Identifying Ethical Issues

CS 230
Lecture 2.1

Announcements

- **LA-1 Due next Tuesday**
- **Subscribe to discussion boards to be notified via email**
- **LA-1: Video**
- **Submission Demo**
- **Office Hours**

2

Last Week

- **Argumentation**
  - **Valid** Arguments: Modus Ponens, Modus Tollens, Process of Elimination, Chain Rule
  - **Unsound** Arguments (valid structure, false premises)
  - **Fallacies** (invalid arguments): Denying the Antecedent, Affirming the Consequent, Slippery Slope, Bandwagon, etc.
  - **Gambits**: Red Herring, Ad Hominen, Straw Man

Today

- **Society, Morality, and Ethics**
- **Ethical Point of View**
- **Identifying Ethical Issues**

4

What Is Ethics?

- Societies benefit individuals
- Rules are needed for society
- Morality is the code of conduct for a particular society
- Ethics is the ==systematic study of morality==
- Maximize the benefit and minimize the harm to members of society

5

What Is Ethics?

- Morals are like the OS
- Individuals are like Apps
- When Apps misbehave they crash
- Sometimes this crashes the system
- Ethics is systems programming

6

The Ethical Point of View

- **Some individuals do not follow the rules (morals) of a society**

- **Some individuals "game" the rules for personal gain**

- **Playing by the rules is showing respect for others and their needs and desires**

Ethics and Law

- **The legal system is separate from society's moral system**
- **Ideally the two should align closely**
- **Laws are reactionary**
- **A sound moral system guides people in novel situations**
- **Example: e-mail and spam**

Examining Ethical Issues

- **Ethical analysis analogous to a court**
- **Weigh arguments on both sides then make a judgment**
- **Supreme Court first decides to decide**
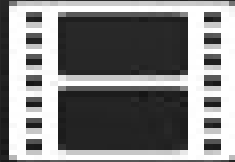- **Before getting mired in analysis, determine if it's an ethical issue**

9

Ethical Scenarios

- **Was there an action by an agent?**
- **Was the action voluntary?**
- **Who benefited?**
- **Who was harmed?**
- **Was the action moral (vs. amoral)?**
- **Was there a better course of action?**

How to identify ethical issues

- It must involve a *voluntary action* by a *moral agent*
- The consequences must be harmful or helpful to society
- Ethical issues involve *moral choices*

11

Ethical Scenarios

How to identify ethical issues

- It must involve a *voluntary action* by a *moral agent*
- The consequences must be harmful or helpful to society
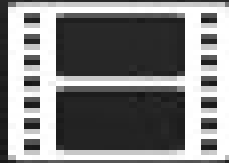- Ethical issues involve *moral choices*

13

Ethical Scenarios

How to identify ethical issues

- **It must involve a *voluntary action* by a *moral agent***
- **The consequences must be harmful or helpful to society**
- **Ethical issues involve *moral choices***

15

Ethical Scenarios

How to identify ethical issues

- It must involve a *voluntary action* by a *moral agent*
- The consequences must be harmful or helpful to society
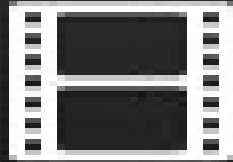- Ethical issues involve *moral choices*

17

Ethical Scenarios

How to identify ethical issues

- It must involve a *voluntary action* by a *moral agent*
- The consequences must be harmful or helpful to society
- Ethical issues involve *moral choices*

19

Ethical Scenarios

How to identify ethical issues

- **It must involve a *voluntary action* by a *moral agent***
- **The consequences must be harmful or helpful to society**
- **Ethical issues involve *moral choices***

21

Identifying Ethical Issues in IT

- **You develop an AI program that surfs the internet for art. Based on "looking at" millions of images it trains itself to create its own "original" artwork and post it to its own website. Your AI is not very good and a lot of the art looks very similar to existing pieces.**

22

Identifying Ethical Issues in IT

- **You convince your grandparents (or other family or friend) that they should install home security cameras to monitor indoor and outdoor locations of their home. The cameras you recommend store content in the cloud.**

23

Identifying Ethical Issues in IT

- **You accidentally discover a bug in BSU's registration system which allows you to see any student's schedule. Just for fun you look up a few of your friends. Then you get bored and start playing a video game and forget about it.**

24

Summary

- Ethics: rational, systematic analysis
- Conclusions must be supported
- Best explanations based on facts, shared values, logic
- Ethics focuses on people's voluntary, moral choices
- Workable ethical theory: produces explanations that might be persuasive to a skeptical, yet open-minded audience

25

Next Time

- Ethical Theories
  - Relativism
  - Divine Comand
  - Egoism
  - Kantianism
  - Utilitarianism
- Reading 2.2 – 2.8