**Cultural differences and ethics research**

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# Cultural differences

The difference of cultural differences can occur in several ways in a team. The way problem issues or questions are approached can often differ within cultures. You can encounter this when working with people from other countries. You can try to find common ground by talking about each other's norms and goods. Then you can try to define a line in this for everyone so that there is roughly the same thinking about certain objects.

Sometimes the way of communication in a culture is also different. It could be that in that culture they are much more direct as they are used to, or much more formal.

# My experience with cultural differences

I have not been outside the Netherlands often in my life, therefore I do not have extreme experience with other cultures. However, I do find it interesting to see how people think and act in other cultures. Or what is not done and is seen as informal.

## Holiday in Mallorca

In Mallorca, I went on holiday with my friends. I talked to many shopkeepers there but also some residents, sometimes I translated for friends what was said so we could all interact nicely with the people in Mallorca.

Besides people speaking Spanish in Mallorca, the working people of Mallorca have a rest period in the afternoon. This period is from 12am to 2pm, during which time people often eat and or sleep because that is when it is the hottest time of the day. It is therefore very important to be quiet around these times and not talk too loudly.

When I was in Mallorca, I didn't really understand why we had to pay so much attention to these people because I'm not used to it in the Netherlands. But after researching cultural differences and ethics, I understand better why this is important for the people there. Because it is so hot between 12am and 2pm, not much can be done and people there like to have a rest then so they can carry on working for the rest of the day.

## Work at Westburg b.v.

My side job employs many temporary workers. These temps come from countries like Poland, Romania and Turkey. These colleagues all don't speak Dutch so I have to communicate with them in English. Some people don't even speak English which makes things even more difficult.

Many colleagues also change clothes at work just before they start work. When they finish again they put on their clean clothes at work right away. Often they come to work together instead of individually.

These colleagues usually work almost all year round, they often only go away on vacation for two weeks in the summer and at Christmas and New Year they are away for three weeks. These are very important times of the year.

# Research

## Cultural differences

As a software engineer, it is very likely that you will collaborate with people from another society on one or more occasions. You often learn a lot from these collaborations, but it can also lead to many false impressions and reduced efficiency. This often occurs when not conscious enough attention is paid to the social contrasts between two societies. It is very important to know these differences so that the collaboration can run smoothly.

### Culture

To find out about the differences in cultures, it is very helpful to know what a culture is.

A culture consists of many points within a society. You can think about knowledge, general values of someone within a society, religion, hierarchies, race/sex relations and experiences. They are the systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people.

### Dimensions within cultural differences

One of the best-known dimensions of cultural differences is Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory. This theory was developed by Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede and is based on research in more than 100 countries. It includes four primary dimensions:

- power distance

- individualism/collectivism

- masculinity/femininity

- uncertainty avoidance

These dimensions can help us understand how people from different cultures approach and interact with different situations. For example, individualistic cultures place a high value on individual autonomy and self-reliance, while collectivistic cultures place more emphasis on the needs and goals of the group. Understanding these differences can help us communicate more effectively with people from other cultures.

Source: <https://www.mindtools.com/a1ecvyx/hofstedes-cultural-dimensions>

## Ethics

Ethics in software engineering is an important topic that is receiving more and more attention as technology becomes more advanced and also plays a larger role in everyday life. A software engineer has a responsibility to consider the ethical implications of our work there to ensure that the software being written is used in an ethical manner. A variety of factors must then be considered, such as privacy, fairness and bias, as well as things like the impact on society.

A big aspect of ethics is the issue of privacy. There are a lot of programs and websites being created these days that require logging in, and a lot of personal information is being stored in the process. It is up to the software engineers to keep this data safe and secure in an ethical way. As an example, a software engineer can be asked to develop a banking system. This requires a lot of financial data and user data to be maintained and stored. The engineer must carefully consider the potential risks to individuals' privacy and ensure that the system is designed in a way that protects this information from unauthorized access or misuse.

Another important aspect of software engineering ethics is the issue of fairness and bias. As software engineers, we must make sure that the systems we create are fair and unbiased, and do not discriminate against certain individuals or groups.

# Ethics in software engineering

It is very important for a software engineer to list the ethical choices that the project needs so that he gets users. It is very important that he does not store the more data than what is needed. This can be annoying to the users if this is not enforced.

A software engineer must think about a user's privacy. It is also necessary to think carefully about what will be done with that data. Will the data reside somewhere, will it be processed or can it be modified? Ethical choices should include thinking about whether to choose some features over more users. Ethical choices often occur with privacy, security and social responsibility.

# My choices

My choices, fortunately, are pretty simple. My website is all about keeping a shopping list. This does not require keeping much information from a user, all that is needed is to store an email address and user name. With the user name, I can link all sorts of attributes and lists to a user. It is then a lot easier to retrieve old data and add products to a user's lists.

With the email address, I can implement the ability for the user to delete their account. Also to change the email address. In addition notification mails can be sent or if the user agrees newsletter mails can be sent.

Source: <https://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/technology-ethics/>