SOCIAL MEDIA DATA ETHICS

Autumn Mayes, Western University
AGENDA

- Private versus Public
- Informed Consent
- Anonymity
- Risk of Harm
- Final Considerations
PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE


- “Research that relies exclusively on publicly available information does not require REB review when:
  a) the information is legally accessible to the public and appropriately protected by law; or
  b) the information is publicly accessible and there is no reasonable expectation of privacy.” (Chapter 2, Article 2.2)
PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE


- “Research that relies exclusively on publicly available information does not require REB review when:
  
  a) the information is legally accessible to the public and appropriately protected by law; or

  b) the information is publicly accessible and there is no reasonable expectation of privacy.” (Chapter 2, Article 2.2)
Other Considerations:

- Closed Groups (i.e. Password protected ‘private’ Facebook group)
  - (Townsend, L. & Wallace, C., 2015)

- Personal or Sensitive Data

- Knowledge of Terms and Service
INFORMED CONSENT

- Private versus Public and Consent
- Expectation of the User
- Expectation of the Researcher
- Sensitive/Personal Data and Vulnerable Persons
ANONYMITY

- When do you anonymize the data?

- User Expectations

- Problems with Anonymity
  - Verbatim Quotes
  - Sharing Data
DO NO HARM

• The Hippocratic Oath

• The Golden Rule

• Do Unto Others as You Would Do Yourself

• Etc.
FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Just because you can do something, doesn’t mean you should.
- Users might have different expectations of how their data is being used.
- There are no black or white answers to ethically questions.
- Ethical considerations should be situational.
- Technology, and ethical guidelines are constantly in flux.
RESOURCES

- Copyright Support at UG
  https://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/about/policies/copyright

- Ethical Decision-Making and Internet Research. (Article)
  www.aoir.org/reports/ethics2.pdf

- Ethics of Online Research: (Series – Advances in Research ethics and integrity) (E-Book)
  https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uoguelph/detail.action?docID=4947194

- Social Media Data Stewardship
  http://socialmediadata.org/

- Documenting the now
  http://www.docnow.io/

- Social media platforms – terms of use
  http://socialmediadata.org/ToS/platforms/

- Social Media Research: A Guide to Ethics (Article)
  https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_487729_en.pdf

- Towards an Ethical Framework for Publishing Twitter Data in Social Research (Article)
  http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0038038517708140

- Beyond the Belmont Principle (Article)
THANK YOU!

Any questions about this presentation?

Feel free to contact me:

Autumn Mayes—amayes4@uwo.ca