

Computers and Society

CPSC 430

Lecture 4-1 – Networked Communications

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<https://www.students.cs.ubc.ca/~cs-430/>

Recap

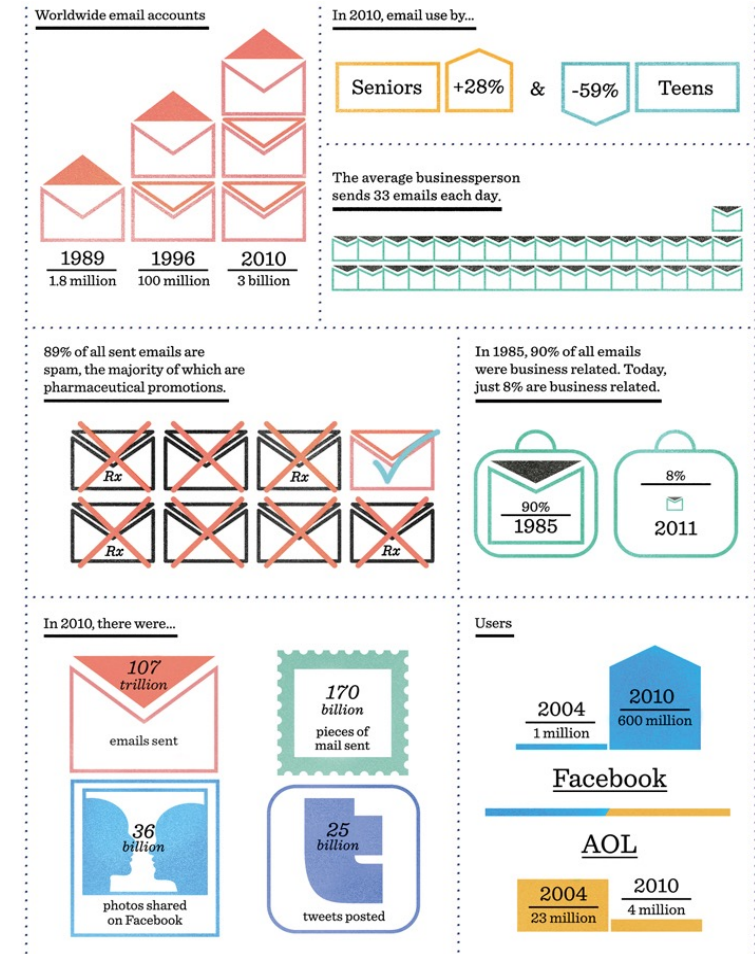
- Define:
 - Kantianism
 - Act Utilitarianism
 - Rule Utilitarianism
 - Social Contract Theory
 - Virtue Ethics
- What's the “right” theory to use?

So much for ethical theories. Let's transition to:

NETWORKED COMMUNICATIONS

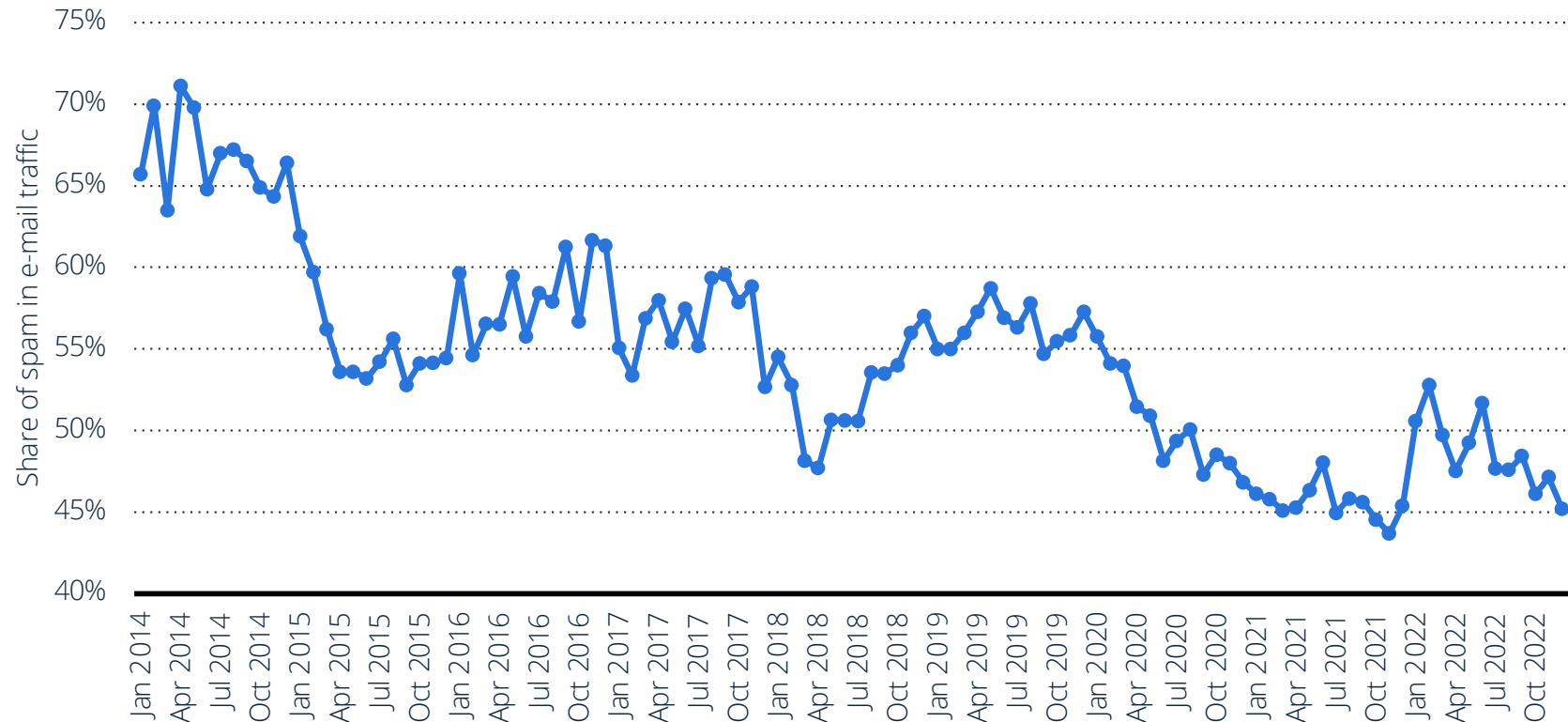
The Spam Epidemic

- Spam: Unsolicited, bulk email
- Spam is profitable
 - More than 100 times cheaper than “junk mail”
 - Profitable even if only 1 in 100,000 buys
- Amount of email that is spam has grown rapidly
 - 8% in 2001
 - 90% in 2009



Source: <http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/156/25th-anniversary-of-listserv>

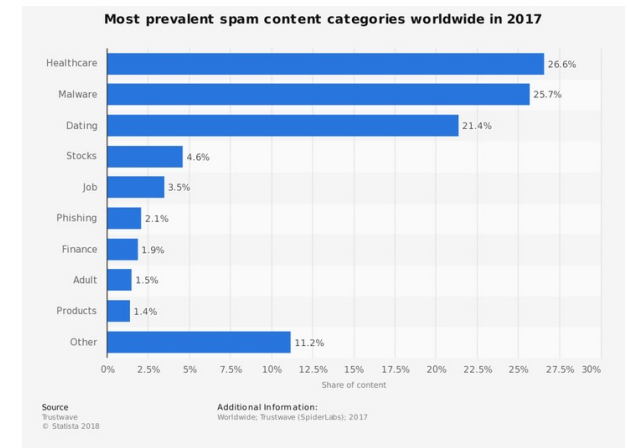
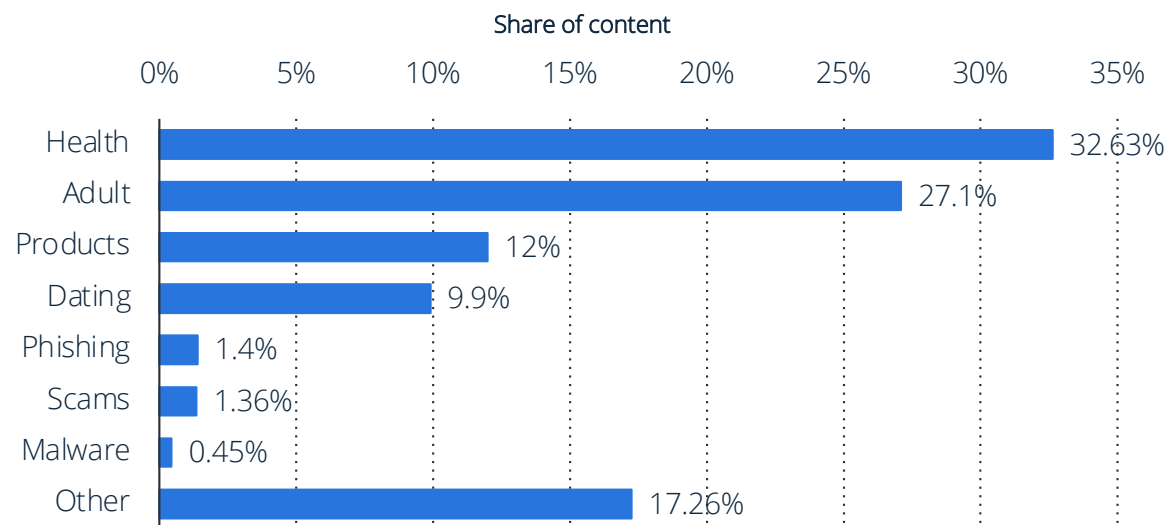
...but things have gotten (somewhat) better



source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/420391/spam-email-traffic-share/>
<https://securelist.com/spam-and-phishing-in-q3-2020/99325/>

Main Spam Categories

Global spam categories 2020



<https://www.statista.com/statistics/263452/most-common-content-of-spam-messages-worldwide-by-category/>

Canadian Context

- Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (2014) prohibits companies from:
 - sending commercial electronic messages without consent, including emails, social networking accounts and text messages;
 - alteration of transmission data in an electronic message, which results in the message being delivered to a different destination without express consent;
 - installing computer programs without express consent;
 - promoting products or services online using false or misleading representations;
 - collecting personal information by accessing a computer system or electronic device illegally;
 - collecting or using electronic addresses using computer programs without permission ('address harvesting').
- Source: http://fightspam.gc.ca/eic/site/030.nsf/eng/h_00039.html

Ethical Evaluations of Spamming

The book argues from each perspective whether spamming is wrong. Let's see if we can make the arguments ourselves:

- Kantian evaluation
- Act utilitarian evaluation
- Rule utilitarian evaluation
- Social contract theory evaluation
- Virtue ethics evaluation

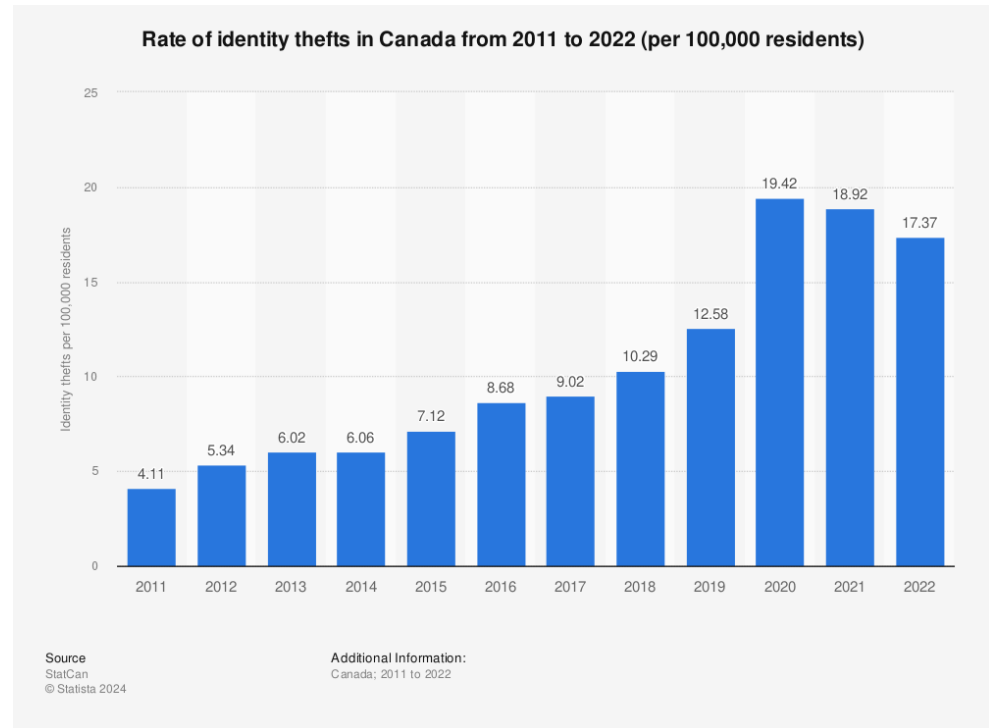
Which of these do you find most/least convincing?

Need for Socio-Technical Solutions

- New technologies can cause social change
 - Calculators --> "de-skilling" of bookkeeping
 - Telephones --> blurred work/home boundaries
- Spam is an example of this phenomenon
 - Email messages practically free
 - Profits increase with number of messages sent
 - Strong motivation to send more messages
- For communications to be perceived as fair, they need to be two-way (allowing consequences for misuse)
 - Internet design allows unfair, one-way communications

Identity Theft

- Identity theft: when a person uses another person's electronic identity
- Phishing: use of email to attempt to deceive people into revealing personal information



source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/544904/identity-theft-rate-canada/>

Sexting

- Definition: sexually suggestive text messages or emails with nude or nearly nude photographs
- In a 2009 survey, 9% of U.S. teenagers admitted to sending a sext, 17% admitted to receiving a sext
- 2018 study: 14% sending; 25% receiving
- Case of Jesse Logan
 - killed herself after ex-boyfriend shared pictures
- Case of Phillip Alpert
 - just turned 18; sent pictures of his 16 year-old girlfriend.
 - sentenced and registered as a sex offender for child pornography
- Case of Ting-Yi Oei
 - principal kept a copy of a picture as evidence
 - angry parent sued him
 - lost job over child pornography charges

How should society respond to sexting?

Cyberbullying

- Cyberbullying: Use of the Internet or phone system to inflict psychological harm
- In a 2009 survey, 10% admitted to cyberbullying, and 19% said they had been cyberbullied (2016 same)

Girl allegedly commits suicide after being bullied



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Vancouver area teen commits suicide after telling story of being cyberbullied (with video)

#RIPAmada is trending as people post news and condolences for the teen, Amanda Todd

BY GILLIAN SHAW, VANCOUVER SUN OCTOBER 11, 2012 1:05 PM

A Vancouver area teen who told a heart-breaking story in a [YouTube video](#) of cyberbullying that led to an all-out schoolyard attack has committed suicide.

In stories and posts flooding Vancouver's social media networks, #RIPAmanda is trending as people post news and condolences for the teen, Amanda Todd. Amanda died in Coquitlam last night.

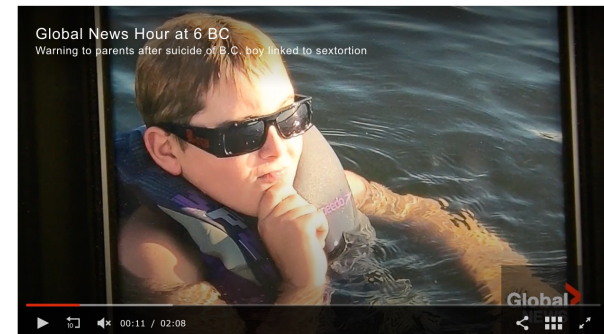
The young teen went to school in Maple Ridge but had changed schools and was living in Coquitlam. She joined YouTube on September 6 and posted her video September 7. Her last YouTube activity was when she added a Hunter Hayes music video to her favourites on YouTube.

CRIME

12-year-old boy in B.C. dies by suicide in response to online sextortion, police say

By Amy Judd • Global News

Posted November 27, 2023 10:37 am · Updated November 27, 2023 6:59 pm



WATCH: The parents of a 12-year-old Prince George boy who took his own life are speaking out. RCMP say he was the victim of online sextortion. As Angela Jung reports, a majority of reported sextortion victims are boys. – Nov 27, 2023