

AI Robots & Ethics 2015/16

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Week 3

Objective

To begin investigating machine moral agency by asking about the possibilities, opportunities, and challenges of assigning moral responsibility and legal accountability to technological artifacts.

Readings

M. Anderson et al, Toward Machine Ethics

C. Allen et al, Prolegomena to any Future Artificial Moral Agent

Questions

1) Both readings for this week operate on the assumption that ethics can be made computable. That is, both texts proceed on the assumption that moral decision making and action can be turned into computable data that is able to be processed by a digital computer. Do you think this assumption is reasonable and correct? Are ethics (moral decision making and action) something that can be made computable? Why or why not?

2) What are the opportunities and risks of assigning moral agency to technological artifacts like artificial intelligence, robots, and algorithms? What are the social, legal, and philosophical advantages of doing so? What are the social, legal, and philosophical dangers of doing so? In other words, do you think machines can or should be held directly responsible or accountable for actions that affect us and the communities in which we live? Why or Why not?