

UiO : Department of Informatics
University of Oslo

Ethics and participatory design

IN 5510

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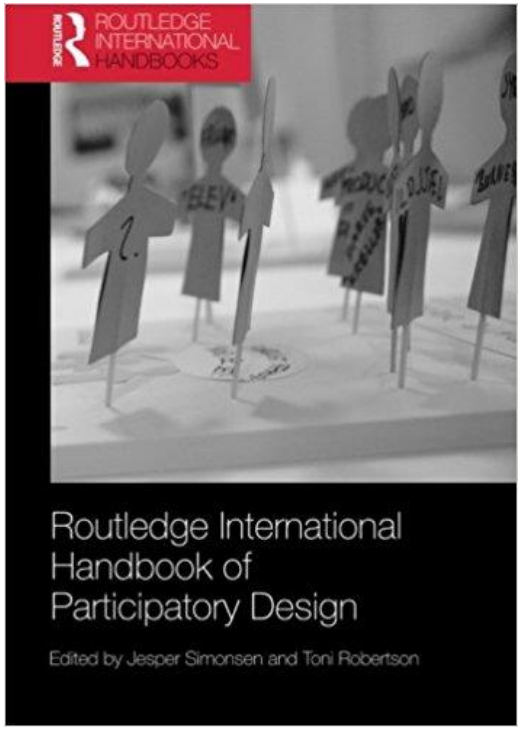
Jasmin Niess

(based on slides by Guri Verne)

"WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE PRESENT IN THAT WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THOSE PRESENT POSSIBILITIES THAT BECOME ACTUAL THROUGH OUR ACTIONS"

GATENS M.

Topics



Chapter 4 in the book

- Ethics and PD
- Ethical theories
- Ethics and technology
- Ethical issues of working with users
- Ethics of technology use



Toni Robertson



Ina Wagner

An ethical motivation is at PD's core

"Participatory design .. has at its core an ethical motivation to support and enhance how people can engage with others in shaping their world, including their workplaces, over time. This ethical motivation is not some optional extra … It is its essence and structures its definition and ongoing development."

(Robertson and Wagner, 2012, p 65)

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Ethics and PD

Working together to shape a better future

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  - Respect other people's expertise
  - Respect their rights to represent own activities

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- Develop and use tools that enable designers, users and stakeholders to learn from each other through understanding priorities and perspectives

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  - An emancipatory agenda

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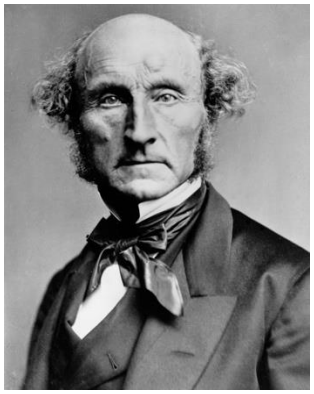
Central, but debated

Who or what do you think of when you think of ethics?

Classical ethical theories

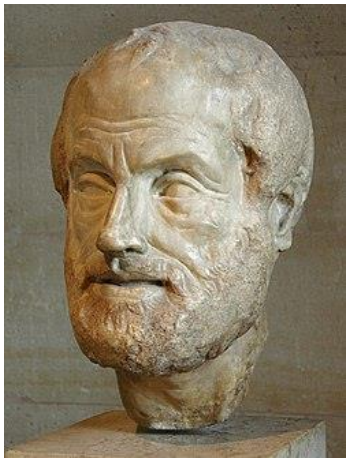
Moral philosophies

- How to live a good life?
- What is a good life?



J. S. Mill



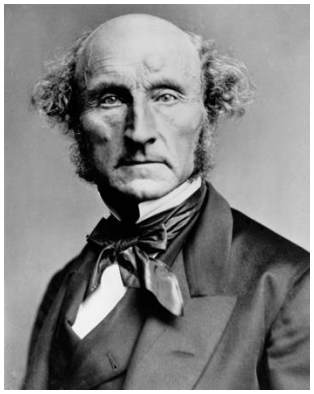


Aristotle

Classical ethical theories

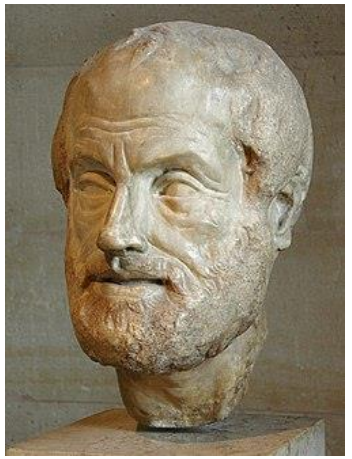
Moral philosophies
- How to live a good life?
- What is a good life?

Right or wrong acts?
- its consequences (J. S. Mill)
- duty (I. Kant)
- Phronesis as a virtue of ethical life (Aristotle)



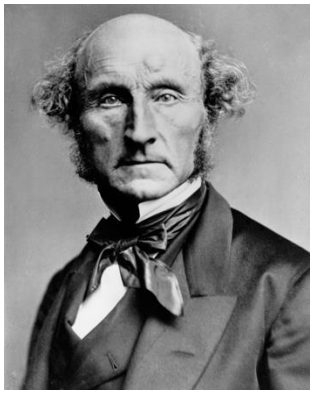
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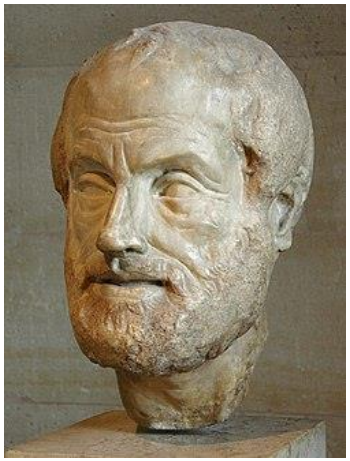
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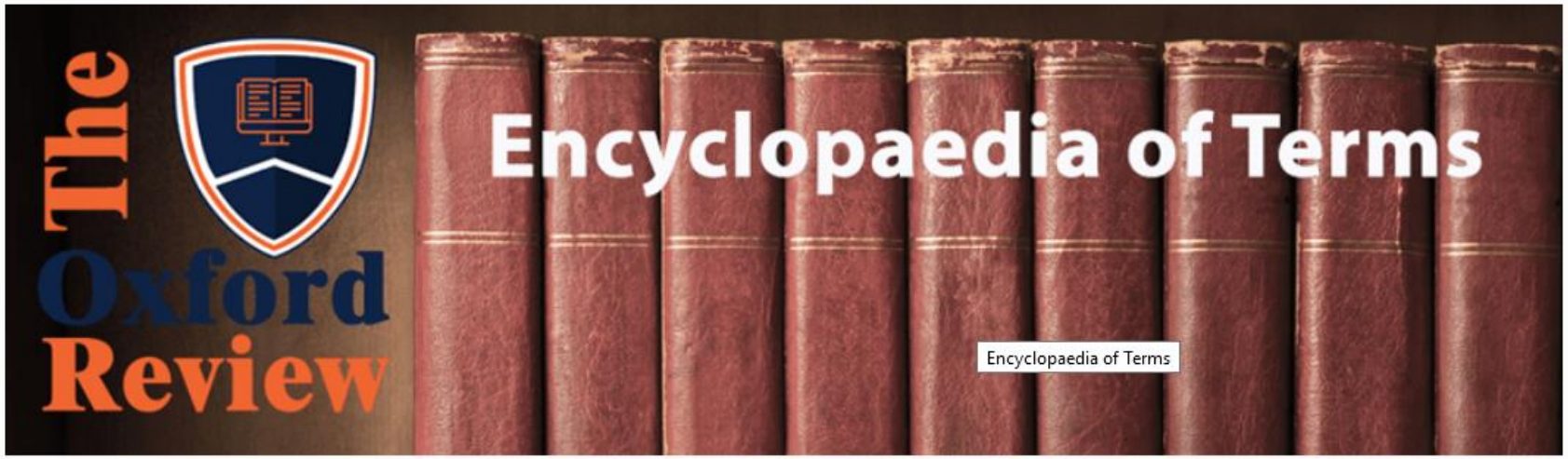
Dialogical relations with others

- Practical, situated ethics



Aristotle

Phronesis: definition and meaning



how to act in particular situations

What is Phronesis?

Phronesis is a Greek team which means 'practical wisdom' that has been derived from learning and evidence of practical things. Phronesis leads to breakthrough thinking and creativity and enables the individual to discern and make good judgements about what is the right thing to do in a situation.

Back the The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Terms

Looking for research articles? Click here

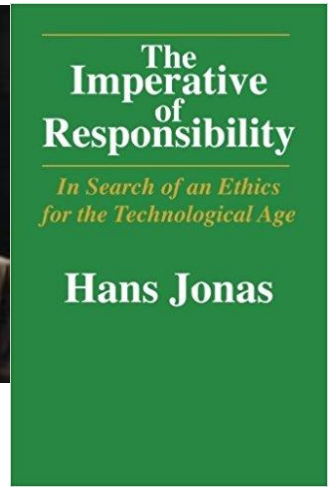
Discuss with your neighbour

- Have you encountered any ethical issues in your project? How would you describe them?

"Taking an ethical stance in PD is about an ethical practice that allows the identification of these issues as they arise in design and use."

(Robertson and Wagner, 2012, p 68)





Ethics and technology design

Starting point: Massively increased capacities of human action

Technology design and use is shaping the future

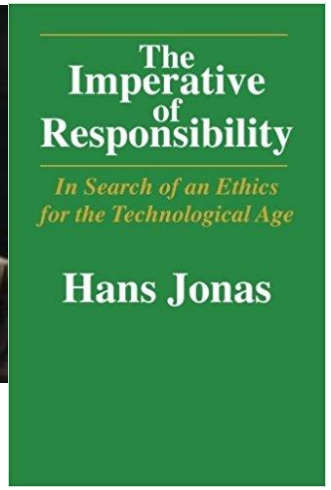
Traditional ethics only requires a good understanding of the present situation

Hans Jonas:

«The Imperative of Responsibility:
In search of an Ethics for the Technological Age»

A moral basis for choosing between design alternatives



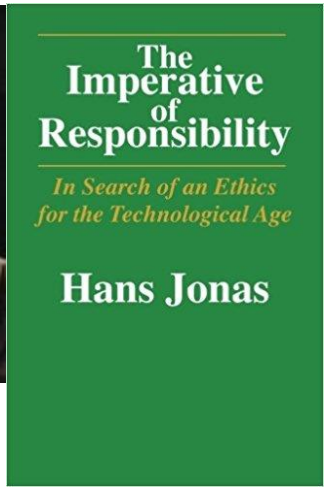


"the indefinite future, rather than the contemporary context of the action, constitutes the relevant horizon of responsibility. This requires imperatives of a new sort. If the realm of making has invaded the space of essential action, then morality must invade the realm of making from which it had formerly stayed aloof" (Jonas 1984:9)

- Finding ways to better predict the effect of new technologies as a way to strengthen and improve our decision making about their design and use
- Accountability of technology design and development to the world it creates.
- Are we responsible for unintended consequences of technology?

A moral basis for choosing between design alternatives





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Ethical aspects of four questions

- Who do we engage with in a PD project?
- How do we engage with participants?
- How do we represent participants and their work?
- What can we offer participants?

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Ethical issues of working with users

Who do we engage with in a PD project?

> Is giving voice to marginalized people or people who inhabit residual categories a moral obligation of Participatory Designers? (Ina Wagner)

Who can provide "voluntary and unconstrained participation"?

Defining those who have a right to participate

Dual loyalties: Being both critical and constructive



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How do we engage with participants?

Mutual trust is basic and essential.

Informed consent is a formal way.

Address risks and responsibilities of research vs design

Sensitive issues and vulnerable participants

- Protection vs exclusion

How to avoid a purely instrumental process of "eliciting user requirements"?

Negotiating and managing of «practical politics»



Informasjon og samtykkeerklæring

Deltakelse i workshop og utprøvning i forskningsprosjektet BRIS

Beskrivelse av forskningsprosjektet

Mitt navn er Guri Verne og jeg er forsker i Post.doc-stilling ved Institutt for Informatikk ved Universitetet i Oslo. Jeg holder på med et forskningsprosjekt om hvordan eldre kan kommunisere med andre via video fra sin egen stue. I dag arrangerer vi en utprøvning hvor vi vil høre deres erfaringer med hvordan utstyret kan styres ved hjelp av bevegelser. Deres tanker og erfaringer vil være viktig for den videre utviklingen.

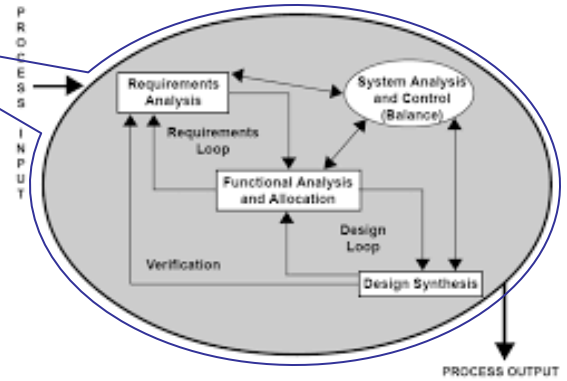
Prosjektets kortnavn BRIS uttrykker at det handler om å utvikle «BRukergrensesnitt for velferdsteknologi i Stua». Prosjektet er finansiert av Regionale forskningsfond, hovedstadsområdet.

Vi ber om samtykke til at din utprøving kan taes opp på video. Videoopptakene vil kunne benyttes til å forbedre bevegelsesstyringen.

Frivillig å delta

Deltagelse er frivillig, og du kan trekke deg når som helst. Du kan når som helst avslutte deltakelsen eller trekke tilbake informasjon som er gitt underveis. Du kan kreve at personopplysninger om deg slettes.

Anonymitet



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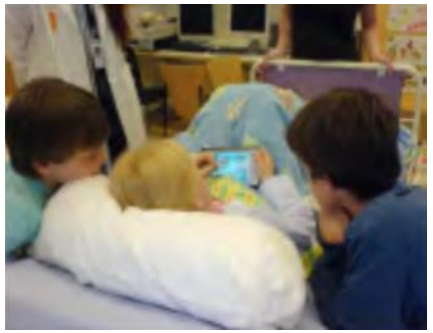
How do we represent participants and their work?



- Production of representations is critical in PD
- Representations are not innocent
- Do not tell the users what their work is!
    - Representations can «silence» or miss
- Misrepresentations of work can lead to challenges and misunderstandings
- Nurses co-representing their own work: humour
- Personal, contingent and sensitive to appropriateness
    - Residual categories
- Listening can add to understanding!

Working with vulnerable users

What is vulnerability?



Working with vulnerable users

What is vulnerability?

Unclear - being prone to harm or adverse impacts (Wrigley and Dawson, 2016, in Sommervold 2017)

Children under 18 considered vulnerable (Heiberg & Undlien 2013 in Sommervold 2017)

Sommervold (2017) chose methods in respect for the participating sick children/adolescents:

- Plasticised materials for disinfection
- Magnetic boards to be used with one arm
- Starting from “cool” design -> appropriating to their needs
- Turn to ethics of care: “central focus is attending to and meeting needs of people for whom we are responsible”



Ethical aspects of four questions

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What can we offer participants?

What if no technology is designed for the participants?

- Incomplete design delivered
- No learning from use
- We often receive more than we can give
- Researchers can harvest findings also from a failed project





PD - as responsible and reflective practice - can offer

- Joyful participation
- Making their own representations
- Mutual learning

«Understand the politics of change and where you stand within them» (Blomberg et al 1996)

Following up for a project to grow



Ethical issues of design in and for use

- Issues that arise in use, strategies for resolving them
- Does the design increase the power-to?
  - Or space for activity and change?
- Challenges - design is completed in use
- Monitoring and surveillance as an ethical challenge



Microethics - what happens in every interaction

Ethical choices with unknown consequences in the course of events

- Negotiating multiple agendas (parents', teachers')
- On being careful e.g. in working with children
- Acknowledging personal context – gender expressions and body influence participation
- Ethical principles came in conflict with microethics

(Spiel et al., 2018)

Ethical principles versus microethics strategies

- to look into the seemingly mundane everyday activities that contribute to ethical conduct

Ethical Principles	Strategies in Micro-Ethics
full context of children	navigation of carers priorisation of topics
do no harm	complex risk assessment making judgements
child-led PD	negotiation of needs being responsible
professional conduct	personal relationships commitment to participants embodied research

Table 1: Tensions between ethical principles stemming from virtue ethics and strategies used in micro-ethics

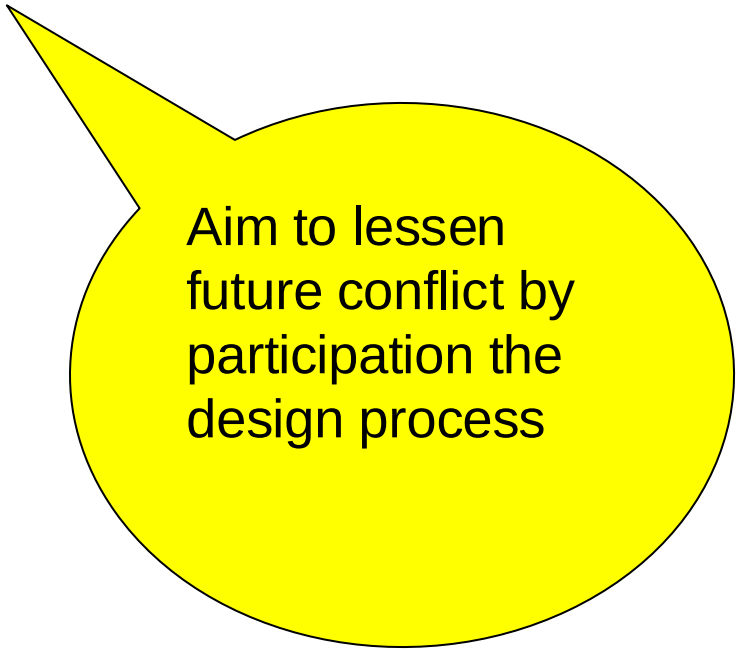
(Spiel et al., 2018)

Questions to guide ongoing ethical reflection

- Do users actually have decision power? If so, what kind?
- Does a design method, tool or process recognise and encourage participants' abilities to learn?
- Does a design method, tool or process guide designers and researchers to analyse and develop their interests and attitude towards participants?
- Does a design method, tool or process include participants' evaluations not just of what is being designed but of the design process itself, including the opportunities for and process of participation?
- Does a design method, tool or process deal with a justified loss or change of design focus, for example when participants identify problems that require-non-information technology solutoions while the process was initiated to design information technology?

Final words

Participation as a means of resolving conflicts that emerge in technology use – more than merely observing, analysing, monitoring consequences.



References not in the reading list

Heiberg and Undlien, 2013, Genetisk forskning på barn, in: Fossheim, H., Hølen, J., Ingierd, H. (eds), Barn i Forskning: Etiske dimensjoner, Forskningsetiske komiteer.

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Weizenbaum, J. (1976). *Computer Power and Human Reason: From Judgment to Calculation*, W.H. Freeman and Company.

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