

Constructing the Future of Social Work Tech Habits of Mind with the Ethical OS

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Abstract

Technological innovation has long been seen as a hallmark of progress in the modern world. While these advances may facilitate advantages to individual and social well-being, they have the potential for creating new areas of risk and expanding on those that already exist. In addition, a global pandemic has reshaped how we interact with one another, as more people connect online. Social work's ongoing relationship with technology necessitates that we evaluate and re-envision how tech ethics create, shape, and transform social work practice.

This paper has three goals. First, we argue that technologies have long been a hidden driver of social work practice and provide an initial mapping of their current influence. Second, we introduce the Ethical OS as a tool for conceptualizing ethical issues that may arise in social work practice, education, and policy. We ask if this tool could promote seeing around corners regarding how developing technologies might be advantageous or disadvantageous for reference or consumer groups. For example, how do they reify historical injustices such as structural racism and how do they offer remediation? Third, we discuss the importance of building coherent, social work tech habits of mind, in practice now and for the future.

Key Words: Ethical OS, social work tech, social work futures, structural racism, habits of mind

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