

MICHAEL J. QUINN

# ETHICS

for the information age



8th edition



# Ethics for the Information Age

8th edition

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8th edition

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# Preface

Computers and high-speed communication networks are transforming our world. These technologies have brought us many benefits, but they have also raised many social and ethical concerns. My view is that we ought to approach every new technology in a thoughtful manner, considering not just its short-term benefits, but also how its long-term use will affect our lives. A thoughtful response to information technology requires a basic understanding of its history, an awareness of current information-technology-related issues, and a familiarity with ethics. I have written *Ethics for the Information Age* with these ends in mind.

*Ethics for the Information Age* is suitable for college students at all levels. The only prerequisite is some experience using computers and the Internet. The book is appropriate for a stand-alone “computers and society” or “computer ethics” course offered by a computer science, business, or philosophy department. It can also be used as a supplemental textbook in a technical course that devotes some time to social and ethical issues related to computing.

As students discuss controversial issues related to information technology, they have the opportunity to learn from one another and improve their critical thinking skills. The provocative questions raised at the end of every chapter, together with dozens of in-class exercises, provide many opportunities for students to express their views, learn from their classmates, and refine their positions on important issues. My hope is that through these discussions students will get better at evaluating complex issues and defending their conclusions with facts, sound values, and rational arguments.

## What’s New in the Eighth Edition

The most significant change in the eighth edition is the addition of **Appendix B** that focuses on the structure of logical arguments and some common logical fallacies. The eighth edition also contains four sidebars with practical advice about how to enhance privacy and security. The sidebars explain

- how to limit the amount of information Google saves about your searches
- how to limit the amount of personal information Facebook releases to others
- how to create a secure password
- how to protect your computer and other Internet-connected devices

The eighth edition covers many new developments and controversies related to the introduction, use, and abuse of information technology in modern society, including:

- safety concerns arising from accidents involving self-driving vehicles
- Cambridge Analytica gaining access to personal information from as many as 87 million Facebook users
- foreign interference in the 2016 US Presidential election using social media platforms
- police obtaining cell phone location records without a search warrant
- the US Supreme Court decision that has led to the invalidation of hundreds of software patents
- whether copying declaring code in APIs should be considered fair use of copyrighted material
- the dispute between the FBI and Apple about unlocking the encrypted iPhone of a terrorist
- how unrepresentative test-data sets can lead to biased artificial-intelligence software
- security risks associated with the “Bring Your Own Device” movement
- distributed denial-of-service attacks carried out by botnets of Internet-of-Things devices, such as baby monitors and security cameras
- the debate whether gig workers should be considered employees or independent contractors
- the new stance of the FCC regarding net neutrality
- the rise of Craigslist and the decline of print newspapers
- final court resolution of the Google Books controversy
- the shift in credit card fraud from point-of-sale fraud to “card not present” fraud
- cloud computing and cloud storage

Finally, I have updated a significant number of facts and figures throughout the book.

## Organization of the Book