

CS 4001: Computing, Society & Professionalism



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Class 1: Welcome and Overview

January 9, 2018

By the end of this class, I will have learned...



Discuss in small groups of 3-4

Who am I?

- Instructor
 - Sauvik Das (www.sauvik.me)
 - sauvik@gatech.edu
 - Office: TSRB 246
 - Office hours: 1pm-2pm Wednesdays

I took this class, just downstairs.

How will I teach you?

- Growth Mindset (vs. Fixed Mindset)
 - Abilities can be developed through practice and hard work.
 - Being wrong is not a character flaw, it's an opportunity!
- Deliberate Practice
 - Purposeful and systematic practice of skills.

Who is your TA?

- Teaching Assistant
 - Julia Deeb-Swihart
 - jdeeb3@gatech.edu
 - Office Hours: By appointment

Background + One topic or issue about computing and society that interests or concerns you, and why

Take 2 minutes to think about it.

Who are you?



Differences of Opinion

- We each represent different views, and bring with us different perspectives
- It's always OK to challenge someone's views
 - Must be able to explain why you believe what you believe
 - Acceptable to say: "I don't know. I need to think about it more."
- Always be respectful
- Someone with different views is interesting. Try to understand them!

You are driving out in the desert. You can see in all directions for miles. No one else is around. You see a stop sign. Do you stop? Why or why not?

Group Discussion: The Stop Sign



Logistics

- Course webpage & syllabus:
<http://cs4001.sauvik.me>
- Class Piazza signup link:
<http://piazza.com/gatech/spring2018/cs4001a>
 - Ask questions on piazza.
- TSquare for announcements and homework submissions

“A branch of philosophy that involves systematizing, defending and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct.”

- Anonymous Wikipedia contributors

What is ethics?



Difference between legal and ethical

- Laws formalize what people **can and cannot** do in society, while ethics are moral standards that govern what people **should or should not do**
- In some instances, legal regulations prohibit people from carrying out certain tasks, such as administering life-saving support, that would generally be considered morally permissible actions.

What are some historic example of actions that were illegal at one time, but that are now largely considered ethical?

How about actions that were considered legal at one time, but are now considered unethical?

Legal vs Ethical



Difference between legal and ethical

- Some laws generate few negative responses, as their intent to protect and promote the safety and well-being of the public is virtually indisputable.
- Other laws, however, generate disagreement among citizens.
- While legal and moral issues sometimes coexist in harmony, they can also raise questions and generate conflicting opinions.

What special responsibilities do we have as computing professionals?

Group Discussion: Professional Ethics



<http://cs4001.sauvik.me/hw-analyzing-article>

Homework 1: Due 1/23/18



Next Class

- Materials and readings on the class website
- Longer than normal reading, but interesting
- Try to identify three things:
 - People: who was involved? what did they do? what might they've done differently?
 - Policies: government; corporate

Ethical Robot

You work for a company developing assistive robots.

You have just been assigned to a team which is charged with coming up with an approach for building a robot capable of making ethical or moral decisions.

Where would you start? How would you proceed? Is such a task one that you believe is even possible?

Ethical Robot

- Do we need robots capable of making ethical or moral decisions? When? For what?
- Are robots capable of making ethical or moral decisions?
- Whose morality or what morality should be implemented?

Asimov's Rules

First Law: A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.

Second Law: A robot must obey orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.

Third Law: A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.

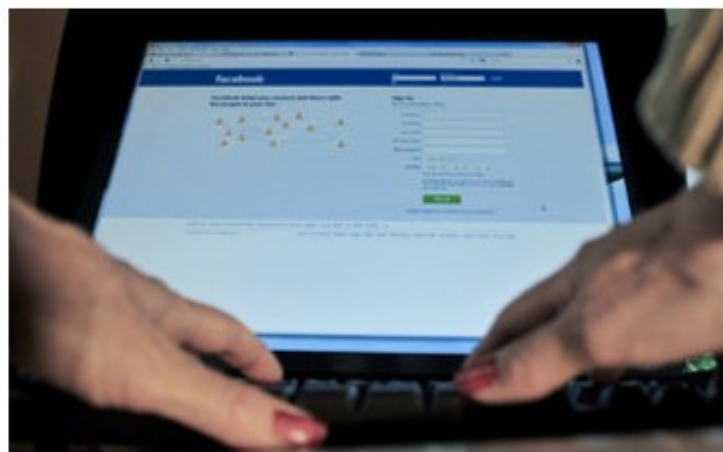
Two Case Studies



- The Facebook Emotional Contagion Study
- Free speech and online harassment

Facebook Tinkers With Users' Emotions in News Feed Experiment, Stirring Outcry

By VINDU GOEL JUNE 29, 2014



Facebook revealed that it had altered the news feeds of over half a million users in its study.

Karen Bleier/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

To [Facebook](#), we are all lab rats.

Facebook routinely adjusts its users' news feeds — testing out the number of ads they see or the size of photos that appear — often without their knowledge. It is all for the purpose, the company says, of creating a more alluring and useful product.

But last week, Facebook revealed that it had manipulated the news feeds of over half a million randomly selected users to change the number of positive and negative posts they saw. It was part of a psychological study to examine how emotions can be spread on social media.