



Centre d'études en droit et
gestion (CEDAG EA 1516)

RBS Research Group: Managing in a
Pluricultural World (MPW)

4th IT & Culture Workshop, Friday June 6th 2014
University of Paris Descartes

Culture and Information Systems Ethics

Call for papers

How to address the ethical issues related to Technology and Information Systems (IS/IT) development and use? This question is recognized as important by practitioners and academics alike (Chatterjee, Sarker and Fuller, 2009; Mingers and Walsham, 2010) who jointly call for theoretical development and pragmatic tools to handle IS/IT ethics concerns.

In this workshop, we focus more particularly on how human interactions with IS/IT could raise ethical implications and what is the role of culture in this process? Many different theoretical domains may be mobilized toward relevant contributions for the workshop e.g., philosophy, psycho sociology, law and management science.

Following Bynum (2011), we define Computer Ethics as the branch of applied ethics which analyses the impacts of IS/IT on the rules of conduct in society. Other neighboring terms exist, such as information or informational ethics which study ethical cases involving information systems devices and networks and refer to organizational contexts as well as private practices. Norbert Wiener is recognized as the founder of this field in the 1940s. Besides his seminal work on cybernetics, Wiener considers that the “great principles of justice” of one’s society could serve as the analytical canvas within which IS/IT ethical issues have to be addressed (Wiener, 1950). During the 1980s, Maner has clearly related IS/IT ethics, i.e. “*ethical problems aggravated, transformed or created by computer technology*” to philosophy and highlighted the utilitarian and deontological underpinnings of this field. Another significant turning point was Moor’s article “*What Is Computer Ethics?*” (1985), in which he argues that computer technology is revolutionary because it is logically malleable: “*Computers are logically malleable in that they can be shaped and modeled to do any activity that can be characterized in terms of inputs, outputs and connecting logical operations [. . .] Because logic applies everywhere, the potential applications of computer technology appear limitless*” (Moor, 1985, p.266). At the same period, Mason (1986) has made a valuable contribution by defining four ethical concerns; privacy, integrity, intellectual property and accessibility. Since that time, an extensive number of issues have emerged including private data protection (Sviokla et Gentile, 1990), IS/IT misuse (Dorf, 1999, Desai, Mayur et Von der Embse, 2008) and cyber criminality ((Baltzan and Phillips, 2008). Gotterbarn’s (1991) approach of IS/IT ethics is not focused on usage but advocates for a deeper attention to professional ethics in order to settle down standards of good practice and codes of conduct for IT professionals.

As pointed out by Mingers and Walsham (2010), the cultural dimension of this debate is inherently related to the economic globalization phenomenon and to some specific usages of IS/IT which are intrinsically global: it is the case of Internet in general and of many web2.0 applications (Capurro, 2008). The question here is about cultural ethical diversity. To what extent are ethical issues defined within specific cultures rather than being universal? Ess (2006, 2008) sustains that a global ethical culture emerges due to converging shared values, whereas many topics remain inextricably rooted in specific ethical traditions. The debate of universalism versus pluralism is more salient for some issues, like the protection of privacy which does not have the same importance in Western and Eastern cultures. Davison et al. (2009) have for example tested the theory of cognitive moral development of Kohlberg (1969, 1981) in a non-Western cultural context to study the ethical reasoning of IT professionals in China and Japan.

Culture at the organizational level has also generated a research interest. Banerjee, Cronan and Jones (1998) have provided evidence about the importance of the ethical organizational climate in shaping ethical behaviors:

“The most important variable in explaining ethical behavior intention was the organization-scenario variable (...). In addition, an individual's personal normative beliefs and organizational ethical climate were statistically significant variables. Moral judgment and attitude were not statistically significant” (Banerjee, et al. 1998, p. 46).

Reindenbach et Robin (1991) have reminded us that the cognitive moral development of the organization is determined by the organizational culture. IS/IT governance decisions affect and are affected by the fundamental organizational values:

“The moral development of a corporation is determined by the organization's culture and, in reciprocal fashion, helps define that culture. In essence, it is the organization's culture that undergoes moral development”(Reindenbach et Robin 1991).

All these developments raise multiple issues:

What are the philosophical underpinnings of IS/IT ethics in theory and practice? What is the relevance of the classical theories of ethics, i.e. deontology, consequentialism and virtue ethics (Mingers and Walsham, 2010) to fathom current ethical issues? What is the relevance of more recent approaches in line with pragmatic theory (Dewey,1948; James, 2007), or with the philosophical theory of information (Floridi, 2002, 2008)?

How does culture (national/organizational/occupational...) influence the individual/organizational ethical positioning vis-à-vis IS/IT? How could this positioning be related to a form of emergent digital culture (Walsh, Kefi and Basekerville, 2010)? What is the linkage between ethical positioning and individual and organizational values?

From a psycho sociological perspective, what is the linkage between IS/IT ethical positioning and the cognitive moral development of the individuals and organizations interacting with IS/IT tools and networks?

This workshop aims to stimulate a deep theoretical reflection on IS/IT ethical issues and also to produce pragmatic managerial solutions. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Applications of classical ethical theory
- Relevance and limitations of recent approaches of ethics
- IS/IT ethics and law
- Use/misuse of IS/IT and the impact of culture
- IS/IT ethics and IT culture
- IS/IT ethics and sociological changes
- Private versus professional life and organizational practices
- IS/IT ethics and organizational governance
- IS/IT ethics in e-commerce
- IS/IT ethics and Social Networking Sites usage

Organizing committee

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Submissions

This workshop is open to all contributors interested from the management science field of research (information systems, marketing, strategy, control, etc.) or from other scientific communities (computer science, sociology, economics, law, etc.).

All proposals must be original and not have been submitted to other conferences or journals. They will be blindly reviewed

Three types of proposals are accepted:

- Research papers which aim to provide a significant contribution
- Work in progress which are not yet complete but are original and promising.
- Case studies which must be related to an original research and include teaching notes for teachers.

Proposals may be submitted in French or English and should be sent to: hajer.kefi@parisdescartes.fr

The best papers, selected by the scientific committee, will be proposed for publication in a book published by CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS PUBLISHING, <http://www.c-s-p.org/>

Important dates:

- Intention to communicate: January 10, 2014
- Deadline for paper submissions: February 07, 2014
- Notifications of decisions sent to authors on or about this date: March 15, 2014
- Finalized papers due: April 15, 2014
- IT Culture workshop in the University of Paris Descartes : June 6, 2014

Instructions for authors

The paper should not exceed 8000 words approx... The text is single-spaced, use a 12 point font, use italics rather than underlining (except for URLs), and place all illustrations, figures, and tables in the appropriate places in the text rather than in the end. Pages should be numbered.

The cover page should include:

- The title of the article (Times 18 point font, bold),
- Authors' names with their affiliation and email address (Times 14 point font, bold)
- An abstract of 500 words approx. (Times 12 point font)
- A list of 5 keywords (maximum).

The second page should only include the title, the abstract and key words without any further information. Papers should be submitted in .doc format

Following the article, please include:

- The references presented in alphabetical order (authors' names)
- Appendix (methodological or other) designated by letters (A, B, etc.)

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