Visualizing Values to Analyze Designers' Ethical Responsibility

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1. Workshop Organizer/s

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In this workshop, we seek to facilitate a shared understanding regarding the role of ethics and values in design practice and research, using this shared understanding to develop methods to investigate ethical decision-making. While existing study of ethics and values has largely focused on design methods for implementation in practice in an explicit and structured way (e.g., value-sensitive design, values at play), our focus is on the ways in which values might be discovered and generatively explored through qualitative and critical means, both by researchers and practitioners. Through collaborative activities and discussions, workshop participants will be engaged in analyzing existing design artifacts and processes, critiquing them through ethical lenses, and subsequently visualizing their process of value discovery. Outcomes from this workshop are expected to further deepen existing methods for uncovering ethics and values in a design process, highlighting potential opportunities for supporting practitioners' work and ethical awareness.

2. Context of Workshop

The increasingly intertwined nature of design and sociotechnical systems has raised new questions about how ethics and values relate to design practice. While numerous methods

that address issues related to ethics and value-centeredness in design activity exist, including value-sensitive design (VSD), values at play, and value levers, it is unclear what relevance these frameworks could have for designers and their pursuit of ethically-centered practice. Further, there is ambiguity regarding the role(s) of the design research and practice communities in shaping the future of ethically-centered design approaches or methods. In this workshop, we will address the notion of designer responsibility, and engage in analysis, mapping, and visualization activities to increase our collective awareness about the normative assumptions that underlie both design activity and the design artifacts that result. Previous research has revealed that a designer's awareness of ethical issues can be raised through value-centered design approaches and methods, but the broader ethical impacts of these approaches and methods are often underexplored. Existing methods do not provide concrete and analytical ways of discovering values in a design activity, which are of particular importance for designers that work within a pragmatist and action-oriented frame. The proposed frameworks are still conceptual and lack the ability to provide the designer with insights to understand their own design activity—as it is undertaken—from an ethical standpoint. We will build connections across the research-practice divide, working with practitioner notions of ethics such as "dark patterns" in user experience design and academically-focused modes of inquiry such as Critical Design. These sites for critical interpretation and discovery will be used as a starting point to build consensus and collaboration around the notion of value interplay, where a designer must actively balance potential stakeholders and use contexts that may not be immediately accessible or obvious.

3. Planned Activities and Expected Outcomes

- **Introductions and Building Consensus (45 minutes)**
  Participants will work in small groups to build a shared understanding of values and ethics, establishing examples and types of current and future technologies to support different characterizations of values and ethics in a design context.

- **Critique, Visualize, and Reflect (60 minutes)**
  Participants will split into groups by category or type of technology and use an existing or future design to work through the following stages: 1) Identify and document ethical assumptions in the design by substituting other user types and contexts; 2) Visualize the process of discovering ethical considerations or values inscribed in the technology; 3) Reflect upon the process of identification and visualization as a design method.

- **Deepening Visualization Mapping and Performing Comparative Analysis (80 minutes)**
  Groups will analyze a range of provided examples (e.g., mainstream design artifacts, examples of "dark patterns," critical or speculative design artifacts) through the lens of ethics and values. Collaborative analyses and visual mappings of these examples will be facilitated through visualization approaches suggested by participants (e.g., affinity diagrams, linkography) and deepened or altered to account for ethical concerns implicit in each type of design example. Groups will regularly cross-pollinate their findings,

barriers, and successes, with documentation of methodological convergence or divergence.

- **Report and Synthesize (35 minutes)**
  Participants will rearrange and collaborate based on emergent areas of interest. New groups will identify how to integrate mapping approaches, including methodological or theoretical concerns that have emerged across research, practice, and educational contexts.

4. Intended Audience

We intend to build a diverse group of 10-15 participants from academia and industry that have diverse design and research backgrounds. Applicants with previous research interest in ethics and values in relation to design are encouraged to participate, but we also welcome those who are interested in learning more about this topic.

5. Length of Workshop

A half-day workshop will allow sufficient time for participants to cross-pollinate ideas from their disciplinary contexts and work towards methods for visualizing value discovery.

6. Space and Equipment Required

A reconfigurable studio space with Internet access, multiple whiteboards, a projector, and consumables such as Post-It notes, sharpies, whiteboard markers, and pads of paper.

7. Potential Outputs

The work accomplished in this workshop will directly interface with the special track on *Ethics, Values, and Designer Responsibility*, priming conversation and potential collaborations among participants. Beyond the immediate priming role of the workshop for conference attendees, we anticipate documenting emergent frameworks or approaches from participants in a shared online repository to further the discovery of values in design activity. Based on participant interest, a summary of existing and potentially new methodological approaches may also be published in a future conference or journal paper.

About the Organizers:

Colin M. Gray is an Assistant Professor at Purdue University and program lead for an undergraduate major and graduate concentration in UX Design. His research focuses on interplay between design theory and practice, and particularly the development of design expertise and ethical design character.

Shruthi Sai Chivukula is a doctoral student at Purdue University. Her research focuses on pragmatist ethics, design ethics and values, and the ethical awareness of designers.

Austin L. Toombs is an Assistant Professor at Purdue University. His research focuses on the impact of digital technologies in the development of interpersonal and community relationships.

Ann Light is a Professor of Design & Creative Technology at the University of Sussex. Her research focuses on the social impact of digital technologies and the politics of design.