MIS 404 LEGAL & ETHICAL ISSUES IN COMPUTING ETHICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Week 2a: Transparency and Virtue Ethics

• **Turilli & Floridi, Ethics of Information Transparency (2009)**

INFORMATION TRANSPARENCY

1 Transparency

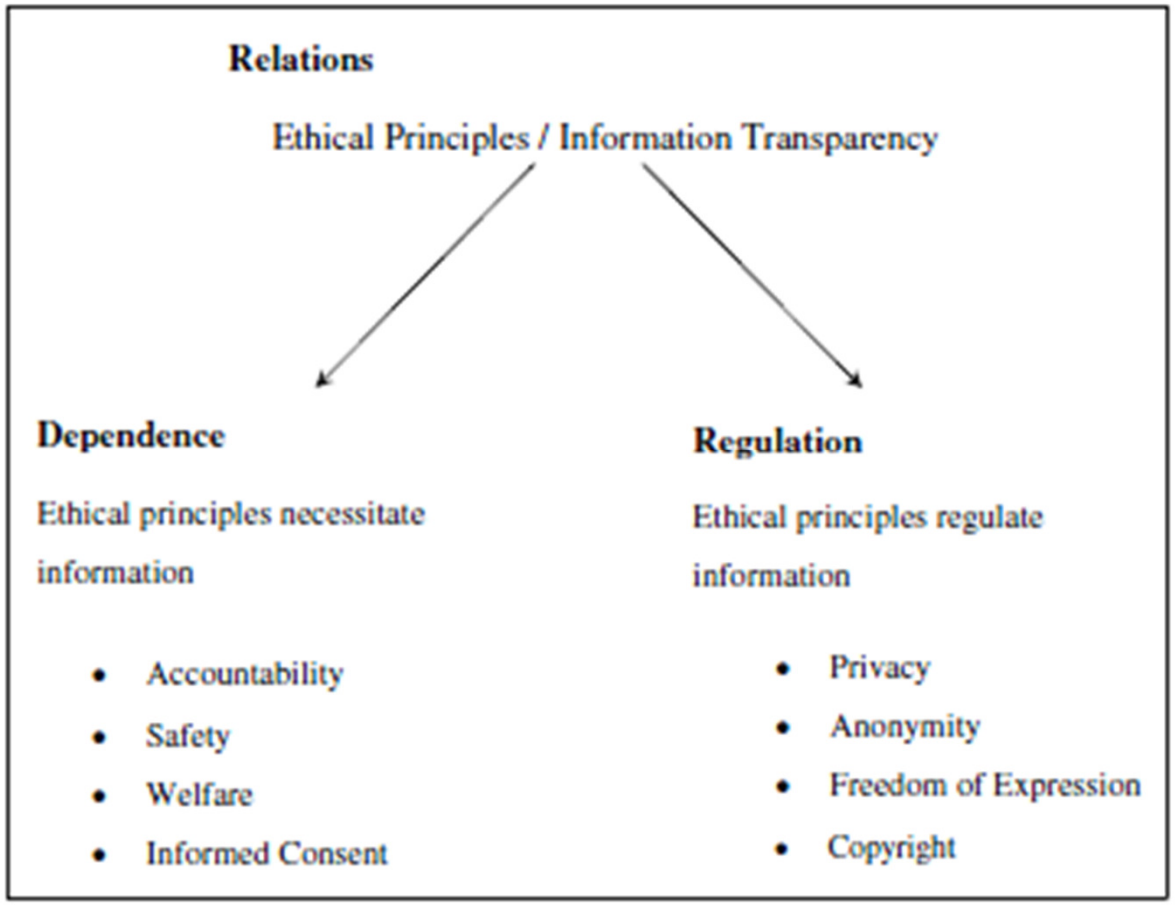
2 Values

- Two senses of the word.
  - Visibility (opaque) = disclosure
  - Invisibility (clear) = non-intrusive

"Disclosing information … and … details of how such information has been produced enables those ethical principles that either depend on information or regulate it. (p. 111)

• **Turilli & Floridi, Ethics of Information Transparency (2009)**

TRANSPARENCY AND ETHICS



PD-INEL Turilli, Matteo & Floridi, Luciano, The Ethics of Information Transparency,PD-INEL

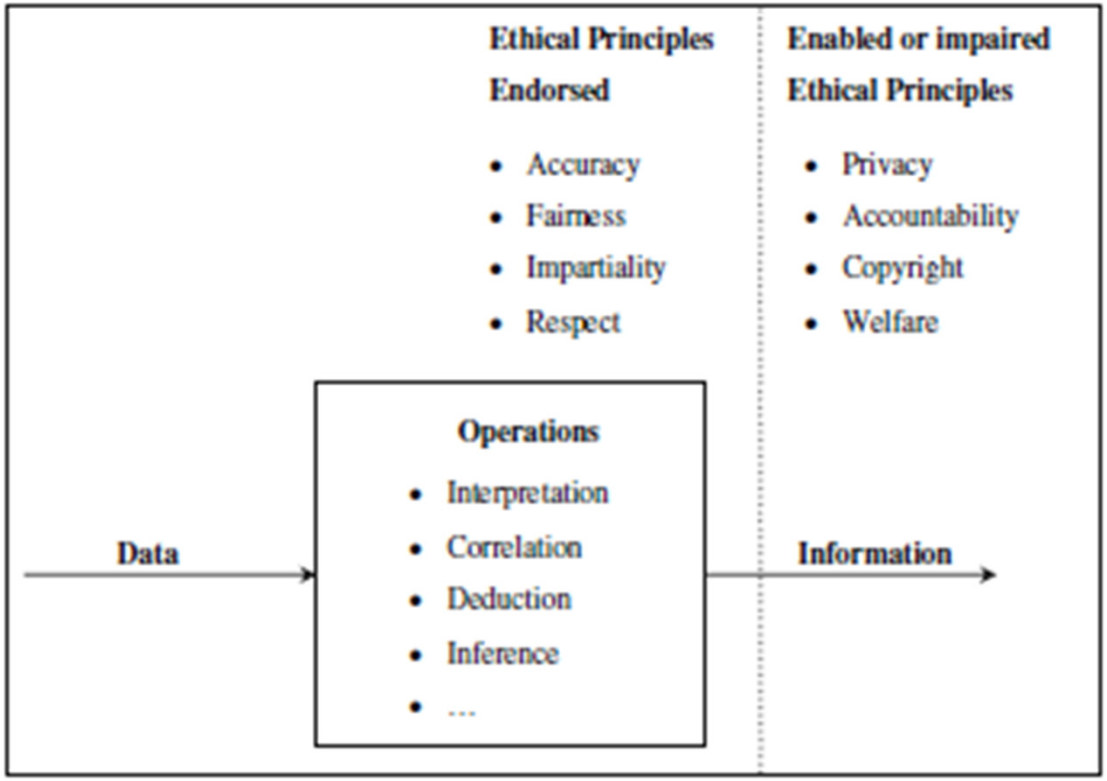
Turilli/Floridi, Fig. 1, p. 107.

INFORMATION ETHICS - TRANSPARENCY

1 Transparency

2 Values

- Information transparency is disclosed information (meaningful, veridical, comprehensible, accessible, useful).



Turilli/Floridi, Fig. 2, p. 108.

PD-INEL Turilli, Matteo & Floridi, Luciano, The Ethics of Information Transparency,PD-INEL

· **Turilli & Floridi, Ethics of Information Transparency (2009)**

TRANSPARENCY AS PRO-ETHICAL

1 Models

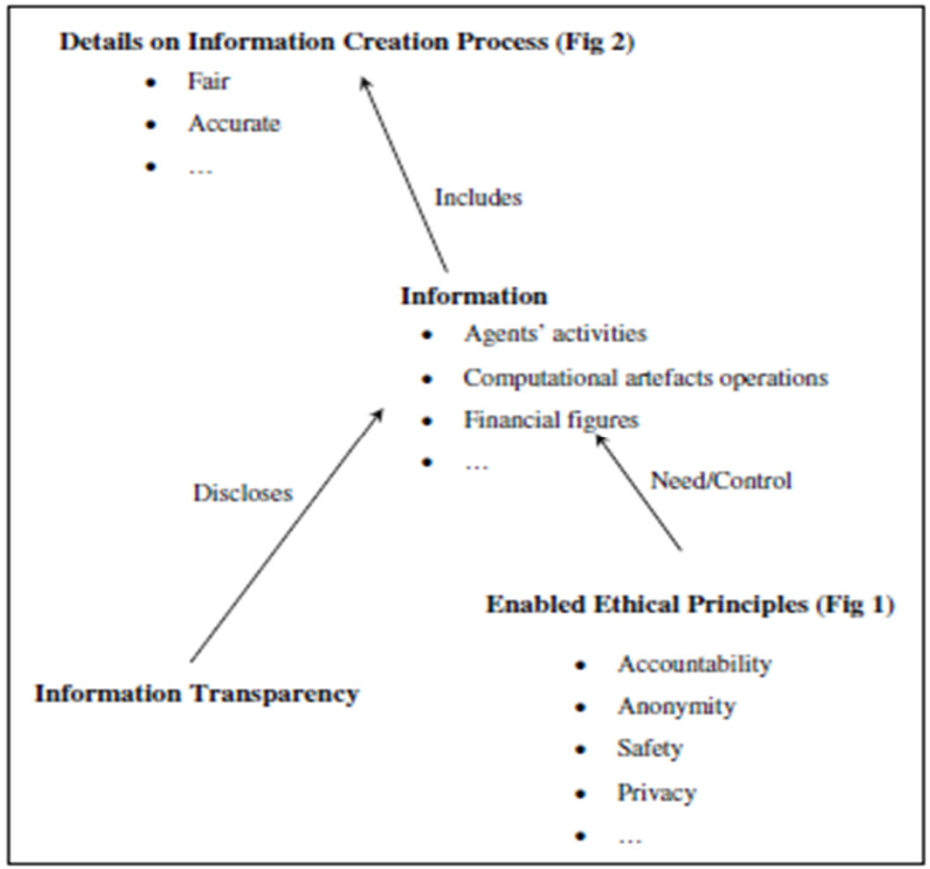
2 History

3 Information Ethics

4 Digitization

5 Floridi

- Enabling or Impairing



Turilli/Floridi, Fig. 3, p. 109.

• **David Brin, *The Transparent Society* (1999)**

DISCUSSION – SURVEILLANCE SOCIETY

- "… it is inevitable that our society is going to become an all-encompassing surveillance society. The question is 'what sort of surveillance society are we going to become.'"

- Imagine two scenarios of "transparent surveillance" – opaque and clear -- and discuss the relevance to dependence and regulation.

- George Orwell 1984 versus Google Street View

· Vallor, *Social Networking Technology and the Virtues* (2010).

VIRTUE ETHICS

- From Aristotle
- Humans have stable character traits (excellences or virtues)
- Excellence is an ability to express one's capacities to flourish physically and socially.
  - *Eudaimonia* (happiness)
- Less about feeling, thinking, believing than action: habit of doing; promotion of virtues (or vices)
- The context of action is all important – sometimes called "situational ethics"

· Vallor, *Social Networking Technology and the Virtues* (2010).

VIRTUE ETHICS AND SOCIAL SETTINGS

- Virtues do not arise from nature or choice, but are shaped by concrete social and physical conditions.

- Initial motivations may transform into virtues
  - Example of charity and friending
  - Example sabotage and gaming !!!!

- Character development over time in relationship to technological "affordances."

· Vallor, *Social Networking Technology and the Virtues* (2010).

VIRTUE ETHICS

- No consensus on what the "virtues" are, but…
  - Aristotle listed patience, amiability, honesty, wit

- Vallor has his own list (discussed in the reading):
  - Patience
  - Honesty
  - Empathy
  - Fidelity
  - Reciprocity
  - Tolerance

• Vallor, *Social Networking Technology and the Virtues* (2010).

DISCUSSION: FACEBOOK AND THE VIRTUES

- How does Facebook provide (or could provide) affordances to reinforce virtue and/or limit vice?
  - Patience
  - Honesty
  - Empathy
  - Fidelity
  - Reciprocity
  - Tolerance

FOR YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT

- The notion of "virtues" may or may not be different in the online environment.

- If virtue ethics is about character development (positive or negative), are there examples of online/virtual environments where character development is a key part of the experience?

Additional Source Information

for more information see: http://open.umich.edu/wiki/CitationPolicy

Slide 5, Image 5: Turilli, Matteo & Floridi, Luciano, The Ethics of Information Transparency, http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=1553322.1553337, PD-INEL

Slide 6, Image 5: Turilli, Matteo & Floridi, Luciano, The Ethics of Information Transparency, http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=1553322.1553337, PD-INEL

Slide 7, Image 2: Turilli, Matteo & Floridi, Luciano, The Ethics of Information Transparency, http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=1553322.1553337, PD-INEL

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