

Technology as a help and hindrance to student flourishing

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Background

- Four years developing student mental health societies
 - Mental Wealth UK (now Student Minds), Leeds Metropolitan
- Two years running campaigns and training
 - NUS, Mindfull
- Three years implementing research and digital programs
 - Hong Kong University, TalkLife

Hypothesis

- We're growing more relaxed about the internet because:
 - Fears have often been exaggerated
 - We accept that it's here to stay.
(Normalisation; other fears emerged)
 - Moderation is improving.



Primitive Approach to Moderation

Moderation: “the action of making something less extreme”

Moderators: anyone with control over what others see (governments, corporations, parents)

- The predominant way of moderating has been to censor content and ban users (🚫🚫🚫🚫)

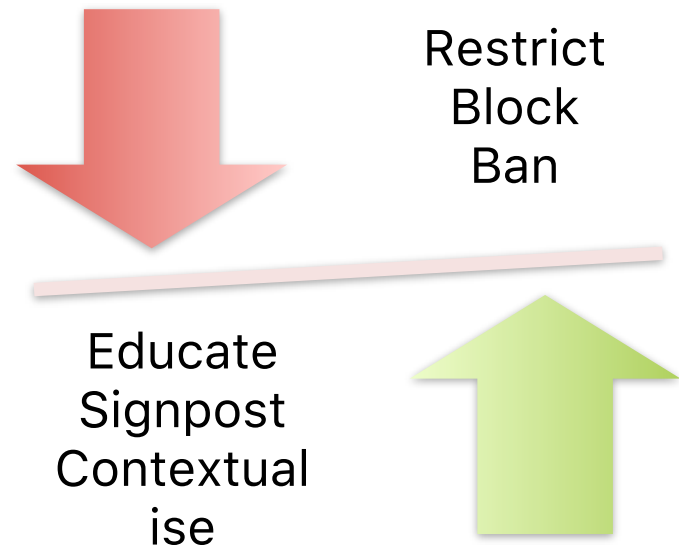


Is this approach sufficient:



Balanced Approach

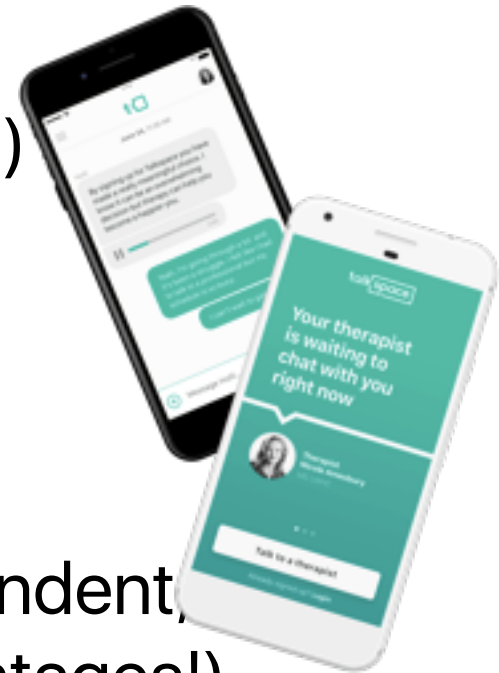
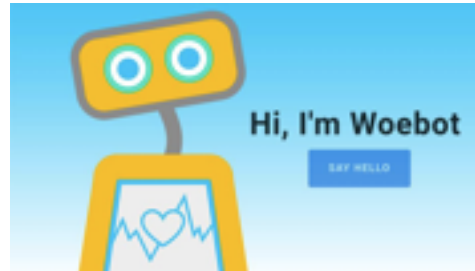
- Accept block-ban ('negative') moderation as necessary but not sufficient.
- Aim to provide a balance between restricting content, and also attempting to educate and contextualise. (~~GOOGLE~~)
- For example, 'buddies'; signposting to resources and helplines. (See FB/Google.)



*Positive and negative in the sense of addition and subtraction, rather than emotionally

Digital Wellbeing Services

- Screening for mental health issues (A.I.)
- Online CBT/therapy
- Education (MOOCs?)
- Peer-support



Benefits: scalable, geographically independent, data-driven. (These can also be disadvantages!)

“the overall results indicate equivalence [between ICBT and CBT]” Andersson, G. et al., 2014, World Psychiatry

BUT..

Continuing challenges

- Adherence
- Impersonal (empathy gap)
- Data privacy
- Online disinhibition effect
- Group validation of maladaptive behaviours

Importance of safeguarding and risk assessment



Integrative Ways Forward

- Online-offline integration (behavioural - e.g. wearables)
- Human - automation
- Private sector – public/third sectors
- Utilising third party software

