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# **SI 410 ETHICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

**Week 6a: Plagiarism in the Online Environment**

# FLOURISHING ETHICS

Human-centric to natural-system ethics [Bynum 2006]

- Humans are ‘information objects’ whose personal identity is tied to information processing and persistent patterns of information.
- Ethics is focused on flourishing of human life, ecosystems and just civilizations, even cyborgs and avatars.
- Luciano Floridi (2008) places at the center of the ethical universe [Infosphere] not ... human agents, but instead the evil suffered by the recipients of the action.

## 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.*

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# MARILYN MONROE AND ANDY WARHOL



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# FORMS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

1. Cheating
2. Plagiarism and other misappropriation of the work of another
3. Falsification of data
4. Improperly obtaining or representing laboratory or field data
5. Dishonesty in publication
6. Publication or attempted publication of collaborative work without the permission of the other participants
7. Abuse of confidentiality
8. Misuse of computer facilities
9. Misuse of human subjects
10. Misuse of vertebrate animals
11. Illegally or carelessly obtaining or using dangerous substances, or providing such substances to others
12. Falsification or unauthorized modification of an academic record
13. Obstruction of the academic activities of another
14. Other forms of academic misconduct that are commonly accepted within the scientific community
15. Aiding or abetting academic misconduct
16. Attempted academic misconduct

## WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

- “Plagiarism is expression that *improperly* and *deceptively* incorporates existing work either *without authorization* or *without documentation*, or both.”
- The limits of deception are relative to the context in which ideas, knowledge, and information are communicated.
  - Ghostwriting
  - Advertising
  - Open source software

John Snapper, (2008) “The Matter of Plagiarism,” p. 534.

## AUTHORIZATION IS MULTIFACETED

- “On a moral right theory, [as opposed to legal/economic theory], harm is done on a personal level – to personal identity.” [Snapper 2008]
  - Right to control personal expressions [integrity]
  - Right to demand attribution
  - Right to withhold a work from disclosure
  - Right to retrieve work

# DOCUMENTATION IS COMPLICATED

- Failure to acknowledge is separate from copyright.
- One harm is to readers – the wrong of hiding material information.
  - Depending on inferior expertise
  - Left unaware of significant evidence
- One harm is to competitors.
  - Unfair advantage
- One harm is to self.

“...new technology has tended to increase the importance we should place on acknowledgement and to lessen the importance that we should place on authorization.”

*Snapper, 2008, 549.*

# PRESSURES OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

- Deadlines
- Misunderstanding
- Mistakes
- Disinterest
- Grade competition
- Team-based projects



 MIT OpenCourseware, Ah! Headache!, Flickr

# TURN TO YOUR TABLE GROUP: DISCUSS

Team-based projects are a common feature of academic work and increasingly common as a practice in the workplace.

- You are working as part of a group on an assignment that will lead to a group paper and presentation. After a month of working on individual tasks, you are meeting to assemble the final documents. As you read over the materials prepared by one of your teammates, you begin to wonder whether she prepared this material herself.
  - What are the dilemmas presented by this case?
  - What presents a moral or ethical dilemma?

<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/publinks/discussingacademicethics.pdf>

## FROM NORMS TO VIRTUES

- “... students are more likely to report or engage in academically dishonest behavior when they hold attitudes favorable to cheating and when they perceive that social norms allow cheating.” (Meizlish 2005: 3)
  
- “The virtues of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility, when taken together, provide the foundation of a flourishing academic life.” (Hinman 2005: 58)

## FUNDAMENTAL VALUE: HONESTY

- “An academic community of integrity advances the quest for truth and knowledge by requiring intellectual and personal honesty in learning, teaching, research, and service.”
  - Classroom versus online conversations
  - Does anonymity enhance or diminish honesty?

Center for Academic Integrity.

*The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity, 1999.*



## FUNDAMENTAL VALUE: TRUST

- “An academic community of integrity fosters a climate of mutual trust, encourages the free exchange of ideas, and enables all to reach their highest potential.”
  - Is fighting fire with more technological fire OK?
  - Trustworthiness is a complement to trust
  - Are better teaching and more feedback part of the equation?

Center for Academic Integrity.  
*The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity, 1999.*

## FUNDAMENTAL VALUE: FAIRNESS

- “An academic community of integrity establishes clear standards, practices, and procedures and expects fairness in the interactions of students, faculty, and administrators.”
  - Handle the digital divide creatively
  - Recognize significant differences in how people learn
  - Understand sometimes subtle cultural differences

Center for Academic Integrity.  
*The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity, 1999.*

## FUNDAMENTAL VALUE: RESPECT

- “An academic community of integrity recognizes the participatory nature of the learning process and honors and respects a wide range of opinions and ideas.”
  - Listening and engaging ideas
  - Personal identity in the online environment
  - Property issues in evolving legal and technological contexts

Center for Academic Integrity.  
*The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity, 1999.*

# FUNDAMENTAL VALUE: RESPONSIBILITY

- “An academic community of integrity upholds personal accountability and depends upon action in the face of wrongdoing.”
  - “This is who I am.”

Center for Academic Integrity.  
*The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity, 1999.*

# ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

“Academic integrity is a commitment,  
even in the face of adversity,  
to five fundamental values: honesty, trust,  
fairness, respect, and responsibility.  
From these values flow principles of behavior  
that enable academic communities to  
translate ideals into action.”

Center for Academic Integrity.

*The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity*, 1999.

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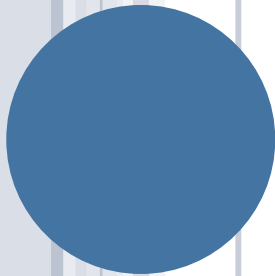
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