Cover Letter:

In order to define privacy, I decided to present my definition in the form of a Powtoon Animation. Throughout the course while discussing piracy, the question that always popped into my mind was how, if possible, to stop piracy. We’ve seen various efforts against piracy as pirating rates have rapidly grown, such as the The Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA). Like with most legislation attempting to address this issue, the question of security versus privacy arises. One of the main criticisms of SOPA was that in order to implement what it proposed, users of the internet would be under heavy surveillance and data passed between the users and the internet would be analyzed, stored in databases, and more. In essence, SOPA infringed upon the privacy of internet users. Thus, my interest in personal internet privacy was provoked.

Privacy, at its very core, is defined by Dictionary.com as “the state or condition of being free from being observed or disturbed by other people.” Interestingly, this definition can be applied to the technological medium of the internet. In a sense, the internet is an extremely revealing and public place. With social media becoming a dominating sector of the internet, more and more information is being uploaded to the web and is freely accessible to anyone who can connect to the internet. With this in mind, privacy online is certainly different from the typical definition that we may think of. While on the internet, one is ALWAYS being observed. Whether we are aware or not, browsers are storing cookies and cache, our computer are in constant communications with networks, sending information back and forth. Hence, this is where the axiom “Once on the web, always on the web” stems from. In fact, the government recognizes the rising conflict of what piracy on the internet is. Legal definitions of piracy have arose, and it appears more and more in court.

My definition of privacy revolves around the balance of security and confidentiality of personal information. I do believe there should be a degree of monitoring of the internet happenings for our safety. One of the front most examples of this is the current online war against ISIS. Anonymous, the assorted group of hackers on the internet, declared an online war on ISIS, notably through Twitter. If it weren’t for the intensive data analysis and DDos attacks, Anonymous wouldn’t be able to weed through the millions of accounts on Twitter and report the accounts that are pro-ISIS or even run by ISIS itself. Similarly, the government, who are given a much deeper range of information regarding internet activities, are able to obtain a massive amount of intelligence, and in fact were able to stop several potential attacks.

I decided to utilize the form of an animation since I think it is an engaging form of presenting my definition. Furthermore, my definition is supported strongly by empirical data, that is best demonstrated visually. The wordy parts of explaining my definition can be easily covered using the voice-over feature of Powtoon, while the smooth animating tools can be used to visually show the numerical evidence I have supporting my definition of privacy. Moreover, I felt like my audience for a term like privacy in regards to the internet would most likely be technology savvy, and hence an online generated animation would be the perfect medium for such people.

In addition, to address such an audience, I used sources that were well respected by the tech community. For example, sites like cnet.com, are extremely well known and regularly post articles about technology. In regards to statistics, I did my best to find reliable statistics that were well backed by sources and citations. The statistics I used were not hard numbers, but rather they were studies and based on the opinions of people. Thus, the numbers are bound to change depending on the demographic polled. In order to effectively present my evidence in a convincing manner, my animation consisted of voiceovers and the demonstration of graphs on the slides. I also included a mini-story line, with a narrator character in order to keep the animation interesting and engaging. Through these different techniques, I hope to mainly appeal to logos and ethos. My empirical data will mostly constitute to my appeal to logos, and the use of professional sources and a clean, well designed animation will be my appeal to ethos.