a large portion of their daily schoolwork. A survey taken by the National Center for Education Statistics in 2003 showed that 62%-69% of students in grades 6-12 use the Internet to complete school assignments. In previous generations, students needed to go to libraries to find articles, encyclopedias, and books full of topic related knowledge. With the growing availability of the Internet, students who seek information will be bombarded with it upon using a search engine. The simplicity of the Internet has made it easy for teachers to assign homework digitally and there are websites that enable students to upload files that their teachers can easily retrieve.

Teachers also upload lesson plans, review guides, and online sources that can be studied, making the Internet not only a source of efficiency, but also a virtual learning device. Schools are also beginning to incorporate technology and the Internet into the classroom. A local high school

in Arizona is an exceptional example of a school that has been completely digitalized: it "...include(s) one-to-one laptop programs for all 850 students and a completely wireless infrastructure powered in part by rooftop solar panels" according to Ron Schacter.

This school is so well equipped with high-tech devices that the students no longer have textbooks. Is this desirable? California and Virginia are following in the Arizona high school's footsteps by making textbooks accessible on the Internet. Other schools are known for having assignments, background materials, lecture outlines, and PowerPoint presentations available on a teachers' blog. Outside of school, additional learning may involve a professional tutoring session over video chat. This is very aptly called, "Distance education."

Although the means of finding information are rapidly becoming simpler, the Internet is also leaving room for unreliable material and higher chances of plagiarism. Each time students type a key word into a toolbar, they are instantly given pages and pages of information regarding the subject matter. Since information is so readily available, students can easily copy and paste other's writing into their work and call it their own. However, the technology that allows plagiarism is similarly helping to detect it: many software programs have been written that crosscheck a student's work past terabytes of online information to check for plagiarism. A national survey published in Education Week showed that 54% of students surveyed admitted to plagiarizing from the Internet. An example of a site where most students may plagiarize from is 'Sparknotes', a website that contains summaries and analyses of several thousand books. In theory, Sparknotes is useful because it allows students struggling in English classes to keep up with the coursework. However, some students begin to feel that reading books is unnecessary, given the immediate availability of chapter summaries. Similarly, when writing essays, some students resort to copying literary analyses directly from Sparknotes.
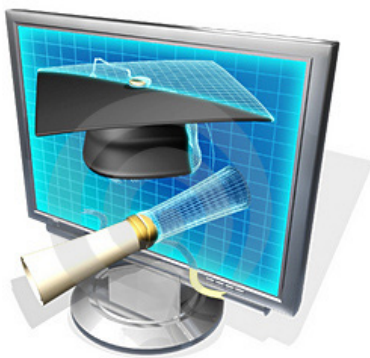
The reliability of the information on the Internet also poses a very important issue. As the Internet becomes more widespread, anybody can post what he or she wants about any subject almost anywhere. Wikipedia, an extremely popular website for instant access to information, is available for editing by anybody in the general public! Available in 10 different languages and containing millions of articles, Wikipedia attracts approximately 78 million users a month. Though efficient in delivering information, the site is "written collaboratively by largely anonymous Internet volunteers who write without pay." Wikipedia is merely an example of the vulnerability of accurate information on the Internet; as the Internet grows, so do the chances of encountering unreliable information.

While the Internet contains an excess of information, there are many factors that detract from its efficiency. The Internet is a platform for an innumerable amount of social networking and multimedia entertainment websites such as Facebook and YouTube. Instant messaging, videos, games, and other entertainment forms can be extremely distracting to students, especially when it is so readily accessible. The commonly used social networking website, Facebook, which has over 400 million active users, can be considered "addictive." Studies show that adolescents spend up to 10 hours per week on Facebook. This is an excessive amount of time that could be spent on schoolwork. However, in 2007, the National School Boards Association showed that 50% of adolescents discuss schoolwork online. Clearly, although some websites may distract students from their education, some make it easier to communicate with classmates regarding schoolwork. Now that the Internet is here, we must meet it and find a place within it to fit educational priorities, goals and outlook.

With the growing role of the Internet in education, we must pause to consider how it is changing the way we learn and the way we teach. For example, traditionally the student-teacher relationship is one in which there is clear power structure: the teacher is the expert, the knowledgeable authority figure while the student is the learner and listner. However, as many teachers are less technologically savvy than their students, this relationship is sometimes reversed and the student, comfortable in the technology-rich environment, becomes the expert. By shifting the focus away from the student-teacher interaction and directing it and towards the Internet, we lose some crucial elements of an education. Attending school is not only about absorbing facts and understanding the curriculum; it is also about learning social skills and conflict resolution. This part of education is neglected when we use the Internet in order to learn. Students interact less with their peers face to face, and the role of the teacher also diminishes; in other words, using the Internet too much in education can isolate students.

While the Internet undoubtedly has the potential to benefit education we must also think about those who do not have access to its resources. Today only 28% of the world's population has Internet access. The Internet has clear benefits for education: however, 72% of the global population has no access to the Internet. Are we merely widening the gap between the rich and the poor? Aren't those already too poor to afford the Internet being put at a disadvantage because they now not only have to face incredible hardship and bad schooling, they are denied important learning tools? It is clear the Internet has great potential to revolutionize education but we must consider if these changes are ones that we want to embrace and if it is fair to allow only select socio-economic strata to benefit from them.

ENGLISH AS THE LINGUA FRANCA

English, the most dominant language on the Internet, is becoming an essential tool in today's increasingly globalized society. The vocabulary used for everything from programming to design is in English. Most search engines are in English, although many have the option to search material in other languages such as Spanish and Chinese. The dominance of the English language on the Internet has origin in colonialism and later in trade of technologies manufactured in the United States. Initially, countries of different tongues could get by with minimal fluency in another country's language until the 20th century when global trade and communication expanded tenfold. At that point, many countries pursued economic prosperity that they could have only attained by learning English and trading with English-speaking countries. People from all over the world began learning English as their second language. The development and role of English throughout history has had several implications on the state of the Internet today.

Due to these developments, English is currently the dominant, global language, even though Chinese has the greatest number of speakers. Many people might wonder, "If English is the dominant language of the Internet and you don't speak it, does that make you 'Internet-illiterate?'" The answer is probably not. What it means is that you are limited to the piece of the Internet that is in the language you do understand. What many people do not realize is that the Internet has the potential to not only cater to individual languages but also to help preserve them.

Wikipedia alone has 17 million articles in 270 languages. Of those, only 3.5 million (20%) are in English. The linguistic diversity of the Internet is staggering and perhaps can even be credited for spreading other languages due to the access one has now to native speakers via the World Wide Web.

On the other hand, some people are afraid of the imperialistic implications of the current dominance of English; some of these fears are justified. The wide use of English exemplifies the economic and political influence of English-speaking countries. Many people cannot compete even within their own countries without the knowledge of English and culturally, the invasion of a foreign language has its own implications as well. The position of a universal language has always been directly related to a sort of imperialism: a nation that conquers a large area also prompts the diffusion of its culture, including its language. The dominance of English shows America's position as a powerful nation, using its own language as the almost universal tongue of the Internet.

It is not only essential to consider which languages are dominant on the Internet, but also how such languages will develop. The nature of language, from its beginnings to today, continue to evolve. The dominant language today could, over time, mirror the development and 'death' of Latin. Some linguists argue that due to the increasing number of English-as-a-second-language speakers worldwide, native English could be, at some point in the future, rendered merely just another dialect. This new "Internet English" could make the Internet more accessible to a greater number of people.

Whatever the viewpoint on the dominance of the English language, one cannot deny that there are definite advantages to having one language as a mediator among many languages. The first obvious advantage is the reduction in misunderstandings. This leads to collaboration among the world's nations in solving problems for all human beings, using the Internet as a medium. Also, it is impossible for the majority of the world's population to learn every language spoken in the world. This reality necessitates the selection of one language which all nations use to engage globally, at least on the technical level. It is important to take into account the origins of the Internet.; the Internet was established by the United States of America. Still today, much Internet communication is routed through the United States' servers; thus, the center of the Internet, metaphorically and literally, is in the United States, an English speaking nation.

Language, like life, is evolving. A process, whose pathway, to some extent, cannot be predicted. With the Internet and globalization, the evolution of language and our very way of life is occurring rapidly. How we seize these opportunities and meet these challenges will determine the future. As we are increasingly connected to all parts of the world by the Internet, the linguistics of the Web will become progressively more important.

THE GENERATIONAL DIGITAL DIVIDE

In this digital age, immersion in the rapidly evolving culture of the Internet is causing a divide between the younger generation and the older generation. The younger generation, also known as "digital natives", and the older generation acquire information in different fashions and subsequently, use the Internet in different ways; while adults will take information from established sources such as the BBC, the youth tend towards blogs and other social media websites to find out about the world. According to polls conducted by ZDnet, 83% of American citizens aged between 12 to 39 actively use the Internet, while a comparatively lower 57% of American citizens over age 40 are active web users.

Presently, the disparity between the technological capabilities of the young and the old is growing dramatically. This technological era began less than half a century ago with the availability of the consumer computer in 1976. This expensive computer of the 20th century quickly evolved into laptops, MP3 players, smart phones, tablets, and more. The amount of technology currently used is absolutely extraordinary in comparison to what was available a mere two decades ago. The members of the older generations have a different idea of what constitutes an innovative piece of technology and what the older generation considers to be of high utility, the younger generation may think trivial or outdated. New and updated pieces of technology are incessantly being produced and marketed to the younger, more technologically-savvy generation. If we, as members of that generation, maintain our ability to learn how to navigate these innovations, we are quickly becoming the ideal consumer, continually waiting for the newer, shinier model.

The methods in which the different generations communicate are also highly relevant to the divide between young and old. Where the older generation would prefer to use mail, or even e-mail, the younger generation would rather use new and instantaneous ways to communicate, like Twitter, which focuses on swiftly sharing announcements of lengths less than 159 characters. The enrapturing forms of Web 2.0 (web applications that facilitate interactivity), including Twitter, Facebook, and Flickr have the younger generations communicating more and more through the Internet. Why go out when you can interact with all of your friends online in the comfort of your own home? Social skills are declining among newer generations due to easy access to friends and family through an Internet connection. While this may seem paradoxical, typing to a friend on Facebook or Instant Messenger is not nearly as socially demanding as seeing them in person.

Not only is the generational divide diminishing social skills, it is also causing the younger generation (even very young children) to spend less time with their families; they prefer to spend more time interacting with social networking websites. Young toddlers and even babies are becoming fervent members of the Internet world; in another study done by ZDNet, over 15.3 million children ages 2-11 are active Internet users. However, children of this age are hardly to blame; their habits and interests are quite malleable. The reason they are such avid users of the Internet is because many parents want their kids to be able to use the Internet and reap all its advantages later in life. Parents' motives may range anywhere from wanting their children to become more educated through the Internet to being ready for an Internet-dependent job market. Mandeep Singh Dhillon, the creator of an intuitive social networking site "Togetherville," has a target market of children ages 6-10. To quote an article from the New York Times, "Mr. Dhillon liked the idea of his son developing skills at an early age that he would use for a lifetime, but was also hesitant to let Zoraver [his son] loose on the open Internet." His website is only a first for the growing technological world of today's children and the coming generations.

The older generation may lack the ability to acclimatize in this era. With accelerating technological innovations, the divide between the younger and the older generations grows wider. Not only does this stall communication, it prevents the younger generation from benefitting from the knowledge and experience of the older people. While older generations grew up with bulky televisions and rotary telephones, the younger generation has the world at the tip of their cursors. This stalls communication between the generations and reduces the amount of dialogue and contributes to the trend in our society of distancing ourselves from the experience and value of the older generation's knowledge.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

In the past two decades, the evolution of the Internet has changed the entire meaning of the term "access to information." The Internet has an everlasting impact on our everyday lives, as information is available instantly everywhere and on everything. For instance, international affairs, peaks and slumps on Wall Street, advice on how to become a teacher or publicist, and even instructions on how to wear a tie can appear on your screen with a few clicks of a button. If we have a question that no one can answer, we immediately look to the Internet.

Historically, a common characteristic of totalitarian governments in many countries and parts of the world was their strict control over information. They had the power to censor, illegalize, and even destroy the possibility of gaining information. In the past, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union and today, North Korea has blocked all access to anti-governmental information, whether it be books, newspapers or magazines. Other authoritarian governments such as China, Iran, and Cuba also exercise control over the information available to their populations. However, since the inception of the Internet, governments are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain this control, especially to hide or censor human rights abuses. For example, during the election riots of 2009 in Iran, protesters used Twitter in order to share videos and photographs depicting the violence and brutality of Iranian forces against peaceful, protesting civilians with the rest of the world. While the Internet has led us to a more democratic world, information on the Internet can be misleading and inaccurate.

Access to information on the Internet has been hugely beneficial from an economic perspective. The distribution of money and the stock market would all most likely fail without the Internet. We use the Web to find out which bank is offering bank loans with low interest. Farmers access information on international crop prices using websites like the "Chicago Board of Trade's" and in India, "e-Choupal," which gives advice on costs and farming practices, enabling them to increase their production of produce and their income. People routinely use the Internet to compare prices of clothing, and household necessities to minimize their expenditures. The Internet has expanded investment horizons by enabling anyone to access information on the financial market, information worldwide and other economic subtopics.

On a more casual level, the Internet has information that is used for everyday activities. The Internet has everything we want to know, from food recipes to sports, and it is available at an unbelievably fast rate with various options to choose from. This perhaps makes you think, how much do we really depend on the Internet? When we are assigned

a research project, we are programmed to think of Google or Wikipedia or any other leading knowledge-filled database. Have we forgotten how to research without the Internet? Do we really need a library pass anymore? How long could we survive without Facebook, or Twitter or our blogs? These questions are what we ask ourselves without even knowing it, but never seem to find an answer. Since we are so settled in with our technology and upgrades, why think outside the box?

The answer is that the world would reach chaos if access to the Internet were dismantled and removed from society. While this new era of the Internet has increased our access to information, our dependency on the Internet has sky rocketed. Our world over the past twenty years has learned to take more and more for granted. We depend on online databases to display thousands of websites with answers to our out of the ordinary or straightforward questions. Hopefully someday, the 71.3% of people in this world who do not have access to the Internet will say the same thing.

CHAPTER 5 INTERNET CULTURE
SOCIAL NETWORKING AND VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES

Virtual communities are essentially networks of people who frequently interact over the Internet. Their innovation lies in the diversity of communication they allow; people from varying ages, geographical locations, cultures and genders can all interact in a virtual community. Common examples of virtual communities include chat rooms, dating websites, e-mail, and most prominently, social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter. Social networking has provided ordinary people with not only a worldwide connection but also an interface for promoting social and political ideas.

The evidence that virtual communities are becoming more active is abundant. In 2010, the social networking website Facebook surpassed Google as the most visited site by 1.74%. One of the possible reasons that social networking is so effective is because it has the ability to connect people from all over the world: Facebook is a perfect example of how easy it is for people to stay in contact on the Internet: it allows users to chat, send videos, photos and many other forms of media to their friends. Because of their efficient and influential nature, social networking sites are being used more and more for presenting political views.

Social networking sites have immense impacts in countries where politics is a closed and immutable business. This is especially clear in Egypt, where a Facebook page managed to engage and unite hundreds of thousands of Egyptian citizens. Similar situations may be found in other parts of the world: Jeremy Goldkorn, founder of the Chinese Internet tracking website, Danwei, said in USA Today, "Some of the most cutting social criticism is found in online humor. The Internet is the freest place for self-expression in China, and young Chinese people are increasingly media savvy." Even in countries where these limitations do not exist, citizens have taken advantage of the "virtual town hall" that social networking websites are. For example, Iceland saw a wave of protest and demonstration on Facebook when its government declared bankruptcy in 2008.

Although virtual communities are laden with constructive and useful benefits, some argue that there are dangers to this modern method of interaction. A salient point of concern is the effect of social networking on Internet users' privacy. Generally, people of an older age are more conservative when it comes to what they share on the web. However, many younger individuals aren't as cautious and don't realize the permanence of what they post online. People often overlook the consequences that publishing certain content might have on future educational or career opportunities.

Another cause for unease is the deterioration of social skills that has come along with the era of online communities. It has been shown that online relationships are not as valuable as those in real life. An editorial in the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine stated that social networking "encourages us to ignore the social networks that form in our non-virtual communities. [...] The time we spend socializing electronically separates us from our physical networks." In addition to a decline in social skills, people tend to act differently online than they do in real life; for example, comments are often more impetuous and sarcasm can easily be misinterpreted, which may lead to a further deterioration in real life socializing. Physically, only 7% of communication is through words while the other 93% is reliant on body posture, intonation and mannerisms. On the Internet, however, communication is almost always text based. The human contact that makes communication personal and meaningful is lost when interaction only occurs on the Internet.

Virtual communities, although fraught with weaknesses and drawbacks, have many good qualities. They enable people to stay in touch with each other when they are separated by distance and they draw people with similar interests together. Scientists around the world need to collaborate and piece together research and ideas. Teachers and professors can enhance their classes by posting additional information on the Internet. Similarly, businesses can get a better sense of their customers and respond more quickly to their demands. Overall, social networking allows people to be more connected to the world than ever before, and if people are responsible with the amount of time they spend on virtual communities and the content they share, human relationships can be enhanced and society can benefit.

POP CULTURE/LEISURE

Many people turn to the Internet to engage in the various forms of entertainment it provides. Some of the possible recreational activities that are available on the Internet include gaming, blogging, listening to music, and watching or creating YouTube videos (sometimes known as "vlogging," or "video blogging"). Personal blogs and websites are used around the world for posting pictures and expressing opinions. In this Internet-driven era, individuals might choose to express themselves to an audience of anonymous users rather than through a conversation with friends or another traditional form of communication.

Websites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter provide interfaces over which people can connect quickly and conveniently. While websites such as Facebook and Twitter can be seen as useful and entertaining to some, they can also be incredibly distracting. Many people find themselves procrastinating by spending excessive amounts of time on virtual communities rather than working on or engaging in other productive activities. Yet a positive aspect of these virtual communities is that, as the Internet has grown and as more people have obtained access to it, it is now possible to connect with others across the globe. Social networking sites aren't the only forms of leisure on the Internet; such websites as Metacafe, YouTube, and Hulu all provide free, entertaining clips from movies, TV programs, and web-based shows. Part of the popularity of communities such as YouTube comes from the instant fame they can create. With the help of YouTube, fame is something anyone can strive for through a stroke of luck or a viral video that becomes popular. Some argue that this easy opportunity devalues fame as a whole, while others revel in their own success or use it for good projects. For example, YouTube's "Project For Awesome," which was founded in 2007, hosts an annual event with special guests who are popular figures on the website. This endeavor encourages raising money for a variety of charities.

Additionally, a range of online gaming websites such as Miniclip could be almost addictive as some allow individuals to play the role of a character that couldn't possibly exist in the real world. Many people who play games during their free time claim that it's a way of connecting with others; that in turn can provide a kind of temporary escape from their real lives.

The popularity of some of the most well-known websites can be shown through the number of "hits," or views they receive. For instance, on Facebook.com there are more than 500 million people who check their profiles daily. According to the website, "People spend over 700 billion minutes per month on Facebook." This proves that individuals spend increasingly more of their recreational time online.

Pop culture influences almost everyone, and the effect of popular thinking is seen on the Internet more than anywhere else. On the web, many new "fads" and fashions are created daily. In fact, a whole new language of acronyms, abbreviations, and other slang has developed over the last few years. Words like "two" are represented by the number "2," and a phrase like "laugh-out-loud" is represented by "lol." Each culture has its own version of these shortened words; web-lingo is thus affecting children all over the world. Consequently, young people's ability to write formally and coherently has suffered markedly.

The Internet has a dynamic effect on popular culture and the way people spend their time. Internationally, people's lives are becoming even more deeply rooted in the online world, and a dependency on the Internet is building for many as we become accustomed to instant gratification, convenience and access to an endless stream of entertainment. Some might think it fickle to be constantly entertained by the latest and ever-changing Internet fads; as the Internet will undoubtedly continue to thrive and people will surely devote more and more of their time to it.

COLLABORATION AND INTELLECTUAL OWNERSHIP

Websites such as Wikipedia, Yahoo Answers and Sparknotes enable and encourage us to share everything at a faster rate and collaborate on a wider scale in order to answer communal questions. The Internet can provide us with accurate information if every article, comment, and video is well-researched and honest. But we know from experience that this

is not the case. Writers are often not credited for their work on the Web, but are also not held responsible for inaccuracy or falsification. While collaboration may allow us to come to conclusions faster, it takes away from the reliability of the information due to the anonymity of Internet users.

Tangible sources of information, such as books, are commonly regarded as more reliable sources of information than those on the Internet. Sure, books go through extensive editing, and their legitimacy at the time of release is nearly always ensured, but usually only one person or a very small group of collaborators write books. It's commonly said that two heads work better than one. Well, what about two heads to two million heads? According to that logic, millions of people behind computers should be able to come up with better answers than one person or group of people writing, editing and publishing a book. So why is it that many people still believe that the information found in books is more reliable? One reason might be that in order to get a book published, one needs a certain amount of credentials, like a degree in the topic that is being written about, in order for the book to be credible. On the Internet, anyone with a computer can post "factual" information. However, the information in books is only as current as their publishing dates. New discoveries are made daily in science and history that can surface on the Internet instantaneously, but are rarely edited into books. Still, because these discoveries are so recent, they have yet to be verified by other scholars. What is posted on the Internet can easily be inaccurate whereas the information in a book usually needs to be either from a credible author or a more generally accepted (or at least supported) thesis or idea in order to be published.

Due to the amount of collaboration the Internet encourages, intellectual property laws have been challenged. If the Web belongs to no one and everyone, can we really claim ownership of what we post online? Can copyrights and patents have any meaning in intangible cyberspace? Many argue that the famous words from Ayn Rand's Capitalism: the Unknown Ideal—"a man's right to the property of his own mind"— may be true for intellectual rights in the world, but are not applicable to intellectual ownership on the Internet. Some would argue that intellectual property laws could actually harm the fountain of knowledge found on the Internet. Unfortunately for the authors and artists whose livelihoods depend on the protection of property rights, laws have yet to

catch up with the Internet Age. Take the case of Julian Assange, the creator of WikiLeaks. Some might say that his Internet activism must be controlled and that he should be persecuted for sharing government secrets, but according to the current legislation, he has broken no laws. Government secrets or not, once something is on the Internet, it becomes public knowledge, and there is no law against communal information.

The Internet has allowed levels of collaboration never before possible. For example, users of the website 4chan.com have banded together to bring justice to animal abusers posting videos online. Blogs have aided the authorities in reporting crimes and user-generated sites like Wikipedia have become major, if not controversial sources of information. Also, mathematicians all over the world can work together to solve nearly impossible math problems, thereby completing puzzles that would have ordinarily taken years and perhaps decades. Additionally, programs such as Google Docs allow multiple users to edit one document simultaneously (this was key in putting together this very Working Paper!). This trend towards collaboration is facilitated by the Internet, as information can now be shared almost instantaneously across the globe via the web. Collaboration emphasizes the importance of sharing information, working together and sacrificing personal pride for the pursuit of knowledge, but this influx of information and creativity, while inspiring, is difficult to regulate and authenticate.

AFTERWORD

Whether we are ready for it or not, the Internet is allowing humanity to develop at an unprecedented rate and is revolutionizing the world we live in. There is no other topic that is as pressing or immense as the advancements of the World Wide Web and its inherent issues. As we delve further into a technology dependent society, the problems and changes that we face from the Internet become increasingly imminent and deserve extensive thought as to how the Internet Age will affect the human race. The Internet has changed the realms of politics, economics, and culture; an insurgence can now begin on Twitter, the most outlandish products can be bought with the click of a mouse, and more newspapers are found on computer screens than on newsprint. But all these advancements are coming at what price? As we rapidly progress as a society we must stop and evaluate the intrinsic issues that the Internet brings with it: should the Internet be monitored, and would that be a violation of privacy? Does privacy even mean anything on a network that is open to anyone? And if said network is open to everyone, then who owns it? It cannot be ignored that only a minority of the world's population has access to the Internet. If the Internet is such a powerful force in today's world, should it be considered a human right? The Internet is also changing the basic way in which humans interact with each other, but are our inherent social skills paying the price?

It is critical to consider the impacts of the answers of such questions. The Internet may change many aspects of our society, but it is important that we do not lose sight of what is important to humanity as a whole. There is no doubt that we are at the dawn of a new era, but it is entirely up to us as to how we choose to face it. Here in the Working Paper, we do not seek to answer any of the imperative questions that accompany the Internet revolution and we do not wish to side with any particular argument pertaining to the topics that arise with the Web. Our hope is that through this Working Paper, and the UNIS-UN conference, we can aid you in forming your own opinion about the coming Internet Age. We hope to be a platform through which dialogues can begin, knowledge can be found, and awareness can be raised. Our aim is to assist you in exploring the issues of the Internet and help you form a respect for the perspectives of others while becoming confident about, or questioning, your own.
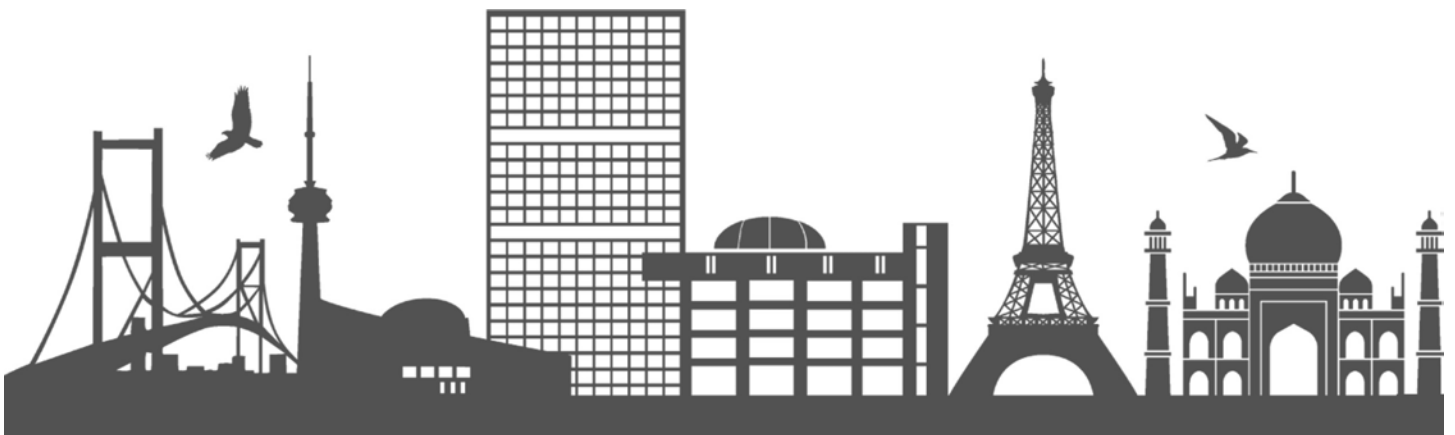
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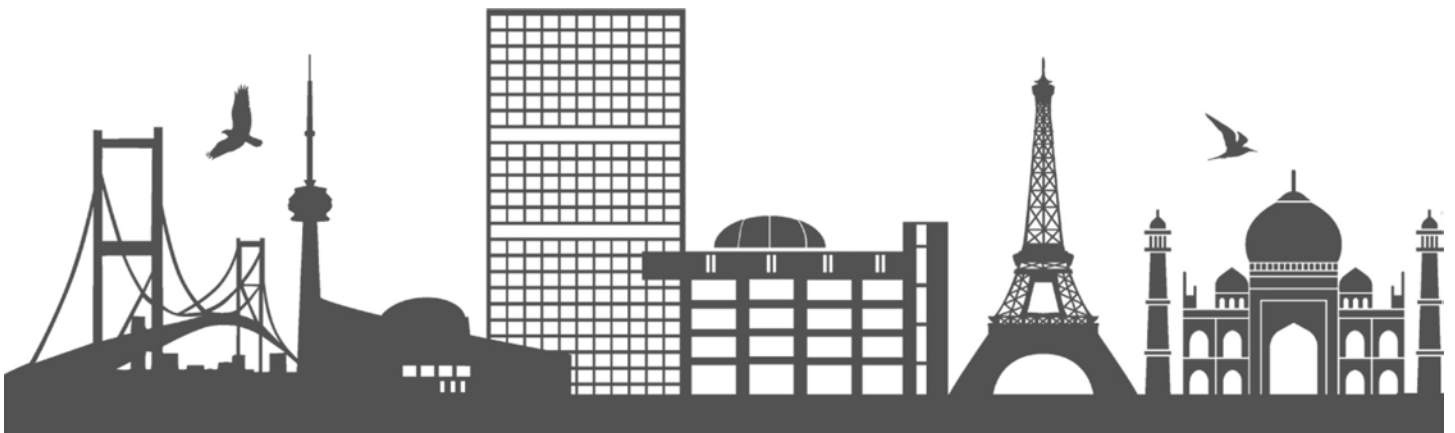Soraya Attia
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