

(Analogue-) Digital Media Ethics: Beyond Privacy and Copyright

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overview

Premises and questions:

(P) insofar as (analogue-) digital media interact with our conceptions of *selfhood*, *identity*, and thereby *moral agency* and *responsibility* – and thereby our *social* and *political* regimes ...

(Q1) how and in what ways are these conceptions changing in “West” and “East”?

Approach: what do changing attitudes and practices regarding *privacy* and *copyright* suggest?

(A1): marked shifts both “East” and “West” → (over?) convergence towards a *hybrid* identity:

“West”: from *individual*(relational) to (individual)*relational self*

“East”: from (individual)*relational self* to *individual*(relational)

(Q2) what *kind(s)* of “individualism” is fostered by (analogue-) digital media?

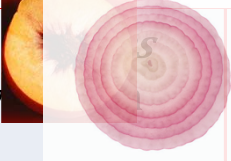


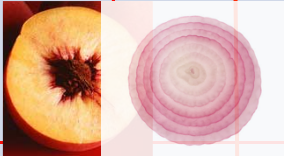
Approach: recent work regarding critical thinking, democracy, religion online

(A2): strong tendency towards the *emotional* (rational) individual

→ **problem:** emotional (rational) selves fostered by “electric media” || more hierarchical / authoritarian social structures and regimes

(Q3) what to do?

Premises – Medium Theory

orality	<i>Relational</i> (individuals inextricably interwoven in community)	 (non-democratic)
(orality)-literacy	<i>relational</i> (individual) selves / reflective / <i>rational</i> (emotive) selfhood	(authoritarian / hierarchical regimes)
(orality/literacy)- print	“atomic” INDIVIDUAL – Cartesian mind vs. body / Rational INDIVIDUAL(+relational/affective) Kantian-feminist autonomy	 modern liberal state / democratic polity
secondary orality-literacy ANALOGUE medium	→ RELATIONAL(+"individual")	???
“secondary orality” (i.e., as based on alpha digitality) (Finnemann 2002)	 “individual” “individual”	 <div>Exaptation: “old” sense of identity / media / structures <i>transformed</i>, not <u>abandoned</u>?</div>

Premises: *Digital* media?

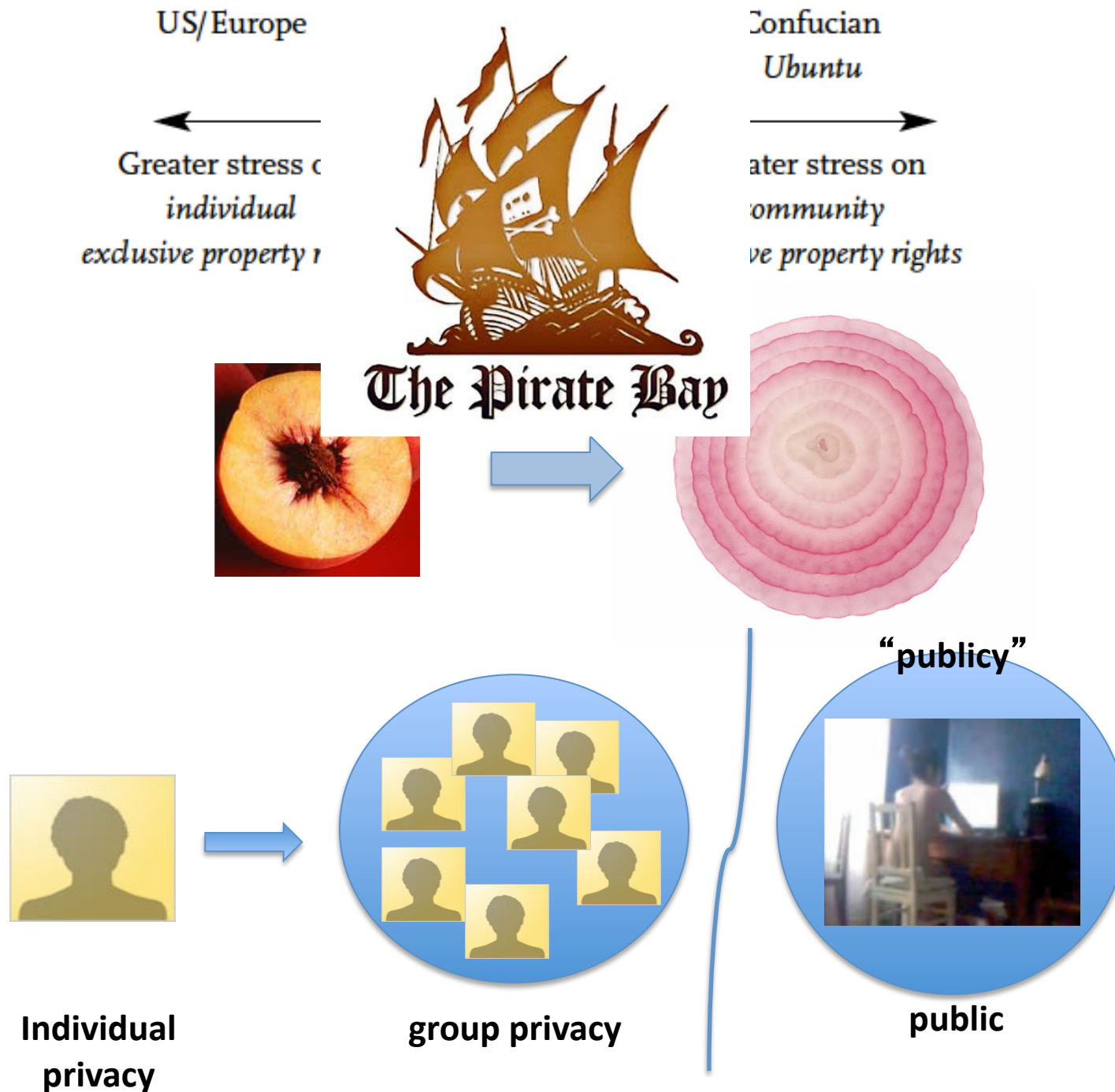
How “digital” are *digital* media?



→ While the specific affordances of digital media – both in the sense of *communication* media and in the sense of digital devices that *re/produce* analogue experiences of sight, sound, etc. – are critical,

we risk an unhelpful narrowing of focus and perhaps a technological determinism if we focus solely on the “digital” in “digital media”

- Specifically as we thereby risk overlooking aspects of knowing / navigating the world that depend on *embodiment*



(A1) Shifts in selfhood – (North) “East”

privacy, law and policy



Contemporary Views (Lü)

Prior to 1985, the term Yinsi (隐私) is defined as a hidden, bad thing

...

But now people usually distinguish the difference between a ‘shameful secret’ (Yinsi, 隐私) and ‘privacy’ (Yinsi (隐私)).

while the term Yinsi (隐私) is defined as personal thing people do not wish to tell others or to disclose in public.

US / EU	Germany	China 2005-2011
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moving towards convergence?

“Over-convergence”?

As the U.S. (and, perhaps, the E.U.) softens individual privacy rights in the name of state security - it becomes more (classically) “Chinese” ...

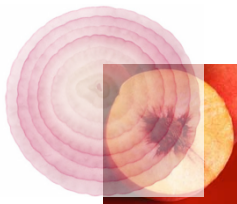
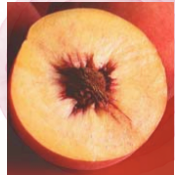
while other traditionally authoritarian / hierarchical countries in Asia *increase* individual privacy rights protections (including China), they become more (classically) “Western”?

individual
autonomy /
democratic
polity /
individual
privacy

individual
privacy only
as a *means*

...

can be
overridden
by state /
collective
needs



(2011: Apparently similar provisions in most recent EU data privacy protection laws?)

Information, “Online Rights of Minors”]

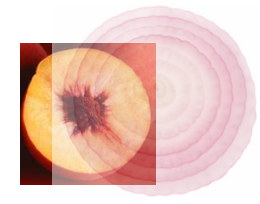
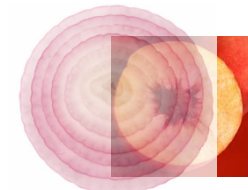
2011 – right to due process?

Prof. Sui argues that state interests should not supersede individual right to privacy without following a legal procedure that would examine justification for such infringement and make judgments as to whether to allow such infringement

2. Privacy protection as a *means* necessary to the development of e-commerce.
(Bizer 2003)

2. commercial usage of personal information for business efficiency

3. administrative usage of personal information for better governance
(Chen 2005)]



More Accurately: hybridization + convergence



on the one hand: the mobile phone encapsulates the drift of modern technology towards individualization ...

and, in contrast with much of our communicative engagements as sustaining *weak-tie* relationships - **“a major finding of the mobile communication research community ... is that the mobile phone has resulted in tighter ties within the sphere of our closest friends and family”** (Ling 2008, McEwen 2010)

→ will converging senses of self in both “West” and “East” - as relational-individuals (with different emphases) → converging / complementary senses of privacy?

Yes, but: “Web 2.0”
“individual” as more
emotive (rational)?



Critical thinking?

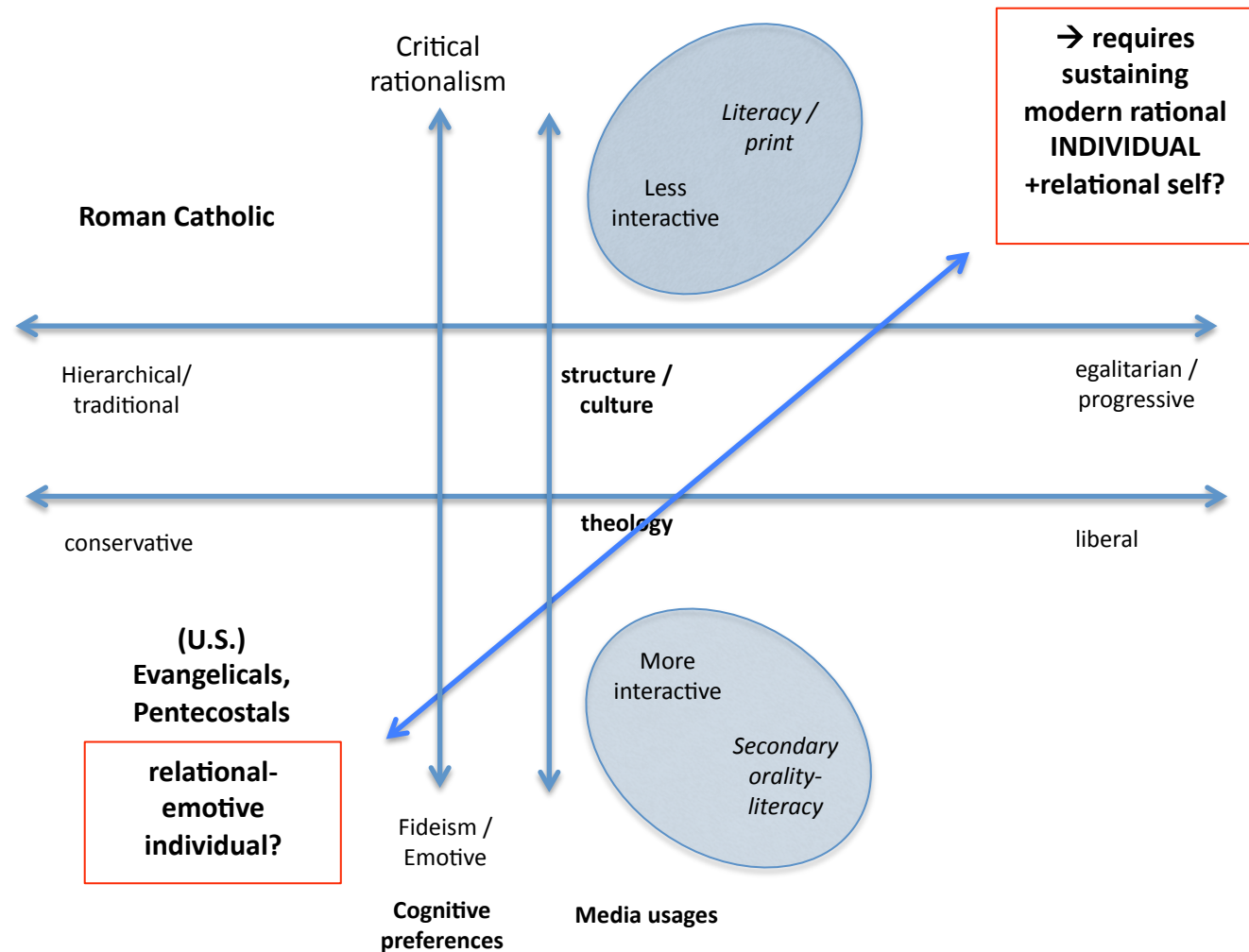
Our growing use of the Net and other screen-based technologies, [Greenfield] wrote, has led to the “widespread and sophisticated development of visual-spatial skills.”

But those gains go hand in hand with *a weakening of our capacity* for the kind of “deep processing” that underpins “*mindful knowledge acquisition, inductive analysis, critical thinking, imagination, and reflection.*” (Carr, 2010)

Democratization? *Sort of ...* (wisdom of the crowds → madness of the mob?)

Digital media – digital religion?

where would we fit Web 2.0
emotive (rational) / relational (individual)?



(Q3) What to do?

Notes towards an account of selfhood, agency, responsibility in an analogue-digital age

1. *Preliminaries*: why this will be difficult / impossible

- A. Relational notions of selfhood as springing the boundaries of received conceptualizations of individual / community:

Anonymous as moving from “swarm” – “a decentralized, self-organizing and spontaneous and constituted by relationality” – to a still anonymous but stable, collective “network” (Thacker 2009, in C. Wiedemann 2012)

- B. Selfhood as process, not content – hence resistant to articulation e.g., from Kant’s transcendental unity of apperception – Buddhist notions of selfhood (Hongladarom)
- C. Moral reflection, agency dependent on processes such as *phronesis* that may be non-computational (Ess, Søraker) and thus less “rational”?
- D. “Embodied” / “Embedded” mind = pre-reflective, tacit dimensions that stubbornly resist explicit articulation



What to do?

Notes towards an account of selfhood, agency, responsibility in
an analogue-digital age

2. Current / future directions

A. Possible linkages between *sociological / philosophical* conceptions of individual-relational self + emerging notions of agency, privacy ...?

Sociology / Internet Studies: Goffman's *The presentation of self in everyday life*: advances a *relational* but also “very rationalist-strategic conception of the self” - but also “more symbolic-pragmatic,” as “all about trying to (re)-establish social order through intersubjective alignment in interaction” – inclusive of the emotive? (Stine Lomborg)

Add: Karen Borad’s “intra-actions” as correlative of “entanglement” / QM understandings of intersubjectivity; Lucy Suchman in HCI, etc.

Philosophy:

Kant / phenomenology / virtue ethics (Ess & Thorseth 2011)

Phenomenology / Critical Theory - Feenberg

Buddhist notions of selfhood – S. Hongladarom

What to do?

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2. Current / future directions

Possible linkages between *sociological / philosophical* conceptions of individual-relational self + emerging notions of agency, privacy ...?)

(more) philosophy:

- Late modern “reflexive self” (Giddens), “quasi-subject” (Rainwater):
“constructing a differentiated self via increased body awareness”
+ Confucian notions of selfhood – P. Wong
- A. Hoffman and “relational autonomy”:
does not name a single view, but instead designates a loosely related collection of views that share an emphasis on the social embeddedness of the self and on the social structures and relations that make autonomy possible. (Andrea Westlund, 2009)
→ “distributed responsibility” (Floridi et al)
→ “contextual privacy” (Nissenbaum)

What to do?

Notes towards an account of selfhood, agency, responsibility in
an analogue-digital age

2. Current / future directions

B. (Re)turn of the body?

- i) Stubborn resistance of identity - as rooted in embodiment - to dissolution into postmodernist notions:
Seibt & Norskøv; Rodogno; Tartaglia (phenomenology again – J. J. Valberg) -

→ online communication (e.g., blogging) known to be ‘public’ but
experienced as personal (not ‘private’) - Lomborg

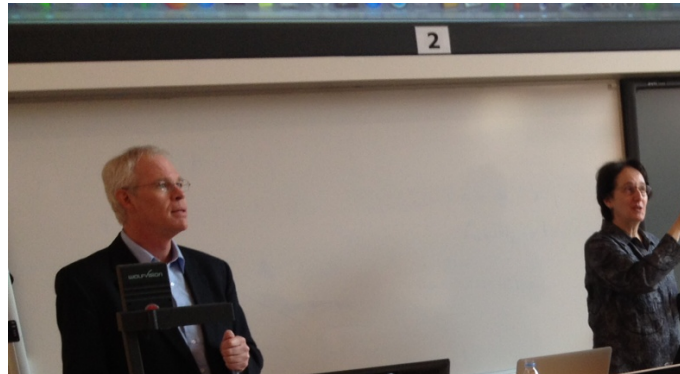
Philosophy and Technology, Sept, 2012

(cf. Taylor, 1989)

- ii) (re)new(ed) appreciation of the analogue-tangible-tactile dimensions of “digital” media:

Vinyl vis-à-vis CDs, mp3’s, etc.

Photographic prints, rendered analogue ...



[App Store](#) > [Photo & Video](#) >



[Burbn, Inc. Web Site](#) > [Instagram Support](#) >



What to do?

Notes towards an account of selfhood, agency, responsibility in
an analogue-digital age

2. Current / future directions

C. (re)new(ed) notions of individual-relational / rational-
emotive selfhood → new *political* theories?

Already: S. Hongladarom (2007, 2011, 2012)

Look for: *Philosophy East-West*, 2015 (!!)

D. (Analogue-) Digital Media Ethics → Informed choice:

Given what we can know about media ↔ selfhood –
select the balance / blend of media literacies (print-literacy //
secondary orality) that foster *both* individual-relational /
rational-emotive senses of selfhood

→ an agential self capable of sustaining democratic
processes, egalitarian structures

thanks!