Foreword

People who care about ethics should read this book. Particularly those in global organizations, and especially those concerned about information technology. As a university professor, I see a host of uses for the book in my business courses, and am convinced that the book would serve liberal arts faculty and students as well.

Globalization is a powerful force, but because it by definition extends across political and social boundaries, the traditional mechanisms which shape and control human behavior and decision making may prove ineffective in maintaining ethical behavior and decision making. This book deals with the problem by amply illustrating how globalized ethical challenges arise in the most transnational of activities – IT – helps actors identify what novel dimensions arise due to their global setting, and provides a framework for decision makers to allow them to clearly and consistently analyze the implications of alternatives and chose ethical paths.

Dr. Schultz aptly uses IT as a playing field, where he has been both a senior level IT practitioner as well as an academic who built a highly successful IT department in a long established business school. Rare as this combination of town and gown is, the author adds one more key pillar of wisdom which makes him unique: he earned a PhD in Philosophy under at Harvard under one of the most astute ethicists of the 20th Century, John Rawls.

Because of this background, Dr. Schultz brings to bear a wealth of experience and expertise in identifying situations which highlight the pressing need for individuals to apply an ethical framework in determining what they will do. And, after providing an insightful explanation of ethical theories, he outlines an eminently useful “social contract” frame of reference to help people think about the ethical aspects of their actions, and make informed, consistent, ethical decisions. These are tasks which are increasingly important in today’s world.

It has once again become fashionable to talk about ethics, particularly at universities and in big companies. Alas, mostly it is just talk. And all too often the discussion is not really about ethics, but merely about the ugly imposition of the social values articulated by the power elite. As such, the focus – and the results – tend to be ad hoc, self oriented, semi-utilitarianism. (One example of this which comes to mind is one of my students’ conclusions that “ethics is when the bookstore lowers its prices on textbooks.”)

To the contrary, this book is not value laden. Nor is the ethical decision making framework outlined in the book. For example, even though this book focuses on IT-enabled ethical problems in globalized operations, the book is neither pro-globalization nor anti-globalization. These value sets are not at issue. Instead, globalization is viewed as another developing form of human cooperation. Rather than focus on whether globalization is good or bad overall, the author presents a highly developed, very useful framework for identifying ethical issues and determining how to act ethically. In other words, Dr.
Schultz presents ethical standards for dealing with the impacts of globalization, rather than supporting or condemning it.

It is refreshing to see instead how ethics can be viewed as a set of principles of cooperation, sharply distinguished from morality as founded on custom, religion, ethnicity, culture, power, or authority. This book does so by presenting a social contract theory inspired by the work of John Rawls as a means of determining ethical principles of cooperation.

The author proposes two global social contracts, one for ethical relations between states, and one governing the global economy. This global two-contract theory differs from other theories of globalized ethics. On the one hand, it acknowledges that a social contract is needed for the global economy which goes beyond a contract just for states. Most ethical frameworks do not go beyond this. Unlike cosmopolitan ethical theories which apply to all human beings as human beings, Dr. Schultz’ two-contract approach theory allows ethical standing for cooperative groups such as countries and national economies, not to mention tribes, clans, and social cohorts.

Other distinctive features of the book include an assessment of current and new institutions with an eye towards showing how to implement global ethics while extending authority as little as possible. Like gravity, there may very well be an inverse square rule for driving behavior through authority. The farther the authority is physically from the actor, the less effective the authority is in shaping the actor’s behavior. Globalized IT has proven an excellent laboratory to test this; Dr. Schultz’ insight in this area is astute and sorely needed.

But wait, there’s more! This book also provides a separate, non-social-contract treatment of environmental ethics as prior to human ethics, and discussions of the ultimate value of globalization for humanity. These are topics which we as citizens ought to be thinking about as we vote and go about our public lives. Let me suggest that you treat yourself to Dr. Schultz’ insights, and read this book.

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Formerly Director of Taxes of a New York Stock Exchange-listed high tech multinational (which was then one of the world’s largest software concerns), John Karayan is a tax attorney with a "Big 8" CPA firm background. Dr. Karayan remains active outside academia with service on public and private Boards, as well as testifying as an expert witness in complex business litigation. John serves on the Board of Directors of Delta Scientific Corporation. (http://www.deltascientific.com/). A family business headquartered in Southern California, Delta is the world’s foremost manufacturer of anti-terrorist vehicle barricades, and was featured in Tom Peters’ "Thriving on Chaos" Series on PBS, Peter Drucker’s "Innovation on the West Coast" video series, and articles in newspapers, such as the Wall Street Journal, along with features on television news programs, such as the NBC Evening News. Professor Karayan has co-authored several books – notably Strategic Business Tax Planning (Wiley 2006) -- and published articles in journals ranging from The Tax Advisor to the Marquette Sports Law Review. He also has spoken before professional groups such as the World Trade Institute, the Tax Executives Institute, the California Continuing Education of the Bar, the California Society of CPAs, and the Beverly Hills Bar Association.