Digital Rhetorical Privacy Collective
Privacy, Surveillance, and Course Hero

Dr. Charles Woods, Texas A&M University-Commerce
Dr. Brenna Clark Gray, Thompson Rivers University
Dr. Lacy Hope, Utah Tech University

TRANSCRIPT

00:00:02.614 --> 00:00:08.165
and now we should have captioning. And then next thing that we need to do is start recording

00:00:08.165 --> 00:00:14.366
Thank you so much for taking the time to chat with me today.

00:00:14.366 --> 00:00:28.766
My name is Charles Woods, I'm a member of the Advisory Board of the Digital Rhetorical Privacy.

00:00:28.766 --> 00:00:36.164
Collective. We are a coalition of folks who are work in writing studies, rhetoric, technical communication with the goal of amplifying the work of scholars who work in digital privacy and surveillance, but also

00:00:36.164 --> 00:00:38.214
tackling some of the issues that relate related to digital privacy and surveillance in American culture.

00:00:38.214 --> 00:00:43.164
So, I want to introduce my guests today. First, we have Dr.

00:00:43.164 --> 00:00:49.714
Lacy Hope and Dr. Brenna Gray. Lacy, tell us a little bit about yourself.

00:00:49.714 --> 00:01:00.664
Well, hello, Charles and Brenna, and everyone who is listening and watching. My name is Dr.

00:01:00.664 --> 00:01:05.814
Lacy Hope. I am an assistant professor in the English department at the newly rebranded Utah Tech University imn St. George, Utah.

00:01:05.814 --> 00:01:18.764
There I teach everything from first year composition courses.

00:01:18.764 --> 00:01:27.614

But Now I'm starting to move into working with the students, both in our bachelors and masters level programs for technical and professional writing.

00:01:27.614 --> 00:01:35.019
And so, my name is Brenna Clark Gray and I'm coordinator of educational technologies at Thompson Rivers University, Thompson Rivers is in beautiful Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc in the

00:01:35.019 --> 00:01:38.114
unseated traditional lands of Secwépemc ulu, or at It's known to others, Kamloops.

00:01:38.114 --> 00:01:42.068
British Columbia in the interior desert of British Columbia.

00:01:42.068 --> 00:01:53.967
I before I took on this role as a faculty.

00:01:53.967 --> 00:02:17.866
Educational technologies, coordinator I spent 9 years teaching academic writing and literature to community college in the lower mainland. so, questions that specifically relate to rhetoric and composition are near and dear to my heart and

00:02:17.866 --> 00:02:23.419
That's what my background is in today. we're talking about Course Hero, according to the about a section of the Course Hero website, quote Course Hero is an online learning platform for course, specific study resources Course Hero supports students on their unique learning journey as

00:02:23.419 --> 00:02:32.066
they seek help and resources to better understand their courseware.

00:02:32.066 --> 00:02:43.966
Prepare for exams, learn, and remember. Students can subscribe or contribute their own resources to access.

00:02:43.966 --> 00:02:52.416
Millions of learning materials, including practice problems, study guides textbook solutions, and step by step explanations for every subject.

00:02:52.416 --> 00:03:05.621
So that's what? How Course Hero describes itself? but let me ask you, how would you describe?

00:03:05.621 --> 00:03:13.017
Course Hero? Well, I think that when most instructors meet course here for the first time, it's either because they've googled themselves and found their material posted without their consent on Course Hero or it's because they've come

00:03:13.017 --> 00:03:29.265
up against Course Hero in an academic integrity, investigation, or an academic integrity situation.

00:03:29.265 --> 00:03:42.815
So that's certainly what Course Hero is to me I always knew it, as you know effectively a cheek competitor before it started to try to go legit with recent moves for staffing and other and other things

00:03:42.815 --> 00:03:55.619
I think that for most instructors that's what we think of when we think, of Course Hero, you know and to build off that I will say I think Course Hero is an opportunity missed.

00:03:55.619 --> 00:04:03.014
So, I don't think I'll receive much push back when I say that learning, especially as it relates to writing and rhetoric and language, is very much a collaborative process like it has to be done within

00:04:03.014 --> 00:04:06.914
among others but which to a degree, of Course Hero kind of gets that.

00:04:06.914 --> 00:04:23.214
But I think it goes about it in all the wrong ways.

00:04:23.214 --> 00:04:28.365
So, I see it, as you know, this opportunity for collaborative learning, but that has been marred by really exploitative practices, both as it impacts the students and the instructors.

00:04:28.365 --> 00:04:33.267
The other thing that I think is important to remember when we talk about what Course Hero is.

00:04:33.267 --> 00:04:41.924
It's not always immediately evident when you spend time on the Course Hero website.

00:04:41.924 --> 00:04:45.015
But Course Hero is also Quilbot, which is a machine learning tool for writing.

00:04:45.015 --> 00:04:49.314
It does paraphrasing, and it does composition.

00:04:49.314 --> 00:05:00.464
And so that acquisition happened about a year ago they didn't develop Quilbot.

00:05:00.464 --> 00:05:07.668

They acquired it. But I think we're going to have a conversation today about like student faculty intellectual property, and what that big database of content is really for.

00:05:07.668 --> 00:05:13.015
And I think we can't really have that conversation without remembering that there is this, this arm that is potentially powered by those tools.

00:05:13.015 --> 00:05:24.966
So, It's. It's good to keep that in mind, too, Brenna.

00:05:24.966 --> 00:05:39.770
You mentioned some moves to quote Go legit hired a, I guess. VP.

00:05:39.770 --> 00:05:53.766
Academic. I, some folks have on Twitter. I comically referred to this as the provost of plagiarism, but that position was filled last year by Sean Michael Morris, and I think that that was a really that

00:05:53.766 --> 00:06:00.764
was an important moment in Course Hero both gaining legitimacy? Sean Michael Morris is a huge name in pedagogy circles, and someone who is aligned with ethical pedagogical practice and

00:06:00.764 --> 00:06:11.664
critical digital pedagogies I think he's someone who people feel like I sort of does the right thing

00:06:11.664 --> 00:06:22.964
And in going to work for Course Hero gains is a really big name with a lot of credibility, and also, I think, probably some speculation.

00:06:22.964 --> 00:06:26.064
But we're seeing more and more institutional partnerships emerging from Course Hero right now, and I think there's a real move to place someone with academic legibility and legitimacy in in a key role in

00:06:26.064 --> 00:06:33.064
Course Hero as a mechanism for developing those partnerships.

00:06:33.064 --> 00:06:37.416
Further. And, Lacy, you mentioned some exploitative practices.

00:06:37.416 --> 00:06:49.319
Could you elaborate on what you mean there? Absolutely.

00:06:49.319 --> 00:06:58.417

So, as I had mentioned earlier, like I said, I feel like this is an opportunity missed, because, you know, I'll say, in my own classrooms I provide my students, a space on our LMS for they can share notes where They

00:06:58.417 --> 00:07:11.364
can share materials that they've come across as it relates to our course, and many of them have cited that that's been incredibly helpful.

00:07:11.364 --> 00:07:13.214
However, this information, this content, this material is either theirs that they have produced, or they are properly citing and giving credit where credit is due.

00:07:13.214 --> 00:07:17.319
But they also have a lot of control over it so if they say hey?

00:07:17.319 --> 00:07:22.667
I'm really not comfortable with my notes being available to my peers anymore. I want to take them down.

00:07:22.667 --> 00:07:39.764
They have every right to do that with a you know fairly immediately.

00:07:39.764 --> 00:07:47.814
Right but Course Hero doesn't seem to extend those same crises to the students, where they don't have as much control over what they share, and I also think it's exploitative when it comes to the

00:07:47.814 --> 00:08:04.917
instructors in that, you know. You read through the terms of service from, Course Hero, and they say, oh, these are students resources, students, materials.

00:08:04.917 --> 00:08:13.514
Well, you know, just for fun I went on and I've been going on trying to see what you know my material I could find, and seeing what other information and resources are available at least from our the institution that I'm at and you

00:08:13.514 --> 00:08:20.769
know, while some are things that students have produced, you know their notes, their essays.

00:08:20.769 --> 00:08:27.964
Whatever the case may happen to be, there are still things like exams, study guides, PowerPoint things that the instructors have created.

00:08:27.964 --> 00:08:42.164
Now, Course Hero is not free. Course Hero. You have to pay a monthly subscription.

00:08:42.164 --> 00:08:49.564

And so, they are ultimately making money off of what not only the students have done, but also what the instructors have done, and the instructors are never notified that their materials have been shared.

00:08:49.564 --> 00:08:53.864
There is no You know indication that you know my assignment.

00:08:53.864 --> 00:09:01.514
Cheese is now up for the world to see, or a PowerPoint that I put in.

00:09:01.514 --> 00:09:13.864
A lot of time and effort into is now widely available for anyone to see and anyone to use as they see fit.

00:09:13.864 --> 00:09:22.921
And what's more again, is that this site is making a profit off of that, when we, as the instructors Aren't even notified that it's posted, I think what Lacy's touching on here is a really significant

00:09:22.921 --> 00:09:33.015
issue with the way Course Hero aggregates content. There is no community moderation on course.

00:09:33.015 --> 00:09:40.014
Hero and that to me is a huge issue They would say it's up to the person uploading to make sure that they have the copyright for the material.

00:09:40.014 --> 00:09:52.364
But the thing is that you can pay for Course Hero or you can pay for Course Hero in content.

00:09:52.364 --> 00:09:58.514
Right, you can upload and get credits and so something that I've noticed is that a lot of my material is up there, and I haven't taught in 3 years since I moved into this role the things that are up there

00:09:58.514 --> 00:10:06.564
of mine are things like entire transcripts from my teaching and learning podcasts that I make

00:10:06.564 --> 00:10:11.514
And they were included in all kinds of sections I just found several episodes with the transcripts uploaded to

00:10:11.514 --> 00:10:15.417
It's an economics class at an institution I've never heard of

00:10:15.417 --> 00:10:28.168
There are copies of transcripts from presentations I've given.

00:10:28.168 --> 00:10:35.814
And so, it's very clear that students need credits to access materials in a course. and so, they'll just aggregate whatever they can find, whatever might be tangentially coming up in a Google search and you know on one hand, that's just

00:10:35.814 --> 00:10:48.364
kind of funny, like the idea that somebody would be seeking my podcast, transcript and help for economics like God love you.

00:10:48.364 --> 00:10:53.914
That's not going to go well but it's it demonstrates a larger issue, and it's something a gesture to Karen costa's work here which looks at how trauma in its sort of a

00:10:53.914 --> 00:11:07.114
trauma informed. Look at Course Hero, but one of the things that she does is she actually just searches for trauma and similar keywords.

00:11:07.114 --> 00:11:18.414
My most traumatic experience those kinds of like at first your essays that I think many of us would have problems with the assignment in general, but that do exist, and those are being uploaded in large numbers without any guidance

00:11:18.414 --> 00:11:26.265
on uploads. If you look through the material that's There, you'll find tons of private data that's been publicly shared that students may not recognize the value of so things like their student numbers often geographical clues

00:11:26.265 --> 00:11:33.864
and full names, so that it would be very easy to find out where a student lived based on the material that's posted.

00:11:33.864 --> 00:11:41.864
And you know. there's this real hands-off approach on Course Hero's part. It's like well people are responsible for what they upload.

00:11:41.864 --> 00:11:48.068
But they're to me there's an ethical requirement that that there'd be some guidance provided there.

00:11:48.068 --> 00:11:50.518
And you know that gets at you know they're sort of the poor open citizenship that happens when we see instructor content.

00:11:50.518 --> 00:11:56.914
That has been licensed. Cc. by Nc.

00:11:56.914 --> 00:12:01.264
So non-commercial it's showing up there on Course Hero makes no effort to check for that content and remove it.

00:12:01.264 --> 00:12:04.514
It has to be done proactively on the part of the instructor.

00:12:04.514 --> 00:12:14.664
So yeah, I think this issue of what and ends up on Course Hero.

00:12:14.664 --> 00:12:19.367
Hero is huge. you're pushing me to think about like this whole, like digital ethics like I don't know what's the right word.

00:12:19.367 --> 00:12:28.014
I'm struggling here, but like keystone if you will like responsibility is shared.

00:12:28.014 --> 00:12:32.964
I'm among different stakeholders right and what you're pushing us to, both of you and your responses is to think about privacy.

00:12:32.964 --> 00:12:41.214
So, in what ways is Course Hero infringing on the privacy of instructors.

00:12:41.214 --> 00:13:01.966
And then you've also both touched on this How is it infringing on the privacy of students.

00:13:01.966 --> 00:13:16.617
As what, so you know, just to further kind of speak to Brennan's point. where yeah, I think we are at a point where we assume, especially with students who are traditional students coming in at 1819 years old I think there are

00:13:16.617 --> 00:13:32.664
these assumptions made that. Oh, they grew up with these platforms with these technologies. So of course, they're going to know and be aware of copyright issues, privacy issues, surveillance issues that are obviously going to exist in these

00:13:32.664 --> 00:13:48.514
spaces, but without fail every semester students and I talk about data tracking and gathering practices by, you know, sites like Google and Amazon, and they have no idea that they are being tracked to the extent that

00:13:48.514 --> 00:13:59.417
they are, and there are so many calls within the field of rhetoric and composition, especially for actively incorporating digital literacy components into our curriculum.

00:13:59.417 --> 00:14:05.614
And so, you're absolutely I think we're going to hitting the mail on the head, where its students are giving up a lot of their information, and they may not be aware of the consequences of that as I said as I

00:14:05.614 --> 00:14:09.769
was going through saying, oh, you know what kind of stuff is up there?

00:14:09.769 --> 00:14:20.864
I saw, you know, a student that I had from a previous semester.

00:14:20.864 --> 00:14:36.718
Their name was still attached the date. So, you knew exactly who they were, what the course was, what the section was, what the date was.

00:14:36.718 --> 00:14:40.664
And oftentimes, do you know, I ask students to reflect on their role in their place in public spaces, and how that shapes their use of language and more public settings, and so students are often sharing these more personalized

00:14:40.664 --> 00:14:55.067
responses granted it's theirs you know it's their response.

00:14:55.067 --> 00:15:07.017
It's their writing. But they're ultimately shared experiences that are better explained and understood and appreciated within the context of the classroom itself.

00:15:07.017 --> 00:15:16.914
So, I just think, students, perhaps aren't as aware as we may assume they are, or the information that they are ultimately, you know, giving up to others.

00:15:16.914 --> 00:15:22.466
And then, of course, you know, we can get into the whole tata tracking on the you know, as force Hero does it.

00:15:22.466 --> 00:15:38.714
You know, as they collect data through cookies and other tracking technologies.

00:15:38.714 --> 00:15:48.618
But there's certainly a lot at risk. for students but I don't think the students are immediately aware of And I think when we talk about this issue of privacy, I have a lot of questions about what happens with the data that

00:15:48.618 --> 00:15:51.265

Course Hero retains. So, one thing that I've noticed as I watch people go through the process of trying to get their work taken down from Course Hero.

00:15:51.265 --> 00:15:55.014
Is that that is not a collegial process that's not a hey?

00:15:55.014 --> 00:16:00.764
I notice you've got my materials up here maybe you could take those down for me.

00:16:00.764 --> 00:16:09.614
You have to go through DCMA take down request again.

00:16:09.614 --> 00:16:19.717
They require a lot of a personal information. in order to make that in order for you to be able to make that request, and it's worth noting that it's a DCMA take down it's not a

00:16:19.717 --> 00:16:31.414
deletion. Now, Course Hero are used, that they take it down and retain it; so that if it was re uploaded, they would know that it had been re-uploaded, and they would not allow that but

00:16:31.414 --> 00:16:41.517
given this other arm of the company. This, this Quilbot function, which we know contains a plagiarism detector and some machine learning.

00:16:41.517 --> 00:16:48.914
Writing components, so really cannot function without a large database of student writing to pull from, I, I have a lot of questions about where that content goes.

00:16:48.914 --> 00:17:01.718
Even once it's been taken down from the from the live site, and I don't feel like those questions have been answered.

00:17:01.718 --> 00:17:12.418
I think that since the teaching and learning community sort of became extremely aware of how Course Hero functions when Sean Michael Morris was appointed, I think that those questions have been asked really directly, and I don't I have not seen,

00:17:12.418 --> 00:17:16.314
answers forthcoming. and I think that's another important component of the sort of question of privacy of both instructors and students is, where is that data going in the long run?

00:17:16.314 --> 00:17:28.469
And who might it be restored? To how might it be repackaged?

00:17:28.469 --> 00:17:35.268

They retain the right to do all of that in the privacy agreement that you click through And of course we could have a big conversation about like a privacy agreement as a click through when a student is trying to get access to materials that

00:17:35.268 --> 00:17:41.667
they perceive the need for in order to pass a course like Can that ever really be sort of free and fairly informed consent.

00:17:41.667 --> 00:17:44.314
I don't know but yeah, I have a lot of questions.

00:17:44.314 --> 00:17:57.714
But where that data is going, you know, in preparation for this.

00:17:57.714 --> 00:18:01.014
I revisited a Beck article on the invisible digital identity and thinking about.

00:18:01.014 --> 00:18:06.765
You know how that that data is gather and what's absolutely fascinating.

00:18:06.765 --> 00:18:19.122
So, I decided, just for you know, to jump down this rabbit hole.

00:18:19.122 --> 00:18:25.715
My own kind of geeky interest. I created both a student account and an instructor account, and the student account it didn't really have me give up all that much information just my name and a username.

00:18:25.715 --> 00:18:32.514
But when I created the instructor account cool what university are you at what department do you teach in what's your official role?

00:18:32.514 --> 00:18:45.065
And it had me fill out; you know much more detailed information of course. Why don't you bring up a good point?

00:18:45.065 --> 00:18:51.068
Where does that data go? Where does that information go? And how is it influencing the You know this digital in this invisible digital identity?

00:18:51.068 --> 00:18:53.964
That is created for us, not necessarily by us about us.

00:18:53.964 --> 00:19:09.815
So, you know, I think that that really opens up the question.

00:19:09.815 --> 00:19:24.815
You know. Not only how does this give impact our teaching? but how can What kind of consequences do we see coming from this, as we are just individuals existing in digital spaces?

00:19:24.815 --> 00:19:30.365
You all are really alluding to the next question that I have in your responses? that means there's good synergy, and what we're talking about here.

00:19:30.365 --> 00:19:45.214
So, does. or how does a platform like Course Hero serve as a surveillance tool?

00:19:45.214 --> 00:19:50.164
For me. This seems like an incredibly important question, especially after what Lacy walked through with the amount of information that they collect for instructors versus students coupled with or compounded with.

00:19:50.164 --> 00:19:55.264
You know this idea that sometimes, and knowledge is under attack in America.

00:19:55.264 --> 00:20:03.114
Right. So, in what ways does Course Hero serve as a surveillance tool.

00:20:03.114 --> 00:20:07.215
So, I have a lot of concerns about this this week in particular, because we've just seen over the last few days.

00:20:07.215 --> 00:20:21.220
I think it's come to twitter anyway; I sure folks are aware of it before.

00:20:21.220 --> 00:20:24.915
But so, lumen learning many of their OER not the Wayfinder, and not the Course Hero projects, but some of the sort of what they call community Olympics, which were previously hosted on lumen very quietly have had

00:20:24.915 --> 00:20:31.714
their URLs redirected and they're now hosted on Course Hero.

00:20:31.714 --> 00:20:41.414
So, if you follow old links to lumin learning textbooks, you may discover that they are now housed on course.

00:20:41.414 --> 00:20:48.414
Hero. Now this concerns me, given the kinds of tracking that we can see.

00:20:48.414 --> 00:20:57.064
Course Hero doing an OER that tracks, users, serves ads, collect analytics like to me.

00:20:57.064 --> 00:21:06.119
That changes the definition of an OER right there's nothing very open about where that data is going, and what it's collecting about students.

00:21:06.119 --> 00:21:12.265
You can also find, if you'd follow the links to those resources that are now housed on Course Hero that unsurprisingly, one or 2 clicks through the resource and you're being invited to sign up for

00:21:12.265 --> 00:21:17.214
an account to access additional study resources doesn't take very long before that happens.

00:21:17.214 --> 00:21:20.314
It's worth noting that in Course Hero's privacy agreement.

00:21:20.314 --> 00:21:26.914
It's specifically saying that it doesn't accept a Browser request to not track.

00:21:26.914 --> 00:21:31.664
So, if you have your privacy settings turned on safari, for example, you know that sends a message saying I don't want to be tracked.

00:21:31.664 --> 00:21:40.264
Well, Course Hero says in their agreement that at this time they basically ignoring that request.

00:21:40.264 --> 00:21:54.464
So, they clearly have a reason to be collecting a whole bunch of data, as we've already said, it's pretty unclear about where that data is going.

00:21:54.464 --> 00:22:01.915
But I've I didn't like it particularly as a practice before, but now that they are going to be hosting a lot of OER, I can see faculty very innocently continuing to use a link that now

00:22:01.915 --> 00:22:06.664
redirects to Course Hero that is now inviting students into an ecosystem that we don't have a really good understanding of.

00:22:06.664 --> 00:22:11.165
And so, this is where I become concerned about Course Hero behaving as a surveillance tool.

00:22:11.165 --> 00:22:17.364
There are in-built analytics. we're not sure what those are used for at the moment.

00:22:17.364 --> 00:22:28.465

But I could totally see you know you might say it's to improve an OER to track when students click in and out of resources.

00:22:28.465 --> 00:22:43.714
But as Course Hero builds further partnerships with institutions, I begin to wonder about where that data goes, and how student behavior is tracked, and what instructors might be asked to do with that data at a later.

00:22:43.714 --> 00:22:53.418
Date. and I know that to some people, when they hear folks talking like that, we sound paranoid, except that if you look at how learning analytics have expanded in the in the use of you know within your own internal learning management

00:22:53.418 --> 00:23:00.622
system at your university, or with a tool like teams we can see the kinds of behaviors that we're expected to track and watch.

00:23:00.622 --> 00:23:21.869
I don't think it's paranoid huh let me put it that way. I don't think it's paranoid, you know.

00:23:21.869 --> 00:23:28.866
When I think about the idea of surveillance, especially as it relates to the current status and higher education, I think it perhaps, in addition to exposing students to data gathering practices, I also think that you know it

00:23:28.866 --> 00:23:38.321
can expose instructors again, because it's very much devoid of context, right like I can share my notes.

00:23:38.321 --> 00:23:46.568
I can, you know, share an essay? that I did but if you don't know the discussions that those notes that assignment is predicated in

00:23:46.568 --> 00:23:55.415
Then I, I want to say, kind of the meaning of the document can be lost, or it can be misconstrued in.

00:23:55.415 --> 00:24:01.164
Perhaps detrimental ways. And so, you know I go back, and I think about this this notion of consent.

00:24:01.164 --> 00:24:04.864
And in her work the age of surveillance, capitalism.

00:24:04.864 --> 00:24:12.067
Sure, Shauna Zuba really talks about

00:24:12.067 --> 00:24:21.565
She impacts when Google decided to do their street view.

00:24:21.565 --> 00:24:28.769
And they were driving around, and many European countries pushed back, basically saying, just because, you know, people decide to exist in this space does not mean that.

00:24:28.769 --> 00:24:39.865
You know they are jeopardizing. You know themselves and jeopardizing.

00:24:39.865 --> 00:24:46.270
You know their privacy and existing in this space and I kind of think that there is that can relate to what we're seeing with instructor materials being shared on Course Hero.

00:24:46.270 --> 00:24:53.915
Oh, you know, in addition to the data collection from it, we also have to think about.

00:24:53.915 --> 00:24:59.267
Okay, well, you know, of course, instructors shouldn't consent to this much like, you know, people in very European countries who were like, hey?

00:24:59.267 --> 00:25:11.815
I'm just occupying the street. you know you don't have a right to photograph me and just show me.

00:25:11.815 --> 00:25:16.774
You know, devoid of contacts. and so, I think you know we see surveillance, and it's a surveillance that we, as instructors, by and large. we didn't consent to we are you know that we

00:25:16.774 --> 00:25:22.964
did not. We did not click okay and accept the cookies, right?

00:25:22.964 --> 00:25:29.520
And so, I think that adds on an additional layer that really comes on.

00:25:29.520 --> 00:25:46.616
How Course Hero runs, and how it provides its resources.

00:25:46.616 --> 00:25:55.265
But one thing that I find especially troublesome, as it relates to, especially as political actors are trying in in certain areas, trying to become more involved with the curriculum development and the ways in which universities and even individual

00:25:55.265 --> 00:26:09.068

classrooms within those universities operate. One thing that I found especially concerning is on their terms of service.

00:26:09.068 --> 00:26:15.464
There is a section that says, you hear my grandparents 0. a non-exclusive license to transmit modifies for edit display, perform, reproduce, distribute, and otherwise act with respect to such the

00:26:15.464 --> 00:26:24.914
missions in each case to enable us to operate the service as described.

00:26:24.914 --> 00:26:33.364
And so, you know, the student is uploading again, slides that an instructor creates, or a study guide.

00:26:33.364 --> 00:26:37.920
You know they are ultimately giving Course Hero the opportunity. to you know.

00:26:37.920 --> 00:26:56.864
Modify that document as they see fit now, I don't know if you know what that hack actually looks like in practice.

00:26:56.864 --> 00:27:04.664
But where instructors are being so heavily scrutinized again by these political actors that operate outside of the university, individual instructors, and a department and perhaps institutions as a whole, at much greater risk because perhaps their materials

00:27:04.664 --> 00:27:09.019
are being misconstrued, or they are not being shared in the way that they were originally presented.

00:27:09.019 --> 00:27:18.065
So, and again we're never notified that these materials are uploaded, and so on.

00:27:18.065 --> 00:27:30.414
Top of that we could be blindsided by This kind of surveillance that happened

00:27:30.414 --> 00:27:33.514
I was talking to a colleague at another institution, at a conference recently, and I know that they had found some of their teaching and learning materials

00:27:33.514 --> 00:27:42.364
On Course Hero and I approached them and was like hey?

00:27:42.364 --> 00:27:50.364

How's it going? how's the Course Hero thing going and there was a defeated, defeated look on this scholar spaces.

00:27:50.364 --> 00:28:03.365
Tell her that our respect immensely and they said I've given up There's just nothing I can do

00:28:03.365 --> 00:28:10.164
So. what are the next steps, then, for those of us working in higher education across the disciplines who oppose what Course Hero has built over the last 15 years, and continues to build?

00:28:10.164 --> 00:28:16.914
What can we do? who matters? Is there a future without Course Hero?

00:28:16.914 --> 00:28:26.614
Hero acting ethically. Well, there's a micro level in a Macro left question.

00:28:26.614 --> 00:28:36.316
Yeah, So the macro level is it's wrapped up in all kinds of things like reimagining assessment practice.

00:28:36.316 --> 00:28:48.064
Right there. There are assessments that Course Hero is no help for and there are assessments where Course Hero will have the exact specific answer that the student needs.

00:28:48.064 --> 00:29:03.464
And you know there's lots of work to be done in the way we, the way we do assessment at the full secondary level, and the assumptions that we make about what makes something rigorous or not but that

00:29:03.464 --> 00:29:06.967
is that is big work that is long term work, and that is work that involves being resource effectively, having individual faculty and teaching and learning centers resource effectively to do that work, and we're not in a moment not even on the side

00:29:06.967 --> 00:29:12.165
of the border, where those resources are particularly forthcoming.

00:29:12.165 --> 00:29:25.966
You know, pandemics are really good reason to move into an austerity moment for budgets.

00:29:25.966 --> 00:29:30.864
But there are things to do on the micro level even as we work towards those larger changes and things like I mean if you're using an OER, and it now redirects the Course Hero that licensing hasn't

00:29:30.864 --> 00:29:38.718
changed, so you can get that material out of Course Hero you can put it in a pressbook or a WordPress site.

00:29:38.718 --> 00:29:51.715
I know that Libra text and press books are both in the in the process of trying to reclaim those materials into other spaces.

00:29:51.715 --> 00:29:58.914
So, keeping an eye on that kind of stuff like when we use OER materials, it's really easy to kind of lose track of like where it lives, right, and the more you can bring those things either in house into your own institution or

00:29:58.914 --> 00:30:05.715
into a service that You have a reason to trust or in a relationship where you can ask questions the better.

00:30:05.715 --> 00:30:12.915
So that's one thing that we can do, and I think that institutions and teaching and learning centers in particular.

00:30:12.915 --> 00:30:17.015
It is a lot of time and effort to complete these DCMA Take Downs faculty need help with that.

00:30:17.015 --> 00:30:19.465
If that's the root they want to go to remove their material, they need assistance.

00:30:19.465 --> 00:30:28.115
Can't just assume that It'll happen on an individual level and leave it up to chance.

00:30:28.115 --> 00:30:40.920
I think that institutions, and particularly if they're thinking in terms of risk management, they should be thinking about how to get their materials out.

00:30:40.920 --> 00:30:58.814
Course Hero, you know, I'm hearing what Lacy saying and like I'm totally imagining some ideological group, critical race theory, and Course Hero and seeing what comes up and going on in attack and so I think

00:30:58.814 --> 00:31:02.515
that there are all kinds of like very institutionally palatable risk management reasons why dealing more effectively with Course Hero is important, and I do think you know, Course Hero has made noises since appointing Sha Michael Morris that they want

00:31:02.515 --> 00:31:08.914
to engage in these conversations in a collegial way I haven't seen any evidence of it.

00:31:08.914 --> 00:31:14.464
I'd love to be wrong, please prove me wrong but you know I don't think a DCMA process is a collegial process.

00:31:14.464 --> 00:31:21.919
I don't think that's the route the instructor should have to take, to remove large swaths of material and course.

00:31:21.919 --> 00:31:25.415
Hero could choose to change that if they really believe that there is some larger mission here beyond, just straight up data harvesting.

00:31:25.415 --> 00:31:36.715
So, you know, feel, as I say, feel free to prove me wrong. At any moment.

00:31:36.715 --> 00:31:51.314
I would be delighted. you know I don't think I think a Pandora's box has been opened with this kind of service.

00:31:51.314 --> 00:32:00.364
So even, Course Hero, you know, cease to exist tomorrow. for whatever reason we you know, by the weekend we probably have 4 or 5, you know, similar sites to take its place.

00:32:00.364 --> 00:32:06.364
And so, I think this is something that as instructors we are going to have to confront from here on out what I have seen.

00:32:06.364 --> 00:32:11.515
In terms of so in terms of the macro level I'm.

00:32:11.515 --> 00:32:17.115
I'm not quite sure. I mean you know aside from saying, hey, just you know everyone does not use it.

00:32:17.115 --> 00:32:28.214
But I mean how many times have we told ourselves I'm going to get off Facebook this time, right like how often does that really happen?

00:32:28.214 --> 00:32:33.764
And so, I think our best bed of seeing meaningful action as individual instructors is to address this within the classroom itself.

00:32:33.764 --> 00:32:38.117
Now, what I find especially interesting about Course Hero is that they say, Okay, yes.

00:32:38.117 --> 00:32:49.016
You know we have our terms of service, but you also have to abide by your institutions.

00:32:49.016 --> 00:32:53.566
Academic integrity policy. Well, perhaps this is a good way for us to open up conversations about that with students is to say, okay?

00:32:53.566 --> 00:33:03.222
Well, what is academic integrity? What does that mean in terms of sharing these materials?

00:33:03.222 --> 00:33:07.568
You know. recently there was a lawsuit that an instructor brought against a number of students because they shared their materials.

00:33:07.568 --> 00:33:17.015
The instructors' materials on Course Hero when it went against

00:33:17.015 --> 00:33:24.865
The universities. academic integrity policy and that's sort of been part of the foundation of the case.

00:33:24.865 --> 00:33:33.915
And so first, we can, I think, you know, to combat this, have open and dynamic conversations with our students.

00:33:33.915 --> 00:33:38.014
But also, what I've seen and I'm as I prepare my materials for the fall.

00:33:38.014 --> 00:33:47.715
I don't know exactly what this will look like you know individually on my end.

00:33:47.715 --> 00:33:57.164
But many discussions that I've seen on various like higher ed and academic subreddits has been well to combat this.

00:33:57.164 --> 00:34:14.269
We're now adding in statements into our syllabus, basically saying, you know any material that I am the instructor produce you know, cannot be shared.

00:34:14.269 --> 00:34:20.464
It is an infringement on copyright and so basically being very open with students about saying, you know, this is my intellectual property that I'm sharing with in the context of this classroom, but it should stay within this classroom,

00:34:20.464 --> 00:34:22.719
and so, looking at it, you know, to borrow from Rena at more of a micro level.

00:34:22.719 --> 00:34:30.516
I think we have, as the instructors have to consider.

00:34:30.516 --> 00:34:34.264
Okay, well, you know what material am I? Okay, you know, with students potentially sharing on a site like Force hero.

00:34:34.264 --> 00:34:48.067
And you know what kind of statements do I need to put in my syllabus?

00:34:48.067 --> 00:34:54.014
If there are contingencies to that. And so just having those open and direct and honest conversations with students about things like academic integrity.

00:34:54.014 --> 00:35:01.014
Copyright surveillance, privacy. really, just getting at that.

00:35:01.014 --> 00:35:21.615
Digital literacy is perhaps one of the first steps that we can take. especially. yeah.

00:35:21.615 --> 00:35:30.464
Assuming that these sites are always going to be You know something that we have to be aware of, and I think that you know those of us who have either a professional or personal interest in open access or open educational resources or the notion of

00:35:30.464 --> 00:35:36.217
the Commons. I think we need to be really aware of players like Course Hero to me.

00:35:36.217 --> 00:35:46.715
This recent move to start hosting OERs on Course Hero is a real it's.

00:35:46.715 --> 00:35:52.914
It's a real time to encircle the commons right to take all of these materials that were created for open use, and to lock them into a very specific ecosystem.

00:35:52.914 --> 00:35:57.667
Where students, as we've already said, are tracked and monitored, where they will be served as an invited to pay for products.

00:35:57.667 --> 00:36:03.217
But not only that we can see with the way Course Hero behaves in.

00:36:03.217 --> 00:36:10.014
How it deals with content that it's not a particularly good open citizen, right!

00:36:10.014 --> 00:36:21.514
It may host OERs, but it completely disregards the licensing that instructors put on their materials.

00:36:21.514 --> 00:36:28.514
You know, putting that license on doesn't have any impact on how quickly they take down material and it doesn't bypass the DCMA take down process which I find absolutely wild and so you know I

00:36:28.514 --> 00:36:42.570
think that there is often in teaching and learning circles there can be a sense of like, you know.

00:36:42.570 --> 00:36:47.165
Well, my assessment practice means that this doesn't affect me but even if that's the way your course works, it's not the way the structure of the institutions works and it's not the way like these materials will not stay in

00:36:47.165 --> 00:36:59.614
the open. if private players are allowed to encircle them.

00:36:59.614 --> 00:37:16.318
The way Course Hero is doing, and so I think that this is an issue that has like huge philosophical resonances for the way we approach education, and I think we have to fight it on the micro, level, because we don't have a lot of

00:37:16.318 --> 00:37:28.464
other choice. But I hope that people who are interested in privacy rights and interested in open access, even outside of individual classroom contacts, will recognize that what Course Hero is doing here has a detrimental effect on the commons as a whole

00:37:28.464 --> 00:37:41.214
and you know they can either change their practices in their business plan, which I doubt is going to happen, or we can take steps to get that material back and out of their clutches.

00:37:41.214 --> 00:37:47.614
And that, unfortunately, will be like a Sisyphean task that we are up against every semester as long as these tools exist online, Brenna and Lacy Thanks.

00:37:47.614 --> 00:37:50.714
So much for chatting with me today about privacy, surveillance, and Course Hero.

00:37:50.714 --> 00:37:54.872
Make sure to follow the Drpc. on Twitter at Drp.

00:37:54.872 --> 00:37:57.872
Collective and visit our website. Drp: Collective Dot Com: Thanks.