From The Editor:

"The past isn't dead.
It isn't even past."

-Old Time Traveller Saying, Coined 300 Years from now.

Hello, iSchool. I hope you are well.

I don't have any words for wisdom or bits of philosophy for this issue. The world is changing as I sit here and write this, and that is both awe inspiring and terrifying. It is also too late for me to be thinking about such things, so I won't. I'll save reflection on the state of the union and the rest of the world for when I'm well rested.

Elections are soon. At the beginning of February, representatives from each student organization will visit the Residential LIS 530 sections to tell a bit about the organizations, and explain how one can become an officer. It's not too late to become involved with the Silverfish. We are always welcoming to new writers, and anyone interested. I have proven to be a little lackadaisical, but I am proud of our newsletter, and I would like to see it continue. More information on how to nominate someone for a position, and when to vote, will come soon. Watch your listservs.

In other news: We want your fiction. Your poems, your stories, your literary endeavors. Next quarter we will, once again, produce a literary supplement made up of the creative writing of you, our fellow iSchoolers. Submission guidelines will be sent to one and all in the next couple of weeks, and I look forward to reading your stories, or poem, or plays if you have one.

Be excellent to each other.

Erin Mettling,
Editor

AN INCREDIBLY BIASED APPROACH TO SOPA
BY
ERIN METTLING

Choosing an incredibly current issue such as SOPA for this article was such a bad idea. It was like the mullet or skinny jeans for guys. It's one of those things where, in the moment, it's the best idea in the world! But when you look back on the photographs, you can't help but wonder, "What the hell was I thinking?" SOPA and PIPA are fantastic topics. There is so much stuff from both sides of the support divide, and there's new information being released each day about who is or is not behind the Stop Online Piracy Act, that keeping up with it was nearly impossible. This is especially true for the last week.

On Wednesday, 18 January 2012, users of the Internet protested. They gathered peacefully and en masse online to show Congress what it would be like if the Internet was regulated. I had no idea how often I turn to Google to find the smallest things, or how often I actually use Wikipedia as a jumping off point for research. On that day, though Google still worked (it would cause riots and panic if Google actually went down), Wikipedia pages were blacked out. I couldn't access the Harry Potter Wiki, which is my one of my main sources of mostly canon information about the books and universe. I use it for my gaming. Many already know this about me because I wear my geek proudly, but I'll elaborate for those of you who do not know.

I participate in a couple of journal-based, Harry Potter role playing games via insanejournal.com. I'm not embarrassed. In these games, I write characters that are set in the magical world found in J.K. Rowling's books. Most of the games I have been involved with are next generation. This means that they are the kids of Harry Potter and his friends and classmates. So, some of these characters have been named by Ms. Rowling herself, but most of them are original characters. You can, if you are oh so inclined, see a list of my past and present characters at

erinenchanted.insanejournal.com. Full disclosure. I also make icons for characters. These are 100 x 100 images of actors, models, or musicians who represent what a character looks like. Most of the icons I make come from screen captures (screencaps) from movies.

What has this to do with SOPA? I read the bill in its entirety the day of the blackout. Before then, I knew what I heard from others: that it wanted to censor the internet. That's not the case. Not really. What I got from reading the bill is that SOPA wants to do what its name suggests. It wants to stop online pirates from hurting and stealing from American artists. Sounds good, right? I think so. Not having to worry about receiving emails from people in other parts of the world who are looking to steal your money is a good thing. Though, in my humble opinion, if you buy that some prince in Africa will give you a load of money for whatever reason, you really didn't need that money anyway. I'm not excusing it by any means. It's theft, but seriously? When has any good actually come from giving up your life's savings to a complete stranger? Fairy tales don't count.

I digress again. SOPA, in theory, is a good thing, but read the definitions. Once I was able to move past the legal jargon, I realized that they are incredibly broad definitions. On the surface, they sound good. I was starting to believe them, even, and I have the cynicism of history at my back. I looked closer, and I realized that, though on the surface it feels right, just beneath that is a double un-good, *1984*, Big Brother feeling. Under the definitions, if someone really starts to dislike me, I am a pirate.

Avast, ye mateys! All hands on deck. I don't have permission from the films to use the screencaps, which were made by others. The pictures I use on my characters' journal profiles are not mine to use. I don't have Ms. Rowling's okay to write within her world, either. When I have a character who is an artist or musician, I link to pictures they "painted" or songs they "sang". I give credit where credit is due for those, but not with the other things. Under the broad definitions, should SOPA actually make it to vote and pass, I would be in serious trouble. I would not be anywhere near the top of the list, mind, because what I do is not an act of terrorism. I'm not actually hurting anyone, but it could be argued that I am. Not only do I have everything at my creative outlet, but my tumblr has copyrighted material on it, I tweet about things that I don't own the rights to, and I view videos on youtube that don't belong to the people who posted them.

I am innocently viewing, sharing, using, and interacting with my geeky passions. I am watching trailers of movies of books that I love (fodder for this newsletter). I am keeping sane by writing characters set in a world I grew up with. I share all of this with my friends and "followers" on tumblr and twitter because I'm proud of my geekiness. The vote has been delayed, again, but if it's passed, what does that mean for all of us? Not just me and my geeky pastimes, but all of us in the information field? They're questions to ponder, and questions that I can't even start to answer yet. Until we know if SOPA will finally be voted on in the House, and PIPA in the Senate, any answers are like this article: speculative, random, and very opinionated.

FROM AN ONLINE STUDENT, A LETTER
BY
GREG BEM

When I first became interested in the iSchool at the University of Washington, I had the same dilemma every prospective student faces: choose residential or online? It so happened through some computer error the choice to choose between the two programs extended itself well beyond the initial application. I had been accepted to the iSchool, but accepted into both programs. I remember getting that email and feeling like my body was being pulled apart, wrenched from its hinges and sockets, elasticized and spread up on a wall over some proverbial mantel.

After numerous consultations and arguments with friends, foes, colleagues, coworkers, educators, mentors, and family, I chose the online mode after all. Though the process of making the decision generated despair, discomfort, and anxiety, the choice, when finally made, presented a great sense of relief and excitement. But why did I make the decision? Why go online?

At the time of application, I had only been in Seattle a few months, no huge, long-term plans in place, no necessarily-specific outlook for the future established. I moved from North Philadelphia where I was struggling to stay sober, productive, and retain the essence of valuable citizenry learned through the AmeriCorps. The transition to the Pacific Northwest unlocked a lot of potential, and the period of time before the bud of the idea of school even appeared as a concept was fruitful with life. Working, saving, living, exploring, and doing all of those great things people do

in Seattle invaded my life. My involvement with a variety of social and cultural communities flourished through non-profit activity: the curatorial duties of an arts series on Capitol Hill, and my involvement with my local library, the Columbia branch of the Seattle Public Library system.

The choice to follow the online mode depended on school serving primarily as a catalyst of the activities of my professional and personal endeavors. It's expensive to live in Seattle, and being an active member of many communities constricts the schedule. The online mode appealed to me through its availability and its accommodation. The 21st century learning experience, the part-time manageability, and the complete reliance upon self-discipline for scheduling and fulfilling personal education promoted self-awareness. Going online felt like choosing a tool belt rather than donning an entire outfit, where the skills learned within the "class" could be synchronized with daily life. Avoiding a formalized schedule's constraints, and avoiding that frugal, thrifty, monk-like mode of living (ingrained so well from my undergraduate days) served as additional motivators.

With the initial quarter behind me, reflection comes at estranged moments. And yet when I do ponder the fluidity of this form of learning, the decision still feels correct. The overwhelming Internet hyper-connectivity and the incessant screen-gazing often contrast the ideal image of opportunity, but the benefits of "part-time" or "distance" education triumph. All of the aforementioned benefits of this program mode sustain themselves through the variety of classes, each with their individual educators and composition of peers. The freedom of expression, and making the voice heard, evolves and fits within the simultaneous discourses. The tool belt, consisting of a plenitude of aids to information analysis, grows with every module, every lecture, and every discussion board thread. And yet the freedom to seek out and establish personal achievements gets consistently reinforced through the coinciding communities I had come to love before school happened.

For many, an online education of the graduate level can feel hollow, non-adaptive, and entirely faceless. The challenges of will and action become propelled by barriers of technology and communication. Early on I proposed to myself limiting thought around surface-level conflicts; instead, I argue, and command to myself, control of the courses is control of the self, a narrowing of a personal focus at varying instances, an expansion of the vision, and perhaps most importantly, an understanding of control over a new ability to segment priorities. Online courses often feel like volunteer obligations and personal commitments in that they require the student to define the value within and project that value in the catalyst mode, allowing education to better serve, steer, and soothe the totality of one's everyday life.

IMPORTANCE OF PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENT FOR UW'S NEXT 150 YEARS
BY
BRYAN DOSONO,
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN INFORMATICS

In just 150 years, the University of Washington has made incredible leaps and strides as a global leader in every respectable industry imaginable. Alumni of UW have patented scientific discoveries ranging from the color television to the NASA space suit, opened successful businesses like Nordstrom and Baskin Robbins, entertained the masses with the founding of Pixar Animation Studios and Wizards of the Coast, and touched the hearts of children everywhere through the creation of loving characters like Beezus, Ramona, and Dennis the Menace [1].

The University of Washington produces global leaders that transform the world by providing its students with tremendous opportunities to learn, engage, and discover. However, these opportunities are soon disappearing because the quality of education has been negatively affected by decreased financial support from the state. As a public university that has

historically relied on state funding, UW must now place more emphasis on garnering private support if it wishes to continue educating the bright minds of future Huskies.

With respect to the definition of a public intuition, many people feel that the state should prioritize the needs of its universities. However, given the current budget crisis in today's economy, the state can no longer expect to meet all of its financial obligations to higher education. Data from the UW Office of Planning and Budgeting has demonstrated a new funding paradigm within the past several decades [2]. In 1990, the average funding received per student was $17,000—the state paid 82% and the student paid 18%. It is estimated that in 2013, the average funding received per student will be approximately $16,800, with the state paying only 30% and the student paying 70%! While the institution struggles with the challenges of decreased state funding, the University of Washington must continue to commit to making higher education accessible to students in years to come.

One of the University of Washington's few revenue streams that boasts the potential for long-term growth is private support. The demand for new instructional technologies, in addition to increased utility costs, and the need for new student services all contribute to the rising cost of tuition. Moreover, private gifts allow the University of Washington to provide a margin of excellence for its students that cannot be accomplished with state and research funding alone. For instance, private donors contribute to the critical edge of excellence by supporting scholarship opportunities—like the Mary Gates

Endowment and the Husky Promise—to assist a diverse array of students in meeting their educational goals. In order to keep tuition affordable for students within the next 150 years and beyond, the university should focus and invest more into private partnerships for the support needed to perpetuate the university's excellence.

Nobody can predict the future, but it is safe to say that the significance of private support looms larger than it ever has before. The University of Washington's ability to fulfill its core mission will largely be a function of its ability to generate additional support from the community at large. Tomorrow's leaders are today's students at UW, and their education will continue to thrive even more so with philanthropic contributions from corporations, alumni, and friends of the university.

Sources

[1] http://www.washington.edu/alumni/timeline
[2] http://www.washington.edu/discover/budget

About the Author

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State and Tuition Funding per FTE
(in 2013 Dollars)