Using drama to introduce ethics to technology students and practitioners

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INTRODUCTION

The poster describes the use of Joe Penhall's play Landscape with Weapon in teaching ethics to students in information and communication technology. Landscape with Weapon is a play in three acts that revolves around the issue of intellectual property rights and moral and legal obligations of developers and producers of technology-related ideas. The play presents the ethical dilemmas faced by developers, producers, and users of technology, and it explores different styles of argumentation and, hence, illustrate the relevance of ethical stances that might perhaps want.

Although it is not always clearly recognised, it is in the everyday, routine conversations and dealings of people the ethical questions that are really raised. Although the play raises big questions concerning technological development, this implies that the developer may merely provide gratification, and the creator of the technology may be seen as the owner of the product, for the manufacturer and the user, there are no immediate consequences.

The Unit development has capitalised on the lessons and feedback from various students in the area of ethics, it does so to introduce ethics as a subject in its own right, without the use of a videoconferencing tool available on OpenLearn. The Unit will be capitalised on a video and download for re-use in a Creative Commons License.

LANDSCAPE WITH WEAPON

An allegory

Landscape with Weapon centres on the development and exploitation of a weapon system, and it can be viewed as an allegory. However, when we are designing something that is not yet known with certainty, perhaps a small part of a large-scale project, we have to be flexible. Therefore, any discussion that a technologist has about the deployment of a technology is likely to be speculative, and ensuring a `good outcome' has to depend on the good understanding of what is actually happening.

As a technologist, Dan meets his customers face-to-face while he performs his work, and his professional skills put him in control of the immediate outcomes of his work. On the other hand, Ned, the technologist in the play, is involved in the design and production of a weapon system, and can be viewed as an allegory. However, when we are designing something that is not yet known with certainty, perhaps a small part of a large-scale project, we have to be flexible. Therefore, any discussion that a technologist has about the deployment of a technology is likely to be speculative, and ensuring a `good outcome' has to depend on the good understanding of what is actually happening.

This also implies that, to ensure a `good' outcome, the technologist has to have some authority over the technology users. That is not necessarily possible. Indeed, in many instances, technologists in general do not normally meet the users of their technology. They are, however, often designing systems and artefacts that are produced, but he has little or no influence over their actual use.

Clearly there is a difference between a kind of meaninglessness, and a difference between a kind of deficiency. However, in many instances, technologists in general do not normally meet the users of their technology. They are, however, often designing systems and artefacts that are produced, but he has little or no influence over their actual use.

REFERENCES


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