Teaching and Learning Guide for: New Media, Web 2.0 and Surveillance

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Introduction

The Internet has become part of our everyday lives. Many of us use it for work, hobbies, entertainment, politics, staying in touch with friends and family, learning to know new people and other cultures, for getting all kind of information, etc. In the past 10 years, we have seen the emergence of platforms like Facebook and Myspace (social networking sites), Wordpress and Blogger (blogging) Twitter (social networking, microblogging), YouTube (video sharing), Wikipedia (wiki-based encyclopaedia), or the Pirate Bay (file-sharing index site). The notions of 'web 2.0' and 'social media' have been used by some scholars to describe features of such sites such as community-building and maintenance, continuous communication, user-generated content production and diffusion, collaborative authoring, and distributed content classifications (the latter mechanism is also called folksonomy). Most web 2.0 platforms collect, store, and share a lot of personal user data and data about usage behaviour. Therefore, questions about privacy violations and online surveillance have arisen in public discussions, especially concerning Google (for example the discussions about Google targeted advertising, Google Street View, Google Buzz, etc.) and Facebook (for example the discussions concerning Facebook targeted advertising, Facebook beacon, the Facebook privacy policy, Facebook places, etc.). The field of web 2.0 surveillance studies critically asks questions about the data protection aspects and power dimensions of the contemporary Internet. It is crucial for students and scholars, who are interested in the contemporary media landscape, and who study in fields such as media/communication studies, cultural studies, political science, law, computer science, social informatics, information science, sociology, business studies, advertising, marketing and public relations, philosophy, ethics, science and technology studies etc., to also engage with web 2.0 surveillance studies.

Recommended readings

Fuchs, Christian. 2010. 'Labour in Informational Capitalism and on the Internet'. *The Information Society* 26(3): 179–96. doi: 10.1080/01972241003712215
Christian Fuchs discusses in this article the political economy of the contemporary Internet. He does so by giving first an introduction to Karl Marx's analysis of capitalism that is then applied for understanding aspects of the exploitation of the users of contemporary commercial Internet platforms like Facebook. Fuchs uses Dallas Smythe's notion of the audience commodity for critically discussing the business models of web 2.0. He coins the notion of Internet prosumer labour in this context. He concludes that on commercial

web 2.0 platforms, user activity tends to become exploited and is unpaid labour. Surveillance is situated in the framework of this analysis.

Andrejevic, Mark. 2002. 'The Work of Being Watched'. *Critical Studies in Media Communication* **19(2): 230–48. doi: 10.1080/07393180216561**
Mark Andrejevic argues in this article that contemporary commercial forms of interactive media make use of surveillance for exploiting consumers. He introduces in this context the notion of 'the work of being watched'. This concept is based on Sut Jhally's concept of the work of watching. Andrejevic also introduces the notion of the digital enclosure and gives very good examples for online surveillance.

Albrechtslund, Anders. 2008. 'Online Social Networking as Participatory Surveillance'. *First Monday* **13(3). [online]. Retrieved on 1 March 2011 from: http://www.uic.edu/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2142/1949.**
In this article, Anders Albrechtslund introduces the notion of participatory surveillance. Other than Fuchs and Andrejevic, Albrechtslund has a rather positive concept of surveillance, he focuses on the description of potentially empowering aspects of social networking sites and other web 2.0 technologies. Albrechtslund stresses the social dimension of web 2.0, its ability for enabling communication, sharing, and community-building.

Mathiesen, Thomas. 2004. *Silently Silenced. Essays on the Creation of Acquiescence in Modern Society*. **Winchester: Waterside Press.**
In this short 100 page book, Thomas Mathiesen discusses mechanisms and examples of how political opposition is silently silenced, that is ideologically forestalled. The work is a masterpiece of contemporary ideology critique. Mathiesen identifies mechanisms of how silent silencing works and gives many examples. In chapter 8, it is discussed how the corporate Internet works as system of silent silencing or what Mathiesen terms the synopticon. Mathiesen's work is influenced among others by Foucault and Frankfurt School ideology critique.

Campbell, John E. and Matt, Carlson M. 2002. 'Panopticon.com: Online Surveillance and the Commodification of Privacy'. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* **46(4): 586–606. doi: 10.1207/s15506878jobem4604_6**
In this paper, Campbell and Carlson discuss the usefulness of Michel Foucault's notion of the panopticon as technology of surveillance for explaining how Internet advertising and marketing work. They employ a political economy framework and argue that Internet advertising and marketing commodify users' private data and their privacy.

Online materials

The following online journals are very good sources for further papers about critical internet studies, information society studies, surveillance studies, and privacy studies:

1. tripleC: Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society. http://www.triple-c.at
2. Surveillance and Society. http://www.surveillance-and-society.org
3. First Monday. http://firstmonday.org/
4. Journal of Privacy and Confidentiality. http://repository.cmu.edu/jpc/

Sample syllabus

Topics for Lectures and Discussion

Week I: Foundations of surveillance studies

Readings:
Foucault, Michel. 1977. 'Panopticims.' (Part 3). Pp. 195–228 in *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Vintage.

Lyon, David. 1994. 'Surveillance in Modern Society' (Chapter 2). Pp. 22–39 in *The Electronic Eye*. Cambridge: Polity.

Lyon, David. 2007. 'Explaining Surveillance' (I.3). Pp. 46–70 in *Surveillance Studies. An Overview*. Cambridge: Polity.

Week II: Foucault's surveillance theory and the panopticon: criticism and defence

Readings:
Lyon, David (ed.) 2006. 'Pre- and Post-Panopticism: The Search for Surveillance Theories.' Pp. 3–20 in *Theorizing Surveillance*. Portland, OR: Willan.

Haggerty Kevin. 2006. 'Tear Down the Walls: On Demolishing the Panopticon.' Pp. 23–45 in *Theorizing Surveillance*, edited by David Lyon. Portland, OR: Willan.

Fuchs, Christian. 2010. *How Can Surveillance Be Defined? Remarks on Theoretical Foundations of Surveillance Studies*. Vienna: Unified Theory of Information Research Group. SNS3 Research Paper No.1. ISSN 2219-603X. http://www.sns3.uti.at/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/The-Internet-Surveillance-Research–Paper-Series-1-Christian-Fuchs-How-Surveillance-Can-Be-Defined.pdf

Week III: What is web 2.0?

Readings:
Fuchs, Christian. 2010. 'Social Software and Web 2.0: Their Sociological Foundations and Implications.' Pp. 764–89 in *Handbook of Research on Web 2.0, 3.0, and X.0: Technologies, Business, and Social Applications*. Volume II, edited by San Murugesan. Hershey, PA: IGI-Global.

Castells, Manuel. 2009. 'Communication in the Digital Age' (Chapter 2). Pp. 54–136 in *Communication Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Alternative to reading Castells (2009):
Castells, Manuel. 2010. 'Communication Power: Mass Communication, Mass Self-Communication, and Power Relationships in the Network Society.' Pp. 3–17 in *Media and Society*, edited by James Curran. London: Bloomsbury.

Scholz, Trebor. 2008. 'Market Ideology and the Myths of Web 2.0.' *First Monday* **13**(3). [online]. Retrieved on 1 March 2011 from: http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2138/1945.

Week IV: Computing and surveillance

The role of surveillance in the age of computing

Readings:

Marx, Gary T. 2002. 'What's New About the ''New Surveillance''? Classifying for Change and Continuity.' *Surveillance & Society* **1**(1): 9–29.

Lyon, David. 1998. 'The World Wide Web of Surveillance. The Internet and Off-World Power-Flows.' *Information, Communication & Society* **1**(1): 91–105.

Clarke, Roger. 1988. 'Information Technology and Dataveillance.' *Communications of the ACM* **31**(5): 498–512.

Week V: The capitalist business and ideology of surveillance

Readings:

Gandy, Oscar H. 1996. 'Coming to Terms with the Panoptic Sort.' Pp. 132–55 in *Computers, Surveillance & Privacy*, edited by David Lyon and Elia Zureik. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Mathiesen, Thomas. 1997. 'The Viewer Society. Michel Foucault's ''Panopticon'' Revisited.' *Theoretical Criminology* **1**(2): 215–34. doi: 10.1177/1362480697001002003

Week VI: The Internet prosumer commodity

Readings:

Smythe, Dallas W. 1981. 'On the Audience Commodity and Its Work.' Pp. 230–56 in *Media and Cultural Studies*, edited by Meenakshi G. Durham and Douglas M. Kellner. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Fuchs, Christian. 2010. 'Labour in Informational Capitalism and on the Internet.' *The Information Society* **26**(3): 179–96. doi: 10.1080/01972241003712215

Week VII: The work of watching and the work of being watched

Readings:

Jhally, Sut. 2006. 'Chapters: Watching as Working. The Valorization of Audience Consciousness. The Political Economy of Culture'. Pp. 25–61 in *The Spectacle of Accumulation*. New York: Peter Lang.

Andrejevic, Mark. 2002. 'The Work of Being Watched.' *Critical Studies in Media Communication* **19**(2): 230–48. doi: 10.1080/07393180216561

Week VIII: Economic online surveillance and web 2.0

Readings:

Mathiesen, Thomas. 2004. 'Panopticon and Synopticon as Silencing Systems' (Chapter 8). Pp. 98–102 in *Silently Silenced. Essays on the Creation of Acquiescence in Modern Society*. Winchester: Waterside Press.

Fuchs, Christian, Kees Boersma, Anders Albrechtslund, Marisol Sandoval (eds) 2011. *The Internet and Surveillance*. New York: Routledge.

- Chapter by Christian Fuchs: 'Critique of the Political Economy of Web 2.0 Surveillance.'
- Chapter by Marisol Sandoval: 'A Critical Empirical Case Study of Consumer Surveillance on Web 2.0.'

- Chapter by Thomas Allmer: 'Critical Internet Surveillance Studies and Economic Surveillance.'

Campbell, John E. and Matt, Carlson M. 2002. 'Panopticon.com: Online Surveillance and the Commodification of Privacy.' *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* **46**(4): 586–606. doi: 10.1207/s15506878jobem4604_6

Focus questions

Discussion in week 1:

What different kinds of definitions of surveillance are there? Compile various definitions by making a literature search. Compare these definitions and discuss how surveillance should best be defined.

Discussion in week 2:

Discuss first in small groups of 3–5 and compare then the results of the group discussions in a general discussion.
Consider the following list of information processing phenomena. Which one do you consider as surveillance, which one's not? Compare your results with the results of your colleagues. Discuss then if a Foucauldian understanding of surveillance fits your understanding of surveillance or not. Discuss pro and con arguments for 'demolishing' Foucault's notion of the panopticon. Discuss if using the notion of the panopticon makes political and theoretical sense in contemporary society or not.

- teachers watching private activities of pupils via webcams at Harriton High School, Pennsylvania,
- the employment of the DART system (Deep-ocean Assessment and Reporting of Tsunamis) in the Pacific Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea for detecting tsunamis,
- the scanning of the fingerprints of visitors entering the United States,
- consensual online video sex chat of adults,
- parents observing their sleeping sick baby with a camera or babyphone in order to see if it needs their help,
- the use of speed cameras for identifying speeders (involves state power),
- the seismographic early detection of earthquakes,
- electronic monitoring bracelets for prisoners in an open prison system,
- the scanning of Internet and phone data by secret services with the help of the Echelon system and the Carnivore software,
- the usage of a GPS-based car navigation system for driving to an unknown destination,
- the usage of full body scanners at airports,
- biometrical passports containing digital fingerprints,
- the use of the DoubleClick advertising system by Internet corporations for collecting data about users' online browsing behaviour and providing them with targeted advertising,
- CCTV cameras in public means of transportation for the prevention of terrorism,
- the assessment of customer shopping behaviour with the help of loyalty cards,
- the data collection in marketing research,
- the usage of smog and air pollution warning systems,

- the publication of sexual paparazzi photos of celebrities in a tabloid,
- the assessment of personal images and videos of applicants on Facebook by employers prior to a job interview,
- drinking water quality measurement systems,
- the collection of data about potential or actual terrorists in the TIDE database (Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment) by the US National Counterterrorism Center,
- Passenger Name Record (PNR) data transfer from Europe to the United States in aviation,
- the permanent electrocardiogram of a cardiac infarction patient,
- the activities of radioactivity measuring stations for detecting nuclear power plant disasters,
- Telekomgate: spying on employees, trade unionists, journalists, and members of the board of directors by the German Telekom,
- measurement of meteorological data for weather forecasts
- the video filming of employees in Lidl supermarkets and assessment of the data by managers in Germany,
- the usage of a fire detector and alarm system and a fire sprinkling system in a public school,
- watching the watchers: corporate watch systems, filming of the police beating of Rodney King (LA 1992), YouTube video of the police killing of Neda Soltan (Iran 2009)
- systems for detecting and measuring temperature, humidity, and smoke in forest areas that are prone to wildfires.

Discussion in week 3:

Work in groups of 3–5 people. Compile a list of Internet platforms that you use. Based on the literature that you have read about web 2.0, try to identify key qualities of the communication processes that are supported by the Internet platforms on your list. Discuss if it makes sense to employ notions like 'web 2.0' and 'social media'. Discuss how the communication qualities of the platforms you listed are connected to/enable surveillance. Compare the results in a plenary discussion.

Discussion in week 4:

Work first in groups of 3–5 people. Discuss the meaning of the notions of the panoptic sort and the synopticon. Make a list of examples, where surveillance plays a role in the economy. Make a list of examples, where surveillance, the media, and information technology function as means for advancing ideologies. Discuss to which examples the notions of the panoptic sort and/or the synopticon can be applied. Discuss first in the small group and then in general with all colleagues in the seminar how useful the notions of the panoptic sort and the synopticon are for understanding the contemporary Internet and media landscape.

Discussion in week 5:

Work first in groups of 3–5 people. Find examples for the connection of computers and surveillance. Based on your list of examples and the read literature, try to identify key qualities of computer-based surveillance. Compare the three articles of Marx, Lyon, and Clarke: What are the key characteristics of computer-based surveillance for each of the three authors? How do the three approaches differ? What do they have in common? If

you compare computer-based and non-computer based forms of surveillance, what are commonalities and differences? Can we speak in the case of computer-based surveillance of a new form of surveillance?

Compare the group discussion results to the results of the discussions in the other groups.

Discussion in week 6:

Work first in groups of 3–5 people. Discuss the meaning of the notions of the audience commodity and the Internet prosumer commodity. Find examples for how the audience commodity works in the area of advertising in newspapers and TV. Find examples for the Internet prosumer commodity in relation to web 2.0 platforms that you use. Discuss the role of surveillance in Internet prosumer commodification. Discuss if you as Interner prosumers that use Facebook, Google, YouTube, etc. are exploited by the companies owning these platforms or not. If you think you are exploited, what can be politically done in order to overcome the exploitation of labour on the Internet? Compare the results of the group discussions and conduct a general discussion about the crucial questions.

Discussion in week 7:

Work first in groups of 3–5 people. Discuss the meaning of the notions of the work of watching and the work of being watched. Discuss the role of surveillance in the work of being watched. Find examples both for the work of watching and the work of being watched. Compare Dallas Smythe's concept of the audience commodity to Sut Jhally's concept of the work of watching. Compare Fuchs's concept of Internet prosumer commodification to Andrejevic's concept of the work of being watched online. What are differences and commonalities? Compare the results of the group discussions. Discuss with all colleagues what the political implications of economic online surveillance are: How dangerous is economic online surveillance and online labour exploitation? What can be done about it politically?

Discussion in week 8:

Work first in groups of 3–5 people. Based on the read literature, make a list of qualities of economic surveillance on web 2.0. Identify which web 2.0 platforms you read most frequently. Read the terms of use and privacy policies of these platforms. Make a list, how each of these platforms exactly uses your data and usage behaviour data, for economic purposes. List for each platform what kind of data about you it stores, collects from other Internet platforms, which data it is allowed to sell for advertising purposes, and which data about you or that you upload becomes property of the platform owner. How does the organization model of Wikipedia differ from the ones of Facebook and Google? Inform yourself about the alternative web 2.0 platform Diaspora. What are its organizational principles, how do they differ from Facebook? Compare the results of the group work.

Conduct a general discussion about the following questions: What are the problems of surveillance on web 2.0? What are the advantages and disadvantages of platforms like Facebook, Google, YouTube, Twitter? How can advantages and disadvantages be overcome? Do you see possibilities for creating a non-commercial Internet or non-commercial Internet platforms? What are advantages and disadvantages of a non-commercial, non-profit, commons-based Internet?

Seminar/project idea

Internet Studies in general and Critical Internet Studies and Web 2.0 Surveillance Studies are very young fields of studies. There are a lot of unexplored topics relating to the political economy of web 2.0 that have thus far not been pursued. Writing master's theses and dissertations in this area is not only interesting and important, but is also a lot of fun because one engages in research about those media that we have come used to utilize in our everyday life and work. Students may also consider to present chapters from their dissertations or theses at international conferences, like the PhD student workshops and conferences of the ICTs and Society Network (http://www.icts–and–society.net) or the annual conference of the Association of Internet Researchers (http://www.air.org).

Research results can also be presented to the public in the form of blog postings or small articles for popular journals or newspapers. For writing for these more popular formats, it is good to connect more theoretical ideas to concrete events and phenomena in the world of the Internet (see the example writings on the NetPoliticsBlog: http://fuchs.uti.at/blog). One can also pursue writing an op-ed piece for a daily newspaper.

Social movements and groups that discuss Internet politics and want to foster a common and free access to knowledge and the Internet can be interesting discussion and co-operation partners for scholars, which can give a more practical dimension to research.

Short Biography

Christian Fuchs holds the chair in media and communication studies at Uppsala University's Department of Informatics and Media. He is also board member of the Unified Theory of Information Research Group, Austria, and editor of tripleC (cognition, communication, co-operation): Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society. He studied computer science at the Vienna University of Technology in the years 1994–2000. He completed his PhD in 2002 at the Vienna University of Technology. In 2000–2006, he was lecturer for information society studies at the Institute of Design and Technology Assessment of the Vienna University of Technology. He was a research associate at the same department in the years 2002–2004. At the University of Salzburg, he was assistant professor in the years 2005–2007 and associate professor from 2008 to 2010 in the field of ICTs and society. His main research fields are: social theory, critical theory, critical political economy of media, information, technology; information society studies, ICTs and society. He is author of many academic publications, including the books *Internet and Society: Social Theory in the Information Age* (New York: Routledge, 2008) and *Foundations of Critical Media and Information Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2011). He is co-editor of *The Internet and Surveillance* (edited by Christian Fuchs, Kees Boersma, Anders Albrechtslund and Marisol Sandoval). He co-ordinates the research project *Social Networking Sites in the Surveillance Society* (2010–2013), which is funded by the Austrian Science Fund FWF and is management committee member of the EU COST Action *Living in Surveillance Societies* (2009–2013).

Note

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