The Ethical Principles and Dilemma on Account of Information System

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Abstract: The information system, Internet and the world wide web have grown rapidly and now used by millions of people worldwide. There importance in everyday life is well know, however it is also important to realize that the information systems and web are what we make them and the code of ethics and morals we apply on these. In today's information age, the social and ethical implications of information and communication technology (ICT) are enormous and ICT is developing so rapidly that new possibilities emerge before the social consequence can be assimilated. New social/ethical policies for the information age, therefore, are urgently needed to fill rapidly multiplying "Policy vacuum". But filling such vacuums is a complex social process that will require active participation of individuals, organization, and governments and ultimately the world community.

Keywords: Information system, Information and communication technology (ICT), policy vacuum, worldwide web, ethical

1.   Introduction

The commercialization of information communication technologies has been widely recognized as an important tool for economic growth. The issues related to morals, ethics and privacy of information and action and the security of information system are increasingly a focus of concern for the business community and the public at large. Information ethics has been defined as "the branch of ethics that focuses on the relationship between the creation, organization, dissemination, and use of information, and the ethical standards and moral codes governing human conduct in society". It provides a critical framework for considering moral issues concerning informational privacy, moral agency , new environmental issues, problems arising from the life-cycle (creation, collection, recording, distribution, processing, etc.) of information (especially ownership and copyright, digital divide, and digital rights). [1]

Dilemmas regarding the life of information are becoming increasingly important in a society that is defined as "the information society". Information transmission and literacy are essential concerns in establishing an ethical foundation that promotes fair, equitable, and responsible practices. Information ethics broadly examines issues related to ownership, access, privacy, security, and community.

Information technology has been applied to enhance four major categories of activities:

•   Governance
•   Growth and supply/distribution of goods and services
•   Adding value to exiting services and
•   The creation of new products and services.

2.   Globalization

Globalization has been given a practical shape by ICT developments and cyberspace has brought the world community closer for interaction and ICT has made possible for the first time in the history. Traditional borders and barriers between countries have now become less meaningful because most countries are interconnected by the internet. For this reason individuals, companies and organizations in every culture can engage in global business transactions, distance education, cyber-employment, discussions of social and political issues, sharing and debating of values and perspectives.[2]

It is the process of international integration arising from the interchange of world views, products, ideas, and other aspects of culture Put in simple terms, globalization refers to processes that increase world-wide exchanges of national and cultural resources. Advances in transportation and telecommunications infrastructure, including the rise of the telegraph and its posterity the Internet, are major factors in globalization, generating further interdependence of economic and cultural activities.

3.   Issues

The world wide nature of the internet has already led to many issues which need to policies to resolve them. If sexually explicit materials are provided on a website in a culture in which they are permitted, and they are accessed by someone in a different culture where such materials are not permitted by that culture, then whose laws and values apply? Should the values of first culture be permitted to undermine those of the second culture via the Internet?[6]

Let me define another example, business transaction in cyberspace: whose laws apply to business on Internet? When people in one country purchase goods and services from merchants in another country, who should regulate or tax the transaction? And how will cyber business in global market affect local business, local tax collection and local unemployment? What new laws, regulation, rules, practices should be adopted, and who should formulate them?[4]

Let us consider cyber medicine: medical advice and psychological counseling on the internet, "keyhole" surgery conducted at a distance, medical tests and examination over the net, "cyber prescription" for medicine written by doctors in one part of world for patients in other parts of the world. How safe is cyber medicine?[5]

Education in cyberspace: lots of universities and colleges are offering online courses. But when students earn degree or certificates from all around the globe, who should set the standard? Will there be "cyber university of the world"? will thousands of ordinary teachers be replaced by a handful of "Internet superstar teachers?[3]

4. Human Relationships

Not all social/ethical issues which arises from ICT depend upon its global scope. For example, the impact of ICT on human relationships. How will family relationships or friendships be affected by mobile phones, laptop, desktop, telecommuting to work and school, virtual reality conference? Will the efficiency and convenience of ICT lead to shorter work hours and more quality time with the family? Will people find new friendships and relationships in "virtual communities" in cyberspace-relationships based upon interactions that never could occur in regular space time setting?

5. Social Justice

Lots of society's activities and opportunity enter cyberspace-business opportunities, educational opportunities, medical services, employment, leisure-time activities, and so on. Persons without an electronic identity may have no social recognized identity at all.

Therefore social justice requires that society develop policies and practices to more fully include people who, in the past, have had limited access to ICT resources: women, the poor, the old, rural residents, persons with disabilities. A variety of hardware and software has been developed in recent years to enables persons with disabilities to use ICT easily and effectively. people who would otherwise be utterly dependent upon others for almost everything suddenly find their lives transformed into happy, productive, "near-normal" ones. A good example is "assistive technology" for persons with disabilities.[1]

6. Work

Work and workplace are being dramatically transformed by ICT. More flexibility and choices are possible, for e.g., tele-working at home, on the road at any hour or location. New kinds of jobs and job opportunities are being created. But such benefits and accompanied by risks and problem, like unemployment of computer-replaced humans of workers who only push buttons, stress keeping up with high speed machines, repetitive motion injuries, magnetism and radiation from computer hardware, surveillance of workers by monitoring software, and ICT.

7. Government and Democracy

ICT has the potential to significantly change the relationship between individual citizens and governments- local, regional and national. Electronic voting as well as mailed messages to legislator and ministers, could give citizens more opportunities to make timely input into government decision and law making. Optimists point out that ICT, appropriately used, can enable better citizen participation in democratic processes, make government more open and accountable and provide easy citizen access to government information, report, services, plans and proposed legislation. Pessimists, on the other hand, worry that government officials who are regularly bombarded with e-mail from angry voters might be easily swayed by short-term swings in public mood, that hackers could corrupt electronic election processes.

8. Intellectual Property and Ownership

Possession and control the information will be the key to wealth, power and success. Those who own and control the information infrastructure will be amongst the wealthiest and most powerful of all. And those who own digitized intellectual property- software, database, music, video and educational resources- will possess major economic assets. But digitized information is easily copied and altered, easily transferred from one place to another, and therefore the piracy of intellectual property will be a major social problem. Even today, for example, in some countries over ninety percent of the software is pirated. What new laws, regulation, rules, international agreements and practices would be fair and who should formulate or enforce them?

It is also possible to mix and combine several types of digitized resources to create multimedia works of various kind. A single program, for example might make of bits and snippets of photographs, video clips, sound bites, graphic art, newsprint and various literary works. How large must a component of such a work be before the user must pay copyright royalties? Must the creator of multimedia work identify thousand of copyright holders and pay thousands of copyright fees in order to be allowed to create and disseminate his/her work? How can they be enforced at all on the new frontiers of cyberspace?

9. Conclusion

Information technology affects common issues such as copyright protection, intellectual freedom, accountability, privacy, and security. Many of these issues are difficult or impossible to resolve due to fundamental tensions between Western moral philosophies (based on rules, democracy, individual rights, and personal freedoms) and the traditional Eastern cultures.

New social/ethical policies for the information age, therefore, are urgently needed to fill rapidly multiplying "Policy vacuum". But filling such vacuums is a complex social process that will require active participation of individuals, organization, and governments and ultimately the world community.[7]

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