Cyber Ethics in Platial Research

Ekaterina Egorova
University of Twente

Junghwan Kim
Harvard University

Grant McKenzie
McGill University

Martin Tomko
University of Melbourne

Hongyu Zhang
McGill University

The examination of morality has a long-standing history in philosophy, but the invention of computing technologies has expanded the field into a multidisciplinary study of ethics. With the global connectivity provided by the Internet, cyber ethics is unique because of the fast-changing use cases of computers and the extension of ethical considerations from human subjects to artificial intelligence (AI). Among the deluge of data generated by machines and humans, platial information is special because it has vague boundaries, undetermined consensus, and sometimes implicit references. Compared to location data, platial information has a wider coverage as it is more than absolute coordinates and often involves human attachments. Current research of geoethics targets at human impacts on the geosphere. It is therefore important to include cyberspace in the discussion and bridge the gap between cyber- and geo- ethical studies. In this mini workshop, participants will first provide a short summary of their related works. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Ethical theories, ethical reasoning, and decision making
- Security and privacy in geosocial networks
- Spatial data collection and ownership
- Cyberplace and its interaction with the real world
- Inequality and the digital divide
- Workplace privacy and surveillance
- Methods of anti-geosurveillance
- AI and ethics
- Biometrics and its associated spatial information
- Legal frameworks for data protection

Then, the workshop will seek answers for the following questions, and all attendees will be invited to join the discussion:

1. What ethical concerns are unique to platial research, but not to geospatial research more broadly?
2. What is volunteered platial information, and what influence does it have on contributors/users?
3. How to better incorporate cyber ethics in platial research?

The objective of this workshop is to explore the unique aspects of ethics related to place. A short paper will be produced to summarize the outcomes from the discussion.