Ethical perspective of technology

Ethics is a set of beliefs about right and wrong behavior within a society. Ethics is derived from the **Greek ethos**, and the term morality has its roots in the ***Latin mores***. ***Both the Greek and the Latin terms refer to notions of custom, habit, behavior and character.*** Although ethics and morality are often used interchangeably in everyday discourse we draw some important distinctions between the two terms.

Morals are the welfare principles enunciated by the wise people, based on their experience and wisdom. They were edited, changed or modified or evolved to suit the geography of the region, rulers (dynasty), and in accordance with development of knowledge in science and technology and with time. Morality is concerned with principles and practices of morals such as: (a) What ought or ought not to be done in a given situation? (b) What is right or wrong about the handling of a situation? And (c) What is good or bad about the people, policies, and ideals involved?

Morality is different from Ethics in the following ways:

Morality	Ethics
1. More general and prescriptive based on customs and traditions.	1.Specific and descriptive. It is a critical reflection on morals
2. More concerned with the results of wrong action, when done.	2. More concerned with the results of a right action when not done.
3. Thrust is on judgment and punishment in the name of God or by laws.	3. Thrust is on influence, education, training through codes, guidelines and correction.
4. In case of conflict between the two, morality is given top priority, because the damage is more. It is more common and basic.	4. Less serious, hence second priority only. But relevant today, because of complex interactions in the modern society.
5. Example: Character flaw, corruption, extortion and crime.	5.Example: Notions or beliefs about manners, tastes, customs and towards laws.(Naagarazan, 2006)

What is engineering Ethics?

Engineering ethics is (1) the study of moral issues and decisions confronting individuals and organizations engaged in engineering and (2) the study of related questions about the moral ideals, character, polices and relationships of people and corporations involved in technological activity.

Moral dilemma:

A dilemma describes a situation where one is confronted with two choices, neither of which is desirable.

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Imagine that you are driving a trolley and that all of a sudden you realize that the trolley's brake system has failed. Further imagine that approximately 80 meters ahead of you on the trolley track (a short distance from the trolley's station) five crew men are working on a section of the track on which your trolley is traveling. You realize that you cannot stop the trolley and that you will probably not be able to prevent the deaths of the five workers. But then you suddenly realize that you could "throw a switch" that would cause the trolley to go on to a different track. You also happen to notice that one person is working on that track. You then realize that if you do nothing, five people will likely die, whereas if you engage the switch to change tracks, only one person would likely die.

What would you do in this situation—let the trolley take its “natural” course, expecting that five people will likely die, or intentionally change the direction of the trolley, likely causing the death of one person who otherwise would have lived? If you use what some call a “cost-benefits” approach in this particular situation, you might reason in the following way: throwing the switch will have a better outcome, overall, because more human lives would be saved than lost. So, in this case you conclude that throwing the switch is the right thing to do because the net result is that four more people will live.

Imagine that you are standing on a bridge overlooking the track on which a runaway trolley is traveling. You observe that the trolley is heading for the station where there are many people gathered outside. Standing next to you on the bridge is a very large and obese person (weighing approximately 500 pounds), who is leaning forward over the rail of the bridge to view the runaway trolley. You realize that if you gently pushed the obese person forward as the trolley approaches, he would fall off the bridge and land in front of the trolley; the impact would be sufficient to stop the trolley. Thus you could save the lives of many people who otherwise would die.

Would you be willing to push the obese person off the bridge? If not, why not? What has changed in the two scenarios? After all, if you are reasoning from the standpoint of a utilitarian/consequentialist theory, the same outcome would be realized—one person dies, while many others live. But studies have shown that most people find it far more difficult to push (intentionally) one person to his death, even though doing so would mean that several persons will live as a result. However, in this case, you might reason that intentionally causing someone's death (especially by having a "direct hand" in it) is morally wrong. You may also reason that actively and deliberately causing one person's death (as opposed to another's) is unjust and unfair, and that it would be a dangerous moral principle to generalize. In this case, your reasoning would be nonutilitarian.

Definition from tavani:

The purpose of posing this dilemma now is to get us to begin thinking about how we can respond to dilemmas that we will invariably face in our professional as well as personal lives.(Tavani, 2011)