Information Technology and Moral Philosophy

Information technology is an integral part of the practices and institutions of postindustrial society. It is also a source of hard moral questions and thus is both a probing and a relevant area for moral theory. In this volume, an international team of philosophers sheds light on many of the ethical issues arising from information technology, including informational privacy, the digital divide and equal access, e-trust, and teledemocracy. Collectively, these essays demonstrate how accounts of equality and justice and property and privacy benefit from taking into account how information technology has shaped our social and epistemic practices and our moral experiences. Information technology changes the way we look at the world and deal with one another. It calls, therefore, for a re-examination of notions such as friendship, care, commitment, and trust.

Jeroen van den Hoven is professor of moral philosophy at Delft University of Technology. He is editor-in-chief of *Ethics and Information Technology*, a member of the IST Advisory Group of the European Community in Brussels, scientific director of the 3TU Centre for Ethics and Technology in The Netherlands, and coauthor, with Dean Cocking, of *Evil Online*.

John Weckert is a Professorial Fellow at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics at Charles Sturt University in Australia. He is editor-in-chief of *NanoEthics: Ethics for Technologies That Converge at the Nanoscale* and has published widely in the field of computer ethics.
Information Technology and Moral Philosophy

Edited by

JEROEN VAN DEN HOVEN
Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

JOHN WECKERT
Charles Sturt University, Australia
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press
32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA
www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521855495

© Cambridge University Press 2008

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2008

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Information technology – Moral and ethical aspects. I. Hoven, Jeroen van den. II. Weckert, John.
t58.5158745 2007
303.48'33-dc22 2007016850

ISBN 978-0-521-85549-5 hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.
## Contents

**List of Contributors**

List of Contributors page vii

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Norbert Wiener and the Rise of Information Ethics</td>
<td>Terrell Ward Bynum</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Why We Need Better Ethics for Emerging Technologies</td>
<td>James H. Moor</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Information Ethics: Its Nature and Scope</td>
<td>Luciano Floridi</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Transformation of the Public Sphere: Political Authority,</td>
<td>James Bohman</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communicative Freedom, and Internet Publics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Democracy and the Internet</td>
<td>Cass R. Sunstein</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The Social Epistemology of Blogging</td>
<td>Alvin I. Goldman</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plural Selves and Relational Identity: Intimacy and Privacy Online</td>
<td>Dean Cocking</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Identity and Information Technology</td>
<td>Steve Matthews</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Trust, Reliance, and the Internet</td>
<td>Philip Pettit</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Esteem, Identifiability, and the Internet</td>
<td>Geoffrey Brennan and Philip Pettit</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
vi

Contents

11 Culture and Global Networks: Hope for a Global Ethics? 195
   Charles Ess

12 Collective Responsibility and Information and Communication Technology 226
   Seumas Miller

13 Computers as Surrogate Agents 251
   Deborah G. Johnson and Thomas M. Powers

14 Moral Philosophy, Information Technology, and Copyright: The Grokster Case 270
   Wendy J. Gordon

15 Information Technology, Privacy, and the Protection of Personal Data 301
   Jeroen van den Hoven

16 Embodying Values in Technology: Theory and Practice 322
   Mary Flanagan, Daniel C. Howe, and Helen Nissenbaum

17 Information Technology Research Ethics 354
   Dag Elgesem

18 Distributive Justice and the Value of Information: A (Broadly) Rawlsian Approach 376
   Jeroen van den Hoven and Emma Rooksby

Select Bibliography 397

Index 401
List of Contributors

James Bohman is Danforth Professor of Philosophy at Saint Louis University in the United States. He is the author of Public Deliberation: Pluralism, Complexity and Democracy (1996) and New Philosophy of Social Science: Problems of Indeterminacy (1991). He has recently coedited Deliberative Democracy (with William Rehg) and Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant’s Cosmopolitan Ideal (with Matthias Lutz-Bachmann) and has published articles on topics related to cosmopolitan democracy and the European Union. His most recent book is Democracy across Borders (2007).

Geoffrey Brennan is professor in the Social and Political Theory Group, Research School of Social Sciences, the Australian National University, Canberra, Australia; professor of political science, Duke University; and professor of philosophy at University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill in the United States. Among his most recent publications is The Economy of Esteem, with Philip Pettit (2004).

Terrell Ward Bynum is professor of philosophy and director, Research Center on Computing and Society, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven. He was a cofounder of the ETHICOMP series of international computer ethics conferences and has chaired the Committee on Philosophy and Computing for the American Philosophical Association and the Committee on Professional Ethics for the Association for Computing Machinery. He is coeditor of the textbook Computer Ethics and Professional Responsibility (2004). In June 2005, he delivered the Georg Henrik von Wright Keynote Lecture on Ethics at the European Computing and Philosophy Conference in Sweden.

Dean Cocking is Senior Research Fellow/lecturer at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics, Charles Sturt University, Canberra, Australia. He is currently working on a book titled Intending Evil and Using People and with Jeroen van den Hoven, a book on Evil Online (forthcoming).
Dag Elgesem is professor, Department of Information Science and Media Studies, University of Bergen, Norway. Among his recent publications is his contribution to Trust Management (2006), titled “Normative Structures in Trust Management.”

Charles Ess is professor of philosophy and religion and Distinguished Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, Drury University in Springfield, Missouri, and Professor II, Programme for Applied Ethics, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim. Ess has received awards for teaching excellence and scholarship and has published extensively in comparative (East–West) philosophy, applied ethics, discourse ethics, history of philosophy, feminist biblical studies, and computer-mediated communication. With Fay Sudweeks, he cochairs the biennial Cultural Attitudes towards Technology and Communication (CATaC) conferences. He has served as a visiting professor at IT-University, Copenhagen (2003) and as a Fulbright Senior Scholar at University of Trier (2004).

Mary Flanagan is associate professor and director of the Tiltfactor Laboratory, in the Department of Film and Media Studies at Hunter College, New York City. The laboratory researches and develops computer games and software systems to teach science, mathematics, and applied programming skills to young people, especially girls and minorities. Flanagan, who has extensive experience in software design, has developed methods of engaging girls and women in science and technology. She has garnered more than twenty international awards for this work. Flanagan created The Adventures of Josie True (www.josietrue.com), the award-winning science and mathematics environment for middle-school girls and is now collaborating on integrating human values in the design of software. She is the coeditor of reskin (2006) and has recently received an artwork commission from HTTP Gallery in London.

Luciano Floridi (www.wolfson.ox.ac.uk/~floridi) is Fellow of St Cross College, University of Oxford, United Kingdom, where, with Jeff Sanders, he coordinates the Information Ethics Research Group, and professor of logic and epistemology, Università degli Studi di Bari, Italy. His area of research is the philosophy of information. His works include more than fifty articles and several books on epistemology and the philosophy of computing and information. He is the editor of The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Computing and Information. He is currently working on a series of articles that will form the basis of a new book on the philosophy of information. He is vice-president of the International Association for Philosophy and Computing (www.iacap.org).

Alvin I. Goldman is Board of Governors Professor of Philosophy and Cognitive Science at Rutgers University, New Jersey. He is best known for his work in epistemology, especially social epistemology, and interdisciplinary
philosophy of mind. His three most recent books are Knowledge in a Social World (1999), Pathways to Knowledge (2002), and Simulating Minds: The Philosophy, Psychology, and Neuroscience of Mindreading (2006). A Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Science, he has served as president of the American Philosophical Association (Pacific Division) and of the Society for Philosophy and Psychology.

Wendy J. Gordon is professor of law and Paul J. Liacos Scholar in Law, Boston University School of Law, Boston, Massachusetts. Professor Gordon has served as a visiting Senior Research Fellow at St John’s College, Oxford, and as a Fulbright scholar. She is the author of numerous articles, including “Render Copyright unto Caesar: On Taking Incentives Seriously,” University of Chicago Law Review, 71 (2004) and “A Property Right in Self-Expression: Equality and Individualism in the Natural Law of Intellectual Property,” Yale Law Journal, 102 (1993); she is coeditor of two books, including, with Lisa Takeyama and Ruth Towe, Developments in the Economics of Copyright: Research and Analysis (2005).

Daniel C. Howe is on the staff of the Media Research Laboratory at New York University.

Deborah G. Johnson is Anne Shirley Carter Olsson Professor of Applied Ethics and chair of the Department of Science, Technology, and Society at the University of Virginia. Johnson is the author/editor of six books, including Computer Ethics, which is now in its third edition. Her work focuses on the ethical and social implications of technology, especially information technology. Johnson received the John Barwise Prize from the American Philosophical Association in 2004, the Sterling Olmsted Award from the Liberal Education Division of the American Society for Engineering Education in 2001, and the ACM SIGCAS Making a Difference Award in 2000.

Steve Matthews teaches philosophy at School of Humanities and Social Sciences and is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics (an ARC-funded special research centre) at Charles Sturt University, New South Wales, Australia. He is a visiting Fellow at University of Melbourne and Australian National University. Relevant areas of interest include ethical issues raised by computer-mediated communication and ethical questions of identity and agency, especially as raised in legal and psychiatric contexts. Recent articles include “Establishing Personal Identity in Cases of DID,” Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology, 10 (2003) and “Failed Agency and the Insanity Defence,” International Journal of Law and Psychiatry, 27 (2004).

Seumas Miller is professor of philosophy at Charles Sturt University and at Australian National University and director of the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics (an Australian Research Council–funded
special research centre). He is the author of more than 100 academic articles and ten books, including *Social Action* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), *Ethical Issues in Policing*, with John Blackler (2005), *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism* (forthcoming), and *Institutional Corruption* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

*James H. Moor* is a professor of philosophy at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, and is an adjunct professor with the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics at the Australian National University, Canberra, Australia. His publications include work on computer ethics, nanoethics, philosophy of artificial intelligence, philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, and logic. He is editor-in-chief of the journal *Minds and Machines* and is associate editor of the journal *NanoEthics*. He is the president of the International Society for Ethics and Information Technology (INSEIT) and has received the American Computing Machinery SIGCAS Making a Difference Award and the American Philosophical Association Barwise Prize. His most recent article is “The Nature, Importance, and Difficulty of Machine Ethics,” in *IEEE Intelligent Systems, July/August*, 2006.

*Helen Nissenbaum* is associate professor in the Department of Culture and Communication, New York University and Senior Fellow, Information Law Institute, New York University School of Law. She is coeditor of the journal *Ethics and Information Technology* and has recently edited, with Monroe Price, *Academy & the Internet* (2004).


*Thomas M. Powers* is assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Delaware and was a National Science Foundation Research Fellow at the University of Virginia. His main research interests are ethical theory, Kant, computer ethics, and philosophy of technology. He has edited, with P. Kamolnick, *From Kant to Weber: Freedom and Culture in Classical German Social Theory* (1999). He has also published chapters in a number of collections and articles in the journal *Ethics and Information Technology*.

*Emma Rooksby* is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics at Australian National University. Her research interests include computer ethics, philosophy, and literature. Her publications include *Ethics and the Digital Divide* (2007). She was recently awarded a postdoctoral research fellowship at University of Western Australia.

*Cass R. Sunstein* is Karl N. Llewellyn Professor of Jurisprudence, Law School and Department of Political Science, University of Chicago. Among his recent publications is *Infotopia: How Many Minds Produce Knowledge* (2006).
List of Contributors

Jeroen van den Hoven is professor of moral philosophy at the Department of Philosophy of the Faculty of Technology, Policy, and Management at Delft University of Technology and is a Professorial Fellow at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics at Australian National University. He is editor-in-chief of Ethics and Information Technology. He was a Research Fellow at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (NIAS), Royal Dutch Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1994 and received research fellowships from University of Virginia (1996) and Dartmouth College (1998).

John Weckert is a Professorial Fellow at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics and professor of information technology, both at Charles Sturt University. He has published widely on the ethics of information and communication technology and is the founding editor-in-chief of the journal NanoEthics: Ethics for Technologies That Converge at the Nanoscale.