

# CMPM 202 W2018

## Computational Media Research

### Readings – 1/20

Read the assigned texts:

Psychopolitics, Byung-Chul Han (chapters 11)  
Permanent Record, Edward Snowden (chapters 17-21, 23-25)

Also, read at least one of the links from <https://www.lawfareblog.com/snowden-revelations> and be able to summarize the “revelation” in class.

Add your response to the Google Team Drive “CMPM 202 W2020 - Reading Responses” by creating a Google Doc titled “W3\_[your name]” before Monday at 9pm.

Respond to the ideas raised in each of the texts. (I've listed some questions below to guide your response.) Also, make sure to identify any terms or concepts that you aren't familiar with so that we can discuss them in class. Review your classmates' responses before Tuesday's class and be prepared to discuss the articles. This means: a) have at least one point prepared if called on in class, b) find one or more points in one your classmates' responses that you disagree with or don't understand, and c) write down any terms or concepts that you find to be interesting or confusing.

### Questions:

- At the start of chapter 17 (and in many other places in the book), Snowden describes the moral dilemma related to his role in invading the privacy of others. Here he writes “I decided that it was best to live in denial and make some money”, and then explains that he was able to deal with “contradictory thoughts” by telling himself that he was making life “better for the people I loved”. What dilemmas have you encountered (as a researcher, a worker, a person)? How did you work through it? Is the very act of thinking affected when you think you are being watched or judged?

- New technology is often promoted as supporting, augmenting, liberating. What is your take on Snowden's and Han's questioning of cloud computing, the quantified self, the internet-of-things, social media? How do they find these technologies problematic? Is it an issue that we are “paying for the privilege” of having our data monitored and monetized? Even if so, don't the benefits outweigh the potential issues?

- How is the internet different from what it could be? From what Snowden describes nostalgically when he was growing up? From what Tim Berners-Lee first envisioned? From what Vannevar Bush speculated it would be? From what Jaron Lanier thinks it should be? Why is it different?

- Snowden writes: “A world in which every law is always enforced would be a world in which everyone was a criminal”. Do you agree? How does Snowden describe the relationships between law and technology? Why shouldn't the law be carried out “pre-emptively”? Why would this lead to an “intolerable” society? Why does power, in Snowden's view, require interpretation? Why does Snowden think that the job of law enforcement should be made as difficult as possible?

- Discuss this quote (from Chapter 18): “saying that you don’t care about privacy because you have nothing to hide is no different from saying you don’t care about freedom of speech because you have nothing to say.”
- Why does Han believe that increasing our ability to collect data perverts Enlightenment values and leads to “barbarism” and “nihilism” and “the end of freedom”?
- Explain what Han means when he differentiates between counting, accounting, recounting. How is the knowledge of “correlations and additions” generated by “Big Data” different from the “narrative form of knowledge” generated by “theoretical thinking”? Why is Big Data blind to the event and blind to the future?