

Chapter 9

Educational and Professional Technoethics

INTRODUCTION

Are we developing a (global) society where our youth think it is ok to copy and paste whatever they see on the Internet and turn it in for homework; where writing an English paper would include BTW, IMHO, LOL among other emoticons; where downloading a song or movie that they can pirate from the Web is perfectly ok? We would certainly hope not. However, these concerns are just the tip of what is happening in our society. When looking at the social impact of technology in on our society it becomes clear the importance of instilling ethical behaviors and practices in the members of our society. Where is the best place to instill these ethical behaviors? --Gearhart, 2008, p.263.

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The above passage provides a glimpse at the challenges connected to education and the increasing role of technology within it. As a formal field of study, Educational technology is pursued a variety of research programs under various names which focus on the connections between technology and education within society (i.e., Instructional Technology, Educational Computing, Distance Education, Technology Education). This work places technology oriented developments in education under the general heading of educational technology. As defined by Luppicini (2005):

Educational Technology is a goal oriented problem-solving systems approach utilizing tools, techniques, theories, and methods from multiple knowledge domains, to: (1) design, develop, and evaluate, human and mechanical resources efficiently and effectively in order to facilitate and leverage all aspects of learning, and (2) guide change agency and transformation of educational systems and practices in order to contribute to influencing change in society (p.108).

Educational technology deals with the use of technology within traditional educational settings (i.e., schools, colleges, universities) as well as professional training contexts where technology is influencing work and professional activities (i.e., technical schools, public institutions, companies, non-governmental organizations).

Ethical considerations within amassing work in educational technology refocuses attention from technology and education to ethics, technology and education. Muf-foletto (2003) states the “concept of ethics within the field of educational technology is a conceptual construct that legitimates certain behaviors and interpretations, while reifying particular social structures and ways of knowing” (p. 62). Educational technoethics is dedicated to social and ethical aspects of technology within formal and informal educational contexts (education, training, and evaluation). Thus, it is divided into two main areas dealing with traditional educational settings as well as professional educational contexts. General educational technoethics is concerned with ethical use of technology to promote the aims of education while professional technoethics is a specialized area of educational technoethics focusing on the development and evaluation of ethical codes and standards to guide decision-making about technology in education and professional life. Within educational technoethics, this often involves the strategic use of technology assessment models to evaluate new technologies and their possible consequences, along with the assignment of social and ethical responsibility. This chapter traces the roots of technoethical inquiry in education and professional life. It also explores current efforts in educational technoethics to leverage the use of technology in education and professional life.

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