**Reflective Essay: My Perspective on AI Ethics and the Global Generative AI Response**

Since late 2022, I’ve seen how generative AI has rapidly moved from a niche technology to something that’s reshaping nearly every industry and even the way we live and work. As someone studying and working within computing, this shift has felt especially personal. Generative AI didn’t appear out of nowhere, it builds on decades of research, and yet the urgency around ethical guidelines now feels more important than ever. I was particularly struck by Correa et al. (2023), who describe this moment as an “AI ethics boom”, a global scramble to figure out how AI should be governed. But after reading both Correa et al. and Deckard (2023), I’m left feeling that while we’ve made progress, we still lack a consistent, actionable approach to ethics in AI. This is something I think needs to change.

Correa et al. (2023) highlights that a lot of work is being done to define the values guiding AI, but it’s clear there’s little global agreement. Countries and organizations have released hundreds of guidelines, yet many are vague, voluntary, or overlap in unhelpful ways. Their study reviewed 200 such documents and found 17 recurring principles, including transparency, fairness, accountability, and privacy. What stood out to me was how different regions and institutions emphasize different priorities. For example, European countries focus more on privacy and human rights, while the U.S. tends to highlight innovation and reliability. Asian countries often place emphasis on beneficence and collective good. This divergence isn’t surprising, given the different political and cultural contexts, but it raises a serious question. How can we move forward if we don’t even agree on what we’re trying to protect?

One of the issues Correa et al. also point out is that many of these ethical principles aren’t backed by enforcement. The majority of guidelines they reviewed are not legally binding, and very few provide practical tools to put the principles into action. I think this is one of the biggest weaknesses in our current approach. Ethics can’t just be theoretical, it needs to shape real-world decisions. I’ve seen examples where AI tools are deployed quickly without fully understanding the risks. This can lead to harmful consequences, especially for vulnerable groups. The Cambridge Analytica scandal or the biased risk scores used in criminal justice software (Angwin et al., 2016) are just a few examples. In my opinion, without enforceable standards or technical mechanisms, ethics in AI risks becoming more of a checkbox exercise than something meaningful.

Deckard (2023) takes a more practical approach, focusing on what it means to be an AI ethicist today. I found this really useful because it gave me a clearer idea of how ethics should be part of everyday practice, not just something we think about when something goes wrong. He talks about the importance of having a background in both technology and philosophy, staying informed, and being able to communicate ethical ideas clearly. What resonated most with me was the idea that we need to develop practical solutions to ethical challenges. It’s not enough to say that AI should be fair or transparent. We need tools, frameworks, and processes that help developers and organizations implement those values.

In terms of what I think should happen next, I believe there needs to be a more coordinated international effort to create baseline standards for AI ethics, ones that are legally binding and come with enforcement mechanisms. I don’t mean that every country has to adopt the exact same approach, but there should be some agreement on minimum protections. For example, all AI systems should be subject to impact assessments, especially if they’re used in high-risk areas like healthcare, law enforcement, or education. These assessments should consider not just technical performance but social and ethical implications as well (Morley et al., 2020).

Also, as a computing professional, I think there’s a responsibility on us to push back when things don’t feel right. The BCS Code of Conduct (BCS, 2024) makes it clear that we need to consider the wellbeing, privacy, and safety of the public. But in reality, developers often face pressure to release products quickly, even if the ethical concerns haven’t been fully addressed. I think this tension between speed and responsibility is one of the biggest challenges in the tech industry right now. Companies need to create environments where ethical concerns are taken seriously and where professionals are supported if they raise red flags.

At the same time, I agree with Deckard (2023) that ethics can’t just be left to ethicists. Everyone involved in developing or deploying AI systems should have at least a basic understanding of ethical issues. This means integrating ethics more deeply into computer science education, not just as a separate module, but across all parts of the curriculum. Courses in AI should include discussions of fairness, data bias, and user consent alongside the technical content. I also think professional certifications should include ethics as a core component, especially for those working in high-impact areas.

If we took these steps, the legal, social, and professional impacts could be significant. Legally, there would be clearer accountability when things go wrong, and we’d likely see fewer cases of unethical AI use. Socially, people might start to trust AI systems more, especially if they know those systems have been reviewed for fairness and safety. Professionally, I think the role of the computing professional would become even more complex, but also more respected. We’d no longer be just coders or engineers, we’d also be guardians of the public interest.

The rapid rise of generative AI has made ethics more important than ever. Correa et al. (2023) show that while there’s a growing awareness of ethical issues globally, our current frameworks are fragmented and too soft. Deckard (2023) helps highlight how we, as individuals, can start to take action by building skills and participating in ethical discussions. But ultimately, we need structural change: enforceable global standards, more practical tools, and better ethics education. In this way, we can ensure that AI truly benefits everyone, and not just a few powerful players.

**References**

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