# EBU5303

# Multimedia Fundamentals

## Ethics

Dr. Marie-Luce Bourguet

marie-luce.bourguet@qmul.ac.uk

# What is "Ethics"?

Ethics refers to the principles, values, and guidelines that help individuals and societies determine what is right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable, in various situations.

It encompasses principles that govern a person's or group's behaviour. Ethics can be rooted in philosophy, religion, culture, law, or societal norms, and they play a crucial role in guiding individual and collective decisions, behaviours, and policies.

# What is "Ethical-Tech" or "Tech-for-Good"?

Stakeholders, including developers, policymakers, and the public, are increasingly recognising the need for ethical guidelines, frameworks, and oversight for new technologies to ensure that they benefit humanity while minimising potential harms.

# How about ethics and multimedia technology?

Multimedia technology, e.g., multimedia signal processing, which involves the manipulation and analysis of signals like audio, video, and images, is a fundamental technology in modern communications, entertainment, and surveillance applications.

While it offers numerous benefits, it also raises several ethical concerns …

# Ethical concerns

❖ Privacy violations

❖ Deepfakes and misinformation

❖ Copyright infringement

❖ Bias and discrimination

❖ Manipulation of emotions

❖ Accessibility and inclusivity

❖ Transparency and Accountability

❖ Dependency on technology

❖ Security

❖ Environmental impact

❖ Cultural sensitivities

❖ Digital divide

❖ Etc.

- ❖ **Privacy Violations:** There is a potential for abuse when it comes to collecting and using multimedia data, such as images, audio, or videos of individuals, especially if they aren't adequately informed or if they haven't given explicit consent.

- ❖ **Deepfakes and Misinformation:** Advances in multimedia signal processing have facilitated the creation of "deepfakes" – hyper-realistic but entirely fake content. This poses threats related to misinformation, false evidence, and even potential political manipulation.

- ❖ **Copyright Infringement:** Multimedia signal processing tools can be used to copy, alter, and distribute copyrighted material without permission. This could undermine the efforts of content creators and cause economic loss.

❖ **Bias and Discrimination:** Algorithms in multimedia processing, like facial recognition, can unintentionally embed or perpetuate biases, leading to discriminatory outcomes or unfair representation.

❖ **Manipulation of Emotions:** Multimedia content can be processed in a way that manipulates people's emotions or perceptions for commercial, political, or malicious purposes.

❖ **Accessibility and Inclusivity:** There might be biases in multimedia processing tools that make them less accessible or useful to certain populations. For instance, voice recognition software that doesn't account for various accents or dialects could be seen as discriminatory.

❖ **Transparency and Accountability**: Many modern algorithms, especially deep learning models, operate as "black boxes," making it difficult to understand their decision-making processes. Who is accountable when these systems fail or cause harm?

❖ **Dependency on Technology:** As multimedia signal processing becomes more advanced and integrated into daily life, there's a risk of over-dependency which could lead to a lack of critical thinking or skills in human society.

❖ **Security:** Multimedia systems, like any other digital systems, are susceptible to cyber-attacks. Unauthorized access or tampering with multimedia signals could lead to misinformation, misrepresentation, or even direct harm.

❖ **Environmental Impact:** The massive data centres and computational resources required for large-scale multimedia processing have significant energy footprints. This could contribute to environmental degradation if not managed responsibly.

❖ **Cultural Sensitivities:** Processing and modifying multimedia from various cultural backgrounds without sensitivity or context can lead to misrepresentation or cultural appropriation.

❖ **Digital Divide**: Access to multimedia technologies might not be equitable, leading to a divide between those who can benefit from these technologies and those who cannot, further exacerbating social inequalities.

❖ Etc.?

# Ethical concerns

It is crucial for researchers, developers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to be aware of these ethical considerations and collaboratively work towards regulations, guidelines, and best practices that can ensure the responsible and beneficial use of multimedia signal processing technologies.

# Hands-on Activity

Match a non-ethical scenario with its consequence!