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Content

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Editorial: On IJIE

What is IJIE?

IJIE is the journal of the International Center for Information Ethics (ICIE) and one step further in its successful evolving history. The ICIE started in 1999 when a small group of friends and colleagues gave its founder, Rafael Capurro, their approval to build a network of experts in the field of information ethics. Martha Smith and Barbara Rockenbach formed the US connection at Yale University Library (http://www.library.yale.ed/icie). ICIE continued to grow as a virtual community receiving strong support for its technical implementation from the Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany (http://www.zkm.de/). With the help of Thomas Hausmanninger (University of Augsburg, Germany) the regularly held ICIE symposia were started in 2001. The proceedings were published at Fink Verlag Munich as an ICIE series.

As we planned the International ICIE Symposium, taking place in October 4-6, 2004 and sponsored by the Volkswagen Stiftung (http://www.volkswagenstiftung.de/), the idea of an international online journal was born. We envisioned the possibility of making the papers of the Symposium broadly and freely available as well as creating a general forum for ongoing exchange of research and expertise in the field. Felix Weil (CEO of http://www.quibiq.de/) was an enthusiast of IJIE from the very beginning and offered management support in conjunction with the Center for Art and Media. Being that ICIE is international in scope we felt committed to the idea that contributions could be published multilingual (i.e. in English, German, French, Spanish or Portuguese). Many ICIE members belong to these linguistic groups and thus appreciate to use IJIE as a platform for their local research communities instead of using English as the lingua franca. We hope that the policy of multilingualism of IJIE will be recognized as a unique value-adding contribution of the journal to its field.

Information Ethics

Information ethics as understood in the context of this journal is concerned with ethical questions in the field of the digital production and reproduction of phenomena and processes including the exchange, combination and use of information so produced or reproduced. Maintaining a broad focus on these issues, IJIE is particularly devoted to

ethical questions of all kinds of digital devices whether through their coding methods or their local or global content and the social interactions that produced them, i.e., to what has been called the "infosphere" (L. Floridi).

Scope

IJIE is not primarily a philosophical journal. It is interdisciplinary as the subject itself yet taking the ethical point of view on it. The topics are supposed to be relevant not only to theoreticians but also to practitioners from a diversity of fields such as internet research and practice, media studies, computer science, economics, politics, philosophy, sociology and psychology. Nevertheless, the journal is not devoted to questions of professional ethics in particular. Contributions should rather focus on critical thinking about the conflicts, threats and opportunities in the field of information ethics, the change of norms and values, the creation of power structures, information visions and myths as well as hidden contradictions and intentionalities in information theories and practices. Contributors with different philosophical and scientific backgrounds are welcome provided that they do not pursue an ideological or proselytising agenda and that a standard of excellence in ethical reasoning and scientific methodology is observed. We agreed on setting high standards and keeping them up by a rigorous peer-to-peer reviewing procedure. Thus we are proud on having gained prominent experts in the field as our editorial advisory board. For all details on submitting contributions, the reviewing process and publication conditions see www.ijie.org. IJIE is also designed to be a platform for intercultural exchange. It intends to provide reports about local experiences that may be of interest to other settings or to the global community.

Issues

The information field is a quickly changing field. Today's information societies are characterized by a plurality of paradigms that have their sources in a variety of cultural traditions and technological developments. Ubiquitous computing and nanotechnology may have a profounder social impact in the near future than the internet revolution ten years ago. Who will be the beneficiaries and who the losers? With which criteria will we think about the *liaison* between information technology and biotechnology? Orwell's fear, the fear of surveillance, may become the dominating mood of the information society, particularly after September 11, 2001 and March 11,

2004, instead of trust and information solidarity. The latter would give our planet and its inhabitants not only an opportunity of survival but also an occasion for good life *(eu zen)*, which is, indeed, the main concern of ethics from the time of its founder, Aristotle.

Volume 1

Introduction is the theme woven into our first issue: introduction into the subject, the agents and the ambience. In his "Position Paper" Rafael Capurro introduces into the state of the discussion on information ethics in Germany. Following Wittgenstein (where Wittgenstein never would have gone himself), Felix Weil wants to introduce with his contribution the notion of 'use' into ethics – into information ethics in particular. Thomas Hausmanninger asks the question "Controlling the Net: Pragmatic Action or Ethics Needed?" and argues to take the ethical approach to the problems concerned. Thus having introduced ourselves we comply with our standards set for the journal and invite for the international discourse within IJIE: Shifra Baruchson from Israel elaborates on the relationship of "Printed Versus Internet Plagiarism" and proves that information is not equal to information but strongly depends on its media. Tadashi Takenouchi from Tokyo University in Japan familiarizes with Rafael "Capurro's Hermeneutic Approach to Information Ethics" and finds some interesting interactions with Japanese thought patterns.

Perspectives

The following volume 2 is to be published by August 2004. It will be dedicated completely to the papers submitted to the ICIE Symposium (http://icie.zkm.de/congress2004) held 4-6 October 2004 in Karlsruhe on "Localizing the Internet: Ethical Issues in Intercultural Perspective"

We hope that all ICIE members, contributors and readers of this journal will appreciate the IJIE as a tool for their research and/or practice. We will do our best to enhance this platform continuously by providing new features supporting the journal's objectives. Any ideas or suggestions for improvement are highly welcome.

Yours,
Rafael Capurro (Editor in Chief),
Thomas Hausmanninger and Felix Weil

June 2004

Rafael Capurro

Informationsethik – Eine Standortbestimmung

Abstract:

Title: Information Ethics – A Position Paper

The paper describes some of the main ethical challenges of information society as currently discussed within the framework of the *World Summit on the Information Society*. It addresses the question of 'what is information ethics?' under a twofold perspective. In a large sense information ethics is said to deal with ethical questions related to all kinds of digital phenomena including all non-digital but digitalized or digitalizable phenomena. In a narrower sense information ethics deals with ethical questions of human communication within a digital environment. A non-metaphysical foundation of information ethics in the narrower sense ('nethics' or Internet ethics) is given. Curricula targets are briefly outlined.

Agenda

Einführung

Themen der aktuellen Diskussion um die Wissensgesellschaft

  „Charta der Bürgerrechte für eine nachhaltige Wissensgesellschaft„

Ansätze zur Informationsethik

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    - Ethik im Netz. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2003, 278 p.
    - Netzethik. Grundlegungsfragen der Internetethik, Thomas Hausmanninger, R. Capurro, (Ed.) Schriftenreihe des ICIE Bd. 1, München: Fink 2002, 206 p.
    - Leben im Informationszeitalter. Berlin: Akademie Verlag 1995, 134 p.
    - Hermeneutik der Fachinformation. Freiburg/München: Alber Verlag 1986, 239 p.
    - Informationsethik. R. Capurro, Klaus Wiegerling, Andreas Brellochs, (Ed.). Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz (UVK) 1995, 308 p.

Einführung

Der Begriff Informationsethik reicht vermutlich bis in die frühen 1980er Jahre zurück, als der Computer im bibliografischen Bereich sich allmählich durchsetzte und sich neue Fragen vor allem in Bezug auf den online Zugang zu wissenschaftlichen Dokumenten und ihren Surrogaten (*abstracts*) stellten.[1] Die ersten internationalen Datenbanken und Informationssysteme, wie zum Beispiel INIS (*International Nuclear Information System*) der *International Atomic Energy Agency* (IAEA), gehen auf die 1970er Jahre zurück. Joseph Weizenbaums „Computer Power and Human Reason" erschien 1976.

Als Mitte der 1990er Jahre das Internet entstand, weitete sich die Bedeutung auf dieses Medium aus und es gab konkurrierende Bezeichnungen, wie zum Beispiel *Cyberethik*. Dies geschah zunächst nicht nur in Abgrenzung zu den ethischen Fragen im Bibliothekswesen (Bibliotheksethik) in der Informatik (Computerethik), sondern vor allem in Bezug auf den Bereich der Massenmedien (Medienethik), wobei der Ausdruck ‚Medienethik' inzwische auch umfassender gebraucht wird.[2]

Im weiteren Sinne umfasst Informationsethik Fragen der Digitalisierung, d.h. der Rekonstruktion aller möglichen Phänomene im Medium von 0 und 1 als digitale Information sowie des Austauschs, der Kombination und der Verwertung dieser Information im Medium digital vermittelter Kommunikation. Die Verschwommenheit dieses Begriffs von Informationsethik ist der Umfassendheit der Digitalisierung geschuldet, ihrem Sog, alles in sich aufzusaugen und als seiend nur noch gelten zu lassen, was digitalisierbar ist. Ich spreche in diesem Zusammenhang von einer digitalen Ontologie.[3]

Im Rahmen dieses Verständnisses von Informationsethik hat das International Center for Information Ethics (ICIE) zunächst einen Schwerpunkt in seiner Arbeit gesetzt, nämlich die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Internet (Netzethik) und der digital vermittelten

Kommunikation.[4] Diese Schwerpunktsetzung ist pragmatisch: Informationsethik muss mit einem der möglichen Gegenstände beginnen und das Netz stellt hierbei zweifelsohne eine der neuartigsten Herausforderungen dar. Das lässt sich am Beispiel der aktuellen Diskussion um die Wissensgesellschaft zeigen.

Themen der aktuellen Diskussion um die Wissensgesellschaft

Auf der praktischen Ebene hat das Nachdenken darüber, was der Anruf der Freiheit in der kategorialen Gestalt des Netzes verspricht, längst begonnen. Nach den konkreten Ausformungen von Informationsfreiheit zu fragen, heißt, auf die Ungerechtigkeiten in der realen Welt zu achten, nicht zuletzt, indem wir uns fragen, was sollen und können wir im Netz und mittels des Netzes tun, um eine Welt zu gestalten, die ökonomisch, militärisch, politisch, technisch, moralisch, religiös... zumindest *weniger gewaltsam* wird.

Welche sind die Topthemen in der aktuellen Diskussion um die digitale Weltverneztung? Ich nehme als Beispiel die Website www.gipfelthemen.de, die von polit-digital e.V. und der Deutschen Gesellschaft für die Vereinten Nationen mit Unterstützung vom Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit betreut wird. Die Themenliste umfasst folgende Rubriken, deren Erläuterungen hier abgekürzt wiedergegeben sind:

1. **Digitale Spaltung**: Wer von "Digitaler Spaltung" redet, redet immer auch über fehlende technische Infrastruktur. Die Frage ist, ob und inwiefern die Informationstechnik (allein) zur Überwindung der digitalen Spaltung beiträgt.

2. **Medien & Kompetenz**: Ein Computer allein reicht nicht mehr. Auf die kompetente Bedienung kommt es an. Die Frage lautet dann, wie die Vermittlung von Medienkompetenz bei der Überwindung des digitalen Grabens helfen kann.

3. **Inhalte & Vorbilder**: Auf die Inhalte kommt es an. Was ist aber ein guter Inhalt? Wo kann das Internet Mehrwert sein? Und wo ein Vorbild?

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[1] Rafael Capurro: Hermeneutik der Fachinformation.

[2] Klaus Wiegerlin: Medienethik.

[3] Rafael Capurro: Beiträge zu einer digitalen Ontologie.

[4] Thomas Hausmanninger, Rafael Capurro: Einleitung: Eine Schriftenreihe stellt sich vor. 10

4. **Wissen & Besitz**: Im Internet türmen sich Berge von Informationen. Doch wem gehören Sie? Unternehmen, der Allgemeinheit oder gar dem Staat? Wie steht es um die Kommerzialisierung von Wissen?

5. **Multi & Kulti**: Das Internet steht für Vielfalt in einer globalisierten Welt. Es ist die Frage, ob es diesem Anspruch auch gerecht wird. Gibt das Netz kulturelle Vielfalt wieder oder dominiert eine Kultur alle anderen?

6. **Beteiligung & Spielregeln**: Um die neuen Medien zu nutzen, um damit Bürgerbeteiligung und Gemeinwesen zu stärken, braucht es Regeln und Gesetze. Die Diskussion rund ums *eGovernment* und *eDemocracy* ist voll im Gange.

7. **Piraten & Terroristen**: Wie gefährlich ist Cyberkriminalität? Ist eine Kriminalisierung von Hackern und Raubkopierern gerechtfertigt oder wird mit Bedrohungsszenarien übertrieben?

8. **Daten & Schutz**: Ist das Sicherheitsbedürfnis von Einzelpersonen real, die wahre Bedrohung aber nur virtuell? Wie sollten und können die individuellen Rechte geschützt werden? Wie viel Daten müssen z.B. Provider speichern, was den Sicherheitsbehörden melden?

9. **UNO und Info-Gesellschaft**: Wie kann die UNO den Wandel hin zu einer Wissens - und Informationsgesellschaft mitgestalten und welche Positionen hat sie dabei bislang eingenommen? Vordringliches Ziel des *World Summit on the Information Society* (WSIS) ist es, allen Menschen gleichberechtigten Zugang zu Wissen zu ermöglichen, so der Generalsekretär der Vereinten Nationen, Kofi Annan.

Diese Fragen weisen auf Chancen und Gefahren der globalen Vernetzung hin. Sie stellen eine zugleich politische und ethische Herausforderung dar. Verschiedene insbesondere zivile Organisationen bemühen sich um Lösungsvorschläge bezüglich der ethischen und juristischen Rahmenbedingungen einer gerechte(re)n Weltinformations- und Kommunikationsordnung zum Beispiel in Form eines Wertekatalogs, der als Orientierung politischen Handelns sowie rechtlicher Normierung dienen soll.

„Charta der Bürgerrechte für eine nachhaltige Wissensgesellschaft„

Ein Beispiel eines solchen Wertekatalogs ist die "Charta der Bürgerrechte für eine nachhaltige Wis-

sensgesellschaft", ein kollaboratives Werk zivilgesellschaftlicher Akteure, insbesondere der Heinrich Böll Stiftung, die damit ein Diskussionsangebot zum UN-Weltgipfel zur Informationsgesellschaft unterbreiten wollen.

"Die Ausgangsthese ist", so Olga Drossou, Referentin für Medienpolitik und Neue Medien der Heinrich Böll Stiftung in Berlin,

> *"dass die Digitalisierung einen erheblichen Neuordnungsbedarf im Hinblick auf den Umgang mit Wissen hervorruft. Aus unserer Sicht wird die Auseinandersetzung hierzulande, aber auch weltweit, sehr stark durch die Bestandsinteressen der Informationswirtschaft und der Verwertungsindustrie geprägt. Das herrschende Problembewusstsein erschöpft sich in Begriffen wie Raubkopien und geistiger Enteignung. Wir meinen dagegen, dass es bei der Gestaltung der künftigen Wissensordnung mehr zu bedenken gibt als die Absatzprobleme einzelner Branchen. Aus unserer Sicht geht es um nichts Geringeres als die Konzeption einer nachhaltigen Wissensgesellschaft, die auch für die künftigen Generationen das Wissen der Vergangenheit zugänglich vorhält. Nur durch den ungehinderten Zugang zu Wissen können die kreativen Potenziale erschlossen und soziale und wirtschaftliche Erfindungen gefördert werden, die für die Zukunft unserer Gesellschaft und ihrer Verantwortung für globale Nachhaltigkeit erforderlich sein werden."* [5]

Die ethischen Werte die nach dieser "Charta" zu bewahren und zu fördern gilt, lauten in Kurzform:

1. Wissen ist Erbe und Besitz der Menschheit und damit frei

2. Der Zugriff auf Wissen muss frei sein

3. Die Verringerung der digitalen Spaltung muss als Politikziel hoher Priorität anerkannt werden

4. Alle Menschen haben das Recht auf Zugang zu den Dokumenten öffentlicher und öffentlich kontrollierter Stellen

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[5] Olga Drossou: Die „Charta der Bürgerrechte für eine nachhaltige Wissensgesellschaft" und der Weltgipfel zur Informationsgesellschaft (WSIS) 2003.

5. Die ArbeitnehmerInnenrechte müssen auch in der elektronisch vernetzten Arbeitswelt gewährleistet und weiterentwickelt werden

6. Kulturelle Vielfalt ist Bedingung für individuelle und nachhaltige gesellschaftliche Entwicklung

7. Mediale Vielfalt und das Angebot von Information aus unabhängigen Quellen sind unerlässlich für den Erhalt einer aufgeklärten Öffentlichkeit

8. Offene technische Standards und offene Formen der technischen Produktion garantieren die freie Entwicklung der Infrastrukturen und somit eine selbstbestimmte und freie Kommunikation

9. Das Recht auf Achtung der Privatheit ist ein Menschenrecht und ist unabdingbar für die freie und selbstbestimmte Entfaltung von Menschen in der Wissensgesellschaft.

Diese knappen Hinweise auf brisante Diskussionsthemen der Wissensgesellschaft unter einer ethischen Perspektive machen aber deutlich, dass hier nicht nur eine politische, sondern eine kulturelle und letztlich auch eine philosophische Herausforderung ersten Ranges vorliegt, die mit Diskussionen in Online-Foren oder mit der Erstellung von Wertekatalogen nicht erschöpft ist. Sie verlangt vielmehr einen langfristigen interdisziplinären und interkulturellen Dialog, der nicht zuletzt sich des Mediums bedient, das er zugleich problematisieren soll.[6]

Ein solcher Dialog kann wiederum selbst als ethisch bezeichnet werden, sofern nämlich damit nicht nur eine intellektuelle Tätigkeit der Reflexion über Moral und insbesondere der Moralbegründung, sondern eine gestaltende Kraft gegeben ist, die sich aber keinesfalls einbildet, aus der hohen Warte der Moral, anderen zu diktieren, wie sie im Netz oder ohne das Netz zu denken und zu handeln haben.

Ansätze zur Informationsethik

Es ist eine Stärke und kein Manko der Ethik, dass sie sich auf unterschiedliche Denkansätze berufen kann. Diese Vielfalt schützt uns vor fundamentalistischen Verkürzungen und entlässt uns keineswegs aus der Verantwortung im jeweiligen Fall zu berücksichtigen, was genau zum Beispiel unter Menschenwürde zu verstehen ist und wie diese in Bezug auf unser

Informationshandeln gegebenenfalls (besser) zu schützen wäre.

In der heutigen ethischen Diskussion ist es beinah Mode geworden, utilitarische und deontologische Ansätze als unvereinbare Gegensätze darzustellen und sie manchmal sogar mit geographischen Einteilungen diesseits und jenseits des Atlantik oder, innerhalb Europas, diesseits und jenseits des Ärmelkanals zu identifizieren. Im Unterschied zu solchen Verkürzungen sehen wir die lebendige Einbeziehung ethischer Ansätze unterschiedlicher philosophischer Provenienz, sowie aus anderen Kulturen und Epochen, als ein *pharmakon* gegen einseitiges Denken und Handeln.

Menschliches Denken und Handeln finden immer im Kontext kontingenter Situationen statt, was nicht heißt, dass wir einem unentrinnbaren Schicksal ausgeliefert wären. Vielmehr bildet diese Einsicht die Voraussetzung dafür, dass wir die digitale Weltvernetzung nicht verabsolutieren. Wir denken und leben in kontingenten Netzen. Das ist unsere Grundbefindlichkeit.

Thomas Hausmanninger sieht im Anschluß an Überlegungen von Hans Blumenberg die ersten Wurzeln dieser Kontingenzerfahrung schon in der nominalistische Verunsicherung nach der Hochscholastik, wodurch die göttliche Garantie für die Vernünftigkeit der Welt zerbricht.[7] Mit den Umbrüchen zu Neuzeit und Moderne, die sich daran anschließen, wird diese Wende zur Kontingenz vollendet: Pluralisierung und Entsubstantialisierung der Subjektvorstellung und die Heraufkunft eines nachmetaphysischen Zeitalters benennen schlagwortartig unsere Zeitsituation. Die Relativierung und Kontingentierung der Vernunft, die dabei geschieht, die Endlichkeit und Pluralität des Vernünftigen, erscheint jetzt, im Informationszeitalter, in der Erfahrung der digitalen Vernetzung, der unterschiedliche Formen technischer Netzwerke vor allem im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert vorausgingen.

Pluralisierung und Relativierung bedeuten aber keineswegs Beliebigkeit und Relativismus. Hausmanninger weist in Anschluß an Kant mit Recht darauf hin, dass Freiheit "nicht aus sich selbst bestehen (bleiben) kann, sondern als reale eröffnet, durch Grenzziehungen offengehalten werden muss.

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[6] Charta der Charta der Bürgerrechte für eine nachhaltige Wissensgesellschaft.

[7] Thomas Hausmanninger, Rafael Capurro: Ethik in der Gobalität. Ein Dialog. 13-14.

Hierfür ist zunächst einmal die Ethik zuständig (als Basis auch des Rechts)".[8]

Wenn wir in diesem Rahmen Informationsethik zu betreiben versuchen, sind wir uns zunächst darin einig, dass das erste Verbindende die Frage selbst ist: Wir treffen uns in der plural-dezentrierten Zeitsituation und in der globalisierten Welt zuallererst in der Frage nach einer Orientierungsbasis. Sie erlaubt es uns, mitten in den *constraints* der real-politischen Auseinandersetzung, vor allem aber mitten in der real-sozialen Wahrnehmung dessen, was unerträglich ist, und was keinen Aufschub erduldet, doch Zeit und Raum zu finden, um uns auf die Differenzen einzulassen, sie in uns, individuell und sozial, zuzulassen.

Eben dieses Zulassen der Orientierungsfrage, ist bereits ein Teil jener *nicht-substanziellen Orientierungsbasis*, die wir, bei allen Differenzen, gemeinsam suchen. In der Sprache der Tradition würden wir sagen, dass wir im Kontext der Informationsethik nach Möglichkeiten der Verwirklichung menschlicher Freiheit unter den kategorialen Bedingungen der Weltvernetzung fragen. Der Ausdruck "nicht-substantielle Orientierungsbasis" ist dabei in einem gewissen Sinne ein Oxymoron, sofern nämlich mit Basis etwas Festes angedeutet wird, während in Wahrheit die digitale Weltvernetzung uns mit einer zugleich kollektiven und kontingenten Form von Freiheit, Geschichte und Subjektivität konfrontiert, also mit Dynamik und Vielfalt sowie mit einem Wegbrechen der traditionellen Festigkeiten, deren Tragweite wir heute kaum ermessen können.

Diese Situation fordert auch von EthikerInnen eine Offenheit, die Wagnischarakter hat. Interessanterweise ist es ein Theologe, der schon 1965 solche Offenheit als Erfordernis für die Ethik in der Moderne einfordert. Gegenüber der Moral, die an der Verteidigung von bestimmten Gestalten interessiert ist, muss die Ethik, so Karl Rahner in einem berühmten Vortrag mit dem Titel "Experiment Mensch", sich dem schmerzhaften Wagnis der Freiheit stellen.[9] Ich glaube, dass das Internet Teil dieses Freiheitswagnisses ist.

Wenn das ,Wesen' (verbal gedacht) des Menschen in der Möglichkeit der (Selbst-) Manipulation besteht, dann ist die Frage nach dem Woraufhin offen und lässt sich nicht von einem konkreten Zustand her moralisch legitimieren und beantworten. Im Unterschied zum Moralisten ("Der Mensch darf und soll nicht alles tun, was er kann") und zum nüchternen Skeptiker ("Es ist nicht zu erwarten, dass der Mensch unterlassen wird, was er tun kann") schreibt Rahner:

> *"Das absolute, absolut durchschaute System, das reibungslos funktioniert, könnte per definitionem nur von einem gebaut werden, der selbst schlechthin außerhalb seiner steht; auch die lernende und sich selbst adaptierende Maschine kann, solange sie mit dem Universum nicht identisch ist, dies nur innerhalb eines endlichen Bereiches."* [10]

Sich zum Wagnis der Freiheit zu bekennen, bedeutet aber nicht, Ambivalenzen zu verkennen. So ist zum Beispiel im industriellen und post-industriellen Zeitalter der Netzbegriff vorwiegend positiv belegt, während er in der Agrargesellschaft stärker zwiespältige Konnotationen besaß. Die Sprache bewahrt Spuren dieser Ambivalenz, zum Beispiel in den Ausdrücken "den Faden verlieren", "sich in den Netzen verfangen", sowie in Worten wie "Liebesnetze" und "Fangnetze". Die Ambivalenz bleibt auch für die digitalen Netze bestehen: Bei aller Anerkennung um die Vorteile der digitalen Vernetzung sollten wir uns zugleich immer bewußter werden, dass, wenn wir eine Orwellsche *surveillance society* vermeiden wollen, gerade auf die Lücken des Netzes angewiesen sind. Je engmaschiger die Netze, um so schwieriger ist es auch, im informationstechnischen Labyrinth zwar nicht *den einen* wohl aber einen Ariadnefaden zu finden, den wir aber immer mit anderen Fäden selbst verknüpfen müssen.[11] Die Maschen, die wir dabei stricken und in denen wir uns *volens nolens* verstricken, sind unser Leben selbst. Denn wir sind immer schon als Natur- und Kulturwesen vernetzt, im Netz des Lebens, das heißt der Natur und der Sprache.

Den Begriff der Netzethik, die wir uns in den kontingenten Netzen von Lebenswelt, Kultur und Digitalität zur Aufgabe gemacht haben, können wir dabei im Sinne eines *genitivus objectivus* und *subjectivus* verstehen. In der ersten Bedeutung meinen wir die Kritik an einer Ausformung unseres digitalen Seins, die von den realen Nöten der Menschen absieht, anstatt zu fragen, inwiefern das Netz bestehende

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[8] Thomas Hausmanninger, Rafael Capurro: Ethik in der Globalität. Ein Dialog. 18

[9] Karl Rahner: Experiment Mensch.

[10] Karl Rahner: Experiment Mensch. 66.

[11] Rafael Capurro: Ethik im Netz. 48-50.

Ungerechtigkeiten zementiert und sogar vertieft oder, positiv ausgedrückt, inwiefern die Globalisierung den Menschen konkrete Chancen bietet, sich in einer pluralen und komplexen Welt ein nach ihren eigenen Vorstellungen und Wünschen besseres Leben zu gestalten. Diese Problematik wird heute vor allem unter dem Stichwort *digital divide* thematisiert. Wir können auch von *digitaler Apartheid* sprechen.

Die zweite Bedeutung bezieht sich auf die Art und Weise wie wir im Netz sind. Hier sehe ich die Chance für eine Netzethik im Rahmen einer Philosophie der Lebenskunst. Wenn Wilhelm Schmid auf die "Gefahr einer bloßen Unterwerfung des Selbst unter die technologischen Bedingungen" aufmerksam macht,[12] dann ist zu fragen, inwiefern dabei die Unterscheidung zwischen den Massenmedien und dem Internet ausfällt, die den entscheidenden Unterschied zwischen der Massenkultur des 20. Jahrhunderts und der neuen vernetzten und interaktiven Kommunikationskultur in diesem zweifellos nicht undramatisch beginnenden 21. Jahrhundert ausmacht.

Wenn Misstrauen eher Gelassenheit am Platz ist, dann vor allem in Bezug auf jene Schleusenwärter der Information, die mittels einer hierarchischen *one-to-many* Struktur, eine Masse durch eine universal ausgerichtete Botschaft neuerdings auch durch das Internet zu erreichen und ihre Aufmerksamkeit zu fesseln versuchen. Wir können diese Gefahr als das CNN-Effekt bezeichnen. Das Subjekt ist aber ein historisches Gebilde, als *face-to-face* Diskutierender, Leser, Zuschauer oder Zuhörer von massenmedialen Botschafen und -- als Sender und Empfänger im digitalen Netz. Die moralischen und rechtlichen Bedingungen der Massenmedien lassen sich nicht eins zu eins auf das Internet übertragen, ohne damit die Chancen dieses Mediums für eine neue Form der Ausgestaltung unserer Freiheit aus dem Blick zu verlieren. Das heißt wiederum nicht, dass im Internet keine rechtlichen und moralischen Normen notwendig wären. Es ist gerade die Hauptaufgabe einer Informationsethik zur Bildung eines *Cyberethos* beizutragen, von dem aus sich rechtliche Normen herauskristallisieren können.

Informationsethik lässt sich demnach als deskriptive *und* emanzipatorische oder normative Theorie unter jeweils historischer und systematischer Perspektive auffassen:

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[12] Wilhelm Schmid: Philosophie der Lebenskunst. 136.

- Als deskriptive Theorie beschreibt sie die verschiedenen Strukturen und Machtverhältnisse, die das Informationsverhalten in verschiedenen Kulturen und Epochen bestimmen.

- Als emanzipatorische oder normative Theorie befasst sie sich mit der Kritik der Entwicklung moralischen Verhaltens im Informationsbereich. Sie umfasst individuelle, kollektive und menschheitliche Aspekte.

Mit anderen Worten, Informationsethik soll

- die Entwicklung moralischen Verhaltens im Informationsbereich, und insbesondere im Bereich der digitalen Weltvernetzung, beobachten,

- Informationsmythen aufdecken und kritisieren, Machtverhältnisse, die das Informationsverhalten bestimmen, analysieren,

- verdeckte Widersprüche der herrschenden theoretischen und praktischen Sprachnormierung offen legen

- die Entwicklung informationsethischer Fragestellungen beobachten.

Eine so verstandene informationsethische Reflexion umfasst kultur- und philosophiehistorische Dimensionen. Die Frage nach der Freiheit des Zugangs zum digitalen Netz (*freedom of access*) lässt sich zum Beispiel in Auseinandersetzung mit der modernen Pressefreiheit (*freedom of the press*) und der antiken Redefreiheit (*freedom of speech*) erörtern.

Daraus ergeben sich folgende Ausbildungsziele:

- Selbständige Erkennung und Problematisierung ethischer Konflikte im digitalen Informationsbereich.

- Verantwortungssinn für die Auswirkungen individuellen und kollektiven Handelns im digitalen Informationsbereich wecken.

- Fähigkeit zum interkulturellen Dialog im Sinne von Anerkennung der Vielfalt von Informations- und Medienkulturen mit ihren jeweiligen Werten und Traditionen.

- Grundkenntnisse ethischer Begriffe und Theorien und ihre Relevanz für die alltägliche Informationspraxis vermitteln.

Mit anderen Worten, die primäre Aufgabe einer Netzethik besteht darin, unser Im-Netz-sein im Kontext von Freiheit, Gerechtigkeit, kultureller Vielfalt und Chancengleichheit zu thematisieren und umgekehrt, diese Dimensionen menschlichen Seins aus der Perspektive des digitalen Weltentwurfs neu zu reflektieren.

Unsere digitalen Wohnorte sind nur scheinbar raum- und zeitlos. Das Thema des ICIE-Symposiums 2004 drückt eine wichtige vor uns liegende Denkaufgabe aus, nämlich das Lokalisieren des Internet aus ethischer und interkultureller Perspektive. Im Informationszeitalter sollten wir, wie Manuel Castells richtig bemerkt, lokal, d.h. situationsbezogen denken und, in Anbetracht der global agierenden Mächte vor allem im Medium der Weltvernetzung, global handeln, denn sonst macht es keinen Unterschied.[13]

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[13] Kreisler, Harry: Identity and Change in the Network Society. Conversation with Manuel Castells. 5.

Felix Weil
Von der Ethik des Mediengebrauchs zu einer 'brauchbaren' Medienethik

Abstract:

Title: From the Ethical Use of the Media to a 'useful' Media Ethics

Without knowing the rules of the game in a specific area qualified ethical decisions within are simply not possible. Therefore, a fundamental understanding of the phenomenon 'media' is a prerequisite for the 'usablity' of any media ethics. This understanding of the very basis of media is introduced by the notion of space: media is the space where the presentation of something is possible – formally that space fulfils the criteria of a Hilbert space; more common is this concept in the notion of cyberspace e.g.. As presentations (in a real as well as in a Hilbert space) do not exist separated from each other but are (more or less) connected, are linked, thus acting in the media can be understood as moving in the space of communication, following the links. This understanding leads to fundamentally new ethical categories: media ethic is the challenge of ethically designing the communicative space. The appropriate ethical approach for this task can be found in Wittgenstein's notion of 'use'. That overcomes the 'blind' application of ethical norms to categorical distinctive descriptions, which is very common through the term 'applied ethics' though it can be easily proved as aporetic. The investigation in what the ethical 'ought' basically could mean shows that there is no normative meaning without a descriptive context: 'to ought' always means 'to ought' in a certain situation, be it more common or more specific. Ethically right then means: one can decide on the basis of good reasons to do the right in this or that situation. And ethics finally is the quest to categorize, structure and systemize these right decisions by the means of creating a comprehensive theory. These are the limits and the dignity of ethics as a scientific scholarship and media ethics in particular.

Agenda

Was macht eine Medienethik 'brauchbar'?

Grundzüge einer 'brauchbaren' Medienethik

    Zutreffende Deskription der Welt der Medien als Unterscheidungen von Präsenz und Absenz

    Brauchbare Medienethik als Verknüpfung von zutreffender Deskription der Medien und ethisch legitimer Normierung

      Regel, Anwendung und Irrtumsmöglichkeit

      Spezifikum gelungenen Regelbefolgens

      Vom situativen Sollensbegriff zur ethischen Theorie

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  - Die Medien und die Ethik. Grundzüge einer 'brauchbaren' Medienethik. Freiburg 2001
  - Digital Divide und Digitale Dynamik. Über den tatsächlichen ethischen Handlungsbedarf. In: Capurro, R, Hausmanninger, Th., Scheule, R.: Vernetzt gespalten. München 2004

Was macht eine Medienethik 'brauchbar'?

Wer die Gesetze des (erfolgreichen) Handelns im Medienbereich nicht kennt und das heißt, laufend auf dem aktuellsten Stand ist, kann auch nicht kompetent zu den ethischen Problemen Stellung beziehen. In diesem Sinne ist für eine tatsächlich 'brauchbare' Medienethik – vgl. Weil, Felix: Die Medien und die Ethik, 75 – zweierlei erforderlich:

- Zunächst ein zutreffendes Grundverständnis des Phänomens der Medien. Der Medienethiker muss wissen, *wovon* er im Bereich der Medien redet.

- Sodann eine Ethikauffassung, welche es erlaubt, die mit dem o.g. Grundverständnis gegebene angemessene Deskription des zu regulierenden Bereiches mit der Normativität ethischer Regulative gleichermaßen sachgerecht wie moralisch verbindlich zu verknüpfen. Der Medienethiker muss sagen können, was *konkret* getan werden *soll*.

Im folgenden sollen diese beiden Grundanforderungen an eine 'brauchbare' Medienethik näher ausgeführt werden.

Grundzüge einer 'brauchbaren' Medienethik

Zutreffende Deskription der Welt der Medien als Unterscheidungen von Präsenz und Absenz

Der Schlüssel zu einem zutreffenden Grundverständnis von Medien, das prinzipiell für die Entwicklung einer 'brauchbaren' Medienethik erforderlich ist, liegt in dem heute vielfach unterschiedlich verwendeten Raumbegriff – weniger in seinem metaphorischen Verständnis (wie z.B. in dem vielbemühten Cyberraum) als vielmehr in einem mathematisch präzisen Sinne (nach Hilbert) als strukturelles Apriori einer fundierten Unterscheidung:

- im mathematischen Sinne: als strukturierte Menge, also als Struktur der Unterscheidung, ob etwas Element einer Menge ist oder nicht ($\in, \notin$)

- im Falle der Medien: als strukturelles Apriori der Unterscheidung von Präsenz und Ab-

senz, also ob etwas präsent(iert) wird oder nicht.

Die Welt der Medien kann formal präzise als Raum beschrieben werden, der den drei Bedingungen eines Hilbertraumes (M, $\boldsymbol{M}$) genügt, welcher aus einer Trägermenge M (nun konkret aller medialen Präsentationen, in Summe: der Welt der Medien) und ihrer Struktur $\boldsymbol{M}$ (mathematisch: der Topologie des Raumes; für die Medien konkret: der Kontext einer Präsenz bzw. Absenz) besteht. Und umgekehrt können diese nun für die fundierte Entwicklung einer in obigem Sinne 'brauchbaren' Medienethik fruchtbar gemacht werden:

- Bed. 1: $\emptyset \in \boldsymbol{M}$, $M \in \boldsymbol{M}$. Die Zugehörigkeit zum Raum ist eindeutig entscheidbar. Das heißt für die Medien: es ist eindeutig entscheidbar, ob etwas (im Raum der Kommunikation) präsent wird oder nicht.

- Bed. 2: $T_1, T_2 \in \boldsymbol{M} \rightarrow T_1 \cap T_2 \in \boldsymbol{M}$. Alle Elemente des Raumes sind miteinander verknüpfbar. Das heißt für die Medien: jede realisierte Präsenz steht im Zusammenhang mit anderen Präsenzen, steht in einem Kontext.

- Bed. 3: $\Re \subseteq \boldsymbol{M} \rightarrow \bigcup_{T \in \Re} T \in \boldsymbol{M}$. Die Vereinigung von Teilmengen von $\boldsymbol{M}$ ist wiederum Teilmenge von $\boldsymbol{M}$. d.h. für die Medien: der Kontext erschöpft sich im Raum der Kommunikation, er verlässt ihn niemals und bedarf auch nichts außer seiner selbst.

Zu Bed. 1: Das Wesen von Medien lässt sich zunächst ganz fundamental dahingehend bestimmen, *Präsenz und Absenz voneinander unterscheidbar* zu machen: das weiße Blatt Papier, auf dem ein Brief, eine Nachricht, ein Artikel stehen kann oder eben nicht, die Mattscheibe, auf der ein Film ablaufen kann oder die Webpage, auf der Inhalte audiovisuell und interaktiv dargestellt werden können. Ein Medium birgt prinzipiell diese Möglichkeit der fundierten Unterscheidung von Präsenz und Absenz an und in sich. Ist das Blatt weiß, ist der Brief nicht nur einfach nicht existent – er ist absent, er könnte da stehen, d.h. präsent sein (aber eben nur in einer bestimmten Länge etc.), tut es aber nicht. Und der ausgeschaltete Fernseher – als Medium betrachtet – wird dadurch nicht zum bloßen Möbelstück, sondern es hat sehr wohl seine Bedeutung, wenn er ausgeschaltet ist (für die Quote, die zukünftige Programmgestaltung, die Werbeeinnahmen etc.).

Zu Bed. 2: Weiterhin gilt: Wie in einem realen Raum existieren einzelne Präsenzen nicht isoliert voneinander, sondern sind verbunden, beziehen sich aufeinander, zitieren, kommentieren, negieren sich, sind verknüpft, verlinkt, vernetzt. Handeln im *Raum der Medien* wird damit zur Bewegung im Raum der Kommunikation, von einer medialen Präsenz (in ihrem Kontext) zu einer anderen. Und umgekehrt lässt sich eine mediale Präsentation nur aus ihrem Kontext heraus verstehen, ist darum auch zu ihrer ethischen Beurteilung zuallererst in diesen einzuordnen und nur aus diesem heraus zu bewerten.

Zu Bed. 3: Zur Bestimmung einer realisierten Präsenz (für ihr zureichendes Verständnis) schließlich ist der *Kontext* innerhalb des Raumes der Kommunikation nicht nur notwendige sondern auch *hinreichende* Bedingung. Für Kommunikation gibt es nichts anderes als den Raum der Kommunikation, um etwas präsent zu machen. Und ist etwas präsent, so lässt es sich innerhalb des Raumes der Kommunikation (durch seinen Ort, seinen Kontext s.o.) *vollständig* bestimmen. Darum stellen die Medien schließlich auch einen eigenständigen Bereich dar, der tatsächlich einer eigenen ethischen Betrachtung, einer eigenen Bereichsethik, bedarf, die sich gar nicht aus anderen ableiten lässt.

Eine Präsenz hat folglich immer ihren (angemessenen) Ort, ihren Kontext im Raum der Kommunikation, aus dem heraus sie und insbesondere ihre ethische Angemessenheit bestimmbar ist. Die medienethische Aufgabe wird damit zur Forderung nach der ethischen Gestaltung dieses Raumes der Kommunikation: der Reflexion auf die strukturelle Ermöglichung und Sicherstellung seiner ethisch angemessenen Erschließung bzw. Erschließbarkeit, seiner Begehung bzw. Begehbarkeit, der Orientierung darin sowie seiner ständigen Erweiterung und/oder Begrenzung.

Während mit dem Raumbegriff das strukturelle Apriori für mediale Kommunikation noch ganz anschaulich gefasst werden kann, ist mit dem erläuterungsbedürftigen Präsenzbegriff deren materialer Grund bezeichnet. 'Präsenz' ist dabei jedoch gerade nicht als eine Fundamentaleigenschaft zu verstehen, sondern vielmehr als die fundamentale Handlungsweise, welche den darauf sich entwickelnden Bereich der Medien begründet.[14]

Letztlich kann auch diese Handlungsweise auf dem Grunde des Bereiches der Medien analog zu der verstanden werden, die für die Entwicklung des mathematischen Raumes oben auch schon gefordert wurde: nämlich letztlich als die Handlungsweise (aktiv verstanden), eine Entscheidung zu treffen, die einen Unterschied macht bzw. andersherum (passiv verstanden), einen Unterschied darzustellen, der im Einzelfall eine konkret fundierte Entscheidung ermöglicht: ob etwas Element ist oder nicht, oder wie im Falle der Medien: ob etwas präsent wird oder nicht.

Die Fundamentalhandlung für den Bereich der Medien kann nun präzise von anderen abgegrenzt werden:

- Präsenz ist zu unterscheiden von *Wahrnehmung*: Wahrnehmungen (Berührungen, Kälte, Wärme, Feuchtigkeit etc.) wie ein 'Kühles Nass' werden durch die mediale Vermittlung (z.B. durch das Wort 'Wasser') in 'präsent' oder 'absent' unterscheidbar. 'Wasser' erfüllt von nun an den Ort des 'Kühlen Nass' in dem neuen, damit erst eröffneten, also mit der Fähigkeit zur Unterscheidung gleichursprünglichen Raum der Präsenz.

- Präsenz ist auch zu unterscheiden von V*erstehen*: Sehr leicht ließe sich 'Präsenz' aufgrund des o.g. vermittelnden Moments des Mediums als so etwas wie semantisches Verstehen missverstehen: als Verstehen dessen, was durch sinnfällige Zeichen bezeichnet wird. Um dies zu vermeiden wurde das Vermittelnde Moment gerade nicht als Verweis über sich hinaus präzisiert, sondern als bestimmtes Verhältnis zunächst allgemein gehalten. Darum nun genauer: Präsenz ist von Verstehen (bzw. einem hermeneutisch geprägtem und auch in der Phänomenologie nachweisbaren Verständnis von Verstehen) zu unterscheiden, insofern das Medium auf nichts ('Essentielles') verweist, das durch geeignete Methode 'erschlossen' werden kann; es bezeichnet nicht 'etwas' (Unabhängiges), das damit besser oder schlechter getroffen werden kann. Eine

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[14] Für den interessierten Leser sei auf die analoge Figur bei Wittgenstein verwiesen, dem die Entwicklung dieser Position viel verdankt: „Die Begründung aber ... kommt zu einem Ende; – das Ende aber ist

nicht, daß uns gewisse Sätze unmittelbar als wahr einleuchten [mediale Präsentationen uns präsent werden, FW], also eine Art Sehen unsrerseits; sondern unser Handeln, welches am Grunde des Sprachspiels [der Medienethik, FW] liegt." Wittgenstein, Ludwig: Über Gewissheit. § 109f.

Präsenz, so lässt sich das bestimmte Verhältnis nun abgrenzen, ist kein Verweis auf etwas, sondern einzig und allein das, als was sie im Raum der Kommunikation, in einem Kontext 'gebraucht' wird bzw. werden kann, um zu unterscheiden, was in diesem Kontext einen Unterschied macht.

Diese Einsicht ist weitreichend: Jeder Mensch ist damit immer (auch) einer, der mit Medien in diesem allgemeinen Sinne umgeht - nicht nur einer, der heutzutage kontingenterweise mit Darstellungen und Literatur, Presse, Radio, Film, Fernsehen oder Internet umzugehen hat, um auf dem Laufenden zu bleiben, um mitreden zu können oder um sein täglich Brot zu verdienen. Sondern noch in einem viel ursprünglicheren Sinne gilt: durch seinen Umgang mit Medien ist eine Grunddimension des Menschseins in Augenschein genommen – in der antiken Formulierung noch konkret auf das Medium der Sprache bezogen: Der Mensch sei dasjenige Lebewesen, das über Sprache verfügt – nun allgemeiner: das Lebewesen, das Medien zu gebrauchen weiß.

Brauchbare Medienethik als Verknüpfung von zutreffender Deskription der Medien und ethisch legitimer Normierung

Die Stellung nun, die man zu konkreten Normen einnimmt, die auf dem o.g. Grundverständnis basieren, hängt wesentlich davon ab, welchen Status man prinzipiell normativen bzw. deskriptiven Elementen in der Ethik einräumt. Eine jede Bereichsethik steht letztlich in diesem Spannungsverhältnis. Im folgenden soll dargestellt werden, dass man sich weder letztlich für eine der beiden Seiten entscheiden muss, noch dass die Unauflöslichkeit dieses Spannungsfeldes Anlass für einen ethischen Skeptizismus sein muss. Im Gegenteil: für eine 'brauchbare' Ethik fordert der Autor (in: Die Medien und Ethik, 48):

- eine "normativ be- und nicht ver-urteilte Deskriptivität"

  gleichermaßen wie

- eine "deskriptiv ge- und nicht ent-schärfte Normativität"

In diesem Sinne kann es einerseits gar keine normativ unbestimmt erschließbare Domäne reiner Deskriptivität geben (auch nicht den Bereich der Medien) und andererseits ebenso keine deskriptionsfreie Aufstellung einer Norm (in einer reinen, allgemeinen Ethik). Jede Norm ist dann immer schon prinzipiell auf einen Bereich ihrer konkreten Gültig-

keit bezogen und jede Beschreibung eines Handlungsbereiches (jede Einsicht in sein Funktionieren, seine Gesetzmäßigkeiten wie oben für den Bereich der Medien gefordert) mag für oder gegen die Gültigkeit einer Norm sprechen. Beide stehen dann nicht mehr unabhängig nebeneinander, wie normative und deskriptive Prämisse im reinen, praktischen Syllogismus und werden in der Ethik einfach nur logisch notwendig zusammengeführt. Sondern die Beschreibung der Anwendungsfälle von Normen ist dann konstitutives Element ihrer verbindlichen Formulierung - und nicht allein ihre praktische Notwendigkeit. Und genauso ist die inpflichtnehmende Norm immer schon konstitutives Element für die zutreffende, im konkreten Fall zu gebende Beschreibung der entsprechenden Situation – und diese nicht nur das Material des Handwerks der Anwendung von Normen. Mit Kant, gegen Kant, wird diese Position in Weil, Felix: Die Medien und die Ethik. 48, kurzgefasst als: "Normativität ohne Deskriptivität ist leer, Deskriptivität ohne Normativität ist blind."

Diese Positionsbestimmung der Medienethik als Bereichsethik, genauer: als eine im Bereich der Medien 'brauchbare' Ethik, ist im folgenden genauer zu betrachten. Der späte Wittgenstein steht mit seiner allgemeinen Lösung des Problems des Regelfolgens – exemplarisch: Wittgenstein, Ludwig: Über Gewissheit. §§ 26, 27, 139 - Pate dafür:[15]

> *"... Was nützt uns ... eine Regel? Könnten wir uns bei ihrer Anwendung nicht (wieder) irren?*
>
> *Wollte man aber dafür etwas Regelartiges angeben, so würde der Ausdruck 'unter normalen Umständen' vorkommen. Und die normalen Umstände erkennt man, aber man kann sie nicht genau beschreiben. Eher noch eine Reihe von abnormalen.*
>
> *Um eine Praxis festzulegen, genügen nicht Regeln, sondern man braucht auch Beispiele. Unsere Regeln lassen Hintertüren offen, und die Praxis muß für sich selbst sprechen."*

Drei Aspekte sind daraus für die Entwicklung einer 'brauchbaren' Ethik von Bedeutung: Das Problem des Irrtums in der Anwendung einer Regel, die Frage nach dem Spezifikum gelungenen Regelbefolgens und die Frage nach der wissenschaftlichen

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[15] Die Idee der Möglichkeit, eine Ethik aus der Philosophie Wittgensteins zu entwickeln, findet sich bereits in Roberts, Julian: Das rechnende Subjekt.

Theoriebildung auf dem so gewonnenen Fundament.

Regel, Anwendung und Irrtumsmöglichkeit

Zunächst zum erstgenannten Problem des Irrtums in der Anwendung. Eine einfache und darum wohl auch intuitiv einleuchtende Annäherung daran ist das Schachspiel: Hier gibt es einerseits Zugregeln, wie z.B. ein Springer oder ein Läufer zu ziehen sei - vergleichbar ethischen Normen. Und dann gibt es spezifische Situationen, in denen der eine oder aber der andere Zug richtig wäre - vergleichbar konkret beschreibbaren Situationen. Welcher regelkonforme Zug aber in welcher konkreten Situation anzuwenden sei, das gerade ist die Kunst des Schachspiels. Schon die im Vergleich zur Wirklichkeit des menschlichen Lebens immer noch geringe Komplexität des Schachspiels mit seinen 64 Feldern und 32 Figuren macht es unmöglich, den jeweils richtigen Zug in einer konkreten Situation in einem umfassenden Katalog nachschlagbar zu machen.

Philosophiegeschichtlich ist auf das Scheitern der Tradition der kasuistischen Ethik zu verweisen, die v.a. in der katholischen Moraltheologie im Anschluss an das Konzil von Trient im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert zur Perfektion getrieben wurde. Nicht bestritten werden soll dabei die Nützlichkeit von anschaulichen Beispielen und paradigmatischen Fallsammlungen, wie sie sich auch im Schachspiel zum Beispiel in Form von Eröffnungs- oder Endspielbibliotheken finden.

Systematisch ist daher darzulegen, dass es bei allem Streben danach in der Ethik keinen umfassenden Katalog geben *kann.* Für das Schachspiel ist dies zunächst gerade nicht einleuchtend, da sich prinzipiell jeder Zug und alle möglichen Folgen in endlicher Form beschreiben lassen, dank der Beschränkung auf die 64 Felder und 32 Figuren. Genau diese notwendige Beschränkung aber macht den umfassenden Katalog der in einem konkreten Fall zu wählenden Regelanwendungen in der Wirklichkeit unmöglich. Einerseits kann man nicht die Totalität aller prinzipiell unendlichen Umstände in die konkrete Entscheidungsfindung mit einbeziehen - warum sollte die Stellung der Sterne oder der Flug der Vögel nicht (mehr) berücksichtigt werden? Andererseits, und dies ist entscheidend, würde die Existenz eines solchen Kataloges das Schachspiel *als Spiel* sinnlos machen – und würde dazu führen, dass man es entsprechend erweitert, auf mehrere Ebenen z.B. wie in der Science-Fiction-Serie Raumschiff-Enterprise, oder in Bezug auf die Regeln, auf denen der Katalog basiert, welche z.B. abwechselnd durch die Spieler beliebig modifiziert werden könnten.

Diese Dynamik ist aus der Paradoxientheorie als das Phänomen der Rächerparadoxien bekannt. Rächerparadoxien reagieren auf das Vorliegen einer Lösung, indem sie wiederum diese selbst ad absurdum führen. Der Umstand selbst, dass es eine Lösung gibt – das also z.B. ein Katalog für das Schachspiel existiert – ist in dem Katalog selbst nicht als Fall (der 64 Felder und 32 Figuren) beschreibbar. Er tritt sozusagen zu den im Katalog betrachteten Umständen neu hinzu. Der Katalog, insofern er mit absolutem Anspruch auftritt, ist damit in dem Augenblick seiner Erstellung veraltet, da er nicht die Totalität aller möglichen Umstände beschreibt, insbesondere seine eigene Existenz vernachlässigt. Ein in obigem Sinne geführtes, gutes Rächer-Argument gegen einen ethischen Katalog, selbst wenn er umfassend existierte, wäre z.B. dass im Falle seiner Existenz seine (stupide) Anwendung ethisch verwerflich wäre, weil sie der Freiheit und Selbstbestimmung des menschlichen Subjektes widerspräche.

Es muss also (noch) eine andere Lösung geben, als die bloße Anwendung von ethischen Normen auf davon kategorial zu unterscheidende Situationsbeschreibungen, wenn *in jedem Fall* eine ethische Entscheidung bezüglich der Alternativen prinzipiell möglich sein soll – wie gesagt: viele paradigmatische Fälle lassen sich mit der ersteren Methode erschlagen, jedoch weder theoretisch noch praktisch alle möglichen und v.a. nicht die komplexen in einem spezifischen, dynamischen Bereich, wie ihn z.B. die Medien darstellen. Diese Einsicht findet sich interessanterweise schon bei Thomas von Aquin:

> *"Man muß aber wissen, dass etwas in zweifacher Weise sich vom natürlichen Gesetz [das ist die Ethik, FW] herleiten kann: einmal wie die Folgesätze aus den Grundsätzen [conclusio, FW]; ein anderes Mal, wie nähere Bestimmungen allgemeiner Sätze [determinatio, FW]. ... die zweite gleicht jener, in der bei den Künstlern die allgemeinen Vorformen auf etwas Besonderes hin ausgearbeitet werden; so muß der Künstler die allgemeine Vorform 'Haus' zu dieser oder jener Form des Hauses ausarbeiten"[16]*

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[16] Thomas von Aquin: Summa Theologiae. I, II, 95, 2

Spezifikum gelungenen Regelbefolgens

Und damit zum zweiten Gedanken, der für die Entwicklung einer 'brauchbaren' Medienethik, deren Spezifikum in der Verknüpfung von Deskription und Normierung liegt, fruchtbar gemacht werden soll: den abnormalen Umständen, an denen man gelungenes bzw. verfehltes Regelbefolgen am besten erkennt.

Zunächst wieder philosophiegeschichtlich ist hier an die Behandlung moralischer Konflikte anzuknüpfen, an denen deutlich wird, *wie* zu einer konkreten Entscheidung zu gelangen ist - paradigmatisch beschrieben z.B. in Sophie's Choice: der Entscheidung, welches ihrer Zwillingskinder, vor die Wahl gestellt durch einen KZ-Aufseher, sie für die Gaskammer selektieren soll (oder aber ihr beide genommen werden, wenn sie keine Wahl trifft). Einerseits ist ein echter Konfliktfall, wie auch immer er zu beschreiben sei, im Rahmen einer Ethik, die immer schon im Vorhinein weiß, was zu tun ist, die mit praktischer Notwendigkeit, wie exemplarisch Kant sagt, aus obersten Prinzipien ableitet, gar nicht *denkbar*:

> "Da aber Pflicht und Verbindlichkeit überhaupt Begriffe sind, welche die objektive, praktische Notwendigkeit gewisser Handlungen ausdrücken und zwei einander entgegengesetzte Regeln nicht zugleich notwendig sein können, … so ist eine Kollision von Pflichten und Verbindlichkeiten gar nicht denkbar."[17]

Und doch existieren sie, nicht nur in der Anschaulichkeit wegen konstruierten Extremfällen. Sie *rigoros* zu leugnen wäre an der Realität menschlichen Handelns und der Not der darin verstrickten sträflich vorbei argumentiert. Andererseits gibt die klassische Lösung des Utilitarismus: die Wahl des je Besseren, Nützlicheren, die normative Inpflichtnahme gänzlich preis: ein nicht gangbarer Weg für eine 'brauchbare' Ethik, die mit dem Anspruch auftritt, intellektuell redlich sagen zu können, was konkret zu tun sein *soll*.

Eine überzeugende Lösung hat Levi mit der Verwendung des Sollensbegriffes im Sinne von konkret 'entscheidbar' vorgelegt:

> "I say the agent ought to perform some option which is optimal relative to some permissible way of evaluation."[18]

Auf die Analogie eines solchen Verständnisses zu Freges Kontextprinzip[19] verweist Vossenkuhl (1993, 143) in seiner Analyse des Verhältnisses von Normativität und Deskriptivität in der Ethik:

> "So wie nach diesem Prinzip Wörter nur im Kontext ganzer Sätze eine bestimmte Bedeutung haben, bildet die deskriptive Bedeutung von Regeln den Kontext, in dem Ausdrücke wie 'gut', 'richtig', 'sollen' ihre normative Bedeutung haben. Normative Bedeutung gibt es nur im Kontext von deskriptiver."

Die Folge eines solchen, prinzipiell situativen Sollensbegriffes ist, dass damit einerseits Konflikte anerkannt und kohärent beschrieben werden können und andererseits die sittliche Inpflichtnahme einer deontologischen Ethik, nämlich sich soundso entscheiden zu sollen, vollständig erhalten bleibt ohne telelogisch reduziert zu werden: Gesollt ist, wozu ich mich in einem konkreten Fall ethisch gerechtfertigt entscheiden kann. In den Worten von Wittgenstein:

> "'Der Satz ist wahr oder falsch' heißt eigentlich nur, es müsse eine Entscheidung für oder gegen ihn möglich sein."[20]

Im Grunde ist damit unser Alltagsverständnis von Moral wiedergegeben: dass es in konkreten Situationen zutreffende und nicht-zutreffende Entscheidungen gibt, ob dies oder jenes zu tun sei, genauso wie, ob dieser oder jener Werkstoff in einem bestimmten Fall verwendet werden kann. Dies kann jedoch nur erzielt werden, wenn der Konsequenz aus dem oben Gesagten von vornherein schon im Ansatz einer Ethik Rechnung getragen wird: nämlich dass Deskriptivität - die *Weise,* wie wir zu Situationsbeschreibungen kommen - und Normativität - die *Weise,* wie wir Verpflichtungen bestimmen - prinzipiell so ursprünglich ineinandergreifen, wie in dem situativen Sol-

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[17] Kant, Immanuel: Metaphysik der Sitten. 330.

[18] Levi, Isaac: Hard Choices. 23

[19] „Nach der Bedeutung der Wörter muß im Satzzusammenhange, nicht in ihrer Vereinzelung gefragt werden." Frege, Gottlob: Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik. XXII.

[20] Wittgenstein, Ludwig: Über Gewissheit. 200

Sollensbegriff von Levi, so dass prinzipiell jede *Entscheidung* sich aus dieser Verschränkung heraus begründet.

An einem Beispiel: Die Norm, die Wahrheit zu sagen, wird kaum allgemein bestritten, weder in unserem Alltagsverständnis, noch in einer ernsthaften Ethik. Der Einfachheit halber kann sie hier für die folgenden situationsbezogenen Überlegungen als gegeben angenommen werden – eine angemessene Vorgehensweise zur Theoriebildung in der Bereichsethik wird im anschließenden Abschnitt noch ausführlicher dargelegt werden. Auf der anderen Seite können wir genügend Situationen beschreiben, in denen uns die Inpflichtnahme durch diese Norm sehr wohl strittig erscheint – am deutlichsten wird dies wie bereits gesagt an (konstruierten) Extremen. Wenn wir uns nun z.B. in dem vielfach diskutierten und zumeist auch einschlägig beschiedenen Fall - SS-Schergen klopfen an die Tür und fragen nach versteckten Flüchtlingen – nicht an die Wahrheit halten und ihre Anwesenheit leugnen, um den Betreffenden das Leben zu retten, dann setzen wir dadurch das Verbot, zu lügen, nicht außer Kraft. Wir müssen dadurch nicht seine normative Verpflichtung leugnen, sondern wir handeln vielmehr aus der Einsicht, dass mit der in der Norm 'Du sollst nicht Lügen' immer schon enthaltenen Deskription eine solche Situation nicht erfasst und gemeint sein kann, dass also diese Norm in diesem Fall – und gemäß des situativen Sollensbegriff ist sie prinzipiell auf angemessene Fälle bezogen - gar nicht verpflichten will. Wir sind dann geneigt, die Handlungsweise in diesem Fall nicht als unverändert verwerfliche 'Lüge', sondern vielmehr als gebotene Nottäuschung oder ziviler Ungehorsam zu bezeichnen.

Und wir kennen noch viele andere und weniger dramatische Situationen (wie z.B. so manches, beliebtes Gesellschaftsspiel, aber auch solche im Rahmen von Höflichkeitsfloskeln, Witzen, Anekdoten oder Parodien), in denen wir durch unsere ethisch gerechtfertigte Entscheidung gegen die Wahrheit nicht die grundsätzliche Gültigkeit des Lügenverbotes leugnen wollen, noch dessen Anwendbarkeit auf den konkreten Fall bestreiten, sondern in denen wir allein durch die zureichende Beschreibung der jeweiligen Situationen (Spiel etc.) besser verstehen, was mit dem Gebot eigentlich gemeint ist, wozu es immer schon *konkret* verpflichten wollte und wozu nicht.

Wir folgen damit aber gerade nicht einer Regel der richtigen Anwendung einer als separat existierend zu verstehenden Normen (bei der wir uns wieder irren könnten, s.o.), sondern wir lernen besser verstehen, zu was die Normen immer schon verpflichten. Vielmehr bleibt die Norm auch in diesen Situationen voll und ganz erhalten: auch wenn wir in einem Spiel oder in einem Witz über eine bestimmte Person oder aus Höflichkeit nicht die Wahrheit sagen: Lügen dürfen wir dadurch noch lange nicht – und tun es damit auch nicht.

Vom situativen Sollensbegriff zur ethischen Theorie

Und damit zum dritten Aspekt, der mit dem Wittgenstein-Zitat eingangs aufgeworfen wurde: Wie kommt man ausgehend von einem solchen Sollensbegriff zu einer Ethik, wie legen wir die Regeln für Praxis systematisch, den Anforderungen an eine wissenschaftliche Theorie genügend fest? Und nun können wir darauf intellektuell redlich mit Wittgenstein antworten:

> "*Wir lernen die Praxis nicht, indem wir Regeln lernen [aus einem Katalog, s.o. – FW]. Es werden uns Urteile beigebracht [Entscheidungen bezüglich konkrektem Sollen, s.o. – FW] und ihr Zusammenhang mit anderen Urteilen. Ein ganzes von Urteilen wird uns plausibel gemacht. ... (Das Licht geht nach und nach über das Ganze auf).*"[21]

Damit gibt es kein *besonderes* Begründungsproblem der Angewandten Ethik mehr (das über das allgemeine Begründungproblem praktischer Philosophie hinausginge). Es ist entschärft worden durch die Klärung dessen, was es bedeutet, überhaupt eine ethische Verpflichtung formulieren zu können. Daran schließt sich das systematischen Bemühen an, solche Formulierungen im Rahmen einer wissenschaftlichen Theorie für einen eigenständigen Bereich – und das sind die Medien wie oben durch die zutreffende Deskription als eigenständiger (Hilbert-)Raum gezeigt - zu erfassen.

Die eigentümliche Struktur der Ethik als Theorie des Gebrauchs – vom professionellen Sachgebrauch ausgehend, über ethische Theoriebildung zu einem je sachgerechteren Gebrauch zu führen, soll hier in dem Begriff der 'brauchbaren' Ethik festgehalten werden. Der Sache nach war sie bereits Aristoteles bewusst, wenn er in der Nikomachischen Ethik nur ältere Semester für ethische Überlegungen geeignet hält:

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[21] Wittgenstein, Ludwig: Über Gewissheit. 147

"Der Jüngling ... hat ja noch keine Erfahrung im wirklichen Leben. Gerade von diesem aber gehen die Vorträge aus und dieses haben sie zum Gegenstand ... das Ziel ist hier nicht Erkenntnis, sondern Handeln [und der Ausgangspunkt ebenso, das ist das ganze Geheimnis, FW]"[22]

Eine Bereichsethik auf diesem Fundament liegt nun nicht unter der Würde einer philosophischen Ethik, weil Normativität immer schon auf Deskription bezogen ist. Allgemeine Ethik und Bereichsethik unterscheiden sich nach diesem Verständnis gar nicht mehr in ihrer Methodik (Grundlegung versus Ableitung), sondern vielmehr in ihrem Anwendungsbereich (Handeln im Allgemeinen und im Besonderen eines Bereiches). Gemeinsam ist ihnen der Versuch der wissenschaftlichen Systematisierung – nicht mehr und nicht weniger. Wer von einer wissenschaftlichen Theorie mehr fordert, der kann mit Nida-Rümelin ...

"... die Ethik guten Gewissens aus dem Bereich der Wissenschaften ausschließen, mit ihr zusammen dann allerdings auch andere systematisierende Bemühungen, die gemeinhin als Wissenschaft gelten [wie z.B. die Architektur - um den Kreis zu der Erkenntnisweise der determinatio zu schließen, die Thomas von Aquin für die Ethik als notwendig reklamiert hat – die völlig zurecht an der Universität gelehrt wird, FW]"[23]

Eine 'brauchbare' Medienethik kann damit als *holistischer, ethischer Objektivismus* des 'Objekt'-Bereiches der Medien kurzgefasst werden. Das diesem Konzept gemäße Fehlen von uneinholbaren allgemeinethischen Grundsätzen, die eine Medienethik nur mehr folgerichtig anzuwenden hätte, ist darum kein Mangel, der zu einem beliebigen Pragmatismus führt, sondern Charakteristikum ihres systematischen Bemühens, das sie als eben 'brauchbare' Medienethik auszeichnet und nicht desavouiert.

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Thomas Hausmanninger

Controlling the Net: Pragmatic Actions or Ethics Needed?

Abstract:

Do we need global ethics for the net? Is it even possible to put these into the form of a universal agreement, embodying the necessary rules and principles in an all-encompassing code of conduct? Or will any such endeavors simply shatter on the differences of cultures? Ought they be labeled as sort of attempted imperialism, more subtle perhaps in comparison with other forms of cultural imperialism—but nevertheless an attempt of such? If so, then ethical concepts need to be restricted to territorially or ethnically specific realms. In that case, the quest for Net-Ethics could perhaps be substituted by pragmatic actions: instruments of control that are simply technical and formal, devoid of moral input and moral convictions. Such a viewpoint has been offered lately in the form of a concept by the Bertelsmann Foundation, which combines rating and filtering instruments with a social lattice-work of net-supervision and transnational combinations of institutions of control. That concept indeed has its charm. It has its problems too; problems that can be made obvious from an ethical viewpoint and which counter the notion, that it is possible to supplant moral instances with pragmatic action. The text therefore reconstructs the concept in question, criticizes it and attempts to sketch an ethical approach to the problem that respects diversity and plurality.

Agenda

Introduction

Rating the Net

Why Rating and Filtering Cannot Suspend Ethics

Towards Ethics for the Net

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- Relevant publications:
  - Th. Hausmanninger (Ed.): Handeln im Netz. Bereichsethiken und Jugendschutz im Internet, München-Paderborn: W. Fink 2003 (= Schriftenreihe des ICIE 2).

Introduction

Freedom cannot exist on its own. At the least, it must be enabled by restrictions against any attempt to use freedom to destroy its further existence (as happened for example in the German Weimarer Republik by the actions of the Nazis). Thus freedom—or to be more specific: the possibility of the universal sustainable use of freedom—has to be secured by measures of control. That seems to be necessary also in the case of freedom of communication and action on the Internet. Thus, in the last few years certain proposals have been presented to bring the Net under normative control. Most recently, concepts suggesting the control of Internet content in the form of a rating system and possibilities based on such ratings that would enable the filtering or blocking of specific content have received special attention. Concurrent with the discourse over the necessity and form of an Internet ethics—for example in the ICIE—practical models und instruments for the normative regulation of Internet communication are therefore already available. The fact of availability seems to beg the question, whether an academic, ethical discourse appears to be even necessary at all, or whether such a discussion could be replaced simply by pragmatic controls—if this replacement has not already occurred.

Moreover, this question can be seriously supplemented with another: whether the path of rating, filtering and blocking would not eventually be the more favorable. Not least because of the Communitarianism debate, though in another context, has it become clear that ethical concepts—down even to foundational reflections—are culturally specific, or at the least that they cannot be conceived without certain culturally specific interests. This realization confronts the discussion about Internet ethics with its most trying difficulty: on the one hand, it should introduce a culturally-overlapping, generally acceptable proposal, while on the other hand it must unavoidably argue from culturally specific viewpoints, fundamental beliefs and preferences. From there, rating, filtering, and blocking could definitely offer a solution, if the corresponding possibilities were to be restricted to a particular cultural community, or, better yet, if the individual users would decide for themselves. Several different normative standards could be used in place of an Internet ethics; the use of which would make it superfluous, whether the standards followed certain ethical norms, or if they were based more on esthetic, functional, or educational theories. On-site pragmatic controls could not only substitute for the arduous, ethical discourse, but could also accomplish the following: they would be the functional equivalent of an Internet ethics, while simultaneously solving a problem that is most likely ethically impenetrable.

The quest for Internet ethics would then be obsolete, and the ICIE could then stop its endeavors in that field. But is the answer to the necessity of Net-control on behalf of its freedom that simple? May pragmatic action, devoid of universal moral principles and convictions, indeed supplant something like global ethics for the Net? In the following text I shall scrutinize that question by first recapitulating the concept(s) of rating and filtering, second pointing out its inherent and not sufficiently reflected problems and third proposing a concept for finding ways towards global ethics of the Net that at the same time do not destroy diversity and difference.

Rating the Net

Rating and filtering concepts have been offered at least since the 1990ies. For the establishment of an all-encompassing Net-control but two concepts (building on one another) seem specifically relevant. The first concept was outlined by Paul Resnick and James Miller (Resnick/Miller 1996), who through the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) were participants in the development of the Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS). Being a standard PICS does not profess to give any material criteria for filtering and blocking, but rather provides a formal structure, which can be filled with such criteria to a certain extent. Using PICS as a foundation, filtering and blocking programs, as well as labels for websites and documents, can be constructed: the labels are then read by the programs and according to the default selections, results are furnished. Thus, for instance, the Recreational Software Advisory Council (RSAC) has submitted a system of classification with material content—it works with the descriptors violence, nudity, sex, and language, which are further differentiated. Microsoft has built this classification system into its Internet Explorer on the foundation of PICS, allowing users access to the corresponding filters. That way, the selection of results comes one-sidedly from the filters. On one hand, the filters select according to negative lists of URLs which are put together by the software producers and block out those that contain the aforementioned descriptors. At the same time, websites and documents—often the title lines—are compared against a list of forbidden words, and selections are made in this way. Corresponding to their world view

and cultural, esthetic, and moral attitudes, different nations, organizations, and groups should develop material criteria for labels as well as filtering and blocking programs. Labels should be provided from those that operate the websites or the authors of documents, yet third parties also should be able to offer suggestions. It should be possible, therefore, to characterize a website or document with several labels—even without the author's or operator's permission. As a result, at the label level different cultural and group-specific attitudes can be mirrored. This way, through blocking and filtering, Resnick and Miller intend to reproduce, and also simultaneously preserve, global plurality and the pluralism of modern, democratic societies (Resnick/Miller 1996).

The second concept builds off the first. Worked out by the Bertelsmann Stiftung in 1999, containing a high level of international cooperation, it was introduced in book form in 2000 (Memorandum 2000). The concept is distinctive in that it takes Resnick and Miller's proposal and develops it further into a mechanism combining technical, social, and institutional controls. First of all, the plan for the technical component is for the authors of content on the Internet—and not third parties—to provide labels according to a basic keyword list (Memorandum 2000, 46). On the basis of this same list, different organizations and groups—churches for example—should be able to draw up templates: that is combinations of words, whose permissibility or impermissibility would be assigned in turn through various criteria—the protection of children and youth, moral conceptions, standards of esthetic taste, etc. Moreover, the templates should be supplemented by lists of individual websites, classified as either suitable or unsuitable, or even by additional filters, enabling a value-based, fine-tuning or intensification of the original filter (Memorandum 2000, 47). The selection process is then carried out in accordance with the value-templates and lists, whereby the users should be able to decide, which filters from which groups and organizations they would like to utilize. In order to enable a comprehensive filtering-process and to keep the demands on the competence of the users low, a filter of the user's choice should be installed with the purchase of the computer (Memorandum 2000, 48).

At this technical level, the Internet is then embedded in the social monitoring through its users, which simultaneously should be provided institutional supports. This monitoring is focused in two ways: firstly, the users should test, whether they deem certain content to be illegal consulting the valid laws of their countries. Secondly in the case of legal content, they should weigh according to their discretion, whether an Internet site has been properly classified: that is, provided with the proper labels (Memorandum 2000, 51-61). The institutional supports then should provide this monitoring with power to carry out its findings. In order to enable self-control of the Internet, the concept advocates that each country establishes to this end: hotlines for service providers; the facilitation of self-monitoring activities; rating and filtering organizations, etc. (Memorandum 2000, 52) In the course of this, hotline operators should cooperate with one another, both within their respective countries as well as internationally, and conclude a framework of various agreements to do this (Memorandum 2000, 33). In order to achieve the appropriate sanctioning power, for the area of legal content, it appears necessary that providers subjugate themselves to the procedures of self-regulation (Memorandum 2000, 54). Concerning illegal content, the worldwide network of hotlines should work together with criminal prosecution agencies. Illegal content should be prosecuted always there, where the servers storing the data are located, according the laws of that country. Thus the concept envisions the establishment of much more an efficient, regulative control of the Internet, than any efforts to establish uniform, international regulations could ever provide.

Why Rating and Filtering Cannot Suspend Ethics

At first sight these concepts in fact appear to be able to form a functional equivalent to a concept of universal ethical standards for the Internet. The performance of multiple filters seems to take the place of binding, culturally overlapping decisions concerning values and norms. Consequently, Internet ethics would be superfluous, and a discussion about the (im)possibility of such would no longer be required. Yet, this first impression is deceptive. Not only do both concepts present a list of technical and organizational problems—which, unfortunately, cannot be handled in full here—but they also pose an ethical problem in themselves. Moreover, this problem is inherent to solutions of this nature. The problem is made apparent, when one (first) directs one´s attention to the social processes out of which the concepts emerged.

These processes are not quite novel in the history of the media both in the US as well as in Germany (Hausmanninger 1992). As a rule, one runs into the

situation, wherein a particular social group scandalizes a new medium of communication, because they hold either parts or the entire content thereof to be dangerous. The more effectively this group organizes itself and the more older, prevalent media absorb the expressed reservations, the greater the pressure will be at the political level to answer comprehensively the reservations with legal regulations. Usually, media enterprises attempt to get around such political rule-making by means of self-censure in the form of self-control. The establishment of the American Comics Code of 1954 can be viewed as a virtual paradigm for this process; an analogy can be found in the development of the German Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Fernsehen (television self control, FSF) in 1992. Normally supporters of self-control argue that it better serves the preservation of freedom of the media and communication than would governmental intervention, and, moreover, that the requirements of the democratic public—more correct: relevant groups—could be better realized thereby.

With regards to the Internet, this process was initiated in the United States through the debate concerning the presentation of sexual content, while the German discussion additionally focused itself on the offerings of right-wing extremists. The American discourse first led to a governmental reaction in the form of the Communications Decency Act of 1996; which, nevertheless, was seen as incompatible with the First Amendment by the Supreme Court and deemed unconstitutional in 1997. It is exactly in this political context that PICS were conceived as an alternative. German politics considered a similar institutional structure of control as has been established for monitoring the distribution of youth-endangering material in the 1950ies, whereas that institutional structure should be completed by legal regulations for Internet providers (see Schily 2000). The Bertelsmann Concept is a response to this proposal. Resnick and Miller, as well as the Bertelsmann Stiftung, argue for rating, filtering and blocking as alternatives to governmental intervention. Analogous to older debates about the control of the media, they all focus their arguments on an individual's freedom of communication, which they claim must be protected. They see this as only being possible through the strengthening of the power of those utilizing communication—through a user-empowerment—which is precisely what is made feasible by filtering technology (Resnick/Miller 1996; Memorandum 2000, 44).

Exactly by this argument, however, prove these concepts themselves to be at least partially deter-mined by normative preconceptions. With their focus an individual's freedom of communication, they place themselves, moreover, directly on an ethical basis of legitimacy. Over and above that, this basis is clearly culturally specific: the freedom of individuals to pursue their own concepts of happiness and with that their needs of communication, is an idea particular to western nations—predominantly found in Europe and North America. The idea belongs to the ethical focus of the project of modernity, specifically its emphasizing the subject's autonomy. It is, furthermore, directly connected with modernity's program of democratization which represents the political realization of freedom and autonomy. Therefore, both concepts are neither culturally independent nor do they form an ethically abstinent foundation for a plurality of standards. This option for plurality—specifically intercultural plurality—intricate to both concepts cannot be detached from thoughts of autonomy and the ethical core of modernity: only in and where autonomy is established, plurality can be substantially understood and delimited as a legitimate phenomenon. If a concept like that of the Bertelsmann Stiftung explicitly identifies the autonomy of individuals as such, the right to freedom of expression, and a variety of other ideas—that is a plurality—as the basis of the substantiation of said concept itself (Memorandum 2000, 44), it can be considered no longer a functional equivalent to ethics. On the contrary, that concept grounds its own necessity within the framework of a modern, ethical notion and attempts to develop its structure out of this ethical conception. Concepts like the one outlined above, then, do not make the question of an ethics of the Internet redundant, rather such a question shows itself as being implicit to the process itself. For here it is apparent that the question whether one or the other of the aforementioned concepts are capable of establishing a consensus is not merely a consensus pertaining to a pragmatic solution, but rather one that pertains at least just as much to confirming a consensus for the ethics contained therein.

Now one may wish to by and large subordinate the discussion of consensus-capability within German and American spheres—in spite of the clash over the boundaries of freedom in the debate between liberalism and communitarianism. Yet even in this case, the two concepts offer more problems than solutions—and here they are firmly ethical problems. The autonomy of individuals (standing as the principle upon which the concepts are based) and freedoms of the media and communication (which the concepts seek to protect) are actually endangered

by these proposals. This comes first of all into effect starting with the fact that the autonomy of the users is not presented as the capacity of discernment regarding the Internet and its offerings; rather it is centrally relocated in the technical possibility of automated negative selection. Media competence hereby shrivels to the mere choice of a particular selection machine. This forms the most critical point of all, because—at least for the concept of the Bertelsmann Stiftung—not simply the safeguarding of children and youth is proposed, but also the shielding of adults from content which they do not wish to be confronted with (Memorandum 2000, 44). To achieve this, the self-protection from a link or web-address should not in any way require reflection, but should be accomplished automatically. Furthermore, this self-curtailing of maturity can go awry by the determinations of others, especially when the suggestion is followed to retain the default settings—chosen by a company— during the purchasing of the computer. Media competence, as reflective and discerning use of the media, is not furthered in this way, but rather its development is undermined and disabled.

Furthermore several more technically conditioned difficulties having disadvantageous effects can unfold. Labeling is essential for both proposals: that is the self-identification of websites and documents on the Internet by authors and operators. This, having to be realized with the provided basic vocabulary of 30 to 60 words (Balkin 2000, 266), means the introduction of a Procrustes' Bed into the process of description and the coercion of routine self-distortion; all the more so, since the vocabulary is to be split up into several criteria—like: content; genre; information desired by users; and the attributes utilized like text, pictures, animation, etc. (Waltermann 2000, 543)—and actually shrunk for characteristics like content. Similar distortions for the construction of filtering templates should be expected, if they work simply with a combination of these vocabulary elements. In this light, it appears questionable whether the rate of incorrect blockings—reaching up to 80%—of current filter systems can be minimized effectively (Haselton 2000, Weinberg 1997). Over and above that the question remains unanswered, how a basic vocabulary is possible in a transnational context: one which helps to avoid narrow, culturally specific notions as well as the domination of American conceptions of ´decency´ (Chalaby 1998, 39). These possible distortions could disturb the fragile freedom of communication—especially when this occurs in the pre-installation phase due to a third party—against

the wishes and beyond the notice of the individual users.

The dangers to freedom of communication are sharpened further by the foreseen hotline system proposed in the Bertelsmann concept. For example in the case of the German institution for monitoring the distribution of youth-endangering media (Bundespruefstelle fuer jugendgefaehrdende Schriften) only a certain few institutions and political representatives are invested with the protection of the youth—and, therefore, can file a legitimate grievance—whereas with the hotline all private citizens may lodge complaints. The German model concerning institutional monitoring of youth-endangering material envisages a type of pre-selection, restricting possible grievances through expertise. Yet in the hotline system, all matters of folly and unknowledgeable interest can affect their influence on the process. The system, then, looks ethically precarious, because, in this case, those interested in the restriction of communication can achieve their end, while representing neither those affected (namely, those interested in using the Internet), nor even the majority of the population. The basis for this objection is to be found in the fact that in a system that exclusively focuses on the voices of those seeking limitations and demanding restrictions, those who do not desire such restrictions have no voice by definition. On behalf of freedom of the media it thus appears vital that calls for limitations of communication ought to be restricted and filtered, too.

Regarding the hotline system, this is not even the end of the story. Concurrently, the danger exists that marginal groups could use the system in order to push through their particular programs of restriction in an organized fashion. Such behavior is not unknown in the history of organized media criticism (Hausmanninger 1992; 2000). The strategic use of institutional and legal conditions, in this way, plays an increasingly serious roll. In the American sphere, the acronym SLAPP—Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation—has already been established to name such legally undesirable but hardly unavoidable conduct (UNESCO 1999, 75). The organized criticism of the media by marginal pressure groups poses problems even for the proposed self-control measures: where the emergence of complaints wins massive attention—relegating the masses interested in use of Internet offerings to silence—also grows the pressure to install self-control mechanisms, whose seriousness is proven through measures of limitation, which correspond to the complaints raised. Instead of the desired user-empowerment

we may find the hegemonic influence of organized factions to impose restrictions. With regard to that possibility, the UNESCO fittingly speaks of a 'privatization of censorship' (1999, 74).

Lastly, it cannot be ruled out that the instruments for rating, filtering, and blocking could dovetail against the inherent and principal intention of both concepts and, by the use of governmental control, be used to completely abolish the autonomy of individuals. Feasibly, the PICS-platform and filtering system could be installed by Internet providers and imbued, for example, with political criteria. Unwanted and counter to their intention, both concepts actually provide instruments for non-democratic political systems. Seen through these objections, the proposals fall into what discourse ethics, in reliance upon linguistic pragmatics, calls a contradiction in performance—a contradiction between intended content and actual conduct: in this case, between the goal of the concept and the possible effects of its implementation.

Towards Ethics for the Net

Rating, filtering, and blocking alone cannot replace Internet ethics. Additionally, despite the objections outlined above, ethical regulation does not appear superfluous. Even where we are not forced to decide on a particular ethical theory for the systematic foundation needed for this regulation, the above sections make us aware of the factual necessity of such. Yet all this begs the question, in which way such a regulation can be reached. In order to answer this question, several requirements for such a regulation have to be kept in mind.

First, any ethical regulation of the Internet must correspond to the plurality and diversity of the world's cultures and notions of morality. Were this not the case, the regulation would tend towards cultural imperialism on a theoretical level, while practically it could not be implemented in the decentralized structure of the Internet. Especially the American and European cultures ought to be quite sensitive towards culturally imperialistic moves: They all embody not only the right to freedom of individuals and groups but more so the right for these individuals and groups to differ in a free and unmolested way from one another. Diversity and plurality are nothing less than the cornerstones of their free societies. Specifically European and American Philosophy furthermore has—under the influence of deconstructionism—developed a sense for difference and its significance in any concept of

justice. Respecting difference thus has become a vital element of morality. Any concept negating the diversity and opting for forced uniformity would thus appear morally precarious. Contemporary American and European philosophy therefore should not seek solutions in the realm of information ethics opposed to difference and plurality. These solutions could not be sustained very long, either. Where an ethical concept does not respect and incorporate plurality and diversity, where it does not bespeak the various convictions of those individuals who are to live with it, looms the threat of its being subverted and undermined. Regarding the Internet, this result obtaining is especially plausible. On the other hand, an ethical concept must be capable of some consensus. That is why the outlined concepts of rating, filtering, and blocking also rely upon the readiness of individuals to restrict their behavior themselves and their corroboration in the institutional realization of censorship, while not relying upon a purely institutional carrying out thereof. As the history of the repressive protection of youth demonstrates, in this case, repression may alter the ways of obtaining certain banned media products, but not really their acquisition and reception by young people in a sufficient manner and to a sufficient degree (Vogelgesang 1991). (For the same reason, of course, the aforementioned danger of the censuring use of filtering instruments by non-democratic states is a bit moderated.) The necessary consensus therefore needs to be of a quality, that takes difference and diversity into account and makes them part of the consensus itself.

Second, the ethical regulation of the Internet must correspond to its various spheres of communication and activity, which form a diversity of its own. Norms for political discourse and the actions of NGOs differ from those needed for the mating and dating in Internet chatrooms. These, in turn, must be differentiated from the norms needed for economic communications and transactions, etc. The more the functions of the Internet differentiate themselves along the lines of social systems—and develop this differentiation further—the stronger the demand will become for the development Internet-specific ethics for each realm. This feature is, by the way, neither covered by rating and filtering, nor do the proposals even intend to address it. Third, the ethical regulation of the Internet requires transnational, legal support: above all, in enabling the effective control of illegal content and other actions. Fourth, and finally, Internet ethics must be supplemented by a Net-external non-repressive, educationally oriented youth protection, aimed at the

generation of individual and autonomous media competence.

Attempts to establish ethical regulations that would take into account the plurality and diversity of the global nature of the Internet can, first of all, take cues from endeavors to ground similar notions of morality. Despite all the diversity and differences of cultures it appears possible to note some basic similarities in the multitude of ethical convictions around the globe. On empirical grounds, that has been shown for example by Hans Küng (1997) and his Project World Ethos: obviously the diverse ethical concepts converse in some basic norms, values and rules—even though these may not always have the same significance or authority in these various concepts. Similar to the endeavors in the field of substantiating basic human rights, Küng´s efforts show, that it is apparently simpler to locate comparable moral norms than identical or comparable discourses for the substantiation of these norms. (Whereas from a European viewpoint it certainly appears possible to propose a meta-theory to explain these convergences, and it may even be feasible to ground this in the self-reflection of a rational, moral self-consciousness [Hausmanninger 1994]. But this European viewpoint is not necessarily transposable into any other culture.). So, in order to generate a convergence of foundational ideas about norms, the unification of all theoretical conceptions is not really essential—the ways of justification and substantiation may remain plural whereas the convergences pose sort of a substantiation and justification of its own.

The reasons for this become clearer when considering the varied justifications and substantiations of human rights; to this end, advocates can utilize a wide range of religious and ethical lines of argumentation including: Kantian, subject-oriented; discourse ethical; justice-based; utilitarian; contract theoretical; or neo-Aristotelian approaches. Efforts to organize similar basic moral conceptions can be further developed into something like John Rawls' overlapping consensus. This forms the starting-point for a world ethos (Weltethos) of the Internet. The term ´overlapping´ on the other hand takes into account that the ethos need not be of a ´monolithic´ sort. On the contrary it ought to be sort of a partially connected, partially overlapping and partially discrete nature. Furthermore the overlapping part may be of different urgency and relevance in different cultures. Thus the world ethos of the Internet could form in itself sort of a net—and thus embody difference, diversity and plurality. Looming conflicts between the discrete parts of it could be softened by the regional character of these, which is made possible also on the net because of its segmentation (see below). At the same time this diverse and internally plural ethos can be considered sound, if it allows for the ordering of foundational ethical reflections. Each part of the ethos needs to be able to substantiate its form and content and thus be potentially criticizable. The intersection of the sundry ethical conceptions could be viewed as something like the core of the world ethos of the Internet. Analogous to the process through which the truth content of religious notions is strengthened by their convergence in several religions—the more instances the better—and anchored in their rational reflective concepts, that intersection attests to the especially well-grounded rightness of that core and also the related ethical convictions.

By looking for an overlapping consensus furthermore a normative instance is gained which allows for the introduction of the ethically fundamental difference between moral and immoral: concepts that directly oppose the core cannot be called ethical anymore. Thus the difference between legitimate and illegitimate elements of plurality and diversity can be noted. Immoral notions can be labeled as such and will not—as with them the ideologies of totalitarian systems—find a place in this overlapping consensus. They would compromise the possible establishment of a consistent, ethical foundation; not least because they are inclined to resort to methods of repression, terror, and torture in order to maintain their existence. Thus these systems demarcate the boundary of legitimacy for plurality and diversity. At the same time, the process leading to this world ethos of the Internet could ultimately play a roll in transnational processes, which could lead to the final disappearance of said political systems.

The factually given segmentation of communication on the Internet could itself be made fruitful for the search for this ethos and also for the creation of its specific, diverse and plural concretions. The entire world is not in point of fact in communication with itself on the Internet, but rather the communication falls into several strands. In contrast to other media of communication to this point, Internet communication tends to have a much stronger international component. Moreover, while the potential for the global networking of communication always exists, there is also the chance that one strand will merge with another. Nevertheless, certain barriers stand in the way of this possibility; in part the same obstacles that cause the segmentation, as well as provide pathways for the channeling, of the streams of

communication. Three such barriers appear especially relevant for our inquiry here: the multiplicity of languages and their written form; the IT- and tele-communications-infrastructure; and the dominant interests of users.

Admittedly, this segmentation of the Internet is not always helpful or desirable—in particular, when this is accompanied by the exclusion of poorer regions of the world from global communication. Yet, some elements of the segmentation are quite useful. The factor of segmentation, for example, brings Anglo-Saxon and democratic, human-rights oriented societies closer to each other. In this strand, an understanding concerning an ethos of human-rights can certainly be achieved without a lot of qualms over cultural imperialism. The effects of localization can support a focus on specifics—for example, on various African ethics—and on the one hand make this an issue for discussion, while on the other hand lend veracity to diverse and plural viewpoints. At the same time, however, this localization remains embedded in global communication and must not come across as ghettoization. Hereby, a tie-in with a world ethos of the Internet appears possible. The plurality of specific notions of morality, as well as the segmentation of them along the interests of the users, are both helpful to that end. By following the specific segmentations of the users along the lines of shared interests or/and ethnic, local etc. features it is possible to establish specific moral codes which belong to specific groups—for example religious groups—as ´group-morals´ which may be the morals of even transnational communities, like (once again) religious communities. These may form specific communicative segments in which group-specific moral convictions are heeded. At the same time, this process must, from the beginning, be compatible with a comprehensive ethical framework—namely, the world ethos of the Internet—and avoide ghettoization and other missteps. In the joining of this segmentation with the global-nature of the communication, the Internet even offers the chance to reach beyond previous efforts to establish an ethical framework for all of humanity—this global-nature is a constant challenge to be faced by every user, yet without denying them the privilege to greater specificity or even exit opportunities.

Not only the plurality, but also the differentiation of communication and action on the Internet must be taken into account. Ethical regulations that correspond to specific areas have to take their place along side these moralities. For instance, the increasing presence of business on the Internet makes necessary a business ethics for the Internet.

The already existent ethics for specific realms of action in the real world could be borrowed from in this case. Yet simultaneously, the Internet poses new difficulties: particularly regarding one's dealings with data and information—which are much easier to 'acquire' on the Internet than in the real world. As regards privacy policies, the groundwork has already been laid. Furthermore, the Internet offers prospects for the establishment of moral standards for global, economic activities—and for their reflected, ethical grounding—which until now have not been possible. This continuing failure to found a framework for global rules remains one of business ethics' central problems. This shortcoming can be partially substituted for at the ethical level or by institutional self-constraint—e.g. industry agreements, codes of conduct, etc. As Karl Homann and Franz Blome-Drees emphasize (1992, 131-135), such substitutions, however, are time and again confronted with the situation of competition: economic actions must be rent producing. The serious opportunities for moral forerunners are to be primarily found, where such substitutions are image-building and profitable (Homann/Blome-Drees 1992, 137).

Image is, however, a product of communication. For that reason, in communicative settings like the Internet, institutionalized self-constraint and ethos-specified actions have a greater chance of coming about. On the Internet, businesses and even entire industries can better explain and justify their policies and actions to consumers—even changing policies to fit consumer demands—building up their image and winning the preference of certain groups. Over and above that, the communicative space that is the Internet compels a closer relationship between companies and their moral policies, because the next firm is but a mouse click away. Not only does the comparability of offers grow, but the moral standards of economic activity do as well. The competition for the best morals that develops out of this can conveniently influence the global business ethics for economic exchange on the Internet, as well as have an impact beyond cyber-space. This goes similarly for other ethical spheres and the cultivation of moral standards: in science, religious communities, and suchlike.

The necessity of rules and laws in the real world, though, draws attention to the fact that the flourishing activity of all working together cannot be guaranteed by morals and ethics alone. Therefore, a comparable legal support for the moral and ethical regulation of activities and communication on the Internet appears necessary. The legal regulations of individual countries and cultures differentiate them-

selves here, as does the perceived relationship between morality and law. Once again, we stand before a situation entailing plurality and difference. For this, the Bertelsmann concept provides an appropriate strategy, even if all of its elements are not found satisfactory. Global framework agreements are indispensable: especially those that incorporate the world's legal cultures with each other, while providing for the effective control of criminality. With this, the basic idea at the beginning of the article comes into force: namely, the notion that the prosecution of punishable actions on the Internet or other means of communication should take place in, and within the legal structure of, the country wherein the actions took place or where the information is stored. From here, one can see the growth of avenues for bettered transnational cooperation. On the other hand, from an ethical perspective—even for illegal content—it is not always desirable that the most rigid notions of morality prevail. Let the difference between the democratic nations of Germany and the United States regarding the treatment of a traditional medium like film serve as an example: films that in Germany are banned, and have therefore been objects of criminal prosecution, in the USA have received a place in the Museum of Modern Arts. In such a case, the differences between the legal cultures can be viewed feasibly as a constructive provocation producing critical reflection about the more rigid regulation. For the reasons mentioned above, a hotline-system taking over the monitoring responsibilities for an area like illegal content appears problematic at best. It would be more appropriate to entrust this function, then as now, to the judicial and executive branches of government.

Lastly, we turn our attention to the problem of the protection of youth. One the one hand, the related anxieties overshoot the situation in reality to a certain degree here—up to now, a phenomenon which has accompanied all new forms of media. On the other hand, the endangerment of youth is not an ontologically-fixed, but rather a dynamic, culturally-specific concept. As above, the according actions to protect the youth should be oriented around the world's plurality and diversity, and their reproduction on the Internet. In addition, experience with regards to traditional media and endangerment of youth from extra-medial sources is waiting to be utilized. One of the central experiences, though one does not always eagerly take note of it, is the already mentioned fact that repressive means of protection—the overly protective educational attempt to guarantee a valuable socialization through the total absence of youth-endangering material—

does not adequately lead to success. This insight has much longer been in force in media education theory, than in politics, law, and the institutions controlling social communication. Therefore, media education theory focuses foremost on teaching knowledgeable behavior. Regarding contact with certain forms of media this means supporting and encouraging the development of autonomous media competence. Institutions responsible for the areas of upbringing and education cannot achieve this alone. In upbringing, a culture must foster maturity: a maturity that needs to be anchored in the family, social groups, and religious and ethical communities. It is here, furthermore, that new models of the localization of civil society could prove useful, as their attention is directed more strongly toward the significance of the local quality of life for social togetherness. An upbringing that results in mature contact with media forms, then, a type of ´filter´ of its own: albeit one that is more effective than the technical kind. It is a ´filter´ that is embedded in the ethos of the individual and thus makes up an essential element of the capacity for self-selection of what is appropriate. Through this, many of the dangers that accompany certain offerings on the Internet can be more efficiently combated, than through repressive means. This fact may actually contribute to an easing of tensions: youth endangering subject matter neither makes up the bulk content on the Internet, nor did it appear for the first time in societies through the creation of the Internet. One has always had to impart lessons to children and youths—that they should not speak to strangers; that not every product of the media is meant and appropriate for consumption by young people; that lies and deceit come part and parcel with this world—so must they now also be taught how to deal with the Internet and its content. And as until now teaching children these other lessons has not been futile, we need not assume that the challenges of the present are insurmountable.

If these paths to moral standards for activities and communication on the Internet successfully develop and encourage media competence, then the more fascinating possibilities of the Internet can be further cultivated. Then as now, it is important to remember that the Internet is not something separate from the real world, but rather embedded in it. It then remains the responsibility of citizens of this real world to establish a structure enabling the flourishing of communication and other activities on the Internet.

Translation from German by Dominic Marcellino, Arkansas, partially rewritten by the author.

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Shifra Baruchson-Arbib & Eti Yaari
Printed Versus Internet Plagiarism: A Study of Students' Perception

Abstract:

Recent studies have shown a growing tendency among students to commit plagiarism, especially from online information sources. This unpleasant phenomenon has a far- reaching impact on both the scientific world and the information society. The present study aimed to examine students' perceptions toward acts of plagiarism, in order to explore whether plagiarism from internet sources is perceived differently than plagiarism from printed sources. Findings of the present study indicate that students perceive plagiarism offences from online sources as significantly less dishonest than similar offences using printed sources. Possible implications of these findings are discussed and several conclusions are noted. Analysis of these findings from a broad perspective highlights the essential need to address ethical issues concerning uses of both online and offline information sources.

Agenda

Introduction

Method
    Sample
    Survey instrument
    Procedure

Results

Discussion and Conclusions

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Introduction

The term "plagiarism" is used to describe a wide range of acts (Oliphant, 2002). One well-accepted definition in literature is "the presentation of another's words or ideas as your own" (Babbie, 1998, 1).

The term, deriving from the Latin root Plagiarius, which means 'a kidnapper,' was first used by Martial, a Roman poet in the first century A.D. (Kolich, 1983). Traditionally, literary theft was compared to stealing a child or a slave, highlighting the powerful relationship between artistic and biological creations (Greenacre, 1978). Since the 18 century, the term plagiarism is restricted excusively to literary theft (Garfield, 1980).

Howard (2001) discusses four types of academic plagiarism: (a) submission of a paper that was written by other student; (b) patchwriting – copying sentences from a source and mixing them with your own words without attribution; (c) failure to cite sources, and; (d) failure to use quotation marks. Amongst these categories, the last two is considered most common among students (Evans, 2000). Wadja-Jonston, Handal, Brawer & Fabricatore (2001) surveyed 246 graduate students and found that 55% admitted to "not copying word for word but changing the wording slightly from an original source while writing a paper" and 16% to "copying word for word from an original source in a paper and not using quotation marks". Less than 5% confirmed that they submitted a paper which had been copied from another student or purchased from "paper mills". Of the 40 academically dishonest behaviors which were examined in their study, students perceived the prevalence rates of the first expression as the most frequent.

Until the mid 90's, expressions of plagiarism were limited to printed sources such as books, encyclopedias, newspapers and articles. The internet, however, opened a window of opportunity for diverse and inventive acts of plagiarism (Stebelman, 1998).

The internet grants students access to vast amounts of information. It allows them to complete their assignments by copying and pasting different segments of information (Galus, 2002). Willems (2003) reported that recent research shows that the majority of students indeed perceived the internet as an auxiliary tool that enables them to prepare assignments "as quickly and painlessly as possible with minimal effort and minimal engagement" (p. 28).

McMurtry (2001) demonstrated three popular methods of using the internet to commit plagiarism. The first method, which is considered the easiest, includes locating appropriate web sites using a search engine, copying relevant texts and pasting them into an essay. The second method is comprised of receiving papers prepared by friends or students from other universities through online communications channels such as e-mail or internet forums. The third and harshest method is downloading essays from online "sites that collect and distributes papers on the web, either free or for a fee," also known as "paper mills." (ibid, p. 37).

All the aforementioned methods illustrate Bodi's (1998) argument. Compared to information on paper, online information has become much more vulnerable to plagiarism due to technological options of modifying texts, moving sections from one place to another and separating sections from an original text as a whole.

The main cause of internet plagiarism, according to the literature, is the assumption that the internet is a public domain and therefore, information on the internet may be used without attribution (Groark, Oblinger & Choa, 2001; Oliphant, 2002; Thompson, 2003).

Devoss & Rosati (2002) suggested several reasons why students use the internet to plagiarize. One of the reasons concerns the ease and popularity of copy-paste actions, which are considered natural operations in computerized environments. Another reason related to the fact that many web sites, as opposed to printed sources, fail to note the author's name. Finally, the lack of knowledge in dealing with these situations leads to plagiarism acts.

Freedman (1998) opined that alongside its numerous advantages, the internet is seen by many as a key factor in the propagation of the plagiarism plague. In his opinion, however, placing exclusive responsible for the increase of plagiarism rates on a new technology is like "countenancing one's own failure to recognize and reward originality" (p. 40).

The main purpose of the present study was to investigate the differences between plagiarism acts from printed sources and plagiarism acts from internet sources. Examining these differences allow us to clarify whether the source of information has indeed an influence on students' perception regarding plagiarism acts.

Method

Sample

Participants were students, who had at least one year of academic experience (i.e., were registered for second-year classes at the B.A level or higher). In order to ensure proper representation of the existing diversity of university majors and academic levels, participants were selected randomly after a multi-stage sampling procedure (faculties – majors – academic levels – courses).

A total of 284 students completed the questionnaire. The average age of respondents was 27.7 years (range: 20-52). The sample was comprised of 215 females and 69 males. Students from two faculties were examined: 177 students from the Faculty of Social Sciences and 107 students from the Faculty of Humanities. The entire sample was comprised of 154 students at the B.A level and 130 students at the M.A level.

Survey instrument

A questionnaire was specifically constructed for the purpose of this study, following Roig's (1997) "Plagiarism Knowledge Survey" (PKS). The questionnaire comprised four items of identical structure. Each section contained a small paragraph taken from an original source including its bibliographic details, followed by a plagiarized version of the source, taken from a student's essay. A plagiarized version means that the student used the materials while committing plagiarism. Illustrations from two classes of plagiarism were used in the present study. In the "word for word" illustration, text was copied from the source without quotation marks. In the "paraphrasing" illustration, ideas from the source were used with no mention of the author's name. Two descriptions were taken from printed sources and the other two from internet sources.

In conclusion, each item was comprised of a unique combination of an information source (printed / internet) and its student (plagiarized) version ("word for word" / "paraphrasing").

After reading each item, respondents were requested to express an opinion regarding whether the author of the student version acted according to the acceptable citation rules. Respondents marked one of three options below:

1. "Yes" – the student version is consistent with accepted citation rules.

2. "Can't decide" – I am unable to determine.

3. "No" – the student version does not meet accepted citation rules.

In addition, participants who marked "No" were asked to explain their answers. Since the aim of this study was to explore student's perceptions only, data collected from this segment was not entered to the present research report.

Procedure

Questionnaires were distributed during class hours, to ensure both full concentration and adequate time to complete the questionnaires.

First, a short introduction about the aim of the research, which was presented as testing the students' citation habits, has been said to the participant. Then, questionnaires were distributed, accompanied by oral instructions on completion. The questionnaire's anonymity and the fact that data would be used exclusively for research purposes was repeatedly noted.

Results

Perceptions of the differences between plagiarism from printed sources and plagiarism from internet sources were examined by analyzing participants' perceptions of the consistency of the students' version with accepted rules of citation. Figure 1 separately presents frequencies for every plagiarism category, by source medium.
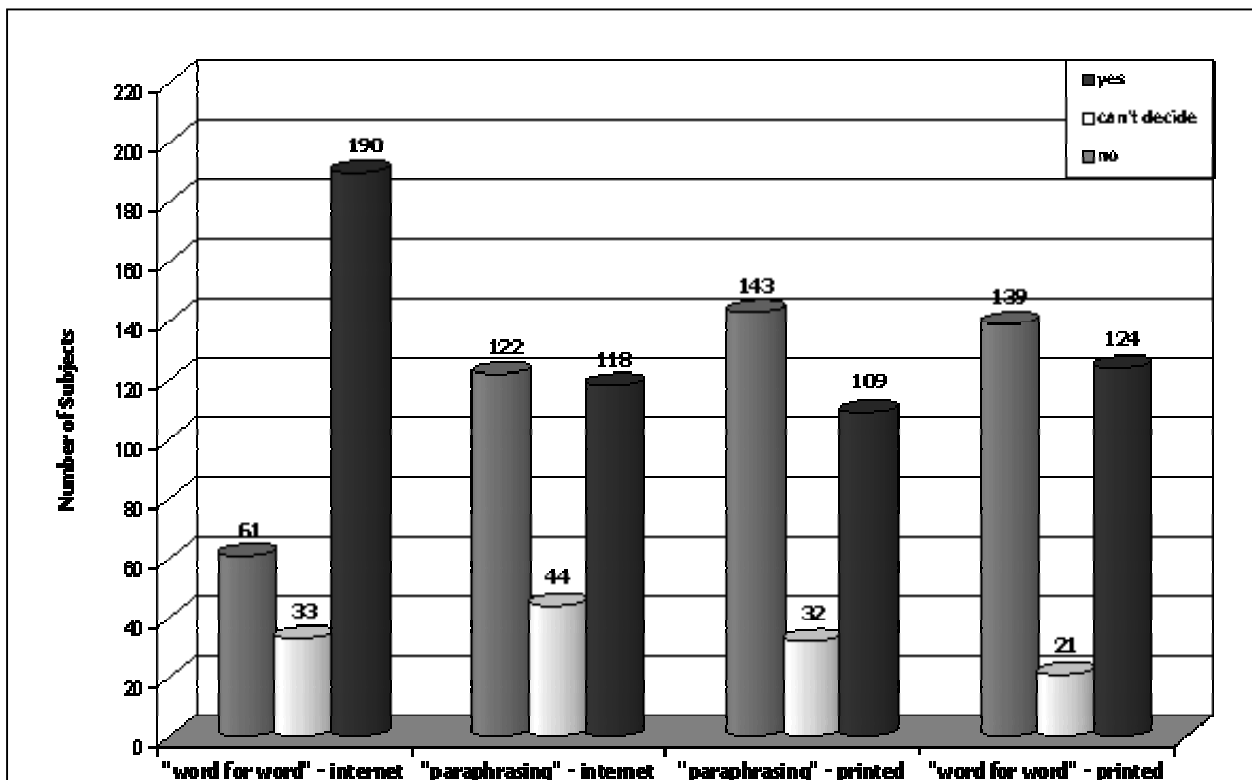
Figure 1. Distribution of students' perception for each of the four descriptions

As shown in Figure 1, most respondents believed they were able to determine whether the student's version was or was not consistent with accepted rules of citation. The minority preferred to mark "can't decide". Furthermore, approximately 40% of the respondents marked "yes" in the first three items ("word for word"-print; "paraphrasing" – print and internet) and approximately 65% marked "yes" in the fourth item ("word for word" – internet). This indicates a poor knowledge of the accepted rules of citation.

Next, a general perception score was calculated for each respondent, by enumerating the number of times the answer "no" was marked for each source text. A score of "0" indicated that both items were perceived as consistent with accepted rules of citation, the score "1" indicated that only one item was perceived to be inconsistent with these rules and the score "2" indicated that both items were perceived to be inconsistent with accepted rules of citation. Due to the ordinal nature of the general perception score, a Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test was conducted to determine whether there was a difference between printed and internet sources. Results of the analysis revealed a significant difference in perception (z=-7.04, N=284, p<.001). Specifically, more participants tended to

perceive the student's version as inconsistent with accepted rules of citation when the source text used was a printed source (M=.99, SS=100) compared to an internet sources (M=.64, SS=21).

In addition, the differences between sources were examined by comparing the participant's perception separately for each item of plagiarism.

The dichotomous nature of the dependent variable (1=marking "yes"[24], 2= marking "no") supported the use of McNemar tests for repeated measures. Table 1 presents results of respondents' perceptions and the McNemar's χ^2 results.

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[24] Because of the small amount of respondents who marked "unable to decide" (compared to the other categories), this category was united with the "yes" category. The rational for this act was that both categories represent the same first impression: although an example of plagiarism, the student's version was not perceived as inconsistent with accepted rules of citation.

		Printed source		χ^2 (1)
		"yes"	"no"	
"word for word"				
internet source	"yes"	132	91	57.01 ***
	"no"	13	48	
"paraphrasing"				
internet source	"yes"	116	46	5.63 *
	"no"	25	97	

Table 1. A comparison of perceived correctness of Plagiarism expression between printed sources and internet sources (N=284) Legend: * p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

Table 1 indicates that the number of participants who found students' versions modified from print sources as inconsistent with citation rules and found students' version of internet sources as consistent with these rules, was significantly higher than the number of respondents with converse answers (i.e., "no" in internet sources and "yes" in printed sources). In other words, the modification of print source texts was judged more harshly compared to perceptions regarding modifications of the same type, of internet source texts.

In order to explore these differences more thoroughly, we investigated the possible influence respondents' age on perception, using a simple logistic regression. Separate analyses were conducted for each unique combination of plagiarized version ("paraphrasing"/"word for word") and information source (printed/internet).

Of the four combinations which were examined, only "paraphrasing of a printed source" yielded a significant overall model (LR Chi^2 (1)=7.32, p<.01), whereas the other combinations were not statistically significant ("paraphrasing of an internet

source": LR Chi^2 (1)=.63, p>.05 ; "word for word of -printed source": LR Chi^2 (1)=1.01, p>.05 ; "word for word of an internet source": LR Chi^2 (1)=.15, p>.05).

The results suggested that respondents' age was a significant predictor of their perceptions of the student's version characterized by the use of ideas from printed sources, with no mention of the author's name (Wald=6.92, B=.052, p<.01). The 'Odd ratio' for the age variable was 1.05, with a 95% confidence interval of [1.01, 1.09]. This suggests that for every additional year of age, the probability of perceiving the student's version as inconsistent with accepted rules of citation, increase by 5%.

Discussion and Conclusions

The present study offers empirical evidence on the differential perceptions of plagiarism from internet and printed sources. The findings of the present study all confirm that plagiarism from internet sources is perceived as less dishonest than a similar act of plagiarism using a printed source.

It should be noted that there are very few studies dealing explicitly with the differences between printed and internet plagiarism. These studies refer primarily to students' self-reported commission of plagiarism and their perceptions concerning the prevalence of plagiarism by other students on campus. In this context, the literature reported that students do not distinguish between types of information sources and commit plagiarism equally from both sources (e.g., Scanlon & Neumann, 2002; Scribner, 2003).

Nonetheless, several theoretical ideas may clarify our findings.

The most common argument for internet plagiarism is related to the widespread opinion among students that information on the internet belongs to the public domain, the use of which is unrestricted and requires no citation (Moeck, 2002; Oliphant, 2002). According to this approach, different perceptions of printed and internet plagiarism stem from the belief that the transfer of information to the internet renders the content free and available for anyone to copy or use as they please.

In our opinion, this assumption results from the highly accessible nature of the internet as an information source, available to almost anyone, anywhere at anytime. On the other hand, access to

printed sources requires a specific location, where sources are stored, sometimes in a limited degree of availability. Furthermore, access to such sources itself may be restricted.

Another argument supporting the perceived differences between sources is the lack of agreement between style guides on the rules of citation for internet sources (Auer & krupar, 2001; Oliphant, 2002). Numerous types of information sources exist on the internet (i.e., web sites, discussion groups, e-mails, etc.) and no uniform code exists regarding citation requirements. Lack of knowledge and clarity surrounding the issue of citing internet sources may also contribute to plagiarism. Furthermore, many websites make no mention of the author's name, a fact which reinforces the supposition that the information has no "official owner." Parenthetically, it should be noted that style guides allow the notation of the organization name or the page title instead of the author's name, in the case of internet sources (Thompson, 2003).

In the present study, we also found that the participants' age had an influence on their perceptions regarding the use of "ideas without mention of the author's name" from printed sources, although this influence was not statistically significant in similar examples of plagiarism from internet sources. In other words, the differences in perceptions between the younger and the older generations in respect of the need to mention the author's name when using a printed source were discernible, while both generations held similar attitudes towards internet sources. A possible explanation for these findings is the lack of clarity, shared by all age groups, regarding the legal status of the online content as intellectual property. As for printed sources, the present findings support the argument that the older generation holds an awareness of the importance of proper citation and the concept that ideas belong to the person who wrote them (Community College Week, 2003).

In conclusion, the findings of the present study suggested that students distinguish printed and internet sources and perceive the information on the internet as bona-vacantia and free for use. This emphasizes the need to treat potential information sources separately in research, in order to gain a full understanding of the phenomenon. It is also essential to: a) perfect students' insights regarding the ethical use of online information; b) teach them how to cite internet sources properly and c) explain the importance of protecting intellectual property rights. By doing so, universities can reduce the extent of plagiarism, and particularly internet plagiarism, committed by students.

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Tadashi Takenouchi

Capurro's Hermeneutic Approach to Information Ethics: Ethos in the Information Society and the Development of "angeletics"

Abstract:

Rafael Capurro is one of the pioneers of the hermeneutic approach to information studies, especially with regard to ethical issues. One of the main goals of his study is to understand "ethos" in the information society. Capurro's ideas concerning the information technology are different from those of Dreyfus although they both have hermeneutic viewpoints. The scope of his study is widened in his latest study named "angeletics" which means "message studies." Angeletics, hermeneutics, and mediology are complementary to each other. Capurro's idea concerning ethics in the information age is based on "technologies of the self" which are not "act-oriented" but "self-oriented." It is also expected that interactions between Capurro and Japanese thought patterns produce some important contributions to information ethics.

Agenda

Ethos in the Information Society

Capurro's hermeneutic approach
> Pre-understanding *(Vorverständnis)*
> Project *(Entwurf)*
> Information Gestell *(Informations-Gestell)*

Development of "Angeletics"

Ethics in the Information Age
> Cooperation toward others
> Open relativism
> Plural perspective
> Ecological thinking

Capurro and Japanese Perspective

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Ethos in the Information Society

Studies on information phenomena from the viewpoint of hermeneutics, which was developed by Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer, can be called "hermeneutic information studies" or "hermeneutic informatics." Rafael Capurro (1945-), philosopher and information scientist, is one of the pioneers of this field. The issues he addresses are quite various: Studies concerning Heidegger, the genealogy of information, hermeneutics of information retrieval, ethics in the information age, media ethics, and digital ontology. Especially his hermeneutic approach to information ethics is an important contribution to this field.

As is generally known, information ethics is a kind of applied ethics such as bioethics and environmental ethics. It is a relatively new discipline which addresses the problems brought by rapidly pervading technology and computer networks. It focuses on common problems such as privacy protection, regulation of potentially injurious contents, responsibility for administrators of the networks or engineers, release of communication records to the police, and copyright protection. Media ethics, which had been discussed before the Internet became popular, is now a part of information ethics.

Studies on information ethics today often deal with these problems through the following approaches: How to teach morals to individuals through "formal education" processes such as schools, how to establish ethical professional codes, or how to develop regulations or laws. These are efforts to maintain ways of regulating society through legislation. It is often the case with this way of thinking to separate information and its technology from existential viewpoints based on the practice of living.

Given the background of this separation, there is the assumption of neutrality with regard to information technology. Capurro throws such ideas into doubt and deeply redefines the relationship between information technology and existential practices of living. Technologies are by no means neutral, and it is also true of information technology. There is no independent substance such as "information itself" similar to Kant's concept of the "thing itself". Information is deeply affected by subjectivity or existential activities. Capurro insists that information technology in itself takes on ethical characteristics, drawing information and its technology back to the field of our daily lives and casting it in multi-layered or multi-dimensional contexts.

Then Capurro turns his analysis to "ethos in the information society." Although his concept of "ethos" is difficult to define clearly, it can be regarded as a practical attitude which provides the context where information technology is located in certain circumstances. It is this problem of "ethos" that Capurro emphasizes using expressions such as "being intertwined" or impartibility between technologies and ethics. To investigate ethos in the information society means to deal with the dimension where information technology and our existential lives are intertwined. As a tool that can be used in order to grasp this dimension, the viewpoint of "hermeneutics" definitely plays an important role. Thus, the concept of "hermeneutic turn" is proposed as the paradigm shift to the new informatics to investigate ethos in the information society. This is the most important framework of Capurro's argument.

Capurro's hermeneutic approach

Capurro's hermeneutic turn consists of three key concepts:

Pre-understanding *(Vorverständnis)*

This is originally a technical term from Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. Capurro uses this concept in order to overcome disunion between information technology and the practice of our living. For example, even a programming language, which seems to have no intersection with our lives, makes sense only when it is used by those who have pre-understanding or pre-existing purposes to use it. In that sense, it reflects the horizons of meanings. Every text as well as daily tools are intertwined in the meaning of our living, expecting pre-understandings in reading or in use. Information and its technologies are also inseparably related to pre-understandings of developers, managers, users, or governors as their framework.

Project *(Entwurf)*

Entwurf (project or casting) is a key concept of Heideggerian philosophy which represents the way of being of *Dasein* (there-being), that is, being cast in history and casting or projecting self for the future at the same time. *Entwurf* has a number of meanings such as project, casting, designing, or planning. Using this concept as a metaphor, Capurro emphasizes that projecting or casting our "selves" are inseparable, and concerning not only computer programming, but also the development of the

whole world of information. The relationship between the practice of living and information (technology) creates ethos in the information society. Projecting "self" is at the same time projecting one's relationship with others, and, in that sense, projecting to the world. This projection provides the background of the next understanding. Therefore, this concept is an indispensable factor of hermeneutic circulation and is strongly connected to the "pre-understanding" that is already shown.

Information Gestell *(Informations-Gestell)*

"*Gestell*" is also a technical term of Heideggerian philosophy (especially concerning technologies) which represents modern technologies as an autonomous system having an axis of usefulness that affects human beings. Capurro thinks that information technology also has this structure of "*Gestell.*" When we see information technology, in the Heideggerian meaning, not as things (*Vorhandensein*) but as tools (*Zuhandensein*), and information and its technology are seen in the context of our lives, then we can also see the opposite situation where we are driven by them.

We can see that Capurro has tried to apply these hermeneutic ideas to information studies since his early study concerning the "hermeneutics of information retrieval." (Capurro 1986) In this study, his hermeneutic model of information retrieval is shown in contrast with traditional models of "rational" information behavior. According to Capurro, information retrieval is not a "right" access to the "rationally" organized system of information as "objective" knowledge. Information systems themselves reflect pre-understandings of developers or situations surrounding them, and users or searchers get information or meanings casting their pre-understandings into systems. We can see these movements as hermeneutic processes. Although classifications in libraries or thesauri in databases may look like closed systems, actually they reflect pre-understandings or horizons of meanings based on various activities in the outer world and have various characteristics in different times and spaces. This hermeneutic analysis on information retrieval is the starting point of Capurro's hermeneutic approach to information studies.

After that, the scope of his study went beyond the framework of information retrieval. From a hermeneutic viewpoint, he addresses the overall relationship between information and human lives, an informatic view of human beings, current issues concerning the information society, and information

ethics in a wider meaning. It is in these studies where "ethos" or the intertwining of information technology and practices of our lives, as I mentioned above, is discussed as an important problem, and the hermeneutic turn of informatics becomes clear. It is not likely that computer hardware, software, or any kind of information media and its contents are created by those who are "independent" from their own lives in society or communities. In fact, the meanings or ways of being of information and its technology in society or communities are determined ontologically based on horizons consisting of their pre-understandings. Furthermore, these pre-understandings are by no means personal, but co-operational behaviors with others in "a" shared world. Therefore, they have ethical problems at the same time.

To view information and its technology from the perspectives of the relationships in our lives, Capurro returns to Aristotelian thought (according to Heidegger). Capurro follows Aristotelian characterization between *techne* (technical knowledge) concerning *poiesis* (production) and *phronesis* (practical knowledge) concerning *praxis* (practice). The former is based on the latter. *Techne* is partial knowledge concerning fragmentary technical acts of *poiesis*, while *phronesis* means knowledge concerning practical relationships. *Poiesis* or *techne* have specific meanings only when they are related to *praxis*. This *praxis* is exactly what Capurro thinks as the holistic image of our lives. He associates *phronesis* with the concept of "foreseeing (*Vor-Sicht*)" which Heidegger pointed out as one of the factors of the "pre-structure of understanding" (*Vor-Struktur des Verstehens*). Capurro regards *phronesis* as the central virtue in technical acts. It is an ability to see through the relationships of meanings, that is, the inseparable, interactive, and tight relationships between information technology and human lives, the "outer" and "inner" world, theories and practices, science and technology, and self and others. Whether we are aware of it or not, we always have some kind of outlook on certain plural relationships of meanings in our holistic human lives. Through practice, foresight is put into hermeneutic circulation, which leads to a new understanding or way of seeing. In this process, fixed statements or casuistic norms which provide problems and solutions in advance have slight significance but do not have ultimate authority. The plasticity or flexibility of human lives, in other words, the possibility of projection, provides the key to understanding Capurro's hermeneutic approach. It is certain that "ethos" is formed by humane interaction of meanings, involvement, and discretion through interpretation and response.

This interpretation is also similar to that of Hubert L. Dreyfus, who discusses information technology from a Heideggerian viewpoint and who mentions the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis*. In some regards Dreyfus and Capurro have very similar positions, but they are different from each other in subtle but important perspectives. One reason for the difference is that Dreyfus developed his study concerning issues on the nature of being of artificial intelligence or robotics while Capurro first started his study on information retrieval, that is, human behavior itself. Dreyfus emphasizes the nature of information as tools based on the first half of Heidegger's "Time and Being". Capurro also discusses that point, but he emphasizes the hermeneutic structure of pre-understandings, mentioning the fact that information and its technology are essential components for us to form our lives.

In addition, Dreyfus concludes that it is impossible for us to make self realizations in cyberspace, for the totality of relationships in our lives is lost there because of the lack of corporeality. Whereas Drefus set information technology against the life-world and supposes a "pure" humane or fundamental world which has not been invaded by information media, Capurro thinks that information technology is "already embedded" in our life-world. In other words, Capurro thinks the life-world is the world which is variously characterized by information technology and media. The life-world seen as such can and should be always newly designed by both personal existential and information technological designing.

Development of "Angeletics"

Capurro has developed his hermeneutic approach and presented a new theoretical framework called "angeletics." As the concept of "information" is quite ambiguous, he has turned his eyes to the concept of "message" in order to concentrate on the aspect of "transmission of meaning" and has tried to describe the structures and developments of various message phenomena in history. He named this particular study concerning message phenomena "angeletics" or "*Angeletik*", derived from the Greek word *angelia* which means message.

In developing angeletics, Capurro tries to complement the hermeneutic approach. Hermeneutics theorizes pre-understandings or horizons of meanings and analyzes them. However, it does not deal with how they were originally generated or formed. Moreover, hermeneutics addresses interpretation of

"something transmitted," but does not address "transmitting." Angeletics is considered to be a comprehensive framework in which the mechanisms of generation, formation, sharing, or transmitting of these pre-understandings or horizons of meanings are discussed.

To describe generation or transmission of messages in history, it is necessary to see how the horizons of meanings or pre-understandings have been formed from a historical viewpoint.

Capurro says that message transmission has two types of structure referred to as "dialogical" and "discursive" in the communicology of Flusser. The former is a structure where new messages are produced, and the latter is one that becomes clear when (new) messages are spread. Capurro regards the former structure as "horizontal = interactive" and the latter as "vertical = one way." The expression of "vertical" implies the image that messages are transmitted from top to bottom with authority or power. Capurro points out the dialectic relationship woven by these horizontal and vertical structures in (western) history. He takes up three eras as model cases.

The first case is ancient Greece. In the pre-Socrates era, the vertical structure of message transmission, by which gods make their intents known to humans, was dominant. The messengers who delivered the gods' messages to humans were poets or oracles. Such structure of messages was determined by religious and political authorities and constituted the core of society. In addition to this vertical structure of messages, a horizontal one was developed through the dialogical culture of sophists and the philosophies of Socrates and Plato. As such, the vertical structure of messages took the place of the horizontal one. But this does not mean that the vertical one disappeared completely.

The second case is the Age of Enlightenment. For a long time after the collapse of the Roman Empire, Christianity was located in the core of western message culture, that is, the dominant vertical message structure based on the connection between religion and political power. In the Age of Enlightenment, the dialectical relationship between vertical and horizontal structures appears again, being different from that of ancient Greece. Capurro thinks that the vertical structure of messages in this era was based on orders or norms characterized by churches and civil society. Those were given conditions. On the other hand, he thinks that communications among researchers through publications allowed the horizontal message structure to gain

power. This view of publishing technology as an apparatus to enable the horizontal interaction of messages and to assure the freedom of thought beyond the level of earthly human relationships is along the lines of Kant's views as shown in "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" or "What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thought?"

The third case is in the age of electronic media, that is, the modern times. Mass media, which Harbermas criticizes as possessing a one-way character, is regarded as the basis of the vertical message structure. The Internet, on the other hand, is regarded as a new infrastructure which enables us to communicate horizontally. The Internet provides all kinds of message transmission: One to one, one to many, many to one and many to many. This is a rather unique situation in history; therefore it is worth analyzing from the viewpoint of the "message society." This horizontal message structure in the Internet Age is one of the main targets of angeletics. Even if the Internet weakens the dominance of the vertical structure of mass media to some extent, it will continue to have crucial influence on our daily lives. This struggle for power is also the theme of angeletics.

When it comes to historical approaches to "transmission" phenomena, Régis Debray's work on mediology may be a useful starting point. Debray developed his mediology by adapting Marxism to "media" studies but in a wider context. He analyzes the mechanisms of the organization of authority structures in transmission phenomena, using the contributing factors of realization or extension of influences of political movements (French Revolution and socialism) or religious doctrines (Trinitarianism of Christianity) as model cases. In mediology, however, "communication" as a horizontal process is not regarded as important for the self realization of such thoughts or movement, and "transmission" is at all points determined by authorities or powers; that is, regarded as top-down construction (in Capurro's words, "vertical" construction). Debray emphasizes that organizing material factors brings about the development of specific thoughts: In the case of Christianity, for example, "church buildings" functioned as a means of accepting the words of God and "Communion bread" made them accept the Incarnation.

Debray tends to regard material things as apparatus of transmission, but ignores emergent factors in each transmission. Although the roles of material things in the transmission of meanings are important, it is not true that transmission is determined only by factors in the "outer" world such as material apparatus or social organizations. It is better to think that such factors influence some kinds of meaning transmission only when they are located in specific contexts of "inner" worlds or given meanings shared in communities or society. Even if there were the same material apparatus, there must be other possibilities of meaning transmission according to "ethos" or pre-understandings. This is one of the most important differences between angeletics and mediology: The former considers message phenomena not only on the level of material or "outer" factors, but also of subjective or "inner" factors. In other words, it is one of the main tasks of angeletics to investigate how horizons of meanings ("ethos" or shared pre-understandings) themselves are formed and how such subjective factors give meaning to material factors in message or meaning transmission. To put it more directly, mediological studies can be seen as a part of angeletics in a sense because all kinds of messages, senders, mediators, and receivers are in the scope of angeletics while only "media" are regarded as producers of transmission in mediology. In other words, angeletics is an idea that comprehends mediological viewpoints. Hermeneutics, angeletics, and mediology are complementary to one another in studies on human interaction. Both angeletics and mediology treat the aspect of "transmission" from a wide perspective that is not covered by hermeneutics. Mediology concentrates on "outer" factors such as social organization or material media rather than the generation of meaning or ideology. Angeletics emphasizes "inner" factors such as pre-understandings or horizons of meanings, which are common to hermeneutics, and investigates various aspects of "ethos" by considering the roles or relationships of senders, mediators, and receivers. Capurro tries to theorize angeletics based on Heidegger's "pre-structure of understanding." This means that message is considered to have ontological character and therefore a relationship with the world of human existence.

Capurro thinks that "angeletic turn" comes after "hermeneutic turn." This is a trial to extend the range of the hermeneutic approach in informatics to generation and the transmission of meanings taking over its fruitful outcome. The construction of angeletics has just started, and Capurro expects our coming contributions to develop this field of study.

Ethics in the Information Age

What does Capurro think ethics in the information age should be? He discusses this question by refer-

ring to Foucault's idea of "technologies of the self." Foucault distinguishes among four types of technologies: of producing, of symbolization, of governing and of the self. Whereas the former three are related to "act-oriented" ethics or "norms," only the last one is related to "self-oriented" ethics or "forms" of our lives in which we exactly face our own "selves". As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, mainstream studies on information ethics so far have dwelt on problems such as morals, regulations, norms or standards. These are apparently "act-oriented" ethics, and Capurro thinks that they do not make up a sufficient condition for us to live well in the information age. Since information and information technology is directly related to the formation of our lives, it is quite important for us to reflect upon self-oriented ethics, to think from "inside" ourselves with regard to matters of information ethics, rather than establish norms from "outside."

In this case, however, the "self" does not mean "ego." Whereas "ego" is a capsule-like, isolated consciousness which does not include others, the "self" is "I as we and we as I", which makes a relationship with others sharing a common environment. Construction of living with others like this is what Capurro calls "self-formation (*Selbstformung*)," and ethics on that level is undoubtedly self oriented.

The self-oriented ethics that Capurro proposes has four characteristics as follows:

Cooperation toward others

The concept of "technologies of the self" as interpreted by Capurro is a slightly different from that of Foucault. While Foucault treats the formation of ethical selves as self oppression toward specific models in history, Capurro emphasizes positive self-projection (*Selbstformung*) to create relationships with others, especially those from whom we are alienated or those whom we can recognize only through information media. "We are exposed to the place where we can form – and sometimes destroy – our lives not only with others but also *for others*."(Capurro 1995: 44) As I already mentioned, Capurro doesn't think that "ethical problems can be solved by codes or prescriptions, at least when they are not understood as beginnings of the discussion. Reflections on ethics themselves can and should produce a new "ethos" in the mid and long term."(Capurro 1999)

Open relativism

Capurro has doubts about attempts to develop "universal" information ethics codes by the United Nations or such organizations. Although the Internet has brought us universal access that overreaches borders, every country has relatively different cultural bases, so a single code or set of norms concerning information ethics will not be accepted by all of them. In Germany, for example, it is forbidden to make public information to support Nazism, but it is not possible to control the information found on websites of other countries. It is the same in the case of the influx of pornography to Islamic countries. In some countries it is restricted or forbidden to use the Internet. These problems cannot be solved at once by developing a "universal" code. Concerning information ethics it seems impossible to find a dogmatic criterion or a universal system. Rather it is important for us to create ways to use information and its technology to maintain relativity, following each culture or way of living. At the same time, however, we should avoid allowing relativism to become dogmatic, exclusive, or uncommunicative. Relativity with room for having dialogues with other systems is desirable.

Plural perspective

To see plural relationships means to reject reductionism, that is, to reduce everything to a single relationship. Human beings are reduced – or even taken apart – in the process of oxidization by biologism, to the system of stimulus-response by psychologism or to social elements by sociologism. Likewise informatism reduces or takes apart everything (of course including human beings) to a single relation where even our spirits or ethos are regarded as mere information processing. Informatism leads to information technology-centered ideas where humans are driven to acquire more and more information (mainly computer) skills to be excellent *homo informaticus*, while those who have poor information skills are looked down upon. These reductionisms ultimately eliminate and ignore our life-world consisting of humane meanings." The hermeneutic approach including participation by the "self" is completely opposed to these reductionisms.

Ecological thinking

According to Capurro, "one answer to the destruction of human life brought by the information society is, as is also the case with the destruction of nature, the ecology of information and communication" (Capurro 1995: 40). He also states, "Technolo-

gies of living mean to learn technologies concerning fulfilling our lives. Insofar as technologies of living are regarded as ecological ones, they are related to ideas transcending individuals" (Capurro 1995: 44). "Ecological thinking" means the pursuit of harmony as a whole. That is, being rampant with unconditional freedom of desires informed by a kind of postmodernist thought is regarded as an undesirable situation. Capurro presented his paper "Towards an Information Ecology" in 1990, where we can see that he had a basis in ecological thinking in the early years of his conception of information ethics. Ecological thinking also means to avoid "humanism" in the sense of Heideggerians, or human-centered-thinking. Capurro thinks that we should not subscribe to technological determinism but humane thinking, but this does not mean human-centered thinking in utilizing the environment with our partial and imperfect knowledge. Furthermore, in this kind of ecology concerning information environment, attentions are paid to pathological phenomena which appear in the intertwining between human lives and information technology. For example, Capurro mentions the problem of speeding, suggesting that we should consider not only the way the Internet is used to pursue efficiency or speed up our lives, driving us more and making us busier than now, but to get more spare time. He is also worried about the increasing number of children among heavy Internet users who lack concentration, are emotionally instable, or who are not good at human relationships. These topics can be regarded as the problems of human ecological systems from the viewpoint of ecological thinking.

We can see that Capurro tries to open up a third dimension which has neither a modern nor post-modern approach to information studies. Mentioning Aristotle, he tries to go back to the viewpoint where the confrontation between modernism and post-modernism or the separation between academic studies and technologies did not occur. Studies concerning information ethics or the information society tend to polarize into modernism (information democracy) and postmodernism (spiritual anarchism) which do not seem to provide us with adequate explanations. We can find few arguments that try to go beyond modernism and postmodernism to construct a new theoretical framework of information ethics. In that sense, Capurro's hermeneutic approach can be regarded as a pioneering work, giving us important suggestions to consider in the future development of information ethics.

Capurro and Japanese Perspective

Finally, I would like to briefly discuss the relationship between Capurro's hermeneutic approach and the Japanese perspective.

Capurro is interested in (ontological) distinctions between *mono* and *koto*, or between "reality (*Realität*)" and "actuality (*Wirklichkeit*)" as proposed by Bin Kimura (1931-), a noted Japanese psychoanalyst and a thinker. *Mono* and *koto* are concepts of Japanese language which mean "things" and "events", respectively. Kimura relates the word "reality" to the "essence" of something and "actuality" to what is "happening". He mentions that in Japanese they use *mono* and *koto*, where *mono* refers to things in there being while *koto* refers to what is happening. The world is the whole of what is happening, not of the things. Also the existences or activities of "I" and "you" are not *mono* but *koto*, that is, they are not "substances" in Japanese. Capurro thinks this is important for our thinking about the question of what he calls "information metaphysics" vs. "information ontology," the conflict between information-as-thing (Michael Buckland's term) and information-as-event (Capurro's concept to denote the "eventuality" in Heideggerian terms of the phenomenon), or between information as *mono* and as *koto*. Capurro says that Heidegger's criticism of the "*Gestell*" and what he calls the "Information Gestell" would look only to information as *mono* (things), but this is exactly what the book culture was. Libraries are full of *mono*. What the Internet brings is information as *koto* (events) and this is the main thought concerning "message", because a message is basically *koto*. It makes no sense to think of messages as "things" with some "characteristics." I agree with Capurro when he says that messages are basically *koto*. The concept of information is particularly problematic, and this is why he thinks that we must switch to the concept of "message" which is more dynamic.

It is natural that Kimura has a similar viewpoint of the hermeneutic approach because his work is based on Heidegger. On the other hand, Kimura also depends on the philosophy of Kitaro Nishida (1870-1945), who is called the first "philosopher" in Japan. Nishida himself practiced Zen and tried to systematize the eastern thought in terms of the western philosophy to overcome the separation between subjectivity and objectivity. Capurro himself has deepened his interest in Zen Buddhism and Japanese thought (e.g. Capurro 1999b, c) and promoted friendships with Japanese thinkers.

The future relationship between Capurro's hermeneutic approach and Japanese thought will be interesting. The interaction between them is expected to bear fruitful outcomes in the development of information ethics.

Acknowledgment

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