Toulmin's Moral Reasoning Model Applied To Ethical Internet Choices: A Means For Exercising Ethical Technology Leadership

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Abstract: Leading our school aged children toward purposeful activity on the Internet requires more than pure logic or rational-technical considerations. Value judgments about the perils that can be encountered on the Internet must be considered in balance with the benefits of providing the technology to students, teachers, administrators, parents and school boardx. This paper demonstrates the Toulmin model applied as a specific problem solving approach for administrators who are considering connecting their schools to the Internet. The article will be of general interest for anyone interested in the methodology of moral decision making. Using moral reasoning, we explore a proposal to connect the school to the Internet. We observe the Internet in schools today, explore various value judgments and principles, develop qualifications to the proposition and reach aconclusion about Internet connection initiatives. This specific moral decision making example leads us to conclude that while we have a duty to provide equal opportunity for our learners via technology, we also hold and are attributed by parents with a duty of care for students, where we protect them from harm. Our solution to some problems associated with the connection proposal is to connect our K-12 school to the Internet with a caveat that Grades 6 to 12 children are taught media literacy and value self-reflection skills while young children (K-5) are closely supervised during Internet transactions

Résumé: Faire en sorte que nos enfants d'âge scolaire puissent avoir des activités significatives sur l'Internet demande plus que la pure logique et des considérations technico-rationnelles. Les jugements de valeur sur les dangers se retrouvant sur l'Intemet doivent être évalués en fonction des avantages que procure cette technologie aux élèves, enseignants, administrateurs, parents et aux conseils scolaires. Cet article veut montrer l'utilité du modèle de Toulmin utilisé comme approche spécifique de résolution de problème pour les administrateurs qui envisagent de connecter leur école à l'Internet. Cet article intéressera tous ceux désireux de connaître une méthodologie pour la prise de décision de nature morale. Ayant recours au raisonnement moral, nous nous penchons sur la proposition de connecter notre école au réseau Internet. Premièrement nous examinons les services offerts sur l'Internet qui sont accessibles de nos jours à nos écoles, ensuite nous regardons les divers jugements de valeur fait à l'égard de l'Internet et les principes pouvant nous guider, puis nous émettons les conditions s'appliquant à la proposition de connexion de notre école à l'Internet et enfin nous concluons sur ces projets de connexion au réseau Internet. Cette décision morale particulière nous amène à tirer cette conclusion: bien que nous ayons le devoir de donner une opportunité égale aux apprenants par l'entremise de la technologie, nous avons aussi le devoir · qui nous est délégué par les parents · de prendre soin des élèves et de les protéger contre les dangers. Les problèmes que nous avions eus avec la connexion de notre école au réseau Internet provenaient du fait que nous connections une école dont les niveaux allaient de la maternelle à la douzième année. Il fallait donc prévoir une politique pour les plus vieux (de la 6 à 12 année), que nous sensibilisons aux médias et auprès desquels nous insistons sur l'importance d'acquérir une réflexion autonome; et une autre pour les plus jeunes (de la maternelle à la 5 année), que nous encadrons plus étroitement lorsqu'ils utilisent l'Internet.

Introduction

Educational leaders know when they provide students with access to Internet technology that this offers opportunities for both learning and "inappropriate communications" (Carpenter, 1996, p. 41). Inappropriate communications encompass pornography, hate literature, sexual solicitation, coercive behaviour and any other immoral acts by immoral or naive persons using an Internet computer.

In this application of moral reasoning as a decision making process we work through the proposal: to connect our school to the Internet world. This paper is not intended as definitive solution to the question itself, but rather it is one example of a moral decision making process as applied to technology. Such school technology decisions confront administrators with increasing frequency. The quality and impact of our decisions about connecting classes to the Internet could well affect the legitimacy of our leadership, and our school culture. As well, there are some large scale technical efforts currently under way to upgrade and connect school technology infrastructure of schools (Markoff, 1994, p. 45). The consideration of the approach advocated by this paper may affect these initiatives in some positive way.

The argumentative or anticipatory moral decision making process advocated by Toulmin (1957) is complementary to systematic, rational decision making models that offer leaders ways to make difficult decisions. This process could be considered the value self-reflection dimension for leaders. A decision can be reached by explaining our logic or precedents and the Toulmin model suggests that leaders develop decisions by testing the antecedents to a proposition (such as to connect to the Internet) by reviewing the proposition context, gaining more facts or information, self-reflecting on our own moral principles, making value judgments and providing qualifications for value judgments (Brown, 1990, p. 20). This process exemplifies a Kantian -type doctrine that has been reduced to a somewhat more reduced to a somewhat pragmatic method for managing propositions that leaders know will involve a conflictual decision making event.

Background

Moral decision making can involve metaphysical or analytical methodology that employ both descriptive and normative ethical thought. Immanuel Kant stated that ideally we are all rational, analytical individuals who act on the sort of policies which, if adopted by everyone, could generate a community of free and equal members, each of whom is in the process of realizing one's own purposes and the further aims of one's fellows (Ellington, 1983, p. xv). This individual freedom exists under a self-imposed law where we act according to the same rules (maxims) we would have acted upon us universally. When we describe actions in terms of our value judgments and assumptions, we engage in the moral reasoning process in Figure 1 (Toulmin, *1984,* p. *15* 1). ***Normative*** ethics involve value judgments that we make by considering social norms or commonly accepted maxims that essentially tell us how we ought to act. As leaders, normative ethical thinking

usually results in a policy or, in other words, a conclusion to a problem. This demonstrates our personal or collective beliefs concerning where we oughf to be on an issue. By contrast, descriptive ethics considers how people act (not how they ought to act but what their action is) in a situation. In the argumentative model used here to discuss Internet connection, we could say that descriptive ethics explain what is going on regarding the Internet and schools and normative ethics identify what ought to be going on (Walker, 1996. p. 283).
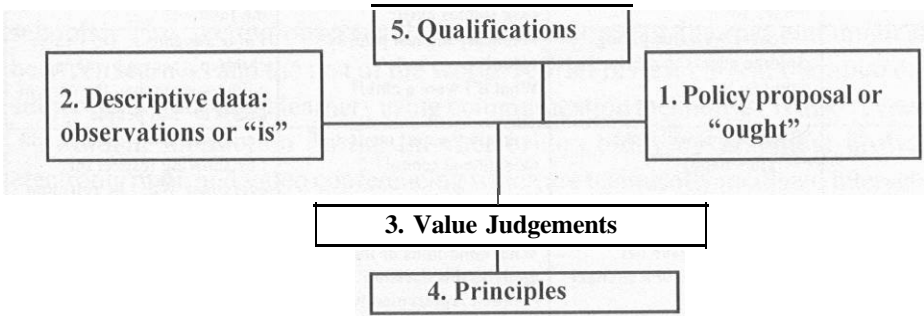
Figure 1. Toulmin's moral decision making process

We ask readers to consider the process from the role of a superintendent of education who has been told by certain constituents that schools "ought to be connected to the Internet." The argumentative nature of this decision is obvious when we recognize that not all constituents will offer the same ought – in fact some might contradict others. What principles underpin this decision to connect to the Internet? What is the descriptive nature of Internet connection to school children? What is going on out there? Individuals will take different positions on where the school *is* and where it ***ought*** to be, but these descriptive and normative positions can be identified and managed by good leadership by using the Toulmin decision making process. Note the difference between leadership thinking in this decision process (ethical reflection) compared to a purely rational management leadership process (bureaucratic-technical) that begins with funding concerns, technical advice on networks, software, hardware, policing and techno-advocacy.

Section 1: The Proposition

Toulmin's process can be mapped by a metaphoric dialogue. Table I shows the various types of stakeholder talk, leader self-talk and the moral reasoning questions (Toulmin) that might apply to the stage of discussion. The sections in this paper take the reader through the Toulmin's process as follows Table 1: Methodology

Table I
Methodology

Section	Dialogue	Leader Self-talk	Toulmin Component U.C.
1	"We want to connect all classes to the Internet."	Why?	*Conclusion* (ought): This is where our school ought to be with new technologies?
2	"All the other schools are doing it and there's grant money for it."	Is everyone really on the internet? What precedents or case studies exist?	*Observations* (is): What happens with kids on the Internet?
3	"Because we value giving children access to other cultures."	Is this my highest priority value? What if I were a child?	*Value Judgment*: Do I value children's access to other cultures more than the cons of access to "bad people"?
4	"Because this will make everyone happy."	Is this in the best interest of everyone at school?	*Principle*: If we connect, will I be showing respect for everyone? Will I be fulfilling my duty of care to all children (K-12) at school?
5	"A young girl gave her parents' address to a stranger in Chicago."	What conditions or limits apply to this decision: are all children represented well?	*Qualifications*: If we connect, then we must teach media literacy for responsible communication, and supervise the young children on the Internet. This is my duty of care
6	"We want to connect all classes to the internet."	Why?	*Conclusion* (ought): This is where our school ought to be with new technologies.

If the school board says, "We want to connect all classes in our schools to the Internet," a leadership team is faced with a request that could be interpreted as dictum or as a conclusion about where the school ought to be on the subject. As rational leaders possessing a free and rational will, we can engage in moral inquiry to test the proposition. Kant reminds us that our will is good in and of itself, so we are viewing the problem from the standpoint of the good will, endemic in the professional educator (Kant cited in Ellington, 1983, p. 393). We must focus on our action or response to the proposition and not to our behaviour as we can behave well without acting well (Brown, 1990, p. 17).

If leaders are presented with a conclusion or outcome, we first look at the conditions or environment surrounding the situation. We develop propositions which tell us where we ought to be and this end must be understood. We must evaluate the current situation or observations in context of the situation regarding, in this case, the Internet and school, our leadership, our schools and division goals -we must seek out the is of the situation to see how much it differs from the ought of the proposition.

Section 2: The Observations

In our other word dialogue (Table I), we observed the rationale for the ought proposition: "All the other schools are doing it..." We must ask ourselves if this

observation is universal. Are all schools really doing it and what is happening in those schools? What other observations about the nature of the Internet connected schools exist? What have other educational leaders decided? Leaders need to observe and research issues beyond the observations by others that lead to an ought proposal. Technical and social information exists about the character of the Internet transactions that we must obtain and understand to establish or "firm up" our own descriptive ethical context (Internet -unconnected schools), providing a foundation for us to construct our normative ethical context (Internet - connected schools). This section observes the technical nature of Internet communication between learners and the rest of the world. A brief review current literature on the subject of school-aged learners using communication technology is also reviewed

Student interaction on the Internet occurs today by graphical browsing, electronic mail, and video conferencing which are technically mediated interactions between individuals, usually not in real time except in the case of video conferencing.

Graphical browsing

Students retrieve graphical information in the form of text, pictures, sounds or movies either as a result of "searching" specifically for the particular information on the Internet or by ad hoc exploration or "surfing" to browse Internet content. Such exploration is much like browsing in a book store. Information retrieval from the Internet can be as simple as pointing and clicking a mouse. Such interactions can occur, even at the kindergarten school level, because only hand-eye coordination is necessary. While some access to Internet sites and content is restricted, an equal amount of material is completely unrestricted to browsing learners. The graphical browser has reduced the need to read or understand language, as more information can be sought by simply clicking on an attractive picture. This is a newer form of information retrieval and teachers need to know that nonreaders can explore issues such as racism and sex, simply by clicking a mouse on a burning cross, for example.

Electronic-mail

Asynchronous or synchronous "person-to-person" dialogue can occur via typewritten electronic "mail" message exchanges between anyone connected to the Internet. Electronic "mail" offers learners a chance to solve problems collaboratively and to learn from people all around the world (Harris, 1994, p. 48) while it also offers a chance to exchange home addresses, telephone numbers, financial data and credit card numbers with anyone, anywhere. Like the telephone, Electronic "mail" technology also offers the student, who has not learned how to think critically, opportunities to communicate with anyone of any moral persuasion. There is tremendous potential for victimization in this environment. There is equal potential for positive educational discourse (Harris, 1995, p. 16).

Video   conferencing

By pointing a camera at any object, learners with computers, connected to the Internet can transmit a live image of that object along with the sounds in the room to another person, or group of people connected to the Internet. Video conferencing is popular with many "meeting rooms" or chat groups on the Internet today where people meet, using the computer as a kind of video phone – but the discourse also offers the potential to create live, interactive communities of learners across geographic and cultural boundaries if it is managed well with a critical view to maximizing interaction (Kowch & Schwier, 1997).

Observations   about   Internet   messages:

Internet messages can be composed of anything that someone decides to write, photograph, film, record on video tape, speak, play on musical instruments, and subsequently post on the network. Software can be shipped and received via the Internet making the Internet a conduit for hackers or computer crime (Carpenter, 1996, p. 41). Who sends Internet messages? Anyone can ship data onto the Internet because the Internet is not regulated beyond the application of existing protections such as copyrights, patents, and libel. Businesses are quickly and increasingly engaging in Internet based marketing and customer feedback and this trend is expected to continue at a quickened pace (Churchland, 1996, p. 252). For example, the ten largest advertisers on the Internet invested over twenty five million dollars for advertising space in that environment during the first quarter of 1996 (Browning, 1996, p. 42). Only six years ago business was not investing in Internet advertising. As business presence increases, so too does the presence of our students on the Internet. An increasing number of schools are also offering students the potential to use the Internet world as a result of massive infrastructure programs (Saskatchewan Education, 1996, p. 2). In addition, some Internet messages originate from social moral minorities whose questionable morality is available to anyone finding the media:

> As with many new technologies (such as television, pagers, or cellular phones), this new medium is vulnerable to misuse. Hostile and angry individuals, sexual predators, even hard-and-soft-core pornographers already exist in this virtual community. (Frazier, 1996, p. 26)

It is clear that as leaders seek more information or observations about the descriptive ethics or *is* of any proposition, we quickly approach the stage where we are forced to make value judgments. These judgments form the normative pathway to the *ought* or to the conclusion. The problem of learners gaining access to "immoral" material is as old as printing presses, television and library censorship debates but the Internet presents some new problems to educators because the Internet is interactive, relatively new, ever-changing and unregulated.

When a student accidentally misses the target of a mouse 'click' target or

keystroke she can navigate to some shocking content that is displayed immediately, in full colour, perhaps with a movie and sound. A child who types "six" can mistakenly type 'sex' into one of the search engines. This *accidental* learner will be instantly confronted with adult graphics or "Cyberporn" that are equally or more explicit than any bookstore magazine rack (Elmer-Dewitt, 1995, p. 146). Conversely, intentional student communication can lead to "humanitarian, multicultural, action-oriented telecommunications projects" that are a tremendous learning experience (Harris, 1994, p. 32). The same intentional communication can lead to students' exploration of racist views, violence, immoral individuals and all forms of unethical representation (Frazier, 1996, p. 26). Examples of tragedies resulting from high school students building bombs using information from the internet are well-known. Even with technological gatekeepers on school systems, Internet communication can be initiated by students at home, from a friend's house or at commercial Internet sites. How do leaders handle these issues?

Observations about school Internet ethics scholarship:

A recent ERIC search on the keywords *Internet and Ethics* found twenty articles. Of the eight articles directly related to Internet ethics, five articles (63%) discussed the dilemma of unethical material and three articles (37%) suggested a set of rules for student behaviour and software censors as decision for managing the problem. While there is no reason to panic over undesirable information on the Internet the opportunity exists for any student to exchange addresses, phone numbers and media, such as photographs, with anyone they choose (Kerckhove cited in Gooderham, 1996). "As the most comprehensive information resource ever developed, access to the Internet has (positively) changed the academic world" (Crossman, 1995, p. 273) and the Internet may similarly effect school teaching and learning.

The ERIC search pinpoints a relatively small concern among educational technology leaders and scholars about value laden issues that could develop into integrity issues for school-based technology leaders who plan to utilize the Internet. As leaders, our decisions must be characterized by integrity. Such decisions occur through perceptual, theoretical, preferential and ideological reflections and occur in the context of the "private life space" of the individual, (Walker, 1993, p. 85). Does our level of scholarship on the Internet access question match our duty to make legitimate decisions?

In the Saskatchewan context, Saskatchewan Education, SaskTel and many school divisions worked to connect 190 schools to the Internet in 1996 (Saskatchewan Education, 1996, p. 2). The technology will soon be in place to extend the reach of the Internet to schools so that the delivery of courses via the Internet will be possible. A recent government survey asked the general public if they believed that Saskatchewan students are able to take the high school courses that they want. Forty four per cent of the respondents were "of the opinion that high school students were generally not able to take the courses they want

(Saskatchewan Education, 1994, p. 62)." This indicates that there is great potential for distance course delivery utilizing an expanded school Internet infrastructure Observations about the public perception of the Internet lead us to conclude that the infrastructure construction is necessary. What about the ethics of the decision to surrounding the proposition to connect to the infrastructure?

Our observations tell us that, contrary to the dialogue of the proposition, all schools are not now connected to the Internet but soon may be. When they are connected, will all students have equal access? This will depend on how the curriculum engages the Internet resources. Our research tells us that ethical concerns about the Internet in classrooms are not being addressed in scholarly literature. The rhetoric of the dialogue supporting the demand to connect all kids to the Internet then, is not clearly substantiated. As a leader, now with more information, one must make a value judgment to decide if the current Internet state is something to offer to all of our students.

Section 3: Value Judgment

There is no recipe for making the 'right' value judgments, but as leaders, we make value judgments constantly. Here we explore the nature of these judgments using the propositions and observations. Value judgments are personal acts by moral agents using ethical principles, which we will define as an independent, and objective set of moral beliefs. Many kinds of value judgments are required in leadership, but we will make a sample judgment to answer the question *"Do I value childrens' access, via the Internet, to people and information as a worthwhile part of K-12 education?"*

Kant reminds us that to make a moral decision, we must possess good will along with our distinctive sense of duty respect for the law and for what is right (Kant cited in Ellington, 1983, p. 23). Furthermore, in making value judgments we must never treat people as means to ends, for we ought to treat people as ends in and of themselves. The authors worry about the well-being of learners having unqualified connection to the Internet. Are leaders concerned about students first and foremost when making Internet decisions? Can leaders just "let students loose" on the net? Must leaders prepare students to overcome the negative moral features which are a part of typical Internet access? If a leader decides not to allow students Internet communication, is this a maxim that this leader would have others apply to her?

Leaders must do some self-reflection to make judgments such as those above given the descriptive ethical nature of the observations (there are problems with the Internet in schools) and the prescriptive nature of the proposition (just connect the schools, please). Such normative ethical reflection will guide leaders to investigate their underpinning values or principles as they make their value judgments. We would suggest that the leaders need to include the judgment step instead ofjumping too quickly to a technological solution, or "quick fix" approach, to their decision making. Choosing to let machines limit the potential for unethical

transactions rather than to worry about the deeper issues of learner choice and critical thought is not a commendable process and is the act that most often condemns technical leaders from an epistemological viewpoint. Technology can act as its own policeman, enforcing social rules and alleviating our responsibilities but tools do not respect others, they allow us to bypass moral decisions by dictum: Just use the Net Nanny, and all will be well. This approach must be critically explored.

Duty of Care: Let the machine police itself

Respect for persons (students and teachers) is a characteristic of Kant's categorical imperative. Some leaders think that negative Internet content could be "blocked" by technology gatekeepers where such blocks are gatekeepers enforcing a duty of care preventing our children from being harmed by immoral Internet discourse. This is a false hope.

Most articles from our ERIC search suggest a single type of solution to the moral questions surrounding Internet connection in schools. The literature suggested that student behaviour contracts and blocking technology (software like Internet Nanny, Cyber Patrol and Tattle Tale) ought to be policy. Such mechanisms should be installed in schools to restrict student access to "immoral" media (Carpenter, 1996; Frazier, 1996). Seldom does the literature present a need for parent and teacher support for such a proposition. From a leadership perspective, implementing "blocking" software is a response to restrict student resources to prevent negative ends. Blocking software acts as a communication gatekeeper to prevent student activity by disallowing access to Internet sites containing defined keywords such as sex, but software and policing do nothing to prevent the student seeking out inappropriate communications, and blocking software does not work on electronic mail communication. Is censorship the solution? Postmodern theorists (and librarians) warn that censorship itself brings about its own problems

> "...censorship and self deterrence always happen faster than the forces or weapons at our disposal; this is the secret of social order. (Beaudrilliard, 1995, p. 479).

Censorship is an old issue to school administrators, librarians, teachers and parents and the perceived effectiveness ofcensorship among professionals reminds us of the history of public debate. "Any kid old enough to be interested in pornography is old enough to figure out a hack around the blocking software and there is no small demand for the (blocking) technology" (Gooderham, 1996, AS). Jackson's studies at MIT prove that technical solutions to network policing are as expensive to maintain as they are ineffective. Rules or codes of student conduct create costly supervision situations that "just do not work when network interactions between one student and another occur each split second" (Jackson, 1994, p. 3 I). Several recent theorists remind us that

> Educators have commonly been preoccupied with authority derived from position, psychological manoeuvres and rational-technical competencies. Perhaps, as Sergiovanni suggests, an over-reliance on these sources of authority has mistakenly overlooked the salience of professional and moral authority in school leader deliberations (Walker, 1993, p. 78).

These observations about the efficacy of machine-based policing show that we cannot use this commonly proposed panacea to eitherjustify or deny access to the Internet. The policing approach is a rule-based approach to an ethical problem that is without a normative ethical component, and amounts to a dictum that allows leaders to avoid making an ethical decision by going directly from *is* to ought. We could argue ethically that we should respect our students' freedom of choice in their education interactions. This value judgment would lead us away from policing Internet transactions as a solution to the proposition's negative possibilities.

Personal moral decisions can be in concert with external or universal maxims. These moral judgments, forged in the crucible of personal morality, as well as being personal can be contingent upon social values (Rosen, 1989, p. 27). One example of this is the school leader's duty to perform "in loco parentis." We accept that we act in the place of the parent, and are subject to moral conclusions. Leaders know that moral judgments concerning the distributive nature of the justice depend on how we perceive ourselves within a given situation. We have discussed some value judgments (students' right to access, freedom of choice, our duty of care for children) that fit our morality and our 'goodwill' just 'knows' that these value judgments are correct.

With most value judgments, leaders consider their *roles* in the *context* of any decision (Walker, 1993, p. 86). Perhaps there have been poor value judgments made by educational technology leaders. There are increasing calls for more ethically aware leadership (Campbell, 1996, p.7). The context of our value judgment (kids deserve connections to others, we have a duty of care for children) is that more schools are being connected to the Internet and that Internet connection can enhance a learning environment (Harris, 1996, p. 3 1). As leaders in schools, we operate in situations where community values and geography demand communication linkages like the Internet for many reasons (Hoffman, 1996, p. 3). It is as important to know what role we are in when we make decisions as it is to know the number of decision choices available. Table 2 lists the choices available to leaders considering Internet connection.

Table2
Choices available to leaders considering the Internet Access Proposition

Choice	Description, Observations and Vaule Judgement Type
1.	• Not to conncect to the Internet at all (all children are not best served by the connection, this is a universal rule that I could have imposed upon me)
2.	• To connect to the Internet and impose behaviour rules on the students, with teacher supervision (dictur: this is imposing behaviourial criteria that do not work, according to the observations. Judgemendoes not fit with the observations that behaviour contracts do not work in this case.
3.	• To connect to the Internet and impose technological gatekeepers like Net Nanny to keep students from harm (dictum: this is imposing machines as surrogate ethical decision-makers, releasing leaders and students from making the right learning transaction choices – does not fit with the observations).
4.	• Choices 2 and 3 combined.
5.	• To connect to the Internet and empower lerarners to make ethical media choices by applying media literacy skills (a value judgment respecting students' right to access information and other people, a judgment that fits with our duty to act "in loco parentis" with a **qualification** that the students be educated in moral self-reflection to make the correct transaction decisions on their own).

If a school is already connected to the Internet, then the decision is one of choosing a method to plan for (and to mitigation) the potential hazards of inappropriate learner communications found in choices two through five. The authors choose option five because the observations show that options two and three are ineffective, option one robs students of exposure to access of educational opportunity and resources (conflicting with our duty to provide relevant world experiences for students in school). Option 1 is compelling, but not to connect to the world creates another discontinuity with the school/society context – a condition that we could not live with ourselves as administrators today. To answer the question: "Do I value children's access to people and information (via the Internet) as a valuable part of those children's education?" We answer "Yes", but such a value judgment depends on the principles – the underpinnings or fourth step in the Toulmin moral decision making process on our journey from the *is* to the *ought*.

Section 4: Leader Commitment to Fundamental Principles

Kant said that a moral decision made by a rational, good-willed person, according to a set of (universal) principles constitutes both a valid decision and a moral decision (Kant in Ellington, 1983, p. 56). This absolute position is difficult for leaders in the education system today, immersed in contexts that do shift, but leader ethics should be stable. First, we review some conditions that might distract the practitioner from stable value based self-reflection. Influences on the decision maker and on

decision making processes include: the nature of our work; ethical influences inherent in our expectations; personal influences (our perceived role and motivation); internal influences and external influences (Walker, 1996, p. 276). We are asked to consider the learner, the community, our own values and our roles as a leader in the work of schools. It may be helpful to look at the problem first by deciding what roles we are reflecting by "way of seeing" when we make particular decisions (League of Educational Administrators and Directors of Saskatchewan, 1993, p. 5).

Understanding our role in the decision situation can help us make value judgments or act concert with our fundamental principles or beliefs. As leaders, we act in one or more of four key roles when we make decisions like this (Walker, 1993):

1.   **Leader of Leaders:**   The concept *ofprimus inter pares* (or first among equals) applies to an individual in this role. A leader in this role makes decisions that fit their internal value system and also sets an example (externally) for other people. The media literacy qualification (Section 5) was developed from the stance as an empowerment-provider, as opposed to this "example setting" role.

2.   **Servant of Leaders:** Servants of leaders help to enable other people in their respective roles. Reproductive and transformative leaders act in this role most often. A leader in this role provides power to other leaders. It is within this role that the researchers make the decision to consider core commitments (the moral principle of "no harm", relevance, access to information for students).

3.   **Advocate:** Speaking on behalf of other interests and other actors in a situation will identify a leader who is acting in this role. Advocacy of moral reasoning in leader decision-making plays a part in the writers' decision but the process is narrated as one process and not as an advocacy for the specific treatment.

4.   **Steward of Resources:** Reporting, explaining and justifying are acts associated with a leader in this role. While issues of cost and technical concerns are the key issues for some leaders involved in Internet access decisions, they must also consider the importance of moral decisions that are best for all.

Walker (1997) states that leaders act from within an assumed role, according to a set of core principles or commitments. The integrity of our leadership depends on the consistency with which we rely on our principles within each role. When a resource or new form of discourse offers itself we must consider a resource that might "promise on-line treasures and wonders to those brave enough to dig them out" (Frazier, 1995, p. 27). As responsible leaders, we strive to be **just** and **relevant** to our organization. By reinforcing technology, one "reinforces" reality, and one's

chances of being just and right increase accordingly (Lyotard, 1984, p. 14.)

The   Principles

To identify our principles or warrants that have led us from an informed description of a situation (the Internet world and schools) to the conclusion (to connect our kids to the Internet) via our value judgments is an essential part of leadership. The writers have chosen to appeal to one value – *respect for learners ' improved access* to other people and information in learning, and to our sense of *duty to provide a relevant experience for learners.* These values are in concert with the categorical imperative because we act as moral agents "in loco parentis" in education. We cannot isolate students from the realities of society today. But we equally value our *duty of care* principles, where *we* wish for *no harm* to come to our K- 12 or higher education students. Particularly, the "no harm" principle is used in this instance as the foundation for a moral judgment leading to the media literacy solution.

The "No Harm "principle

Regardless of other principles, we are concerned with the way immoral transactions can so easily occur on the Internet. Leaders who are caring act though their concern for the interests of others that transcends mere avoidance of harm to others and is characterized by kind, compassionate and generous interactions with and on behalf of others (Walker, 1993, p. 8).

In the view of the writers, it is only a matter of time until a student obtains information on the Internet that leads to a sensationally immoral and harmful act. Such a sorrowful event will have educational leaders scrambling for a solution or policy position to prevent the recurrence. If we guide students toward investigating information by personally critiquing both the subject of the media and the student's own values, perhaps we can lead them toward "more appropriate" decisions (Adams, 1989, p. 139). When we teach these critical thinking skills to learners so that they are applied in our absence when there is no momentary supervision or rule enforcement we are likely to give them a powerful tool for dealing with any inappropriate media encounter. This powerful skill set allows students to lead themselves out of harm's way more effectively than we can police or coerce student behaviour by rules. Can we achieve this goal through concurrently introducing media literacy *and* the Internet to learners?

Section 5: Qualifications

While we can make the value judgments based on observations and research to connect our children to the Internet, we hold some principles that must also be addressed in reaching our conclusion, or the path from *is* to *ought.* These concomitant qualifications are the fifth and   step in reaching the conclusion. Observation of media literacy pedagogy reveals a different kind of solution to preventing inappropriate learner media choices that have historically been offered

by print and video media. The media literacy solution applies communication theory to student practice, without focusing on gatekeeping, by leading media consumers to become better "choosers" of what they consume. Media literacy theory asks teachers to "encourage students to explore their own sense of historical agency as they come to realize that everyday decisions and choices are not simply value 'free', nor are they a product of rational decisions alone" (McLaren, 1992, p. 2).

The media literacy approach is a normative ethical approach with a teleological orientation, a position that we take when we desire positive or 'good' outcomes (Rosen, 1993, p. 14). Our stance hopes for student encounters with immoral media to be productive. Learners ought to possess and choose to use critical thinking and self reflection skills to make the 'good' decision and to avoid the 'bad' stuff. If students obey our rules and "don't go there" on the Internet, we can feel that we achieved our obligation. The moral decision in this paper is based on the duty that we wish a positive outcome from student-media interaction rather than a fulfilment of our own objectives as leader or teacher. The result is a more democratic learning environment where "...the shift of responsibility to the learner requires the focus to become, 'Does the learner possess strategies for exploiting this material successfully?'" (Schwier, 1995, p. 123). How can we empower learners to make the right Internet transactions?

Media Literacy

The Internet is a medium and as such it transports controversial information housed in the Internet world as electronic media (Bryant, 1992, p. 4). Teaching media literacy is not new and it is being taught in school systems to focus *learner criticism* and *understanding* about television, film, print and radio medium (Adams, 1989, p. 13). The Internet medium adds a new twist to mass media theory by being an interactive media   meaning that we do not just see media pieces as they "roll by" as with television, but we actively and selectively retrieve it. Today, most media literacy pedagogy rests on the idea that students exist in society that is awash with propaganda and mediated messages: "Before quality assurance has been developed, the human race is being forced to swim in an electronic sea of ideas" (Adams, 1989, p. 7). We know too that learners construct meaning from what they "swim through:"

> Since the media construct their own view of reality it is necessary for students to be able to read media text critically. This ability can make media a resource for students where the values and ideas represented are carefully examined as a normal part of reading, viewing and listening. (Schwier and Saskatoon School Board, 1994).

Methodologies for teaching media literacy vary but most teach critical consumerism and critical thinking concomitantly. One school division in western Canada uses the T.R.A.P. method to teach students media literacy (Schwier, 1994).

By looking at the program we see how media literacy skills support might prevent harm. Educators have already developed the skill teachings because of problems with "immoral" television, print and video. An explanation of the terms represented by the T.R.A.P. acronym follows with examples of some demonstrative teaching tactics to reduce harm when students encounter inappropriate media or communications.

"T" is for *Text:* Students learn the text or content of the media messages and test the source of the information for credibility. Is the source valid? Learners compare and contrast a particular message from more than one source. Free of an editing process, the Internet world *text* begs for critical review.

"R" is for *Representation:* Students are coached to understand what forces are behind the creation of the media. Learners are asked to choose the forces they "like". Why? With business exerting more of an advertising presence on the Internet, for example, understanding representation of messengers' motive is important.

"A" is for *Audience:* People have an effect on the media. Learners are asked to consider which culture was "targeted" by the messenger or media. Students compare the message to other messages delivered in different cultures. Cultural bias (without intent, many times) is in our view one of the Internet's weakest points as a medium. While learners can share cultures, they can very easily share counter-cultural morality if learners have not learned critical thought processes.

"P" is for *Production:* Students are informed that agencies and individuals actually create media copy. Learners are confronted with examples of the economic forces in play at the time of media production and are led to question who produced the copy. Is the producer a government institution, a private business or a Hollywood crew? Some Internet sites cost as much to produce as five story buildings.

As teachers, we act *in loco parentis* and we hold dear the principle that we should bring no harm to students. We act according to this principle when confronted with inappropriate television and video at school. Why can we not act accordingly with Internet media? The Internet begs leaders and teachers to offer the same care level of critiquing skills for all media. Media literacy theorists have learned a lot about the value of critiquing television messages. Voojis points out that once learners engage in critical thinking about the nature of violence, most of the "negative effects" of encountering a violent television program do not manifest in learner behaviour or attitude (Saskatoon Board of Education, 1993, p. 136).

A massive quantity of empirical studies on television and video media has been accumulated (Comstock, 1987, p. 2). For example, school children involved in media literacy come to understand the self-interest of advertisers as they grow older (Comstock, p. 33). Critical and creative thinking, Communication, personal and social skills and technological literacy are key components of the province of Saskatchewan's core curriculum making media literacy teaching a responsible act as well as a caring one. Kohlberg offers a normative ethical perspective on moral reasoning where he asserts: "... a person can be helped to achieve a 'higher' stage (of moral reasoning) by someone who has a higher level reasoning" (cited in Rosen,

1993, p. 91). Given that we *can* lead students to making moral decisions, we need to know something about three stages of student moral development defined in Kohlberg's developmental theory of Moral.

Preconventional Level. (Stage One): Most children operate here, where they make decisions to satisfy their own moral needs to avoid punishment. They make these decisions based on values that can be exposed by Socratic teaching methods. It is here that we suggest our first qualification within Toulmin's moral decision making process as it applies to the proposition. If we can not be sure that our Socratic methods are leading the child to an awareness of their individual values, we need to employ gatekeeping and supervision for these children during Internet transactions. This is an example of a-qualifier or exception to the conclusion to connect to the net which we reached based on our "no harm" principle. If the student can be harmed because they are not yet capable of knowing "good" values from "bad" values, then we suggest a deontological stance. We ought to provide structured, rule based care for them if they are in stage one or within grades lower than, say, Grade 5 unless we can determine the child's moral development stage.

Conventional Level. (Stage Two): At this stage, learners make decisions by considering the norms of one's group and family. The desire to meet the needs of the group exceed personal needs and Kohlberg suggests that most adults do not get beyond this stage. The "kid on your shoulder" principle has worked well with high school students and university labs where students are asked to view Internet sites as if a young child were watching. Students who are in stage two of development are aware that if they encounter something that a small child on their shoulder should not see, they stay away from the media on the Internet. The social norms of the family are brought to the moral consciousness of the student to prevent them from harming themselves.

Postconventional Level. (Stage Three): In stage three, the learner is more self-motivated toward decision making. The standard of what is right and wrong has been internalized in this student as a set of principles concerning the social good. These learners are autonomous because they think for themselves, beyond local custom. Kohlberg claims that people are operating within this stage when they consider the meta-ethical strategies and schema like that proposed in this article.We know that banning access to television in one location (a classroom or the home) does not prevent learners from watching the program at some other venue. Televisions, like Internet connected computers, exist both at school and at home. Critical thinking about the message conveyed by the media could provide students with the empowerment to make choices outside "policed" environments. Kohlberg responds: "through Socratic questioning, the values and principles held by children can be brought to consciousness" (Rosen, 1989, p. 41). If, for any reason, we cannot lead the students to know values of "right" and "wrong" or "good" and "bad" during media encounters, the principle of duty of care override the "freedom of access" principles and we suggest that professionals then ought to act in a more authoritative manner to prevent harm.

Figure 2: Toulmin's Model Applied to the proposition
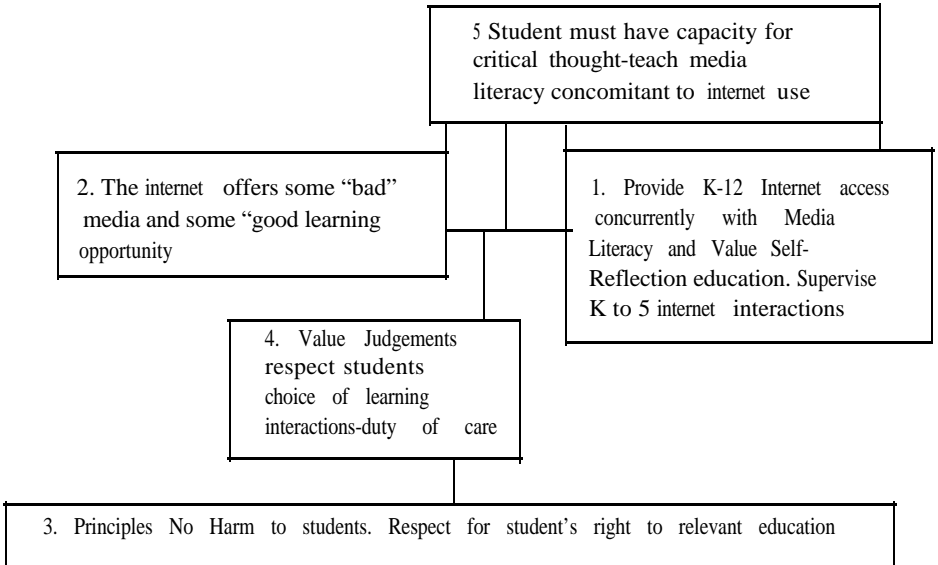
Conclusion

We conclude that school leaders *ought* to connect our example K- 12 school to the Internet. After reviewing the context of schools and Internet content we observe that some Internet material *is* inappropriate, particularly graphic advertisements and electronic mail functions that allow unregulated person-to-person discourse. After we investigated the Internet situation we concluded that while students should have the freedom for broad social interaction, what the Internet *is* might not be exactly where our school *ought* to, be if we consider the harm possible to children. We provided value judgments about the net content, student critical thinking capability and our own duties as teachers and administrators, acting in loco parentis. We looked more closely at the principles underpinning those value judgments to assure integrity-to agree that these principles are not likely to change. Principles of respect for students and their rights to relevant education are "pros" for Internet connection, while our duty of care or "no harm" principle is a "con" for the proposition. This article suggests that leadership mediates the "cons" of Internet connection by educating learners about media literacy and developing self-reflective techniques so that our if learners are empowered to reach beyond stage one of Kohlberg's moral development capacity. We would also emphasize another qualifier: that children who have not reached beyond stage one need constant, effective supervision during Internet transactions until the problems of immoral Internet transactions are alleviated from schools.

In summary, our case of a leader moral decision is made by stating the outcome desired (the proposition), making value judgments based on observations, reviewing the principles behind those judgments and suggesting qualifiers to the judgments

where necessary to the exercise of ethical technology leadership (Brown, 1990, p. 48). The result is a demonstration of a critical moral reasoning process for school leaders, educational technology leaders and for classroom teachers to think about the discourse possible between their students and the Internet world.

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