Valerie Steeves
University of Ottawa, Canada. vsteeves@uottawa.ca

Owain Jones
University of Gloucestershire, UK. ojones@glos.ac.uk

In a sense, to be a child is to be under surveillance. Parents watch their children to keep them safe and to correct their behaviour. Teachers keep an eye on students to enforce classroom rules and to maintain discipline. Managers of shopping malls and many other semi-public places use a variety of methods to keep young people under control in order to maintain those spaces for adult usage, sensibilities and consumption. Depending on age, which is critical in this context, it can be argued that surveillance as care is a necessary condition of nurturing and educating children and young people.

However there are a series of pressing questions about the surveillance of young people. To what extent is surveillance justified? How far should it go and what form should it take? Is it more about imposing (adult) order of some kind on young people rather than a form of care? Is it a means of reproducing adult society in perpetuity at the expense of the alterity that might flourish in young life and which might challenge dominant ideologies and orders of society? How does it square with children's rights? Such questions have long been at the heart of relations between young people and adults, and are pressing in new ways particularly in relationship to technology, capitalism, urbanism and consumption.

In historical terms, shifting adult constructions of childhood, such as the romantic Apollonian (innocent) child, and the more puritanically derived Dionysian (corrupt) child (Jenks 2005), have carried with them very different regimes of education, discipline and surveillance. This has translated into constructions of differing childhoods (e.g. gender) in differing kinds of spaces. For example, part of the very powerful idea of a "natural" country childhood is that (innocent) children should be free from supervision, and free to explore nature (Jones 1997; Ward 1988). An absence of surveillance has been seen as critical to children's wellbeing and development in some romantically derived liberal regimes of child nurturing. Such regimes (as in alternative education systems) are now very much the minority as more attention is focused on the child in the family, the school, public space, by parents, educators, the state and corporations. Freedom for children in (developed world) urban space has become problematic, particularly in the modern era. And we must remember that due to long term demographic shifts from rural to urban, "the late modern private child [is] predominantly the city child" (James et. al. 1998: 51). Cloke and Jones (2005) have explored how the derelict city has been seen as a place where children find some kind of freedom from adult surveillance in this otherwise hostile environment.

Over the past few decades, the potential to experience that freedom has been restructured and constrained by a wide array of new surveillance technologies. It is now common for nurseries and preschools to broadcast images of the children in their care over the Internet so parents can watch from a distance (Dowty 2008). Older children's mobility is increasingly under adult scrutiny in order to keep them safe from "strangers" and other dangers they might encounter when they leave the home (Fotel and Thomsen 2004). Many schools use closed circuit televisions, fingerprint scanners and Smartcards to keep an eye on their students as they move through the school throughout the day (Dowty 2008). Children's web sites surreptitiously collect data from the children who play there (Grimes and Shade 2005; Steeves 2006,

2007), and social networking has opened up the child's world to surveillance on the part of parents, schools, corporations and governments alike (United Kingdom 2009).

Fotel and Thomsen (2004) argue that monitoring is now a central feature of modern childhood. Indeed, the increasing normalization of surveillance technologies in the social spaces that young people inhabit raises important questions about the effect of pervasive surveillance on young people's everyday lives, their sense of identity and their social relationships. Questions of adult surveillance and control of young people go to heart of the question of what childhood and youth are and should be, and the extent to which they are, and should be, separate realms from adulthood. This even pertains to academic research which seeks to see the world from the child's point of view. Jones (2008) has argued that there is an otherness to children's lives that is vital to the very nature of those lives, and all adult knowledge should acknowledge and respect that. That otherness cannot be obliterated by surveillance and control, but violence can be done to it. Children and young people need their own spaces, physically, imaginatively and emotionally, which are free from adult power and adult surveillance. The pervasiveness of the adult gaze and adult ordering of the world and children's lives, even to the extent of the surveillance and ordering of children's very bodies (James 2000), should not be underestimated.

There is an emerging literature on the technologically watched child, but it often sits behind disciplinary walls and there has been little cross-disciplinary work to date interrogating the effect of surveillance on the conditions of childhood. For example, a range of themes and questions which touch upon surveillance in children's everyday lives has emerged in children' geography studies (Holloway and Valentine 2002). Researchers have considered: the (supposedly) fraught relationship between children, parents and information and communications technologies (ICTs) (Valentine et. al. 2000); children's competence and independence in negotiating outdoor play safely, thus reducing the justification of surveillance as care (Valentine and Holloway 1997); and "paranoid parenting" and spatialised, materialised fear and risk of children in public spaces (Pain 2006). Some legal scholars (Hertzel 2000; Steeves 2006; DiGennaro and Simun 2008) and communication scholars (Grimes and Shade 2005; Chung and Grimes 2005; Shade et. al. 2005) have also examined the impact of ICTs on children's spaces, and criminologists (Monahan and Torres 2009 – reviewed in this issue) and educators (Giroux 2003) have documented the growing use of surveillance in the schools, especially in the context of zero tolerance policies.

Policy scholars have also engaged with questions around children's online privacy, but much of the early discussion has been framed within data protection discourses, which focus on identifying the ways in which children's personal information is collected and evaluating regulatory responses that incorporate fair information practices (Montgomery 1996; Turow 2001; Cai and Gantz 2000; Hertzel 2000; Lewandowski 2003). Although new research continues to engage with these issues, it is far more critical of both market-driven collection and data protection responses. Part of this is fine-tuning. For example, a number of studies have reported that privacy policies are extremely difficult for children to understand (Media Awareness Network 2001, 2005) and some have looked for ways to encourage corporations to better support informed decision-making on the part of children and parents (Burkell, Steeves and Micheti 2007; Montgomery 2009). However, most research that touches upon this topic is highly critical of data protection and calls for solutions that go beyond mere informational control. Data protection is not insignificant; rather, it is insufficient on its own to deal with the impact of "cradle to grave" surveillance on child development (Chung and Grimes 2005; Steeves 2006; Meyers *et al.* 2009; Steeves 2009a; United Kingdom 2009).

To a large extent, this call to go beyond data protection has been driven by a body of work that critically interrogates the role of advertising, marketing, and consumerism as drivers of children's media products (Montgomery 1996; Chung and Grimes 2005; Grimes and Shade 2005; Steeves 2006, 2009). In this sense, surveillance questions are also questions about the appropriate role of media in children's lives and the affect of hyper-consumption on their personal and social development. This is particularly important, because corporate and state discourses around surveillance and children are almost always framed in terms of safety, which detracts from the underlying instrumental agendas at play (Adams 2007; Livingstone and

Haddon 2009). Moreover, safety concerns are often used to legitimize increasing levels of surveillance that stigmatize youth (Giroux, 2003). Ironically, the focus on safety has led to two contradictory results: the child is a victim who must be placed under surveillance for protection; and the child is an anti-social threat who must be placed under surveillance to protect society. From either perspective, the richness of the child's lived experience is lost.

This special issue is an attempt to look behind this contradiction, and begin to map the many ways in which surveillance structures and constrains children and childhood. Scholars from sociology, community health sciences, child studies, criminology and applied social sciences have contributed articles that examine the impact of surveillance on the child at home, online, in the school and in child protection facilities. Together, they problematize the purported need to "protect" children by placing them under surveillance, and demonstrate the ways in which surveillance is experienced differentially by children, based on their gender and their socio-economic status. They also document the ways in which surveillance is reconstructing parenting, child care, the provision of social services, and education, by embedding discourses of risk reduction and responsibilization into the child's social world.

Marx and Steeves begin by mapping out the types of surveillance tools that are available in the marketplace to monitor children from gestation through to the late teen years. They focus on the claims made by surveillance entrepreneurs selling pre-natal testing kits, baby monitors, nanny cams, RFID-enabled clothing, GPS tracking devices, cell phones, computer monitoring software, home drug and semen tests, and surveillance toys. Their analysis suggests that surveillance is cast as an essential tool of responsible and loving parenting, and good governance. Not only must children be watched in order be kept "safe" from strangers and other risks; monitoring is also necessary because parents cannot trust their children to behave appropriately. Government agencies, on the other hand, are encouraged to use surveillance to identify any deviations from the norm, so physical and behavioural problems can be "managed".

Henderson, Harmon and Houser interrogate the role surveillance plays in encouraging mothers to adopt standards that are both idealized and unattainable. They build on Douglas's and Michaels's (2004: 6) insight that media representations of the modern family have turned motherhood into a "psychological police state" – a state in which mothers watch each other, themselves, and themselves watching themselves, in order to ensure that their children are both happy and protected from all foreseeable dangers. Indeed, the pressures on mothers to be the "perfect" nurturer, social convenor, medical expert, consumer protection activist, teacher, chauffeur and therapist at all times is so great that mothering is increasingly collapsed into a hyper-vigilance that seeks to identify potential risks and dangers. Interestingly, Henderson, Harmon and Houser's quantitative study suggests that, while media and other formal institutions do perpetuate the intensive expectations of the New Momism, the "pressure to be perfect" is most powerfully propagated through the interpersonal relationships and monitoring practices of mothers themselves.

Sparrman and Lindgren Mail examine visual documentation practices used in preschools, ostensibly to enhance the child's educational experience and help the child to become subjects in society. Inherent in these practices is the assumption that being seen is necessary to becoming a subject. However, their research indicates that the use of visual biographies in schools is problematic; whereas teachers use their "doing on-looking-ness" to enhance their own professionalism, the children's experience of "being looked-at-ness" is marked by a lack of autonomy. This contradicts current educational thinking that sees visual documentation as a form of emancipation for the child.

Gallagher's ethnographic study of monitoring practices in a primary school also challenges accepted beliefs about children and surveillance. He argues that the surveillance he observed often departed from the panoptic "norm" by being discontinuous rather than total; this in turn created interstitial spaces in which children can both avoid and resist monitoring. Surveillance as such was not embedded within the

institutional structure; instead it was an intermittent and only partially successful strategy that was deployed in the context of an ongoing struggle between teachers and students for control.

McCahill and Finn also suggest that we need to "look beyond the Panopticon" to more fully understand children's experiences of surveillance. They conducted qualitative interviews with 13 to 16 year old children in three schools. Interestingly, the young people's experiences of surveillance differed accordingly to socio-economic status. Although all the children were aware that they were "being watched" both in school and in public spaces, children from the private school assumed that the cameras were there to control the actions of children from the working class school. And, unlike their working class peers, they were never approached by police officers in public spaces. The working class students, on the other hand, interacted with police on a regular basis and were subjected to "harder" or more "coercive" forms of surveillance, such as being escorted home by the police or having their drinks seized. McCahill and Finn remind us of the importance of exploring surveillance as a social practice, and challenge us to think more critically about the relationship between surveillance, class and gender.

McIntosh, Punch, Dorrer and Emond also document social practices around surveillance, in the context of food regulation in residential care facilities. Residential care homes are particularly interesting objects of study because they are contemporaneously state institutions, homes and work places. Moreover, the children who live there are doubly surveilled – they are watched because they are children, and they are watched because they are children in care. For their part, staff workers are watchers, but they are also the watched – much of their day to day work is subjected to scrutiny in order to protect the children in their care from abuse. Surveillance in this context is multi-layered and ambiguous. Although surveillance is seen as an essential part of caring for the children, staff members work hard to mitigate the institutional aspects of the facility and create a homely atmosphere, particularly around meal times. In this context, children both accept and resist regulation around food, actively negotiating relations of power and control on an ongoing basis.

Both Wrennall and Osmond take us back to the institutional level, by closely examining the political, economic and social agendas that play out within child protection and anti-social behaviour policies. Interestingly, both these regimes are founded upon the weakening of privacy laws and the cross-institutional flow of children's personal information. This is facilitated by the reconstruction of children as "children at risk" and "children as potentially delinquent". Given the inherent contradictions at play, young people are subjected to a network of control in which conceptions of children's rights become nonsensical.

Rooney completes the issue by reflecting upon the broader impact surveillance has on children's relationships and sense of identity. She argues that the surveillance technologies which now shape children's lives carry with them the message that people are not to be trusted. Rather than protecting children from unforeseen dangers, surveillance may be depriving children of the opportunity to learn to trust others and to be trustworthy. This in turn hampers their ability to enter into ethical relationships with the "other", and to judge which risks are worth taking and which risks should be avoided. Surveillance as care then fails, because it begins to interfere with the developmental processes that are central to a healthy childhood.

Our final word goes to two teenagers who reviewed the novel *Little Brother* by Cory Doctorow. *Little Brother* is a semi-futuristic take on surveillance from a teen's perspective. Our book reviewers' comments are provocative and fun, and provide a unique picture of surveillance from a young person's perspective.

References

Adams, H. 2007. Social Networking and Privacy: A Law Enforcement Perspective. *School Library Media Activities Monthly* 23(10): 33.

Burkell, J., V. Steeves and A. Micheti. 2007. *Broken doors: Strategies for drafting privacy policies kids can understand*. Ottawa: Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

Cai, X. and W. Gantz. 2000. Online privacy issues associated with web sites for children. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 44(2): 197-214.

Chung, G., and Sarah Grimes. 2005. Data Mining the Kids: Surveillance and Market Research Strategies in Children's Online Games. *Canadian Journal of Communication* 30(4): 527-48.

Cloke, P. and O. Jones. 2005. Unclaimed Territory: Childhood and Disordered Spaces(s). *Social and Cultural Geography*, 6(3): 311-333.

Di Gennaro, C. and M. Simun. 2008, Jan 28. Frontline's "Growing Up Online" - What About the Digital Dossier? *Digital Natives*. Harvard Law School, Available at: http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/digitalnatives/2008/01/28/frontlines-growing-up-online-what-about-the-digital-dossier/

Dowty, T. 2008. Pixie-Dust and Privacy: What's Happening to Children's Rights in England. *Children and Society* 22(5): 393-399.

Fotel, T. and T.U. Thomsen. 2004. The Surveillance of Children's Mobility. *Surveillance & Society* 1(4): 535-554.

Giroux, Henry A. 2003. Racial Injustice and Disposable Youth in the Age of Zero Tolerance. *Qualitative Studies in Education* 16(4): 553-565.

Grimes, S. and L. Regan Shade. 2005. Neopian Economics of Play: Children's Cyberpets and Online Communities as Immersive Advertising in Neopets.com. *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics* 1(2): 181-198.

Hertzel, D. 2000. Don't Talk to Strangers: An Analysis of Government and Industry Efforts to Protect a Child's Privacy Online. *Federal Communications Law Journal* 52(2): 429-451.

Holloway S. and G. Valentine, eds. 2000. *Children's Geography: Living, Playing Learning*, London: Routledge.

James, A. 2000. Embodied Being(s): Understanding the Self and the Body in Childhood. In *The Body, Childhood and Society*, A. Prout, ed. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.

James, A., C. Jenks and A. Prout. 1998. *Theorizing Childhood*. Oxford: Polity Press.

Jenks, C. 2005. *Childhood*, 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

Jones O. 2008. "True geography [ ] quickly forgotten, giving away to an adult-imagined universe". Approaching the Otherness of Childhood. *Children's Geographies* 8(2): 195-212.

Jones O. 1997. Little Figures, Big Shadows: Country Childhood Stories. In *Contested Countryside Cultures*, P. Cloke and J. Little, eds. London: Routledge.

Lewandowski, J.L. 2003. Stepping Off the Sidewalk: An Examination of the Data Collection Techniques of Websites Visited by Children. *Journal of School Violence* 2(1): 19-63.

Livingstone, S. and L. Haddon. 2009. *EU Kids Online: Final Report*. London: London School of Economics, London: EU Kids Online.

Media Awareness Network. 2001. *Young Canadians In A Wired World: Phase I Report.* Ottawa: Media Awareness Network.

Media Awareness Network. 2005. *Young Canadians In A Wired World: Phase II Report.* Ottawa: Media Awareness Network.

Meyers, E.M., K.E. Fisher and E. Marcoux. 2009. Making Sense of an Information World: The Everyday   Life Information Behavior of Preteens, *The Library Quarterly* 79(3): 301-341

Monahan, T. and R. Torres, eds. 2009. *Schools Under Surveillance: Cultures of Control in Public Education*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Montgomery, K.C. 1996. *Web of Deception*. Center for Media Education.

Montgomery, K.C. 2009. *Generation Digital: Politics, Commerce, and Childhood in the Age of the Internet.* Cambridge MA: MIT Press.

Pain, R. 2006. Paranoid Parenting? Rematerializing Risk and Fear for Children. *Social & Cultural Geography* 7(2): 221-243.

Shade, L. Regan, N. Porter and W. Sanchez. 2005. You Can See Anything on the Internet, You Can Do Anything on the Internet: Young Canadians Talk About the Internet. *Canadian Journal of Communication* 30(4): 503-526.

Steeves, V. 2006. It's Not Child's Play: The Online Invasion of Children's Privacy. *University of Ottawa Law and Technology Journal* 3(1): 169-188.

Steeves, Valerie. 2009. Online Surveillance in Canadian Schools. *Schools Under Surveillance: Cultures of Control in Public Education*. T. Monahan and R. Torres, eds. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Steeves, V. 2007. The Watched Child: Surveillance in Three Online Playgrounds. *Proceedings of the International Conference on the Rights of the Child*. Montreal: Wilson Lafleur.

Turow, J. 2001. *Privacy Policies on Children's Websites: Do They Play By the Rules?* Report 38, The Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

United Kingdom. All Party Parliamentary Communications Group. 2009. *Can We Keep Our Hands Off the Net?* United Kingdom: ApComms.

Valentine, G. 1997. 'Oh yes you can' 'oh no you can't': Children and Parents' Understanding of Kids' Competence to Negotiate Public Space Safely. *Urban Geography* 17: 205–220.

Valentine, G., S.L. Holloway and N. Bingham. 2000. Transforming Cyberspace: Children's Interventions in the New Public Sphere. In *Children's Geography: Living, Playing Learning*, eds. S. Holloway and G. Valentine. London: Routledge.

Ward, C. 1988. *The Child in the Country*. London: Hale.