

# Wisdom from a Deadhead

- Ethics, responsibility, *why* a special topic for computing?
  - this is a continuing theme of the course
    - the case for computing ethics: just take other codes and adapt them?
  - John P. Barlow in CACM, v34, n 3 (Mar91) suggests some metaphors for consideration

# Mr. EFF speaks

“Imagine discovering a continent so vast that it may have no end to its dimensions. Imagine a new world with more resources than all our future greed might exhaust, more opportunities than there will ever be entrepreneurs to exploit, and a peculiar kind of real estate that expands with development....

“Imagine a place where trespassers leave no footprints, where goods can be stolen an infinite number of times and yet remain in the possession of their original owners, where businesses you never heard of can own the history of your personal affairs, where only children feel completely at home, where the physics is that of thought rather than things, and where everyone is as virtual as the shadows in Plato’s cave....

“It consists of electron states, microwaves, magnetic fields, light pulses, though itself - a wave in the web of our electronic processing and communication systems.”

# Privacy

- What is “privacy”?
  - definition, always a good start!
  - why is it important (or is it?)
    - main privacy issues
      - visible information gathering
        - persistence and secondary uses
      - invisible information gathering
        - accuracy of the information

# Social Value of Privacy?

- What social values require some zone of privacy for citizens?
  - information mediates social relationships
    - consequence to loss of control of personal info?
  - relationships to organizations
    - relationship of power?
    - who has control?
    - what is the result?

# Maybe Privacy not important?

- Counter arguments:
  - innocent people have nothing to hide
    - effects of erroneous or irrelevant information?
  - (libertarian?) we have a choice to give out personal information
    - is this really true?
    - is there a price?

# Professional Responsibility for Privacy?

- What is the *Software Engineer's responsibility* for privacy?
  - list relevant provisions in SE Code of Ethics
  - what is the role as computing professionals?
    - **what are my personal ethics** regarding privacy?
- An important topic for CSC majors?
  - of course, not a new problem!
    - again: *why a special concern for this major?*
      - what are the implications of our technology?
      - how are we guiding its **social** implementation?

# Increased Concerns Due to Computerization

- ease of information gathering
- nature of the data forces humans to change
  - file formats, information used to issue/deny benefits
- importance of the data increases?
  - identity information, medical, licensure
- lack of security, ease of access to critical data
  - vulnerability of most systems to compromise
- persistence of the data
  - encourages secondary, tertiary uses
- new, cheaper means of “sophisticated” analysis