

Next week:

- Topics: Algorithmic Living & Privacy/Surveillance

Schiller texts

- Writing from pre-internet but was prophetic
- PDF posted has three chapters, but only intended for us to read one
- Apologize for assigning more reading than intended

## Relationship between Democracy & Information

Public Sphere

- Not a place, but associated with places
- Jurgen Habermas
  - Conceptual idea that there is a domain of social life where members of the public are engaged in debate, discussions of importance, questions of gov't interest/policy
  - Emphasis on *public* (the public has an interest, a say, and the power to express)
- Before public sphere, gov't regulation was in hands of small elite (aristocracy)
- Habermas: Need to have places/spaces for the public to come together & allow public speech
  - Be able to find fellow citizens & engage in talk with them
  - E.g. town hall meetings, public square
- Depends upon contact & connection/engagement
  - Allowed by different forms of media/communication (radio, internet, T.V.)

Publicness

- Who maintains? Where does publicness come from?
- Context of private provision of communications
  - Origin of radio & T.V. (BBC) = as public goods
  - Duty to educate & inform
  - For the public interest
  - Commercial competitors pose a problem, don't have same idea of public interest
- Difference between public, audience (entertainment-oriented), & market (economic-oriented)
  - Form of address is different when context of communication is different

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## Three Concerns

1. Information commodity
2. Private spaces for public speech
3. Privatization of public goods

Information Commodity

- Information exchanged as part of political process
- Public good delivered by entity that transforms it into a commodity to be sold/traded
- Schiller concerned that information is a commodity to be sold/exchanged
  - What does that mean for democratic processes dependent on ability to manage information?

### Private Spaces for Public Speech

- Where to find private spaces to talk to people about what matters to you?
  - May be restrained by rules & permissions
    - E.g. organizing political protest at UCI Ring Mall (private space)
  - Possibility of using social media, which isn't public space
    - Can't say everything you want on FB/Twitter (abide by ToS)
- Perceive private spaces as public spaces mistakenly
- Legal recourse if freedom of speech infringed upon in public space, not private
  - Not a First Amendment issue because within a private domain
- Live in a world where many places for public speech are predominantly not public
  - Corporate spaces (social media), internet owned by private companies
- Determine how to engage in public speech when spaces are increasingly privatized

### Privatization of Public Goods

- Informational access relies on public goods
- Spectrum auctions (Team 11 Research) *\*Slides should be posted on website*
  - Run by FCC for licenses of electromagnetic spectrum to eligible companies/individuals
  - Conducted over the Internet, for a single day or over several days
  - Types of auction design:
    - Simultaneous multiple-round – anonymous & just based on highest value
    - Package – bid on multiple licenses to form a strategic bundle
  - Process:
    - Pre-auction – FCC posts public notice, seminars held, Q&A, deadlines, mock auction
    - During – actively bid portion of maximum eligibility
    - Post-auction – results made public, winners announced & make down payment
  - History:
    - Before 1993 – licenses sold lotto-style to qualified bidders
    - 1993 – Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (gave FCC authority to auction)
    - 1994 – first spectrum auction conducted
    - 1997 – Balanced Budget Act (auctions required when multiple applications)
    - Before 2008 – Google lobbied FCC to require open standards
    - 2008 – Verizon won valuable “C” block (low frequency for coverage)
  - Issues:
    - Google's support of net neutrality & minimum bid for open policies
      - \* net neutrality – prevent network providers from blocking externalities on their devices
    - Verizon won but policies still placed (filed lawsuit against FCC, but dropped)
    - 2015 spectrum auction – TV stations take bids to give up part of their spectrum
    - Concern that broadcasters who do not participate will be harmed (lawsuit by NAB)
  - What's happening now:
    - U.S. AWS(Advanced Wireless Services)-3 spectrum auction
    - Originally reserved for gov't agencies (Dept. of Defense), high capacity
    - Attempt for global harmony
  - Benefits:
    - Other industries benefit (security cameras, health monitoring, etc.)
    - 4k video more readily supported
    - Carriers able to run networks on cheaper equipment
    - Delayed until Dept. of Defense moves off of spectrum

- Gov't takes public goods (e.g. spectrum) & privatizes
  - Generates large amounts of revenue
  - Favors large players (e.g. Verizon)
- Any different from taking national parks & selling to home developers?
- Unlicensing spectrums has generated innovation
- Public policy issues

\*Aside: story about working with aboriginal people

- Treaty governs relationship between western settlers & indigenous people
- Inalienable ownership of air/sea by the indigenous people
  - Used to argue that they own the radio spectrum (in the air)