

Call for Participation

Ethical Guidance for Research and Application of Pervasive and Autonomous Information Technology (PAIT)

March 3-4, 2010, Cincinnati, Ohio

Made possible by the National Science Foundation (grant number SES-0848097), Indiana University's Poynter Center for the Study of Ethics and American Institutions and the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics

This two-day workshop will convene an international meeting of experts in PAIT, ethicists well versed in practical ethics, and other stakeholders.

Rationale. Technologies are being developed today using very small, relatively inexpensive, wireless-enabled computers and autonomous robots that will most likely result in the near-omnipresence of information gathering and processing devices embedded in clothing, appliances, carpets, food packaging, doors and windows, paperback books, and other everyday items to gather data about when and how (and possibly by whom) an item is used. The data can be analyzed, stored, and shared via the Internet. Some of these pervasive technologies will also be autonomous, making decisions on their own about what data to gather and share, which actions to take (sound an alarm, lock a door), and the like.

The potential benefits of pervasive and autonomous information technology (PAIT) are many and varied, sometimes obvious, sometimes obscure, as are the ethical implications of their development and deployment. The history of information technology suggests that long-standing issues including usability, privacy, and security, among others, as well as relatively new phenomena such as ethically blind autonomous systems, are best addressed early enough to become part of the culture of researchers and engineers responsible for identifying needs and designing solutions.

Key Areas. The PAIT Workshop Planning Committee has initially identified the following key areas for discussion:

1. health and wellness (health monitoring, elder care, nagware)
2. everyday life (GIS, cell phones, PAIT in the home and car and on the body)
3. situations of limited human autonomy (in hospitals, the justice system, schools, the workplace)
4. autonomous systems and robots

Likely cross-cutting themes

1. Law and policy
2. International issues
3. Access and the digital divide
4. Uses of data beyond original intent (repurposing) and data aggregation
5. Informed consent, transparency (end-users' knowing the technology is in use and what it is doing), voluntary and involuntary use of data, the ability to "opt out"
6. Privacy, data security, anonymity
7. Managing data (lots of user interface questions here)

8. Balance of power among various stakeholders (parents/kids, elders/adult children, patient/provider, employee/boss, etc....)
9. Malicious uses, covert uses, surveillance, espionage

Workshop Format. This working meeting will feature discussions of previously-prepared case studies describing actual and anticipated uses of PAIT, invited presentations on key issues, working groups to identify and categorize ethical concerns, and other activities aimed at community-building and formulating ethical principles and other resources that will help researchers and designers of such systems recognize and address ethical issues at every stage, from design to deployment to obsolescence.

Results of the workshop will be published in journals and in one or more books, presented at academic and industry conferences, and distributed via the Internet.

A limited number of travel subsidies are available for members of underrepresented groups in science and engineering.

Registration. The workshop registration form, travel subsidy policy, and travel subsidy application form can be found at <http://poynter.indiana.edu/pait/registration.shtml>.

Please note that space at the workshop is limited. If the number of registrations exceeds expectations, we reserve the right to select among registrants to ensure balance. Please do not make travel plans until you have received confirmation of acceptance.

For more information see <http://poynter.indiana.edu/pait/> or get in touch with Glenda Murray, Poynter Center, Indiana University, 618 East Third Street, Bloomington IN 47405-3602; (812) 855-0262; FAX: 855-3315; glmurray@indiana.edu.

Prospective participants are encouraged to consider registering for and attending the annual meeting of the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics immediately following the PAIT workshop, March 5-7, 2010, at the same hotel. The Association's keynote address will be delivered by **Marc Rotenberg**, Executive Director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center in Washington, D.C. at 8:30 am, Friday, March 5, and a mini-conference on “**Engineering Towards a More Just and Sustainable World**” will be held Saturday afternoon, March 6 through Sunday, March 7, 2010, at noon. See <http://www.indiana.edu/~appe/annualmeeting.html> for details.