

# Networked Communications

## Lecture 3-2

Computers & Society (CPSC 430)

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# Sexting

- Definition: sexually suggestive text messages or emails with nude or nearly nude photographs
- In a 2009 survey, 9% of U.S. teenagers admitted to sending a sext, 17% admitted to receiving a sext
- 2018 study: 14% sending; 25% receiving
- Case of Jesse Logan
  - killed herself after ex-boyfriend shared pictures
- Case of Phillip Alpert
  - just turned 18; sent pictures of his 16 year-old girlfriend.
  - sentenced and registered as a sex offender for child pornography
- Case of Ting-Yi Oei
  - principal kept a copy of a picture as evidence
  - angry parent sued him
  - lost job over child pornography charges

*How should society respond to sexting?*

# Cyberbullying

- Cyberbullying: Use of the Internet or phone system to inflict psychological harm
- In a 2009 survey, 10% admitted to cyberbullying, and 19% said they had been cyberbullied (2016 same)

Girl allegedly commits suicide after being bullied



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Vancouver area teen commits suicide after telling story of being cyberbullied (with video)

#RIPAmanda is trending as people post news and condolences for the teen, Amanda Todd

BY GILLIAN SHAW, VANCOUVER SUN OCTOBER 11, 2012 1:05 PM

A Vancouver area teen who told a heart-breaking story in a [YouTube video](#) of cyberbullying that led to an all-out schoolyard attack has committed suicide.

In stories and posts flooding Vancouver's social media networks, #RIPAmanda is trending as people post news and condolences for the teen, Amanda Todd. Amanda died in Coquitlam last night.

The young teen went to school in Maple Ridge but had changed school and was living in Coquitlam. She joined YouTube on September 6 and posted her video September 7. Her last YouTube activity was when she added a Hunter Hayes music video to her favourites on YouTube.

# Chat-Room Predators

- Chat room: supports real-time discussions among many people connected to network
- Instant messaging and chat rooms replacing telephone for many people
- Some pedophiles meeting children through chat rooms
- Police countering with “sting” operations

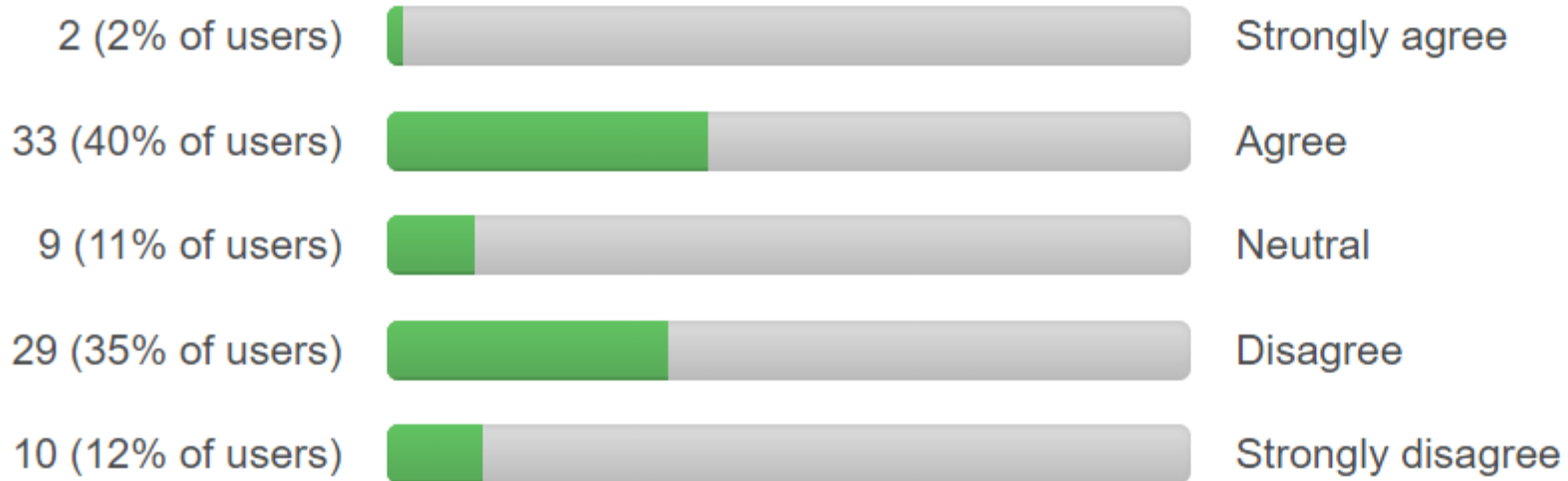
## ***Are chatroom “stings” ethical?***

Kantianism, Utilitarianism (act/rule), Social Contract,  
Virtue Ethics

# Networked Communications

“Any social network above a certain size should be required to verify the identities of its members.”

A total of **83** vote(s) in **122** hours



# Government Control of the Internet

- North Korea: Internet mostly inaccessible; Myanmar: formerly inaccessible; Cuba: Notoriously slow & expensive.
- Saudi Arabia: centralized control
- People's Republic of China: highly sophisticated filtering ('great firewall') as well as censorship
- Germany: Forbids access to neo-Nazi sites
- United States: Limits access of minors to pornography

## Key Findings

1

**Global internet freedom declined for the 11th consecutive year.** The greatest deteriorations were documented in Myanmar, Belarus, and Uganda, where state forces cracked down amid electoral and constitutional crises. Myanmar's 14-point score decline is the largest registered since the *Freedom on the Net* project began.

2

**Governments clashed with technology companies on users' rights.** Authorities in at least 48 countries pursued new rules for tech companies on content, data, or competition over the past year. With a few positive exceptions, the push to regulate the tech industry, which stems in some cases from genuine problems like online harassment and manipulative market practices, is being exploited to subdue free expression and gain greater access to private data.

3

**Free expression online is under unprecedented strain.** More governments arrested users for nonviolent political, social, or religious speech than ever before. Officials suspended internet access in at least 20 countries, and 21 states blocked access to social media platforms. Authorities in at least 45 countries are suspected of obtaining sophisticated spyware or data-extraction technology from private vendors.

4

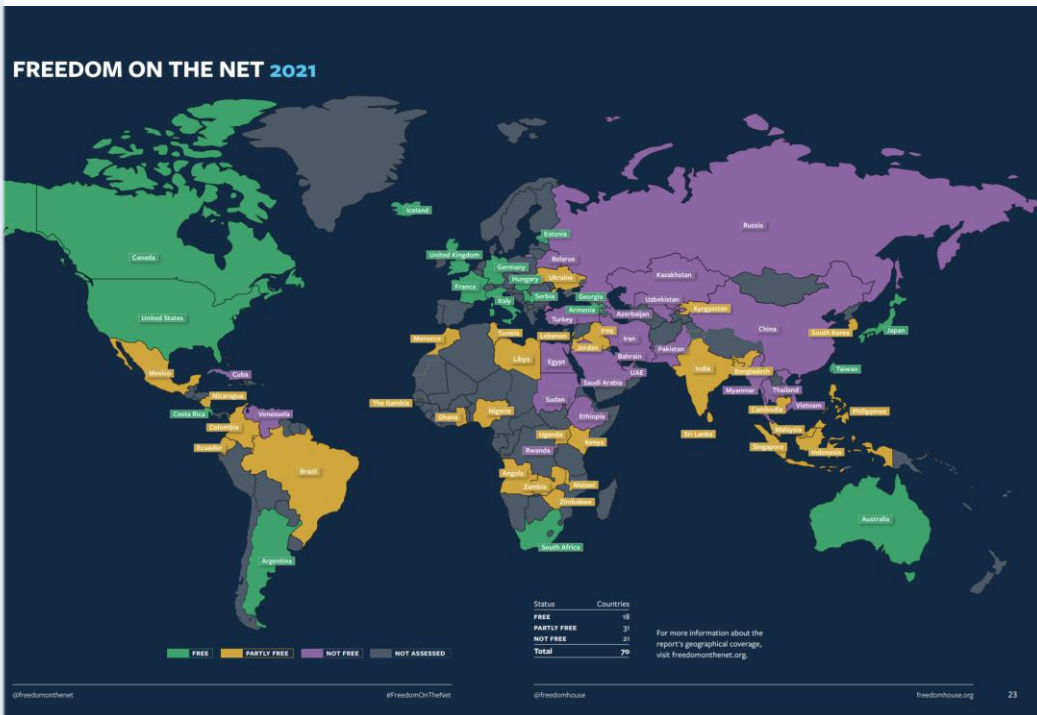
**China ranks as the worst environment for internet freedom for the seventh year in a row.** Chinese authorities imposed draconian prison terms for online dissent, independent reporting, and mundane daily communications. The COVID-19 pandemic remains one of the most heavily censored topics. Officials also cracked down on the country's tech giants, citing their abuses related to competition and data protection, though the campaign further concentrated power in the hands of the authoritarian state.

5

**The United States' score declined for the fifth consecutive year.** False, misleading, and manipulated information continued to proliferate online, even affecting public acceptance of the 2020 presidential election results. The new administration took promising steps to enforce stronger protections for internet users.

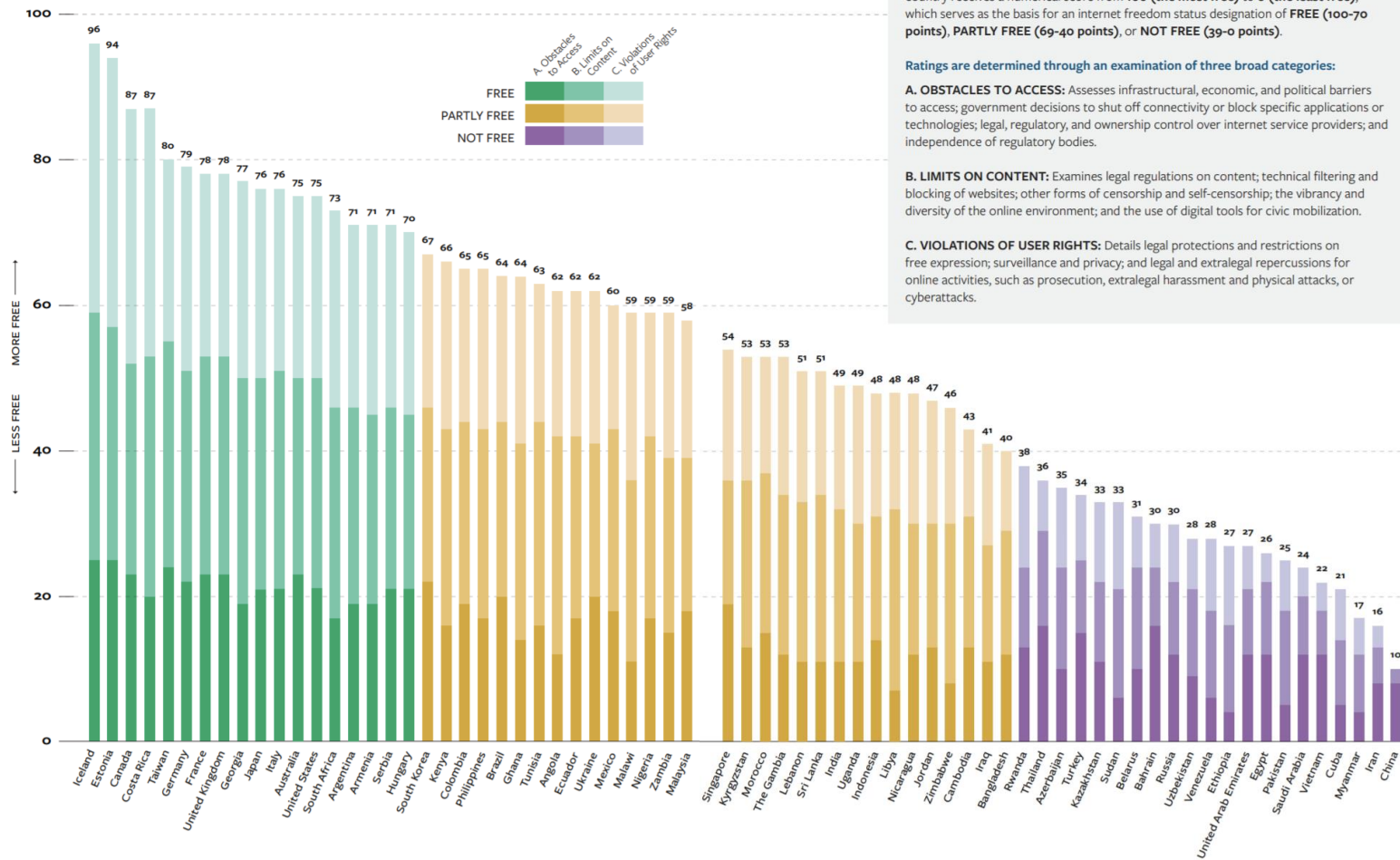
6

**State intervention must protect human rights online and preserve an open internet.** The emancipatory power of the internet depends on its egalitarian nature. To counter digital authoritarianism, democracies should ensure that regulations enable users to express themselves freely, share information across borders, and hold the powerful to account.



## GLOBAL RANKINGS

100 = Most Free 0 = Least Free



Freedom on the Net measures the level of internet freedom in 70 countries. Each country receives a numerical score from **100 (the most free)** to **0 (the least free)**, which serves as the basis for an internet freedom status designation of **FREE (100-70 points)**, **PARTLY FREE (69-40 points)**, or **NOT FREE (39-0 points)**.

Ratings are determined through an examination of three broad categories:

**A. OBSTACLES TO ACCESS:** Assesses infrastructural, economic, and political barriers to access; government decisions to shut off connectivity or block specific applications or technologies; legal, regulatory, and ownership control over internet service providers; and independence of regulatory bodies.

**B. LIMITS ON CONTENT:** Examines legal regulations on content; technical filtering and blocking of websites; other forms of censorship and self-censorship; the vibrancy and diversity of the online environment; and the use of digital tools for civic mobilization.

**C. VIOLATIONS OF USER RIGHTS:** Details legal protections and restrictions on free expression; surveillance and privacy; and legal and extralegal repercussions for online activities, such as prosecution, extralegal harassment and physical attacks, or cyberattacks.



# Forms of Direct Censorship

- **Government monopolization of a communication medium**
  - E.g., the government owns all television stations, or all printing presses, and so controls the message
  - Doesn't work so well with the Internet (though see Saudi Arabia; China)
- **Prepublication review**
  - Certain kinds of information must be reviewed before they can be published
  - E.g., nuclear/military secrets
- **Licensing and registration**
  - You can't operate a TV station without a license
  - Necessary because of limited bandwidth
  - Opens the door to regulation of content (as in Canada)

# Self-censorship

- Most common form of censorship
- Group decides for itself not to publish
- Reasons
  - Avoid subsequent prosecution
  - Maintain good relations with government officials (sources of information)
- A “soft” form of self-censorship: ratings systems
  - Movies, TVs, CDs, video games
  - Nothing similar has happened on the Web
    - At least, not consistently.

# Challenges Posed by the Internet

- **Many-to-many communications**
  - Hard for the government to shut down (but not at all impossible)
- **Dynamic connections**
  - Computers coming and going all the time; hard to know who's who
- **Huge numbers of Web sites**
  - Hard to control access to online information
- **Extends beyond national borders, laws**
  - Governments may have limited authority to shut down sites
- **Hard to distinguish between minors and adults**
  - Important for initiatives that seek to restrict children's access

# Ethical Perspectives on Censorship

- Kant opposed censorship

- Product of the Enlightenment: reaction to institutional control
- “Have courage to use your own reason”

- Mill opposed censorship

1. No one is infallible: we may silence the truth.
2. Even if not, an opinion may contain a kernel of truth.
3. Even if not, the truth must be rationally tested and validated.
4. Ideas are most persuasive if they’re tested rigorously.

Principle of harm: “The only ground on which intervention is justified is to prevent harm to others; the individual’s own good is not a sufficient condition.”

*When, if ever, do you think censorship is justified?*

# Freedom of Expression: History

- **De Scandalis Magnatum (England, 1275)**
  - You could be imprisoned for weakening loyalty to the King
  - Not so different from lèse-majesty laws today, esp. in Thailand, Morocco, Jordan (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lese-majesty>)
- **18th century: freedom of the press in England**
  - Anyone could print what they liked
  - Punishment for libel: publication causing harm, even if truth
- **American states adopted bills of rights including freedom of expression**
  - Freedom of expression in 1st amendment to U.S. Constitution: “Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press”

# Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

1. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it **subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law** as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

- (a) freedom of conscience and religion;
- (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;**
- (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and
- (d) freedom of association.



# Freedom of Expression not an Absolute Right

- Right to freedom of expression must be balanced against the public good
- Various restrictions on freedom of expression exist
  - e.g., Section 1 of the Canadian Charter is used to justify laws against hate speech, even though these limit expression

## **In pairs:**

*Which restrictions on freedom of expression do you think are justified?*