Exercise: Ethical Considerations

They shall be submitted together with the Proposal Exercise, as appendix **in the same document**, but we describe this task here separately.

The discussion shall specifically address the research subject of your proposal. It should not be some essay about the ethics of CS in general!
The recommended length is about 1 printed page. In the case that you refer to papers, you need to add a separate bibliography, independently of the proposal. It is also recommended to follow the steps below, but you don't have to. Only the final text counts.

Step-by-Step Instructions (if you need)

Collect possible ethical issues of your subject, maybe first only as keywords and bullet points, and from a practical point of view. In many cases a subject will immediately raise ethical questions, whereas in other cases they are less obvious, especially if the subject is abstract, mathematical, or purely technical. But even then, remember that the results shall contribute to knowledge and be applied in some ways, and one should always ask oneself: Why is this important and worth studying at all? (One could use time and energy to do something else ...) What are potential benefits and threats for society, i.e., positive and negative implications?
Identify possible scenarios where one has to take principal decisions (for instance, apply a certain method or not, modify it in this or that way). Which decision options do you see? What can they entail? Use your imagination! To make it fun, play a little bit a "science fiction author" in this phase.
Next, give reasons for or against these decision options and possible actions: Which ethical values would be the basis of these decisions? Are these values intrinsic (in your opinion) or only instumental? In the latter case, go further: What justifies these instrumental values?
You don't have to arrive at a final judgement and the "correct way". But try to analyze the *questions* clearly, comprehensively, and in some depth, identify dilemmas, or come to "active" conclusions. (For example: Do not stop at the trivial statement that a technology in the wrong hands may be misused, but also discuss what could be done to prevent such misuse.)
Finally, turn the collected thoughts into a coherent and readable text, as in the other writing exercises. It does not have to contain philiosophical vocabulary anymore; see it only as an aid to structure your argumentation.