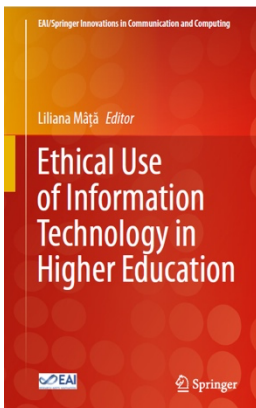


Ethical Use of Information Technology in Higher Education

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With the use of technology continuing to increase in higher education, Liliana Măța has met the need for knowledge on the ethics of information technology. *Ethical Use of Information Technology in Higher Education* specifically looks at the ethical questions that technology has brought to colleges and universities since the 1980s. This book examines both ethical problems and solutions relating to the use of information technology across higher education with the goal of identifying and increasing awareness of the ethical issues that technology brings to education activities.

The book is split into three different sections. The first section includes chapters 1 to 3, which review recent theoretical approaches in ethics in information technology in higher education. The second section includes chapters 4 to 10 focusing on student ethical issues centering on educational resources. The final section includes chapters 11 to 14 looking at ethics as it relates to technology use in instruction. The central claim of the chapters is that current efforts to understand ethical use, prepare students to use resources ethically and teach ethically online are inadequate to ensure continued ethical use. With each technology change, new technological opportunities create waves of challenges for administrators, students, and faculty.

Chapter 1 examines academic integrity in a digital age. Cojacariu and Mareș claim that the causes of academic integrity struggles are either internal or external. These internal and external struggles have expanded due to what some researchers call the “new technological frontier”. This issue has become

problematic as college students are now millennials who, as digital natives, are more results-oriented and less process-oriented. The authors are recommending teacher-centered training for academic integrity that would include starting the training at an early age and building a strong foundation of critical thinking skills. The six foci of the training would be honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. If done properly, this training should prepare students to be successful even as the technology environment changes.

In Chapter 3, Kante focuses on the factors that affect ethical behavior in the use of IT and the effect of factors on ethical behavior in the use of IT. This project claims to have found “a suitable model in predicting ethical behavior in the use of IT in Mali and perhaps in other settings” (p.44). The author does realize the limitations of this study due to the singular location and the small sample size.

Alexandra-Georgiana Poenaru’s chapter 6 reports on a study looking at open-source educational sources and resources available online that discourages students from using “printed” books and how the Internet leads to unethical behavior among students, such as plagiarism and intellectual fraud. Poenaru supports her premises via a literature review along with the survey results. There are some sections of the chapter that divert into discussion of academic dishonesty including the use of unlicensed software which are not directly linked to the stated premises. The findings of the study support that students prefer open-source resources, while the second premise was not clearly confirmed. A larger study with a more diverse sample would be needed to garner more information.

In the seventh chapter, the use of online resources for communication between teachers and students is explored. Măța is clear about the need for mutual respect, justice, and goodwill for effective online communication between teachers and students. The research study found that for students, rapidity and access were the driving forces for online communication with teachers, while the ethical challenges of online communication included inappropriate language, misunderstanding information and nonadherence to the work hours of teachers. While much of the chapter broadly focuses on online resources, there are references to social media or social networks as a form of online instructional communication. This aspect is not covered in depth in the chapter, and as referenced in the chapter, many institutions restrict or have guidelines for teachers when using social media for instructional purposes. The results of the project produced two primary areas of concern: plagiarism and intellectual property infringement. The concerns with plagiarism include the ease with which students can find and use resources and the need (and cost) for anti-plagiarism software to battle plagiarism and self-plagiarism. The concerns about intellectual property infringement were mostly teacher centric, as there are concerns about teachers accessing, posting, and advocating for protected resources to be used

unethically. The dilemma of holding students to an ethical standard (not using work without crediting the creator) while teachers might be violating a similar policy by using unlicensed software or advocating for accessing protected content is not widely explored in this chapter.

As the use of technology continues to increase, the need for ethics in information technology will continue to increase. At the same time, the journey for solutions will continue as the changing landscape of higher education continues to evolve. This book offers a glimpse of the challenges and some possible solutions while also identifying some areas of future concern that all stakeholders in higher education can use to review their own practices and information technology practices.

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