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Anonymity on the Internet

By Alexander Fowler

"I have a big problem and I need all the help I can get from as many people who have personal knowledge of laws governing postdoctoral rights, authorship, data portability, and ORI grievances," wrote a postdoc in an anonymous message posted last month to both the AAAS Ethics in Science Listserv (AAASEST) and Stanford's Young Scientists' Network (YSN). The postdoc identified ten issues that he/she needed assistance with, ranging from whether a postdoc can submit a grievance to the Office of Research Integrity to what intellectual property rights the postdoc can claim for his/her research to whether he/she should be forthcoming about this situation in future job interviews. By posting an anonymous message to both of those listservs, the postdoc could solicit the advice and expertise of several thousand fellow Internet users without infringing on either the rights and identities of the other parties involved in the dispute or risk personal attacks that may have followed had the message been attributable to the postdoc.

The Internet is one of the fastest growing communications mediums today, empowering an estimated 20 to 30 million people worldwide with the capability to send and receive electronic mail, interact with each other in various electronic fora, publish, and access a plethora of information from diverse private and public sector organizations. Unlike more conventional forms of communication (i.e., the telephone and postal service), the Internet is unique in that it is possible for the individual user to easily, inexpensively, and almost instantaneously reach hundreds and sometimes thousands of others with his/her single message or information. It is precisely this power to reach so many people so easily that both complicates and magnifies the complexities involved in anonymous communications on the Internet.

There are numerous ways and reasons why someone would prefer to keep their identity hidden. In addition to the introductory example, it is possible to envision a number of ways anonymity could be used to allow people to share information without fear of reprisal a computer engineer who wants to express opinions about computer products but does not want his employer to find out; someone who lives in a society that is intolerant of their social, political, or religious beliefs; or a whistleblower afraid of retaliation from her co-workers (Bacard). However, many believe that these socially "positive" examples are only the beginning. According to Trotter Hardy, College of William and Mary, "We've tolerated anonymity until now because it has not been that big of a problem.... Anonymity is power and I think it will be abused on the Net" (Lewis). In fact, there are already a number of cases involving the use of anonymity to commit various crimes, "e-mail bomb" or harass others, launder money, and transmit viruses over the Internet.

Romeo@aol.com, Who Art Thou?

There are approximately 20 to 30 anonymous Internet servers, called remailers, operating in this country and abroad, each of which may process as many as 6,000 e-mail messages a day. The primary purpose of a remailer is to allow one to send an electronic message to another person or multiple people without the recipient/s knowing the sender's true identity. The remailer works by stripping an incoming message of its header, a component of all electronic mail that usually includes the senders user name and e-mail address, and replacing it with a dummy address. The message is then forwarded to its intended recipient/s and the sender is alerted by the remailer to his/her new, alternative address. A basic requirement for a remailer to function as a communications tool is that it must permit two-way communications

between the sender and receiver/s. Technically speaking, therefore, most remailers are not anonymous, but pseudonymous in that they assign you a new, virtual identity to supplant your true one. It is precisely this link between one's virtual and true identities that becomes the weak point in the level of privacy these remailers can provide. In a recent case of a alleged child pornographer who used an anonymous remailer out of Finland to transmit illegal information, the operator of the remailer, Johan Helsingius, was ordered on August 23, 1996, by the City Court in Helsinki to disclose the anonymous poster's identity in 30 days or face fines and a six month jail sentence. Two weeks later, Helsingius announced that he was closing his Internet server "because the legal issues governing the Internet...are yet undefined [and] at the moment the privacy of Internet messages is judicially unclear" (Helsingius). To overcome this weakness and make it more difficult for systems operators to know the true identities of their users, three other strategies for transmitting messages or information via remailers have been developed during the last year. First, there are now Cypherpunk Remailers that allow the sender to mail one-way messages without the pseudonymized return address on it. Senders can also encrypt their messages through these remailers, thereby preventing anyone from monitoring the sender's outgoing mail and discovering that he/she is sending anonymous mail. Second, "chaining" remailers together is another strategy that involves addressing a message through a string of pseudonymous remailers, ensuring that after the message travels through the first remailer, the other remailers will only see each successive virtual identity. The most powerful and third strategy requires the use of a special software program -- Mixmaster Remailer -- to generate the message. The program then encrypts the message and breaks it into several packets that are routed separately through a chain of remailers. Only the last remailer in the chain can see that the group of remailer packets are all part of a single message. Unfortunately, while the level of protection is far greater than pseudonomous remailers, these newer strategies cannot guarantee 100 percent anonymity and are too sophisticated for today's average Internet user.

To Permit or Restrict Anonymity, That is the Question

As a decentralized network of literally millions of computers worldwide, the Internet defies any geographical and cultural boundaries thereby complicating efforts to develop ethical or legal norms that could be applied to the activities or behaviors of Internet users. This is significant in trying to grapple with the questions of whether to permit anonymous transmissions on the Internet and how to restrict them without the agreement and cooperation of all of its users and host countries. Key to resolving these questions is how we choose to define the Internet. Some believe the Internet is a democratic community that is ruled by the "netiquette" of its users. Anonymity in this setting can be seen as both an exercise in free speech, liberating individuals from constraints of identity so that they can more accurately and truthfully state their opinions, or a corrosive element which, in the hands of the technically adept, allow people to hide behind assumed names and intimidate and smear others with impunity. Others view the Internet as the next generation of publishing mediums, like newspapers and magazines, where messages are posted for millions to read and discuss. Accordingly, anonymity is seen as leading to greater incivility and distrust among people who can no longer be certain that what they are reading is written with honest intentions and that the author is accountable for his/her statements. Still, there are other implications of anonymous communications on the Internet for organizations working in the area of professional ethics. Several organizations are already accustomed to receiving anonymous allegations from whistleblowers and will likely begin to receive such reports via anonymous remailers. Concerns are also being raised about the privacy of information collected on the browsing habits of employees using the World Wide Web. For instance, last year several government researchers were suspended when it was discovered that they had used their Internet connections to view pornographic materials. In the case of an organization with a whistleblower's informational page on their Web site, it is conceivable that an employer could discover, via the company's network server files, that an employee used that site to report an abuse or request assistance. Therefore, today's increasingly information-based organizations will need to gain a better understanding of how to treat anonymous communications and the records collected about information-gathering habits.

[The AAAS's Directorate for Science and Policy Programs is currently engaged in a NSF-funded project to explore the ethical, legal, and social implications of anonymous communications on the Internet. For more information, contact PER's Deputy Editor - Ed.]

Resources

Anonymously Yours, Part 1: An Interview with Johan Helsingius, www.hotwired.com/

wired/2.06/departments/electrosphere/anonymous.1.html

Anonymously Yours, Part 2: How to Launder Your E-mail, www.hotwired.com/wired/2.06/departments/electrosphere/anonymous.2.html

Bacard, Andre, *Anonymous Remailer FAQ*, www.well.com/user/abacard/remail.html

Engelfriet, Arnoud, *Anonymity and privacy on the Internet*, www.stack.urc.tue.nl/~galactus/remailers/

Helsingius, Johan, *Press Release*, August 30, 1996, www.penet.fi/press-english.html Lewis, Peter, "Computer Jokes and Threats Ignite Debate on Anonymity," *New York Times*, December 31, 1994, Page 1, www.clas.ufl.edu:80/~avi/NII/NYT_anon-amok.txt

IN THE NEWS

Implementing the Recommendations of the Commission on Research Integrity

On June 14, a specially-convened Implementation Group of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services submitted its proposals for implementing the recommendations of the Commission on Research Integrity [See *PER*, VIII(4), Fall 1995] to the Secretary of the Department. The Group recommended that 23 of the recommendations be implemented, some as proposed and others with modifications, that action on three recommendations be deferred, that four not be implemented, noted that two have already been handled through changes put into place by the Department, and that one was not directed toward the federal government.

In a few instances, the Group urged the Department to seek broad public comment before taking action. One such case was with the Commission's most controversial recommendation - the revised definition of scientific misconduct. Here, "being mindful of the considerable differences between the recommended definitions and the current one and concerned about the decidedly negative tenor of the initial reactions to the Commission's report, the Implementation Group believes that the Department should systematically seek and weigh the views of all interested parties before determining whether to accept the recommended definitions in whole or in part." The Group proposed that the Department issue an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the *Federal Register* in order to solicit comments from the scientific community and the general public. The Group "strongly" endorsed the Commission's recommendation that the Department Secretary "encourage an interagency task force to develop a common federal definition of research misconduct and other forms of professional misconduct related to research." [*The Office of Science and Technology Policy is coordinating this effort. A special panel of agency representatives is charged with recommending to the President's National Science and Technology Council "a definition of research misconduct that will be applicable to all federally funded research and to develop guidelines for the roles of agencies and research institutions in ensuring the integrity of the scientific record" -Ed.*]

Expressing concern that the Commission's proposed "Whistleblower's Bill of Rights" created "a strong impression that the Commission was more attentive to rights of whistleblowers and the responsibilities of other parties than to the responsibilities of whistleblowers and the rights of other parties," the Group recommended that the Office of Research Integrity (ORI) draft a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the *Federal Register* so that "institutional procedures [are] refined as necessary to ensure adequate protections for respondents and institutions." Some form of whistleblower protection was required by the U.S. Congress in 1993 legislation.

The Group shared the "Commission's view that universities and other research institutions have a uniquely important responsibility for promoting high ethical standards to guide conducting, reporting, and reviewing research" and supported the Commission's recommendation that "the current NIH research integrity education requirement, now limited to recipients of institutional training grants at NIH-funded institutions [See *PER*, III(1), Winter 1990], [be] ... applied to all individuals supported by PHS research funds." The Group also urged agencies in the Department to "fund high-quality studies of science-related ethics in general and research misconduct in particular" consistent with program priorities and the availability of funds.

The Group did not agree with the Commission's recommendation that there be "widespread, systematic disclosure of all outcomes of federal research and research-related professional misconduct cases....," fearing that it "would put all scientists accused of research misconduct in an unfavorable light irrespective of the merits of the allegations or subsequent exoneration." And it only partially endorsed the Commission's recommendations that the Department "oversee institutions more systematically for compliance with federal assurances, using an appropriate array of mechanisms including on-site visits by specially trained staff." The Group observed that current procedures, whereby the ORI uses site visits as needed, "are appropriate as far as they go but, if funds are available, could be strengthened significantly by incorporating site visits on a routine basis."

Although not recommending any action by the Department, the Group expressed a position in concert with the views of the Commission that "scientific and other professional societies have an indispensable role in promoting research integrity, and hopes that they will continue to provide leadership, especially regarding the types of wrongdoing that are not readily or appropriately considered as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism."

President Appoints Members of National Bioethics Advisory Commission

In July, President Clinton appointed members to the newly established National Bioethics Advisory Commission. Established by Presidential Executive Order 12975 in October 1995, the NBAC is expected to give priority to the consideration of protections of the rights and welfare of human research subjects and the management and use of genetic information. The Commission may also examine other bioethical issues in its advisory role to the federal government. According to its charter, in selecting issues for study, the Commission will be guided by the following criteria: "the public health or public policy urgency of the issue, the relation of the issue to the goals of Federal investment in science and technology, the relative capacity of the Commission as compared to other entities to deliberate on an issue, and the extent of interest in the issue across the government." Executive summaries of each Commission Report will be published in the *Federal Register*. The Commission's charter includes a provision for termination two years from the date of its first meeting, unless formally renewed. The date of its first meeting has not yet been set.

Confidentiality of Mental Health Records

In *Jaffee v. Redmond Et Al.* (June 13, 1996), the US Supreme Court ruled in favor of protecting the confidentiality of the discourse between mental health professionals and their patients. By doing so, the Court created a new evidentiary privilege, in both federal civil or criminal cases, giving mental health professionals the right to refuse to disclose patient records in judicial proceedings. Mental health organizations hailed the ruling as an important step towards recognizing the public interest served by psychotherapy. Notes from the counseling of a police officer by a clinical social worker were sought as evidence against her for killing a suspect who was holding a knife. Justice Stevens noted in the majority opinion that, if police officers were deterred from receiving counseling, the entire community would suffer as a result. He emphasized that the new privilege would "apply with equal force" to all mental health professionals.

IN THE SOCIETIES

Social Workers Revise Code

The National Association of Social Workers has revised its Code of Ethics to reflect recent changes (the last comprehensive revision was in 1979) in service delivery and insurance coverage; privacy concerns precipitated by information technology; and a better informed public. The revised code covers such issues as client confidentiality, access to records, conflicts of interest, dual relationships, cultural diversity, sexual harassment, and informed consent, and addresses social workers' responsibilities to clients, colleagues, their profession, and society. Although the Association's enforcement authority for violation of the code is limited to complaints against members and NASW credentials holders, the code is expected to "serve as a frame of reference for state social work regulatory bodies, social services agencies, professional liability insurance providers, and others." The code makes clear that it is not intended to "provide a set of rules that prescribe how social workers should act in all situations [and] recognizes that

ethical decision making requires" the exercise of professional discretion by the individual social worker.

ETHICS, LAW AND PUBLIC POLICY

Recent Developments In International Engineering Practice

The engineering profession, through the United States Council for International Engineering Practice (hereinafter USCIEP or the "Council"), recently participated and provided formal testimony as part of a United States International Trade Commission investigation to examine the schedule of commitments offered by nine South American countries under the General Agreement on Trade in Services.

Background Of USCIEP

The Council was founded in 1990 and consists of representatives of the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES), Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) and the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE). These three organizations comprise the principal examination, education, and professional practice organizations within the engineering profession in the United States.

Purpose Of USCIEP

The purpose of the Council is to represent ABET, NCEES and NSPE in developing, negotiating, and promoting qualifications and procedures to enable professional engineers to practice internationally. This is accomplished in part by: (1) identifying the constraints to practice engineering in a global community; (2) recommending to the appropriate jurisdictions procedures to eliminate artificial constraints to the right to practice; and (3) seeking ways to establish mutually acceptable assessment mechanisms (education, examination, experience) as qualifiers for cross-border professional practice privileges.

USCIEP has no authority to set regulatory requirements for the licensing of cross-border engineering practitioners. That authority rests exclusively with the individual state and territorial jurisdictions of the United States.

Recent Activities Of USCIEP

Since its founding, USCIEP has undertaken negotiations with its professional engineering counterparts in Canada and Mexico under both the US/Canada Free Trade Agreement and later the North America Free Trade Agreement to identify constraints to engineering practice among the three nations and establish processes to reduce these constraints. These activities culminated in the June 5, 1995 execution by USCIEP and its counterpart organizations from Canada and Mexico of the "Mutual Recognition of Registered/Licensed Engineers by Jurisdiction of Canada, the United States of America and the United Mexican States to Facilitate Mobility in Accordance with the North American Free Trade Agreement," (hereinafter, "MRD"). The MRD was ratified for a two-year period by USCIEP.

The MRD sets out principles for mutual recognition which: (a) are based on objective and transparent criteria, such as competence and ability to provide a service; (b) are not more burdensome than necessary to ensure the quality of a service; and (c) do not constitute a disguised restriction on the cross-border provisions of service. The MRD, when adopted by state and territorial jurisdictions, will apply to nationals of Canada, the US, and Mexico who are licensed to practice engineering in their home jurisdiction.

Since engineering practice in the United States, Canada, and Mexico is generally regulated at the state or provincial level, the MRD represents a statement of principles under the provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Under the MRD, Representative Engineering Organizations at the national level have developed mutually acceptable standards and criteria for licensing and certification of professional services. However, the MRD does not actually bind any state or province but instead establishes basic criteria for a system to better facilitate cross-border practice by licensed engineers. The execution of the MRD was a significant development and the NAFTA process continues to move forward as the three nations continue to address matters of mutual concern as part of a dynamic

process.

Benefits And Limitations Of Existing And Potential Foreign Commitments

In explaining its position to the United States International Trade Commission, the Council noted that it is deeply interested in the impact the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) will have on global engineering practice. As an outgrowth of the NAFTA negotiations, the Council identified the following benefits and limitations of existing and potential foreign commitments for consideration by the U.S.:

1. **Existing Non Conforming Laws:** The laws regulating the practice of engineering in the various states are quite different than the laws governing the practice of engineering in other nations. For this reason, careful consideration needs to be given to the proposed agreements affecting assessment mechanisms and licensing requirements both in the US and abroad.
2. **Deadlines for Non-conforming Laws and Regulations:** Under NAFTA, serious ambiguities exist regarding the obligation of state or provincial licensing authorities to submit their non-conforming laws and regulations to the NAFTA Commission or else waive the state or province's right to maintain such non-conforming laws and regulations. Agreements flowing out of the GATS should be more clear concerning such affirmative obligations by state or other licensing authorities.
3. **Dispute Resolution:** The Council believes that the philosophy incorporated into NAFTA that the Representative Engineering Organizations should voluntarily negotiate issues of mutual recognition and that areas of disagreement should be submitted to the NAFTA Commission for further negotiation and mediation is a desirable approach. The Council urges the continuation of the concept whereby the parties themselves seek mutual resolution of areas of disagreement.
4. **Residency and Citizenship Requirements:** In contrast with the NAFTA, GATS does not appear to promote the general elimination of citizenship or residency requirements. The impact of this difference on international trade in services needs to be carefully considered by the Commission. The Council urges the removal of artificial constraints such as citizenship and residency requirements.
5. **Growing Use of Technology in Professional Practice:** With the increasing use of the Internet in engineering practice and other electronic methods of practice, careful consideration must be given to its impact on cross-border practice.
6. **Language:** Language barriers will continue to be a significant hindrance both to US engineers seeking to practice in non-English speaking jurisdictions and also to non-English speaking engineers who seek to practice in US jurisdictions. The Council urges declaration of an "International Language of Commerce" to be used in the international practice of engineering.
7. **Difference in the Legal Systems:** The US legal system and the legal systems of other nations are significantly different and in some cases seek different objectives. For example, in the US, issues of professional malpractice generally proceed under the civil justice system. In other nations, issues of professional malpractice may also proceed under the criminal justice system or a hybrid system. In addition, the need for and availability of liability insurance for professional errors and omissions in other nations needs to be carefully examined.
8. **Engineering Ethics and Professional Conduct:** Over the years, the US engineering community has developed a set of basic standards for ethical professional practice. These standards are embodied in the Code of Ethics of organizations such as NSPE, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ACE), the Institute for Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) and the Rules of Professional Conduct developed by the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES). Careful attention needs to be given to the manner and extent to which similar standards of ethical professional practice have been embodied within the engineering communities in other nations.

Conclusion

The US engineering community is generally encouraged by recent discussions among the US, Canadian and Mexican engineering organizations growing out of the US-Canada Free Trade Agreement and the NAFTA/MRD. The Council is hopeful that discussions with the nine South American countries under the GATS will likewise be productive. While differences will remain, there is general agreement that through the US-Canada Free Trade Agreement and the NAFTA/MRD, a coherent framework has been established that will assist the engineering profession in the years ahead in seeking mutual resolution of existing and emerging global practice issues.

RESOURCES

In Print

On July 11, 1995, the Public Health Service and the National Science Foundation issued **rules on conflict of interest in research** [See *PER*, VIII (3), Summer 1995]. To assist institutions in implementing policies that comply with both PHS and NSF requirements, the agencies have jointly developed a set of "frequently asked questions" that appear in the *Federal Register* 61: 34839-34841, July 3, 1996.

On-Line

The **Thereza Imanishi-Kari Decision** of the Department of Health and Human Services Departmental Appeals Board, Research Integrity Adjudications Panel, can be found on the Web at <http://www.os.dhhs.gov:80/progorg/dab/dab1582.txt>.

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Ethics Updates, <http://pwa.acusd.edu/~hinman>, is a Web-based list of bibliographic resources that cover a variety of issues in ethical theory and applied ethics. Updates is organized and maintained by Lawrence Hinman, Department of Philosophy, University of San Diego, 5998 Alcalá Park, San Diego, CA, 92110; (619) 260-4787; E-mail hunman@cts.com.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tuskegee University is sponsoring a **Conference On The Human Genome Project**, September 26-28, 1996, for the purpose of increasing awareness in the African American community of the Human Genome Project (HGP). Presentations and workshop discussions will focus on the technological, ethical and social aspects of the HGP with significant opportunities for interaction with students and faculty. Contact Ed Smith, 109 Milbank Hall, Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL, 36088; (334) 727-8028; Fax (334) 727-8552; E-mail edsmith@acd.tusk.edu.

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The Nazi Medical Trials: A Legacy of Horrors is being sponsored by the Center for Bioethics, University of Pennsylvania Health System on September 30, 1996, in Philadelphia. The conference will look back at the formulation of the Nuremberg Code, a framework for the ethical use of human subjects in research that emerged out of the trials of Nazi doctors and officials for experiments on concentration camp inmates. It will also examine research studies that have violated the principles of the Code since the trial, including the Tuskegee Syphilis Study and the Human Radiation Experiments. Contact Helen DiCaprio, Center for Bioethics, University of Pennsylvania Health System, 3401 Market Street, Suite 320, Philadelphia, PA, 19104; Fax (215) 573-3036; E-mail dicaprio@mail.med.upenn.edu.

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The Lehigh University Press has announced a **competition for manuscripts in science, technology, and social studies** that examine the inter-relatedness of science and engineering, technological innovation, and social institutions.

The winning book manuscript will be published and the author will receive \$1,500. Manuscripts must be postmarked by October 15, 1996, and be original contributions in their field, prepared and documented according to the standards of scholarly publication. Contact the STS Studies Manuscript Competition, Lehigh University Press, 302 Linderman Library, 30 Library Drive, Bethlehem, PA, 18115; (610) 758-3933; Fax (610) 974-2823; E-mail inlup@lehigh.edu.

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The Association for Practical and Professional Ethics has announced a **call for presentations** for its upcoming Sixth Annual Meeting to be held in Washington, DC, March 6-8, 1997. Submissions are invited on ethical concerns in various fields such as public administration, law, the environment, accounting, engineering, computer science, research ethics, business, medicine, journalism, and on issues that cut across professions. The deadline for submissions is October 31, 1996. Contact Brian Schrag, Executive Secretary, APPE, 410 North Park Avenue, Bloomington, IN, 47405; (812) 855-6450; Fax (812) 855-3315; E-mail appe@indiana.edu.

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The Center for Applied Ethics, Linköping University, Sweden, has announced a **call for papers** for its June 9-10, 1997, conference on computer ethics. The conference will bring together researchers in computer science and in ethics as well as practitioners in business, public administration, and hospitals for discussions on difference ethical aspects of systems development and the use of computers. Papers are sought dealing with privacy and personal integrity, ethics and the Internet, ethical aspects of the use of decision support systems in health care, ethics and expert systems, professional ethics, computers and the quality of work and the relation between computer ethics and theoretical ethics. The deadline for submissions is November 1, 1996. Contact Nina Nikku, Center for Applied Ethics, Linköping University, S-581 83 Linköping, Sweden; E-mail ninni@tema.liu.se.

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ETHICOMP96, Third International Conference on Ethical Issues of Information Technology, is being hosted on November 6-8, 1996, by the Facultad de Informatics, Universidad Pontifica de Salamanca en Madrid, Spain, in association with the Centre for Computing and Social Responsibility, De Montfort University, UK, and the Research Center on Computing and Society, Southern Connecticut State University, USA. The conference will examine the structure of organizations and societies and the location of work, privacy and monitoring, intellectual property of software and data, and development of future information systems that are consistent with social values. See the conference's Web site for more information, <http://www.cms.dmu.ac.uk/CCSR/ccsr/conf/ccsrorgconf.html>, or contact the Centre for Computing and Social Responsibility, School of Computing Sciences, De Montfort University, The Gateway, Leicester LE1 9BH, UK; -44 116 257 7475; E-mail ccsr@dmu.ac.uk.

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Communities Of Color and Genetic Testing: Purpose, Voice and Values will be sponsored on November 8, 1996 by the Seton Hall University Law School. The conference will examine the legal and ethical problems that may be expected as disadvantaged and minority communities are confronted with new genetic information that may or may not have been tailored to their particular needs and cultural values. For more information, send e-mail to the Program Director, Professor Kathleen Boozang at boozanka@lanmail.shu.edu.

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To emphasize the positive aspects of kids and computers, the relationship between technology and youthful reserves of resourcefulness, social responsibility, compassion and intellectual curiosity, the Computer Ethics Institute is sponsoring, **Kids and Computers: Recognizing Values, Choices and Character**, on November 9-10, 1996, in Washington, DC. The conference aims to underscore the role of information technology in the recognition by kids of positive social values, and the use of information technologies to act on that recognition. In addition, it will discuss uses of information technologies by various professionals to advance the interests and well-being of children. Contact Patrick Sullivan, Executive Director, Computer Ethics Institute, P.O. Box 42672, Washington, DC, 20015; (301) 469-0615; E-mail psullivan@brook.edu.

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Cybercivics 101: The Relevance Of Representative Democracy In The Information Age is being convened on October 10-11, 1996 at The Brookings Institution, Washington, DC, by the Computer Ethics Institute. The conference will address a range of ethical and public policy questions regarding the emerging use of information technologies and the Internet as a public infrastructure for engaging democratic process and achieving the ideals of democracy in real political space. Contact Patrick Sullivan, Executive Director, The Computer Ethics Institute, P.O. Box 42672, Washington, DC, 20015; (301) 469-0615; E-mail psullivan@brook.edu.

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On November 13-14, 1996, **The Responsible Conduct of Research: A Commitment for all Scientists** will be held in San Diego. Co-sponsored by Public Responsibility in Medicine and Research, Association of American Medical Colleges, Tufts University School of Medicine, University of California at San Diego, and Harvard Medical School - Division of Medical Ethics, the conference will address the goals, methods, and evaluation instruments involved in teaching research ethics. Contact PRIM&R at (617) 423-4112; Fax (617) 423-1185; E-mail prmr@aol.com.

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The Harvard University Program in Ethics and the Professions invites **applications for resident Fellowships in Ethics** for the academic year 1997-98. Fellowships will be awarded to outstanding teachers and scholars who wish to develop their competence to teach and write about ethical issues in business, education, government, law, medicine, public policy, and social science. Fellows participate in the weekly seminar of the program, attend courses in one of the professional schools or in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and conduct their own research on ethics. Applicants usually hold a postgraduate degree in business, government/public policy, law or medicine, or a doctorate in philosophy, political theory, theology, or related discipline. Deadline date for applications is December 19, 1996. Contact the Program in Ethics and the Professions, Harvard University, 79 Kennedy Street, Cambridge, MA, 02138; (617) 495-1336; Fax (617) 496-9053; E-mail ethics@fas.harvard.edu.

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The Center for the Study of Values in Public Life, Harvard Divinity School, **invites applications** from scholars and practitioners to be in residence for one semester of one academic year. Fellows will pursue research projects that recognize religious beliefs and practices as important elements in the current debate about civil society and the renewal of public life; participate in an interdisciplinary seminar involving senior scholars and practitioners; and convene a student working group around a central issue in one's area of expertise. Deadline for applications is December 20, 1996. Contact the Center for the Study of Values in Public Life, Harvard Divinity School, 45 Francis Avenue, Cambridge, MA, 02138; (617) 496-3586; Fax (617) 496-3668; E-mail cmcintyre@div.harvard.edu.

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Abstracts are now being accepted for **The Third International Conference on Peer Review in Biomedical Publication**, to be held in Prague, Czech Republic, September 17-21, 1997. Abstracts on any aspect of editorial peer review and its role in scientific publication, decision making, and information exchange will be considered. Deadline for abstracts is January 15, 1997. Contact Annette Flanagin, *JAMA*, 515 N. State, Chicago, IL, 60610; (312) 464-2432; Fax (312) 464-5924; E-mail aff@ix.netcom.com. See the conference's Web site on the *JAMA* homepage at <http://www.ama-assn.org>.