

## Intercultural Information Ethics. Foundations and Applications

This paper aims to examine the present status of the research field intercultural information ethics (IIE) including the foundational debate as well as specific issues that may open new views for research and practice in this field. The present IIE debate focuses on a narrow view of the field leaving aside comparative studies with non-digital media as well as with other epochs and cultures. There is an emphasis on the question of privacy but other issues such as online communities, governmentality, gender issues, mobile phones, health care and the digital divide are on the agenda.

**Keywords:** Culture, Information management, Ethics, Privacy.

**Search tags:** Information Systems Administration – Moral and ethical aspects, Communication ethics, Nonbook materials, Mass Media and Culture.

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## Ética intercultural de la información: fundamentos y aplicaciones

El presente artículo pretende analizar el estado actual de las investigaciones sobre ética intercultural de la información (EII), incluyendo tanto los debates fundamentales sobre el tema como las discusiones específicas que pueden mostrar nuevas maneras de abordar la investigación y la práctica en este campo. El debate actual sobre EII se centra en una visión reduccionista de este campo y deja por fuera estudios comparativos con medios no digitales y con otras épocas y culturas. El tema de la privacidad recibe tratamiento especial pero la agenda también incluye otros tales como las comunidades en línea, la gobernabilidad, los asuntos de género, la telefonía móvil, la atención médica y la brecha digital.

**Palabras Clave:** Cultura, información, administración, ética, privacidad.

**Descriptores:** Administración de sistemas de información – aspectos morales y éticos, ética de la comunicación, materiales no-libro, medios de comunicación de masas y cultura.

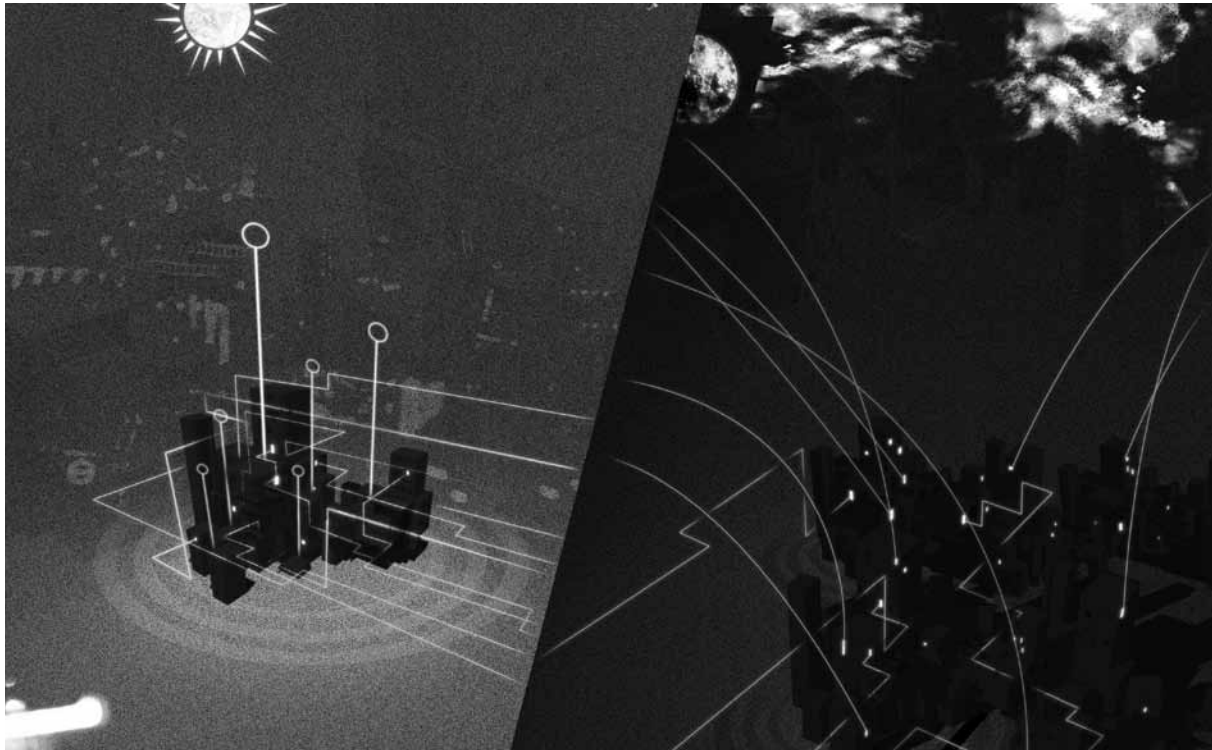
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### Origen del artículo

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# Intercultural Information Ethics. Foundations and Applications



## INTRODUCTION

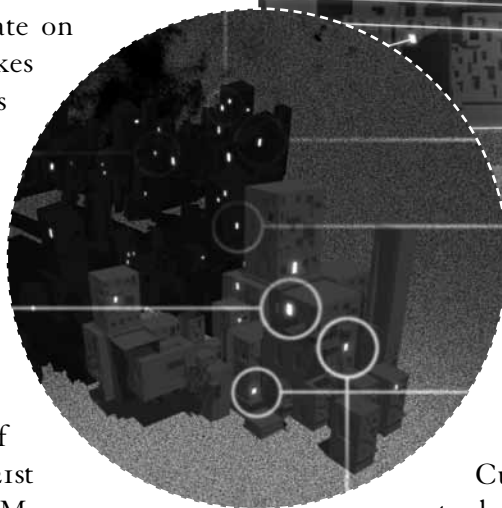
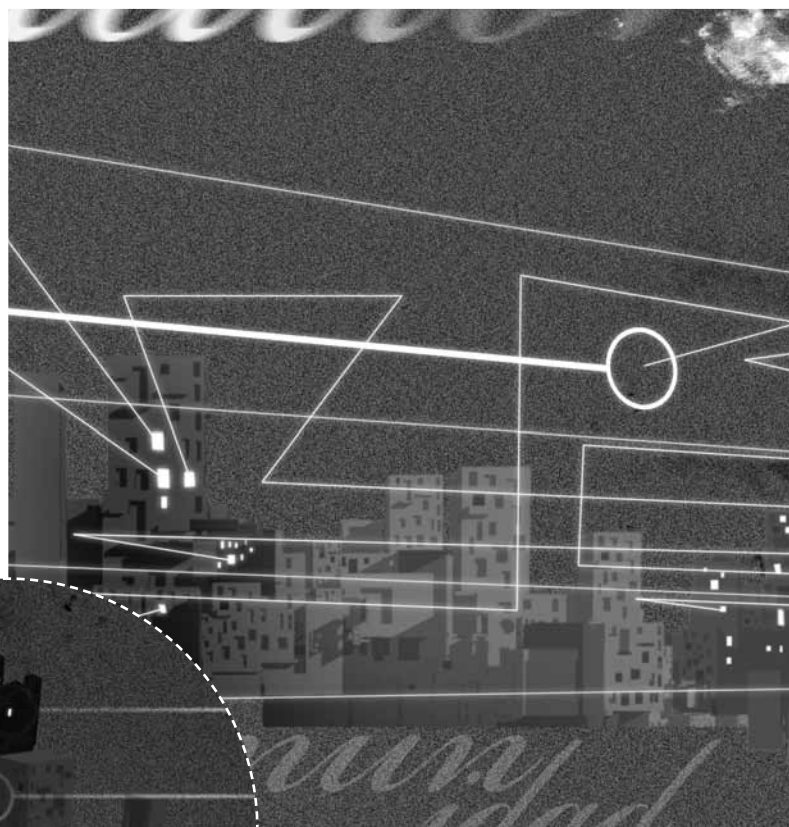
Intercultural Information Ethics (IIE) can be defined in a narrow or in a broad sense. In a narrow sense it focuses on the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) on different cultures as well as on how specific

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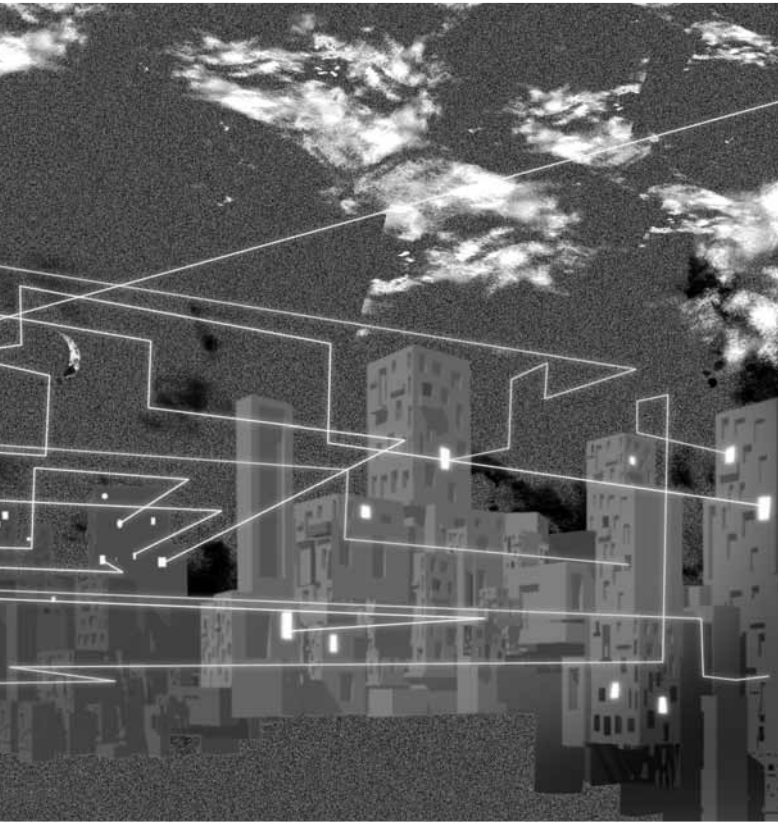
issues are understood from different cultural traditions. In a broad sense it deals not only with intercultural issues raised by ICT but by other media as well allowing a large historical comparative view. IIE explores these issues under descriptive and normative perspectives. Such comparative studies can be done either at a concrete or ontic level or at the level of ontological or structural presuppositions.

The international debate on information ethics started with the “First International Congress on Ethical, Legal, and Societal Aspects of Digital Information” organized by UNESCO in 1997. Subsequent UN conferences culminated in the World Summit on the Information Society. The academic debate on intercultural issues of ICT takes place in the biennial conferences on “Cultural attitudes towards technology and communication” organized by Charles Ess and Fay Sudweeks since 1998. But intercultural issues are also raised in the ETHICOMP conferences organized by Simon Rogerson since 1995, the conferences on “Ethics of Electronic Information in the 21st Century” at the University of Memphis since 1997, and the CEPE conferences (Computer Ethics: Philosophical Enquiry) since 1997. The first international symposium dealing explicitly with intercultural information ethics was organized by the International Center for Information Ethics entitled “Localizing the Internet. Ethical Issues in Intercultural Perspective.” It took place in Karlsruhe (Germany) in 2004.

As far as I know, my introductory paper to this symposium was the first paper addressing the question of Intercultural Information Ethics already in its title. The proceedings were published in the “International Review of Information Ethics”. A selection of papers was published as a book in 2007 (Capurro et al. 2007). The Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics



organized an international conference, entitled “Information Ethics: Agents, Artefacts and New Cultural Perspectives” that took place in 2005 at St Cross College Oxford. This conference addressed cultural questions of the globalization of information processes and flows, particularly “whether information ethics in a global sense may be biased in favour of Western values and interests and whether far-eastern cultures may provide new perspectives and heuristics for a successful development of the information society.” (Floridi/Savulescu 2006, 155). Soraj Hongladarom and Charles Ess have edited a book with the title “Information Technology Ethics: Cultural Perspectives” (Hongladarom/Ess 2007). The book puts together a selection of contributions on what Western and non-Western intellectual traditions have to say on various issues in information ethics, as well as theoretic-



cal debates offering proposals for new synthesis between Western and Eastern traditions.

In the following, I present an overview on IIE as discussed in some of these sources. The first part of the paper deals with the foundational debate in moral philosophy in general as well as with IIE in particular. The second part addresses the question of privacy from an IIE perspective.

## THE FOUNDATIONAL DEBATE

### On the Sources of Morality

There is a classic debate in moral philosophy between cognitivism and non-cognitivism with regard to the truth-value of moral claims. This distinction presupposes that human emotions have no cognitive value and vice versa, that human cognition has a truth-value if and only if it is free of emotions. This is, I believe, a wrong alternative since there is no emotion-free cognition and

emotions have a cognitive value as demonstrated by neurobiologist Antonio Damasio (1994).

One classical answer to the question of the foundation of morality is that moral claims relate to the basic moral principle “do no harm, help where you can”. I believe that even if we can give good reasons for such a fundamental moral principle the knowledge of such reasons is not enough to move the will in order to do (or not) the good. Is there a foundation for this principle?

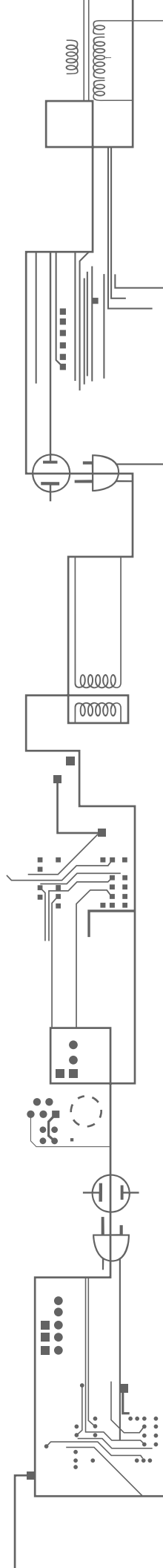
According to Karl Baier (2006), basic moods through which the uniqueness of the world and the finitude of our existence become manifest, are a transcultural experience common to all human beings. They concern our awareness of the common world. It is on the basis of the mood of anxiety, for instance, that we are aware of death and finitude or in the mood of “being born” in which we feel ourselves open for new possibilities of being. According to Heidegger (1987, 228ff) fear is a mood in which one is afraid about something fearsome, while anxiety, in contrast, faces us with our being-in-the-world itself. Wittgenstein describes his “key experience” (“mein Erlebnis par excellence”) in the “Lecture on Ethics” with the following words:

“This experience, in case I have it, can be described most properly, I believe, with the words I am amazed about the existence of the world. Then I tend to use formulations like these ones: ‘How strange that something exists at all’ or ‘How strange that the world exists’”. (Wittgenstein 1989, 14, my translation)

According to Wittgenstein we have really no appropriate expression for this experience – other than the existence of language itself. On December 30, 1929 he writes:

“I can imagine what Heidegger means with being and anxiety. Human beings have the tendency to run against the boundaries of language. Think for instance about the astonishment that something at all exists. [...] Ethics is this run against the boundaries of language.” (Wittgenstein 1984, 68, my translation)

In other words, the *primum movens* of moral



actions lies in the call coming from the uniqueness of the world and the finitude of human existence that are disclosed through moods. According to Heidegger we are “indebted” or “guilty” towards the calling of the world, in the various senses of the word “guilty” such as ‘having debts to someone’ or ‘being responsible for’ (Heidegger 1987, 325ff) We are primordially “guilty” in the sense that we are indebted to the “there” of our existence, between birth and death. Our existence is basically “care” of our given and limited possibilities that manifest themselves within the framework of the uniqueness of the world and human existence.

Morality arises from (Greek: “*hothen*”) the awareness and respect for both the uniqueness of the world itself and human existence which are the invaluable and theoretically non provable

truth-values on which all moral claims rest. The moral imperative is the call for care of our lives in a common world.

It is a categorical imperative as we cannot

not take care of our lives but it allows at the same time different interpretations that we accumulate as individuals as well as societies building a dynamic cultural memory. In saying this I am not providing a sufficient reason for doing the good just because any linguistic utterance would be insufficient without the experience of the call itself to which a theory can only point to without being able to give a foundation in which case the phenomenon of the call would be negated as originating such utterance.

Our being-in-the-world is the ‘first call’ or *primum movens* of our will. This provides, I believe, a universal non-metaphysical frame of reference for different experiences and ethical theories. Buddhism, for instance, experiences the world in all its transitoriness in a mood of sadness and happiness being also deeply moved by suffering. This mood grasps the world in a specific way. There is something common to all human beings

in the basic moods but at the same time there are specific moods at the beginning of human cultures, such as astonishment (“*thaumazein*”) in the Greek experience of the world. Karl Baier points to the danger of building stereotypes particularly when dealing with the differences between East and West with regard, for instance, to the search for harmony as an apparently typical and unique mood of Asian cultures or the opposition between collectivity and individuality (Baier 2006). As there are no absolute differences between cultures there are also no exclusive moods. Experiences such as nausea, pangs of moral conscience or the ‘great doubt’ are common to Japanese Buddhism and modern Western nihilism. A future intercultural philosophy should look for textual basis from literature, art, religion and everyday culture paying attention to complex phenomena and to the interaction between moods and understanding. If there is a danger of building stereotypes, there is also one of overlooking not only concrete or ontic but also structural or ontological differences by claiming a single world culture that mostly reflects the interests and global life style of a small portion of humanity.

Let me now review briefly some of the foundational theories of Intercultural Information Ethics.

## On the Foundation of IIE

### a) Charles Ess

Charles Ess’ “global information ethics” seeks to avoid imperialistic homogenization while simultaneously preserving the irreducible differences between cultures and peoples (Ess 2006). He analyzes the connections of such an ethical pluralism between contemporary Western ethics and Confucian thought. Both traditions invoke notions of resonance and harmony to articulate pluralistic structures of connection alongside irreducible differences. Ess explores such a *pros hen* pluralism in Eastern and Western conceptions of privacy and data privacy protection. This kind of pluralism is the opposite to a purely *modus vivendi* pluralism

that leaves tensions and conflicts unresolved and giving thus rise to a cycle of violence. Another more robust form of pluralism presupposes a shared set of ethical norms and standards but without overcoming deeply contradictions. An even stronger form of pluralism does not search identity but only some kind of coherence or, as Ess suggests, complementarity between two irreducible different entities.

There are pitfalls of *prima facie* convergences, analogies and family resemblances that may be oversimplified by a *pros hen* strategy. In many cases we should try to dig into deeper layers in order to understand where these claims originate or simply accept the limits of human theoretical reason by celebrating the richness of human experience. As Kei Hiruta rightly stresses (Hiruta 2006), it is not clear what the points of shared ethical agreements are and how this call for unity fits with a call for diversity concerning the judgements of such ethical perspectives. According to Hiruta, the advocates of ethical pluralism would like to avoid the intolerable, such as child pornography in the Internet, working on the basis of a pragmatic problem-solving strategy leading to “points of agreement” or “responses” on the basis of Socratic dialogue. Socratic dialogue is based on the spirit of *parrhesia* or “direct speech” which is a key feature of Western philosophy (Capurro 2006a).

## b) Toru Nishigaki

In his contribution on information ethics in Japan, Toru Nishigaki makes a difference between the search of ethical norms in the context of new information technologies on the one hand, and the changes “on our views of human beings and society” becoming “necessary to accompany the emergence of the information society” on the other hand (Nishigaki 2006, 237). Such changes concern, for instance, the Western idea of a “coherent self” being questioned by information processing in robots. While this change may lead from a Western perspective to nihilism, Buddhist philosophy teaches that there is no such a thing as a “coherent

self” ethics having to do with compassion as well as with the relationship between the individual and the community instead as with the preservation of a “coherent self” the key ethical question being how our communities are changing instead how far the “self” is endangered. As Nishigaki remarks: “It is possible to say, therefore, that in a sense the West now stands in need of Eastern ethics, while the East stands in need of Western ethics” (Nishigaki 2006, 238). Nishigaki stresses at the same time, that there is no “easy bridge” between IT and Eastern philosophy. IT as looked from a cultural standpoint “has a strong affinity with the Judeo-Christian pursuit for a universal interpretation of sacred texts.”

While we in the West look for some kind of unchanged meaning of terms, such as in Charles Ess’ *pros hen* search for shared values and a tolerant or benevolent view on judgment diversity, the ZEN master is eager to exercise himself in his disciple “by doing away with universal or conventional interpretations of the meanings of words” (Nishigaki 2006, 238). In other words, the



Buddhist stance teaches us, Westerners, another strategy beyond the controversy between monism and pluralism, by way of a different kind of practice than the Socratic dialogue. Nishigaki points to the controversy in the West between cognitive science and its view of cognition as a “representation” of the “outer world” and the view shared by our everyday experience as well as, for instance, phenomenology. Biologist Francisco Varela’s theory of autopoiesis offers an alternative based on the Buddhist view on cognition as “a history of actions performed by a subject in the world” being then not representation of a pregiven world by a pregiven mind but “enactment” of such a history in the world.

#### c) Terrell Ward Bynum

‘The’ information society is and has always been culturally fragmented into different information societies. Consequently, what is morally good for one information society may be considered as less appropriate in another one. Terrell Ward Bynum advocates, borrowing insights from Aristotle, Norbert Wiener, and James Moor, for a “flourishing ethics” which means that “the overall purpose of a human life is to flourish as a person” according to the basic principles of freedom, equality and benevolence and the principle of minimum infringement of freedom (Bynum 2006). If the goal is to maximize the opportunities of all humans to exercise their autonomy – a conception of human existence that is culturally grounded in Western social philosophy – Bynum rightly follows that “many different cultures, with a wide diversity of customs, religions, languages and practices, can provide a conducive context for human flourishing” (Bynum 2006, 163). In other words, Wiener’s principles provide a foundation

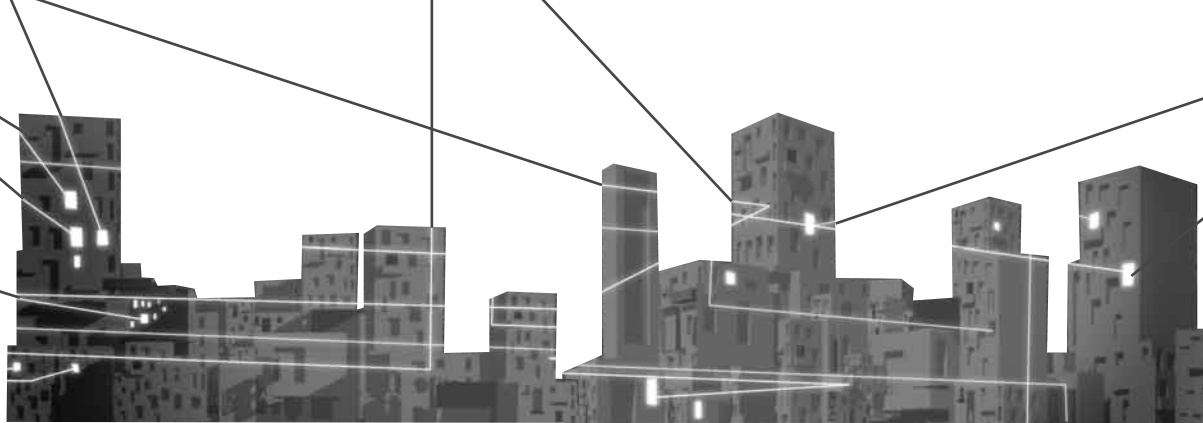
for a non-relativistic global ethics that is friendly to cultural diversity. Bynum widens the scope of this human-centered ethics into a “general theory of Flourishing Ethics” which includes the question of delegation of responsibility to ‘artificial agents’ and the consequent need for ethical rules for such agents. Although Bynum welcomes different ethical traditions, he is well aware that some of them would not be compatible with “General Flourishing Ethics”.

#### d) Bernd Frohmann

Following Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, Bernd Frohmann proposes a philosophical interrogation of the local effects of the Internet through three main concepts, namely effect, locality, and ethics (Frohmann 2007). He discusses the relationships between the global and the local or, more specifically, between the flows of capital, information, technology, and organizational interaction by pointing to the similarities and difference of today’s “space of flow” (Manuel Castells) with some of its predecessors for instance in England’s global empire. According to Frohmann, “ethical action consists in a ‘mode of subjectivation’ not eclipsed by the will to truth’s drive to knowledge, transcendence, and universality. A philosophical ethos seeks contingencies and singularities rather than universal determinants, which block the aim of getting ‘free of oneself’” (Frohmann 2007, 64-65). This is a plea for a kind of Intercultural Information Ethics that focuses on a careful situational analysis starting with the local conditions which does not mean mono-cultural chauvinism but critical appraisal of the way(s) computers control societies and the strategies people can develop in order to becoming “digitally imperceptible.” Frohmann asks for strategies of “escaping” the







Internet rather than “localizing” it as far as it can become a local instrument of oppression.

#### e) Rafael Capurro

In today’s information society we form ourselves and our selves mainly through digital media. The power of digital networks does not lead necessarily to slavery and oppression but also to reciprocity and mutual obligation. Globalisation gives rise to the question of what does locally matter. Cyberspace vanishes into the diversity of complex real/virtual space-time connections of all kinds which are not any more separable from everyday life and its materiality. The boundaries of language against which we are driven appear now as the boundaries of digital networks which not only pervade but accelerate all relationships between humans as well as between all kinds of natural phenomena and artificial things

Following Michael Walzer (1994) and Soraj Hongladarom (2001) I conceive moral arguments as “thick” or “thin” regarding whether they are contextualized or not but I question the view that there is no third alternative between mono- and meta-cultural ethical claims (Capurro 2007). A purely meta-cultural information ethics remains abstract if it is not inter-culturally reflected. The task of Intercultural Information Ethics is to intertwine “thick” and “thin” ethical arguments in the information field. The analysis by Michel Foucault on the Western tradition of parrhesia or ‘direct speech’ shows that it as a special trait of Western moral behaviour and democratic practice in contrast to the importance of ‘indirect speech’ in Eastern traditions (Foucault 1983). We should develop this difference for instance with regard to Confucian and Daoist thought and their relevance for the development of information soci-

eties in Asia. In resonance to Charles Ess’ concept of an ethical *pros hen* (“towards one”) that looks for a pluralist interpretation and application of shared ethical norms (Ess 2006), I argue in favor of a *hothen* (“from which”) approach that turns the attention to the question of the source(s) of ethical norms including the multiple cognitive-emotional experience of such source(s). The task of IIE is not only to describe them, but to open the endless task of translation between them. As Susan Sontag suggests (Sontag 2004), the task of the translator can be seen as an ethical task if we conceive it as the experience of the otherness of other languages that moves us to transform our mother tongue – including the terminologies used by different philosophic schools – instead of just preserving it from foreign or heretic influences.

What is the concrete impact of information and communication technologies on different cultures and particularly on their moral foundations?

#### PRIVACY FROM AN IIE PERSPECTIVE

Let us take a look at the privacy issue as an example of how specific ethics issues are understood from different cultural traditions, namely, Chinese, Thai and Japanese cultures. Privacy is a key question as it deals with basic conceptions of the human person. Intercultural dialogue is the antidote to the danger of getting “lost in translation” that arises from a mono-logical discourse aiming at reducing all differences to the own language.

##### China

Lü Yao-Huai analyzes the privacy experience of today’s ordinary Chinese people (Lü 2005). According to Lü there is a transformation of contemporary Chinese consciousness of privacy



starting with economic and political reforms since 1980. This cultural and moral change concerns mainly three aspects:

1) Individual freedom is not any more a taboo topic. A conversation partner can refuse to answer a question on the plea that “this is my privacy.”

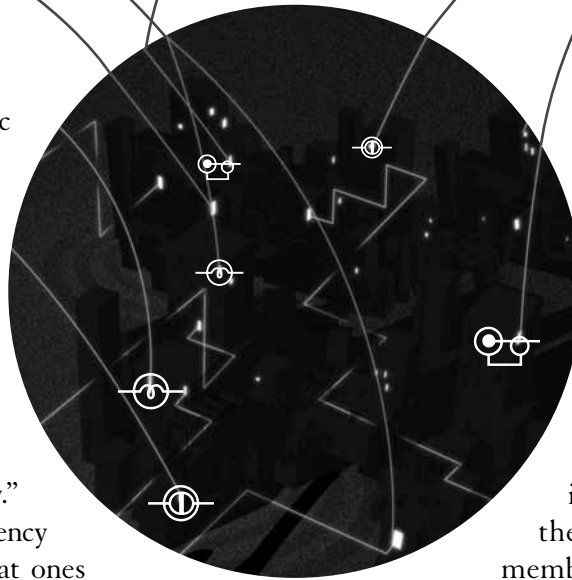
2) There is also a tendency not to interfere with what ones perceives to be the privacy of the other.

3) The common Chinese concept of privacy Yinsi (“shameful secret”) has been expanded to include all personal information whether shameful or not that people do not want others to know.

With the rise of the Internet in the 1990s the question of data privacy emerged in China. Lü provides an overview of the legal framework of Chinese data protection and discusses the following ethical principles:

- 1) the principle of respect,
- 2) the principle of informed consent,
- 3) the principle of equilibrium (between the safety of personal privacy and the safety of society), and
- 4) the principle of social rectification.

The last two principles take society as the higher value. Lü questions the claim that privacy remains a foreign concept for many Chinese people. He argues that in rural areas, following the tradition of collectivism, people are more interested in other people’s lives than in the cities. Chinese papers published so far on information ethics dealing with privacy interpret it as an instrumental instead as an intrinsic good. Chinese researchers argue that privacy protection has a function with regard to social order. Although many Chinese still think that there is no right to privacy within the family, a survey among the young generation shows the opposite interest. Lü foresees a strong influence of Western views on privacy without Chinese traditional culture becoming fully Westernized in this regard (Lü 2007).



## Thailand

Krisana Kitiyadisai explores the changes of the concept of privacy in Thai culture, based on collectivism and non-confrontation (Kitiyadisai 2005). ‘Being private’ applies in traditional Thailand to the space shared by family members. The lack of a Thai word for privacy is due, according

to Kitiyadisai, to the feudal heritage of Thai society with a system of hierarchical ranking, politeness protocols and patronage. Strong relationships are based on the principle of non-confrontation avoiding the disastrous results of ‘losing-face’ (‘siar-na’) instead of face-saving (‘koo-na’). According to Kitiyadisai, “the combination of privacy as ‘private affairs’ (‘rueng-suan-tua’) and the right of ‘non-interference’ works in support of ‘saving face’” (Kitiyadisai 2005, 18). These values are similar to Confucian values of “ancestor reverence, respect for ‘face’, responsibility, loyalty, modesty and humility” (Kitiyadisai 2005, 24). According to Buddhism, human rights are not intrinsic to human individuals but they are necessary for conducting a virtuous human existence. Kitiyadisai provides an overview of the data protection legislation in Thailand. She stresses the ongoing tensions between “imported liberal democratic values” and “traditional Thai values.”

Soraj Hongladarom describes a grave challenge to the privacy of Thai citizens (Hongladarom 2007). The Thai government plans to introduce a digital national identification card in a country with no specific law protecting personal information. The threat of political misuse raises the question on the nature of privacy and its justification. Hongladarom explores this question from the perspective of two famous Buddhist sages, namely Nagarjuna (c. 150-250 AD), founder of the Mahāyāna Buddhism,

and Nagasena (c. 150 BC). He writes: “The reason I believe the Buddhist perspective is important in this area is that Buddhism has a very interesting claim to make about the self and the individual on whose concept the whole idea of privacy depends” (Hongladarom 2007, 109)

The fact that Buddhism rejects the individual self does not mean that it rejects privacy. In order to understand this counterintuitive argument Hongladarom distinguish between the absolute and conventional level of assertion. From an absolute point there is no distinction between subject and object. If there is no inherently existing self then privacy is grounded on the conventional idea that it is necessary for democracy which means that privacy has an instrumental instead of an intrinsic or core value. But, according to Hongladarom, the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental values has an insecure foundation as all values rest on our attachment to them. According to Nagasena, the conventional self exists in conventional reality and is shown to be a mere illusion after analysis in terms of the “ultimate truth.” Hongladarom parallels Nagarjuna’s distinction between “conventional truth” and “ultimate truth” with Kant’s distinction between a “phenomenal” and a “noumenal” realm. But in contrast to Kant there is no “I” providing a transcendental unity of apperception.

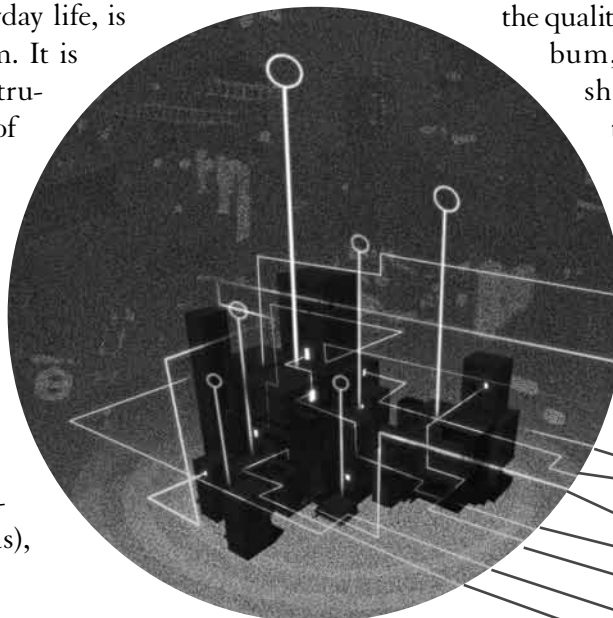
Privacy as used in everyday life, is not denied in Buddhism. It is in fact justified as an instrument for the purpose of living harmoniously according to democratic ideals. But “from the ultimate perspective of a Buddha, privacy just makes no sense whatsoever” (Hongladarom 2007, 120). Violations of privacy are based on the three “mental defilements” (kleshas),

namely greed, anger, and delusion, the antidote being to cultivate love and compassion. He writes: “Compassion naturally arises from this realization when one realizes that other beings are no different from oneself. All want to get rid of suffering, and all do want happiness. The benefit of this realization for information ethics is that compassion is the key that determines the value of an action” (Hongladarom 2007, 120). Compassion is, I would say, the “basic mood” of Buddhist experience of the uniqueness of the world and our existence of which we have *nolens volens* to take care.

## Japan

Similar tensions can be found in Japan as Makoto Nakada and Takanori Tamura analyze in a paper that was originally conceived as a dialogue with them and myself published in the same volume of “Ethics and Information Technology” (Nakada/Tamura 2005; Capurro 2005). It is a pity that the constraints of Western monologic academic culture did not allow the publication of this dialogue. According to Nakada and Tamura, Japanese people live in a three-fold world, namely *Shakai* or the world influenced by Western values, *Seken* or the traditional and indigenous worldview, and *Ikai* which is a world from evils, disasters and crime seem to emerge. On the basis of the analysis

of the way an homicide was portrayed in the quality newspaper *Asahi Shimbun*, Nakada and Tamura show the ambiguities of the concept of privacy in modern Japan. They write: “while the standpoint of *Shakai* would consider publishing



personal information about the Tutiura murder victims to be an invasion of privacy and violation of human rights, from the standpoint of the traditional values and beliefs of Seken, this publication at the same time functions as a warning against the breakdown of moral and ethics – an breakdown, finally, that is rooted in Ikai as the domain of such betrayal” (Nakada/Tamura 2005, 28). Living in three worlds creates a kind of discontinuous identity that is very different from Western metaphysical dichotomies. One main difference concerns the question of ‘denial of self’ (Musi) which seems to be one of the most important Buddhist values for the majority of Japanese people. This view is the opposite to the idea of Western subjectivity from which we, Westerners, derive the concepts and ‘intrinsic values’ of autonomy and privacy.

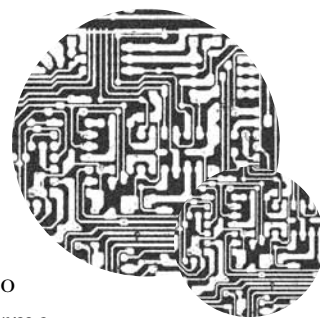
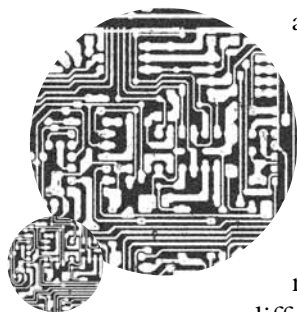
## CONCLUSION

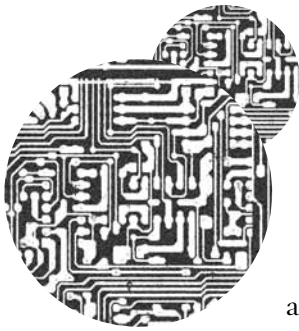
IIE is an emerging discipline. The present debate shows a variety of foundational perspectives as well as a preference for the narrow view that focuses IIE on ICT. Consequently comparative studies with other media and epochs are mostly not being considered so far. With regard to IIE issues in today’s information societies, there are a lot of cultures and regions that have not been analyzed so far. Privacy as well as online communities, governmentality, gender issues, mobile phones, health care, and, last but not least, the digital divide are on the agenda. New issues such as blogs, wikis and “Second Life” are arising. We have to deepen the founda-

tional debate on the sources of morality. According to Michel Foucault, ethics can be understood as the “problematization” of morality. Intercultural Information Ethics has a critical task to achieve when it compares information moralities. This concerns the ontological or structural as well as the ontic or empirical levels of analysis. One important issue in this regard is the question of the universality of values vs. the locality of cultures and vice versa which is related to the problem of their homogenization or hybridization.

Wonil Rhee a curator of the exhibition “Thermocline of Art. New Asian Waves” at the Center for Art and Media (Karlsruhe, Germany) writes in his introduction “The creative time of thermocline. Conflicts between and Becomings of different Time-spaces”:

“‘Thermocline’, the theme of the exhibition, means a layer in a large body of water where warm and cold currents meet to cause a sudden change of water temperature. As a metaphor, this natural phenomenon, that is, the collision between huge currents in the deep ocean symbolizes the encounter between West and non-West, Europe and Asia, and the world and Asia primarily and secondarily, the change of water temperature as the outcome of the physical collision represents a multi-layered system of meaning about the comprehensive change of history, culture, and topographical map, that is, the ‘change-conversion of reality’. As if shedding light on the ‘Thermocline’ phenomenon occurring in the depth of the ocean,





the exhibition aims to explain the acculturation and collision between globalism and localism, the discord and conflict

between tradition and modernity, the collision and coexistence between high and low culture and so on, which all have run through the waves of dynamic upheaval of modern and contemporary history and contemporary art, with the understandings of the over-all tendencies of the infiltrations, currents, chasms and absorptions of philosophical, humanist thoughts.” (Rhee 2007)

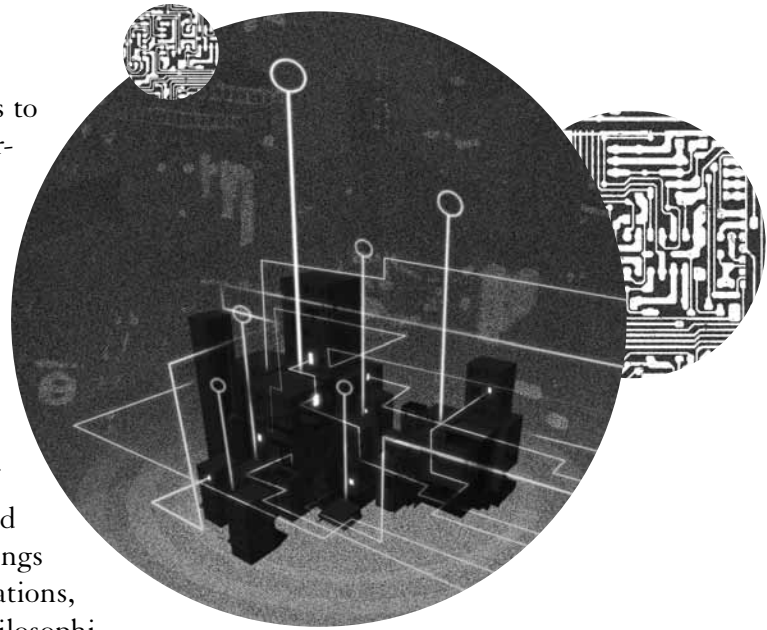
Thermocline is, I think, a wonderful metaphor for the issues addressed by IIE. We are looking for a thermocline of information ethics.

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