

SOFTWARE ETHICS IN A SOFTWARE WORLD

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EclipseCon Europe 2022

INTRODUCTION

- Why talk about Ethics?
- A tale of two wolves
- Objectives of this talk:
 - Provide some references, start a discussion.

ABOUT ETHICS

Setting up sane foundations for the discussion.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT ETHICS

- **Ethics:** different definitions..
 - Consequentialism vs. Deontology.
 - Ethics vs. Morality.
 - It all depends on the context.
- **Politics** is the study of the relative distribution of power / authority / privileges in human societies.
 - Technology is not neutral.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF ETHICS IN SOFTWARE

- Software *has* eaten the world.
- It is everywhere, and it impacts everything.
 - The planet, our societies, the people.
- We, as software practitioners, have a duty towards them.
- Software is only a tool.

APPLYING ETHICS

- As Individuals: what matters to us.
- As Communities: governance, behaviour.
- It's not only about Doing Good (tm):
 - It's the most efficient and rewarding way to do things.

A LANDSCAPE OF ETHICS TODAY

Food for thoughts.

THE ROOTS

- Hacker's ethics (S. Levy, P. Himanem, E.S. Raymond..).
- The four essential freedoms of free software (Richard Stallman)
- Software Quality Attributes.
- Fab-Labs, conferences and workshops on ethical hacking, techno-shamanism, techno-utopians..

CODE OF CONDUCTS & CODE OF ETHICS

- **Code of ethics** is for business and decision-making.
- **Code of conduct** is for actions and behaviour.
- Most companies already have one..
 - Maybe that's not enough.
 - It's a good start.

ETHICAL SOURCE

- A novel trend trying to solve misuses of open source software.
- Empowers developers and enforce fair, ethical, and community-minded terms for users.
- Provides Ethical Licences.
- But:
 - Is not OSI-approved.
 - Hits the morality dilemma.

A DEVELOPING TREND

- There is a growing interest for the topic.
 - More resources, articles, conferences than ever.
 - Now it's ok to discuss it.
- Software Quality attributes evolve:
e.g. sustainability, frugality.
- Alternative communities are emerging everywhere.

USE CASES

How to apply ethics to real use cases?

AI

- It's highly impactful, and we are not ready.
 - Used in every aspect of our lives.
 - Used for the better. Or for the worst.
- Ethical issues of AI:
 - Bias
 - Explainability
 - Control (e.g. killer robots)
- Regulation is lagging behind.

SOCIETY

- Mass surveillance tools.
- Unethical Marketing practice & Social media.
 - Addictive design, targeting kids, manipulating people.
- Corporate (or state) ownership of personal data.
- Whistleblowers are now better protected.

PRODUCING SOFTWARE

- Licensing.
- Adopting a code of conduct/ethics – and enforcing it.
- Setting up a transparent and fair governance model.
- Reducing consumption as much as we can.
 - At code level or/and for hardware.

ETHICS AND US

Practical steps for better Ethics.

BE PREPARED

- Identifying our own grey zone.
- Most of the time the devil lies in this grey zone.
- As a consequence, we need to reduce our grey zone.

STAND FOR YOUR VALUES

“The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything.”

— Albert Einstein

- **Put your values into practice. Courageously. Proudly.**
- Be tolerant, but don't look away when **wrong things** happen.
- Protect your users, their data, the resources.

CONNECT. DISCUSS.

- **Share** your thoughts. Start discussions.
- **Nurish** yourself, nurish others.
- **Engage** with the communities that matter to you.
- **Together we are stronger.** And better, too.

CONCLUSION

- Few takeaways:
 - Discuss. Share.
Build together a common understanding of Ethics.
 - We are responsible for our words and actions
 - With great power comes great responsibility.
 - You have the power to make a change.
 - You are not alone.