Day 2

Themes
Ethics: Schools of Thought
Rights

Old v. New
Lag time
Trade-offs
Kant, Trotsky, Rousseau, Hobbes
Themes in “SocioTech”

Old problems in a new context: crime, pornography, violence, copyright issues, gambling...
Global reach of Net: ease of communication with distant countries can magnify/spread problems that were once local.

Double edged sword: things that have benefits can also bring disadvantages.

https://www.cdc.gov/std/stats17/figures/1.htm
http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats14/figures/1.htm
Lag time

0 Technology development is faster than legislation or education.

0 Even when we are ready to legislate, lack of IT knowledge in legislators is troubling.

NEGATIVE FEEDBACK LOOPS

- Damaging self-referential outputs

  - Example: A criminal labeled as “high risk” in law enforcement database

  -> longer prison sentence
  -> harder to find a job when finally released
  -> more likely to be poor and desperate
  -> more likely to commit crime
  -> “high risk”

  - Unwittingly included in various algorithms, but very hard to track (who gets to see inputs to an algorithm?)

- Also see: payday loan interest rates, credit ratings, job application sorting
Trade-offs

- Security vs. Freedom vs. Privacy
- Connectivity vs. Privacy
- Risk vs. Reward
- Life of one vs. life of many
Ethics

The study of what it is to “do the right thing.”

Concern for entities that cannot defend themselves
Marginalized populations
The environment
Anyone not “in the room” when a decision is being made

Different for individuals and cultures

But most agree that using money as a sole justification for action is morally wrong.

“Gut feeling” is too subjective to govern behavior on a wide scale

Lenses
No easy answers

0 Ethical theories do not provide clear, incontrovertibly correct positions on most issues.
0 We can use the approaches we described to support opposite sides of many issues.
0 Fully understanding each side of an argument leads to viable solutions to problems.
0 Everyone brings their own lenses & filters to an issue.
0 9.3.1 Methodology attempts to aid in objective decision-making.
**DEONTOLOGICAL:** Step-by-step

**UTILITARIANISM:** Outcome-based

[Outcome must be greatest good for greatest number of people]

“Live your life as though your every act were to become a universal law.” - Kant

“The end may justify the means as long as there is something that justifies the end.” - Trotsky

- Golden rule
  - Treat others as you would want them to treat you.

http://www.harryhiker.com/poster.gif
SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY:

Human lives without a law system are “nasty, brutish and short.”

People willingly submit to a common law in order to live in a civil society.

Hobbes: 
*Leviathan* (1651)

http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/philosophers/hobbes.html
Rousseau

Man is naturally good, society corrupts him (opposite of Hobbes)

“L’Homme est naturellement bon... La société déprave et pervertit les hommes.”

- Discourse on the origin of inequality, 1755

http://www.iep.utm.edu/soc-cont/#SH2c

http://la-philosophie.com/homme-nait-bon-societe-corrompt-rousseau
Gov’t/Citizen Rights

NEGATIVE RIGHTS (liberties)

0 The right to act without interference

POSITIVE RIGHTS (claim-rights)

0 An obligation of some people to provide certain things for others

Textbook p. 31
Wrong v. Harm

Some important distinctions:
0 Right, wrong, and okay
0 Distinguishing WRONG from HARM
0 Drunk driving, rescuing someone
  0 Harm alone is not fundamentally unethical
0 Personal preference and ethics
0 Law and ethics
  0 Ethics fills the gap between legal standards (applying to ALL) and particular choices (in a SPECIFIC case).
0 Is it...a right? A positive or negative right? Violation or not?

1. All students have free education options from Kindergarten to 12th grade.
2. A man stands in a park and lists reasons why we are all going to hell.
3. A man screams “FIRE!” in a crowded theater when there is no fire.
4. The right to health care.
1. The right to go to any church you choose.
2. The right to post a blog entry complaining about your job.
3. A woman refuses to let police officers, searching her neighborhood for an escaped fugitive, into her home.
4. The right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
5. The right to use marijuana.
6. The right to have employees work in a warehouse with no windows and poor ventilation.
Deontological or Utilitarian?

It’s ok to spy on employee emails in order to make sure everyone working at a company is being professional and doing what they are paid to do.