

**Author(s):** Paul Conway, PhD, 2010

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# SI 410 ETHICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Week 9a: Avatars – Continuum or Prosthesis

# THEMES

- Textual and visual identity
- Internet identity
- “Cyborgization”
- Projecting self: continuum or prosthesis

1. Identity
2. Internet
3. Cyborg
4. Projecting

- Character identity is a combination of...
  - Self-conception (possibly inaccurate)
  - Judgments of those around you
  - Personality features
  - Physical presentation and manner
  
- “If IT affects the way others see me ... then it will come to affect the way I see myself.”

1. Identity
2. Internet
3. Cyborg
4. Projecting

- Three-part structural feature of identity:
  - This is how I really am
  - This is how I am coming across
  - This is how I really want to be
  
- We care about the character we in fact possess, and we care to display the character we in fact possess. (p. 151)
- Gap between the real and ideal self-image.

•Matthews, “Identity and Information Technology (2008)

1. Identity
2. Internet
3. Cyborg
4. Projecting

- Matthews focus on text-based identity on the Internet – thus the following:
- “Online life limits the possibilities for intimacy precisely because it undermines the possibility of the coauthored self.”

# NORMALIZATION OF BIOMECHANICAL SELVES

1. Identity
2. Internet
3. **Cyborg**
4. Projecting

- Prosthesis – restoring normal functions
- Face lift – restoring or enhancing self-image
- Alternations for aesthetic or intellectual purposes
  - Stelarc: <http://v2.stelarc.org/>
- Implants: enhance neural functions

(p. 157): “If we become too dependent on, or too distracted by, the offerings of a technologically rich and tempting world, we may well tend to lose ourselves in the technology.” TRUE?



# REVISITING AVATAR DEFINITION

1. Identity
2. Internet
3. Cyborg
4. **Projecting**

- (p. 9) [An avatar is] “... a virtual, surrogate self that acts as a stand in for our real-space selves, that represents the user. The cyberspace avatar is displaced from the facticity of our real-space selves...
  - Choice in the creation of the avatar
  - Space to create meaning

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide. It features a vertical stack of thin, semi-transparent green lines of varying widths. To the right of these lines are several solid green circles of different sizes. One circle is the largest and is positioned near the top. Below it are several smaller circles, including one that contains the number '10'.

# PAUL CONWAY

*Associate Professor*  
**School of Information**  
**University of Michigan**  
**[www.si.umich.edu](http://www.si.umich.edu)**

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