Introduction

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The course

• Registration
• Lectures, assignments, seminars
• Literature: Bynum-Rogerson, (Rachels, Quinn, Tavani), articles
• Examination: Participation, assignments, home exam
• Theories (philosophy, psychology, HCI) and practical methods applicable in systems development and systems use
• Guest lecture 5 or 6 May
• Home exam, 19-26 May
What is morality and ethics?

- **Content**: “Right actions are moral but wrong actions are immoral”
- **Choice**: “Morality and ethics are related to choice”

IT and ethics

- IT is necessary, modern society can not function without it
- IT affects significant values for persons and organizations
- IT is malleable, it can be a tool for almost any purpose
- IT has a much bigger impact, both positive and negative, on all aspects of life, compared to any other human artifact

Ethical usability?

- Ethical aspects have an increasing impact on IT usability
- Good IT do not cause conflicts
- Good IT satisfies important values and interests
- People do not want to and cannot use IT that does not satisfy the above, independently of its other usability aspects
Do we need ethics?

- There are really no problems! Just follow the law, the rules, or your moral feeling!
- Education in ethics cannot make people better!
- It is impossible to use ethics education in real life!

Do we know what is right?

- World: changing, global, unpredictable, complex
- Scientific and technical development
- Problems vary, are personal, different
- People are complex, isolated, undefined
- No functioning authorities & guidelines
- Decentralization, delegation
- Intense public and media interest

Can it be serious?

- Low usability and less profits
- Bad service, no trust
- Higher stress, worse environment
- Confusion, fear, desperation ...

Sub optimality: Nothing spectacular but devastating in time
Is it easy or difficult?
Generally we are constrained because of our nature but ethics are harder:
• Incompatible values decide right and wrong
• Contradictory cases, e.g. double standards
• Strong emotions
• Authority is very important
• Focus on content not on process

Gaining Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature, technology</th>
<th>Society, morality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Answer Fact</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method Process Skill</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Ethical insecurity?
Handling of moral issues creates a big risk: *Important myths can be destroyed*
• For persons: Resolution of problems, personal development, but risk to lose enthusiasm, get disoriented, lost, cynical
• For organizations, society: Hero, e.g. whistle blowing (courageous, responsible), or offend persons and principles (show no respect, disloyalty, treason, hostility)
What do we need?

- **Ethical competence**: Know how to handle ethical issues, how to think
- **Ethical processes**: Roles, procedures, mechanisms in organizations
- **Ethical confidence**: Know that we can find good solutions and trust our ability (i.e. know that our skill and our way of handling moral issues is working)

Different approaches

A

Values and norms

↓

Philosophy, tradition, ...

↓

Right solution

B

Problem owners

Psychosocial processes

Skills, methods

Moral problem

Is ethical competence moral?

- **Necessary**: There is nobody who can tell us what is right and wrong
- **Classical response**: It depends how people use their ethical competence
- **Satisfactory**: The ethical competence is the only way to good moral
- **Risk**: Essential myths can be disclosed