

Ethics of Education Online

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Online Education and Ethics

- Two main ethical components that have risen from online education
 - The Digital Divide
&
• Implications of Facelessness

The Digital Divide

- Is referred to the expanding disparity between the impoverished members of society who do not have access to computers or the internet; versus those who do.
 - Factors that play into the digital divide include:
 - Income/Cost
 - Accessibility
 - Formal Education/Generational

Factors Attributing to the Digital Divide (Cont'd)

- Cost/Income
 - A study done by the NTIA (National Telecommunications and Information Administration) showed “[...] that families receiving incomes over \$75,000 are 20 times more likely to have household internet access than those at lowest income levels.”
- Generational/Location
 - It has been observed that those with college degrees or higher are 10 times more likely to have internet access at work compared to those with only a high school education.
- [CNBC Cost of Internet](#)

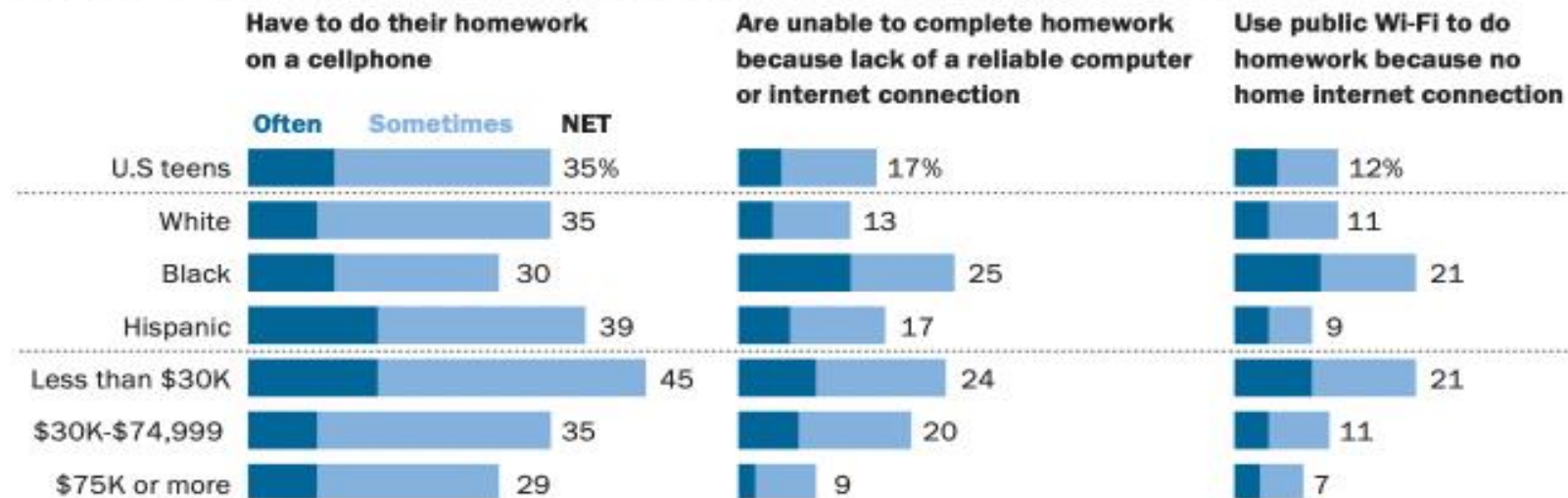
Ethical Dilemma

- How is the digital divide an ethical issue?
 - Through Kantian ethics one could ask the question
 - Does the use of the internet provide you with privileges and provide better desires to your needs?
 - Likewise, one could ask the question, does having internet access change the way or influence one's decision making?
 - Or does my autonomous being therefore, lack certain principles and respects that I could attain if I had Internet access?
 - Academic standards
 - College admission, etc.

Who's affected?

Black teens and those from lower-income households are especially likely to be affected by the digital 'homework gap'

% of U.S. teens, by race and ethnicity or annual family income, who say they *often* or *sometimes* ...



Note: Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics; Hispanics are of any race. Those who gave other responses or who did not give an answer not shown.

Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 10, 2018.

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Implications of Facelessness

- Refers to the psychological and social effects from faceless encounters.
- Or as stated by Ellen Rose and her goal of “understanding that increasing social presence in online courses tends to mitigate the ethical implications of the facelessness in asynchronous education.” Ellen contemporizes the ideas of Emmanuel Levinas and Nel Noddings and their contentions that the “face is the basis of caring, and ethical relations” (Ellen pg. 17).

Ethical Dilemma

- How is facelessness an ethical issue in online education?
 - Is it a form of education that is morally justified?
- Through Kantian ethics one could ask the question,
 - Does a lack of physical connection within a classroom, create a scenario where people are viewed more as objects rather than subjective beings?
 - Will the ideals and development of ethics of the moral law suffer from such loss of communication skills?
 - Much as in Socrates believe that writing wasn't sufficient in conveying ideas.
- Who's effected?
 - Everyone that uses computers/cell phones for online courses or communicational purposes.

Ethical Dilemma (Cont'd)

- Furthermore, “the issues of morality are dismissed with claims that malleable asynchronous delivery is inherently more reasonable than face-to-face education. [This] often does not jive with the reality at the local level” (MacKeogh & Fox, 2011, p. 149).
- A mixed method study “of eight online graduate classes suggested that reciprocity is lacking in virtual learning environments; and, based on interviews with twelve university instructors, [said it was] “difficult to care online”” (McShane, 2006, p. 201).
- Psychologist Sherry Turkle (2015), calls it the empathy gap. “According to Turkle, as we increasingly choose to communicate and learn online, our ability to “put ourselves in another’s shoes,” as well as our willingness to put ourselves at risk through close involvement with others, declines. Faceless communications are thus implicated in “lost practice[s of] the empathetic arts”” (Rose, E (2017, p. 24).

Thanks for listening!

