

CONSEQUENCES OF IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT- WHEN LOOKING GOOD ONLINE IS MORE ABOUT SADISM THAN TRUTH

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Abstract

This research paper addresses ethical considerations for surveillance in education and the educational policy frameworks that regulate human computer interactions of vulnerable and marginalized groups with emerging and disruptive technologies for both punitive and well-being measures. Over the span of two years, qualitative data was collected in the form of semi-structured interviews and participant background surveys and reflections on practice, provided staff perspectives and knowledge about vulnerable and marginalized populations, and technology policies related to known surveillance of staff during work hours in schools. In 1959, Goffman proposed that human beings attempt to control other's impressions of them and that these impressions are often confined to spatially defined social establishments. As such, the concept of impression management and selective expression are the focus of this paper in an attempt to consider the how educational policy has evolved and areas of growth still needed or considered unattainable.

School policies have grown to encompass the creation of safe spaces (and brave spaces) for LGBTQ2 individuals to be welcomed into the profession and community. Changes reflect gender neutral bathrooms, and the identification of pronouns on name tags, and social media where individuals are asked to identify which gender they relate to (she/hers, he/his, they/them, undeclared). However, the message of concealment is still apparent in other ways. The need to separate personal emails from work/school life correspondence is one way school districts have communicated the need to conceal identity, associations, personal interests, thoughts and emotions. Of a similar theme is the concept of responsabilization. This paper considers Karaian's (2014) examination of responsabilization "through the lens of critical whiteness, queer, girlhood/young feminists and porn studies' theorizations of the politics of sexual respectability and sexual subjectification" in an effort to revisit colonization present in schools, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (2011) "Respect Yourself" campaign and the role of surveillance for keeping students safe.

Results from the study indicate that seven of the eight participants in the study did not consider a person in the role of a teacher or administrator to be part of the vulnerable or marginalized population. Of the administrators polled, surveillance of colleagues (i.e. teachers) was often reported to them through students and parent reports of behaviour and included requests to IT staff for monitoring of teachers on site during work hours. IT staff also understood that policing 'sexting' was both difficult to do and the responsibility of teachers in the classroom.

Keywords: *Stress, coping, identity, citizenship, tracking.*

1. Introduction

The vulnerability of teachers may come down to how closely their personal or professional identity aligns with the identity of the organization for which they are associated with. "Risk and protective factors in the environment are not deterministic, but rather are experienced as supports or stressors, and the resulting balance or imbalance is conceptualized as the individuals' vulnerability" (Velez and Spencer, 2018, 77). Abril et al. (2012) hypothesize that populations understand different social situations have different rules of decorum and different filters (p. 63-64). "Through these performances, Goffman posited, individuals create and tailor their social identities for particular audiences" (p. 63). Critical Social Theory posits, "Symbolic interactionism tends to confine itself to the immediate settings of social interaction such as schools, classrooms, staffrooms and communities – ones that are clearly bounded in time and space (...) to understand the world of teaching properly, we must therefore move to some extent beyond it (Goffman, 1975; Woods, 1977 as cited by Hargreaves, 1994, p. 3-4). As

educational policy has evolved, schools have taken great strides to create safe spaces (and brave spaces) for LGBTQ2 individuals to be welcomed into communities. Changes reflect gender neutral bathrooms and the identification of pronouns on name tags, and social media where individuals are asked to identify which gender they relate to (she/hers, he/his, they/them, undeclared). However, the message of concealment is still apparent in other ways.

The need to separate personal emails from work/school life in emails is one way school districts have communicated the need to conceal identity, associations, personal interests, thoughts and emotions. The message that work emails and personal emails should be separate has always been strong. One example of expected concealment in education for Canadian School Districts are requests from unions for personal email to communicate to teachers other than work emails. Research suggests that the power struggle between unions and employers has created tension when union matters are communicated through employee emails, with some employers blocking emails from unions to employees. In the United States, policy has been changing considering the use of employee emails.

“The Board’s review of access rights of third parties to an employer’s virtual space follows the filing of unfair labor practice charges by various unions seeking access to employer’s physical space and presents significant questions regarding the rights of employers to control the use of their property, both physical and virtual” -King, 2014, p. 21-22

Bandura’s (1989) notion that humans are not independent agents has grown to become inclusive of controlling the communication of teachers to the community outsider of the school. In an effort to help ease communication stressors various technological reforms have emerged for the profession. One example is present current suggestive text appearing at the bottom of emails that offer three possible responses and excited punctuation as a quick, positive response to a received email. Additionally, some schools have created positions such as communication officers to respond to parent emails for teachers with many school districts. These positions are offered to individuals with advanced degrees in communication or writing, and varying levels of diplomacy training who diffuse situations, limit confidential information and guide the recipient towards a positive outcome by framing the school as welcoming, and approachable. Communication officers present a professional written response. Finally, one third innovation has been the direction of schools to offer staff lists with a link to contact staff members without providing email addresses. Members of the public are directed to fill in an online form that is then directed to a member on staff. Report card comments are assessed by members of staff and administration prior to being sent home to parents and students. Additionally, many school districts have begun to increase their security and ability to contact, in some cases with security and elevator passes required to speak with any school board staff as a way to protect staff from impromptu meetings that may allow opportunities to present for communication that has not been regulated.

2. Theoretical framework

Karaian’s (2014) examination of responsabilization “through the lens of critical whiteness, queer, girlhood/young feminists and porn studies’ theorizations of the politics of sexual respectability and sexual subjectification” is a sharp contrast to the recent requirement for Ontario Teachers to gain certification from Canadian Child Protection Services (CCPS) for sexual abuse training. Karaian (2014) criticizes the ‘Respect Yourself’ campaign for attacking “white, middle-class teenage girls who ‘send, post and share’ rather than boys, who studies show are more likely to forward or redistribute” (Fleschler Peskin et al., 2013 as cited on Karaian, 2014, p. 286). Karaian (2014) goes further to suggest that the CCPS campaign suggests if girls respected themselves they would prevent the harm of sexting and cites a Canadian Centre for Child Protection, 2011 example activity (Karaian, 2014, p. 287) asking girls to reflect on if they think posting sexy pictures of themselves online will get them attention. From this perspective a different approach from “Respect Yourself” that acknowledges revenge porn as a criminal offence in Canada, and yet acknowledges the realities of the potential distribution of images is a message to “Protect Yourself”.

In a review of the temporal period from 1970-2021, the changes in approaches to surveillance by industries and acceptance of surveillance by the community have shown an incredible breadth and range in responses (Bennett, 2001). Noted psychological impacts have shown a range from fear or bias (Ajzen, 1991; Velez and Spencer, 2018) and compliance with game playing (Fuller, 2019) to complete acceptance (Nam, 2019). In the 1990’s tracking could be promised to offer organizations the ability to gain behavioural insight and could be used to help assess or guide individuals in their attempts to conduct cognitive self-regulation (Ajzen, 1991). University of Victoria political science professor, Collin Bennett’s (2001) review of surveillance systems comments on the once traditional approach of a discrete

and bounded databank with “clear boundaries” (p. 198) to that of an evolving structure, that characterizes the Internet as a form of life, “embedded in human consciousness and social practice, and whose architecture embodies an inherent valence that is gradually shifting away from the assumptions of anonymity upon which the Internet was originally designed” (Bennett, 2001).

3. Methodology

The objectives of the research presented were to address ethical considerations for surveillance in education and the educational policy frameworks that regulate human computer interactions of vulnerable and marginalized groups with emerging and disruptive technologies for both punitive and well-being measures. Over the span of two years, qualitative data was collected in the form of semi-structured interviews and participant background surveys and reflections on practice, provided staff perspectives and knowledge about vulnerable and marginalized populations, and technology policies related to known surveillance of staff during work hours in schools.

Two research applications were provided to participating School Districts for their review, approval or refinement. In the first application teachers, administrators, technology staff and school board members were asked questions related to their understanding of policies related to personal devices known as “bring your own device” (BYOD) programs inclusive of devices such as laptops, cell phones, iPads and school sponsored BYOD programs. Participants responded to questions related to their understanding of district policies for mechanisms of assurances of these personal devices on school grounds for security measures and to protect network infrastructure and user privacy. In addition to this, participants were asked questions ascertaining the participant’s understanding of how surveillance was conducted and communicated to stakeholders regarding personal devices or BYOD while at school and connected to school electronic resources.

In the second study teacher participants provided perceptions of the integration of technology by reflecting on school policies or procedures that encouraged their use of technology and responded to questions related to their personal use of technology, and personally identifying a typology of teachers who have an easy time integrating technology in their classroom. Participants were asked questions related to their understanding of bring your own device (BYOD) policies at school and away from school as well as their understanding of inappropriate behaviour as it is defined by their school and school board through indirect questions related to their use of technology in their personal life away from the classroom, level of comfort using technology in the classroom and were asked to identify specific ways they used technology in the classroom and at home to complete school tasks or read school information. In some cases, participants provided information related to beliefs, past experiences and common practices such as using an app on their phone or detailing how they prefer to communicate with others about school related business.

Background surveys asked participants to identify vulnerable and marginalized groups from a provided list (children 12 and under, teenagers 13-18, First People’s, visible minorities, English Learners, adults over the age of 40, adults over the age of 50, senior citizens, teachers, administrators, IT staff, other) in addition to rating their own experience or knowledge of personal devices and BYOD in education settings by selecting one or more options from a provided list (brand new, don’t know anything, still learning, feel comfortable using it in education settings, have questions, know a little, have more to learn, am an expert, help other people, other).

There are limitations to the present study. First, it should be acknowledged that the participants in the study were selected based on their technological background, and position within the participating School Districts. Second, the sample size is a limitation, in the initial study, there are four School Districts and a total of eight participants. Socio-economic status (SES) is a third consideration in this study due to the technology provided to the schools, and the experience with technology students and parents or caregivers had in the home. Criticism of case studies is mainly focused on possible subjective case selection and the potential for selection bias (Starman, 2013).

4. Results

Participants were asked if they believe marginalized and vulnerable populations were at risk for negative career consequences as a result of their poor understandings of surveillance and inappropriate use of BYODs during work and in what ways, for what reasons. Half of the teachers that responded were unsure, however all of the administrators replied definitively “yes”. Interestingly, administrators believed that teachers poor understandings included their responsibility to monitor students inappropriate use. IT staff, on the other hand, acknowledged the prevalence of texting at school by students and admittedly felt it was unfair for this type of surveillance to fall on teachers, because it is

difficult to police. Administrators that participated in the study also believed that teachers had a responsibility to model appropriate behaviour for students. This modelling was applicable during school hours and after school. Recent policy updates at one of the participating School Districts now include technology statements that inform teachers they are always considered to be a teacher and in that role outsider of school hours, therefore advising them personal social media accounts not linked to specific schools do not admonish their responsibility to model appropriate behaviour and are subject to investigations by the employer if found to diminish the moral exemplar status teachers are expected to uphold.

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