Moral Issues of the Internet

- Computers alone are powerful.
  - Word processing.
  - Gaming.
  - Graphic design.
- Add a computer to the network increases its power.
- Power is restricted to the size of network.
  - Connect with more information sharing peers: SETI project.
  - Increase methods to organize information.
  - Pornographic material is the prime suspect.
- What we will discuss:
  - Censorship
  - Freedom of expression.
Why do people send SPAM?
- Can send millions of advertisements at very low cost.
- Even if 1 out of 100,000 respond they make money.
- How much for 100,000 regular letters: 34c stamp = $34K.
- Cost of sending 100,000 e-mails: maybe 1c = $10K
- Cost of the stationary?
- $$$ - SPAM is cheap and makes money!

How do they find you?
- Dictionary attack.
- Mailing list.
- Web content forms you complete.

How do we combat spam?
- Web filters.
- Limit number of mails people can send.
- Blacklist mailing address.
More SPAM

- **Immoral:**
  - The four ethic theories: SPAM is unsolicited/spoofing/hiding/lying about your e-mail.
  - SPAM is wrong.

- **CAN SPAM act of 2003**
  - Rules business’s must comply to before SPAMMING/
  - Arguments that it just makes SPAM more legal.
  - Most SPAM doesn’t comply to CAN SPAN act (14.3% in 2004 - 5.7% in 2006).

- Need to find a Social-Technical solution.
Global tool for information exchange:
- Decentralization makes adding information easy.
- Unique addresses allow for infinite linking to different objects.
- Based on the internet allowing any technology to connect.

Uses: Shopping, socialize, blogging, business, learn, entertainment ... etc.

Government control: What is too much and what is too little?
- How do we protect society from the negatives of the WWW?
Censorship

- Suppress public access to materials considered offensive or harmful.
  - Largely done by governments and religious institutions.
- Direct Censorship:
  - Government monopolization: control all the flow of information channels.
  - Prepublication review: information that is sensitive such as national security.
  - Licensing and registration: control media with limited bandwidth.
- Self-censorship:
  - Most common form of censorship.
  - Usually done to protect self interest.
  - The rating systems for games and movies is to help with this.
- The internet presents challenges to censorship.
  - Why would we want to censor the internet?
Freedom of Expression

- First Amendment of the United States Constitution.
  - Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

- Not an absolute right.
  - Balance against the public good.
    - Libel, lies, slander, misrepresentation, prejury, false advertising, obscenity, profanity, solicitation of crime ...
Internet crime

- **Children of the web.**
  - Web filters to protect them from objectionable material.
  - Child Internet Protection Act
    - This requires all government funded library’s to install web filters.
    - Is this constitutional?

- **Identity theft.**
  - Spoofed legitimate web entities (Banks and PayPal, e-bay and amazon).
  - Browser hijacks, cookie analysis.
  - Good old hack a website that stores sensitive information.

- **Chat room predators.**
  - Are police “stings” ethical?
Internet conclusion

- Net presents a host of ethical problems.
- Not discussed is internet addiction.
  - Is this even a legitimate addiction?
  - Does online gaming addiction exist too then?
- Does its good outweigh its negative?
  - Consider our ethical theory's.