Editorial

Consider all of candidates' past actions

Dead Week is here. Normally that would mean we would trot out another editorial about your need as students to exert some effort. Or it could mean we'd chastise all the professors whose courses violate the guidelines about homework and exams during Dead Week. But that would be cliche. If you don't know that you need to actually try this week, we're not the ones to tell you.

So here's something that might actually matter: Herman Cain is no longer running for president. Saturday, he suspended his campaign amid allegations of inappropriate sexual advances and a 13-year affair. Whether true or not, it was clear that the possibility of truth was becoming an enormous drag on his campaign.

We cannot support any candidate with such a past, even if he has good ideas. We prefer to examine records more holistically instead of forgetting everything before the recent past. How individuals have acted in the past points to how they will do so in the future and, even if that is private, it is always relevant if it spills over into public life.

Given that assessment, we think it unfortunate that other candidates, such as Newt Gingrich, have not fallen under similar scrutiny. While members of the media are right to examine aspects of candidates' personal lives that spill over into public effects, they should do so fairly.

The moral shortcomings of Gingrich are nothing new. Allegedly he visited his first wife while she was in hospital to discuss the terms of their divorce. Six months after her death, he remarried. While still married to his second wife, he began an affair with his current wife.

We notice among this election cycle's Republican candidates, there is a strong bent to idealism. That idealism does not, however, seem to encompass personal morals. Whenever they are discussed, it is only because they are newly surfaced charges.

That is the problem we face. Instead of examining candidates' whole records, we pick and choose what we like from the recent past. Gingrich's political career, for all his talk about shoring supply-side economics, helping defeat communism and leading the Republican Party to a huge electoral victory in 1994, his political career may very well have begun only a few years ago.

There is little discussion of his private past, which constitutes serious baggage to some voters. There is little discussion of his and his party's polarizing effect on politics in the 1990s, not yet undone. In the same way that studying the last two weeks of the semester will be no help for a final exam, scrutinizing only the last few years of a candidate's life will not lead to a really informed decision.

Editorial Board

Jake Lovett, editor in chief
Michael Belding, opinion editor
Rick Hanton, assistant opinion editor
Jacob Witte, daily columnist
Jessica Opoien, daily staff writer
Ryan Peterson, daily columnist
Claire Vriezen, daily columnist

Feedback policy:

The Daily encourages discussion but does not guarantee its publication.
We reserve the right to edit or reject any letter or online feedback.

Send your letters to letters@iowastatedaily.com. Letters must include the name(s), phone number(s), majors and/or group affiliation(s) and year in school of the author(s). Phone numbers and addresses will not be published.

Online feedback may be used if first name and last name, major and year in school are included in the post. Feedback posted online is eligible for print in the Iowa State Daily.

Internet

Exercising unfair control

Have you studied abroad during your time at Iowa State? I have, and I will tell you that it is an awesome experience to undertake if you have the ability to do so. I was part of a fairly expensive summer program in London, but in many cases you can be part of a student exchange and pay normal Iowa tuition when you study abroad.

But enough of my promo for study abroad. I mention my international studies because I want to tell you a story about my time studying at Brunel University in the U.K.

Now, if you've read my columns, you know that I'm a very tech-savvy student. I read technology and science news, I study computer engineering, I always check out the latest tech sites and tools (this week I got into Diaspora). So when I traveled to Europe, I figured that I could set up my little FTP (file-transfer) server with a friend back at ISU and free up more digital picture space on my cameras in London by sending already-taken photos (I took about 3,000) back home over the Internet. Easy, right?

Well, it was not as easy as I thought. While Iowa State's stance on file-sharing is that they don't want you to share copy-written files illegally, but won't filter the network to stop you per se, Brunel simply blocks everything you could possibly use to share files. So after we finally convinced them to let us on the Internet there, we couldn't access my FTP server back home, nor any FTP server for that matter, and I was even stopped from following a link to a technology news story on TorrentFreak, a news site that covers file-sharing.

Now, was I trying to do anything illegal by accessing my server back home in Iowa or reading about BitTorrent? No. I was just trying to stash some photos and keep up on the news. But this is the basic model. This is the type of situation that the Recording Industry Association of America and Motion Picture Association of America would love to see in every American home. And they're working right now to make it happen, with the help of Congress.

The PROTECT IP Act, or "PIPA," was introduced in May in the U.S. Senate and the Stop Online Piracy Act, or "SOPA," was introduced in the House last month. The agenda of both bills is to crack down hard on any type of online piracy of work created by companies in the United States. This is a very good intention and our work does need protecting, but the problem is that PIPA and SOPA have no carrot incentives, just a massive stick for rights-holders to wield.

Under PIPA and SOPA, companies such as the RIAA and MPAA can ask the attorney general to take down a site that they allege is infringing their content

Google and the Google Web page design are trademarks of Google Inc.

Columnist Rick Hanton believes that two bills under consideration by Congress would block much legal Internet activity in addition to illegitimate websites and stifle innovation in favor of entrenched business associations.

By Rick.Hanton
@iowastatedaily.com

rights. This means that all U.S. service providers must disable that site's domain name (DNS), search engines must remove it from results, payment services must suspend payments and ad companies must break ties with the site within a week.

This doesn't mean that the site will be taken off the Internet if it is located outside the U.S. It will just be a lot harder to find and somewhat harder for them to make money.

If these bills do pass, experts believe that individuals will simply find a way around the restrictions. Tools will allow users to circumvent DNS, users could find the sites on non-U.S. search engines, sites will use non-U.S. (and probably less trustworthy) payment services and ad companies. The Center for Democracy and Technology warns that DNS blocking will likely take down legitimate sites, that social sites like Twitter and YouTube will be burdened with the new role of "copyright police" for fear of being put out of business and that innovation will be stifled with the increased risk of doing creative new experiments online.

PIPA estimates enforcement costs at about $1 per American and for that $1, we'll get our own version of the "great firewall of China," the technological net between China and the rest of the world that the Chinese government uses to keep "bad" content out. Isn't that awesome?

So the question is, does this really help U.S. content creators? Once again, the RIAA and MPAA are trying to put the Internet rabbit back in the hat. The lawmakers, some of whom don't use the Internet (i.e. John McCain), shouldn't be regulating what they don't understand.

Recently, after conducting a study (how novel!), the Swiss government decided Wednesday that because they found that consumer spending on video and audio media as a percentage was in fact constant, not declining, they would not alter current laws to make personal downloading of music and movies illegal there. That's not the only study that has pointed out that "pirates" actually on average pay for more legal movies and music than everyone else.

Studies have shown that many consumers use unpaid downloads as a discovery mechanism or a try-before-you-buy, yet still buy their favorite music and movies to support the content creators. These studies note that for years, the record companies simply lagged behind the curve of digital adoption and now with iTunes and Spotify, are just catching up. But their inability to update their business model is no reason for them to declare war on the Internet and the Internet generation.

I hope our Congress will see the light of reason and vote against PIPA and SOPA, otherwise our creative young generation and our economy will suffer simply to satisfy the whims of multibillion-dollar record and movie studios.

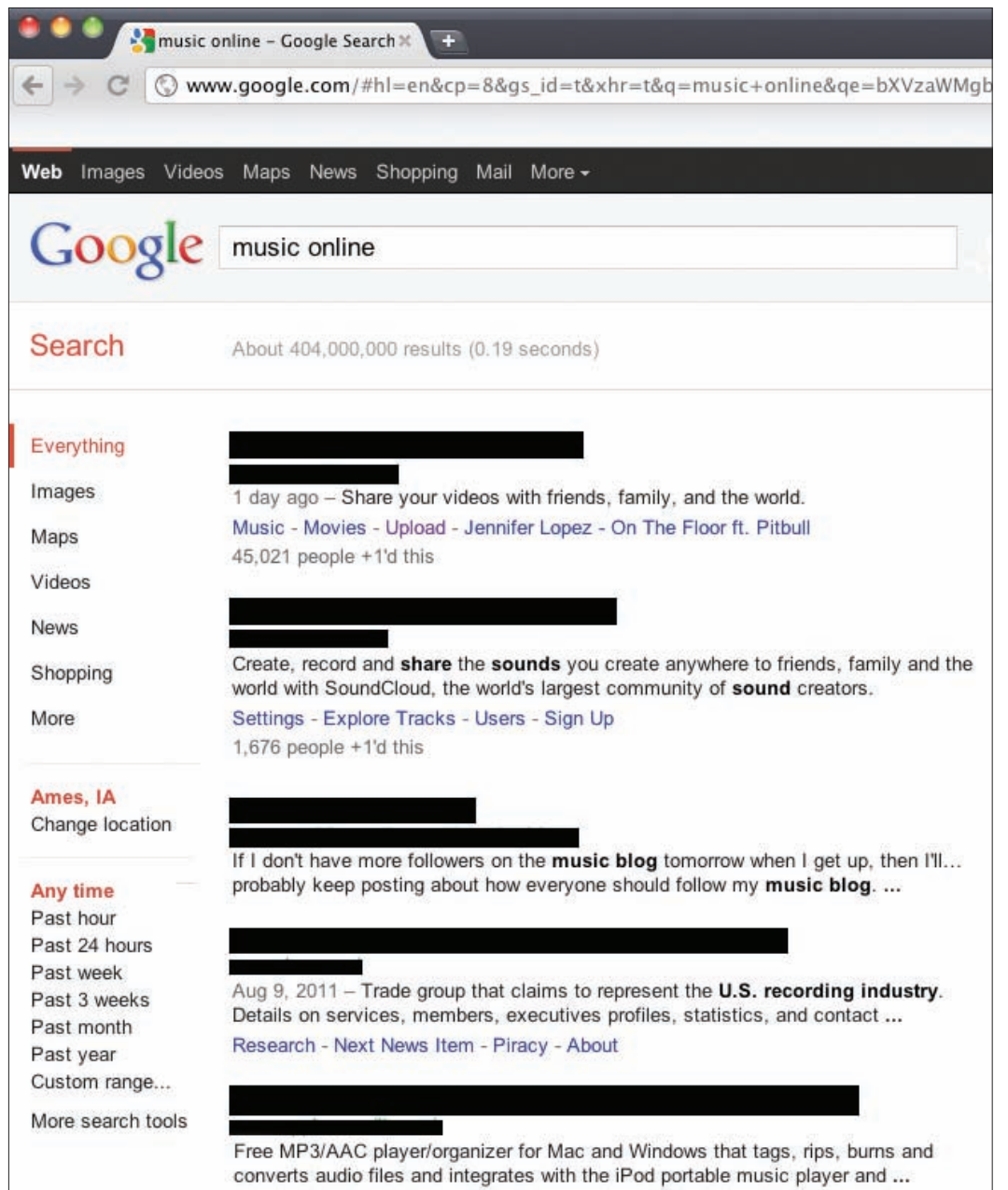**Rick Hanton** is a senior in computer engineering from Arden Hills, Minn.

Teaching

Balance technology in education

Did you enjoy watching PowerPoint slide after PowerPoint slide when you were in high school? Did you come to class each day with an unquenchable thirst for using any and all forms of technology that you or your teacher could muster? Yeah, me neither.

I, like many other students at Iowa State, am in the teacher education program. Soon, hundreds of us will be out student teaching, and before we know it, looking for a job for next fall. One popular topic of conversation in the teacher education program is how we are to use technology in the classroom.

Not only is there an entire course that teaches us how to implement technology in the class, but in nearly every other course, it seems, technology is tamped into us like an iron fist. We are constantly urged to use technology, and it seems that many lesson plans, no matter how successful, can pass or fail, grade-wise, according to whether technology is used.

I may sound like a curmudgeon, but I am not ready to recklessly abandon the "old ways" of not using technology at

By Jacob.Witte
@iowastatedaily.com

every turn. In the 1950s, '60s and '70s, America had the greatest education system on the planet, hands down. Since then, and coincidentally enough, education has been declining rapidly and the availability and use of technology has skyrocketed. Although I know there are many other reasons for the decline of education, this connection, in my opinion, cannot be ignored.

In my content area, social studies, I have seen no better way of learning than reading and discussion, primarily using a Socratic dialogue with students. Using the Socratic method challenges pre-existing notions and helps to reinforce your own arguments. Having a class with a professor that is competent in using the Socratic method is integral to a liberal education. And the extent of technology that is needed for this great way of learning is a printing press,

which was invented nearly 600 years ago.

I see little to no reason for using Smartboards, PowerPoints, laptops and tablet computers ad nauseum when it comes to education. I cannot say with honesty that I will never use technology, but I certainly won't use it as a crutch. Technology is simply a tool to use with education, the same as chalk, slide rulers and compasses were decades ago. And I can guarantee teacher-education students did not have entire classes devoted to how to use chalk.

One common justification for using technology in the classroom is that, essentially, "the kids are doing it these days," meaning that because students use technology so much, we as teachers should basically just go along with it.

I find this defense, frankly speaking, lazy. To just "go along" with what students are doing shows little to no creativity or originality when it comes to designing and implementing lesson plans.

Using technology does have its place in education, especially in the disciplines of science and mathematics, as they help develop the technology that eventually

becomes common among us. However, using the latest and most advanced technology as a teacher will hardly win over students if you do not have the ability to relate to students and actually teach them things.

A PowerPoint cannot help you have better classroom management, and an iPad will not make you more knowledgeable of your content area. It is really that simple. And while some technology can help students learn something, the chances are that saturating the classroom with it will soon become a problem.

I am not advocating for boycotting the use of technology or loathing its very existence. Technology certainly has its place in education. I am merely saying that, as teachers and future teachers, we are charged with having to find a peaceful harmony in which technology can be used and student learning can occur. And student learning is paramount over whether technology can be used or not.

Jacob Witte is a senior in political science from Callender, Iowa.