

Webmastering A - Essay Questions Final Exam – Fall 2007

Choose ONE of the following questions to answer. Your answer should be 2 pages in length (not including the bibliography). You should have at least 2 sources to support your opinion/ideas. It should be typed, double-spaced, 1 inch margins, in 12 pt font Times New Roman or Arial font (MLA format). The essay will be checked for plagiarism. If your essay is plagiarized you will receive zero (0) points for the essay and your name will be given to the assistant principal for disciplinary action.

1. Increasingly we depend on the Internet for news, information, and even personal guidance. Should we? Of what value do you think the Internet is as a source of **reliable** information for the **average** citizen?
2. In your opinion, how has the Internet been harmful to our society? Give specific examples to illustrate your answers and opinions.
3. Write a brief report that explains what the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers.(ICANN) does. Is such an organization necessary in the ongoing organization and development of the Internet? Why or why not?
4. Write a brief research report about the creation of the internet. (Some of the questions you will want to answer are - Who was involved? How and when did it begin? How has it changed?)
5. One of the major advancements in web interactivity has been the introduction of video/multimedia in many forms (mov, wmv, flash, etc.) One reviewer was quoted as saying, "My want of a more consumer oriented web is not so neatly counterbalanced by the desire to enjoy an ad free web experience." What are some of your views on this new "rich media" web page advertising (you may give specific examples to illustrate your point)? Does the use of video/flash animation make these advertisements more acceptable or just more obnoxious? Are they helping to improve web advertising effectiveness?
6. The attached article was in the Outlook section of the Houston Chronicle on Sunday, November 25, 2007. It brings up a very interesting point which many of us probably don't think about. Write a letter to the editor that is a response to this article (supportive or nonsupportive – you decide).

When does cyber-sleuthing become stalking?

Rules on snooping could use some clarification

By TRAVIS F. SMITH - Los Angeles Times

I am an investigator, by hobby if not by trade, the kind of person who looks in stairwells just to see where they go.

So when I meet a couple at a wedding and find out they're prosecutors, I look them up in a database of court cases to see if they've worked on anything interesting.

Or, if I know someone who works in the entertainment industry, I'll look up his or her credits on www.imdb.com, Variety.com or Studiosystem.com.

At a conference, when people asking questions announce who they are and where they're from, I'll see if I can find them on Google in the time it takes for their question to be answered.

When our neighbor tells me she's bought a town house, I deduce which real estate listing it is based on clues from our conversation. (How many bedrooms? How far away? Do you think it'll take much work before it's ready for you to move in? Got it!)

And when my mom tells me she fell asleep watching a movie on TV, I'll try to figure out which film it was from the first half of the plot. Mom likes this too because it means I can fill her in on how the movie ended.

However, as more and more personal information — information that's often impromptu and unfiltered at its origin, like blog comments, Facebook wall posts and Flickr party pictures — moves online, my habits are bumping into a shifting (though not entirely unjustified) expectation of privacy in online spaces.

I think many people would agree it's probably kosher to look up someone's LinkedIn profile after you've met them at a conference. But is it all right to do that to your landlord?

If someone gives you his or her e-mail address, is it OK to then check that person's domain registration to find out where they live? And does it matter why you're doing it? Is plain curiosity worse than to find out if they live in the same area that you've visited as a tourist?

Is it OK to follow the Twitter feeds of people you've never met?

What if it's because they're in your industry? Your neighborhood? Or if they're just funny? Or cute?

If a friend of a friend you meet at a party talks about having traveled someplace, is it a faux pas to search for his vacation photos on Flickr and comment on them? What if they are a woman's photos? Are there different rules for men and women, as searchers and searchees?

I recently met a woman while playing ultimate (the Frisbee sport). She seemed outgoing and was a decent player, and it was the end of the summer season. We talked on the field, introduced ourselves, but had just the briefest of conversations. I knew my team needed players for the fall, and I remembered her name, so I looked her up on Facebook. Through Facebook, I sent her a message about the fall season and a "poke" — a sort of a nonverbal online nudge — and forgot about it. Six weeks later, I rediscovered her name on a to-do list and looked her up again. She was gone. Weird, I thought. Who gives up their account on "Crackbook"?

It took a day or two for it to dawn on me that she probably hadn't left Facebook. She probably had blocked me.

That's a weird feeling. It seems slightly wrong to even tell the story; it feels a bit like I'm admitting to having done something creepy. And it makes me wonder whether I've been blocked by others on Facebook or other networking sites.

I've done my share of ignoring messages and declining requests. But blocking seems more final. Isn't blocking something you do to a stalker? It's like I've been judged for something I didn't do — or possibly for something someone else once did.

Since being blocked, I've been second-guessing my Web-searching habits — and yet, I know that I'm not doing anything beyond looking at what's freely available. I just do it more often than most and am better at it than some.

The moral of the story?

I don't know. I guess it's that online spaces you might think are private aren't, and what you might think is acceptable online behavior isn't. And that the lines aren't just blurred; they haven't stopped moving yet.

Smith is a journalist and Web site developer for Hop Studios in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Smith, Travis F. "When does cyber-sleuthing become stalking?" [Houston Chronicle](http://www.chron.com/dispatch/story/mpl/editorial/outlook/5326092.html) [Houston, TX] 25 Nov. 2007: 1E+. [The Houston Chronicle](http://www.chron.com/dispatch/story/mpl/editorial/outlook/5326092.html). 25 Nov. 2007. 26 Nov. 2007 <<http://www.chron.com/dispatch/story/mpl/editorial/outlook/5326092.html>>