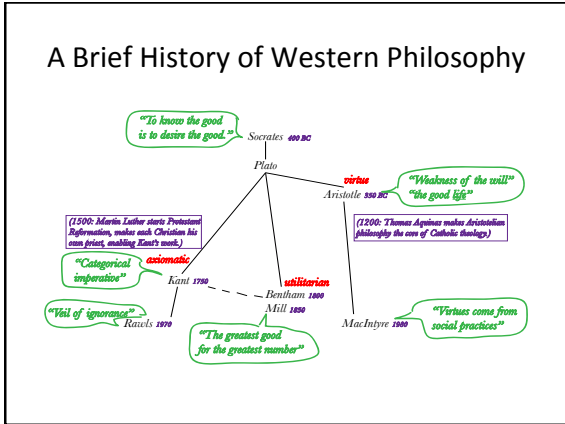


Ethics

 Social Implications of Computers




- ## Kantian ethics
- Categorical Imperative:
 - Treat people as ends, not means.
 - Actions must be universalizable.
 - Everything else can be derived from these axioms.
 - Example: Telling lies isn't universalizable because if everyone did it, nobody would believe the lies.
 - Rawls: the Veil of Ignorance
 - Imagine you don't know whether you'll be rich or poor; black, white, or brown; male or female; etc.

- ## Utilitarian ethics
- The greatest good for the greatest number.
 - Actions are judged by (probable) results, not purposes.
 - A good act has good results, on balance, for everyone.
 - Utilitarian philosophers like to pose dilemmas:
 - "Your spouse and your child are thrown overboard and you only have time to save one of them. Which one?"
 - People today who don't think very hard tend to become utilitarians by accident. Don't do that.
 - If you're a utilitarian, it should be because you've chosen to.

- ## Communitarian/Virtue ethics
- The goal of ethical philosophy isn't to judge individual actions, but to live "the good life" overall.
 - Acting well comes from good habits—the virtues—not from deliberation on the spot.
 - The virtues are learned through engaging in social practices, which are embedded in a particular community. You can't live the good life in a vacuum.
 - Virtues are generally middle grounds between two kinds of error: cowardice—courage—foolhardiness.

Computers and War

 Social Implications of Computers

War is All About Technology

- Castles
- Catapults
- Boats
- Horses
- Arrows
- Swords
- Guns
- ...



Computers in War (a few examples)

- 1940: Alan Turing et al. decrypt Enigma messages.
- 1970s-80s: Nuclear attack warning systems
 - several false alarms; no World War III because human beings had to authorize retaliatory attacks.
- 1983: Strategic Defense Initiative (“Star Wars”)
 - would allow autonomous computer-controlled satellites to fire anti-missile weapons without human intervention.
 - led to formation of Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility
- 1994: GPS


Autonomous Weapons

- DARPA is a major sponsor of robotics research.
- “Smart bombs”
- Drone aircraft
- The main importance of autonomous weaponry is **political**, rather than military:
 - Traditionally, governments are restrained from waging war because citizens don’t want their children to die abroad.
 - Autonomous weapons allow war without soldiers.

The United States at War

- Defensive wars:
 - 1812
 - World War II (arguably)
- Internal war:
 - Civil War
- Imperialist/Interventionist/Policing wars (you decide):
 - Northwest Indian War, Seminole Wars, Mexican-American War, Second Opium War, Paraguay Expedition, Cheyenne War, Spanish-American War, Philippine-American War, Boxer Rebellion, Occupation of Nicaragua, Occupation of Haiti, World War I, Korean War, Bay of Pigs Invasion, Vietnam War, Invasion of Grenada, Bombing of Libya, Invasion of Panama, Gulf War, Bombing of Afghanistan, Kosovo War, Iraq War, ...

Computers and Community

 Social Implications of Computers

Are Computers Isolating?

- Yes:
 - People spend time online instead of face to face.
 - (Even when they are face to face with other people!)
 - Game “addiction”
 - Online commerce hurts downtowns.
- No:
 - People with obscure interests can find colleagues.
 - People with disabilities affecting f2f contact can meet others.
 - Reconnect with old friends on Facebook.

Are Computers Democratizing?

- Yes:
 - Facilitate activist organizing (Arab Spring, Obama)
 - Anyone can blog, etc.
 - Low-cost cellular Internet empowers global poor.
- No:
 - The rich are heard more than the poor, even online.
 - Selective search results make walled microcommunities.
 - NSA, Google, ISPs know too much about us.
 - Positive feedback in popularity of ideas.

“The Web Runs On Love, Not Greed”

Kevin Kelly, Wall Street Journal, Jan 3, 2002:

Right on cue, the demise of the dot-com revolution has prompted skepticism of the Internet and all that it promised...

The hundreds of ways in which the Internet would “change everything” appear to have melted away, or to have not happened at all. As the new year begins, a collective new year’s resolution is surfacing: “Next year, next time, we won’t believe the hype.”

This revised view of the Internet is as misguided as the previous view that the Internet could only go up. The Internet is less a creation dictated by economics than it is a miracle and a gift...

Why don’t we see this miracle? Because large amounts of money can obscure larger evidence. So much money flew around dot-coms that it hid the main event on the Web, which is the exchange of gifts. While the 50 most popular Web sites are crassly commercial, most of the three billion Web pages are not. Only 30% of the pages on the Web are built by companies and corporations like Pets.com. The rest is built on love, such as Care4pets.com or Responsiblepetcare.org.

Digital Divide

- UCB EECS grad admissions 2013:
 - 96 students, 17 women, 3 minorities
 - Not for lack of trying!
- Old digital divide
 - Poor have no computer access.
- New digital divide
 - Poor have consumer access.