

Call for Papers
Special Issue of the *Journal of Business Ethics*
Technology, Ethics, and Corporate Responsibility

Submission Deadline: **September 1, 2017**

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Introduction to the Special Issue

Phones track us as we shop at stores as well as where and when we vote. Algorithms based on commercial data allow firms to sell us products we can afford. Drones watch our neighbors and deliver beverages to fishermen in the middle of a frozen lake. This special issue seeks to examine the ethical dimensions of such technology and the associated corporate responsibilities of firms regarding its use in the market and within the organization. Technology is defined broadly to include all material actors from machine learning and information and communications technology (ICT) as well as drones and phones. While the ethics of technology is analyzed across disciplines from science and technology studies (STS), engineering, computer science, critical management studies, and law, less attention is paid to the role that business firms and managers play in the design, development, and dissemination of technology across communities and within their firm.

Technology has consequences, tests norms, changes what we do or are able to do, “acts” for us, and, more recently, makes decisions on our behalf that can have biases (Friedman and Nissenbaum 1996). The use of technology can have adverse effects on people. Technology can “erode the consumers’ right to autonomy” and violate privacy rights (Lacznik and Murphy 2006) as well as harm individuals, financially and physically. Technologies can also be morally contentious by “forcing deep reflection on personal values and societal norms” (Cole and Banerjee 2013, p. 555). Technologies have values or politics (Winner 1980) in structuring roles and responsibilities in society (Latour 1992) and within organizations (Orlikowski and Barley 2001) -- many times with contradictory consequences (Markus and Robey 1988). As emphasized in a recent *Journal of Business Ethics* article, Johnson notes the possibility of a responsibility gap: the possible abdication of responsibility around decisions that are made as technology takes on roles and responsibilities previously afforded to humans (Johnson 2015). Firms play an important role in the development and deployment of technology and should make associated value judgments around technology use is an open point of contention. Accordingly, this special issue seeks to understand corporate responsibility to consider the consequences of their technology on society.

Prospective Themes of the Special Issue

This special issue will focus on how firms should engage ethical choices in deploying these technologies. How do firms recognize, negotiate, and govern the values, biases, and power of technology? And what responsibilities should organizations take for the implementing technology? Research questions and themes explored by potential contributions to this Special issue include, **but are not limited** to the following:

- What responsibility do firms have around privacy and information technology? Over what categories of privacy harms do firms exercise decision-making authority? What responsibilities do firms have for balancing privacy and technology use or ensuring privacy by design?
- How has the use of information technology and its commercialization changed the nature of personal identity in the marketplace?
- What are the ethical implications of using technology to influence and guide organizational structures and employee roles?
- How does new technology adoption impact employee autonomy, perceptions of surveillance, and identity?
- As autonomous agents take on an increasing number and complexity of tasks within the workplace, how should firms rethink employee responsibility and autonomy?

- How can firms take responsibility for the social justice, discrimination, and privacy implications of data analytics?
- How should firms take responsibility for algorithmic discrimination? How are ethical decision-making models strained by the use of machine learning and algorithms to make decisions? How can ethical decision making models offer insights to machine learning and algorithm design and governance?
- What is the corporate responsibility around dual use technologies (technology that can be used toward good ends as well as support dangerous actors) such as encryption, social networks, crypto-currencies, and surveillance technology?
- Is there a corporate responsibility to assist governments in dealing with unethical uses of information technology? What is the appropriate relationship between government and big data firms?
- What are the ethical implications of drones, robotics, and/or autonomous cars? How should businesses take responsibility for the ethical implications?
- How should firms manage technology ethics in an increasingly global commercial sector? What are the implications for technology firms when information and communication technology (ICT) is seen as global infrastructure akin to banking or utilities?
- What role do firms have in combatting cyberbullying and online harassment? When, why, and how should firms be proactive – under what circumstances do firms have a moral duty to act?
- How are ‘Internet-of-Things’ technologies (e.g., mobile health devices, smart refrigerators, etc) different – if at all – in how we analyze their moral implications? What are the implications for firms?

Types of Submissions

We invite contributions from a broad range of disciplines including (but not limited to) business ethics, management, information systems, marketing, computer science, law, philosophy, science and technology studies, information studies, media studies and political science. We seek papers that are either empirical explorations of technology and business ethics or theoretical contributions at this intersection. The goal of the special issue is to help business ethics as a field think systematically about technology, ethics, and corporate responsibility with implications for firms and managers.

Submission Instructions

Authors are strongly encouraged to refer to the *Journal of Business Ethics* website and the instructions on submitting a paper. For more information see: <http://www.springer.com/social+sciences/applied+ethics/journal/10551>. Submission to the special issue – by **September 1, 2017** – is required through Editorial Manager at <http://www.editorialmanager.com/busi/>. Upon submission, please indicate that your submission is to this Special Issue of JBE. Questions about expectations, requirements, the appropriateness of a topic, etc, should be directed to the guest editors of the Special Issue: Kirsten Martin, Katie Shilton, or Jeffery Smith.

About Journal of Business Ethics

The Journal of Business Ethics publishes only original articles from a wide variety of methodological and disciplinary perspectives concerning ethical issues related to business that bring something new or unique to the discourse in their field. The Journal’s impact factor is 1.837 (2015). This journal is one of the 50 journals used by the Financial Times in compiling the prestigious Business School research rank.

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