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SI 410 ETHICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Week 14b: What Does It All Mean?

WIKILEAKS THROUGH ETHICAL LENS

- Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WikiLeaks>
- Twitter: <http://twitter.com/wikileaks>
- WikiLeaks (as of 3:10 pm EST, 12/9/2010)

```
# tcptraceroute 213.251.145.96
 1 141.211.202.2 0.835 ms 0.424 ms 0.356 ms
 2 13-bseb-rseb.r-bin-seb.umnet.umich.edu (192.12.80.131) 0.377 ms 0.335 ms 0.377 ms
 3 v-bin-seb-inet-aa2.aa2.mich.net (192.12.80.37) 0.354 ms 0.334 ms 0.321 ms
 4 xe-1-1-0x76.eq-chi2.mich.net (198.108.23.12) 7.751 ms 7.729 ms 7.728 ms
 5 192.35.170.42 7.009 ms 6.486 ms 6.490 ms
 6 te-8-1-100-10G.ar3.CHI2.gblx.net (64.208.110.37) 6.762 ms 6.760 ms 6.771 ms
 7 ldn-1-6k.uk.eu (94.23.122.78) 98.503 ms 98.588 ms 98.103 ms
 8 * * *
 9 * * *
10 p19-2-6k.fr.eu (213.186.32.150) 118.546 ms 118.394 ms 118.433 ms
11 213.251.145.96 [open] 118.347 ms 118.223 ms 118.927 ms
```



Paul Coway, Wikileaks Traceroute Screenshot

WHAT IS “ETHICS”?

○ II. *pl.* ethics.

2. (after Gr.). The science of **morals**; the department of study concerned with the principles of human duty.
- 3. In narrower sense, with some qualifying word or phrase: a. The **moral** principles or system of a particular leader or school of thought.
- 4. In wider sense: The whole field of **moral science**, including besides Ethics properly so called, the science of law whether civil, political, or international.

WHAT IS “MORAL”?

- 1. a. Of or relating to **human character or behavior** considered as **good or bad**; of or relating to the distinction between **right and wrong**, or **good and evil**, in relation to the actions, desires, or character of responsible human beings; ethical.
- b. Of an **action**: having the property of being right or wrong, or good or evil; voluntary or **deliberate** and therefore open to ethical appraisal. Of a person, etc.: **capable** of moral action; able to choose between right and wrong, or good and evil.
- c. Of **knowledge**, an opinion, etc.: relating to the nature and application of the **distinction** between right and wrong, or good and evil.
- d. Of an **idea**, speech, etc.: involving ethical praise or blame.
- e. Of a **feeling**: arising from an apprehension or sense of the goodness or badness of an action, character, etc.

COMPUTER/INFORMATION ETHICS

- Computer Ethics: (Moor)
 - “In my view, computer ethics is the analysis of the nature and social impact of computer technology and the corresponding formulation and justification of policies for the ethical use of such technology.”
- Information Ethics (Floridi, others)
 - **Information ethics** is the field that investigates the ethical issues arising from the development and application of information technologies.

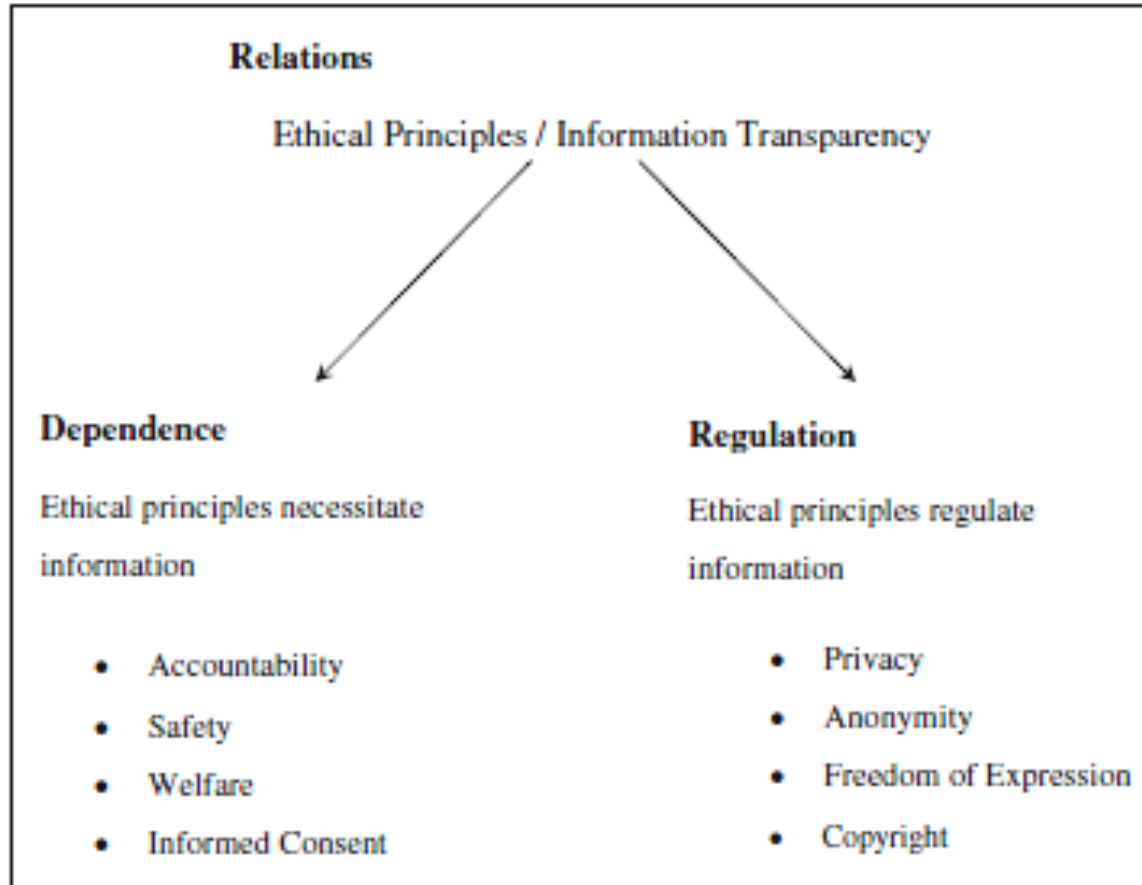
MOOR'S LAW

- “As technological revolutions increase their social impact, ethical problems increase.”
 - Rip | Mix | Burn [limits of sampling]
 - Online simulation [identity and community]
 - Wikipedia [authority, expertise, accountability]
 - Digital photo editing [truth, trust, meaning]

“This phenomenon happens ... because inevitably revolutionary technology will provide numerous novel opportunities for action for which well thought out ethical policies will not have been developed.”

Moor (2006): 117.

TRANSPARENCY AND ETHICS



© PD-INEL Turilli, Matteo & Floridi, Luciano, The Ethics of Information Transparency

ENTROPY ALA FLORIDI (A CORE PRINCIPLE)

- Information **entropy** is the destruction, pollution, and depletion (marked reduction in quantity, content, quality, and value) of information objects.
 - Ought not to be caused in the infosphere
 - Ought to be prevented...
 - Ought to be removed ...
 - The infosphere ought to be protected, extended, improved, enriched and enhanced.
- Duty of moral agent: sustainable blooming of infosphere
 - Any process, action, or event with negative impact increases entropy and is, therefore, an “instance of evil.”

DIGITIZATION

1 Ontology

2 Transparency

3 Presence

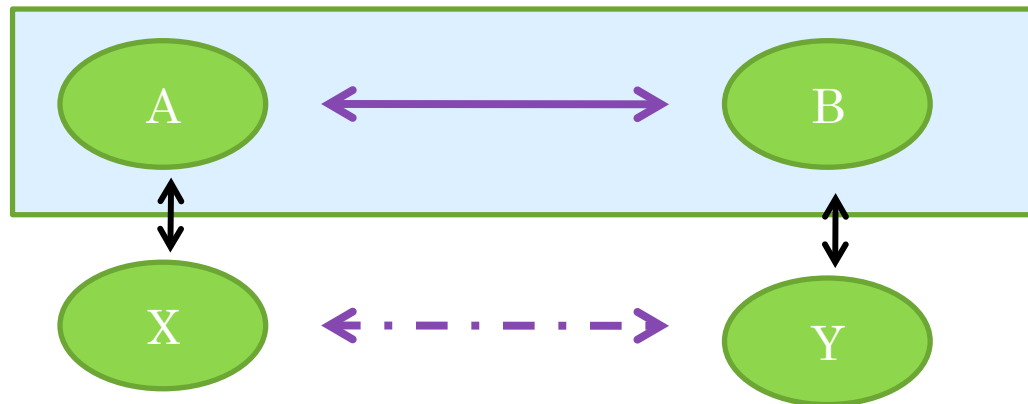
- P. 176. “... information ethics deals with questions of ... digitization ... the reconstruction of all possible phenomena in the world as digital information and the problems caused by their exchange, combination and utilization.”
- P. 182. “...damage or destruction of the digital can have a direct impact on the bodily life of people and institutions.”
- P. 183. “... the basic moral principal of the infosphere is ... the right to communicate in a digital environment ...” (including preservation)

ANONYMITY AND THE INFOSPHERE

- “A moral agent is an **interactive**, **autonomous** and **adaptable transition system** that can perform **morally qualifiable** actions.” (Floridi and Sanders [2004b])
 - Interactive: system and environment (can) act upon each other
 - Autonomous: system (can) change state without direct response to interaction
 - Adaptable: interactions (can) change the transition rules [learning from experience]
- Action has moral qualities if it CAN cause good or evil

MORAL RIGHTS OF AVATARS

- Does Universal Public Morality apply to virtual agents (avatars)?
 - UPM always takes precedence over role morality (professional practice)
 - Question: when moral harm occurs in VW, whose rights are infringed or violated: the player or the avatar?



PRESENCE: DIRECTIONS OF TELEPRESENCE

• Floridi, Presence (2005)

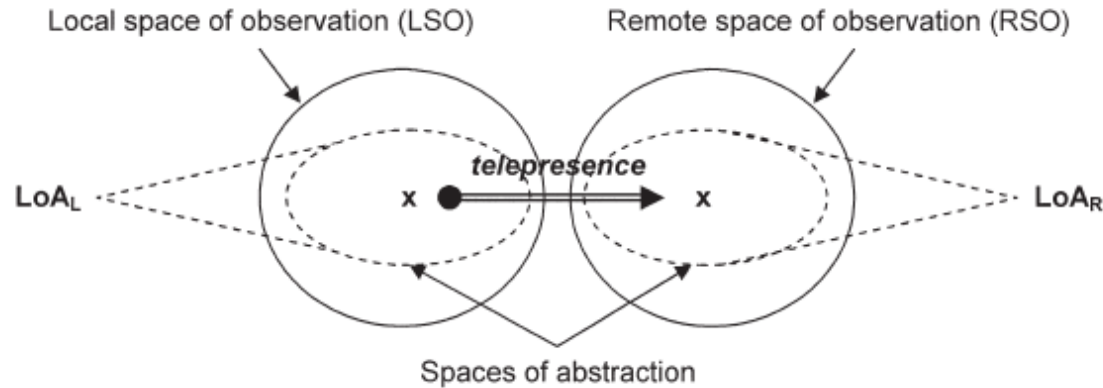


Figure 2. A model of telepresence.



Luciano Floridi, The Philosophy of Presence: From Epistemic Failure to Successful Observation

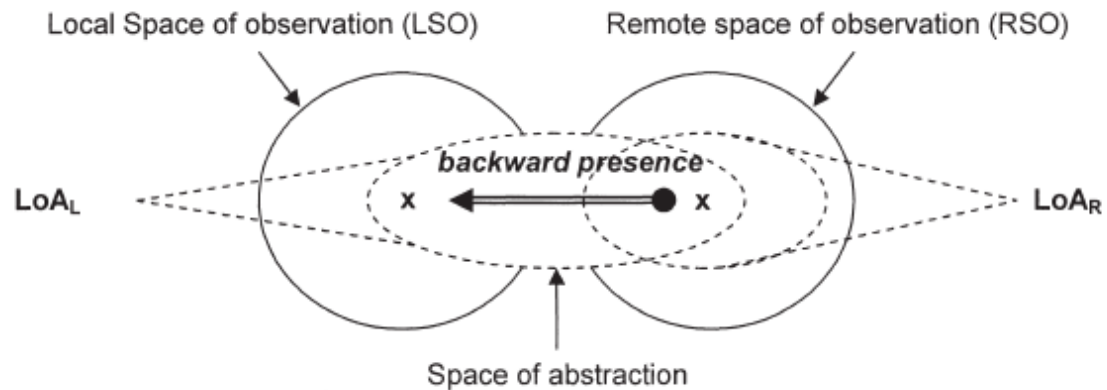


Figure 3. A model of tele-epistemics as backward presence.



Luciano Floridi, The Philosophy of Presence: From Epistemic Failure to Successful Observation

CENSORSHIP

- ❑ To censor is: “restrict or limit access to an expression, portion of an expression, or category of expression, which has been made public by its author, based on the belief that it will be a bad thing for people to access the content of that expression.”
 - Not always wrong
 - Role of censor
 - Role of author’s intent
- ❑ Cases:
 - Inherently harmful content: EXAMPLES?
 - Instrumentally harmful access: EXAMPLES?

GAMES AS INFOSPHERES (SYSTEMS)

- A construction of rules and mechanics of the game, how they interact, and form behavioral patterns.
- Floridi’s IE: moral action modeled as an information process:
 - Messages (M) invoked by agent (A) that brings a transformation of states *directly* affecting patient (P)
 - P responds to M with other changes or messages, “depending on how M is interpreted by P’s methods.”
- The act of playing a game is an act of agency within an infosphere.
- Ethical values and agency in-game and through simulation.

HOW DO PEOPLE PLAY GAMES?

- The game *is* the rules.
- Rule of law is open to question and even alteration.
- Cheating is going “beyond the rules” to gain advantage.
- When is cheating “gaining unfair advantage?”



Alice Daer, Mia Consalvo, Flickr

DIBBELL TAKEAWAY

- Forced a definition of community standards
- Evolution of a community to explicit recognition of behavioral norms
- Establishment of a governance structure in the hands of the avatars
- Tinysex and adolescence
- Dibbell telegraphed the idea of “speech acts”

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Slide 4, Image 5: Conway, Paul, Wikileaks Traceroute Screenshot

Slide 9, Image 5: Turilli, Matteo & Floridi, Luciano, The Ethics of Information Transparency, Ethics and Information Technology, v11, 2, PD-INEL

Slide 14, Image 5: Luciano Floridi, The Philosophy of Presence: From Epistemic Failure to Successful Observation, Presence: Teleoperators and Virtual Environments, December 2005, Vol. 14, No. 6: 656%u2013667, PD-INEL

Slide 14, Image 6: Luciano Floridi, The Philosophy of Presence: From Epistemic Failure to Successful Observation, Presence: Teleoperators and Virtual Environments, December 2005, Vol. 14, No. 6: 656%u2013667, PD-INEL

Slide 17, Image 6: Alice Daer, Mia Consalvo, Flickr, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/alist/814429679/>, CC-BY



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