

## PANEL DISCUSSION

### TEACHING AN ETHICS COMPONENT TO CS MAJORS

Thomas J. Scott, *Chair*  
Associate Professor  
Computer Science  
Western Illinois Univ.  
Macomb, IL 61455  
mftjs@uxa.ecn.bgu.edu

Richard B. Voss J.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Marketing & Finance  
Western Illinois Univ.  
Macomb, IL 61455  
mfrbv@uxa.ecn.bgu.edu

Cherri M. Pancake  
Associate Professor  
Computer Science  
Oregon State University  
Corvallis, OR 97330-33  
pancake@cs.orst.edu

The panel participants will discuss a different aspects of teaching ethics to Computer Science majors, which can be summarized briefly as: 1) What a Computer Science major should know about the law and how it relates to ethics in computing; 2) Using Internet options to teach a dynamic ethics component; and 3) Fitting an ethics component into the ACM Curriculum '91.

#### The Relationship Between The Law And Computing

One can not discuss ethics without an understanding of the underlying legal environment. Students entering the litigious world of computing need to have a basic knowledge of the law so they can behave ethically and protect themselves from the less ethical. Students need to learn when a lawyer is needed and when one isn't. Several scenarios that illustrate legal and ethical problems relating to the computing world, will be discussed and standard legal analyses offered. These scenarios will illustrate real world problems that confront computing professionals in their everyday work.

#### Using The INTERNET To Teach An Ethics Component

Internet capabilities can be used to teach different kinds of ethics components. Assignments can be distributed via "*email*" and students can submit their answers via Email. Using the "*trn*" utility, many different news groups can be accessed and very interesting and dynamic discussions maintained. Using the "*ftp*" facility, information from the many existing ethical information depositories can be downloaded by students to answer questions. Using the "*irc*" capability, an on-line discussion with multiple users can be done, so that students can voice their opinions. In many cases, whole collections, not typically found at University libraries, can be accessed, and interesting assignments made from these collections. Several assignments that cause students to use these Internet facilities as the prime information resource will be discussed, and student reactions to these assignments will be given.

#### Integrating Ethics Into ACM Curriculum '91

The ACM curriculum does not provide for a course in Computer Ethics; instead, ethics are hopefully incorporated into various courses in content specific ways. A set of guidelines for implementing ethical assignments, such as Legal Scenarios, Internet Assignments, and others, will be discussed. The authors intend to provide some handouts, including a number of additional Legal Scenarios, some extra Internet type assignments, some course syllabi for Computer Ethics and Computer Law courses. Hopefully, those attending the panel can implement some of these activities in their own classes.