Ethics in Computing

A YOUNG
PROFESSION
COPING WITH
ETHICAL DEBT



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@POSTWAIT

FOUNDER CIRCONUS

DISCLAIMER

I AM NOT AN ETHICIST.
THIS TALK HAS MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS.

ήθος -> ηθική

- The philosophy of ethics is about systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct.
- Normative Ethics can be viewed from three lenses
 - ▶ Virtue Ethics
 - Deontology (Duties & Rules)
 - Consquentialism (Consequences)

Virtues

- ▶ Perfect virtues vs. continence
- Understanding the importance of practical wisdom

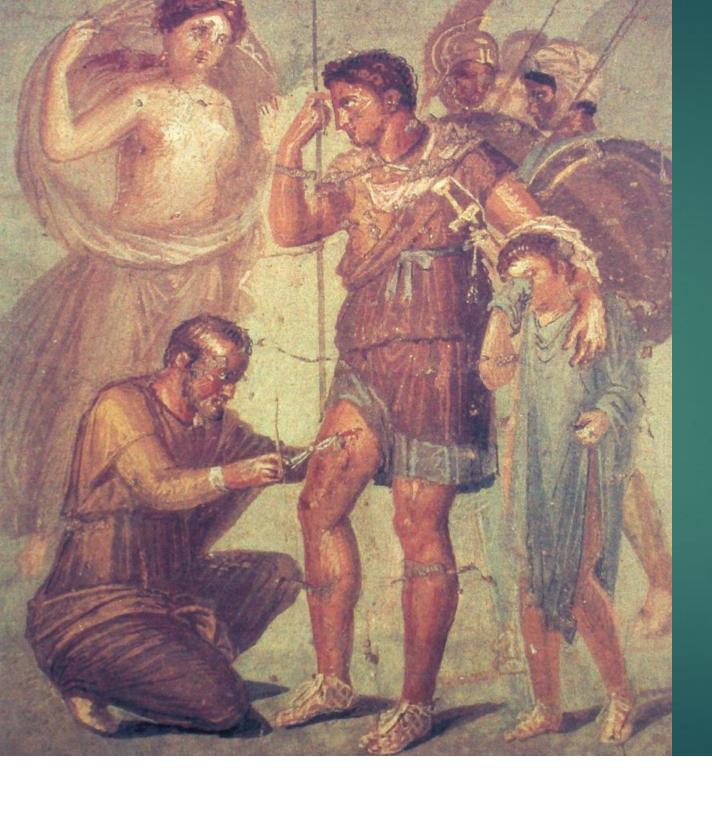
Change Over Time

- ▶ Ethics exist only within the context of human society.
- ► Human society changes
 - ▶ Globalization
 - Scientific understanding
 - Supernatural belief structures

Applying Ethics

Clergy





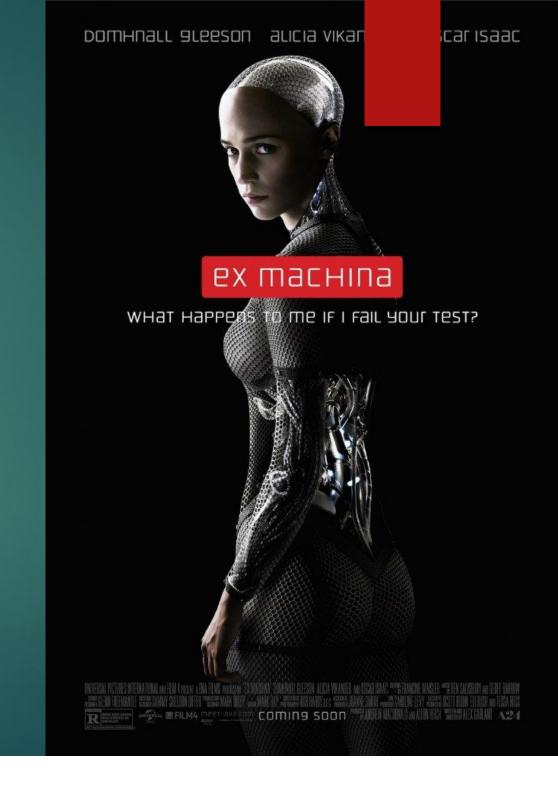
Applying Ethics

- Clergy
- Medical

Applying Ethics

- ▶ Clergy
- Medical
- Business
- Professional

Computing



VW Emissions

Uber Greyball

Uber Autonomous Vehicle Operation

Strava Global Heatmap

Technical Concepts Hand Soap Dispenser

Software Licensing

Antecdotes ~ What now?

- ▶ What can we do?
 - ▶ From day to day ask, "what can I do?"
- ▶ Is this really my responsibility?
 - **▶ Yes** it &\$%@*ing is.
- Build more diverse teams.

Dissenting

- ▶ Be aware that you are not alone
- Understand that ethics are a spectrum
- Keep records
- Build a dispassionate defense
- Work the system
- Resigning

Start The Conversation

- ▶ Idon't come with answers... I come with questions.
- Familiarize yourself with a code of ethics for computing.
 - ▶ ACM's Ethics policy (current 1992, new one expected 2018)
 - ACM's "Ask and Ethicist"
- ▶ We need to ask "what are the ethical implications?" all the time.

Notes

Virtue Fthics:

https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-virtue/

ACM Code of Ethics http://ethics.acm.org/code-of-ethics/

ACM "Ask an Ethicist"

http://ethics.acm.org/integrity-project/ask-an-ethicist-faq/

IEEE Dissention Guidelines http://ethics.iit.edu/ecodes/node/5707

Uber Greyball

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/04/technology/uber-federal-inquiry-software-greyball.html

Uber's Brazen Illegal Behavior
https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/dec/16/uber-self-driving-cars-california-illegal-unethical-tactics

Soap

https://gizmodo.com/whycant-this-soap-dispenseridentify-dark-skin-1797931773 Volkswagen Emissions Scandal https://www.npr.org/tags/443453659/volkswagen-emissions-scandal

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