Ethics in Computing

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PirateBayWatch: Results

• 2.5 million records in 2 weeks for 10 movies
Why Ethics in Computing?

WITH GREAT POWER

COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY
USER PRIVACY

LAWS

BREAKING
THE
LAW

USEFUL INTERNET
RESEARCH

SDSC

Slide credits:
Ben Zevenbergen
Formal Ethics

• Institutional Review Board
• Ethics Committee
• Funding Questions
• Checkbox?
Effective Ethics

• Formal ethics are a first step
• Community must be morally aware
• Discuss moral questionable cases with others
  • without bad consequences!
Statement from the SIGCOMM 2015 Program Committee: The SIGCOMM 2015 PC appreciated the technical contributions made in this paper, but found the paper controversial because some of the experiments the authors conducted raise ethical concerns. The controversy arose in large part because the networking research community does not yet have widely accepted guidelines or rules for the ethics of experiments that measure online censorship. In accordance with the published submission guidelines for SIGCOMM 2015, had the authors not engaged with their Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) or had their IRBs determined that their research was unethical, the PC would have rejected the paper without review. But the authors did engage with their IRBs, which did not flag the research as unethical. The PC hopes that discussion of the ethical concerns these experiments raise will advance the development of ethical guidelines in this area. It is the PC’s view that future guidelines should include as a core principle that researchers should not engage in experiments that subject users to an appreciable risk of substantial harm absent informed consent. The PC endorses neither the use of the experimental techniques this paper describes nor the experiments the authors conducted.

Encore: Lightweight Measurement of Web Censorship with Cross-Origin Requests

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Riding with the Stars

Stakeholder Analysis

• What stakeholders are impacted by your research?
  • You are a stakeholder!
  • Research group and University
  • Subjects in collected data
  • Subjects outside collected data
  • Professional colleagues
IRBs and Ethics Committees

• IRBs only handle federal grants and “human subject research”

• Ethics Committees are ill equipped

• Computer science

• Think about human *harming* research
Good example
Takeaways

• Ethics matter, also for internet measurement research

• Think about stakeholders for your research, also indirect ones

• IRB and Ethics Committees need help

• Don’t be afraid to reach out!
  
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