

DIGITAL MEDIA ETHICS

Prepared by Dr. Sherihan Mohamed

Lecture 3

جامعة الجميع الذكية

تسعى لتكون الكيان الأول الذي يتبنى مبدأ المجتمع التعليمي
التعاوني ويقدم العلم مقابل العمل لتنمية وبناء المجتمعات.

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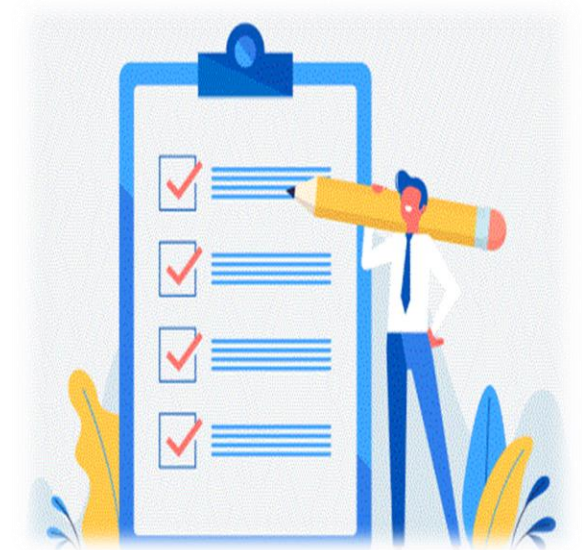
Privacy in the (Post-)Digital Era

Remember

- ** Digital media ethics: How to proceed?
- ** Is digital media ethics possible? Grounds for hope
- ** How to do ethics in the new mediascape: Dialogical approaches, difference, and Pluralism.
- ** Further considerations: Ethical judgments



- ** Information and privacy in the global digital Age.
- ** “Privacy” and private life: Changing attitudes in the age of social media and mobile devices
- ** “Privacy” and private life: Cultural and philosophical considerations
- ** “Privacy” and private life: Cultural differences and ethical pluralism



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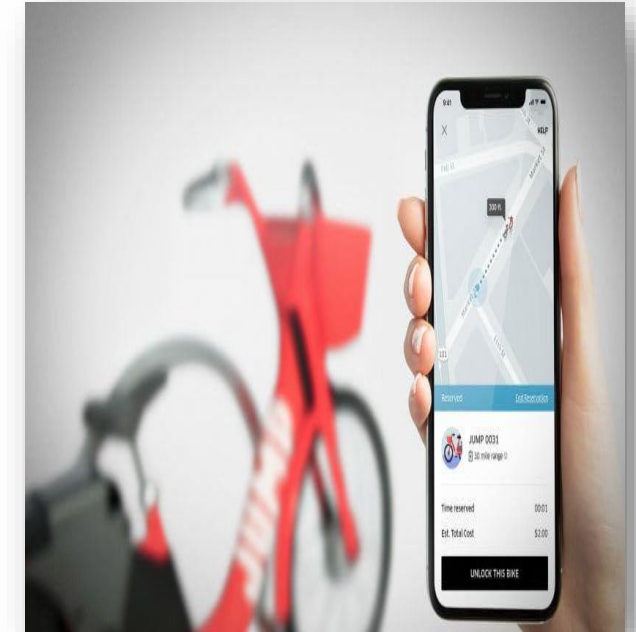
Information and privacy in the global digital age

“Privacy” and anonymity online – is there any?

These days, most of us are so accustomed to being tracked one way or another – including by our smartphones, health-tracking devices, GPS-equipped digital cameras, etc. – that we may not give any of this a second thought.



Whether for **managing our health**, finding our way in a new place via **Google maps**, or keeping track of our children or partners having our rather precise physical location constantly monitored and known to at least selected apps makes contemporary life more convenient, healthier, and safer.





Many of these apps can also be used for **darker purposes**, starting with various forms of **stalking**, **harassment**, and worse. And there are times and circumstances in which we very much want to protect our identity and locational privacy.

In order to get a **better understanding** of how online communication works – in part, so as to develop a better sense of how such communication can be protected when needed – let's play a bit with good old-fashioned email (still one of the primary and most widely used applications of the internet).





The goal here is to **see how much information your email contains about you** that is essentially open and public – and to reflect on how far you may prefer that some of this information remain private.

To begin with: most email clients are set to show users only the basic contents of an email: sender, recipient, cc's, subject line, and email body. But look again: **these clients also allow you to review the complete contents of your email.**

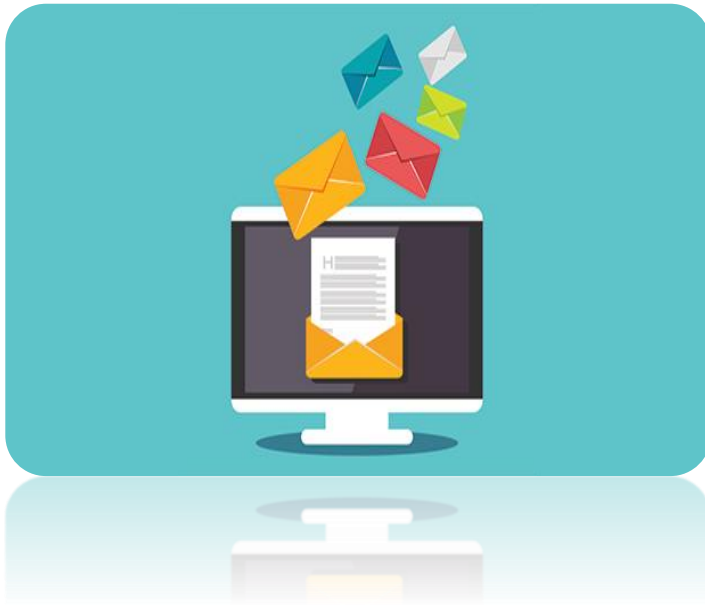


Select a recent email from a friend, and then view the complete source of the email as outlined above.



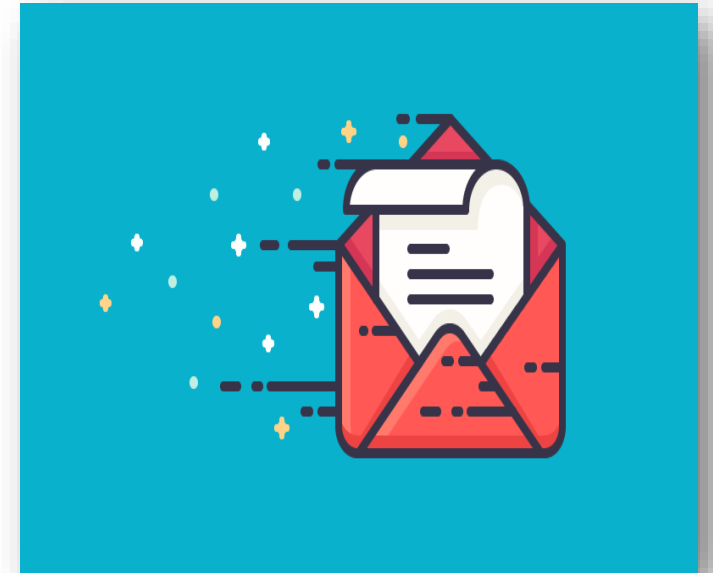
(A) What **strikes you about the information contained** here in the lines before the usual information about sender and receiver addresses?

(B) Notice that **each email includes here a history of how** it was sent, usually in a format like this (from a recent email between two of my accounts).



(C) What strikes you about the **resulting patterns and connections** that Lightbeam (and/or NoScript and Privacy Badger) presents to you? Are there any surprises here?

(D) “privacy” online is **not simply a matter of protecting** our own personal or sensitive information. Moreover, in an age dominated by our use of social networking sites, microblogging services such as Twitter, shared video sites such as YouTube, etc., our internet use and web browsing also reveal a great deal about those to whom we are closest.





In at least **some cultures and contexts**, what we want to protect is not solely the personal or sensitive information of an individual but also the personal information of those within our “**intimate sphere**” (intimssfære) – our close circle of friends and family. In these contexts, what is important to protect is not simply individual privacy but our “**private life**” (privatlivet) as made up by these close relationships

Finally, you can easily check whether your information, **beginning with your email account(s)**, has been hacked or “pwnd” (as someone has taken over its control).

The reality these days is that, in all likelihood, yes, you have been hacked. And especially outside the more protected spaces of the EU and Scandinavia, this means increasing obligation on individuals to take such measures to protect their information.



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“Privacy” and private life: Changing attitudes in the age of social media and mobile devices

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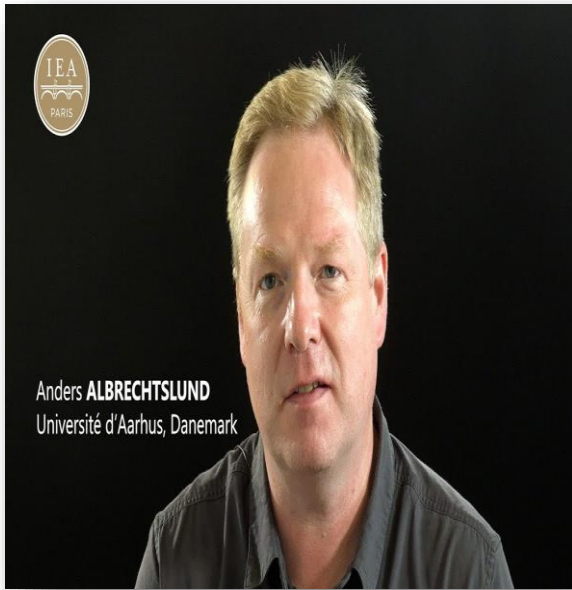


These manifest threats to personal privacy and private life are further accompanied by changing attitudes toward privacy in both “Western” and “Eastern” societies – perhaps as an artifact of our growing use of digital media.

Chapter 02

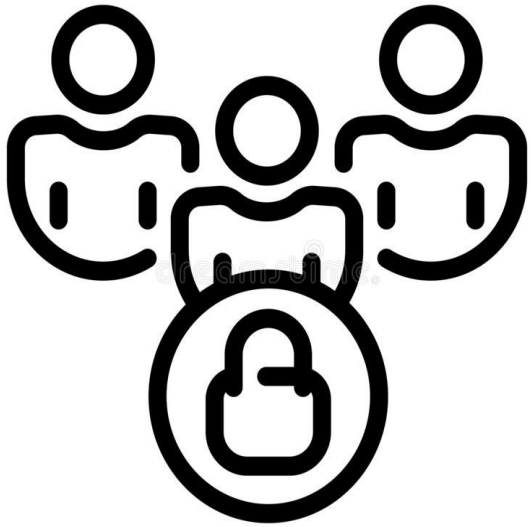
“Privacy” and private life: Changing attitudes in the age of social media and mobile devices

For example, in sharp tension with worries about hierarchical forms of surveillance by states and corporations, the terms first introduced by Albrechtslund (2008) – “voluntary” and “participatory surveillance” – are now commonplace understandings of our always-on behaviors. Lateral surveillance of one another is apparent on any given social media site (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) as well as on video sharing sites such as YouTube.



Chapter 02

“Privacy” and private life: Changing attitudes in the age of social media and mobile devices

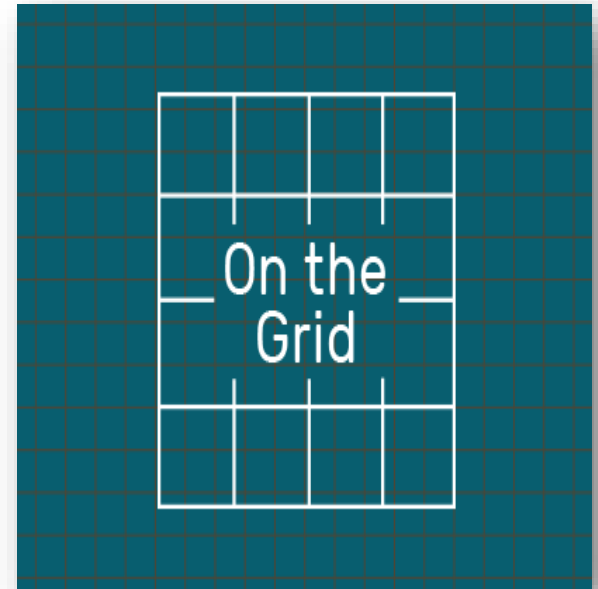


Still more recently, our efforts to sustain some version of privacy are increasingly shared: we want to share what was once seen as primarily individually private information – but now within specific groups. “Group privacy” or “collective privacy” are terms that further refine and describe these changing privacy sensibilities – especially in an era increasingly dominated by “Big Data” approaches.

Chapter 02

“Privacy” and private life: Changing attitudes in the age of social media and mobile devices

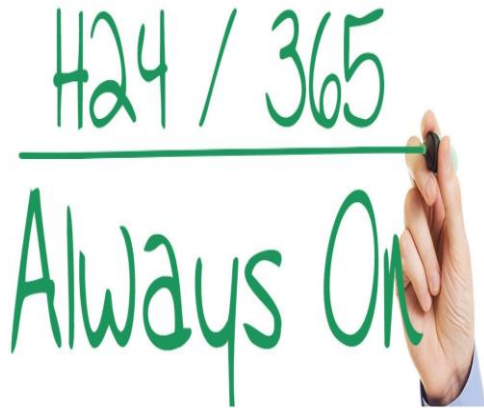
The mobile phone and then tablets invert our earlier contexts as well: being “on the grid” is now the norm – and so these devices have turned traditional notions of “public” and “private” upside down. Earlier, privacy in the form of being “off the grid” of a public communications network was commonplace.



Chapter 02

“Privacy” and private life: Changing attitudes in the age of social media and mobile devices

Being “**always on**” inverts or turns upside down earlier understandings of who we are and of our relationships with others. We will now see how this inversion and transformation means.



First of all, that we have to rethink our conceptions of privacy in dramatic ways. It may also well mean that we will likewise need to revisit and perhaps revise our earlier ethical and political philosophies

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“Privacy” and private life:
Cultural and philosophical considerations

“Privacy” and private life: Cultural and philosophical considerations

What do we mean by “privacy”?

Privacy enables us to create barriers and manage boundaries to protect ourselves from unwarranted interference in our lives, which allows us to negotiate who we are and how we want to interact with the world around us. Privacy helps us establish boundaries to limit who has access to our bodies, places and things, as well as our communications and our information.



“Privacy” and private life: Cultural and philosophical considerations

In the **US context** and tradition, the conception of privacy begins with primarily physical notions, what we initially wanted to protect was the privacy of spaces, first of all our homes.



“Privacy” and private life: Cultural and philosophical considerations



“Privacy” is not simply a matter of protecting specific spaces. what we want protected in an information age is precisely our information – information that, in digital form, is that much easier to access, copy, and distribute.

But why would we worry? “The expectation of privacy is grounded in the fear concerning how the information might be used or appropriated to pressure or embarrass one, to damage one’s credibility or economic status, and so on”.

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“Privacy” and private life: Cultural and philosophical considerations

There is a variation in the meaning of “privacy” that varies from culture to culture, and what is clear is that these concepts most closely associated with “privacy” are not only aligned with the emerging practices of collective and group privacy, in addition, they are expressed in the increasingly influential account of privacy as “context integration.”



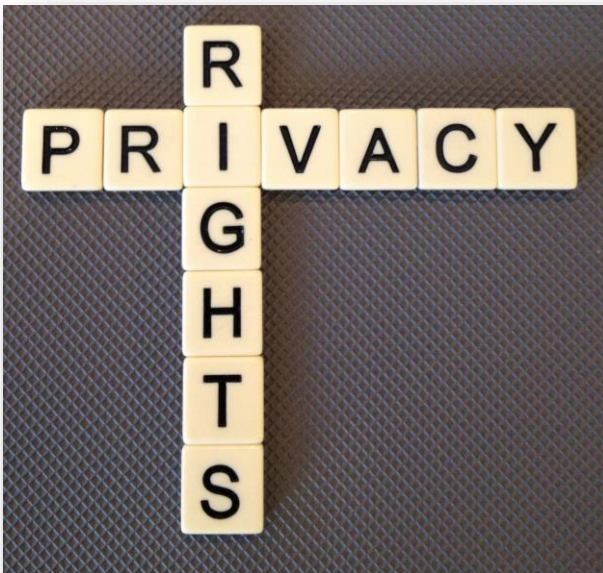
Is privacy a right?

Privacy is a qualified, fundamental human right.

The right to privacy is articulated in all of the major international and regional human rights instruments, including:



“Privacy” and private life: Cultural and philosophical considerations



- * **United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948, Article 12:**
- * **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) 1966, Article 17**
- * **Article 14 of the United Nations Convention on Migrant Workers;**
- * **Article 16 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;**
- * **Article 10 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;**

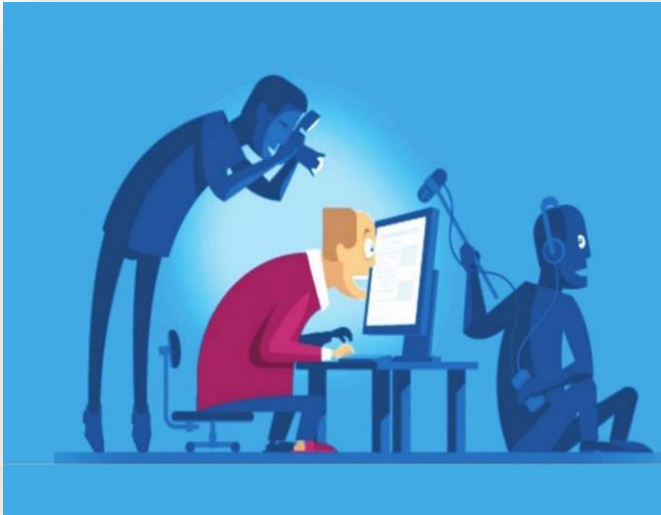
“Privacy” and private life: Cultural and philosophical considerations

What is the relationship between information privacy and data security?



Privacy and security are two interrelated but separate concepts. Information security is concerned with unauthorized activity that causes a loss of confidentiality, integrity, or availability of information or systems (including systems that don't involve personal information).

“Privacy” and private life: Cultural and philosophical considerations



Privacy concerns may arise from **unauthorized access**, but they can also arise from planned and permissible activity. So, even if information is handled securely, privacy concerns may exist where the use or disclosure of that data impacts individuals.

“Privacy” and private life: Cultural and philosophical considerations

For example, a social website may handle all information it collects securely, but then use that information to profile individuals, make decisions about the content users will see, and share their information (**securely!**) with advertising firms.



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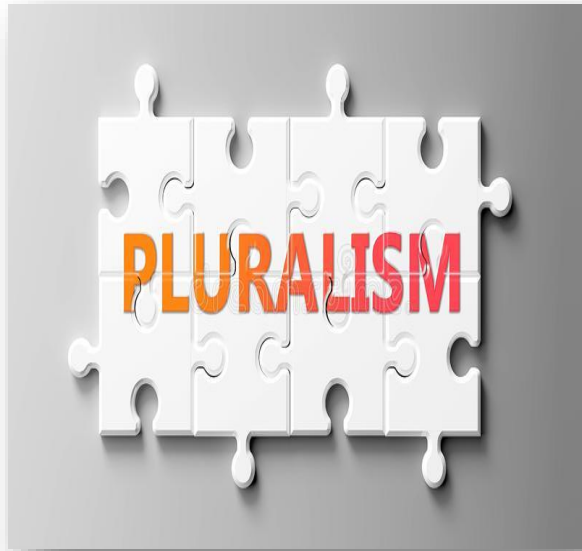
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“Privacy” and private life: Cultural differences and ethical pluralism

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In the case of “privacy,” **these cross-cultural comparisons** can thus be understood to constitute an example of such an ethical pluralism. This is to say: US-style conceptions of “privacy” as strongly individual and Thai notions of “privacy” as primarily familial privacy thus present us with strongly different ideas of “privacy.”

“Privacy” and private life: Cultural differences and ethical pluralism

For the **ethical relativist**, these differences would be one more example arguing that there are no universal values or norms: the validity of ethical norms and values is solely relative to a given culture and time.



Chapter 02

“Privacy” and private life: Cultural differences and ethical pluralism



In this instance, **the US notion of individual privacy as a positive good is legitimate** – but only if you’re a member of the US culture; and the Thai emphasis on familial privacy alone as ethically acceptable is also legitimate if you were born and raised in **Thai culture** in those days. This is fine – at least as long as people from both cultures have nothing to do with one another and thus require no shared norms or values.

“Privacy” and private life: Cultural differences and ethical pluralism

For the **ethical monist**, we can establish a shared norm or value rather simply: one of these values or norms must be true – absolutely, finally, and universally – and hence any different value or norm can only be false. Again, if we had nothing to do with one another, this might be a workable solution: but in today’s world, it is more or less impossible to live in such splendid isolation.



Chapter 02

“Privacy” and private life: Cultural differences and ethical pluralism



And so, if the **ethical monist** has his way, we must choose which norm or value is right and which is thereby wrong.

This approach seems to condemn us to intolerance and conflict – not very useful either for genuine understanding of the Other as Other 5 or for efforts to avoid cultural imperialism, much less warfare.

“Privacy” and private life: Cultural differences and ethical pluralism

The **ethical pluralist**, finally, hopes to avoid such intolerance and conflict by way of arguing that both cultures share a notion of “privacy,” but this notion is understood and practiced in different ways – ways that are directly shaped by each culture’s distinctive traditions and assumptions. Ethical pluralism thus argues for a **middle ground between relativism and monism.**

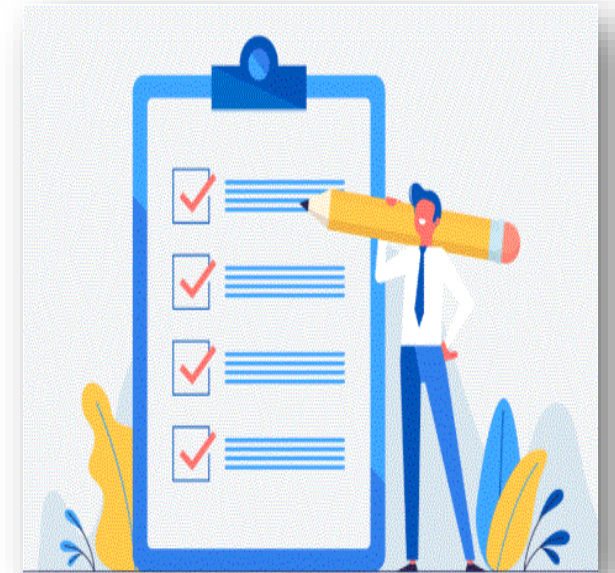


“Privacy” and private life: Cultural differences and ethical pluralism

Yes, norms and values vary from culture to culture – but, contra **monism**, this does not necessarily mean that only one cultural norm can be right and the other wrong: both can be correct as instances of different interpretations of a shared norm. **Contra relativism**, because varying cultural norms may thus instantiate a shared norm, cultural variations of this sort do not necessarily mean that there are no universally legitimate values or norms.



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*Thank you
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