

HCI 220: Ethics and Activism in Technology and Design
Winter 2023
Assignment 1 - Identifying Ethical Dilemmas

Due: Thursday 2/2/23 at 11:59pm on Canvas

In this assignment you will practice identifying and making an argument about an ethical dilemma.

What you will do:

- Choose a user-facing technology such as an application or website
- Perform an ethical analysis of that technology
- Identify an ethical dilemma related to the design and/or use of that technology
- Take a stance on that dilemma.
- Identify an individual or group that this dilemma is relevant to
 - E.g., a potential user, a regulator, a president or CEO, a manager, a developer or designer, etc.
- Write a brief (less than 500 words) letter to that individual or group arguing your position.

What you will submit:

- A write-up of your ethical analysis (maximum 2 pages single spaced) that must
 - Identify the stakeholders in the technology's use, design, and development
 - Analyze the motivations and goals of these stakeholders
 - Analyze how the dilemma affects these stakeholders
 - Identify a party to write to, and justify that decision
- Your letter to the relevant individual or group
- Submit both parts as a single document to Canvas

You may choose any technology you are interested in. If you do not have any ideas, you might try one of the following:

- Video enabled proctor software (e.g., [Proctor360](#))
- Automated parking ticket appeal system (e.g., [donotpay.com](#))
- [Craigslist](#)

As an example: You might analyze Adblock Plus, focus on whether it should allow “acceptable ads” by default, and write a letter to the co-founder of the company that maintains it, Wladimir Palant.

How you will be graded:

Ethical Analysis

- Whether you identify all relevant stakeholders, beyond those that are immediately obvious.
- Whether your analysis shows thoughtful reflection of the motivations and goals of all identified stakeholders. (e.g. do you demonstrate you've carefully considered different viewpoints in your reflection?)

- Whether your analysis shows thoughtful reflection of how the dilemma impacts all identified stakeholders. (e.g. do you draw on your reflection of stakeholders' goals and motivations to support this portion of the analysis?)
- Whether the analysis justifies the choice of letter recipient
- The quality and rigor of the content of your analysis
- The quality of your writing

Letter

- Whether the letter takes a clear stance on the dilemma.
- Whether the letter draws on the ethical analysis to argue the position.
- Whether the letter takes into account the interests, motivation, and background of the recipient.
- Whether the letter is persuasive; e.g., draws on evidence, appeals to morals, etc.
- Whether the letter is written professionally. It has been proofread and is easy to follow. It is free from major grammar and spelling errors.
- The quality and rigor of the content of your letter

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