CO 3202
Social & Professional Issues

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Introduction

References

- Books
  - Sara Baase, "A Gift of Fire", 2nd Edition, Prentice Hall
  - Penny Duquenoy, Simon Jones and Barry G Blundell, "Ethical, Legal and Professional Issues in Computing", Middlesex University Press
- Lecture slides
  - Pg Dr Nor Jaidi, "CO3202 Social and Professional Issues"

What this course is about?

- Discussion, debate, dispute, controversies on what is right or wrong, good or bad in our social and professional (career) life
  - introduces contentious issues in the field, arguments surrounding the issues
- To encourage critical thinking, discussion and debate; learn how to evaluate an issue and explain why we reject or choose a solution or an action
  - many issues are not clear cut, often there are no obvious right or wrong answers
  - finding solutions to some of these issues can be difficult

What this course is not about?

- Technical expertise
- Expert in legal system
- Becoming legal advisor
- IT security

Social vs Professional

- Social – society, human relationship, living together
- Professional – career, work

- Social and professional issues exist in all disciplines/fields including computing
  - we will try to be more focused in the field of computing
- There is generally not much difference between the issues in other fields and computing
  - however, computing has few unique properties to note when dealing with issues relating to computing
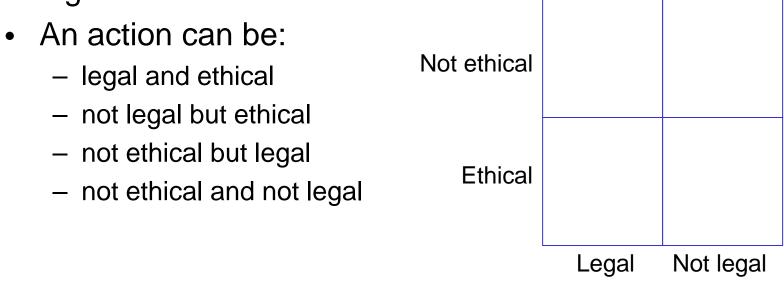
Computing: uniqueness

- James H Moor, in his 1985 paper "What is Computer Ethics?", identified the three properties that make computers a special case:
  - logical malleability – the logic of computers can be shaped in infinite ways through changes in hardware and software and in terms of their usage
  - impact on society – the widespread use of computers in the society
  - invisibility factor – computer operations are invisible

- Information Communication Technology (ICT) has an impact on our lives in good and bad ways

Ethical vs Legal

- Ethics – "the science of morals in human conduct" – Oxford English Dictionary
  - often interchangeably with 'moral'
  - however, avoid using the opposites interchangeably
  - 'immoral' tend to be associated with issues that are of sexual nature
- Legal - in conformity with or permitted by law
  - law - the body of rules and principles governing the affairs of a community and enforced by a political authority
- May be difficult to distinguish between 'ethical' and 'not ethical' – judgment based on a complex set of criteria including common sense, instinct and wisdom
- Easier to distinguish between 'legal' and 'not legal' – judgment based on defined system (law)

The Controversies

- Social and professional values can sometimes be conflicting

- When dealing with social and professional issues, we can deal with them from two points of view: ethical and legal

- An action can be:
  - legal and ethical
  - not legal but ethical
  - not ethical but legal
  - not ethical and not legal

	Legal	Not legal
Not ethical		
Ethical		

The Issues

- Privacy of communications
- Freedom of expression
- Intellectual property
- Social norms
- Professional code of conducts
- Impact on environment: green computing
- Computer reliability and safety
- ICT misuse: cyber crime, abuse, hacking, social engineering

Activity 1

- Select actions to be placed in the array presented in Slide 8 to illustrate each of the four combinations (ethical vs legal). Explain your reasons for choosing each action.