

A review of mining student data could save lives essay

[Law](#), [Security](#)



Michael Morris writes an interesting article, “ Mining Student Data Could Save Lives,” which is about that campuses must use the technology to find out who is going to cause problems like shootings on campus. His thesis is that “ nearly all college and university campuses have developed threat-assessment teams, whereby key members of various campus groups come together regularly to share information and discuss troubling student behavior” and that data mining is this answer (Morris 2011).

The article’s target audience is anyone who is involved with or concerned about college education and safety. Most likely, this will be the campus police and administrators. The author is very persuasive, giving to the readers many examples of how data mining is now used to show bad activities. As an example, Morris writes, “ Have you ever had a credit-card transaction declined because the bank noticed an unusual pattern of spending on your account? Through data mining, the bank drew the conclusion that your credit card had been stolen” (2011). Just like the bad behavior of a person with stolen bankcards is shown to a bank, if a university looks at student emails, it could find out who is going to perform bad behavior on campus. This is the use of propaganda, because readers can really relate to having their credit cards and bank cards stolen and the bad things that happen because of it. It is not as bad as the taking of a student life, but if it can be so easily solved this way with data mining, then it should be used on universities for student safety.

Morris uses the “ crystal ball” metaphor because sometimes people think these problems can only be solved with magic, but a technology exists that

is like magical in what it can do. This technology is data mining. By relating technology and data mining, Morris effectively makes a fantasy become reality. The author establishes his credibility by talking about things like the “ Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act” and because his byline says he is a policeman (Morris 2011). He presents a counterargument by saying what the people against him will say and showing them how it can be different, that the technology culture is changing to allow this data mining for safety. The logical fallacy, I think, is in not saying exactly how the colleges can get the kind of permission they need to do this data mining. The author assumes a lot about the legal words colleges use to gain access to their Internet systems, but little about what a college must do to be able to really do it within the legal rights.

People might disagree with this argument because they see data mining as intrinsically bad, as a tool used by the hackers to illegally invade the privacy and information of Internet users. People who think that the college is asking too much of its users, for a Big Brother style of monitoring, in order to use its Internet, will object to this data mining. The article will be most successful for anyone who has experienced violence at a college or college administrators who are thinking of ways to increase safety on the campus. It will be less persuasive for people, including the students, who are for privacy rights and more individual responsibilities when it comes to using college Internet resources.

Works Cited

Morris, Michael. "Mining Student Data Could Save Lives." The Chronicle of Higher Education (2 Oct. 2011). Web.