The Technological Imperative – is there room for ethics?

Presented by Tim Wallace Behaviour Consultant

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Technological Innovation

“Everything that can be invented has been invented.”

Charles H. Duell, Commissioner, U.S. Office of Patents, 1899
Technological Innovation

U.S Patents granted 1790-2004

Source: U.S Patent & Trademark Office

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"The ordinary 'horseless carriage' is at present a luxury for the wealthy; and although its price will probably fall in the future, it will never, of course, come into as common use as the bicycle."

*The Literary Digest, October 14, 1899*
Health expenditure

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. OECD Health Data 2006
Health expenditure

Hip & Knee replacements per year in Australia

Source: National Joint Replacement Registry 2006
Health expenditure

Health expenditure by age and type 2002-2003

Source: Economic Implications of an Ageing Australia 2005

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Dementia and the future

Dementia estimates: Australia 2000-2050

Thousands

Source: Access Economics 2005

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Older female carers relative to the population in need

Source: Economic Impacts for an Ageing Australia 2005

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“Assistive technology is any device... that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with cognitive, physical or communicative disabilities.”

(Marshall, 2000; p3)
Contemporary examples of AT

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Contemporary examples of AT
Contemporary examples of AT
Ethics & Assistive Technology

- Ethics are:
  - A set of principles
  - About individuals and society
  - Concerned with ‘right’ and ‘wrong’
  - A process and/or an outcome
  - Absolute or relative

- Ethics are not:
  - Universally defined or agreed upon

Source: http://coba.aug.edu/ethics/images/ethics1.jpg
Is there consensus in relation to the ethical use of Assistive Technology?

Commonly shared principles:
- Autonomy
- Privacy
- Dignity
- Informed consent
- Complementary to care
Ethics & Assistive Technology

These principles prompt questions for exploring the ethical use of a specific Assistive Technology

• *In a specific situation*
• *With a specific individual*
• *At a specific point in time*
• *For a specific and explicit purpose*

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Ethical questions

MD2 Medication Dispenser

- Autonomy
- Privacy
- Complementary to care

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Ethical questions

iKids GPS phone
- Autonomy
- Privacy

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Ethical questions

Calendar Clock
- Autonomy
- Dignity
Ethical questions

LED Faucet Lights

- Autonomy
- Dignity
Ethical questions

EXMOCARE watch

- Autonomy
- Privacy
- Dignity
- Complementary to care
- Informed consent
Ethical questions

Boyfriend arm pillow

- Dignity
- Complementary to care
- Informed consent
Ethics & Assistive Technology

Source: http://coba.aug.edu/ethics/images/ethics1.jpg

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Is there a
ROBOT OVERLORD
in your future?

O'Reilly Emerging Technology Conference
February 9-12, 2004

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Further information

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