ICT Codes of Ethics

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Roles of codes

• Function as an ethical charter for the profession
• General acceptance provides an explicit standard against which current practices can be measured

Reference: Software Engineering Code of Ethics & Professional Practice
A code’s nature

- Holistic view
- Not exhaustive
- Not an ethical algorithm
- Tensions can and will arise

Reference: Software Engineering Code of Ethics & Professional Practice
Different types of statement

- Aspire to be human
- Expect to be professional
- Demand to use good practices

Reference: Software Engineering Code of Ethics & Professional Practice
Promote ICT Social Responsibility

• Develop a socially responsible culture within work which nurtures moral individual action
• Consider and support the wellbeing of all stakeholders
• Account for global common values and local cultural differences
• Recognise social responsibility is beyond legal compliance and effective fiscal management
• Ensure all business processes are considered from a social responsibility perspective
• Be proactive rather than reactive

A dynamic and useful code

• Adaptable and relevant to new situations as they occur
• Helps to define those actions which are ethically improper
• Educates both the public and aspiring professionals about ethical obligations of ICT professionals
• Modify existing processes

Reference: Software Engineering Code of Ethics & Professional Practice
Process and Product of ICT

- complex
- interrelated
- issues
- ethical
- social
Process

Virtuous action

Education & Training
Design & Governance
Conduct

Product

Codes could and should inform this ICT activity!
Three examples
Possible role for CEPIS

• Develop an overarching ICT charter and lobby for EU and UN adoption
• Promote a cohesive approach
• Adopt a fresh perspective
• Encourage involvement of “young guns”
• Promote transparency
• Host an annual conference
An ICT Charter

• promote social justice and social care
• restore reciprocity for everyone
• benefit the many rather than the few
• put people first rather than ICT
• limit economic gain because of potential social cost
• favour the reversible over the irreversible
• create a more inclusive society by reducing barriers and creating new opportunities

Adapted from: The real world of technology (1999) and Design for an ageing society (2007)
## Characteristics of Codes

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time frame</th>
<th>Conduct Element</th>
<th>Practice Element</th>
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<td>Static</td>
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<td>Behaviour and Values</td>
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Organisational Ethics Circles

- Contractual recognition of existences and influence
- Membership drawn from all levels but equal status
- Nurture new staff
- Custodian of Codes
- Share good practice
- Review ethical quandaries
- Champion ethical ICT

Ethics by Consent

• Bottom-up
• Community ownership
• Adopt creative commons / open source philosophy
• Involve anybody who “does” ICT
And finally ...

Professional codes should not be an instrument of compliance but an instrument of appliance in furthering ethical ICT