New Telecommunications Technologies Require New Manners[1]

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Abstract / Résumé:

This paper considers a number of examples of unmannerly telecommunications behavior. Eight factors differentiating new from traditional forms of telecommunication are identified which are conducive to bad manners. Answering machines, call waiting and speaker phones are considered in greater detail. Fifteen principles are discussed which should inform telecommunications manners for the new technologies. These affirm respect for the dignity of the other person and involve reciprocity, honesty, trust and choice.

Much of the discussion of telecommunications as a social issue involves the behavior of large organizations - whether governmental or private toward individuals. The telecommunications behavior of individuals relative to each other receives far less attention. Yet the proliferation of new telecommunications devices (from cellular telephones to videophones and voice mail to faxes) raises novel issues for personal interaction.

How can the dignity of the individual be maintained in the face of communications technologies that have the potential to undermine this? Legislation, judicial interpretations, regulation and bureaucratic policies are needed, but are not sufficient. We also need, and are seeing, new communications manners - ways of behaving that go beyond the purely legal and merely formal. It is not possible to legislate everything. Much social order is left to voluntary compliance with informai understandings, and this is particularly the case with individual interactions [3].

In what follows I offèr examples of situations which require new telecommunications manners, indicate what it is that has changed to require this, and identify some principles which are likely to underlie the standards that will appear. The paper is both scientific and normative. It seeks to contribute to our understanding of what is happening and to offer guidance about what type of norms should emerge.

What's wrong with this behavior?

Consider the following examples:

*you spends the entire flight in loud animated telephone conversations.

These diverse examples vary from serious harm to minor inconvenience. In some cases the harm is to a person's dignity or psychological well-being and in others to their material or strategic interests. The more serious violations certainly call for legal remedies. But here I wish to note that common to all of them is the need for new ways of behaving in the face of a lack of regard for the other.

These examples make it clear that recent changes in communications technology require new etiquettes. We need to better specify the conditions under which new communications technologies are appropriately used and the criteria for defining transgressions. This involvescultural definitions and expectations. While there are entire academic industries devoted to charting the appearance of new laws, there is little academic attention to the appearance of new manners [4].

What's new?

Traditionally telecommunications consisted of a transitory dialogue in real time between two persons. When the telephone first appeared the major issue of manners involved the conditions and ways in which it was appropriate for a caller to remotely intrude into another's life[5]. For example, was it appropriate to call someone you had not been formally introduced to? When the telephone came to be seen as an instrument for social in addition to business purposes, questions of manners included the proper way to begin a conversation (AT&T advised against the informal 'hello'); whether it was appropriate to extend a social invitation by telephone rather than by letter or messenger; whether it was appropriate to have a servant dial (thus requiring the called party to wait for the servant to bring the caller to the line); the importance of calling before a visit; limiting the duration of telephone conversations and the importance of not using the telephone for idle chatter.

The inequality in the relationship which permitted the caller to know what number he or she was calling and why, and to be able to choose the time of the call and the opening lines of the conversation, led to a series of taken-for-granted conventions: 'May I call you at home?', 'Is this a good time to talk?', 'I'm sorry to bother you,' or 'I'll just take a few minutes.' When a telephone number was not known, a polite request for it (perhaps accompanied by giving up of the requester's number as well) helped give the intrusion of a ringing telephone the appearance of being consensual, or at least tolerated by the person called. Middle-class standards of speech involving quiet voices and clearly enunciated words were urged on telephone users. In a happy overlap of fashion and function, 'sweet and low' tones were believed to be the most audible. Early telephone companies (with some judicial support) even cut off telephone service to those who used 'improper or vulgar language'[6].

Before direct dialing emerged in the 1920s when calls had to go through an operator, manners and company policies developed to restrict the telephone operator's use of her knowledge of who was talking to whom and what was said.

Manners also emerged around party lines, such as limiting the duration of a call and not listening to others' conversations. One of the delights of childhood in the 1940s was being able to eavesdrop on the party line. Extension telephones raise some of the same issues.

Several decades of research on telephone communication have identified other issues also enveloped in a normative web of etiquette such as interruptions, turn taking, topic changes and endings[7].

Current and emerging technologies come with many rough edgesin need of the sandpaper of manners. We are now facing a period equivalent in some ways to the introduction of the telephone. The manners that have emerged around telecommunications over the last century for the most part consisted of forms to facilitate interaction absent face-to-face cues. With the expansion in forms of electronic communication (many without even the nuances that a voice cancommunicate), such forms continue to be needed. But in addition the new communications technologies appear to offer increased potentialsfor harming the other- whether materially or psychologically - absent appropriate standards.

New opportunities and temptations for deception and rudeness are provided by technologies that offer remote access and anonymity. The absence of visual or auditory cues makes it easier to conceal, deceive and manipulate. The mechanically distanced nature of the communication (eg the isolated individual sending messages at a computer terminal or responding to the requests of an electronic voice) may make it hard to remember that there is (or will eventually be) a human being at the other end. The emotionless quality of the medium, the invisibility of the other and the anonymity of the sender do not seem conducive to civility. The greater expense of cellular calls may also lead to interruptions and curt conversations.

In limiting and channeling response possibilities, the format of the new technologies may alter communication patterns by lessening reciprocal social skills and weakening the ability to express nuance and complexity. This may be welcomed by shy or stigmatized persons uncomfortable with face-to-face and real-time interaction. A recent cartoon by Piraro illustrates this in showing a man on the telephone saying, 'Oh! Sheldon . . . I didn't know you were home, I was hoping to get your machine . . . I'll call back later.' Masking elements of identity such as gender and race may also eliminate some forms of discrimination and dominance. (A recent cartoon showing one dog demonstrating email to another contains the line 'and on the Internet no one knows you are a dog'.) Using a cellular telephone in public where others can hear you may introduce greater restraint into what is said (eg not yelling or swearing).

Emotional needs may go unfulfilled given the impersonality, standardization and automatization of the technology. This is suggested by a New Yorker cartoon showing two men having lunch. In reaching out and touching the other's hand, one of the men says 'Trust me, Mort - no electronic communications superhighway, no matter how vast and sophisticated, will ever replace the art of the smooze.'

Of course the technology also offers new opportunities for sociability and integration. Sometimes email leads to telephone conversations which in turn lead to what is called F2F (face-to-face) meetings and even occasionally to marriage. Yet the technology may also blur the line between genuine and faked intimacy. The immediacy of the new forms undercuts formalism. Its egalitarianism may be welcomed. Yet if anyone can easily reach anyone else in a seemingly personal way, what is left to set off communications that in fact are personal? This pseudo-intimacy can debase communication.

There is a misguided academic debate about whether technology creates culture or culture creates technology. The fact that the technology was designed by historically located humans does not eliminate the fact that it

has properties and creates contexts which persons must subsequently respond to. Without denying the powerful role of culture in shaping the kinds of technologies that have appeared, we can identify characteristics of the new communications technologies which require new manners. A number of factors separate new forms of telecommunication from old fixed location telephone communications.

Telecommunications today often consist of monologues involving machine-to-person, person-to-machine or machine-to-machine messages. They may involve computer-simulated voices and electronic freeze-dried messages to be drawn upon at the recipient's leisure. The ratio of immediate co-present communication declines relative to that which is machine mediated. A greater number of anonymous messages is possible. Talking out loud to another person who is not there, which in the past might have been seen as a sign of mental illness, is gradually becoming an expected social grace.

When persons communicate in real time there can be multiple parties to the communication, not just basic dyads. Conference calls and speaker phones, for example, complicate issues of iriterruptions, turn taking and endings. The greater difficulty in knowing who said what increases the risk of misattributions, though also perhaps of anonymity.

There is increased communications inequality such that one party may have much more powerful tools than the other. The role of the telephone as an egalitarian device permitting anyone to communicate with anyone else, regardless of social location, is changing. Traditionally a telephone was a telephone and that was that! To be sure there were choices - but these were largely symbolic, involving matters of style or color. Whether you had a basic black telephone or a turquoise princess telephone, the service remained the same. Ease of communication is highly valued in our society and is increasingly seen as something that everyone, regardless of circumstances, is entitled to (note government programs to subsidize telelphone service for the poor). But the array of current options is changing this. Recent innovations offer clear advantages to the sophisticated user able to afford them. But with this comes increased inequality and risks of misuse. The playing field is less level. This provides new opportunities for the abuse of power, absent the self-restraint on the part of privileged telcommunicators that manners can provide.

In some ways there appears to be a decrease in communicative autonomy for the average person, such that - absent the taking of special precautions - (a) it becomes more difficult to prevent communications from reaching us, (b) it is more difficult to protect the privacy and confidentiality of our communications, and (c) there is an increased ability to impose external costs upon parties to a communication without their direct permission (eg tying up a fax machine, capturing an unlisted number using Caller-ID, calling someone with a cellular telephone who must pay for the call). However, such generalizations must be approached cautiously since one person's autonomy may be another's restriction and we alternate in the roles we play as senders and receivers of communication.

Previously there were greater ecological limits on unwanted telecommunications. For example, it was necessary to individually dial a telephone number. But with automated dialing machines, email and voice mail it becomes possible to reach an enormous number of persons with minimal effort and cost, and in ways that are more intrusive than mass mailings. The sender need not observe the resource limitations previously imposed. The increased ease of sending information creates new burdens of being flooded with unwanted information, and this can only be known once it has been minimally attendéd to. That of course takes the recipient's time. For some persons it may also raise questionsabout when a response (even if only an expression of disinterest) is appropriate. As a collegue said, 'Am I really supposed to respond to 56 email messages on Monday morning?'

*There is increased use of communications devices which are vulnerable to interception by third parties (absent special protections such as encryption).*These may be sent as radio transmissions via cordless and cellular telephones or through archival media such as email and voice mail. The latter create records, and absent appropriate precautions it may be possible for outsiders to intercept them, whether directly or by accessing the storage records kept by many email systems. While not secret, many persons seem unaware of how vulnerable their communications are.

It is easier to secretly record communications. Consider, for example, miniature voice-activated tape recorders, tiny radio transmitters, video cameras hidden inside everyday objects such as teddy bears and brief-cases, or answering machines and telephone attachments that permit silent recording.

There is greater ignorance about what technology the other party to the communication might be using and a lack of certainty even when assurances are given by that party. 'Yes, I have you on the speaker phone for convenience, but no one else is in the room.' 'Of course I am not recording this.' But are these disavowals really true? The new opportunities for bad manners offered by the technology may be compounded by Iying.

There are increased possibilities to deceive. We cannot be certain that individuals are being honest about what devices they are using. With call forwarding and conferencing we may not know where the other party to a conversation is; even if we initiated the call. Nor can we be sure that the signals and messages received are authentic and that persons are who they claim to be[8]. There are of course the symbolically interesting fake toy car phone~s and the conspicuous wearing of beepers that are inoperable. But beyond these, what should we make of devices for disguising identity - voice-changing telephones which, to quote an advertisement, offer 'a voice even your mother won't recognize'. Using digital signal processing, a telephone is available which offers 16 different voices, permitting shifts such as from a female to a male or an adult to a child's voice.

There are new possibilities for self-initiated interruptions. A machine with 15 simulated sounds such as babies crying, sirens and a doorbell ringing is marketed as a way of permitting individuals to politely disengage from a telephone conversation. In a related example, if you have two telephones and call waiting, is it wrong to call yourself from the second telephone in order to have an excuse to get off the first (the party spoken to being unaware that the call waiting is actually from t you)? Perhaps an element of good manners is present, since one does t not want to risk hurting the other's feelings by saying 'I don't want to talk to you.' Yet this comes at a cost of Iying, even if for a socially constructive purpose. Of course non-technical means are always avail` able such as hanging up the telephone while you are talking. Since people do not hang up on themselves, the other party is likely to think it was a mechanical failure.

Answering machines, call waiting and speaker phones

Let us consider these issues in more detail by considering answering machines, call waiting and speaker phones. The ubiquitous answering machine nicely illustrates a number of issues involving telecommunications and manners. From one standpoint it prevents certain kinds of bad manners. Thus by its design you know when it is in use. You also can choose to ignore it by hanging up. Individuals are not forced to own one and if they do they can turn it off.

Yet other issues are present. The caller cannot be sure if the device is being used to screen calls, nor, with a recording made of the message, who might hear it. Issues of manners apply to the person called, as well as the caller.

The answering machine (along with call waiting) offers a new currency of access with which to reward and punish. When leaving a message on a machine, is it disturbingly deceptive or honorably self-protective to be interrupted by the person called who says 'Hi, I'm here'? Should persons calling feel honored because they were deemed worthy of being spoken to (they passed the screening test), or should they be put off because they were led to believe no one was there? Is it better if the message says, 'We can't come to the phone right now' or 'I can't take your call right now' rather than the bold-faced lie involved in saying 'No one is here to answer the phone now'? Of course there are graceful ways out such as by saying, 'Wow! I'm glad I caught you, I just came in' or 'Sorry, I haven't had a chance to change the message.'

If the caller does not believe the message this can lead to responses such as 'I know you are there. Come on, pick up the phone.' If this assumption is wrong (eg the called person really was not home) the caller appears foolish and has wrongly impugned the other's motives.

If the caller is left only with the answering machine message, is it rude to hang up without leaving a message after listening to the recorded message? If so, is it suffficient to simply report the fact that you called, or should the purpose of the call be revealed as well? (With unprotected Caller-ID the question is moot since the time of the call and number of the caller are automatically recorded. So too with a service called 'last call return' which permits you to automatically connect with the last person who called.) In such cases is it presumptuous and intrusive, or expected and thoughtful, for the person called to return your call on the assumption that you still wish to speak with them?

You are visiting with a friend who, out of courtesy or indifference, ignores a ringing telephone. An answering machine with the volume on loud picks it up. Your conversation is not only interrupted, but you are embarrassed in hearing a personal message that the caller assumed would be private. Has the owner of the machine shown bad manners to both you and the caller (who wrongly assumed that no one was home to hear the message)? Callers with confidential (eg a doctor's diagnoses or advice) or personal messages should not leave messages unless they are absolutely certain no one but the intended party will hear the message. Given the contingencies of interaction and the vulnerabilities of technology, such certainty is hard to come by.

Some similiar issues apply when, after being out with friends, you return to their house and in your presence they immediately listen to their messages. Persons who remotely retrieve their answering machine messages via a cordless or cellular car phone also broadcast the message in ways the person who called probably did not anticipate.

While of a different order, communications technologies which go beyond being user friendly to being user enticing offer new possibilities for mistakes and embarrassment for the naive or incompetant user. The abundant stories (only some of which are apocryphal) of wrongly received email, voice mail and answering machine messages attest to this. The technology offers rich possibilities for megaphonic degradation. There even seem to be archtypical forms of this: the vitriolic complaint about the boss which is mistakenly sent to the boss, the negative confidential evaluation of an assistant professor that is erroneously sent to everyone on the university's email system, and the unintentionally amplified love message. The cartoon character 'Cathy' nicely captures this in her recollection of a Valentine's greeting gone awry: '[Remember] the year I called

Irving's office and the sultry poem I thought I was leaving on his voice mail got broadcast through the entire building's speaker system???!'

Is it bad manners to call someone you do not know and have no desire to talk to, just to hear the great (and often changed) message on their machine? Even if one is able to disengage before it appears as a tape recorded hang-up, the telephone line is busy while the message is being heard. For some persons clever messages are a source of self-expression and creativity. Are persons who offer clever messages creating an attractive nuisance, or can they legitimately take offence at the large number of hang-ups on their machines?

Have you ever called someone only to hear, 'Sorry, mailbox is full'? Does the caller have an obligation not to use up all the space on an answering machine? Many machines are designed to cut the message off after several minutes (sometimes giving you a 15-second warning). But the machine does not control for persons who keep calling back in order to leave a longer message. Is it rude to call back and do this (one friend missed some important calls because a caller redialed his voice mail line five times, at two minutes each, to leave a lengthy message). Should callers be informed of how much time they have? Should they limit messages to the time allotted? Or is it techno-coercion to limit callers to short messages, when there is the option for lengthier ones? Do owners of such machines have an obligation to purchase them with sufficient space, or to check them frequently so they do not get filled up?

If it is appropriate for persons with answering machines and faxes to be sure there is usable tape or paper in them, is it inconsiderate of them not to turn their machine on? Have you ever called someone to leave a message, only to get a message saying you cannot leave them a message, but can write to them? What of those who choose not even to have the wonders of modern telecommunications? Do they have space and peace that the rest of us lack? In this day and age is it selfish and antisocial not to have a telephone, answering machine, email or pager if one can afford it?

Given the public nature of a telephone, care must be also taken with the nature of the message inviting you to leave a message. It should be general and understandable by those who do not belong to your tribe. To offer too long a message tries the caller's patience, while to say nothing or to offer the cryptic 'You know what to do' may appear brusque and may even be dysfunctional for those who need a directive about what to do. The fake gushy sentimentality of 'We are really sorry we missed your call and are eager to talk to you' also does not ring true. What if the caller is a bill collector or dialed a wrong number? In amulticultural environment should messages be in several languages or genres? If so, which language should come first? Should this be regularly altered so as not to offend?

The length and probably the number of wrongly addressed messages have significantly increased with the spread of answering machines, voice mail and email which permit one-way communications in frozen time. With a traditional telephone with a called person at the other end of the line, the caller can readily determine the error and politely disengage. But with an answering machine that gives neither a name nor a number, that screening does not occur. And when automated dialers are used, even the clues that a human caller would use to infer a wrong number are irrelevant and the machine cannot meaningfully apologize. Sometimes this results in absurd juxtapositions such as calls to a hospice to sell health insurance or to a prison to sell 'get-away' vacations. The uncoupling of a 'live' person from the voice can also result in poignant moments in which the cheery, optimistic voice is that of a recently deceased person (as in the film *Shortcuts).*

Automated bill collectors that reach the wrong number not only intrude into your home and use your technology, but they sometimes do damage to the privacy of the person they are seeking to reach. Consider a

message such as the following left on an accquaintance's machine: 'Hello, I have an important message for--[not my friend~. On June 2, 1991 Dr--of Health Care Associates treated you for an infectious disease. The bill of $89 has not been paid.' Perhaps the bill was not paid because the provider had the wrong address as well.

Some more sophisticated systems at least say, 'If you are [name of person they seek], please press 1 now.' The synthetic voice then warns you that listening to this message is an invasion of privacy and if you really are not the person the message is intended for you will be in serious trouble. While good manners require not pressing 1 if you are not that person, the tone of such messages is a bit unsettling. After all, it is your telephone they have called. This is not unlike walking by an open window and seeing something of interest inside. The visual sight is in a sense thrust upon ypu, even if it is not intended for you. This is very different from using binoculars from far away to look in a window. Intermediate is the rationale used by those with scanners who would not wiretap because it is illegal, but who feel comfortable listening to radio-transmitted conversations because they are also in a sense thrust into one's presence. But in this case special means are needed to access the communication and this sets it apart from looking in the window without binoculars.

Email, with its ease of transmission and the likelihood that it will be stored until the addressee gets to it, is in some ways like an answering machine. The email of a colleague who deals with sensitive personnel issues often goes to another person with the same name (although a different middle initial). The person receiving his mail has told him, 'I really think that this is material I should not be reading.' But of course he paradoxically must first read the message to determine it is not for him to read. At what point should he stop? After all, he did not request the messages, they simply appeared on his screen. Although good manners require that he not proceed, the temptation is there. But as with radio transmissions from cordless and cellular telephones that can easily be received by those they are not intended for, just because they are accessible does not mean they should be used. The several hundred thousand persons who own scanners seek to intercept messages that are out there. These active measures intended to grab a communication are more objectionable than in cases where it is just thrust upon one.

The mechanical distancing quality of answering machines and the fact that a full message can be left without being disconnected by a hang-up can be an invitation to harassing messages. For example, the Jewish Defense Organization, as part of its struggle with the Ku Klux Klan, put a recording on its New York answering machine giving names and telephone numbers of reputed Klan members. The Klan mounted a counter-attack with its own message[9]. Among tactics adopted by some anti-abortion groups are picketing and jamming telephone lines of homes and workplaces. Like electronic battlefields, it is possible to imagine a war (in this case of words) between machines, with people playing a more indirect role. The words may be secondary, as in a filibuster, if the main purpose is an electronic blockade of the line. The telephone and answering machine messages offer public invitations to the most private of spaces.

Answering machine messages and responses have something in common with talking household appliances ('Add the soap, dummy') and cars. Consider a voice alarm that permits car owners to record their own messages. What kinds of message are appropriate for it? Would it be thoughtful to alter the content of the message, tone of voice, slang, and even the language, as one parks in neighborhoods with different social characteristics? Is it acceptable for the voice to swear and threaten if the sensors indicate that the car is being stolen? Is a milder message appropriate for someone who is merely leaning on the car? What obligations does the owner of the car have to nearby residents whose tranquility is disturbed at 3 am when the alarm is accidently set off by vibrations from a passing truck?[10]

Is it appropriate for the recipient of automated messages to respond with greater abandon and vulgarity than would be the case if the message was delivered by a real person with feelings? The limits on dumb machines that can never be programmed to capture reality's richness, or that m~ust lead you through a lengthy switching process, mean that *ustration will often accompany the best efforts of voice messaging systems that never let you speak to a human ('Enter your PIN number now and then press the pound sign') when you are calling to tell them you lost the number. Your anonymity and the machine's inability to retaliate further support unmannerly repsonses from humans to machines.

Call waiting

What etiquette should govern call waiting, sometimes referred to as 'call-us interruptus'? Is it always appropriate to leave the line to determine who a waiting call is from? Under what conditions would it be bad manners to interrupt a conversation? (A Caller-ID device could be helpful here.) What message is symbolically communicated by interrupting a current call?

If one does not wish to ignore the call waiting signal, what should be said to the party you are speaking with? It is best to apologize for the interruption and ask permission to leave - 'I'm sorry, may I take this?', as against- 'I'm sorry, I have to take this' or, worse, 'I have to take this'. On exiting, is it appropriate to say, 'I am expecting an important [long distance?] call and if I don't come back on in 30 seconds please hang up'? Will the person's feelings be hurt? What if the stated reason for disengaging is not true and the person simply wishes to end the current call? Should you always come back on the line, even if only to say you cannot continue to talk? And what is a decent amount of time to stay away? How long can the other person be left dangling on the line?

What happens if the initial line is inadvertently disconnected? Does the obligation to call back lie with the person who responded to the call waiting signal? Similarly, if the called party chooses to continue with the call in progress, after informing the activator of call waiting, who has the obligation to call back- the person who placed the call, or the caller who chose not to be available to receive the call?

If, rather than call waiting, an individual has two telephone lines and while the first is in use and the second telephone rings, the first party often says, 'Do you want to get that?' This seems less likely to happen than with one telephone with call waiting. Why? First, the individual with two lines may be showing respect for the other party by not suggesting an exit. They in turn may politely acknowledge your deference by giving you permission to answer it. Second, the ring of the telephone is somehow more incessant and nagging than is the soft click.

If you ignore the call waiting signal, is that then inconsiderate to the person trying to reach you? The person may be upset at your failure to respond because they know you have an answering machine and assume that if the machine does not pick up it is because your telephone is in use and you are ignoring the second call.

Speaker phones

What manners should govern the use of speaker phones? Should the other person always be informed that the broadcast device is in use? If so, is it enough just to say, 'I've got you on the speaker phone?' Should a further step be taken and the person's permission be asked? And then does it matter if one says, 'May I use a speaker phone?' as against, 'You don't mind if I switch to the speaker phone, do you?' before the device is used?

Are there times when it would be inappropriate to use a speaker phone? The speaker phone may be more convenient, but is it also more impersonal than talking directly into the phone? Does the added physical distancing serve as a barrier or buffer that makes the conversation less intimate? Should the other person's needs be considered in realizing that the sound may not be as clear? Is something symbolic being communicated about how this converstaion is viewed by the person using the speaker phone? Does the person using the speaker phone have an obligation to inform the other party whenever someone enters or leaves the room or what they are doing that requires two freehands? Does the user have the obligation to consider if there are others nearby (but not in the room) who will also hear the conversation? The issue here is not only the privacy of the communication, but thrusting it upon the solitude of others who have no interest in being disturbed.

Some principles to guide mannerly telecommunications

Given the rapidity of change and the immense variability in communication contexts, there are no universal rules. Yet without denying the needto be sensitive to local subcultures and specific contexts, I think there are some core societal principles that can help define communications etiquette for the new technologies. These are offered as guidelines intended to inform discussion, rather than as rigid rules. They may conflict and their meaning and applicability are subject to interpretation. These principles affirm respect for the dignity of the other person and imply a golden rule - reciprocity. They involve politeness, honesty, trust and the maximization of choice.

The principles are offered as empirical predictions and as normative directives. I think research would identify them as the background assumptions that inform how people respond to new communications technologies. In confronting the examples given at the beginning of this paper, many persons experience consternation and even outrage. They feel something is not quite right, but just what it is can be difficult to define. I suggest that underlying such feelings is a violation of one or more of these principles. Even if they are not present, I think they *should* inform the evolution of manners.

(l) Respect social boundaries and spaces (intrusions and invasions).

(2) Inform people of the capabilities and risks involved in the communication technology being used (informed communication).

(3) Do not impose costs on a party to a communication that they are unaware of or cannot control (externalities).

(4) Do not deceive (authenticity).

(5) Respect confidentiality (discretion).

(6) Use communication technologies in ways that respect the intentions of the communicator(s); for instance, the only parties having access to a communication (absent informed consent) should be those directly engaged in it. Do not consume communications erroneously sent to you beyond what is required to identify the mistake (respect intentions).

(7) Communications are jointly owned by those who are parties to them (joint ownership) [11].

(8) Communications should not be recorded without the knowledge and consent of the parties involved (reproductive rights).

(9) If a consensual record is made it should be accurate (validity).

(10) The recipient possessing technologies such as a telephone, fax or computer invites communication but is under no obligation to sustain or respond to it once it has been determined to be unwanted (receptivity).

(11) The initiator of the communication must respect the recipient's desire not to sustain the communication (non-coercion).

(12) An unsuccessful effort to reach another party carries no obligation to leave a record of the attempt (non-accountability regarding attempts).

(13) Request another co-present person's permission to engage in a conversation that they are not a direct party to (eg use of a car phone with a passenger present) (politeness).

(14) Request permission (and offer an apology?) for interrupting (leaving) a communication (continuity).

(15) Communicate politely and in good taste (civility).

Survival tactics

'Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell.

I took thee for thy better~

- Hamlet on stabbing Polonius for eavesdropping

Finally, one need not (and indeed should not) be dependent only on others voluntarily showing good manners, nor can we wait for manners to evolve to protect us. A variety of self-protective actions are in order. As consumers we have choices!

The first choice, although one not without costs, is to reject a technology or service. Unless it clearly meets your needs, 'just say no!' Even if you say yes, the technology does not have to be used all the time. For example telephones do not have to be answered, nor do faxes or answering machines always have to be left on. With a little practice one can even learn to ignore the call-waiting click.

There is an unbecoming Pavlovian conditioning in the way humans automatically respond to a ringing telephone, regardless of what they are doing. The bedroom scene in the film *Mall* with Woody Allen's and Bette Midler's telephone lines intermittently ringing wonderfully captures this.

Remembering to turn the volume down on a living room baby monitor or answering machine can avoid embarrassment when guests are present.

Conversational ploys such as asking a telephone solicitor for *their* home number so you can call them back at a time that is more convenient for you can be used. This is more polite than using a device which emits a loud siren in their ear. It is also good for the soul and may even reduce call-backs. Single persons who receive solicitations for a non-existent spouse may answer saying, 'Didn't you hear? She is dead.' Another response is to take literally the telemarketer's psuedo*gemeinschaft* ritual opening, 'How are you today?' by offering a catalogue of horrors: 'I'm really terrible, I have the flu, I lost my job, my partner walked out on me, my dog died . . .'

One can also request that one's name and number be removed from a direct marketer's lists. Being sure to give out and receive correct addresses and numbers, and taking care in accessing them, can avoid the wrong numbers which are frustrating to both parties.

Save very personal and confidential exchanges for face-to-face or mailed exchanges. Do not say anything over the telephone or in a fax that you would not mind being overheard by others.

Finally, technologies can be developed that deny individuals the opportunity to show bad manners, just as they are now developed (although not necessarily intentionally) to do the opposite. Technologies should be designed to increase choice and to give recipients warnings. Enhancing the equity which already adheres in the idea of reciprocal communication ought to be taken as a design goal. The enhancement of control and expanded opportunities for all parties to a communication should be foremost.

A nice engineering effort devoted to this end can be seen in the optical active badge, a location-communications system being tested by the Olivetti company. The system is egalitarian. Anyone on it can track anyone else. All users can know who is monitoring their whereabouts because such information is logged and recorded. Individuals can opt out of the system permanently or temporarilly by putting their badge in a drawer or turning it upside down. The system's video capability is recriprocal. If a participant uses the video capability to look over your office, an image of the surveyor appears on the screen. You cannot observe without being observed[12].

Mechanical censorship might give a boost to self-censorship through the development of software which emits warning sounds and lights (and could even shut down the system) when certain offensive words and phrases are used. More realistic are the variety of countertechnologies to screen calls and faxes. Encryption is a last resort. In Europe some telephones have a warning light that goes on if an extension is picked up and some simply go dead. Choosing the blocking option for Caller-ID where it is available, or a service that masks your number, is another option. Some fax machines keep a record of messages even when the paper has run

out. Centrally located, publicly accessible fax machines and printers that faithfully disgorge their products for anyone to see can be designed only to generate documents when the addressee is at hand. Automated dialers can be programmed to ask for verification of the identity of the respondent before they proceed to communicate. If one is to believe the advertisements (which might not be wise), it might even eventually be possible to deal with electronic deception by using a voice stress analyzer which - it is said can tell if someone is telling the truth by remotely analyzing micro tremors in the voice. Some pagers vibrate when a message has been received, rather than emitting a sound for all to hear. Computer keyboards to be used in public settings can be designed to operate more silently.

A combination of hardware, software and 'humanware' (ie manners) must be evoked to balance the conflicting interests and values amidst the new electronic environment so as to responsibly minimize constraints and maximize freedoms.

Cybernews Volume 1, numéro 1 (hiver 1995)

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[1] This draws on a paper delivered at the 1993 Ccnference on Computers, Privacy and Civil Liberties, San Francisco, CA. Some of the material will eventually appear in Marx, G T *Windows into the Soul: Surveillance and Society in an Age of High Technology* American Sociological Association-Duke University Jensen lectures. I am grateful to the Rockefeller Center in Bellagio where work on the paper was begun and to Murray Davis, Rolf Kjolseth, Richard Leo, Adam Seligman and Jeff Smith for comments.

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[3] Whether and when legislation and tough sanctions are to be preferred is an important issue. Hard-headed social analysts with a cynical view of human nature generally disparage moral appeals and calls for good manners, absent strong sanctions for violations. But for a large proportion of the population such moral education is very significant. Virtue is often its own reward, particularly when the temptations of its opposite are minimal.

[4] In the broadest sense manners are about showing respect for the other s personhood. Demonstrating bad manners can communicate a view of the other person as an object to be manipulated and treated as a means to your end (however noble or ignoble). The assessment of manners depends on the context and on intentions, and not on the behavior or the technology as such. Codified rules usually come with formal sanctions. But with manners the sanction is informal and involves viewing the violator as rude or socially incompetent. Most conformity with manners is unreflective and seemingly natural. Yet to the extent that it involves calculation, what is at stake is the desire to create a good impression and to have others think well of us. To show good manners affirms social solidarity. It communicates something about how the person involved in the interaction views himself or herself, as well as the other person. Major sociological statements about manners include Elias, N *The History of Manners* Pantheon, New York (1978) and Goffman, E On the nature of deference and demeanor *American Anthropologist June*1956 58

[5] Marvin, C *When Old Technologies Were New* Oxford University Press, New York (1988); Katz, *J* Caller-lD, privacy and social process *Telcommunications Policy* 199014 (5) 372-411; Fischer, C*America Calling* University of California Press, Berkeley, CA (1993).

[6] Marvin *ibid*

[7] Hopper, R *Telephone Conversation* University of Indiana Press, Bloomington, IN (1992); Schegloff, EA Identification and recognition in telephone conversation openings in Psathas, G (ed) *Everyday Language* Irvington, New York (1979).

[8] The possibilities for deception in a computer-dominated environment are rich and in some cases a testimony to the enduring power ot the human spirit in the face of the machine; unfortunately, in many cases the testimony is to cleverness in the service of immorality: Marx, G Fraudulent identification and biography in Altheide, D, et *al,* New *Directions*in the *Study of Law and Social Justice* Plenum, New York (1990).

[9] New *York* Times 1 June 1992.

[10] This is the classic threshold issue for automated alarms that must rely on indirect measures (rather than the direct measures that humans use). To set the standard too low will mean violations and to set it too high will mean false alarms. It also relates to the broader issue of machines that utter sounds. We tend to take for granted the skill involved in differentiating the increasing number of beeps, horns and buzzers that populate our auditory environment (eg differentiating between the sounds from microwave ovens, doorbells, faxes, telephones, pagers, answering machines, car warning sounds, and the end of washing machine and dishwasher cycles).

[11] This is reminiscent of a Groucho Marx joke in which he asks if his half-Jewish child could go swimming in a discriminatory country club, and is told, yes, but only up to the waist. One might argue that you are entitled to record and sell your part of a transaction (assuming you have a video and audio machine that only records you or edits the other out), yet because even your behavior is likely to be in response to the other person s, this solution does not hold any better here than it did for Marx.

[12] While it is not considered bad manners to opt out, it is seen as rude to take the badge off to leave it face up on a desk, since this sends a signal presumably implying that the individual is present at his or her desk. A person seeking the individual may then walk a distance to converse with them only to find the badge, not the person.

 ISSN 1201-7302
