

Ethics and Information Technology

Call for Papers for a Special Issue with Ethics and Information Technology on “Robot Ethics and Human Ethics”

The literature of the newly-emerging area of robot ethics frequently mentions that one benefit of trying to build moral robots is what we stand to learn about ethics in the case of human beings. Yet, there is little mention of any specifics. The purpose of this special issue, "Robot Ethics and Human Ethics," is to address this matter explicitly and ask what we can learn about human ethics by our attempt to build moral machines. To this end, papers are requested that explore various facets of this question, including, among others, what insight robot ethics might cast on:

1. how to deal with conflicting moral claims on our behavior,
2. whether ethical practice is essentially algorithmic, possibly by following the application of moral theories,
3. the role that internal, psychological factors like desire and emotion play in the way we make decisions,
4. the possibility of special moral neurological circuitry used in determining human behavior,
5. the extent to which ethics in humans might emerge from evolutionary pressures keyed to certain environmental props or social circumstances,
6. or the role that enculturation might play in determining behavior by establishing norms and other expectations for conduct.

We are also interested in papers that address whether the attempt to build moral machines is demonstrating (or will demonstrate) that human ethics requires something well beyond the capacity of machines, or whether, perhaps, this very attempt is exposing weaknesses in our existing conceptions of (human) ethics that might be repairable following insights that arise in the process of experimenting with machines. To be clear, this issue is not dedicated to papers primarily about how to build moral machines, save insofar that mention of such is necessary for illuminating human morality.

The editors at Ethics and Information Technology are seeking articles for a special issue in this area. Submissions will be double-blind refereed for relevance to the theme as well as academic rigor and originality. High quality articles not deemed to be sufficiently relevant to the special issue may be considered for publication in a subsequent non-themed issue.

Closing date for submissions: September 1st, 2009

To submit your paper, please use the online submission system, to be found at www.editorialmanager.com/etin

There will be a workshop on this topic hosted at Delft University of Technology when the special issue comes out.

Please contact the special guest editor for any information regarding this special issue,

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Ethics and Information Technology (ETIN) is the major journal in the field of moral and political reflection on Information Technology. Its aim is to advance the dialogue between moral philosophy and the field of information technology in a broad sense, and to foster and promote reflection and analysis concerning the ethical, social and political questions associated with the adoption, use, and development of IT.