

Workshop Report

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Purpose and subjects of the workshop

The center of our concern is Information Technology, especially the Internet. The use of the Internet undoubtedly provides us with a wonderful new horizon for global communication and global collaboration. We now live in a virtually borderless world, and businesses make use of the new possibilities provided by the Internet. However, the Internet also brings about a series of problems that require further reflections on borderless ethics and responsibility for businesses. The national law enforcement of each nation is different and we have no international common understanding yet to regulate the use of the Internet. For our daily life, from children to senior citizens, from churches to commercial companies, from university research institutes to hospitals, from government to individuals, few areas can be kept going without the use of the Internet. A communication problem in one part of the world, the lack of global standards, the manipulation of data, the lack of privacy, and other issues can have a tremendous impact on society. What is our social responsibility in the context of these challenges? iBiZ2008, an international workshop for net business ethics aims at discussing the theme "Global Technology, Ethics, and Social Responsibility

Day One: “Borderless Technologies: The challenge of the Internet”

Dr. Wanda Bigham made a welcome address of the workshop mentioning that the Internet is a tool for good and a tool for evil, although there are also grey areas where we must use logic and values. She also emphasized that “Global Ethics, Methodist network” are keywords of this conference.

Dr. Masayuki Ida provided the introduction lecture “Elements for Net business Ethics”. His main focus was what is taught in business ethics class for international or global business. By showing TV programming videos, such as “Google revolution”, “Search Engine Expo”, he stated that there is no “abroad” or no boundary in the Internet era and pointed out the importance of governance and social responsibility.

Because of the absence of **Guy Steel**, **Dr. Amos Nascimento** briefly summarized his keynote address on his behalf. The title was “ Borderless net business and technology.” In summary, Guy stated

that in regards to the Internet, people want to know whether the information is reliable. This is one essential ethical issue.

Mr. Kaz Hashimoto, developer of game software, demonstrated state-of-the-art 3D game graphical software, whose name is “Blue Mars”. He showed us the possibilities that the graphical technology will offer for a seamless world between real and virtual worlds.

Two regional presentations followed. One was “Technology for Africa” by **Dr. Martin Dwomoh-Tweneboam**. He insisted that “ICT” – Information, Communication and Technology is a more suitable definition which explains the Internet in Africa than the word “IT”. The word “Communication” gives broader meanings which include libraries, document centers, and telecommunication. He mentioned the large growing possibilities in the African Internet market and the need to develop broader access to the market by utilizing the open source software. He introduced several open software projects and the “Mozambique education center project”.

The final presentation of day one was **Dr. Klaus Schutzer**’s “Research and Technology in Latin America”. He showed that 10% of the universities in Brazil are public while 90% are private. However, most research funding is given to public universities in Brazil. On the other hand, he mentioned that non-profit universities do social education in Brazil and introduced us to several UNIMEP activities.

Soon afterwards we welcomed dinner with a roundtable presentation where every participant made a self introduction in an informal atmosphere.

Day Two: “Borderless Business; Net-Business Ethics and Responsibility”

At the keynote address in the morning of day two, **Dr. Hubert Kim** presented “Internet business and ethics in Korea”, which showed that Korea leads as top-runner and test bed of broadband Internet services. By using the examples of “Cyber University” and “Megastudy”, he emphasized that e-learning is a growing sector of Internet business in Korea. At the same time, there are negative effects of Internet in the country, such as adult material, violence, fraud, addiction etc. To counter the bad effects of Internet, he introduced several social activities such as Internet ethics education in elementary school.

From a view of a small IT business enterprise president, **Ms. Sakuko Unten**, presented several cases of a Web solution business in Japan. She pointed out the importance of combining Internet ethics and corporate ethics, and also the difficulties of customer education in dealing with ethical problems. She insisted that finding the right balance between benefits and risks is a key solution.

Dr. Davi Betts’s presentation title was “WWW, \$\$\$, Education & Ethics in Brazil”. In the Internet age, he said convergence of technology, application and communication is important. He

continued that in the knowledge society; we need to have data information knowledge wisdom. There are lots of issues such as local cultures and values, indigenous knowledge, national identity, copyright and patent, and data confidentiality and security in another country especially with respect to local legislation.

Dr. Margaret Griesse gave an interesting case study of the DuPont Brazil controversy of GMOs (generally modified organisms). She concluded that ethics is a social process and presented the tension between personal integrity versus social conditions for sophisticated ethical decision making. Similar to the Internet, we found limited ethics in a variety of stakeholders. In this case, they include DuPont themselves, consumers, scientists, Greenpeace, farmers, government and other countries. Keywords to solving these complicated problems are communication, negotiation, regulation and participation.

In the afternoon of day two, **Rev. Professor Yoshinobu Tobo** made the keynote address, “Theology for Information age: Happiness and Darkness in an Information Age”. He said that the Bible is media space and the truth is the invitation to love God when invited to love our neighbor. With regards to the topic of the social entrepreneur, Prof Tobo said that it is the 21st century new business model which comes from the cultural sector including the church. He also mentioned Ohhara’s Christian faith and his mission.

Dr. Iris Trick presented “Water -Source of Life?!” from the view of biotechnology and the environment. She said biotechnology is a fast growing area in different lines of business and water is essential for life. At this moment, she reported that 40% of the world population is suffering from a shortage of water and there are regional problems. She showed a challenging water treatment project in Piracicaba, Brazil (Sao Paulo) and also in Germany with a decentralized water management system as an alternative for sustainable business.

“Ethics in e-learning” was the title of **Dr. Ted Brown**’s presentation. At first, he mentioned that online education is the fastest growing sector in the United States and we need to look at both the quality of the effectiveness of e-learning and its consumer. He pointed out that psychological distance can encourage academic fraud. Developing a specific academic moral code and teaching a moral code to students will maintain higher quality e-learning.

Dr. Fred Bird’s presentation was “Globalization Perspective of e-business and ethics”. First, he said we are living in an unbalanced and risky world. Since 1980, we have been looking at increased inequality within and between nations. There are risks such as the global spread of diseases, climate change and environmental degradation, modern uses of armed forces and modern labor markets and industrialization. He considers the fundamental ethical responsibility of business is to be good at

business. He emphasized that businesses are not charities. Thus, we should invest in developing areas, use local suppliers and include those have been excluded. Finally he named several issues such as lack of access, odious usages and information overloads which net business ethics is facing.

At the concluding remarks, **Dr. Ida** made the presentation “Globalization”. He referred to the Asian situation by using a video of a Vietnam Internet high education program and prep school for IT engineering in India. We see how the Internet accelerates globalization and lead us to a borderless world; however, at the same time, we realize the ethical issues are different nation by nation. Solutions of ethical issues are not simple but complicated.

Following this, **Dr. Bigham** gave the closing remarks, **Professor Chiaki Iwai** wrapped up the two day conference by summarizing each presenter’s keywords and implications.

Dr. Nascimento led the final discussion as chair. At the conclusion, every participant agreed that we should organize a technical and an ethical task force and continue further discussion for the iBiz2008 publication and member’s mutual communication.

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