**Renegotiating the Privacy Ethics of Digital Genealogy Databases: An Intersectional Analysis of Technology, Criminality, and DNA**

Charles Woods • cfwood2@ilstu.edu • @charles\_woods1

**Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to work toward a public ethical framework for using genealogy databases. The problem I explore is the (un)ethical use of these sites by individual users, police and government agencies, and public and private corporations.

**Corpus of User Agreements**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Term** | **Rank** | **Frequency** | **Collocates** |
| “Consent” | 128 | 18 | “Consent Document”; “explicit consent” |
| “Privacy” | 87 | 28 | “Privacy Statement”; “Privacy Policy” |
| “Data” | 25 | 129 | “raw data” |

**Constructing an Identity-Attentive Digital Cultural Rhetorical Methodology**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Zappen (2005)** | **Haas (2018)** |
| rhetorical strategies in production and analysis of digital text | interrogating the politics of digital interfaces |
| identifying characteristics, affordances, and constraints of new media | studying digital rhetorics in relation to/with specific communities and cultures of practice |
| formation of digital identities | examining the relationship between older and new technologies |
| potential for building social communities | valuing diverse bodies |
|  | Reassessing access |

**Utilizing a Virtue Ethics Framework**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **General Questions** | **Questions for Genealogy Database Users** |
| “What kind of person do I want to be?” | What kind of user do I want to be? |
| “How should I live my life?” | How should I live my digital life? |
| “What does it mean to be a good person?” | What does it mean to be a good user? |

**Works Cited**

* Edwards, D. (2018). Circulation gatekeepers: Unbundling the platform politics of youtube’s content id. Computers & Composition: An International Journal, 47, 61-74.
* Eyman, D. (2015). *Digital rhetoric: Theory, method, practice*. Ann Arbor, MI: U of Michigan P.
* Duffy, J., Gallagher, J., & Holmes, S. (2018). Introduction. *Rhetoric Review,* 37, 321-327.
* Gallagher, J. (2018). Enacting virtue ethics. *Rhetoric Review,* 37, 379-384.
* Grabill, J. & Pigg, S. (2012). Messy rhetoric: identity performance as rhetorical agency in online public forums. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 42 (2), 99-119.
* Gross, A.G. (1996). The rhetoric of science. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP.
* Haas, A.M. (2007). Wampum as hypertext: An American Indian intellectual tradition of multimedia theory and practice. *Studies in American Indian Literatures Series 2*, 19 (4), 77-100.
* --. (2018). Toward a digital cultural rhetoric. In J. Alexander and J. Rhodes (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Digital Writing and Rhetoric* (412-22).
* Katz, S. (1992). The ethic of expediency: Classical rhetoric, technology, and the holocaust. College English, 54 (3), 255-275.
* Kirchner, L (2017, September 4). Traces of crime: How new york’s dna techniques became tainted. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/04/nyregion/dna-analysis-evidence-new-york-disputed-techniques.html.
* McNamara, M. (2018). I’ll be gone in the dark: One woman’s obsessive search for the golden state killer. New York, NY: Harper.
* Miller, C. (1979). A humanistic rationale for technical writing. *College English*, 40 (6), 610-617.
* Selber, S.A. (2004). *Multiliteracies for a digital age*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP.
* Worth, K. (2015, June 24). The surprisingly imperfect science of dna testing. *Frontline*. Retrieved from https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/the-surprisingly-imperfect-science-of-dna-testing-2/.
* Zappen, J. P. (2005). Digital rhetoric: Toward an integrated theory. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 14, 319-325.

**Notes**