

## **Assignment: Ethical Analysis 1** **due 10/3, 9 pm**

draft due: 9/29, in class

Using the Ethical Analysis Framework that we reviewed and practiced in class, you will analyze the problem of whether and how to regulate researchers' use of personal information shared on social media.

The primary question is: Should personal data - including posts, images, and metadata - shared on social media be used for research purposes? How: by whom, for what specific purpose, and using what laws, regulations, policies, or standards? Why?

The expected length is 2-4 pages in a standard single-spaced, 11 or 12 point font report style. If you have more to say, it's OK to submit a longer analysis (but not more than 8 pages, please). Remember to focus on content and clarity of writing before worrying about length. We will do a writing workshop beforehand; each student should bring 3 printed copies of a rough draft to class on Sept 29, and we will work in small groups (not the usual groups) to do peer review.

1. Read the commentaries on the drinking-on-the-job analysis to see some well-written examples, with different structures, that present the different sides of an ethical situation clearly and persuasively. Notice that those commentaries do not all draw the same conclusion! (Notice also that they mostly do not cite any sources. You, by contrast, should cite your sources, and should not make unsupported assertions.)

<http://www.onlineethics.org/cms/11658.aspx>

<http://www.onlineethics.org/cms/11662.aspx>

<http://www.onlineethics.org/cms/11660.aspx>

<http://www.onlineethics.org/cms/11664.aspx>

2. Read the following sources to learn more about the Facebook case that brought this issue to attention.

- <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/06/everything-we-know-about-facebooks-secret-mood-manipulation-experiment/373648/>
- <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jul/07/facebook-study-science-experiment-research>
- <http://www.pnas.org/content/111/24/8788.abstract>
- <http://www.pnas.org/content/111/38/13677.full>
- <http://www.pnas.org/content/111/38/13675.full>

*You may refer to this case in your analysis, but strive to address the ethical issues more generally, thinking beyond the specifics of this one case.*

3. Do your own research. What questions do you have that these articles haven't answered? As you go through the rest of the process, you will likely need to do more research on specific questions or possible consequences.

4. While there are many different angles to this story, you do not need to include all of them. Decide what you want to focus on and what aspects of this situation you want to draw out. Don't try to include every single thing that you've learned. (You wouldn't be able to fit that in 4 pages.)

5. Use the ethical analysis framework to organize your thoughts and develop your analysis. (You do not need to submit your notes as you did with the in-class analysis.)

- This is the framework posted at Analysis Guidelines on the class schedule page.

6. Write your own cogent ("clear and understandable") essay presenting your analysis. It should include all of the key information that you organized in your framework process, but should not just be linearly presented as those information sequentially.

7. Think about what conclusion you drew and use that as a thesis statement, then create a narrative structure that will let you support that thesis using the information from your analysis. You probably want to write an outline first to organize the general order in which you'll present the information, and what you'll say, before you write the final essay.

8. Start this assignment soon! Feel free to come by office hours to talk about your notes from the ten-step process, review your outline, or ask me to look through parts of an early draft with you. It's OK to ask a friend/peer to read and comment on your draft, but they should not rewrite it for you. Indicate any editing help you received.

9. Please be very careful about any quotations or wording you'd like to borrow from your sources, and quote and cite those sources appropriately, consistent with the course policy. You should also cite your sources for any specific facts, findings, or sources of expert opinions (but you don't need to cite sources for general knowledge).

10. Include a bibliography (list of references) that is easy to read and has full bibliographic information (not just URLs, even if you found a source online). MLA style is suggested but you are free to use any style as long as it's internally consistent. Don't forget to cite the sources listed above.