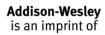


Lecture 2-1: Introduction to Ethics



Define ethics—how is it different from morality?

Ethics

Study of morality

Morality

What people ought to or ought not to do

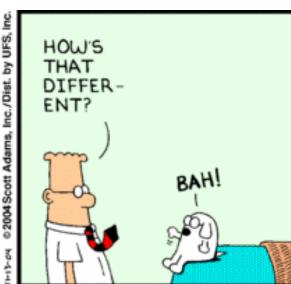
Why do we have a course about ethics and technology?

- Generally need a way to decide the best thing to do
- New problems accompany new technologies
- "Common wisdom" may not exist for novel situations brought about by new technologies

How do we evaluate whether an action is ethical?







- Ethics: a rational, systematic analysis
- Workable ethical theory: produces explanations that aim to be persuasive to a skeptical, yet open-minded audience
- Good, persuasive arguments.

Subjective Relativism

"Who are you to criticize my values?"

- There's no universal standard of right or wrong.
- Every individual must decide for himself or herself.

Cultural Relativism

"Who are you to criticize my culture's values?"

- Moral actions are based on a culture's actual moral guidelines.
- Different cultures have different moral standards.
- It is presumptuous to judge another culture's values.

Divine Command Theory

"Stealing is wrong, because the Bible says so."

- Good actions are actions that God has willed.
- We should therefore use holy books as guides for moral decision making.

Ethical Egoism

"Surly looks out for one guy: Surly!"

- People's self-interest is their only ethical obligation
- Morally right actions are those which advance one's own long-term interests
- Helping others is moral only insofar as it advances one's own interests