Online Communication in the Digital Age
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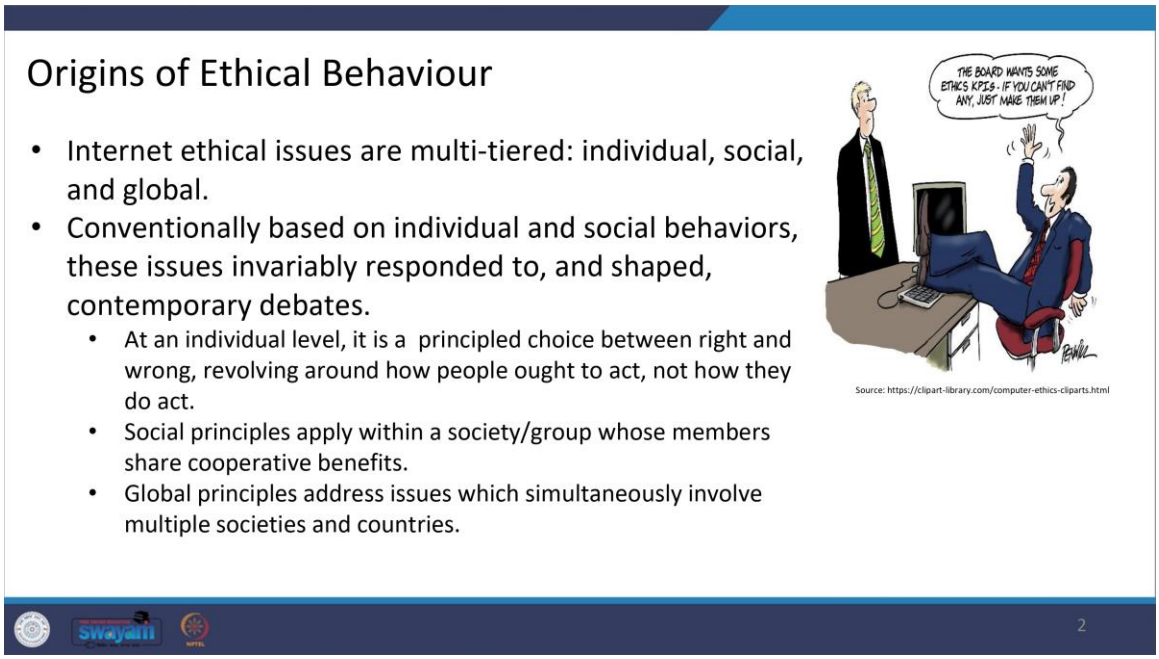
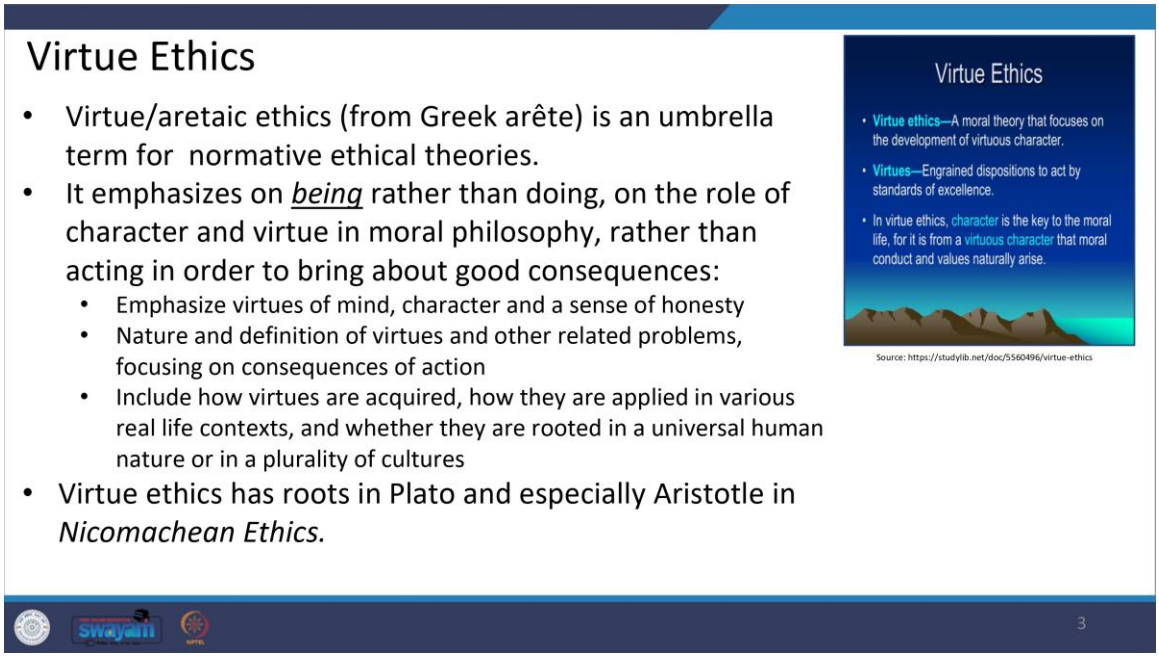
Lecture – 42
Fundamentals of Ethical Behaviour

Good morning dear friends and welcome to this module. In the previous module, we had introduced the concept of digital ethics and its relevance in the modern age. Today, we will discuss the fundamentals of ethical behavior across multiple forms of online communication in order to understand their relevance, significance and role in today's digital interactions.



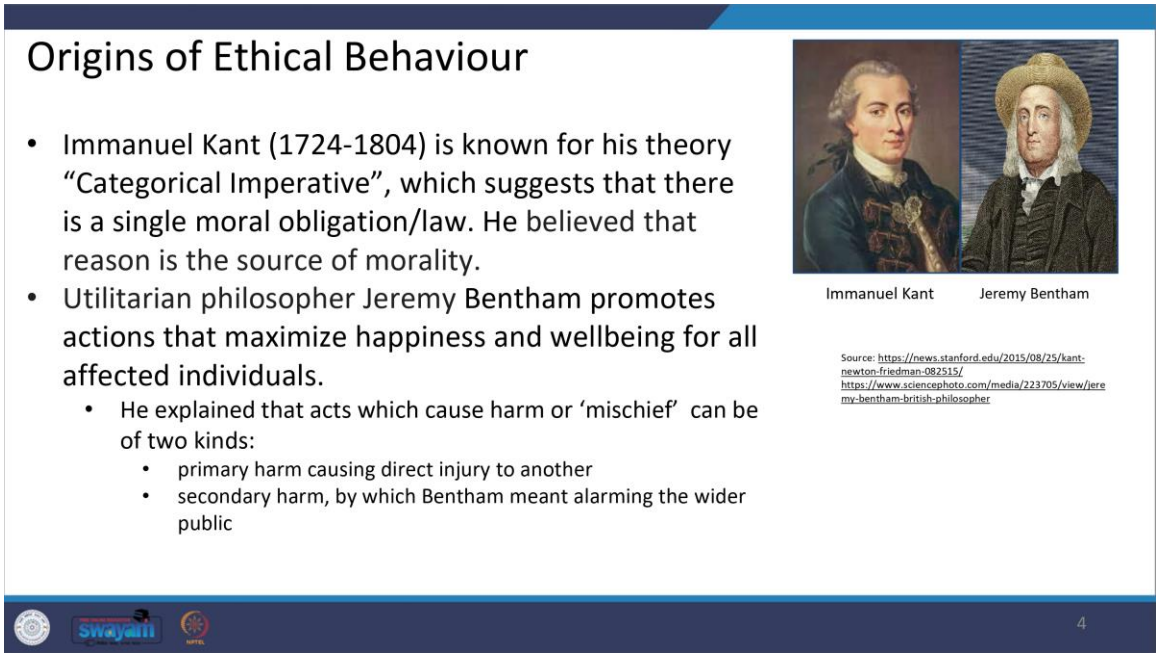
Internet ethical issues are multi-tiered. They have to be treated at individual, social and global levels simultaneously. At an individual level, it is the principle choice between what we define as right and wrong, and it revolves around this idea of how people should act instead of how do they act. At the social level, it is considered in the context of accepted behavior within a society or group whose members share similar or cooperative benefits. But there are certain issues which simultaneously involve multiple societies and countries and they are considered as global aspects of the ethical behavior. So let us say that the conventional understanding of ethical behavior is based on individual and social behaviors but these issues are always shaped and responded to in the context of contemporary debates in every time.

Whilst digital transformation is of course enabled through technology, human dimensions are as important as technology. We can say that the two are in fact complementary. Ethics represents a key differentiator in a highly competitive market where reputation and values are now as important as products and services. And if organizations want to deliver successfully in today's digital world, they have to ensure that they understand the need to act ethically. Similarly, we must also understand that there are certain perennial ethical considerations which do not change with the passage of time. However, their concerns and manifestations have presented themselves differently in different ages aligningg them to social and technological challenges. They remain with us in this age of internet, robotics and AI also guiding our understanding of the ethical dimensions of digital behavior. The term ethics originates from the ancient Greek word ethos meaning character, custom or habit. I would introduce the concept of virtue ethics at this point.



This concept of virtue ethics has roots in Plato and especially in Aristotle's Nicomachean ethics. It has originated from the Greek word arete and we can say that it is an umbrella term for normative ethical theories. It emphasizes on being rather than doing on the role of character and virtue in moral philosophy rather than acting in order to bring about only good consequences which serve the purpose for some immediate gain. We can understand that the concept of virtue ethics emphasizes virtues of mind, character and is also integrated with an inherent understanding of honesty. It looks at the nature and definition of virtues and other related problems focusing on consequences of our action in a far reaching manner. It also includes how virtues are acquired, how they are to be applied in various real life contexts and whether they are rooted in a universal human nature or in a plurality of cultures.

Throughout the ages, this concept has been accepted by philosophers under different nomenclature.

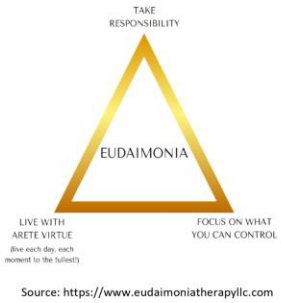


We can refer to certain prominent philosophers in this context. Immanuel Kant for example is known for his theory of categorical imperative which suggests that there is a single moral obligation or a moral law and he also believes that reason should be the source of morality. We also have Jeremy Bentham, the famous utilitarian philosopher who had promoted the idea that actions must maximize happiness and well-being for all affected individuals. His criteria for judging whether the action is good or not, whether it is harmful or mischievous is divided into further categories. For example, he looks at such actions in two ways, primary harm and secondary harm. Secondary harm which causes direct injury to another person and secondary harm is something which alarms the wider public.

Kant's categorical imperatives as we can understand are principles that are intrinsically valid and must be obeyed in all circumstances if we want that our behaviour should observe the moral law. For Bentham, any act of any type is good or not according to its consequences that means whether it is harmful for the people or non-harmful. This tradition continues in the Victorian era too. We can refer to Carlisle, Ruskin, Arnold philosophers who thought that moral view should be the benchmark to judge the work. The Romantics also gave a strong voice to a will to value and Dr. Johnson here talked about value pluralism.

Virtue Ethics in 20th Century

- Oakley and Cocking (2001)* draw from Aristotle and emphasize on the importance of practical rationality (*phronesis*) in determining a "virtuous character".
  - They postulate that positive deliberation and application of virtues in daily life, leads to *eudaimonia* or flourishing.
- Moral philosopher Phillipa Foot, in her work *Natural Goodness* (2001) asserts that acting morally is an intrinsic component of *practical rationality*.
- Her work challenges the idea that virtues are solely based on subjective feelings, highlighting rational choice's role in defining human goodness.



Source: https://www.eudaimoniatherapyllc.com

*Oakley, Justin, and Dean Cocking. Virtue ethics and professional roles. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

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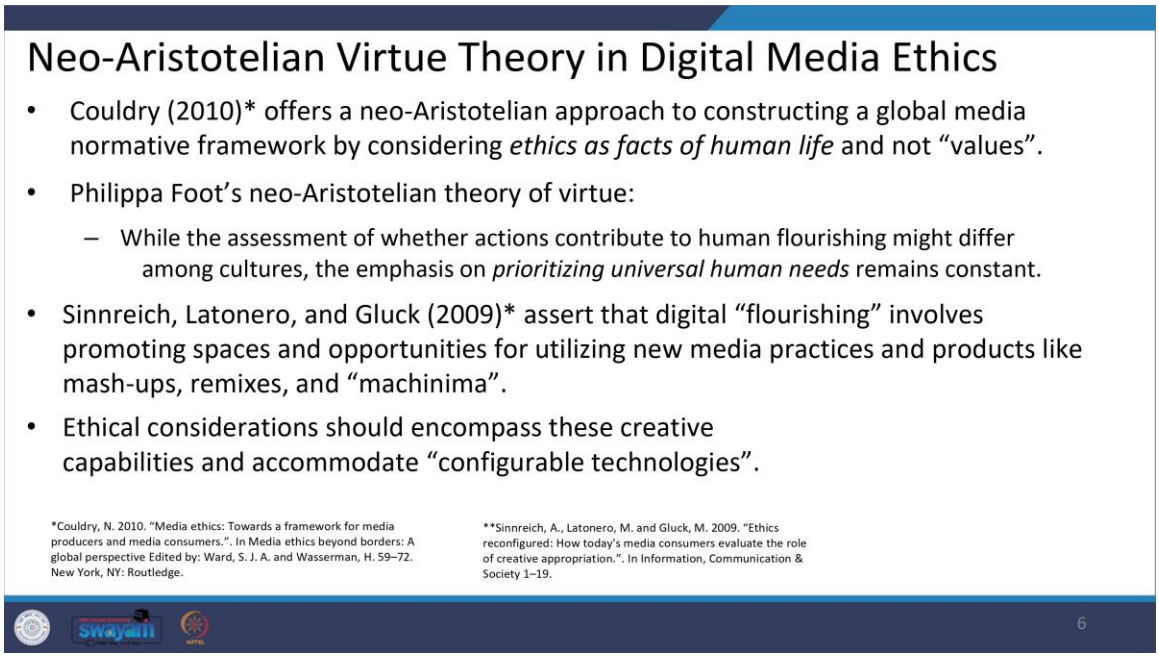
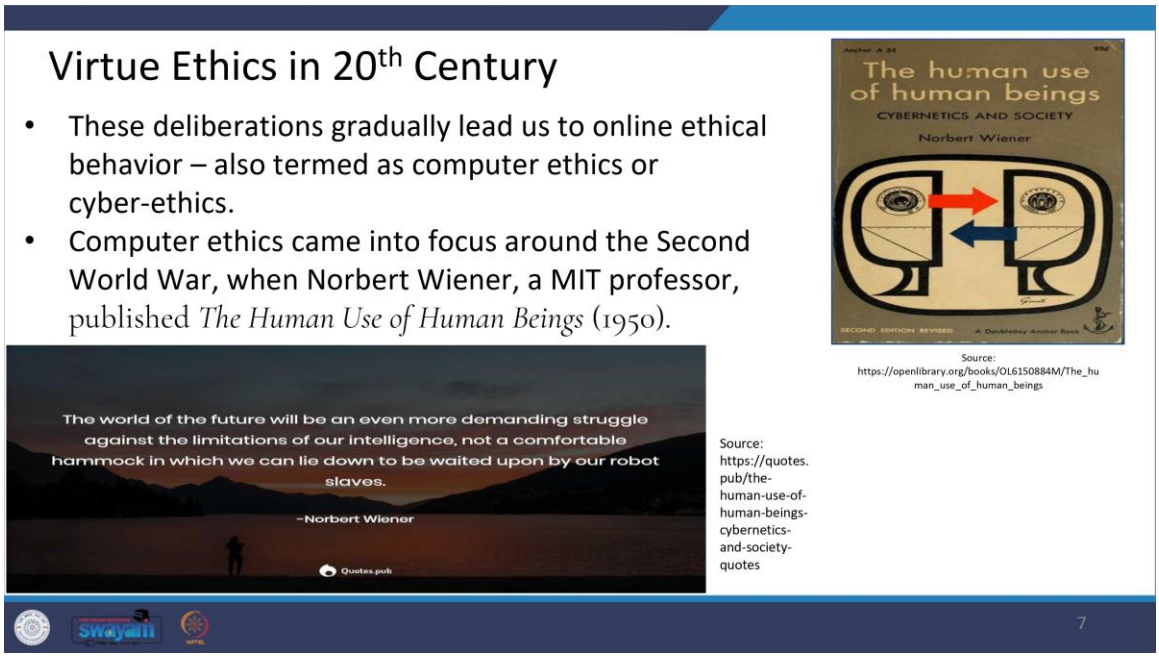
In the 20th century also, the concept of virtue ethics is highly relevant and many philosophers have continued to work in this direction. Here we are referring to certain prominent philosophers of the 20th century who have continued the tradition of virtue ethics in their works. Oakley and Cocking in their 2001 work draw from Aristotle and emphasize on the importance of practical rationality which has been termed by Aristotle as Phronesis in determining a virtuous character. They also suggest that it is positive deliberation and application of virtues in our daily life which can enhance to a sense of flourishing life. Moral philosopher Philippa Foot in a work Natural Goodness published in 2001 only asserts that acting morally is an intrinsic component of practical rationality. Her work challenges the idea that virtues are solely based on subjective feelings highlighting rational choices role in defining human goodness.

Principles underlying virtue ethics have also evolved to address ethical issues regarding modern digital media.



We can in this context also refer to the 2010 work of Couldry who is offered a new Aristotelian approach to constructing a global media normative framework by considering ethics as facts of human life and not simply as values. Philippa has also suggested a new Aristotelian theory of virtue that means that while the assessment of other actions contribute to human flourishing might differ among cultures the emphasis on prioritizing universal human needs must remain constant. Other philosophers have also asserted and here we have quoted to Sinnreich, Latonero and Gluck that digital flourishing involves promoting spaces and opportunities for utilizing new media practices and products like mashups, remixes and machinima. Ethical considerations must encompass these creative capabilities and accommodate configurable technologies.

Critics like Elizabeth Anscombe, Philippa Foot, Iris Murdoch and Bernard Williams etc. have discussed the concept of virtue ethics from different perspectives.



These deliberations gradually lead us to online ethical behavior which is also termed as computer ethics or cyber ethics by certain critics. Computer ethics came into focus around the Second World War when Norbert Wiener, a MIT professor published in 1950 his book The Human Use of Human Beings.

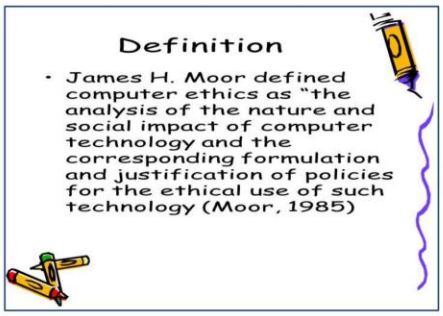
Wiener had predicted significant social and ethical consequences to the cybernetics technology he was helping to develop. An academic journal, Meta Philosophy organized around this time an essay competition about computer ethics. The results of this essay competition were published in 1985 in a special issue of this journal with the title Computers and Ethics. The winning essay was titled as What is Computer Ethics? written by James Moore.

"What Is Computer Ethics?"

- James Moor* states that computer ethics includes:

  1. Identification of computer-generated policy vacuums.
  2. Clarification of what Moor called 'conceptual muddles'.
  3. Formulation of policies for the use of computer technology.
  4. Ethical justification of policies.

*https://online.glyndwr.ac.uk/what-is-computer-ethics/#:~:text=The%20history%20of%20computer%20ethics&text=In%201950%2C%20Wiener%20published%20The,its%20first%20code%20of%20ethics.



Source: https://slideplayer.com/slide/4112272/

James Moore has stated that computer ethics must include the following four dimensions. The first area he addresses is regarding the identification of computer generated policy vacuums. He also insists on clarifications of conceptual models in this regard, focuses on the need of formulation of policies for the use of computer technology in the world and ultimately he stresses an ethical justification of policies.

Other milestones can also be referred to here.

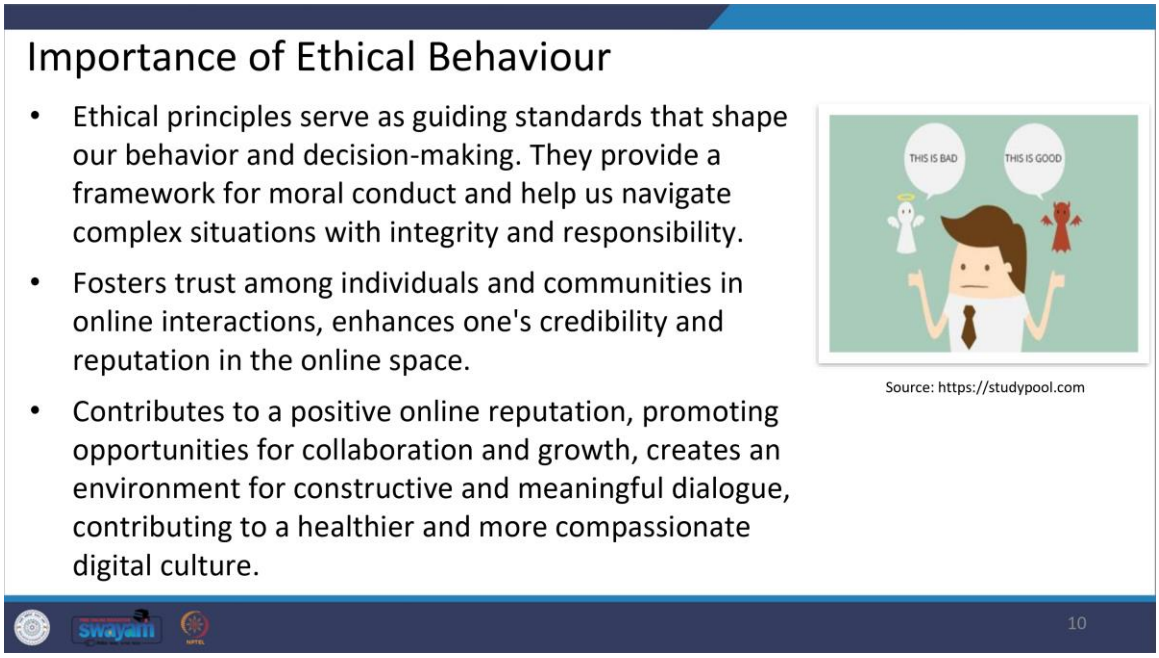
Computers and Ethics in 20th Century

- The ACM (Association for Computing Machinery) had adopted its first code of ethics by 1973.
  - Founded in 1947, it is the world's largest educational and scientific society, uniting computing educators, researchers and professionals to inspire dialogue, share resources and address the field's challenges.
- The term 'computer ethics' was coined in 1976 by Walter Maner.
- Deborah Johnson published her book *Computer Ethics* in 1985.
- Some critics claim that soon computer ethics will replace ethics altogether, though many others disagree to it.

Source: https://www.acm.org/media-center
https://dribbble.com/tags/acm%20logo

The ACM, Association for Computing Machinery had adopted its first code of ethics by 1973. This association was founded in 1947 in the US and it is the world's largest educational and scientific society. The term computer ethics was coined in 1976 by Walter Menor. Deborah Johnson published her book Computer Ethics in 1985. Some critics claim that soon computer ethics will replace ethics altogether though many other critics disagree to it.

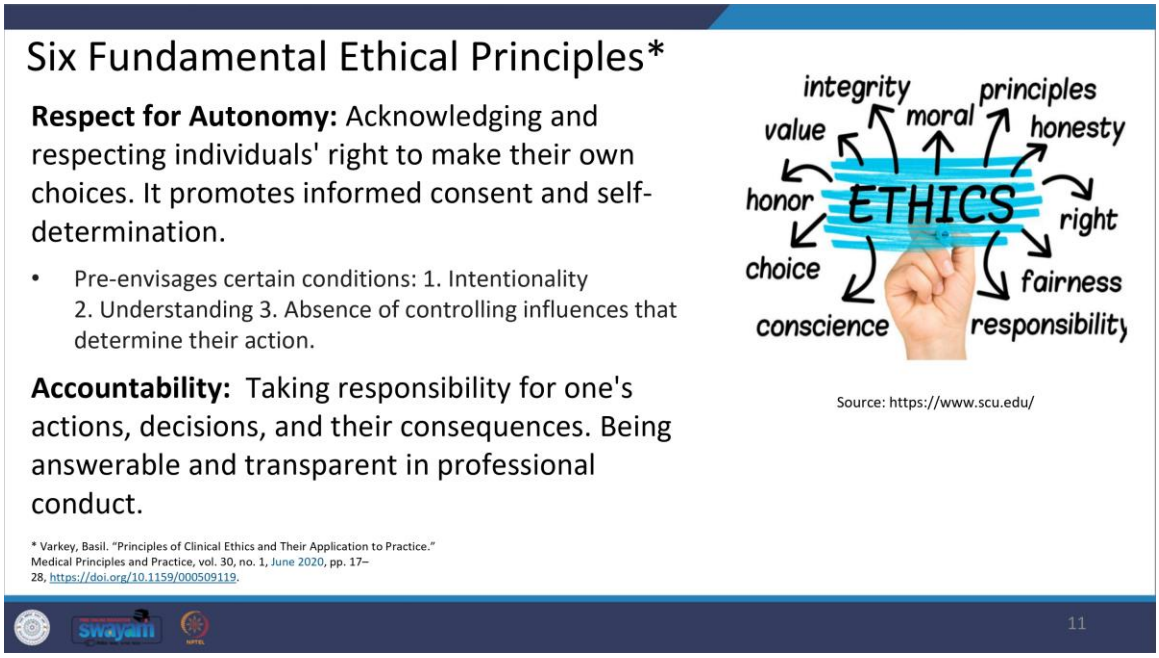
We have referred to the work of Deborah Johnson. She has suggested that computers do not create new ethical problems rather they pose new versions of standard moral problems, as well as moral dilemmas intensifying the requirement of old problems and forcing us to apply ordinary moral norms in uncharted realms. Her opinion is valid in the context of vastly and mountingly emerging challenges of the digital world and therefore it is crucial for maintaining trust and credibility. Let us look at why ultimately it is important.



Primarily we can say that ethical principles serve as guiding standards that shape our behaviour and decision making. They also provide a framework for moral conduct and it also helps us in navigating complex situations with integrity and a sense of responsibility. Ethical behaviour also fosters trust among individuals and communities during their online interactions enhancing an individual's credibility and reputation in the online space. It also contributes to a positive reputation offline as well as online I would say promoting opportunities for collaboration and growth and also creates an environment for constructive and meaningful dialogue contributing to a healthier and more compassionate digital culture.

At this point let us explore the fundamental ethical principles. Here I would refer to the

six fundamental ethical principles suggested by Basil Varkey recently that form the foundation of ethical behaviour.



The first principle he mentions is to have respect for autonomy. It acknowledges a respect for individual's right to make their own choices and promotes informed consent and self-determination about anything involved with the online behaviour. Respect for autonomy pre-envisages certain conditions. Firstly intentionality, secondly understanding and third is the absence of controlling influences that determine an individual's actions. The second point accountability talks about taking responsibility for one's actions, decisions and their consequences. That means being answerable to others and transparent in our professional conduct.

The next two are justice and honesty which play pivotal roles in shaping societies and defining the character of individuals.

Justice:

- Ensuring fairness, equity, and impartiality in the distribution of resources, opportunities, and outcomes.
- Treating individuals and groups equitably and without discrimination.

Honesty:

- Being truthful, transparent, and sincere in communication and interactions.
- Avoiding deception, dishonesty, and misleading others.

Source: https://www.iconfinder.com

The concept of justice ensures fairness, equity and impartiality in the distribution of resources, opportunities and outcomes. It is equally important in the digital world too. Treating individuals and groups equitably and without discrimination is also a compulsory aspect related with the concept of justice. Honesty as it suggests means being truthful and transparent and also sincere in our communication and interactions. It also suggests that we should avoid deception, wrong information, misleading attempts by us and dishonesty of any type.

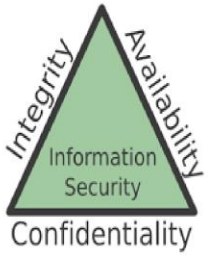
The last two ethical behaviours are integrity and confidentiality. These principles are also integral to maintaining trust and upholding professional standards as well as preserving the dignity of individuals and organisations in digital communication.

Integrity:

- Consistently aligning actions with ethical principles and moral values.
- Demonstrating honesty, reliability, and moral courage.

Confidentiality:

- Safeguarding private and sensitive information shared in confidence.
- Respecting privacy rights and maintaining trust in professional relationships.



Source: https://panmore.com

The fifth point Basil talks about is integrity. That means consistently aligning actions with ethical principles and moral values. The last point he mentions is confidentiality. That means safeguarding private and sensitive information which is shared in confidence. That leads us to an understanding and having respect for privacy rights and maintaining trust in professional relationships.

In online communication we can see ethical behaviour plays a huge role to ensure successful and respectful communication. Ethical guidelines for social media use are also important as they provide a framework for it. These guidelines promote integrity, transparency and positive interactions contributing to a healthier and more ethical digital landscape in the context of social media platforms.

Ethical Considerations in Social Media

Honesty and Authenticity:

- Share accurate information and be transparent about your identity and affiliations.
- Avoid creating or spreading misleading or false content.

Privacy and Consent:

- Respect individuals' privacy rights and obtain consent before sharing personal information or photos.
- Be mindful of the privacy settings of your own accounts and respect others' preferences.

Source: https://customenvy.com

Ethical considerations in the context of social media reiterate the significance of honesty and authenticity as well as that of privacy and consent. Honesty and authenticity suggest that we should share accurate information transparently about our identity and affiliations. It should not be misleading in order to deceive other people. We should also avoid creating or spreading false content or misleading content with any malicious purpose. We should also respect the privacy rights of individuals and obtain consent before sharing personal information or photographs. We should be mindful of the privacy settings of our own accounts and respect the preferences of other people too.

Similarly, we find that the ethical considerations for email communication involve principles that guide responsible and respectful behaviour in this form of online communication. Let us look at some key ethical considerations in the context of email writing.

Ethical Considerations in Email Communication

Professionalism and Respect:

- Maintain a professional tone and use respectful language in emails.
- Avoid offensive or derogatory remarks that may harm relationships or create a hostile environment.

Timeliness and Responsiveness:

- Respond to emails promptly, acknowledging receipt, and setting clear expectations.
- Do not ignore or neglect important emails that require attention or action.

Source: https://newyorklegalethics.com

We should be professional in writing mails to others as far as our tone and the use of language is concerned. Our use of language should be respectful to others. That means that we should avoid using any derogatory remarks that may harm relationships or create a hostile environment. We should also be sensitive to the differences which exist in the world around different concepts. We should also be able to respond to the email in a prompt fashion, acknowledge receipt and also setting clear expectations with the help of words. That means that not only the important but also not so important mails should not be ignored or neglected and immediate action should be taken. At least they should be responded to with a firm acknowledgement immediately.

Obtaining consent, respecting copyright laws and maintaining boundaries also play a crucial part in ethical communication via email.

Consent and Opt-Out:

- Obtain consent before adding individuals to mailing lists or sending marketing emails.
- Provide clear options to unsubscribe or opt-out of further emails.

Use of Intellectual Property:

- Respect copyright laws and obtain permission before using others' intellectual property in emails.

Professional Boundaries:

- Maintain appropriate boundaries, avoiding personal or inappropriate discussions in professional email communication.

Source: https://prsay.prsa.org

As it is important in other online platforms, we find that in the context of email writing also obtaining consent before adding individuals to our mailing list or sending marketing emails is important. We should provide clear options to opt out of further emails in our primary mail. We should also respect copyright laws and obtain permission before using other individuals' intellectual property as part of our email. We should also maintain appropriate boundaries in a professional manner and avoid personal or inappropriate discussions in professional email communication.

Similarly, ethical considerations for instant messaging encompass principles that guide responsible and respectful behaviour in real-time text-based communication. Let us explore some contexts that highlight specific ethical considerations.

Ethical Considerations in Instant Messaging

Workplace Communication:

- Respect confidentiality and share sensitive information only with authorized individuals.
- Maintain a professional and respectful tone in conversations with colleagues, supervisors, and clients.

Personal Relationships:

- Obtain consent before sharing personal or sensitive information about others.
- Establish clear boundaries and obtain consent when discussing personal matters or sharing intimate content.

Source: https://www.getapp.com

Instant messaging is emerging as a popular medium in workplace communication as well as in our personal communication. In the workplace communication, we should respect confidentiality and should avoid sharing sensitive information without prior approval from the authorised individuals. We should also maintain a respectful and professional tone in conversations not only with our seniors and supervisors but also with our subordinates, colleagues and clients. In our personal relationships also, we should be careful to obtain consent before sharing personal or sensitive information about other people. Even in the personal relationships, we should be able to establish clear boundaries and obtain consent when we discuss personal matters or share any intimate content about a close friend or a family member, for example, with others.

Finally, ethical participation in online forums involves adhering to principles and practices that promote responsible and respectful behaviour.

Ethical Considerations in Online Forums

Respectful Communication:

- Avoiding personal attacks or offensive language towards other participants.

Constructive Engagement:

- Seek common ground and build upon shared ideas to promote collaborative problem-solving.

Adherence to Forum Rules and Guidelines:

- Reporting any violations or inappropriate behaviour observed within the forum.

Source: https://insidehighered.com

In online forums, our attempt should be to engage our conversations in a constructive manner. We should try to seek a common ground amongst all the interactants and build upon shared ideas to promote collaborative problem solving. We should also adhere to the rules and guidelines of any forum. The communication should also be full of respect, maintaining a professional tone only.

Moving on to the unethical behaviours prevalent in online communication, misinformation and fake news severely impact the integrity of public discourse. Fake news, which includes bogus stories, satires, sensational and deceptive efforts, spread rapidly on social media. Let us now look at a video that gives us a few tips to recognise fake news.

Fake news is nothing new, but bogus stories can reach more people more quickly via social media than what good old-fashioned viral emails could accomplish in years past.

A lot of these viral claims aren't news at all, but fiction, satire and efforts to fool readers into thinking they're for real. Here are some strategies to shield yourself from fake news. Are you familiar with the source? Is it legitimate? Has it been reliable in the past? If not, you may not want to trust it. If a provocative headline drew your attention, read a little further before you decide to pass along the shocking information. Even in legitimate news stories, the headline doesn't always tell the whole story.

But fake news, particularly efforts to be satirical, can include several revealing signs in the text. One fake story even attributed a quote to a dolphin. If that had been real, you could argue they buried the lead. Another telltale sign of a fake story is often the byline, if there even is one.

And in some cases, the authors are not even real. One story was credited to a doctor who won 14 Peabody awards and a handful of Pulitzer Prizes. Which would be very impressive if it wasn't also totally made up. Many times these bogus stories will cite official or official-sounding sources, but once you look into it, the source doesn't back up the claim. Some false stories aren't completely fake, but rather distortions of real events. These mendacious claims can take a legitimate news story and twist what it says, or even claim that something that happened long ago is related to current events.

One deceptive website took a story that was over a year old from CNN and slapped on a

new, misleading headline and publication date. So on top of the deception, there was copyright infringement. Remember, there is such a thing as satire. Normally it's clearly labeled as such, and sometimes it's even funny.

But it isn't the news.And then there's the more debatable forms of satire, designed to pull one over on the reader. These posts are also designed to encourage clicks and generate money for the creator through ad revenue. But they aren't news. We know this is difficult. Confirmation bias leads people to put more stock in information that confirms their beliefs and discount information that doesn't.

But the next time you're automatically appalled at some social media post concerning, say, a politician you oppose, take a moment to check it out. Try this simple test. But other stories have been posted to the news website that is the source of the story that just popped up in your social media feed. You may be predisposed to believe a story about a politician you don't like, but if the alleged news site also features a story about guardians from Antarctica retaliating against America by hitting New Zealand with an earthquake, maybe you should think twice before sharing. And yes, that earthquake story is a real example of a fake story that popped up.

We know you're busy, and some of this debunking takes time. But fact checkers get paid to do this kind of work. Between factcheck.org, snopes.com, the Washington Post fact checker, and politifact.com, it's likely at least one has already fact checked the latest viral claim to pop up in your social media news feed.

And remember, news readers themselves remain the first line of defense against fake news. To see more, go to factcheck.org.

This video underscores how fake news can spread rapidly through social media, often appearing as sensational headlines and fabricated stories. It highlights how misleading headlines, confirmation bias, and satire can contribute to the proliferation of fake news. The video also points out the role of fact checking websites in debunking false claims and emphasizes the importance of news consumers vigilance and awareness in countering the spread of misinformation.

Thus news readers active involvement in recognizing and countering fake news is a vital defense against misinformation. Keeping these points in mind, let us explore the ethical duty we have to uphold truth and accuracy in our online interactions.

Avoiding Misinformation and Fake News

Verifying Sources:

- Relying on reputable sources and authoritative platforms helps combat the spread of misinformation.

Promoting Critical Thinking:

- Encouraging others to evaluate information critically and question the credibility of sources.
- Providing tools and resources to enhance media literacy and distinguish reliable information from falsehoods.

Responsible Sharing:

- Double-checking facts and ensuring the accuracy of the content before disseminating it further.

Source: https://s.wsj.net

The primary duty in this context is to verify the sources, whether these are the authoritative platforms we are referring to as it is only the verified sources which can combat the spread of misinformation. We should also promote critical thinking and encourage other people also to evaluate information in a critical manner and also look questioningly at the credibility of sources. We should also be able to provide and understand tools and resources to enhance media literacy and distinguish reliable information from falsehoods. At the same time, we should be highly responsible in sharing any online message to others. We should double check the facts and ensure the accuracy of the content before disseminating it further in several other groups.

The balance between online anonymity and accountability is a complex and ongoing debate in the digital age. Anonymity can provide freedom of expression, but it also raises concerns about responsibility and potential misuse as well. Let us explore the challenges and considerations in finding the right balance.

Online Anonymity and Accountability

Freedom of Expression:

- Anonymity can enable individuals to express opinions and engage in discussions without fear of reprisal or judgment.
- It allows marginalized voices to be heard and protects privacy in sensitive situations.

Source: https://alltheragescience.com

Misuse and Harmful Behaviour:

- Anonymity may facilitate cyberbullying, harassment, and spreading false information without consequences.
- Lack of accountability can undermine trust, leading to a toxic online environment.

On the one hand, anonymity can enable us to express opinions and engage in discussions without any fear of reprisal or judgment. And therefore, it might be important sometimes for some marginalized voices in sensitive situations, particularly in those countries where democratic norms are not normally practiced. Anonymity may also facilitate at the same time however, cyberbullying, harassment and spreading false information without facing any consequences oneself. And this is the threatening aspect of anonymity.As anonymity is also associated with lack of personal accountability, it undermines trust leading to a toxic online environment which has to be avoided at all costs.

Finding the right balance between online anonymity and accountability is crucial for promoting a safe and respectful digital environment. Let us now explore some real world case studies of ethical and unethical behavior in online communication to put this information into perspectives.

In the first case study, Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla and SpaceX uses Twitter as a platform to communicate with the public. In 2018, when a Twitter user questioned the safety of Tesla's autopilot feature, Musk provided a detailed response explaining the safety measures and statistics demonstrating transparency by addressing concerns without any delay.

Case Study 1: Ethical Behaviour

Elon Musk's Transparency on Twitter Scenario:

- Musk's transparency and proactive communication improved public understanding and trust in Tesla's autopilot feature.
- It showcased ethical behavior by prioritizing the dissemination of accurate information, addressing concerns, and engaging with the public in a responsible manner.

Source: https://www.twitter.com

Musk's transparency and proactive communication improved public understanding and also enhance the trust in Tesla's autopilot features. It showcased ethical behavior by prioritizing the dissemination of accurate information, addressing the concerns without any delay and engaging with the public in a responsible manner.

So, what are the lessons we can learn from this case study?

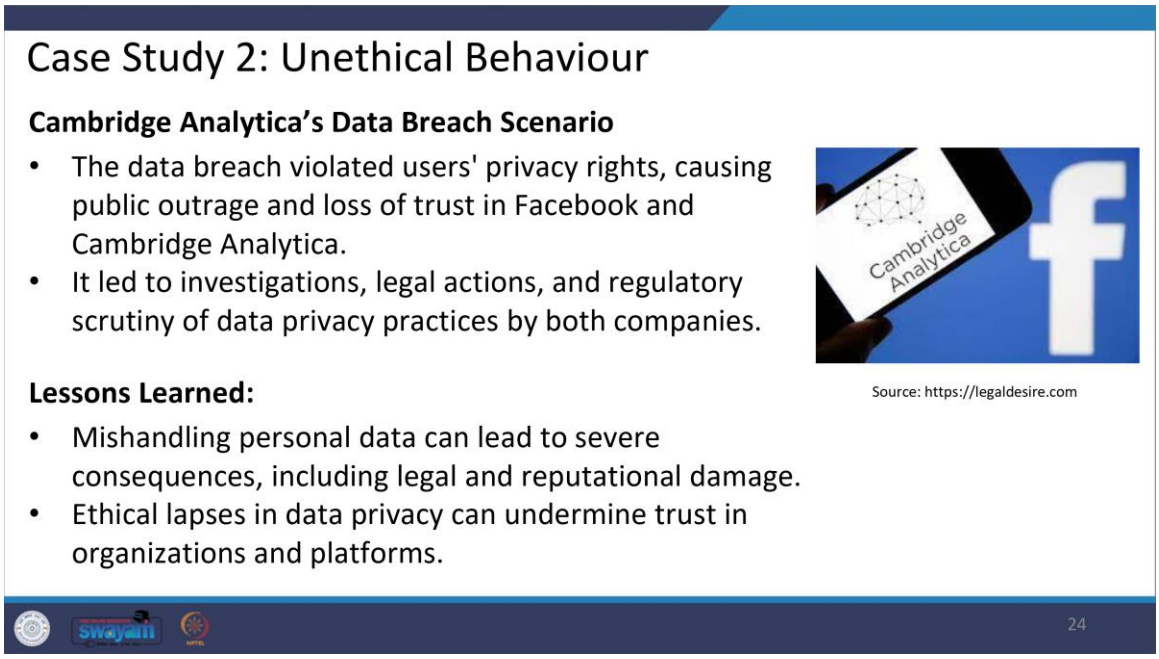
Lessons Learned:

- Transparent and honest communication builds trust and credibility with the audience.
- Addressing concerns and providing accurate information fosters a positive online reputation and can positively impact the perception of a brand or individual.

Source: https://media.wbur.org

This case study shows that transparent and honest communication builds trust and credibility with the audience and addressing concerns in providing accurate information fosters a positive online reputation and positively impacts the perception of a brand or individual.

Thus, we can look at the positive impact of ethical behavior and transparency in online communication. For our second case study, we have the scenario of Cambridge Analytica's infamous data breach. In 2018, it was revealed that Cambridge Analytica, a political consulting firm, harvested personal data from millions of Facebook users without their consent. This data was used for targeted political advertising during the 2016 US presidential election campaign.



This data breach had violated the privacy rights of users causing public outrage and a loss of trust in Facebook as well as in Cambridge Analytica. It of course led to investigations, legal actions and regulatory scrutiny of data privacy practices by both companies. This case study tells us that mishandling personal data can lead to severe consequences including legal and reputational damage. Ethical lapses in data privacy can also undermine trust in organizations and platforms.

This case serves as a stark reminder of the severe consequences of unethical behavior in the digital realm. The breach of user data and manipulation of personal information, eroded trust, violated privacy rights and undermined the integrity of democratic processes It highlights the urgent need for ethical considerations and robust safeguards to protect individuals and preserve the ethical foundation of online communication.

While the process of globalization has brought about new challenges and issues for ethical considerations, it has also raised age-old questions that have been pondered by philosophers throughout history. Let us look at a video that addresses this concern.

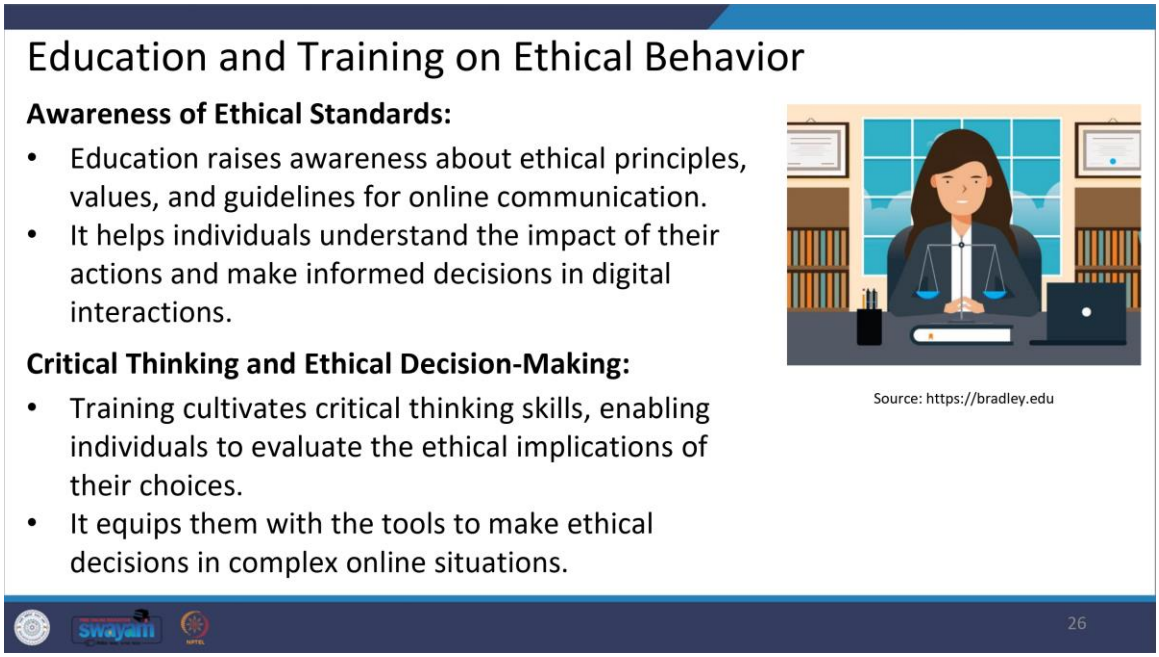
In many ways the globalization of business that's occurred in recent decades has raised a whole slew of new issues and challenges for business ethics. But in other ways this process has raised some questions that are as old as Western philosophy. Issues like bribery, issues like sweatshop labor, child labor are very much new to the field of business ethics in the last year and they've really arisen as business has become a more globalized and international enterprise. On the other hand, the question is what does it matter that different cultures have different expectations and standards? Are we to simply accept the status quo? When in Rome do as the Romans do? When in Indonesia do as the Indonesians do? Or are there standards that are more objective, more universal? Is ethics dependent upon culture or is it something that's more rational and independent of culture? Again, I think Plato asked that question 3,000 years ago and it's still valid today. If we assume that every culture has its own standards and standards are valid within each culture, then we face the real serious risk of relativism, that each culture has its own standards and what's good in one place is wrong in another place.

But the result of that ultimately is who's going to win that conflict and what it really means is that those that have the power will control the agenda. Thrasymachus in Plato's Republic had it right. Justice is the advantage of the stronger. If there are no rational process, if there are no objective answers, then we have conflict and when we have conflict, the decision will be made by those with power. So the philosophers argue that

there has to be a rational process, perhaps not a rational answer, one definite right answer that's correct in all times, in all places and across cultures, but a process of reasoning and thinking and decision making which can find mutually agreeable conclusions.

So again, I would push a model of ethics as a model of decision making and argue that even in a global context, there are standards, there are rational, objective and intercultural standards of behavior.

This video is by Professor Joseph R. Des Jardins, who is an academic dean at the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University, Minnesota. He has served in various key leadership roles with the Society for Business Ethics for several years. This video highlights how issues like bribery, sweatshop labor and child labor have emerged in the context of a more globalized business environment. This video also emphasizes the danger of cultural relativism, where differing standards across cultures could lead to conflicts with those in power determining the outcomes. With these challenges in mind, education and training on ethical behavior are paramount.



When we talk about education and training on ethical behavior, firstly, we have to create an awareness of ethical standards. Primarily, it is understood that education raises awareness about ethical principles, values and guidelines for online communication. It also helps us to understand the impact of our actions and therefore make informed choices and decision in our digital interactions. Secondly, we should promote critical thinking and ethical decision making. Training cultivates critical thinking skills and it enables us to evaluate the ethical implications of our choices. It also equips us with the tools to make ethical decisions in complex online situations.

Furthermore, teaching responsible digital citizenship and establishing a culture of ethical behavior is equally important.

Responsible Digital Citizenship:

- Education encourages individuals to be accountable for their actions and contribute positively to the digital ecosystem.
  - It promotes responsible digital citizenship, emphasizing ethical behavior, empathy, and respect for others in online communities.

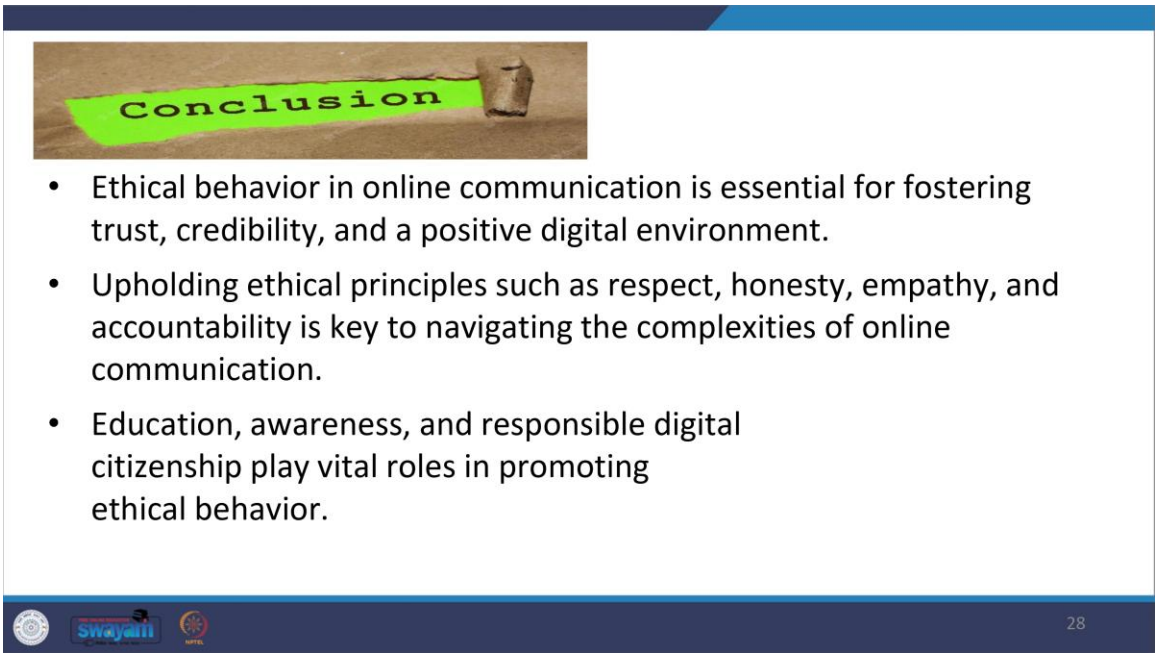
Building a Culture of Ethical Behavior:

- Through education and training, we can create a culture that values and prioritizes ethical behavior in online communication.
- It fosters an environment where individuals are empowered to uphold ethical standards and hold others accountable.

Source: https://apc.edu.ph

What do we mean by responsible digital citizenship? Education encourages us to be accountable for our actions and contribute positively to the digital ecosystem. It promotes a responsible digital citizenship, emphasizing ethical behavior, empathy and respect for others in online communities and even with people whom we do not personally know. It also suggests that we should also be able to build a culture of online ethical behavior through education and training. Through education and training, we can create a culture that values and prioritizes ethical behavior. The culture of ethical behavior would also be able to foster an environment where all individuals are empowered to uphold ethical standards and at the same time hold an individual accountable.

In conclusion, by raising awareness, developing critical thinking skills, fostering responsible digital citizenship and building a culture of ethics, we can create a safer and more ethical online environment.



Ethical behavior in online communication is essential for fostering trust, credibility and a positive digital environment. Upholding ethical principles such as respect, honesty, empathy and accountability is key to navigating the complexities of online communication. Education, awareness and responsible digital citizenship play vital roles in promoting ethical behavior.

We shall continue our discussion about this topic in the subsequent modules.

Thank you.