

# Ethics and the Internet

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**Informavore:**

human behavior in the modern information society

**SANDALL/SLA Spring Workshop 2010**

**April 24, 2010, 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.**

**University of San Diego**

Is OR  
Ought?



# Internet

- Convenience
- Efficiency
- Information
- Information Backup
- Analysis



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Dt2wrr.jpg>

Scan taken from *Dick Tracy: America's Most Famous Detective* ([ISBN](#) #0806510595), Citadel Press, 1990

# Internet Use (2009)

World Regions	Population ( 2009 Est.)	12/31/00	Latest Data	% of Population
North America	340,831,831	108,096,800	<b>259,561,000</b>	<b>76.2</b>
<b>WORLD TOTAL</b>	6,767,805,208	360,985,492	<b>1,802,330,457</b>	<b>26.6</b>

<http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>  
**World Internet Users and Population Stats**

# Search Engine Use (April 10, 2010)



63%



11%



10%



3%

**Total**

87%

# The technology behind Google's great results

- As a Google user, you're familiar with the speed and accuracy of a Google search. How exactly does Google manage to find the right results for every query as quickly as it does? The heart of Google's search technology is PigeonRank™, a system for ranking web pages developed by Google founders [Larry Page](#) and [Sergey Brin](#) at Stanford University.
- Building upon the breakthrough work of [B. F. Skinner](#), Page and Brin reasoned that low cost pigeon clusters (PCs) could be used to compute the relative value of web pages faster than human editors or machine-based algorithms. And while Google has dozens of engineers working to improve every aspect of our service on a daily basis, PigeonRank continues to provide the basis for all of our web search tools.

<http://www.google.com/technology/pigeonrank.html>

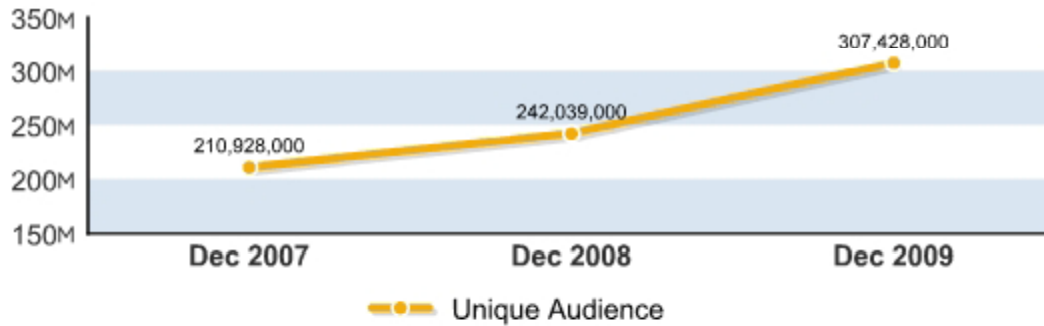
# Integrity

- Google's pigeon-driven methods make tampering with our results extremely difficult. While some unscrupulous websites have tried to boost their ranking by including images on their pages of bread crumbs, bird seed and parrots posing seductively in resplendent plumage, Google's PigeonRank technology cannot be deceived by these techniques. A Google search is an easy, honest and objective way to find high-quality websites with information relevant to your search.



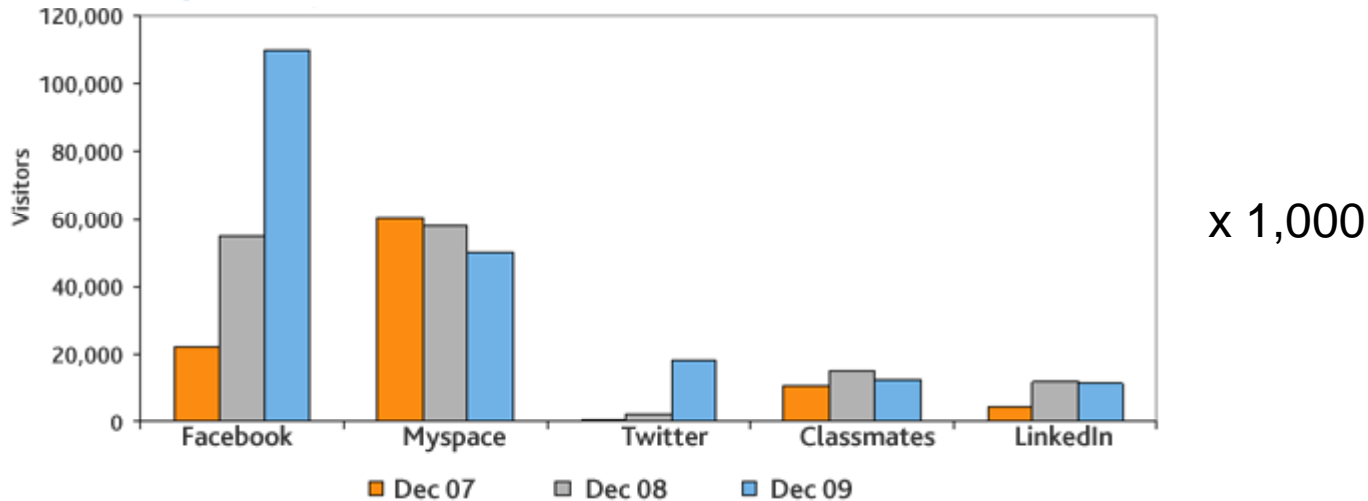
<http://www.google.com/technology/pigeonrank.html>

# Social Media Use (December 2009)



Source: The Nielsen Company

Top U.S. Social Media Sites: December 2009



Source: The Nielsen Company

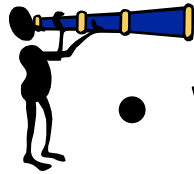


# What's ethics got to do with it?

- Law?
- Compliance?
- Morality?
  
- Process



# Internet Searching



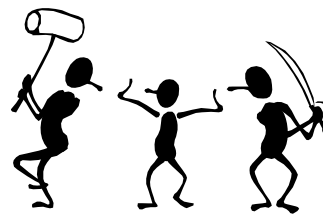
- Who is watching?  
Interception; Cookies; Key strokes

- Who is filtering?

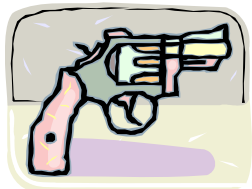


- Pornography

- Hate speech



- Weapons technology



# Social Media

- Blogs (e.g., Blogger)
- Microblogs (e.g., Twitter)
- Social Networking (e.g., Facebook and MySpace)
- Image and Video Sharing (e.g., Flickr and YouTube)

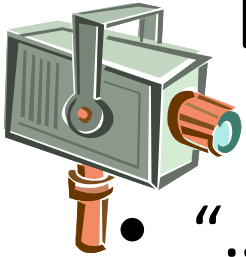


# Megan Meier



- “DARDENNE PRAIRIE, Mo. - Megan Meier thought she had made a new friend in cyberspace when a cute teenage boy named Josh contacted her on MySpace and began exchanging messages with her.”
- “Megan, a 13-year-old who suffered from depression and attention deficit disorder, corresponded with Josh for more than a month before he abruptly ended their friendship, telling her he had heard she was cruel.”
- “The next day Megan committed suicide. Her family learned later that Josh never actually existed; he was created by members of a neighborhood family that included a former friend of Megan's.”

# “Attention social media users – Big Brother is watching” (3/16/10)



- “...presentation from the Justice Department titled “Obtaining and Using Evidence from Social Networking Sites.”
- “...The presentation notes that Facebook was ‘often cooperative with emergency requests’ while complaining about Twitter’s short data retention policies and refusal to preserve data without legal process...”
- “The presentation also touches on use of social media for undercover operations.”

localtechwire

[http://localtechwire.com/business/local\\_tech\\_wire/news/blogpost/7242510](http://localtechwire.com/business/local_tech_wire/news/blogpost/7242510)

# Big Questions

- How can we balance security with privacy and civil liberties?
- What have we lost with efficiency?
- What does it mean to be human?
- What are our roles and responsibilities?
- What should we do?

