

Subjects and Objects

Slide 1

Agenda

- Announcement
- Follow-up to digital divides
- Learning Outcomes
- Subjects and Objects
- Break
- Word Processors

CSC301, Winter, 2014

Slide 2

Announcement

- Nominate TA for faculty award
 - Michelle Craig wrote, “We have never had a CS grad student win the arts and science teaching assistants' teaching excellence award. This is in spite of the fact that we have some excellent TAs.”
- In order to win, a TA must have multiple student nominations. That form is at:
 - <http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/gsta/ta-awards/student-nomination.htm>

CSC301, Winter, 2014

Slide 3

Digital Divides in Census

- Income
 - Very poor and very rich
- Ethnicity
 - Especially aboriginals
- Geography
 - Urban vs rural, far north, reserves
- Language
 - English, French, and others
 - Literacy
 - Native languages
- Age
- Physical and mental health
- Social capital

CSC301, Winter, 2014

Slide 4

Today's Learning Outcomes

- Identify subjects and objects in a design.
- Apply the autonomy lens to users.

Subjects and Objects

- In a sentence, the subject is the noun doing the action.
 - Has autonomy/authority
- The object is the entity receiving the action.
 - Is authored
- Functional approach: study the artifacts to learn about the people
 - Example: A shoe's functional structure tells us about a foot, the foot which it was designed to fit
 - Example: A computer
 - A person has one ear, one eye, no nose, and 40 fingers
- In the design of a computer system, who is the subject and who is the object?

Aside: Academic Debate

- Talking Philosophy: Democracy
- Extremely high speed version of academic debate
 - Normally occurs slowly over many years through books, reviews, and papers
- Role models how to make an argument
 - Structure, evidence, and counter-arguments
- Necessary to respond to each other

Why does autonomy matter?

- Cross cultural normative value
 - 85% of people believe that rule of people by themselves is a good thing
- Necessary to develop a moral plan of life from the inside
- Ends where another's autonomy begins
 - Tyranny is the extension of authority beyond its own domain
- Marginalized groups have less autonomy than privileged
 - Greater resistance is required
 - History of oppression can inform special accommodation

Panel: The Limits of Accommodation

Panel

- In the news recently, there have been two cases of students who were asking for special accommodation.
 - York student asked to be excused from a group project because his religion forbade him from socializing with women
 - UofT student claimed discrimination because he was docked participation marks, because he didn't attend class. He was the only man in the course.
- These can be viewed as issues of autonomy.
- What would you do? If you were the instructor? University administration? Provincial human rights tribunal?

Technological Orders

- Programs of action are created by artifacts/mechanisms
 - Users/people are inscribed
 - Behaviours are prescribed
 - An interaction is circumscribed
- Concept borrows from Reader Response Theory
 - Meaning of a text is not created when it is written, but rather deferred until it is read
- Consistent with Langdon Winner's social orders
 - Both are concerned with projection of power

Creating Orders

- Car Seat Belt
 - Law
 - Alarm
 - Sensor
- Architecture
 - Doors, hinges, automatic door closer (groom)
 - Berliner key
- Projections of power
 - Who's power? On whom?

Technological Orders

- Do people have free will? Where is Latour's free will when he puts on his seat belt?
- Who created these technological orders?
 - What if you want a different order?

Word Processors

- IBM DisplayWriter and WangWriter
- WordStar and WordPerfect
- Xerox Star

- What is a word processor?
- What technological (and social) orders do they create?
- Who are the subjects? Who are the objects?

- Contrast Microsoft Word and GoogleDocs

Exercise

- Contrast Microsoft Word and GoogleDocs

- What is a word processor?
- What technological (and social) orders do they create?
- Who are the subjects? Who are the objects?

Panel: Autonomy to Make Our Own Mistakes

Panel

“...it’s not a matter of me having more expertise, but rather me having the right to make my own kind of mistake. ...Even if he’s absolutely right and in fact this is a disastrous marriage, it’s the kind of disaster that I want to be able to make for myself. I don’t think that’s a matter of expertise. Expertise looks to me like when there is an objective answer about what ought to be done. And the person on the receives end of power, who is on the leading edge of it, is the one who is most likely to know the true answer. There’s also the case that democracy is about our right to make our own mistakes together. Sometimes that’s not a case of shared expertise, but shared ignorance.”

- Should autonomy be relinquished to avoid making a disastrous mistake? Under what circumstances? What experts? Who decides?
 - Example: Marriage
 - Example: Customer does not want to use an optimal information architecture