

**Youth responses to the surveillance school: The bifurcation of antagonism and confidence
in surveillance among teenaged students**

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Michael Adorjan, University of Calgary

Rosemary Ricciardelli, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Abstract:

The recent rise of so-called ‘surveillance schools’ is often justified given the need to engender a safe and secure educational environment for students; a fusion of pedagogical and security motives. This paper contributes knowledge regarding the attitudes and lived experiences of teenagers in response to school-based surveillance. Focus groups center discussions on two areas: the effectiveness of policies regarding technology in the classroom as well as school-wide restrictions on Wi-Fi access, and the effectiveness of surveillance technologies geared to actively monitor student online activities. We explore a bifurcation of attitudes revealing both resistance to surveillance school practices as well as strong support for monitoring technologies perceived to be effective in addressing cyber-risks such as cyberbullying. Our findings point to the need for empirically assessing contexts where support or antagonism towards surveillance occurs, suggesting neither isomorphic resistance nor wholesale acquiescence.

Keywords: youth, resistance, school surveillance, privacy, social network sites, teachers

INTRODUCTION

Global technological advancements have helped produce ubiquitous surveillance devices, within which new generations of citizens are embedded. Surveillance is defined as “any collection and processing of personal data, whether identifiable or not, for the purposes of influencing or managing those whose data have been garnered” (Bruno, 2012: 344). Said another way, it is the collection and analysis of data with the intention to maintain awareness over those individuals. Surveillance has become increasingly relevant in schools, which have become a focal point for concerns about youth and cyber-risk, including cyberbullying and sexting (Marx and Steeves, 2010; Steeves, 2010). The recent rise of so-called ‘surveillance schools’ is often justified given the need to engender a safe and secure educational environment for students; a fusion of pedagogical and security motives (Fisk, 2016; Taylor, 2012).

Surveillance schools, “characterised by an array of routine practices... [that] identify, verify, categorise and track pupils,” are becoming established around the world (Taylor, 2012: 2). Their common features include Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), fingerprinting, iris scanning, school ID cards with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), and even ‘smart uniforms’ which monitor student whereabouts both on and off school property (Taylor, 2013). Fisk (2016: 159), for instance, found some U.S. schools possess “an extensive surveillance system to monitor and restrict the activities of students throughout the school day”, including CCTV and audio monitors in bathrooms and locker rooms. Similarly, through research with 13- and 14-year-old students in an urban secondary school in London, England, Livingstone and Sefton-Green (2016: 140) found it “striking ...how the class was almost constantly under surveillance, recorded, and evaluated – both interpersonally and digitally.”

While the degree to which Canadian schools are adopting surveillance tools compared to the U.S. and U.K. is debatable (given limited research), similar trends may have been triggered in response to ‘moral panic’ over school shootings such as Columbine, Colorado and Taber, Alberta (Steeves, 2010). CCTV cameras, argued to be “at the forefront of embedding communications technologies into everyday teaching and learning”, soon became “common” across Canadian schools, mirroring international trends (Steeves, 2006: 183; Steeves, 2010). School administrators draw from a variety of surveillance technologies, including “draconian use policies, filtering software, and monitoring,” that make surveillance the “default response” to any harm potentiality (Steeves, 2010). In the early 2000s, “dystopian accounts” of such technology’s impact on youth, especially female teens, helped justify “expanded state and law enforcement powers, especially powers of surveillance” (Bailey and Steeves, 2015: 3). The increasing implementation of surveillance, then, appears related to perceptions of its effectiveness; perceptions reinforced by the increasing omnipresence of surveillance.

Considering the rapid adoption and presumed efficacy of surveillance technologies in schools, not enough is known about students’ own attitudes and experiences in relation to these technologies, especially from those who grew up under their ubiquitous presence. While research is still emerging in this area, some point to overt antagonism coupled with creative strategies to help mitigate and circumvent surveillance by educators and parents alike (e.g., Fisk, 2016; Taylor, 2013). In 2006, Taylor (2013) found the students she interviewed in British schools to be “incensed about the lack of privacy they were afforded, not just in the school but more broadly a result of surveillance technologies” (p. 64). Likewise, Giroux (2003: xvii) highlighted the “deep distrust” apparent across U.S. educators in their interactions with students, whom he argues have become a “generation of suspects”. More recently, Fisk (2016) found some students in the U.S.

complaining about content their schools block online, citing increased difficulties in completing class projects as a consequence.

Recent researchers have enriched our understanding of the ways young people resist surveillance, challenging the ‘top down’ model of panoptic social control. For instance, drawing from Gary Marx’s (2003) typology of “moves” resisting surveillance, Hope’s (2005, 2010) work contributes greatly to our understanding of the hermeneutics of resistance among students; i.e., the motivations and perceptions associated with resistance to surveillance. According to multiple researchers, teens often demonstrate creative strategies to resist governance, thwart attempts at control, and circumvent restricted access (boyd, 2014). For instance, Fisk (2016) found students told not to text in class simply did so in washrooms and locker rooms (perhaps explaining school-deployed audio monitoring of these spaces), while Steeves (2010), addressing the Canadian context, argues:

although the surveillance capacities of networked computing have been used to deepen the neoliberal tendency to treat students as suspects, the effect of this on the social relationships in the classroom has been ambiguous, and the wired classroom remains a contested site in which students can resist the teacher’s authority.

However, despite antagonism towards resistance that begets strategies of resistance, Hope (2010: 326) also notes that “some students appear to conform to observation”, suggestive of the normative social forces which align behavioural expectations. He argues that students are increasingly accustomed to and accepting of surveillance; they are “socialised into a ‘culture of observation’” (p. 323). Yet researchers have only begun to unpack the particular contexts where surveillance is assessed positively by students; where resistance is no longer relevant since the *modus operandi* of surveillance is valued; where resistance is even embraced. Indeed,

surveillance scholars, who have often deployed Foucault's famous metaphor of the panopticon (Garland, 1997; Shearing and Stenning, 1985), argue that that the metaphor has become less relevant next to more contemporary permutations. While panoptic surveillance is 'top down', the subjects of surveillance are increasingly not only resisting surveillance, but encouraging it (Hier, 2002).

Examining the attitudes and perceptions of school-based surveillance among Canadian teens through focus group discussions, in this paper we contribute knowledge about empirical contexts where surveillance is resisted and where it is – more or less – embraced among students. We also illuminate attitudes and experiences among students residing in *rural* regions, who in comparison with their urban counterparts, often do not have the same degree of Wi-Fi access and limited data access (i.e., 3G, LTE). We center on two areas: first, the effectiveness of policies regarding technology in the classroom as well as school-wide restrictions on Wi-Fi access; second, the effectiveness of surveillance technologies, such as Wi-Fi monitoring and real-time access to students' social media activities. We pinpoint a fault line or threshold explaining where antagonism versus complicity emerges. Following the methodology, we proceed to highlight findings in relation to teens' perceptions of policies regarding technology in the classroom, as well as school-wide restrictions to Wi-Fi, before turning to attitudes and experiences with surveillance technologies. In the discussion that follows, we highlight research findings and suggest some future directions. We also raise questions regarding the implications of growing up not only being constantly observed through surveillance technologies, but the wider philosophies of safety and security which animate them (cf. Calvert, 2000; Marx and Steeves, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

To explore attitudes and experiences of youth towards school policies and responses to cyber-risk, we conducted focus groups with teens, aimed to examine this topic by unpacking the everyday and practical contexts of their lives (Madriz, 1997; Stewart et al., 2007). Studies drawing on focus group research to examine youth and cyber-risk are relatively rare compared with larger-scale quantitative research on cyberbullying (cf. Hinduja and Patchin, 2014). Researchers increasingly draw on systematic focus group designs to examine cyber-risk issues, like cyberbullying and sexting (Allen, 2012; Lenhart, 2009; Pelfrey and Weber, 2014). Such group discussions among peers often illuminate salient social contexts and personal interpretations which are largely left out of survey-based methods. We thus echo Haggerty's (2006: 42) observation that models of contemporary surveillance, often presuming top-down forms of governance, exclude the "actual experiences of people being subjected to different governmental regimes," and that "modestly realist projects" are required "that analyze the politics of surveillance on the experiences of the subjects of surveillance."

Participant Sample and Recruitment

We employed a purposive, snowball sampling design, whereby initial contacts in various sectors such as schools and universities helped provide references to additional participants. We conducted 35 focus groups with 115 Canadian students aged 13-19 (average age of 15), with an average number of 3.3 participants per group (a minimum of two and maximum of five). Although we aimed for groups with no less than four participants, some groups had two participants and were thus akin to small group discussions rather than focus groups. We chose to include these groups as their conversations generated significant knowledge, and as we are not in this study interested in examining the interactional dynamics of larger groups of teens *per se*.

Each discussion lasted between 30 to 120 minutes and were conducted by both authors as well as select trained research assistants (RAs). While previous studies of student perceptions of surveillance often draw from urban samples (e.g., Hope, 2010), our participants were drawn from both urban Western and rural Atlantic regions. Both public and private schools participated in the project. School districts were approached for ethics approval after receiving university ethics approval. After school board approvals were received, school principals were contacted and with their permission focus group arrangements were made with students. Other participants were either university undergraduate students or the children of parents attending classes in university. Including in our sample both younger teens and those emerging into adulthood allowed us to explore age-related trends regarding school-based experiences and perceptions. Throughout this article we will refer to the Western, urban locations as Cyber City, and the rural, Atlantic locations as Cyberville (the collapse of multiple locations into these two pseudo-regions ensure the anonymity of participants while facilitating thematic comparisons of the data). 15 groups were conducted in Cyber City; the remaining 20 groups were conducted in Cyberville. A total of 67 females and 48 males participated in our study. Most groups were held with youth of the same gender and age/grade levels, a sampling stratification strategy designed to help ensure participants interacted with others that they would not perceive as threatening and with whom their experience may also resonate (Madriz, 1997). Our examination thus touches upon trends based on age, area of residence (i.e., urban vs. rural) and gender (i.e., male or female; only a single participant identified as 'gender fluid'). Our focus exclusively on students for this project was based on budgetary and temporal restrictions, and necessitated excluding other relevant stakeholders, especially parents and educators (see discussion below). Nevertheless, our aim here is to provide youth which a voice to express their lived experiences in their own words.

DATA ANALYSIS

The transcribed focus group data was analyzed using an inductive, comparative approach without initially arriving at any definitive substantive or theoretical conclusions about what the data reflected sociologically (Berg, 2004; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Concepts and theories emerged naturally through the dynamic interaction of participants. NVivo qualitative analysis software, specifically the parent and child node functions, was used to conduct analyses of the data. The initial stages of “widely open inquiry” involved ‘open coding’ of the data (Berg, 2004: 278), following Anselm Strauss’ advice to “believe in everything and believe nothing” about what was being analyzed (Strauss, 1987: 28). To this end, initially, all mentions of a particular topic/theme within a session were noted (i.e., captured as ‘nodes’ and reported as ‘references’ in NVivo), allowing for comparison across sessions. Coding schemes were developed through first-level coding (i.e., parent nodes), involving close readings of the data.

Using NVivo, prominent themes emerged through the tracking of coding ‘nodes’ both across and within groups. Appropriate for focus group discussions, references included a range of dialogue between participants. This usually began with a particular question from the facilitator, followed by a series of exchanges. The reference would normally end once participants discussing a particular topic finished their exchange and a new question was asked. Our conversations, as expected, often led in a number of unanticipated yet inter-related directions, and coding decisions were made where one coding sequence ended and where another began. Regular research meetings between the investigators ensured that thematic development emerged in a consistent and reliable manner, and helped to ensure a hermeneutically attuned validity of the data (Twinn, 1998). While the first author took initial responsibility for coding all

data, both authors and RAs worked with the coded data to collectively vet the final results in terms of validity and thematic accuracy. Primarily, our focus is to the qualitative details of our focus group discussions. However, thematic saliency is relevant in order to highlight wider trends in the data as they relate to age, gender, and residence location.

TECHNOLOGY RESTRICTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM: INCONSISTENT ENFORCEMENT AND FALLIBLE DETECTION

Across our 35 focus groups, discussions which centered on experiences with technology and surveillance (including parental monitoring (see Adorjan and Ricciardelli, Forthcoming)) naturally gravitated to experiences in school. During these discussions, some participants revealed that some of their teachers restricted access to their cell phones in class. In the U.S. most teachers informally permit students to possess cell phones for safety reasons (e.g., in response to the Littleton high school shooting in 1999), with official policies varying by school district. Some schools have cell phone bans to curb cyberbullying, others embrace technologies for the educational opportunities they afford students (Fisk, 2016; Higgins, Aug 7, 2013). Similarly in Canada, partly in response to the school shooting in Taber, Alberta in 1999, school boards often have policies in place declaring their “right to monitor all electronic communications” of students, who are often told they have their online activities recorded (Steeves, 2010). Some scholars have argued the majority of school boards in Canada treat cell phones “as a scourge”, though more recently the Toronto District School Board (the largest in Canada), among others, have reversed restrictive policies in favor of “permissive smartphone” usage, emphasizing students’ use of cellphones for connectivity and learning (Mcquigge, Feb 26, 2017).

Suggestive of these trends, our participants revealed no overarching emphasis regarding their experiences with policies on technology in the classroom; instead, policies seem to be more a product of individual teacher decisions than school or school board policy (or, where such policies exist, students reveal variation by teacher regardless). Groups were asked about what policies, if any, exist at their school regarding technology in the classroom. In one group of five female teens Judy, aged 15 from Cyber City, replied “they block all the social media stuff.” She adds that while students are “allowed to have” phones in class, they are “just not allowed to use them when the teacher’s talking” or when students are assigned particular tasks. Our groups often referred to inconsistent policies and practices across teachers at the same school. One group of three male students, aged 17 and 18 from Cyberville, discussed the restrictions in their school placed on certain video game sites and websites. Patrick discloses that cell phones are permitted only “in some classes.” Edward agrees: “yeah, it depends on the teacher, some teachers put strict bans on cell phones.” Others recalled being granted permission to use cell phones only during selected times. In a group of two, Tracy, 15, from Cyberville, recalls a ‘pocket’ system, comparable to the one mentioned by Cynthia, “with numbers on it. We’re assigned a number to put our phone into, and we’re only allowed to have our phones on Fridays to listen to music. We’re not allowed taking it to the bathroom; they make us keep it in the classroom.” In the same group, Cynthia, age 13, adds “some teachers say yeah you could go on your phone, some teachers are like no up in the pocket.” Groups in both Cyberville and Cyber City shared the experience of variable technology policies in the classroom.

In contrast to views on surveillance technologies such as ‘Wi-Fi surveillance’ (see below), most participants felt strict technology restrictions in the classroom are not effective. The majority of references regarding having a class with restrictions on technology are concentrated

among 13- to 14-year-old participants, given the assumption that teachers may have more restrictive policies for younger students. Overall, 21 references are antagonistic to technological restrictions (usually cell phones are discussed), with only two supportive. Moreover, the majority of antagonistic references (16) come from female groups. There are no significant differences in the concentration of references between Cyber City and Cyberville (i.e., antagonism was expressed relatively equally in both regions). Two 13-year-old male students from Cyberville expressed reservations about the effectiveness of cell phone bans in classrooms. Asked if such policies work, Tucker disagrees: “no, people are still on their phone ...under the desk they went on whenever.” Another group of three 17-year-old females from Cyberville also stated that whether cell phones are restricted in class “depends on what kind of teacher you have” (Tamara). Tamara adds that some teachers collect cell phones using a ‘pocket’ system mentioned by Tracy and Cynthia above. Asked if the pocket system is effective, Rebecca reveals a strategy of concealment: “I’ll just put mine under my thigh and be like ‘I don’t have it’.” A number of our respondents shrugged off teachers’ ability to detect whether they were using their cell phone to go online, pointing to a variety of concealment strategies (Hope, 2010).

Of the minority who supported restrictions, participants pointed to the alleviation of problems that come with access to devices, at least within the spatial and temporal boundaries of the classroom. For instance, Julien, a male 14-year-old from Cyber City, argued that while at school “you gotta do what you gotta do, and at home if you’re gonna be [using your phone], why [use your phone] at school too, you’re basically not really learning anything.” Averie, age 15 from Cyber City, suggested that teachers with stricter policies had at least the effect of reinforcing among students the expectation of not using their phones while attending particular classes:

Well there are always people who are not going to listen to the rules no matter how hard you try, but if you do have a stricter teacher, people are more like oh fine, I'll put it away. ...they'll just be *kind of accustomed to it* so I think having a stricter teacher is better than having a lenient one, because then even though they might not follow the rules, they'll be more aware, *they'll learn how* to just put away their phone and not use it. [added emphases]

Averie's remark suggests that while students may not internalize a deeper sense of *why* cell phones are restricted (e.g., to instill self-control, avoid addiction to going online), they may at least benefit from the *shallow control* instilled through the expectation of surveillance in the classroom. We return to this in the discussion below.¹

Support for classroom technology restriction policies, however, is largely undercut by criticisms levied at inconsistent, unenforced, and ostensibly unenforceable practices. Some participants critiqued the 'pocket' system mentioned earlier. Amelie, age 13 from Cyberville among a group of three females her age, criticized the lack of student participation for this system: "cuz there's this thing we have to put on the board; your phones go in each pocket, and in my class, there's only maybe two up in the pockets, and there's 22 people in my class." Teachers who aim to restrict access to cell phones also face challenges that come with student ingenuity circumventing efforts to regulate or restrict technology in the classroom. As highlighted above, participants often referred to strategies such as keeping their phones on them with the ringer turned off, or having a friend keep their phone for a while, while others suggested that teachers do not follow through with their directives, as they are able to keep their phones openly on their desk to charge. Similarly, Hope (2005) found "that students hide their online activities from teachers by physically shielding the screen and deleting histories; *they also use*

the computer to put the teacher under surveillance” (quoted in Steeves et al., March 2010: 15, added emphasis). While we did not find evidence of any ‘sousveillance’ (Mann et al., 2002), referring to placing those who conduct surveillance under scrutiny themselves (i.e., watching the watchers, for example hacking teachers (e.g., Hope, 2010)), we did find consistent forms of antagonism and accompanying resistance expressed against classroom attempts to control technological use.

Moreover, students who abide by classroom technology policies may feel a lack of support from teachers. Roman, age 13 from Cyberville, comments “I saw multiple [classmates] on their tech last class while I was doing my work. I thought it was unfair that they were on the tech and I wasn’t.” Roman’s remark suggests that students who abide may experience relative deprivation compared with their classmates, and may become excluded from the social capital that accrues from being left out of a primary medium of social connection – online social networks (boyd, 2014). Some participants advised about ways to integrate technology in the classroom more effectively to reduce the novelty of technology for youth while away from school. In this context, some participants questioned the effects of restrictive policies on technology in the classroom. Anna, 19 years old from Cyber City, critiqued this both for reinforcing a taboo but also potentially exacerbating addiction at home:

if you’re never allowed to have it, it’s this risqué taboo thing that’s super exciting, and like, every kid wants to play with it, and then by the time you get home, you’re just like, you spend all your time on it and *that’s where all your socialization goes*. [added emphasis]

Janiya, 18, agrees with Anna: “it needs to be a normal thing so that it isn’t like [a] super exciting thing.” These participants suggest restrictive classroom policies – designed to simultaneously help students stay focused on their studies as well as maintain surveillant control of the teacher – ironically entice students all the more to online technologies, not because of the technology *per*

se, but because that is where students find interpersonal connection and meaning. As dana boyd (2008, 2014) argues, youth are not ‘addicted’ to technology, but each other.

We turn from individual teachers’ policies in the classroom to school-wide policies related to Wi-Fi access, including Wi-Fi surveillance. Here the impact of living in a rural region becomes more relevant in our discussions.

ANTAGONISM TOWARDS RESTRICTING Wi-Fi ACCESS AND BLOCKING CONTENT

In addition to classroom technology restrictions, many participants also expressed strong antagonism in response to school-based internet restriction policies, specifically blocking Wi-Fi access to students (12 groups made 14 references). No patterns by age or gender emerged here, though interestingly the majority of references to schools having a Wi-Fi restriction policy come from rural Cyberville participants (17 versus only 4 from Cyber City), with Cyberville youth presenting as slightly more antagonistic towards such policies. These discussions reveal how significant access to technology is for many teens (boyd, 2014; Livingstone and Sefton-Green, 2016). Some students from Cyberville, during wider discussions of technology in the classroom, revealed that their school principal had placed restrictions on cell phone and Wi-Fi access in response to transgressive student incidents such as the non-consensual distribution of nudes (i.e., ‘sexting’). Three 13-year-old females from this school argued that one effect of blocking Wi-Fi access was to “really tick everyone off, because now we have to use our 3G and stuff” (Valerie). A number of Cyberville participants, who often have cell phone plans with limited data, strongly critiqued school Wi-Fi restrictions as causing them to exceed their allotted data plan and sometimes incurring significant overuse charges (see Adorjan and Ricciardelli, forthcoming).

While criticisms were more overtly expressed among Cyberville participants, some from Cyber City also raised the issue of limited access to data. Four females from Cyber City, ages 14 and 15, were asked how easy it is to circumvent school Wi-Fi monitoring (i.e., content browsed online while using school Wi-Fi). They agreed that using data would help counter school surveillance, but this is not often a viable option. As Nancy suggests, “if I just sign into the internet here, then I don’t have to use up all my stuff [data]...” Adds Holly – “cuz like, we don’t, well I don’t have a lot of data either, so I’d rather use the Wi-Fi.” Others agree: “yeah.”

Strategies of resistance to restricted Wi-Fi access centered on acquiring access to Wi-Fi passwords. Three 13-year-old male students from Cyberville referred to one student at their school “sending a nude,” (Sergio) causing the school to “shut down the internet” (Keaton) – referring to restricting students’ access to school Wi-Fi. Interestingly, Mario adds that one solution is “you go give your phone to the teacher; they just put it in,” referring to sympathetic teachers who grant ‘good’ students Wi-Fi access (and alluding to potentially differential treatment by particular teachers, as discussed above). Sergio concurs with Mario: “yeah if you’re a good student, like [teachers name] would give it to you if you were a good student.” Another group of three 13-year-old females from Cyberville referred to one student who was “selling the Wi-Fi [password] and he got suspended” (Amelie). Irene adds that this student was selling the password for “five bucks” to other students. Greta recalls another student “in my class” who said “for two dollars I’ll tell you the Wi-Fi password.” The consequences, importantly, impinge on students’ ability to do their schoolwork. Irene complains: “cuz they were just like, you guys are doing bad stuff on the internet; I’m like how are we supposed to do our projects on the computers.” “Like we can’t do nothing,” agrees Amelie. “All we’re doing is notes now,” Greta adds. “Sucky!” exclaims Irene.

SUPPORT FOR Wi-Fi SURVEILLANCE

Of note, during focus group discussions, it became evident how strongly some participants felt the schools are able to surveille their activities online. While participant support for Wi-Fi surveillance was less frequently expressed than antagonism towards classroom technology restrictions (six groups made 11 references to the effectiveness of Wi-Fi monitoring), most support came from relatively older teens, aged 15 and up, and especially undergraduate students. This is likely due to undergraduate students having had more time to reflect upon their high school experiences retrospectively. For example Emily, a 19-year-old undergraduate student from Cyber City, argues “it’s necessary to monitor [student online activities], because that’s how people communicate with each other.” She recalls cyberbullying being a problem in her sister’s class:

for my sister’s class, when they started checking peoples’ Facebooks and stuff, [the bullying] went down drastically, a couple of them tried to send anonymously, but they already knew who was fighting with who, so they figured it out like that, and it helped to like settle things. I think it’s important.

Surveillance is seen to be a tool in combating the anonymous nature of many instances of cyberbullying, even where the offender and victim may be peers in the same school or class. In a different group Christine, another 19-year-old undergraduate student from Cyber City, elaborates on a striking experience. With cyberbullying a serious problem at her former high school,

...my principal realized it was an issue that people would hide behind ...and he noticed cyber bullying as a large issue, so I don’t know what he did, but he got this app and because if you were connected straight onto the Wi-Fi, within like a kilometer of the

school ...he would [have] full access to seeing anything that was posted within that kilometer. So when, I like thought he was kidding, one day he was like nice Instagram post that you posted, I was like what, he was like yeah you posted it during your spare, and then that's when students were able to realize they were monitoring us now, so you can't hide behind anything.

Asked if such an approach was effective, Christine affirms "it was so effective when it came to our students; after that there was no issues with cyberbullying that I was aware of."

Interestingly, Abigail, in the same group as Christine, raises conflicting sentiments towards school surveillance, which she argues:

as effective as it seems to be, brings up some privacy issues ...I don't think someone has the right to see your deepest and darkest secrets that you don't want to be seen, so I think that kind of oversteps a boundary, *but at the same point is extremely effective, so if that system was implemented in every school district, there could be massive gains.* [added emphasis]

Abigail's reflection suggests awareness both of the privacy implications of school surveillance, but also a simultaneous, if not reticent, acknowledgment of its potential effectiveness. Frederick, age 18 in a coed group with three other 17-year-old students from Cyber City, similarly argues that "a way to prevent cyber bullying, at least for me personally, I'm not going start cyber bullying someone anyway, but if I knew someone was watching me, then I [will] definitely be like careful of what I'm saying to anybody." Interestingly, Frederick says his school does not disclose to students whether they are being explicitly monitored, which he argues is less effective than overt disclosure of surveillance:

You actually have to make sure people know you're monitoring, cuz I don't know the school is actually monitoring [students]; they might be, they might not be. You gotta let [students] know, 'cuz if someone actually thinks they're being watched ...but if they don't know they're being watched, then it actually doesn't make any difference, and then there's some people who just don't care if like, well whatever I'll get in trouble.

Frederick's remark suggests that 'panoptic' surveillance, where the verifiable presence of surveillance is sometimes less relevant than the expectation that one is *likely* being surveilled, is not as effective among teens who have yet to fully internalize and orient themselves towards societal expectations of licit behaviour, especially online.

Tellingly, when asked for advice about how schools can better manage online risk, some suggested *ramping up* efforts at surveillance to reinforce student obedience on and offline, at least while on school grounds. To be sure, it is highly unlikely that most schools have the sort of surveillance power in place that Christine and other participants suggest (given limited resources and time to systematically monitor all student online activities – see below). However, some researchers have found that some Canadian schools do place efforts into tracking student activities outside of the classroom, such as what they post online (Steeves, 2010). Steeves (2010) also found some schools have punished students for posting illicit content online, such as one case where a student posted anti-Semitic remarks, even though this was done after school hours and through an online platform not related to the school. For our participants, it is also telling that the strongest advocacy, as well as antagonism, towards school surveillance comes from articulate undergraduate students who have had time to reflect upon their high school experiences. Abigail's reservations are qualified by an acknowledgement that *surveillance*

works. However, as we turn to in the discussion, we question whether this works in a *shallow* or *deep* sense.

DISCUSSION

At the beginning of his influential book *The Culture of Control*, David Garland presciently writes “we quickly grow used to the way things are” (Garland, 2001: 1). He refers to the broad ways that, over time, a penal climate can sediment itself such that the array of penal technologies, including punitive and rehabilitative responses, seems atemporal and transcultural – just “the way things are”. The same historical progression can be claimed for the ubiquitous presence of surveillance technologies, including those in the emerging ‘surveillance schools’. Our participants, aged 13 to 19, have grown up during the ‘net 2.0’ area of high-speed internet connectivity, social media and multimediated interactivity (Livingstone, 2003; Tapscott, 2009). Arguably, many have internalized the expectation of being watched online, and, in many respects, the expectation to be able to watch others (Calvert, 2000). The expectation of surveillance, and moreso the acquiescence to it, is reinforced in part by the increasing role schools play in normalizing the appropriateness of surveillance technologies. Apart from the manifest content of their education, students learn that these technologies exist to keep them safe and secure, especially given the contemporary context of school shootings and serious instances of harm online that impact both students’ lives and the broader school environment.

Key Findings

School policies and regulations related to technology, including access to phones in classrooms, whether students have access to school Wi-Fi, and the degree to which students are actively

surveilled either through the Wi-Fi system or otherwise, ultimately aim to orient students as ‘governable subjects’ (Rose, 1996) – the ideally socialized, compliant and therefore ‘safe’ child/student. Previous research has raised awareness of young people’s active resistance to efforts of social control within the online spaces they inhabit (Barron, 2014; boyd, 2008; Livingstone, 2008). In line with these findings, we show that when asked about school-based practices, there is vociferous resistance towards any restriction of technology, be it teacher-specific classroom policies restricting student access to cell phones or wider school policies restricting Wi-Fi.

In line with existing research, there is the overall sense among our participants that classroom restrictions fail to prevent harm. Participants suggested that teachers may not follow through on their stated policies, or may be restricted by a wider school-based technology policy. What seemed more ubiquitous is student ingenuity in sidestepping classroom policies or hiding their use of technology (such as cell phones) (Hope, 2005; Marx, 2003). Despite the best efforts of teachers to consistently implement and enforce policies, and despite students who seek to circumvent such policies, other students may request exceptions from teachers, for instance those who require access to their phones for health monitoring purposes (e.g., diabetes), or those with custodial issues that have their guardian requesting he/she have a mobile device. This may enhance a feeling of relative deprivation and differential treatment among students – a theme that was raised during some of our focus group discussions. Perhaps a wider influence on student antagonism towards classroom-based restrictions on technology is the inconsistent practices across classrooms. Regardless of school policies, some teachers embraced mobile phone usage, albeit with caveats, while other teachers had more restrictive policies.

Our participants referred to ‘learning’ about individual teacher expectations and adjusting accordingly. This suggests that students become primarily conscious about classroom policies but lack cogitation over the reasons restrictive policies are in place, or wider issues regarding addiction to devices within the context of a learning environment. Schools may consider whether having more uniform policies in place regarding technology in the classroom are worthwhile developing, or, where such policies exist, how they are enforced. Ultimately, we agree with Cassidy, Faucher and Jackson (2013: 588), who argue that it is

vital to promote positive uses of ICT. While banning cell phones and the internet from schools or restricting access to technology is often the kneejerk reaction that accompanies problems such as cyberbullying, it is generally acknowledged that such approaches will have little impact on the incidence of cyberbullying (see also Cassidy et al., 2012).

Moreover, restrictive and ‘zero tolerance’ policies neglect consideration of the positive uses of the Internet by students, i.e., for completing school assignments. Emphasis on cyber-risk alone will lead to ineffective and counter-productive responses, not only easily circumvented by students, but which undercut preventative, harm-reducing approaches (Pearce et al., 2011; Wong et al., 2011).

Among our participants who experienced Wi-Fi restrictions, these restrictions were imposed in response to particular instances of harm, such as the non-consensual distribution of nude images (i.e., ‘sexting’). It is not likely that an overarching framework of ‘best practices’ regarding Wi-Fi regulation will have equal impact on both urban and rural areas. The greater antagonism towards such restrictions from our rural participants is based on their reliance on Wi-Fi given limited access to data plans (e.g., 3G or LTE wireless networks). Further research involving those across the spectrum of the ‘digital divide’ – i.e., those with regular access to LTE

bandwidth and Wi-Fi versus those with limited bandwidth access in rural areas – is especially warranted (cf. Robinson, 2009). Some studies suggest that the social media sites students frequent are similar across urban and rural regions (see Burkell and Saginur, 2015), though further research regarding how differential access affects things like attitudes and strategies towards surveillance is needed.

In contrast to existing research regarding student resistance to social control (e.g., Hope, 2016), the overwhelming majority of our older participants expressed strong support for school surveillance of student Internet use. A significant proportion of participants believed in schools' ability to surveille everything they do online, including 'real time' monitoring of social media, especially through the use of Wi-Fi monitoring – despite the unlikely feasibility of such practices. Tellingly, many of our older participants believed school surveillance helps instill good behavior, even combatting issues such as cyberbullying and addressing anonymous forms of harassment. When asked for advice about how schools can better manage online risk, some suggested *ramping up* efforts at surveillance to reinforce licit behavior of students on and offline, at least while on school grounds. While we did not follow up, for this research, with school boards to determine if school Wi-Fi monitoring or some technological surveillant equivalent exists, the ongoing monitoring of student online activities may indicate a form of 'dataveillance' (Clarke, 1992), with implications for the 'social sorting' and classification of students based strictly on their online activities (Lyon, 2003). Hope (2005: 366) finds precedence for the virtual surveillance of school internet use in his UK-based research, where "an array of 'virtual' computer-mediated observation tools exist that enable staff to follow *specific* student online activity". Noting that a school ICT manager "related how he regularly checked student accounts to see what images they had downloaded onto the school system", he described how it remains

difficult and perhaps impossible to systematically sort through this content and analyze it in systematic and meaningful ways (Hope, 2005: 367). Nevertheless, arching back to Foucault's initial metaphor of the panopticon, among our participants school surveillance seems to be, overall, embraced and deemed effective due to their *expectation* of being watched, regardless of the veracity of this perception.

Further Directions and Implications

While our paper is geared to providing youth with a voice to express their lived experiences regarding school-based responses to cyber-risk, further research exploring 'best practices' related to cyber-risk from the perspective of educators would offer significant insights, as there are only a handful of studies in this area (e.g., Fisk, 2016; Livingstone and Sefton-Green, 2016). That cyber-risks are ongoing and persistent problems in the school raise questions about how schools are responding, especially given the atemporal and placeless nature of cyberspace. Are there official policies governing from the 'top down' technology in the classroom, and policies in place regarding the types of programming offered to teens? Are schools engaging in the type of surveillance practices highlighted by our participants?

Researchers looking at teens' perceptions and experiences with school surveillance reveals the danger of assuming that those on the receiving end of panoptic surveillance readily internalize and respond to ubiquitous and hegemonic social steering. Teens are, of course, undergoing processes of rapid social change and hold a liminal social status in relation to wider adult society. While resistance to surveillance is a frequent finding, further research is also needed to explore what appears to be a bifurcation in attitudes and experiences of surveillance. Antagonism and resistance occur mostly in relation to specific teachers and school policies,

perhaps signaling adolescent resistance towards adult authority. At the same time, it appears that a maturational effect occurs whereby older teens come to internalize the logic and ‘doxa’ of surveillance, coming to accept, even embrace its effectiveness in preventing online harm. This may also be related to older teens acquiescing to omnipresent surveillance and debased privacy, and more readily adopting a stance towards privacy that they have ‘nothing to hide’, as they do not engage in any illicit behaviour online (see Adorjan and Ricciardelli, forthcoming). Our participants also argued that some teens will simply not care about being watched – they will engage in harmful and transgressive behaviour regardless (see also Hope, 2005). However, the point of ‘criminologies of everyday life’ are not to transform the ‘soul’ of everyone isomorphically, but steer in a shallower sense the aggregated behaviour of the wider majority – here, the student body. What may be absent is a deeper moral orientation among students, especially older teens, who may benefit from a safer school environment but do so without reflection upon the wider implications of embracing surveillance and debased privacy.

While it is too early to anticipate the long-term impact surveillance by educators will have on today’s ‘net generation’, the result of the wider acquiescence to surveillance within institutional settings is likely an erosion of “belief in democratic systems [which] teaches young people that the only means of trust is through technological means, and takes away privacy” (Taylor, 2013: 74). Students may gain a sense of safety and security based on school surveillance practices, though reliance on surveillance as a primary strategy to address transgressive behavior may preempt other efforts to instill skills of citizenship among students, who become treated more as suspects and always potential rule breakers (Giroux, 2003; Steeves, 2010). While cyber-risks involving youth often suggest problems associated with cyberbullying and sexting, they also involve, arguably to a greater degree, the debasement of privacy and wider toolkits for

active citizenship which, if neglected, may lead to more serious and longer-term psychological and sociological impacts.

ENDNOTES

1 – Regarding the ‘shallow control’ instilled by surveillance, see also Tankebe (2013) for the comparable concept of ‘dull compulsion’ applied to assessments of police legitimacy and racial profiling.

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