The Whole World Is Watching

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Where do your moral standards and ethics sit when the whole world is watching? As technology exponentially advances on a daily basis we are becoming increasingly interconnected. Whether it's Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare, YouTube, or any of the various social applications, the world is at our fingertips, and everybody else's, as we often seem to forget. These concepts are not new — hackers and internet pirates have been around as long as the internet has, and as security has advanced, so have they. The difference, now, is that anybody who goes online is capable of privacy invasion or technological sleuthing. 'Trolling' has even been coined a term regarding folks that cruise social profiles for information.

The real question here is: Where do we draw the line? Or can we? It is undeniable that the internet is simultaneously inhibiting and enhancing our lives. I am a huge advocate for transparency, but where is the line between the right to know and our depraved need to gossip, troll, or even stalk?

This video was recently posted on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRNFfPZh5qI&feature=related [1] (caution: there is some very strong language used).

This woman is now being detained in London for a "racially aggravated public order offence," but she wasn't arrested until after the YouTube video received over 11 million views. Now, it is obvious that this woman was out of line, rude, bigoted, and deserves some form of punishment. Or does she? Would this offense have been diluted once the passengers left the tram if not for YouTube? Would the authorities have taken action or just given her a stern reprimand? Free speech versus hate-speech. Regardless, YouTube has certainly played a part in the arrest of this woman.

Without instant social connection, this situation may have only gone over as head-

shaking dinner conversation among the trains passengers. Instead, this woman is in jail over the holidays for being obnoxious and rude. Regardless of opinion surrounding her situation, it is undeniable that there is always a chance somebody is watching — now, more than ever.

So where do our moral implications direct this new technology? Where are the ethical standards to exposure, and, beyond that, what is done about certain acts or events? Rather than thrusting ourselves into the spotlight, the spotlight has been thrust upon everyone.

I don't have an answer to these questions, but rather a hope. As a forward-thinking person, I hope that this sudden transparency that everybody faces should help to keep us honest and moral, though in this situation she was being more honest about her opinions than she'd ever like to admit. I don't necessarily like the possibility of everything I do, say, and express being available to everybody, but exposure does keep us honest, publically and privately.

The true turn-of-the-screw will occur when businesses and corporations are exposed in similar fashions. This has already started to occur, and incidences like the above video are evidence that it will only grow.

As with everything, there are moral issues when it comes down to context — a segment of video taken without the circumstance of an entire situation. This can't be helped and journalists have been guilty of it for years, but exposure will open more eyes to truth than falsified news tidbits can diminish.

What's your take? Email chris.fox@advantagemedia.com *[2] or comment below.*

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