



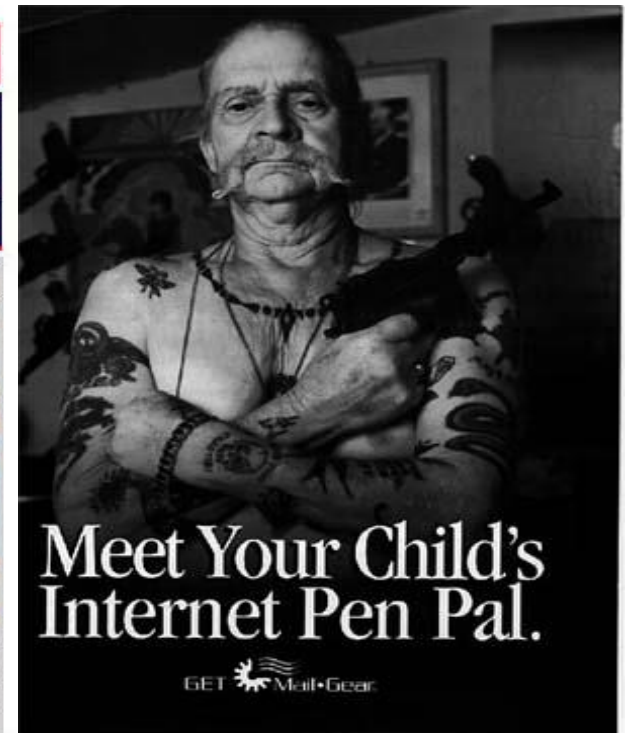
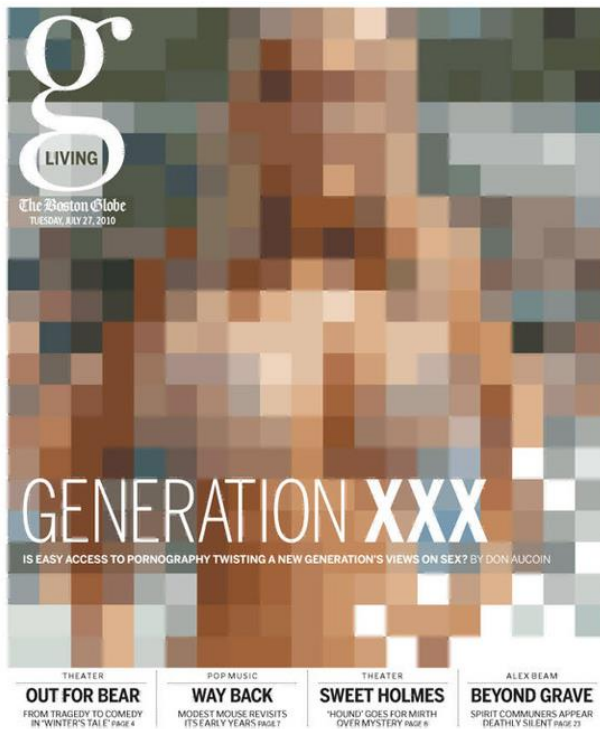
The risks of academic blogging

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Oxford Internet Institute

Hilary 2014

Internet-related risks and harms



A source of moral panic/

Dispelling some misconceptions



- There is no golden age
- The Internet does not cause offensive behaviour online
- Individual experiences differ, different platforms pose different risks.

Sources of risk?



- Professional
- Personal
- Political



Professional risks

- Opportunity cost
- Criticism lasts longer than praise
- Reputation management
- Plagiarism
- 'Free' labour?

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Can Blogging Derail Your Career?

7 Bloggers Discuss the Case of Juan Cole

With the debut of his Web log, Informed Comment, four years ago, Juan R.I. Cole became arguably the most visible commentator writing on the Middle East today. A professor of modern Middle East and South Asian history at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and president of the Middle East Studies Association, Cole has voiced strong opposition to the war in Iraq and to the treatment of the Palestinians, garnering him



PROJECT MU

*The Trusted Voice
in the Scholarly Community*

Sources:

Personal risks



 **Jack** @JackRiley92 21h
@CCriadoPerez are you the sad bitch that's running a campaign to have more women on banknotes???

Expand

 **Caroline Criado-Perez** @CCriadoPerez 44m
Are you the sad twerp who takes time out of his day to track down strangers to abuse them? Enjoy your life I guess... @JackRiley92

Expand

 **Jack** @JackRiley92 41m
@CCriadoPerez just reading the news yesterday and saw your ugly head moaning about women not being on notes. You need a life love

Expand ← Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ⋮ More

 **Frank Hindle** @TheFrankHindle 19m
@JackRiley92 @CCriadoPerez just losers Jack. The fact women have to do these groups shows how insecure and inferior they are from Bury, Bury

 **Jack** @JackRiley92 18m
@TheFrankHindle @CCriadoPerez this Perez one just needs a good smashing up the arse and she will be fine

Hide conversation ← Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ⋮ More

12:26 PM - 25 Jul 13 · Details

- Trolling
- Offensive speech
- Malicious communications
- Cyber-stalking



*“In the democratic vision, the freedom achieved by a democratic order is above all the freedom of self-determination in making collective and binding decisions: **the self-determination of citizens entitled to participate as political equals** in making the laws and rules under which they will live together as citizens.*

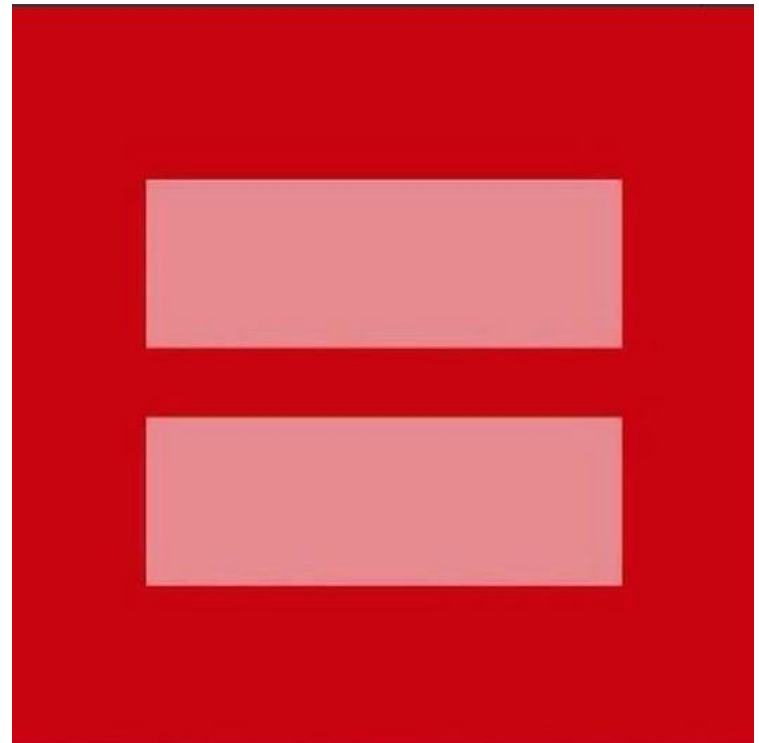
*....it follows that a democratic society would, among other things, manage to **allocate its resources so as to optimize political equality...**” (Dahl 1989: 326)*





New political (in)equalities?

- Are traditional sources of political inequality...
 - reproduced online?
 - reduced online?
 - exacerbated online?
- Who speaks?
- Who is heard?
- How are they regarded?





Who speaks?

- Women outnumber men as bloggers (Nielsen 2012) but...
- Top political bloggers usually white, male, with elite education or professional jobs (Hindman 2009) and top political blog sites feature more writing by men than women (Johnston et al 2011).



Who's heard?



- Power law distribution: high disparity in visibility (Drezner & Farrell 2008)
- Mainstream news feeds blogs; blogs lag behind (Leskovec et al 2009)
- Top political blogs replicate agendas set by other elite blogs (Nahon et al 2011)
- Of top 10 most popular blogs few have political focus (eBizMBA)
- Political blogs may matter more for their influence on thought-leaders than for general readership.



How are they treated?



“To objectify a person is to treat her as thing, an object, although, being a person, she is not really a (mere) thing...”

*So often, high-achieving women are treated, on Internet gossip sites, as if they are no more than a photo, **or a set of body parts.**” (Nussbaum 2012: 69 & 71)*





Facing off political risks

Voice:

- Blogs and social media do offer extraordinary opportunities for self-expression and connection, but speaking is not the same as being heard;
- *As academics, how can we find our own voice, and how can we be heard?*
- *How can we do so in a way that expands access to political voice?*

Silencing:

- Persistent, vitriolic, threatening campaigns have been used to try and silence high-profile female or minority voices;
- *Are we prepared to take this sort of criticism and stand against it?*

Social bases of self-respect:

- The existence of hate-speech (and more problematically, offensive speech) sites and discussion threads threaten to undermine social and self-respect.
- *Do we have a duty to engage with, and challenge such speech when it affects us? When it affects others?*



Thank you!

Vicki Nash

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