

## **Report: Ethics and Social Psychology**



MS Data analysis and processing, business application  
Academic year 2016-2017  
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## **Introduction**

During the Ethics and Social Psychology sessions, we tackled different topics about the behaviour of people when they are in a group, and the problems that can arise from each individuality. We learnt how to observe such behaviour, and explored possible ways of dealing with the litigations. This report will try to apply some of the discussed themes over the integration project we conducted during the whole semester.

## **Analyse the project using notions from the course**

### **Decision making**

In order to discuss about the decision making process in the project group, a single example is going to be analysed. At half of the semester, the project group was asked to introduce in the project a SOAP interface, used to describe how to retrieve data from the inner part of our system. The SOAP technology was new to everybody, so we divided the task into sub-parts, each member being responsible of a particular aspect of the interface.

After one month and a half, the SOAP interface was only partially implemented, and the deadline was coming closer. The project group had to take a decision about the implementation of the interface, and a time slot was spared for this purpose.

During the debate, the arguments for the maintaining of the implementation were mostly the constraints from the directions given by the teacher and the feeling that we did not do all that work for nothing. On the other hand, the time constraint and the work left were in favour of abandoning the implementation. There where no real opposition, since all members where aware of both constraints.

Most of the discussion effort was directed at how to find an equilibrium. Together, we discussed which part of the SOAP interface we need to keep implementing, and to what extend. Finally, all the members agreed at reducing the interface to the minimal, and making only half of the team member work on it while the others can resume their work on the main project.

I was personally inclined to drop the SOAP interface, so the conclusion of reducing the interface to the minimum was very welcome for me. I do not think there were any risky or absurd decisions since everybody was aware of the situation of the project. For me, the decision's main purpose was to resynchronise everybody.

### **Group dynamic**

The group was composed of several people from different options : Computer Science, Embedded Systems, Innovation Management and Network and Telecommunications. As such, all the members had a different aspirations toward the project. Some were willing to implement some form of artificial intelligence, some wanted to control a robot while others were here for the social dimension. We all agreed on a subject were a robot will take care of elderly people using a smart environment, since it interested us all.

However, it was hard to satisfy everybody, mostly because of time constraints. First of all, the SOAP interface described before took us too much time, and nobody was interested in it. We also had too much documentation to produce, and could not spend enough time on the implementation as we liked. Finally, one of us is doing a double diploma curriculum and was not able to follow the project : he could not catch up with the project's evolution and was left behind.

I felt that most of the time precious resources were wasted : we know only lately that one of us was interested to work with a very particular aspect of the intelligence, and that person did not have enough time to deepen what he wanted to do. The person with the double curriculum has bright insight about the project, but we did not have enough time to discuss about it. And finally people had to abandon what they wanted to do in order to finish the project before the deadline.

In the end, although we knew the motivation of most members, we were not able to fulfil each desire, resulting in a project where everybody is not really happy to work. One of the solutions could have been to discuss more about each goal and expectations in the beginning, and try to reduce the SOAP interface's workload during the early stages of the implementation.

## **Ethical problems**

The aim of our project was to provide health assistance to the elderly people by monitoring their health state. This topic has huge ethical impacts, such as the constant surveillance of one human being, even though for a prevention purpose.

The data we handle is of explosive nature, since it represents all the private information of one person. Thus, it will be very hard to decide who can access this data. For example, private insurances can be interested in such product, so that they can say if an individual can subscribe to their insurance depending on his health state.

Also, if the family wants to monitor their parents, it will be difficult to decide what to do if the senior family member does not want to be monitored every time of the day. In case the system detects something, it is also hard to decide who to notify first : the patient himself? the family? or the doctor?

As we saw, we deal with one's well being with our product, so we need to be very careful about how to use our product and how we handle the data we gather.