open.michigan

Author(s): Paul Conway, PhD, 2010

License: Unless otherwise noted, this material is made available under the terms of the **Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike 3.0 License:** http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Citation Key

for more information see: http://open.umich.edu/wiki/CitationPolicy

Use + Share + Adapt

{ Content the copyright holder, author, or law permits you to use, share and adapt. }

PD-GOV   **Public Domain – Government**: Works that are produced by the U.S. Government. (17 USC § 105)

PD-EXP   **Public Domain – Expired**: Works that are no longer protected due to an expired copyright term.

PD-SELF   **Public Domain – Self Dedicated**: Works that a copyright holder has dedicated to the public domain.

ZERO   **Creative Commons – Zero Waiver**

BY   **Creative Commons – Attribution License**

BY-SA   **Creative Commons – Attribution Share Alike License**

BY-NC   **Creative Commons – Attribution Noncommercial License**

BY-NC-SA   **Creative Commons – Attribution Noncommercial Share Alike License**

GNU-FDL   **GNU – Free Documentation License**

Make Your Own Assessment

{ Content Open.Michigan believes can be used, shared, and adapted because it is ineligible for copyright. }

PD-INEL   **Public Domain – Ineligible**: Works that are ineligible for copyright protection in the U.S. (17 USC § 102(b)) *laws in your jurisdiction may differ

{ Content Open.Michigan has used under a Fair Use determination. }

FAIR USE   **Fair Use**: Use of works that is determined to be Fair consistent with the U.S. Copyright Act. (17 USC § 107) *laws in your jurisdiction may differ

Our determination **DOES NOT** mean that all uses of this 3rd-party content are Fair Uses and we **DO NOT** guarantee that your use of the content is Fair.

To use this content you should **do your own independent analysis** to determine whether or not your use will be Fair.

SI 410 ETHICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

3

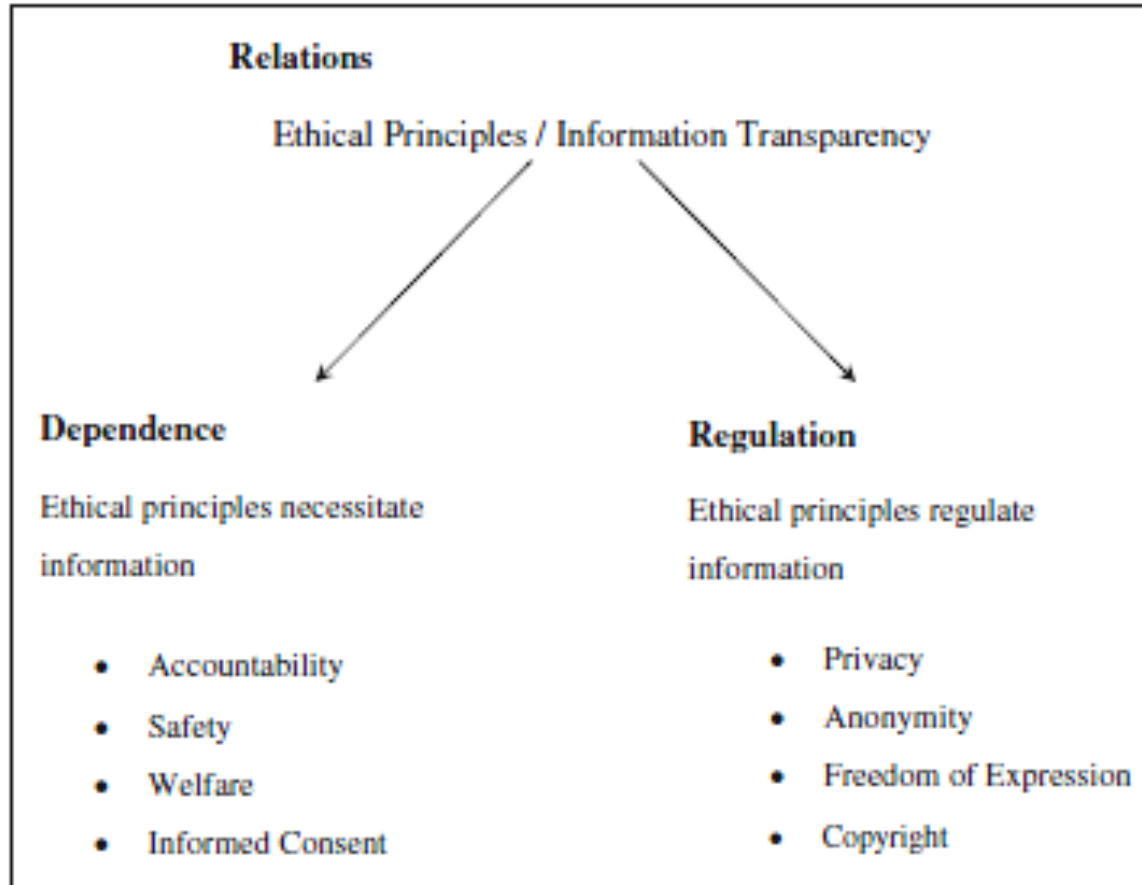**Week 2a: Transparency and Virtue Ethics**

INFORMATION TRANSPARENCY

1 Transparency

2 Values

- Two senses of the word.
  - Visibility (opaque) = disclosure
  - Invisibility (clear) = non-intrusive

"Disclosing information … and … details of how such information has been produced enables those ethical principles that either depend on information or regulate it.   (p. 111)

TRANSPARENCY AND ETHICS

Relations

Ethical Principles / Information Transparency

Dependence

Ethical principles necessitate information

- Accountability
- Safety
- Welfare
- Informed Consent

Regulation

Ethical principles regulate information

- Privacy
- Anonymity
- Freedom of Expression
- Copyright

PD-INEL Turilli, Matteo & Floridi, Luciano, The Ethics of Information Transparency,PD-INEL

Turilli/Floridi, Fig. 1, p. 107.

Fall 2010   SI 410 Ethics and Information Technology

5

INFORMATION ETHICS - TRANSPARENCY

1 Transparency

2 Values

○ Information transparency is disclosed information (meaningful, veridical, comprehensible, accessible, useful).
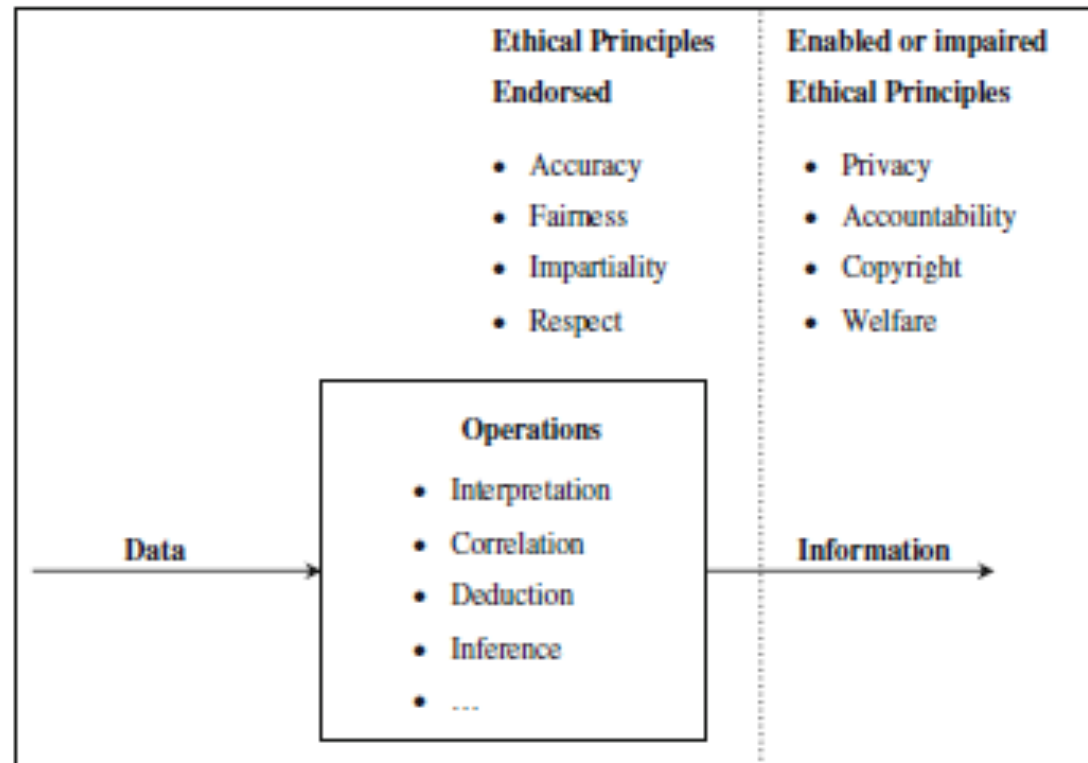
Turilli/Floridi, Fig. 2, p. 108.

TRANSPARENCY AS PRO-ETHICAL
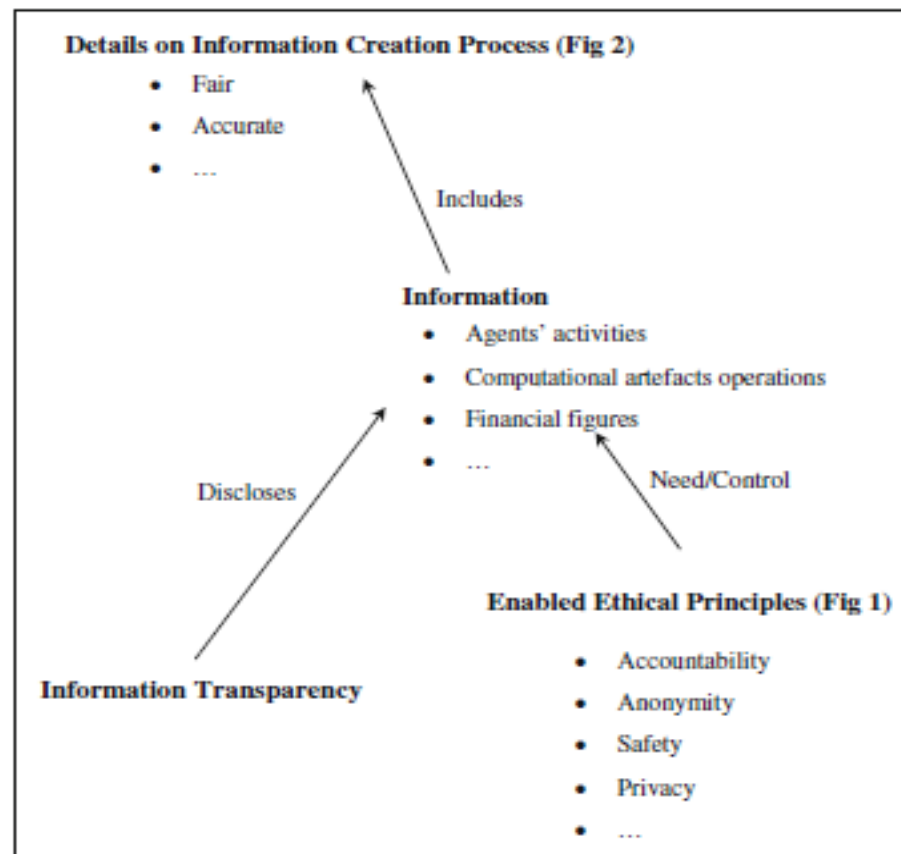
⦾ Enabling or Impairing

Details on Information Creation Process (Fig 2)
- Fair
- Accurate
- ...

Includes

Information
- Agents' activities
- Computational artefacts operations
- Financial figures
- ...

Discloses *Need/Control*

Information Transparency

Enabled Ethical Principles (Fig 1)
- Accountability
- Anonymity
- Safety
- Privacy
- ...

Turilli/Floridi, Fig. 3, p. 109.

DISCUSSION – SURVEILLANCE SOCIETY

- "… it is inevitable that our society is going to become an all-encompassing surveillance society. The question is 'what sort of surveillance society are we going to become.'"

- Imagine two scenarios of "transparent surveillance" – opaque and clear -- and discuss the relevance to dependence and regulation.

- George Orwell 1984 versus Google Street View

VIRTUE ETHICS

- From Aristotle
- Humans have stable character traits (excellences or virtues)
- Excellence is an ability to express one's capacities to flourish physically and socially.
  - *Eudaimonia* (happiness)
- Less about feeling, thinking, believing than action: habit of doing; promotion of virtues (or vices)
- The context of action is all important – sometimes called "situational ethics"

VIRTUE ETHICS AND SOCIAL SETTINGS

- Virtues do not arise from nature or choice, but are shaped by concrete social and physical conditions.

- Initial motivations may transform into virtues
  - Example of charity and friending
  - Example sabotage and gaming !!!!

- Character development over time in relationship to technological "affordances."

VIRTUE ETHICS

- No consensus on what the "virtues" are, but…
    - Aristotle listed patience, amiability, honesty, wit

- Vallor has his own list (discussed in the reading):
    - Patience
    - Honesty
    - Empathy
    - Fidelity
    - Reciprocity
    - Tolerance

DISCUSSION: FACEBOOK AND THE VIRTUES

- How does Facebook provide (or could provide) affordances to reinforce virtue and/or limit vice?
  - Patience
  - Honesty
  - Empathy
  - Fidelity
  - Reciprocity
  - Tolerance

FOR YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT

- The notion of "virtues" may or may not be different in the online environment.

- If virtue ethics is about character development (positive or negative), are there examples of online/virtual environments where character development is a key part of the experience?

Additional Source Information

for more information see: http://open.umich.edu/wiki/CitationPolicy

Slide 5, Image 5: Turilli, Matteo & Floridi, Luciano, The Ethics of Information Transparency, http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=1553322.1553337, PD-INEL

Slide 6, Image 5: Turilli, Matteo & Floridi, Luciano, The Ethics of Information Transparency, http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=1553322.1553337, PD-INEL

Slide 7, Image 2: Turilli, Matteo & Floridi, Luciano, The Ethics of Information Transparency, http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=1553322.1553337, PD-INEL

14

PAUL CONWAY

Associate Professor

School of Information

University of Michigan

www.si.umich.edu