Preface

Crossing the river by feeling with our feet. —Japanese proverb

INTRODUCTION

Science and technology do not exist in a vacuum. Instead, they stand in a large variety of relations with their surroundings and contexts. Being manmade, science and technology have a clear link with human society in various ways. It may seem quite surprising to hear that science is manmade, but this refers to the enterprise of conducting science and its product: scientific knowledge. It may be true that knowledge exists "out there" and will continue to do so, but in order for that knowledge to become useful and relatable to human beings, some kind of methods are needed; this is when the enterprise of science comes in. Technology follows closely on the heels of science, and it is even more clearly related to the human world.

This relation of science and technology with the human world has given rise to a set of problems and agenda, and chief among these agenda are the normative aspects of the relation. Ethical problems have abounded with regard to the use of science and technology. This is so because science and technology are very powerful tools, and as such, they have a great impact on our values and on the question of what should or should not be done with regard to the processes or products of science and technology and for what reasons. Ethical deliberation on science and technology and their close relationship with the human world is thus essential in this day and age when advances in these fields are being made at a very rapid pace.

This book is aimed at continuing this deliberative attempt. More specifically, it deals with information technology, which arguably is the most pervasive and powerful technological tool that has been invented in recent decades. The evidence of the pervasiveness of information technology is everywhere. The book that you are reading now is a result of a joint editing effort by two college professors, one living in Thailand and the other in the United States. It is furthermore a collection of 14 chapters written by scholars who live and work in places far away from one another, such as Austria, Norway, the U.S., Turkey, and Thailand, to name but a few. All this, of course, is made possible through information technology. It may seem rather commonplace to say so in this day and age, but it points to the deep pervasiveness of the technology, so much so that it would be very difficult to imagine what it would be like to live without (i.e., checking e-mails or opening up a Web site).

Another aspect of the book, one which makes it particularly distinctive and interesting, is that it deals with ethics of information technology from cultural perspectives. In fact, it is not possible to view anything from an utterly neutral perspective with no angle from the peculiar standpoint of the observer. In Thomas Nagel's famous book, *The View from Nowhere* (1986), the author argues precisely this point: no observer-neutral perspective is possible, and all lookings have to be from somewhere and through someone's eyes.[1] Consequently, when information and communication technologies (ICTs) interact with humans and their communities within their social and cultural worlds, these ethical dimensions are interwoven deeply with the peculiar standpoints from which humans and their particular communities look at the world. Scholars who study cultures agree that the term *culture* is one of the most slippery concepts in the entire vocabulary (Eagleton, 2000). Nonetheless, culture always crops up in attempts to understand the human world because it is such a useful concept, and to do without

it would make the task of understanding human society almost impossible. Broadly speaking, culture is what separates the human world from the natural world that operates solely on physical and chemical principles. But it is well-known in the social sciences that to rely on these physical vocabularies alone would miss the point by a wide margin in understanding what human beings are up to. What is broadly understood as the domain of culture differentiates the human world from the natural one, even though physically there are no differences at all. But if this so, then to look at the ethics of information technology through the perspectives of culture would be a most important undertaking.

Talking about cultures also implies another important dimension, for cultures are not the same all over the world. Of course, one can talk about the universal traits of human beings (e.g., they become hungry, they want to have sex, etc.), but that is part of the natural world, and when one focuses on culture as what distinguishes the human world, one cannot fail to find a tremendous variety of cultures, many of which are very different from one another. Hence, ethical deliberation on information technology and its role in the human world must not fail to include the notion of culture; and to so include culture further involves taking in the differences among the cultures of the world, such as those existing between the West and the East, for example. This is so because if one failed to incorporate these cultural differences, then one would risk, in his or her attempt to understand the ethical judgments pertaining to information technology, viewing the whole issue from an observer-neutral perspective all over again. That would defeat the purpose of staying on the ground in order to really understand the human world from the beginning.

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

This book, then, deals with information ethics, viewed from various cultural and intercultural perspectives. This branch of information and computer ethics is altogether a new field of study, as most books and research works in information ethics have dealt almost exclusively with what is happening in the West and relied mostly on the Western tradition of ethics and sociopolitical philosophy for their conceptual and theoretical underpinnings. However, both the global reach of the Internet and the forces of globalization more broadly are rapidly expanding the use of ICTs in non-Western countries—so much so, for example, that there are now as many users of the Internet in Asia and the Pacific Rim countries as in North America. Yet discussions of and scholarship devoted to information ethics in non-Western countries are comparatively recent, and discussions of and scholarship devoted to cross-cultural approaches to information ethics, especially across East-West boundaries, are only in their beginning stages. The book thus fills this important lacuna through an investigation of what the non-Western intellectual traditions have to say on the various issues in information ethics, both at the first-order level of proffering normative judgments on such difficult and controversial issues as intellectual property rights, the digital divide, privacy, and so forth, as well as at the second-order level of theoretical arguments and debates concerning, for example, definitions of culture and technology, their interrelationships, our frameworks for evaluating their impacts and resolving conflicts, and so forth. Along the way, the book further aims at identifying salient problems in information ethics that exist solely or more prominently in non-Western cultures and suggesting ways toward their solution that might preserve local cultural values and traditions, but in consonance with shared, more global approaches as well. Finally, a number of new syntheses—both in theory and in praxis—that conjoin prominent features of Western and Eastern traditions emerge here. These syntheses—especially in the work of Johnny Søraker, Theptawee Chokvasin, Maja van der Velden, Soraj Hongladarom, and Barbara Paterson—thus contribute novel and, we believe, substantial insight to a nascent but genuinely global information and computer ethics that extends beyond Western origins to more fully represent and incorporate Eastern cultural values and their correlative philosophical and religious traditions and frameworks.

The book, then, is aimed at achieving the following objectives. First, it introduces the dimensions of cultures into the deliberation on information and computer ethics. Second, it aims at contributing to the ongoing discussions on information ethics and gathering the best research on the field. It thereby aims to equip practitioners, policymakers, and various stakeholders in information and computer ethics with a heightened sensitivity to

cultural concerns. Most broadly, the book introduces a new field of study—what our colleague Rafael Capurro (2005) has aptly called "intercultural information ethics"—into the discourse and discussions of not only academics but also policymakers and the various stakeholders in the area. Thereby, it intends to stimulate further discussion and research on the role of cultures on issues in information and computer ethics.

WHY INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES?

One might question the rationale behind the emphasis on intercultural perspectives. Why focus on these perspectives since the spread of information and communication technologies seems to be homogenizing, if not at the level of deep awareness rooted in one's cultural tradition then at the level of sheer use of the technological products, which appear to be dictated, whether one likes it or not, by the procedures necessarily involved in getting the products to work? One might argue, for example, that the principle against software piracy should be applicable everywhere, because the interests of software producers need to be protected wherever the software is made available, and this should override any possible objection, such as one coming from particular cultures that copying software is an act of paying homage to the producer who is assumed to be acting out of altruism. The argument is that the interests of the producer trump such cultural concerns, and if these concerns are given too much weight, then the interests of the software producer will be compromised. It would be better, so the argument goes, to justify the interests of the software producer through a reliance on a single ethical system, presumably one from the West, since it is the West that is the source of much original software and other cultural production.

This argument is untenable in several ways. First, the argument ignores the fact that all kinds of technology, including information and communication technologies, do not operate in a vacuum. Again, there is no neutral standpoint on which one could stand and pronounce one's normative judgments on these matters in a way that transcends one's own peculiar or unique perspective. Hence, to assume that the ethical system of the West should be applied elsewhere in the world sounds rather odd in today's world in which there is a need for a multitude of systems, each of which originates in its own historical tradition. Nonetheless, this is not to argue that there can be no single ethical system that is normatively binding everywhere. Certainly, software piracy should be regarded as unethical and, indeed, illegal everywhere in the world. But it is our contention that there can be a plurality of ethical systems, each of which can be congruent in significant ways. If it is indeed necessary in today's world to protect the rights of software producers (after all, producers of software or other cultural products need not be in the West any longer), then there needs to be a system of intercultural information ethics (Capurro, 2005) that does justice to the wide variety of cultural traditions, while it is not reduced to mere relativism.

In the case of Thailand, for example, Buddhists usually turn to the teachings of their religion when they need guidance on ethical matters, and to assume that Buddhism should be disregarded when the act of deliberation on information technology ethics is done on Thai soil and in response to Thai concerns would be incongruous and ineffectual. When the technology is transplanted onto the life world of Thai culture, it tends to take shape on its own. On the one hand, it retains its functionality. Computers work in the same way in Thailand as in the U.S., for example. But on the other hand, computers have found themselves in a new sociocultural environment. Their relations to human beings and their communities are not necessarily the same as those in the West. In fact, numerous case studies have documented carefully that when ICTs (as originally the products of predominantly North American white middle and upper-middle class males) are exported beyond these cultural origins—whether within the Western sphere (e.g., various European countries and Scandinavia) and especially in non-Western cultures (including aboriginal cultures in Africa, Australia, and North America; South America; Middle Eastern countries, both Arabic and Islamic as well as Israel; and numerous countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including Thailand)—important traits, values, and patterns defining these local cultures still persist in significant ways.[2] If this is the case, then ethical deliberations as part of the meaning-making activities of culture should retain their particular cultural flavor, too. What this means in more concrete terms is that, taking the issue of personal privacy as an example, deliberations on the ethical concerns regarding privacy in the Thai context should be

based on what Buddhism has to say or on what it can be interpreted to say. To argue and deliberate on this topic exclusively within the vocabularies of Immanuel Kant or John Stuart Mill alone simply will not work in the way as those vocabularies originally were intended.

The other reason is more immediate and practical. It is undeniable that the world is getting smaller due to the very fast spread of an unimaginably huge amount of information around the globe every second. In a way, this situation may seem to endorse the idea that ethical vocabularies from the West should be the tools of choice among those who deliberate on these matters, no matter where they are. But the situation also points in the other direction. As the world is getting smaller and more compressed, aspects of each part of the world tend to assume more highlighted significance. This is even more so in areas of the world (as is the case nowadays) in which significant portions do not belong to the cultural sphere of the West. The idea is not to swamp each corner and cultural niche with one cultural system (which includes the system of how ethical judgments are arrived at), but to find out how the differing systems can live together. The increased intensity of intercultural communication enabled by information technology indeed has resulted in a plethora of voices from all corners of the globe. As the case studies collected by Ess and Sudweeks (1999a, 1999b, 2003, 2005) make clear, one should not remain complacent and believe that the world is going to be culturally homogeneous in any way.

FROM HOMOGENEOUS UNIVERSALS TOWARD RESONANCE

Basing one's ethical deliberations on the particularities of one's cultural background, however, does not mean that ethical judgments are doomed to be bound only to those traditions with no possibility of alignments among different traditions. The lack of one overarching ethical system stemming from one particular cultural background does not imply that there is no ethical standard that can be applied across cultures. In fact, the globalizing world of today has made it the case that ethical systems belonging to many cultures have to be aligned with one another. This has become a necessity, because globalization means that the boundaries among the cultures are increasingly blurred. Elements of a culture very often are found in others in such a way that was not possible just a few decades ago. Issues in information technology ethics, such as software piracy, are the concerns not only of one cultural domain but of the world, since the software industry has become a global enterprise. But if there is to be (or should not be) an overarching ethical system, then whose system or what kind of system should there be in order to account for this need for alignment among the various ethical traditions?

The answer is that there does not have to be such a single, overarching system. Instead, the various systems that are available can be adapted and modified in such a way that they are aligned with one another as they need to be. Many chapters in this book attest to this. For example, the chapter by Soraj Hongladarom presents an analysis of the concept of privacy from a Buddhist's perspective. What emerges from Hongladarom's chapter is that the result of the analysis as well as the system of justification of privacy is not too remote from the concept of what constitutes privacy and why it is needed in today's world, based on the more familiar system of Western ethics. More simply put, Hongladarom is arguing that there is a need for more protection of privacy of individuals vis-à-vis the state, but the reasons behind the conclusion are couched in terms of Buddhist teachings. The alignment with what could be taken as a global concern on privacy protection is there, but with an obvious difference in how these conclusions are arrived at. This way of accounting for an alignment in ethical judgments is not exactly the same as Rawls' (2005) idea of overlapping consensus in a political liberalism. In Rawls' (2005) version, the problem of how, in one political state, citizens belonging to different religious or cultural backgrounds can find a way to live together in one polity through bracketing their metaphysical beliefs, leaving them at home, and engaging with their fellow citizens only on the basis of what is politically expedient. The overlapping consensus, according to Rawls, is what emerges when citizens from various cultural backgrounds have to work together; hence, in political liberalism, no metaphysical beliefs are taken into consideration. In our case, the metaphysical beliefs do not have to be as fully bracketed. The scope of our consideration is also much wider than Rawls', which focuses only on what is happening within one political state. What we would like to show, rather, is that there can be alignments among the various cultural traditions and ethical systems of the world, alignments which

emerge when the world has become increasingly globalized. Indeed, these alignments also may be aptly called *resonances* or *harmonies*, precisely because these terms appear in both Eastern and Western traditions and are used to refer to an ethical pluralism that holds together the irreducible differences between diverse cultures alongside such closely parallel alignments (Ess, in press). These notions of alignment, resonance, and harmony—and the ethical pluralisms they articulate—mean that these diverse ethical systems and traditions do not have to leave their metaphysics at home; on the contrary, they bring their specific backgrounds to the table of philosophical dialogue and debate and search for ways in which their systems could or could not be aligned with the others. In the case of personal privacy, this would mean that the Buddhist tradition and the Western secular tradition compare and contrast their similarities and differences without (echoing Michael Walzer, 1994) each leaving its thick backgrounds and operating with its fellows on thin air.

Moreover, in the dialogical space created by our suspending the demand for a single, homogenous ethics, we may find that, in addition to such resonances and alignments, new and creative intercultural hybrids of ethical theories and insights emerge. In fact, in Section I, Lorenzo Magnani will call attention to this feature of intercultural dialogue (i.e., its ability to generate new syntheses as the claims and approaches of one culture are applied in new ways to the issues and approaches of an "Other" culture) as an important counter-cultural force, one that might help offset the homogenizing effect of globalized technologies in general and ICTs in particular, along with their tendencies to reduce human beings to instrumental value only. Indeed, four of our contributors in Section I—Johnny Hartz Søraker, Theptawee Chokvasin, Maja van der Velden, and Soraj Hongladarom—develop just such syntheses. Briefly, Søraker will conjoin Confucian thought with Western information ontology to develop a broader and more powerful theory of moral status—one that helps us make theoretical sense of our intuitions that at least some forms of data and ICTs should enjoy at least a limited form of moral status that entails at least a minimal level of moral respect. Chokvasin brings together Kantian and Habermasian theories of autonomy with Thai Buddhism, highlighting ways in which mobile phones create a new form of communicative space with which Habermasian theory does not fully come to grips; he warns that neither Western conceptions of autonomy nor Buddhist understandings of the individual may thereby be strong enough to overcome the tendency (as noted by Magnani) of technology use to reduce human beings to instrumental value only. For her part, van der Velden documents two ICT projects: the Indymedia global journalism project and an Australian project developing databases shaped from the ground up by local ethical traditions, approaches, and ways of knowing (in contrast to the prevailing tendency to use off-the-shelf technologies that thereby impose Western ontologies and epistemologies as embedded in the software and hardware). van der Velden thus brings to the foreground for us two real-world instantiations of the sort of intercultural syntheses developed at more theoretical levels by Søraker, Chokvasin, and Hongladarom. Hongladarom closes Section I with his extensive analysis of both the irreducible differences and the strong alignments or resonances between (Thai) Buddhist and modern Western understandings of the individual vis-à-vis the community, and correlative expectations regarding privacy. By bringing to the foreground important alignments (i.e., Western emphases on community and Buddhist emphases on individual striving and responsibility) that complement the well-known differences between these traditions, Hongladarom thus dramatically expands our theoretical understanding of how these two traditions may cooperate much more closely than initially expected in an emerging global information ethics.

Similarly, Grodzinsky and Herman Tavani introduce in Section I the central concerns of the digital divide, thereby laying the foundation for the distinctively intercultural responses and insights (again, at both theoretical and practical levels) regarding the digital divide developed in Section II by Barbara Paterson (emphasizing African cultural approaches) and Lynette Kvasny (who returns us to the U.S. but in a way that radically questions and expands upon the prevailing theoretical approaches). In the same way, Dan Burk's overview of diverse cultural approaches to the central issues of intellectual property and (data) privacy protection in Section I thereby opens up the intercultural dialogue on these topics further developed in Section II through the particular insights of Pirongrong Ramasoota Rananand's discussion of privacy from a Thai perspective and Gonca Telli Yamamoto's and Faruk Karaman's analyses of the multiple cultural backgrounds in Turkey (Western, Arabic-Islamic, and Eastern, such that Turkey thereby stands as a microcosm of the larger cultural divides confronting information and computer ethics) and their influences (or lack thereof) on attitudes toward intellectual property and copying

software. Similarly, Bernd Carsten Stahl and Simon Rogerson's foundations for a new research program on how Western (specifically the UK) and Middle-Eastern/Islamic attitudes toward healthcare may complicate emerging efforts in telemedicine, as developed in Section I, introduce these cultural contrasts as more fully explored by Yamamoto and Karaman in Section II. Finally, Thomas Herdin, Wolfgang Hofkirchner, and Ursula Maier-Rabler develop a dialectical model of how culture and technology mutually shape one another—a model that foregrounds the role and importance of local cultural norms and identities in more powerful and effective ways than previous models made possible.

Taken both individually and together, then, these chapters helpfully and powerfully expand the theoretical understandings and practical approaches of a global intercultural information ethics.

PART I: THEORETICAL CONCERNS

We begin with Johnny Hartz Søraker's "The Moral Status of Information and Information Technologies: A Relational Theory of Moral Status." Prevailing (and usually atomistic) Western views tend to relegate both information and information technologies to a somewhat lower, usually material level in an ontological hierarchy that reserves meaning and value to higher levels associated especially with human agency. (Such views are at work, e.g., in the notion of technological instrumentalism as this view claims that ICTs are merely tools; that is, culturally and morally neutral artifacts whose meaning and worth only can be constituted by moral agents.) Within such an ontology, in contrast with human beings as holders of intrinsic moral status and value, information and information technologies can enjoy only an extrinsic and instrumental moral status and value. By contrast, Søraker turns to East Asian—specifically Confucian—theories that stress the relational (rather than atomistic) nature of beings. In this view, entities and beings attain existence and moral status precisely through their interrelations with other beings and entities. The upshot is an account of moral status for nonsentient beings—specifically, information and information technologies—that accords these a much more significant moral status and value than is possible solely within classical (but anthropocentric) Western frameworks.

While granting that moral status at its highest stage centers on human beings as moral agents, Søraker's theory, by utilizing relational value as an intermediate sort of moral status, is able to break out of the Western anthropocentric hierarchy in important ways. From this relational perspective, especially given the increasing importance of information technologies to our identity and functioning as persons (consider the simple examples of a PDA for organizing our important appointments, contact information, etc.), to damage at least some instances of information technology is tantamount to damaging us as persons. This allows Søraker to expand his original gradations to include nonsentient entities, including at least certain kinds of information and information technologies; these may have no moral standing per se, but they have moral status insofar as they function as irreplaceable and constitutive parts of a person's practical identity; that is, because such information and information technologies, seen in relational terms, contribute essentially to who we are as human beings and moral agents, their damage or loss immediately means damage or loss to who we are.

One of the central goals of Søraker's theory is to support what he calls a "more sustainable development of the infosphere," referring thereby in part to Luciano Floridi's (2003) efforts to develop an information ontology that begins with information as the fundamental substance out of which all beings are constituted. In its focus on ontology, Floridi's (2003) project is thus distinctively Western, while Buddhism, as Søraker notes, likewise takes up issues of ontology and epistemology (Confucian thought does not). What is thus striking about Søraker's claim is that it draws on specifically Eastern conceptions in part in order to expand and refine a more characteristically Western philosophical project. Thereby, it exemplifies at the level of theory the intercultural dialogues we see as essential to develop a genuinely global information ethics, specifically as it constructs a new sysnthesis of Eastern and Western theory.

In "Online Communities, Democratic Ideals, and the Digital Divide," Frances S. Grodzinsky and HermanT. Tavani take up one of the central most important legitimation claims for the Internet and computer-mediated communication (CMC) in Western and developing countries—that the Internet, specifically in the form of online

communities, will foster democracy and democratic ideals. Grodzinsky and Tavani further examine two additional dimensions of the Internet and CMC that are equally compelling from a moral standpoint—the implications of online communities for information justice (specifically, the digital divide) and the potential effects of the Internet on community life at both the global and local levels.

Grodzinksy and Tavani begin by noting that online communities challenge more traditional understandings of community in many ways, as online communities are defined more by shared interests than by geographical proximity. In contrast to the unalloyed optimism marking much of the 1990s Western discourse on the Internet and democracy, Grodzinsky and Tavani take a more cautious stance—one that is in keeping with much of the prevailing research and theory in these areas as well (see Hubert Dreyfus's, 2001, critiques of notions of online communities, Nancy Baym's, 1995, 2000, authoritative analyses of online communities, and May Thorseth's, 2003, overviews and discussions of the literature and current theory and praxis regarding deliberative democracy).

Grozsinksy and Tavani then turn to a number of issues clustering about the digital divide, defined here in terms of access (or lack of access) to and/or knowledge (or lack of knowledge) of how to use ICTs. They seek to establish strong arguments for universal access to the Internet as a positive right, both within the U.S. and globally. They further observe that computing professionals slowly are coming to recognize the importance of resolving such digital divides.

They conclude with a modest optimism that the shared interests driving virtual communities may help such communities serve as engines in what Hans Jonas (1984) has called *neighbor ethics*—such neighbor ethics will continue efforts to overcome various forms of the digital divide on a global level. But, recalling the ways in which virtual communities may weaken traditional, real-world communities, they call us to examine whether the ethical benefits of the former are worth the costs to the latter.

This chapter should be read alongside Barbara Paterson's and Lynnete Kvasny's discussions in Section II of the digital divide, both of which expand the cultural and theoretical approaches introduced here.

Lorenzo Magnani's "The Mediating Effect of Material Cultures as Human Hybridization" begins with the recognition that the Western Cartesian mind-body split is simply false. Rather, human evolution has long been a matter of offloading cognitive tasks to external artifacts that help us to remember and think, beginning with notches on bone for counting and geometric diagrams. (As Clifford Geertz, 2001, put it earlier, "Our minds are not in our bodies, but in the world," p. 205.) For Magnani, this means that we already are cyborgs (i.e., biological-technological hybrids), and because our technologies as external artifacts that shape and are shaped by distinctive cultures, we can vary widely (a point developed more fully by Herdin, Hofkirchner, and Maier-Rabler later) and so, too, will our identities. In particular, Magnani seeks to examine how new information technologies result in new ontologies, including humans as information beings complete with external data shadows.

Magnani further includes an understanding of the brain as a semiotic machine, one that can create and manipulate signs, especially as these signs are embodied in external artifacts. In contrast with other views represented in this book (e.g., Floridi's information ontology, as expanded and reinforced by Søraker, and Hongladarom's Buddhist analysis) as well as with other contemporary understandings of mind and identity, Magnani seeks to argue that the brain as a semiotic Turing machine is thus simply reducible to meat. This again recalls 1990s postmodernism inspired in part by William Gibson's (1984) classic science-fiction novel *Neuromancer* and its account of life outside of cyberspace in terms of meat (see Barlow, 1996). (For representative criticisms and alternatives, see Borgmann, 2000, Becker, 2002, and Dreyfus, 2001).

But Magnani is also critical of the reductionism implicit in at least simple views of the mind as meat. Indeed, he raises the central moral problem that, as new technologies becoming increasingly central to our bodies and our identities, they thereby may produce cultures that treat people as instrumental means rather than as Kantian ends requiring absolute moral respect. Further echoing Kant (specifically, Kant's central notion of the human being as an absolute spontaneity), Magnani hopes that our internalized cultural representations may somehow activate a countercultural effect that will help us to resist such instrumentalization. He sees grounds for such hope, in particular, as intercultural communication and cross-cultural experiences allow members of one culture to appropriate and creatively apply to new contexts the external cultural artifacts that carry and embed the semiotic meanings of their root culture.

This leads Magnani to address one of the thematic concerns of this book: how to develop a global information ethics that will recognize and preserve local cultural values and norms. Magnani calls for a cyberdemocracy that, by exploiting the countercultural possibilities facilitated by cross-cultural and intercultural communication aided by ICTs, will generate new hybrid insights and institutions that will manage to offset the homogenizing effects of globalization.

Thomas Herdin, Wolfgang Hofkirchner, and Ursula Maier-Rabler's "Culture and Technology: A Mutual-Shaping Approach" aims to develop a sophisticated set of models not only for understanding how culture and technology interact but also for providing much-needed guidance for shaping technology design and use in ways that contribute to core values of equitable knowledge distribution, development of people's abilities to use ICTs, and social inclusion.

They first show the (now well-established) limitations of both technological determinism and social constructivism as once-prevailing views regarding technology. They point out that technology does not stand apart somehow from culture but rather is encapsulated as a part within culture as the more embracing whole. Technology thus may function as a necessary but not sufficient condition for determining the social outcomes of its own development and diffusion, a relationship further complicated by technology's ambivalence; its use and impacts in praxis are often different from the original intentions guiding its design. This leads to what Herdin et al. initially describe as a dialectical relationship.

This dialectical model is enhanced further by taking on board a continuum developed by Maier-Rabler, one defined in terms of information-friendly vis-à-vis information-restrictive societies. This work can be compared usefully with numerous discussions of ICTs in terms of Hofstede's famous—but contested and limited—cultural dimensions (see Ess & Sudweeks, 2005). This continuum involves further correlations between more democratic vis-à-vis more authoritarian regimes, respectively, thus providing a foundation for Herdin et al.'s rights-based approach in developing a normative model of ICT and culture. This model becomes still more fine-grained with regard to culture through the addition of Wolfgang Welsch's notion of transculturality—one that helpfully moves us beyond the container theory of society and culture that dominated earlier views (i.e., as stressing culture as homogenous, static, hermetically sealed from others, etc.). The resulting model then can address issues of the digital divide—for example, by stressing notions of a permeable flow of information between cultures as themselves complex structures of multiple and dynamic subcultures that often interconnect more directly in horizontal ways across national boundaries (e.g., diaspora communities) rather than in ways defined by a vertical integration with a specific national culture. This model offers the further advantage of thereby bringing the central importance of local communities, including their distinctive cultural norms, values, practices, and so forth, to the foreground.

Herdin et al. then explore three specific implications of their model: knowledge management, learning strategies, and education. They include attention here to notions of intellectual property and, thus, should be read alongside Dan Burk's chapter in this book. As well, they take up questions of potential cultural homogenization, imperialism, and fragmentation vis-à-vis various models for attempting to preserve local cultural values alongside global connectivity; their discussion of universalism vs. relativism and subsequent recommendations for pluralism are consistent with the broader philosophical discussion of pluralism as an important strategy in information and computer ethics for developing a global information ethics that preserves the irreducible differences defining distinctive cultures (Ess, in press).

In his "Mobile Phone and Autonomy," Theptawee Chokvasin takes up a careful analysis of the nature of the human being—specifically with a view toward possibilities of autonomy and self-governance as affected by hi-tech mobilization—from a distinctively Thai perspective; that is, one fully informed by both traditional Thai (Theravadan) Buddhism and a strong awareness of Western views, as manifested, on the one hand, in the philosophies of Heidegger and Habermas, and, on the other, in the Thai appropriation of modern ICTs, specifically, the mobile phone.

Drawing first on Heidegger, Chokvasin argues that our possession and use of such phones is distinctively personal, since they are used by their owners directly and exclusively as direct channels between themselves and

others as distinctive individuals. Contra the prevailing view of technological instrumentalism (i.e., the notion that technologies are just tools and thereby somehow culturally and ethically neutral), Chokvasin argues that the mobile phone emerges within the larger context of a form of technological thinking that controls the individual as "a 'positioned' individual in the communicative sphere." This is done with our consent, he quickly adds, one fueled by our interests in communicative efficiency. Using Heidegger's notion of enframing, Chokvasin argues that personal mobile phones mean, presuming we have one and others know we have one, that we are always there in a constant state of connectedness. Chokvasin argues that Kantian and Habermasian notions of autonomy, especially as they entail the ability to give reasons for our beliefs and actions in a public, communicative sphere, in fact cannot take place in the distinctive communicative space constituted by the personal mobile phone. Habermasian notions of autonomy via social participation in communicative rationality thus fail to account for all forms of communication.

From here, Chokvasin develops his own account of the autonomy possible for mobile phone users—one that depends on a distinction between abstract conceptions, as found in Western philosophers and in Buddhist culture, and a concrete conception. The latter, however, lessens human nobility, in part because it values the individual solely insofar as such a being is needed as a controlled being within a technological system.

Chokvasin concludes by arguing that a concrete autonomy of the mobile phone user results in a more instrumental value for the individual, in contrast to a more intrinsic value for the individual who enjoys an abstract autonomy, whether in Kant/Habermas or in Buddhism. The mobile phone user, he observes, may appear to respect the other in ways that echo the sorts of respect commanded by either Kantian or Buddhist ethics for the (intrinsically valuable, for Kant) individual, but such a user instead does so only for the sake of sustaining his or her own position in a technological society and the distinctive communicative space constructed by mobile phones.

Chokvasin's essay is especially helpful to our larger project of fostering intercultural dialogue regarding basic concepts and specific issues in information ethics as he points out here that Kantian and Habermasian notions of autonomy, usually considered distinctively Western, insofar as they emerge out of the Western Enlightenment indeed find important counterparts in Buddhist culture, which considers autonomy in terms of someone choosing to comport himself to the right path and way of living. The concept of *Attasammapanidhi*, "the characteristic of a person who can set herself in the right course, right direction in self-guidance, perfect self-adjustment" (Phra Dhammapitaka, 1995, p. 321) in fact resonates closely with additional Western moral figures, including the *cybernetes*, the pilot or steersman who, in Plato's *Republic*, stands as the analogue for the capacity of a moral judgment to discern the right course or path and to correct oneself when error is made. As is well-known, the cybernetes becomes the basis of Norbert Wiener's foundational notion of cybernetics, information systems that can correct themselves over time. The cybernetes in Plato implicitly underlies contemporary cybernetics, and so it is perhaps not an accident that Wiener is also the primary founder of Western information and computer ethics (Ess, in press). Such self-correction, especially in an ethical context, is clearly central to Western ethics broadly and information and computer ethics in particular. Chokvasin's pointing to an analogous conception of ethical self-correction in Buddhist tradition suggests an important bridge between Western and Eastern ethics and, thereby, an important contribution to our larger project of developing a genuinely global information ethics.

Maja van der Velden's "Invisibility and the Ethics of Digitalization: Designing so as not to Hurt Others" picks up Søraker's and Chokvasins' critiques of technological instrumentalism and also returns us to the thematic concern with the digital divide, initially raised here by Grodzinsky and Tavani. van der Velden's essay brings us forward, moreover, as it highlights two real-world examples of designing information technologies that begin with the epistemological reality that peoples in diverse cultures know the world in different ways; hence, ICTs that intend to respect and preserve these diverse ways of knowing must be designed from the ground up (i.e., based on these diverse ways of knowing) in contrast to design strategies that impose a single, prevailingly Western model of knowledge and data in the name of efficiency.

To move beyond prevailing analytical frames that presume technological instrumentalism, van der Velden develops a theoretical foundation that draws on the work of Haraway, Latour, and the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos. She then builds up a conceptual toolkit (our term) of notions and examples—figu-

rations, in her terms—that illustrate how contemporary technologies hide alternative meanings and histories (i.e., they make others invisible).

van der Velden then examines two projects—Indymedia, a collective of independent journalists; and TAMI, a database developed as part of the Indigenous Knowledge and Resource Management in Northern Australia (IKRMNA)—as ways to illustrate how distinctive ethical and political values *can* drive technology design in such a way to avoid making such others invisible. So, Indymedia is devoted to providing voice to the voiceless, in part by way of a principle of open publishing. However, achieving this required its founders and proponents to inscribe these values at the level of software code, first, in a code base called *Active*, developed initially in Australia and then adapted and used in Seattle during the WTP meeting in 1999. Subsequent versions of this software have been developed in light of specific local demands and conditions (e.g., the German constitutional prohibitions against publishing racist, hateful, or revisionist speech).

In philosophical terms, the result is a pluralism—a diversity of interpretations of how to effect open publishing—within a shared set of principles. Such a pluralism, we would argue, is in keeping with similar pluralisms emerging in information and computer ethics, both within Western spheres and between Western and Asian countries, for example (Ess, in press). At the same time, in the terms we have used here, this sort of pluralism highlights important alignments and resonances between otherwise irreducibly different cultural traditions and values.

van der Velden then turns to the Australian Aboriginal project for an even more powerful example of how to design with specific cultures, values, and ways of knowing in mind first. In taking an autopoetic approach to knowledge as a dynamic, social process, designers begin by looking at how people actually know and represent knowledge. The TAMI (Text, Audio, Movies, and Images) database designed for people with little or no literacy skills was developed in just this way, as van der Velden documents. In particular, the database was designed to be ontologically flat so that people with different ontologies (Westerners vis-à-vis Aborigines) would be able to refine it further by developing various user interfaces as appropriate to their specific ways of knowing.

van der Velden concludes by articulating four principles of the translation work she sees in the design approaches of Indymedia and TAMI as exemplars of designing technology so as *not* to hurt people. The principles highlight the values of democratizing technology, democratic representation, the cultivation of diversity, and the principle of autonomous self-organization—contra, she goes on to argue, the intrinsically hierarchical assumptions of prevailingly Western ways of organizing knowledge as encoded in technology design as fostered by the drive in globalization toward efficient but homogenous and homogenizing flows of information.

As van der Velden thus documents how design approaches can work to homogenize diverse cultures, so Dan L. Burk's following analysis of legal frameworks highlights the ways in which emerging global legal frameworks are likely to homogenize and thereby eliminate local differences as well.

Dan L. Burk's "Privacy and Property in the Global Datasphere" provides an invaluable, genuinely global overview of the current law regarding two of the central components of information and computer ethics; namely, intellectual property (IP) rights and privacy rights. It should be read especially alongside the contribution by Yamamoto and Karaman in Section II on cultural and economic roots of attitudes toward copying. Their account of Turkey suggests at least a partial counter-example to the larger conclusion regarding intellectual property law that Burk develops here.

Burk shares with our other contributors the view that technologies, including ICTs, bear "the value-laden imprint of its makers." Correlatively, the ethical codes and laws developed in diverse countries and cultures regarding the uses of information and ICTs likewise bear the imprint of their makers. Burk sees that two major ethical-legal frameworks currently dominate the global stage—that of the United States and that of the European Union. Burk concerns himself here with not only the sharp contrasts between these two frameworks as each vies for dominance in emerging international law and ethical codes but also with the perhaps inevitable consequence: no matter which side wins in this struggle, the further losers will be the distinctive ethical approaches and traditions of multiple but non-Western cultures now bound together by ICTs. In the face of the likely dominance of one or the other of these two frameworks, Burk glumly concludes that "prospects for any cultural diversity in approaches to informational control is relatively bleak."

Burk first takes up intellectual property (IP) in order to contrast the American and European approaches. Briefly, he shows that IP law in the U.S. is guided by a utilitarian ethic, a cost-benefit analysis that justifies IP rights in theory only insofar as they can be shown to benefit the larger public. The European approach, by contrast, takes what can be characterized as a deontological approach, one that insists on the intrinsic rights of the author as an autonomous (i.e., essentially free) person.

Similar considerations hold in the matter of informational privacy. Indeed, these sharp contrasts between U.S. utilitarianism and EU deontology have been noted by others as well (Burkhardt, Thompson, & Peterson, 2002) and in the ethical guidelines developed for Internet research by the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR, 2002). But as Burk points out, these sharp contrasts spell trouble, as both the U.S. and the EU seek to promulgate their laws and approaches internationally. Briefly, Burk finds that the U.S. has managed to dominate emerging international law regarding copyright. By contrast, the EU approach to data privacy protection currently dominates internationally, first of all because the EU act requires that member states not release data to anyone in nations whose data privacy protections are less stringent than those defined for the EU.

From a Western perspective, these contrasts between the U.S. utilitarian and the EU deontological approaches may appear to be virtual opposites. But as Burk goes on to show, both ethical theories and approaches rest on shared and distinctively Western assumptions regarding the individual and the nature of the creative act. By contrast, for example, classical Confucian thought emphasizes emulation of revered classical works rather than innovation as creative. As Burk points out, in this view, copying (a cardinal sin in Western systems of copyright) is a cardinal virtue in Confucian thought and, therefore, in the many Asian countries deeply shaped and influenced by Confucian tradition. Similarly, communal control of what Westerners see as exclusively individual work is characteristic of a number of indigenous communities.

By the same token, it is now well-established that contemporary Western conceptions of privacy (and thus, of data privacy protection) are, indeed, distinctively Western, resting on relatively recent (i.e., Enlightenment) conceptions of the individual and, as Burk points out, relative affluence (see especially Hongladarom in this book; Floridi, in press). In addition to his use of recent publications on views of privacy in China and Japan, Burk highlights here the philosophy of *Ubuntu* in post-apartheid South Africa, one that emphasizes community welfare first.[3]

As Burk points out, emerging cultural norms, especially among young people, demonstrate that non-Western countries such as China and Japan are increasingly adopting Western-style notions of individual privacy, as emerging data privacy laws in these countries are shaped by international treaties dominated by the U.S. and/or the EU. Again, whether the U.S. or the EU manages to dominate in a particular context, it is thus clear that non-Western and/or developing nations must likely choose to take up one or the other of these Western models, if they wish to engage in global communication and trade. But this means, in light of these contrasts between Western and non-Western worldviews and ethical traditions, that these nations and peoples will do so at the cost of subordinating or abandoning their own ethical norms and traditions.

Bernd Carsten Stahl, Simon Rogerson, Amin Kashmeery's "Current and Future State of ICT Deployment and Utilization in Healthcare: An Analysis of Cross-Cultural Ethical Issues" lays the theoretical and ethical foundations for a program of culturally sensitive research on healthcare, focusing on the contrasts between Western and Middle Eastern cultures, thus complementing attention in other chapters on Asian and indigenous cultures.

Stahl and Rogerson note that the informatics of healthcare, where healthcare is deeply shaped by diverse communities and cultures, thus requires careful consideration of culture. Here, culture refers broadly to the totality of shared meanings and interpretations of a given group. This admittedly broad definition of culture further incorporates Hall's (1976) well-known distinction between high context/low content and low context/high content cultures. As well, Stahl and Rogerson make clear that this definition of culture fits with what we know to be true of culture (i.e., that it is dynamic and multiform), such that individuals are members of a variety of cultures, not simply of a single and supposedly static national culture (Herdin et al.). Finally, culture includes a normative function (i.e., it is to provide values that guide our behavior) that Stahl and Rogerson simply describe as decent conduct found in every culture.

Turning to healthcare, Stahl and Rogerson take up the distinction between value-based practice (VBP) vs. evidence-based practice (EBP). This distinction plays out in important ways in the policy vacuum originally described by James Moor (1985) to emerge alongside new developments in ICTs in general, and, for Stahl and Rogerson, in ICTs and healthcare in particular. Especially the values-based practice approach to healthcare highlights the potential conflicts between different individuals, especially as members of diverse cultures. By contrast, Evidence-Based Practice, as emphasizing accountability as verified by fact and evidence, may be less likely to lead to such conflicts.

From here, Stahl and Rogerson go on to consider possible values conflicts that can emerge in healthcare in the context of British culture, followed by six scenarios that highlight values conflicts in healthcare in the intersections between Middle Eastern and Western cultural values, especially UK-based practitioners. While these scenarios are somewhat speculative, they highlight the sorts of issues that Stahl and Rogerson expect to encounter in their further research on the actual use of ICTs in healthcare in the UK and a Middle Eastern country. We will see, moreover, that Yamamoto and Karaman powerfully supplement Stahl and Rogerson's examples here with their analyses of how the diverse cultural streams in Turkey (including Western and Islamic-Arabic) indeed lead to profound conflicts between these two cultural traditions.

Soraj Hongladarom's "Analysis and Justification of Privacy from a Buddhist Perspective" offers an invaluable philosophical analysis of privacy as centrally important to information and computer ethics, especially from a comparative perspective.

As others in this book help to document (Chokvasin, Rananda, Bhattarakosol), the cultural, ethical, and legal dimensions of privacy in contemporary Thailand are especially complex and problematic. As Hongladarom points out, while Thailand is moving quickly in its appropriation and development of ICTs, and while Thailand, as with all other Asian countries, is profoundly influenced by Western notions of privacy and privacy protection laws (Burk), there is, as yet, no data privacy protection law in force in Thailand. Given the central importance of Buddhism to Thai culture, Hongladarom seeks to define and justify privacy from a Buddhist perspective. In addition, his analysis of privacy provides us with important new insights regarding both irreducible differences and perhaps surprising similarities between Western and Buddhist views.

Indeed, it would seem that the primary Buddhist teachings (i.e., self, as opposed to Western ontologies that insist on the primary reality of the self, especially in the modern era as shaped by Descartes and Kant, does not really exist) thereby undermine the basic ontological and ethical justifications for privacy in the modern West. By exploring the work of Nagasena and Nagarjuna, foundational figures for both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, Hongladarom argues, however, that Buddhism nonetheless sustains a pragmatic conception of privacy, one that will clearly work with better cultural and philosophical fit in Thailand and, perhaps, other countries and cultures deeply shaped by Buddhist tradition.

Hongladarom first provides a comprehensive overview of the extensive range of Western philosophical approaches to privacy. Despite important differences among Western theorists, Hongladarom makes clear that these approaches all rest precisely on a shared but distinctively Western assumption of the existence of the individual self or individual as an autonomy whose privacy, however defined, must be protected. (For additional discussion of Western conceptions of privacy, see Floridi, in press).

Hongladarom then takes up the phenomenon of hybridization of Western and Eastern notions of the individual and correlative expectations of privacy, as documented in a recent special issue (Ess, 2005). Here, he notes important similarities between Buddhist and Confucian notions of the self as a relational being, in contrast with modern Western views of the self as an isolate, something of a psychic atom that exists prior to and independently of all relationship with others. At the same time, however, Hongladarom helpfully warns against our conceiving these contrasts too sharply. Western traditions and philosophies further understand that individuals are interrelated (as emphasized especially in communitarian traditions), and Eastern views have ways of highlighting individuals as separate beings as well. Such parallels, as potential common grounds and/or what Ess (in press) characterizes as important resonances between Eastern and Western traditions, are critical, as Hongladarom notes, to the central task of a global information ethics that requires "a system of justification of privacy which respects these diverse cultural traditions, but at the same time is powerful enough to command the rational assent of all involved."

In his distinctive contribution to the development of such a system, Hongladarom begins by pointing out how Buddhism asserts the existence of the individual self at a conventional level in contrast to an absolute level, and thus, in Hongladarom's view, thereby insists on privacy as at least an instrumental good, one that counters abuse of power. This distinction, moreover, works to suspend the Western contrast between privacy as an intrinsic vs. instrumental good, and in this way, Hongladarom argues, Buddhism can make an important contribution in the form of a novel resolution of this particular debate in Western philosophy.

Turning to Nagasena, Hongladarom highlights a central argument for the Buddhist rejection of a self or a soul, understood as the unifying receptor of sense data. This reinforces the understanding of a unitary self as an empirical reality at a conventional level; while seen from an ultimate or absolute standpoint, this empirical self is simply conventional (i.e., not an absolute reality).

For Buddhists, however, the distinction between conventional and ultimate reality does not mean an ontological dualism that places less weight or value on the conventional vis-à-vis the ultimate. Indeed, for Buddhists (as well as for Kant), these are one and the same reality. Hence, Hongladarom argues, there is here a prima facie reason to respect privacy of such individuals. Indeed, he goes on to argue that the Buddhist injunction for which each person is responsible for his or her own liberation thereby sustains notions of equality and democracy that are at least closely similar to those developed and endorsed in Western societies. (The resonance suggested here thus compliments a similar alignment or harmony pointed out by Chokvasin between Buddhist versions of autonomy and Kantian and Habermasian notions, an alignment that, we suggest, further extends between the Buddhist notion of *Attasammapanidhi*, of ethical self-direction and self-adjustment, and Plato's model of the cybernetes, the pilot or steersman who symbolizes a similar capacity for ethical self-correction.)

Hongladarom further points out how Buddhism highlights the motive for efforts to violate one's privacy; namely, greed for the power, material gain, and so forth that would result from such violations. The antidote is not simply, as in the West, to insist on privacy rights as a protection against such violations. In addition, Buddhism endorses the cultivation of love and compassion as well as the extinction of the empirical self and its strong tendencies toward greed and so forth. In this way, Buddhism more directly addresses the basic source of potential privacy violations, not simply their effects.

Hongladarom concludes by noting that Buddhist ethics thus come closer to a Western-style virtue ethics as well as the pragmatic ethics of Richard Rorty (1975). In this way, his analysis helps to identify and reinforce a second key resonance between Eastern and Western thought, one noted by many comparative philosophers; namely, between Western virtue ethics (whether in Socratic, Aristotelian, and/or contemporary feminist forms) and the ethical systems of Confucian thought and Buddhism (Ess, in press).

SECTION I: SUMMARY REFLECTIONS

A number of important themes and larger insights thus emerge here. For example, many of these chapters share a clear rejection of the notion of technological instrumentalism, the view that our technologies are somehow cultural- and value-neutral. On the contrary, Søraker, Chokvasin, and van der Velden especially make clear how distinctive cultural values are embedded in ICTs, in particular, thus raising the threat of what Ess has called computer-mediated colonization (i.e., the covert, but thereby even more insidious, imposition of specific cultural values, norms, and preferences upon others as ICTs, including the Internet and the World Wide Web rapidly diffusing throughout the globe). Happily, as we have seen documented elsewhere (beginning, in fact, with the work of Hongladarom, 1998, and more broadly in the various publications by Ess and Sudweeks), local cultures and peoples are often more than capable of resisting such colonization. Here, van der Velden documents such resistance especially clearly as she provides both principles and examples of culturally sensitive design that seeks precisely to start from the ground up (i.e., from the cultural values and communicative preferences of a given group of people as the information design starting point) rather than imposing such values and preferences upon a specific group by using off-the-shelf but thereby predominantly Western designed and, thus, Western value-laden technologies.

At the same time, however, Burk's overview of the legal frameworks defining and seeking to protect intellectual property and privacy rights makes clear that the political and economic powers of the United States and the European Union are likely to override non-Western notions of who owns intellectual property (the community rather than the individual), its relative value (as emphasizing faithful replication of past masters rather than contemporary innovations), and notions of privacy (as generally more negative when individual, in contrast to familial or collective privacy as more positive).

Nonetheless, echoing van der Velden's arguments and examples regarding design, especially Søraker, Chokvasin, and Hongladarom demonstrate that a respectful philosophical dialogue between Western and Eastern traditions is not only possible—respectful in the sense that such dialogue is committed first of all to articulating, preserving, and enhancing the cultural values and preferences that define distinctive cultural identities in contrast to running over them roughshod in the name of a putative but, in fact, only Western universality; in addition, these contributors offer highly creative and fruitful syntheses out of such dialogue—but are also syntheses that, as alignments or resonances, help to bridge the irreducible differences between Eastern and Western cultures, while simultaneously preserving their irreducible differences. In this way, these insights may exemplify what Magnani has called the countercultural possibilities (in his example, of Islamic refinements of finance and economic development in light of traditional, Abrahamic critiques of interest) facilitated precisely by the cross-cultural and intercultural communication made possible by ICTs. As we will argue more fully in the Preliminary Conclusions, these alignments and resonances will prove critically useful in our larger project of developing a genuinely global information and computer ethics.

SECTION II: SPECIFIC VIEWPOINTS

We now turn to more specific analyses, beginning with two contributions that analyze the issue of privacy in Thailand. Subsequent chapters will turn to Africa, Turkey, and, finally, the United States, expanding upon initial discussions of cultural, theoretical, and practical analyses and concerns initially raised in Section I, especially as the correlative contributions in Section II provide more concrete details regarding specific cultural backgrounds and perspectives on specific issues such as privacy, software copying, and the digital divide.

Pirongrong Ramasoota Rananand's "Information Privacy in a Surveillance State: A Perspective from Thailand" focuses primarily on the historical, anthropological, and legal backgrounds of Thai notions of privacy, thereby helpfully supplementing the more philosophical approaches we have seen in Section I (Chokvasin, Hongladarom).

Rananand begins with a review of how far Buddhism may have played a role in the relative lack of an ethic of privacy in Thailand. Rananand makes the now-familiar point that, for Buddhists, the self is to be overcome in order to achieve enlightenment, or *nirvana*. Moreover, the Buddhist emphasis on interrelatedness, expressed first in the doctrine of co-emergent existence, contrasts with the Western dichotomy between the individual and the State, and thus between the private and the public.

These observations are problematic, however, in the sense that contemporary Thais may be understood to be exemplary hybrids (i.e., reflecting the powerful and extensive incorporation of Western cultural norms and beliefs); contemporary Thais, as secularized Buddhists, do not hold so strictly to traditional Buddhism as once might have been the case. For example, traditional Thai peasant houses included private spaces, but spaces that were for family activities and rituals, thus fostering a sense of collective privacy (Ramasoota, 2001). More recently, however, rooms for individuals are increasingly common in Thailand, which we might expect to foster a Western-like sense of individual privacy; we can note that such a pattern, in fact, is apparent among younger people in China (Lü, 2005) and Japan (Nakada & Tamura, 2005). Nonetheless, Rananand argues that the Thai tradition of a surveillance society, manifested in traditional wrist tattoos and contemporary smart ID cards (Kitiyadisai, 2005), has countered any similar emergence of a sense of individual privacy in Thailand. In particular, despite the clear and manifold potentials for abuse of individual privacy in the new system of smart ID cards, Rananand finds that their introduction, justified first as a way of curbing violence in the Muslim-majority prov-

inces bordering Malaysia, has resulted in no criticism against it whatsoever. (For a somewhat different view, see Kitiyadisai, 2005.)

Rananand then provides an overview of current privacy legislation in Thailand. Briefly, while there has been some movement toward such legislation (pushed in part by globalization and the influence of Western notions and laws regarding privacy), currently in Thailand, reflecting longstanding traditions, government information is well-protected by statute and by practice, while individual/personal information is not. This means, in particular, that, thanks to the techniques of data mining between diverse bureaucratic databases, an extensive amount of information may be garnered about individuals without their knowledge or consent. This situation further reflects, on Rananand's showing, with a general public apathy in Thailand toward the issues of privacy. Even the relatively affluent Thais, who make frequent use of the Internet, see privacy as having a primarily instrumental value (rather than, say, standing as an intrinsic right, as is often defended in Western views), and if trading off individual privacy might result in economic benefit, especially users from lower socioeconomic groups seemed willing to make such a trade.

Rananand nonetheless sees some hope for further expansion of interests in individual privacy in Thailand. But he concludes with the observation that despite the pressures of globalization and the influence of notions of Thailand as an information society (the countervailing forces of Thailand's traditions as a surveillance society) coupled with a Buddhist underpinning that, contrary to Hongladarom's analyses, may undermine especially Western notions of privacy, seems to still hold the upper hand.

Pattarasinee Bhattarakosol's "Interactions among Thai Culture, ICT, and IT Ethics" provides an alternative perspective on the ethical dimensions of ICTs in Thailand, one that analyzes multiple ethical problems that have emerged in Thai society as a result of the introduction of ICTs. She begins with an extensive account of Thai culture, including nine value clusters, ranging from ego orientation to achievement-task orientation, that constitute a uniquely Thai set of orientations toward various dimensions of individual and community life. Reinforcing the dialectical understanding of the relationship between technology and culture developed by Herdin et al. in Section I, Bhattarakosol observes that most of the multiple factors influencing Thai culture are mutually interdependent (i.e., Thai culture may shape IT ethics, but as IT ethics change with new technologies and technological possibilities, so it may reshape Thai culture, in turn). Crucial to her later arguments, the sole exception here is religion: Bhattarakosol asserts that at least the ethical precepts of religion do not change.

In an analogy of computer programming languages, Bhattarakosol suggests that earlier Thai society could be understood in terms of a function-oriented language (e.g., Fortran); by contrast, she argues, contemporary Thai society is better understood as analogous to an object-oriented language. For example, earlier, a colleague could temporarily take over some of the functions of a sick colleague until that colleague was able to return to work. Such a behavior would seem to be an expression of Thai helpfulness toward others. But in contemporary Thai society, rather than function, life and work are organized in terms of objects in the sense that only particular persons can perform particular tasks. This is especially true under the regime of ICTs. Each individual user must login to a computer system using a unique user ID and password in order to be able to exercise certain functions and responsibilities. This electronic identity—another object—a cannot be shared or temporarily taken over by another. Even more bluntly, Bhattarakosol observes that people increasingly are oriented toward the consumption of objects, whether they be consumer items such as mobile phones or other persons as sex objects.

In particular, Bhattarakosol argues that as Thai children are brought up in homes increasingly inundated with the open information environments of the Internet (while their working parents are increasingly absent), such children increasingly call into question the ethical precepts that their parents try to teach. For Bhattarakosol, this is not only an argument for filtering of information, especially in light of the apparent fact that such children likely will grow up into less-than-ethical adults, but it is also an argument for renewed family structures, including a renewed emphasis on religion as the primary source of ethical precepts. Bhattarakosol proposes that such changes be implemented in small-scale pilot projects in hopes that, to remain with her analogies from computer science, the children who emerge from these projects will help the larger society to scale up in ethically positive directions.

Barbara Paterson's "We Cannot Eat Data: The Need for Computer Ethics to Address the Cultural and Ecological Impacts of Computing" takes up the urgent problems of the digital divide. Paterson points out that the usual solutions for solving this problem (basically, more machines and infrastructure) ignores the fact that computers, as we saw in several ways in Section I, embed a Western world view and its values of efficiency, speed, and economic growth. Paterson's analysis is distinctive, however, as she links the Western worldview, as embedded in ICTs, thereby leading to what she calls information colonialism with another feature of Western societies; namely, the environmental crises of global warming, natural resource depletion, and accelerated species extinction as consequences of Western ways of life.

Paterson begins by rightly pointing out that much of computer ethics has been framed by the assumptions of its almost exclusively Western developers, beginning with the presumption of a technological determinism that sees technological progress as inevitable and unstoppable. This technological determinism, moreover, is supported both by technological instrumentalism, a view examined by several authors in Section I (i.e., the belief that technology is cultural- and value-neutral, or just a tool), and by a presumed evolutionary (more precisely, Social Darwinist) view that assumes that societies and cultures are engaged in a ruthlessly competitive struggle. Paterson further identifies contemporary writers in computer ethics whose presumptions of competitive evolution reflect an unfortunate ethnocentrism. Their dominance in the field thus reinforces yet again the dominance of Western views over other cultural narratives, norms, and values. In this way, Paterson reiterates the point made by van der Velden in Section I with regard to Western design approaches as homogenizing, but now with regard to the literatures of information and computer ethics as themselves potentially homogenizing and, thereby, overriding local cultural values, norms, and decision-making approaches.

Paterson reinforces this point by reviewing the roots of the computer in Western culture—more specifically, in the emergence of mechanistic philosophy and the atomism/determinism of Thomas Hobbes. The subsequent Enlightenment built on these assumptions a (now strongly contested) view of natural science, a capitalist economics, a sociology that presumed that societies functioned like machines, and an industrial revolution literally built by machines. Paterson concludes, "The computer is thus a result and a symptom of western culture's high regard for abstraction and formalisation: it is a product of the mathematician's worldview, a physical device capable of operation in the realm of abstract thought."

A telling contrast then emerges between Western assumptions as embedded in computing technologies and African assumptions. Readers who recall Søraker's use of Confucian thought and Hongladarom's account of Buddhist thought will find these African assumptions familiar; here (again), persons are defined in terms of their relationships with other persons, such that "*participation* integrates individuals within the social and natural networks of the world" (emphasis added). As in Confucian ethics and, to be fair, Western virtue ethics, to be a person is a project of becoming a person. Personhood is not given at birth in the form of an isolated, atomistic self (as in Hobbes); Paterson cites Menkiti (1979), who notes that "personhood is something at which individuals could fail" (p.159).

Clearly, the digital divide is at least as much about cultural differences as it may be about disparities in income and infrastructure. Moreover, contra the frequent claim that ICTs inevitably (i.e., deterministically) will lead to economic prosperity and democratic polity, Paterson points out that ICTs facilitate or afford a phenomenon that Cass Sunstein (2002) has aptly captured under the phrase "The Daily Me" (i.e., my ability on the Internet to exclude others and to focus solely on communicating with and receiving information from only like-minded cohorts. Paterson (along with Sunstein and others) rightly worries that this fragmenting feature of computer-mediated communication may exacerbate existing ethnic divides in a number of African countries.

Moreover, Paterson argues that the computer, reflecting its Western roots, is, quoting Berman (1992), "a technology of command and control." Coupled in Africa with the authoritarian state inherited from colonialism, computer technology actually may increase the possibility of anti-democratic politics rather than inevitably lead to them. Moreover, as computerization apparently reinforces Western attitudes toward nature as a resource to be exploited (first of all, by making it quantifiable and separate from human beings; all are atomic isolates), and as computerization thereby reinforces models of consumption and commodification central to Western life styles,

Paterson argues that the introduction of ICTs indeed threatens to overrun local African values and knowledge and thereby to expand the environmentally unsustainable lifestyle of the West.

The solution—one anticipated, for example, by the syntheses we have seen in Section I between Confucian and Western thought (Søraker) and Buddhist and Western thought (Hongladarom), as well as in the examples of technological design from the ground up (van der Velden) and the dialectical relationship between technology and culture developed by Herdin et al.—is, instead, to work to ensure that African values and norms may work to reshape ICTs in their design and use. Paterson calls for a dialogue that will lead to information and computer ethics that is not simply global, while preserving local cultural norms and values; in addition, such a dialogue must focus on developing the ethics needed to guide the use of ICTs for the sake of sustainable development. The environment, in effect, becomes a central partner in such a dialogue.

Paterson thereby expands for us the broad parameters of the global dialogue on information and computer ethics that we endorse with this book, one that, we hope with Paterson, will develop "an inclusive ethical vision that recognizes the interdependencies of environmental protection, human rights, equitable human development, and peace."

Gonca Telli Yamamoto and Faruk Karaman's "Business Ethics and Technology in Turkey: An Emerging Country at the Crossroad of Civilizations" takes up information ethics as a subset of business ethics on the one hand and of IT and technology more broadly on the other. They note that what one country or culture may consider unethical is accepted as ethical in another culture or country—most notoriously, copying software is widely accepted in a number of Asian countries (in part, to recall van der Velden's observation, because Confucian traditions valorize copying great work)—as it is, according to Yamamoto and Karaman, in Turkey.

Yamamoto and Karaman first develop a broad approach to IT, one that echoes Herdin et al. and others in Section I by rejecting simple notions of technological determinism; rather, IT and information ethics will be shaped by a range of cultural factors, in turn, including religious and philosophical views, scientific developments, social and economic developments, and so forth. Information ethics thus must pay attention to a range of factors, beginning with IT first, since digital technologies especially develop rapidly and diffuse themselves extensively throughout all aspects of human existence (echoing Magnani).

Yamamoto and Karaman show that increasingly complex technologies issue in increasingly complex ethical issues, many of which we may not be immediately prepared to be resolved. Their analysis is of special interest, because Turkey represents a distinctive, perhaps exemplary, case study for anyone interested in the possibilities of a global information ethics that respects diverse cultural traditions. Turkey long has been shaped at the intersection of three world cultures: Western, Islamic, and Eastern. In this way, Turkey represents a microcosm of the global macrocosm: any resolutions and developments in information ethics that work in Turkey may be very suggestive for resolutions and developments in the larger world.

In their extensive review of these diverse cultural roots, Yamamoto and Karaman observe that notions of private property—especially property conceived in intangible forms, such as intellectual property—are alien to the originally nomadic peoples of the central Asian Turkish culture. Moreover, they suggest that the Islamic prohibition against stealing is less effective in Turkey in light of a larger sense that the wealthy West has taken advantage of the relatively poorer Islamic countries; hence, retaliation in the form of copying rather than paying for Western-produced software (and other goods) is seen to be justified. Finally, while Turkey is often touted as the most Western of Islamic countries (e.g., in the contemporary debates regarding Turkey's admission to the EU), Yamamoto and Karaman argue that the Westernization of Turkey, begun by its founder Ataturk, has not succeeded in changing prevailing beliefs that justify, or at least allow for, copying.

Finally, Yamamoto and Karaman point out a number of economic and social factors that likewise make it difficult for Western notions of intellectual property rights to be taken seriously in the Turkish context. More broadly, given the wide disparities among the diverse cultural views at work in Turkey as a microcosm of the larger world, they are not optimistic that a more universal IT ethic will emerge anytime soon.

Yamamoto and Karaman should be read in conjunction with Dan Burk's chapter in Section I, in part as at least as a partial counterexample to Burk's view that the intellectual property regimes of the United States eventually will dominate the global marketplace. He may well be right—in the long run. What Yamamoto and Karaman

make clear for us is that local cultures, especially as reinforced by the problems of developing and/or struggling economies, may have the roots to resist such dominance for quite some time to come.

We close with Lynette Kvasny's "The Existential Significance of the Digital Divide for America's Historically Underserved Populations." Understandably enough, our other contributors, concerned with the digital divide (especially Grodzinsky and Tavani, van der Velden, and Paterson), have focused on its global expressions. But there are important global lessons to be drawn from the U.S. experience in this matter.

As the homeland of much of ICT invention and development as well as its preponderant consumer in the 1990s, the U.S. early on addressed the issues of the digital divide. Kvasny begins by observing that our answer to the question, "Has the digital divide become passé?" depends very much on what we mean by the "digital divide." In her view, academics and policymakers tend to conceive the digital divide as a gap in access and skills. In contrast to this technology-centric approach (i.e., one that emphasizes overcoming the digital divide in terms of increasing public access and training), Kvasny takes a broader existential perspective, which includes attention to emotional experience and how such experience influences decision making. From this perspective, much more is needed to overcome the digital divide than simply setting up more terminals in public libraries.

Indeed, frequently cited models and statistics based on the technology-centric approach suggest that the digital divide in the U.S. is gradually closing. But Kvasny observes that these statistics, along with their less encouraging global counterparts, come prepackaged in ways that help to create and justify categories of the information have-nots—ones that highlight typical problem populations (the unemployed, low income families, etc.). Kvasny further argues that doing so constructs the discourse regarding the digital divide in a racist way—one that argues for aid to those (at least implicitly) believed to be inferior. Put more broadly, Kvasny suggests that the prevailing discussion of the digital divide only reinforces, rather than radically calls into question, pre-existing inequalities.

Instead, Kvasny calls for a more contextually nuanced discussion of the digital divide in its social and technical as well as its economic dimensions. Some studies along these lines, in fact, exist and thereby highlight the limitations of the U.S. government's framing of, and thus proposed resolutions to, the problem. For her part, Kvasny portrays the digital divide in terms of a complex human evil that takes many forms—existential, institutional, social, political, and economic. Her recent research on ICT experience among low-income residents of a predominantly African American community shows, in fact, that ICT presents a double-bind oppression (Frye, 1983); whatever options are made available, there is no way to win. So a low-income black father, for example, characterizes the Internet as a white man's invasion of his home, one that programs his family to want "stuff" that he cannot provide.

Kvasny concludes with a series of critical questions that she argues are necessary for researchers to confront if they are to overcome prepackaged frameworks and discourse for dealing with such issues as the digital divide. She highlights Cornel West's observation that "there can be no democratic tradition without non-market values." But in the market-driven and market-dominated culture of the U.S., she goes on to point out, "nonmarket values are relatively scarce," including, in her view, the basic democratic interest in "the relationship of public interest and common good to the most vulnerable among us as human beings."

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

The contributors to this book, both individually and collectively, thus offer significant new insights and approaches at both theoretical and practical levels and from a wide range of cultural perspectives with regard to newly emerging global and intercultural information ethics. We conclude by noting how these contributors significantly expand what we might think of as the conceptual toolkit, research agenda—and, indeed, the very definition of this new field.

Contributors to Section II first help to sharpen our understanding of the irreducible differences among diverse cultural traditions and the challenges for any global information ethic that these differences entail. Gonca Telli Yamamoto and Faruk Karaman help to expand our understanding of the fundamental differences between Western,

Arabic/Islamic, and Eastern attitudes at work with regard to the issue of copying software, and Barbara Paterson highlights the contrast between traditional African understandings of the individual vis-à-vis the community, as these sharply contrast (in ways similar to Confucian and Buddhist views, we may note) with the Western understandings and values embedded in ICTs at both the software and hardware levels. Similarly, Pirongrong Ramasoota Rananand's and Pattarasinee Bhattarakosol's analyses of the problems of privacy in Thailand reiterate the contrasts highlighted by Hongladarom in Section I between the cultural and religious backgrounds that shape Thai notions and values and those underlying prevailing Western views. In particular, Western ethicists may be somewhat startled by Bhattarakosol's prescription for curing the ills of too much Westernization in Thailand; namely, a restoration of family life and adherence to traditional religion. That is, Western ethics, especially in the U.S. context, tends to strongly separate rationalist ethics and morality on the one hand and religious frameworks and beliefs on the other. But neither Hongladarom nor Bhattarakosol hesitate to offer strong ethical advice based in Buddhism first of all. As we are about to see, this sharp difference nonetheless may work to build a new and more comprehensive synthesis of Western and Eastern approaches, one that expands extant information and computer ethics in ways that may well be required if such an ethic is to enjoy a global legitimacy.

In fact, our contributors have offered a number of new syntheses—what we call here alignments or resonances—among diverse cultural traditions, beginning in Section I with Søraker's conjunction of Confucian and Western thought; ranging through Chokvasin's and van der Velden's conjunctions of Western theory with local values, ontologies, and ways of knowing; and concluding with Hongladarom's development of a close alignment between (Thai) Buddhist and Western approaches to issues of privacy.

Søraker takes up especially a classical Confucian understanding of human beings as relational entities and applies this notion to a distinctively Western information ontology in order to establish and defend the distinctive moral status of informational entities. In doing so, he adds a distinctive and important element not only to Luciano Floridi's highly influential information ontology but also thereby to a larger understanding, articulated perhaps most extensively by Terrell Ward Bynum, of information and computer ethics as oriented toward the moral value of flourishing. Especially as Bynum draws together here the work of Floridi, Norbert Wiener as the foundational figure of Western information and computer ethics, and other prominent contributors to that ethic, his account stands (currently, at least) as the most comprehensive such effort in Western philosophy (Bynum, 2006). Very much to his credit, Bynum seeks to incorporate important Eastern insights as well, precisely for the sake of developing a genuinely global information ethics that will recognize and preserve local cultural norms and values, both Western and non-Western. In our view, Søraker's theory of informational moral status makes a significant contribution toward that more comprehensive goal.

Similarly, Hongladarom's analysis of Buddhist understandings of the individual self and, thus, possible notions of individual privacy centrally contribute to resolving what otherwise appears to be an intractable contradiction between Western and Eastern views—and this in two ways. To begin with, Hongladarom points out that the apparent contradiction between a Western (more precisely, modern) insistence on the reality of an individual, atomic self as the moral autonomy whose rights, including the rights to privacy, must thereby be respected, and a Buddhist understanding of the individual self as an illusion that must be overcome in the name of genuine Enlightenment is not as black-and-white as it first appears. On the contrary, Western traditions certainly include understandings of the importance of relationships and community, and Eastern traditions include ways to understand the individual as an isolate as well. Moreover, the distinction in Buddhism between conventional and absolute standpoints allows for an understanding of an individual self as an empirical self as seen from the conventional standpoint—a self that thereby deserves privacy protections along the lines developed and justified in the modern West. Of course, from the absolute standpoint, this self ultimately will be seen (again) as an illusion that must be overcome if one is to overcome suffering (*dukha*); but until such Enlightenment is reached, we live as such selves and must take them and their rights, as justified by social and political requirements, seriously.

In this light, the contradiction between Western and Eastern ontologies remains, but it is ameliorated by the possibility of what we might think of as a Buddhist approximation of the Western view, one that is real enough to justify individual privacy rights as a serious matter. This resonance thus complements Chokvasin's account of Buddhist notions of autonomy, including the concept of *Attasammapanidhi*, the self-directed, self-correcting

person, as thereby closely aligned with Kantian and Habermasian understandings of moral autonomy. Indeed, we have suggested that the concept of *Attasammapanidhi* resonates in particular with the Platonic model of the cybernetes, the pilot who symbolizes ethical self-correction—a resonance clearly critical for a global intercultural information ethics that seeks to take up cybernetics as not simply informational but, more centrally, ethical self-correction.

In these multiple ways, then, this alignment or resonance emerging from Hongladarom's analysis builds an important structure of ontological and ethical pluralism—one that holds together both incommensurable differences (i.e., precisely the differences in terms of beliefs, norms, values, etc.) that define distinctive cultural identities, thereby protecting cultural identities, alongside close similarities and/or shared beliefs and views (Ess, in press). Hongladarom's analysis of a close resonance between Buddhist and Western views, especially as complemented and reinforced by Chokvasin's account and the alignment we have seen between *Attasammapanidhi* and the cybernetes, hence provides critically important examples of such a pluralism and resonance.

Indeed, and perhaps most importantly, Hongladarom's account of how Buddhism approaches the problem of privacy protections is especially notable, as it shifts Western attention away from its characteristic focus on privacy as a right that must be protected to the source of the attacks on that right; namely, greed. In this way, the Buddhist injunctions to practice love and compassion—injunctions shared, obviously, by all world religions and most ethical frameworks—have us attack the problem of privacy not simply as a matter of insisting that others leave us alone, allow us to control our own information, and so forth, but rather as requiring us to assert positive responsibilities toward others (i.e., to approach them first of all out of a posture of love and compassion).

Such a solution will ring oddly in many Western ears, as it will sound more like a religious—specifically, Christian—than a rational/philosophical injunction. At the same time, however, such a solution is coherent not only with other Eastern philosophies (Confucian thought, first of all); it is also in keeping with Western virtue ethics especially, as Hongladarom points out. As well, its coherence with the Western, Abrahamic religious traditions should be seen as a strength, especially for countries such as the United States, whose citizens remain overwhelming defined in their ethics by their religious (predominantly Christian) beliefs. Moreover, this Buddhist emphasis on compassionate posture toward others very closely resonates with Hans Jonas' (1984) neighbor ethics, as endorsed in this book by Grodzinsky and Tavani. In any event, Hongladarom's Buddhist resolution, as is characteristic of virtue ethics generally and Buddhist thought in particular, makes clear that resolving the problems of privacy is not simply a matter of straightening out important but difficult conceptual problems and definitions at a purely rational level, as is the prevailing approach among Western philosophers. Rather, resolving the problems of privacy further requires us to reflect upon the motives for its violations and thereby resolve for our selves first of all to behave and thereby become more compassionate beings.

In Section II, at least one additional alignment emerges; namely, Barbara Paterson's insistence that traditional African understandings of the individual vis-à-vis the community be preserved in the face of the Western values embedded in ICTs. Paterson hereby complements Maja van der Velden's account in Section I of two ICT projects that accomplish just such a preservation of local values—but expands it to include traditional African understandings that, in turn, we can now see closely resemble Confucian and Buddhist accounts of the relationship between the individual and the larger community. But this expansion includes an additional element; namely, Paterson's linking our concerns with the homogenizing dominance of Western technologies and ethics in extant applications and information and computer ethics with the ecological consequences of a Western, consumer-oriented lifestyle. To be sure, more Western-rooted ICE systems (perhaps most notably the works of Terry Bynum, 2006, and Luciano Floridi, 2003) make explicit links between information ethics and ecological understandings of the world. But as reinforced by her standpoint in traditional African worldviews, Paterson radicalizes these linkages: ICE cannot focus narrowly on ICTs. But if it is to be a genuinely global ethic, ICE must take a genuinely comprehensive view, one that includes explicit attention to how we must live as human beings, not simply how we behave as users of technology.

This more comprehensive agenda for an emerging intercultural information ethics is still further fleshed out, for example, by Lynette Kvasny's call for researchers to critically evaluate their frameworks and research data in order to avoid simply reinscribing extant social and political injustices and, instead, to bring forward the evil

that is at work in those injustices and inequalities. In this way, Kvasny makes clear that strongly prescriptive—indeed, ethically challenging and demanding—insights and claims are not restricted, for example, to the overtly religious appeal of Bhattarakosol. On the contrary, she makes clear that a comprehensive information ethics (i.e., one that steps beyond the comparatively narrow boundaries that have defined that ethics in much, though by no means all, of its Western development and expression) will issue in strong medicine (our term) (i.e., even more ethically demanding and challenging conclusions than follow from predominantly Western views).

In sum, our contributors thus help to extend and redefine intercultural information ethics in a number of striking ways. Our contributors, especially as they draw from diverse non-Western traditions (Confucian, Buddhist, Arabic/Middle-Eastern, and the indigenous traditions of Africa and Australia) thus broaden our understanding of both the irreducible cultural differences and resonances and alignments at play here, as these further apply to central issues in ICE such as privacy and intellectual property rights. They thereby highlight the dangers of remaining too closely within Western views, including assumptions of technological instrumentalism and technological determinism, and of uncritically accepting the Western assumptions both embedded in ICTs and even in specific research methodologies. As first steps beyond the Western views and approaches that have been predominant in both theory and praxis on both theoretical and practical levels, our contributors then offer up new syntheses, alignments, or resonances that help to constitute a more comprehensive, genuinely global approach to the issues of information and computer ethics (e.g., by way of new conjunctions between Western and Confucian thought [Søraker] and between Buddhist and Western thought [Chokvasin and Hongladarom]). Finally, our contributors make clear that Western tendencies to isolate and specialize (so as to separate, for example, ethics from religion and technology from ecology) will not do. Rather, a comprehensive intercultural information ethics will explicitly attend not only to the widest possible range of human cultural traditions, seeking to ensure their survival and flourishing in the face of otherwise homogenizing forces, but also thereby to the larger natural order and the potential consequences for that order that follow upon our design, construction, and diffusion of ICTs. By the same token, a comprehensive intercultural information ethics will seriously attend to the ethical demands of what Westerners may be tempted to dismiss as religious traditions, whether this be an overt call to return to traditional religious belief and family structure (Chokvasin) or to shift our attention from a primary focus on privacy protection to the more demanding awareness that the solution to data privacy may include prevention of such violation by bringing to the foreground the strongly positive obligation to cultivate within ourselves the postures of love and compassion that thereby overcome the motivating roots of privacy violation (Hongladarom). Such a call, we may note, constitutes still another alignment or resonance with the ethical posture suggested by Kvasny as necessary for Western researchers as well, insofar as the latter includes a heightened awareness of systemic evil in society and of the ways that prevailing research methodologies and data resources may collude with that evil.

While thus enhancing and expanding the emerging field of intercultural information ethics in these compelling and significant ways, we and our contributors would be the first to insist that these are but initial steps in the global intercultural dialogues that are needed for any further development of information and computer ethics on a global scale. We cordially and humbly invite our readers to take up these dialogues further.

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