

MEV Ethics

This is meant to introduce the topic and discussion of ethical MEV, and to encourage a serious debate on the subject other than the superficial approach of “fairness” approaches.

Technologies can be designed with the best intentions and still nevertheless end up causing more harm than good. A Roomba can clean your home, but the data it collects about your home in the process could be used to invade your family's privacy. A drone can let you see the world from new perspectives, but it can also let you see into your neighbour's windows. Social media platforms can help connect people, but they can also be used to target, harass, and misinform people. Because of the inherent uncertainty about the impact technologies will have on society, it is easy for designers to blame users for technologies being used harmfully and easy for users to blame designers for creating technologies that can be used harmfully. Consequently, it should not surprise us if technologies are used nihilistically since they can help us escape from reality and from responsibility.

Yet, according to the existential philosopher Simone de Beauvoir, while nihilism is one of the more common ways we can respond to the problem of uncertainty, it need not be the only way. By looking at de Beauvoir's Ethics of Ambiguity, we can see not only how to become ethical in the face of uncertainty but also how technologies that seem to be ethical, technologies that try to help us by providing more efficiency, more comfort, more luxury, and more happiness, can end up helping us become more nihilistic. The existential ethics of de Beauvoir can provide us with new ways to think about the ethics of technology and show us how even a tech company could be ethical.

Rehabilitating the concept of responsibility

Topics on this subject include:

Awareness Possibilities Give reasons for resisting oppression rather than manipulating people (strictly relying on incentives?)

Ethics is not a Recipe or Checklist

“It will be said that these considerations remain quite abstract. What must be done, practically? Which action is good? Which is bad? To ask such a question is also to fall into a naïve abstraction. We don't ask the physicist, ‘Which hypotheses are true?’ Nor the artist, ‘By what procedures does one produce a work whose beauty is guaranteed?’ Ethics does not furnish recipes any more than do science and art. One can merely propose methods.”

Sources

ChatGPT unfortunately has a German continental bias as it relates to philosophy evidently. It was attempted but ultimately found to be too provincial for this particular topic.

Nolen Gertz's work on the topic of nihilism and technology was invaluable and credit to him.

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