

Overview

1. **Persuasive Technology**
 - a. What is PT and why is it interesting for Philosophers?
2. **A very, very, very short introduction to ethics**
 - a. Ethical Approaches
 - b. Rationalism in Ethics (Deontology)
 - c. Discourse Ethics and Persuasion
3. **Rationalism and Persuasion – suggestions for a marriage contract**
 - a. 4 intuitions for a ,rational persuasion'
4. **“let him now speak or forever hold his peace”**

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/ Filosofie 11-09-2009 PAGE 1

Persuasive Technology

- **Persuasive Technology**
- **Persuasive Technology: intentionally designed to change attitude and/or behaviour of users**
- **Captology: „Computers as persuasive Technology“**
- **Expantion: Persuasive Technology (not limited to Computers)**

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A trend in interactive technology

B.J. Fogg (2003)

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Honda Insight (Hybrid Car): Eco Assist

Honda Technology

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Persuasive Technology

'Persuasion'

- Can be interpreted as “communicative relation” between user and (designer of) technology
- **Attempt to transfer a message**
- **Motivation to change the behavior of the user**
 - Often for "ethical values" (e.g. sustainability")
 - assumed to be the best interest of the user (or the society)

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Ethical Concerns on two levels

- **Is the aim of the persuasion really moral?**
- **Is the type of persuasion used neutral/ethical?**

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/ Filosofie 11-09-2009 PAGE 6

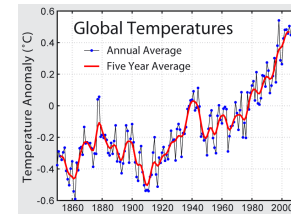
Strategies – Example of Visual Feedback



Al Gore – An Inconvenient Truth (2006)

Strategies of Persuasion (examples)

- Visualisation
- Feedback
 - Numeric
 - Visual
 - Social
- Visual Feedback can be a powerful persuader



Strategies of Persuasion (examples)

Fitna the official movie, part 2 (English)



Ethical Concerns

- Two key issues
 - (1) "Manipulative Technology"
 - in how far is 'persuasion' different from manipulation?
 - Autonomy and Paternalism
 - (2) [Additional Issue: Distribution of Responsibility]

A very very very short Introduction ETHICS

Elements of ethical Judgement

- Ethics as "mixed Syllogism" (V. Höhle)
 - 1. "x is a value" (normative premise)
 - 2. "in a situation s1, y1 is a means to realize x" (descriptive premise)
 - 3. "Do y!" (conclusion: Norm)

The three great ethical traditions

- **Western Tradition: 3 main theories**
- **Virtue – Ethics**
 - Based on qualities of a character (ancient greek, medieval world)
- **Deontology**
 - Based on types of actions (modernity, I. Kant)
- **Consequentialism / Utilitarianism**
 - Based on consequences of action (modernity, J. St. Mill, J. Bentham)

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/ Filosofie 11-09-2009 PAGE 13

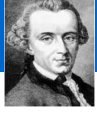
"Person / Character"	"Action"	"Consequences"
Somebody...	...does something...	...with a result/consequence
Virtue Ethics e.g. "Aristoteles"	Deontology e.g. "Kant"	Consequentialism e.g. "Mill"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main idea: the good is linked to traces of a character that make somebody a good person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main idea: the good is linked to types of actions that can rationally be considered to be good and are rationally chosen by the actor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main idea: the good is linked to the outcome of an action: a good action leads to the greatest happiness of the greatest number

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MORAL AUTONOMY, RATIONALISM AND PERSUASION

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Rationalism in Ethics



- **Rationalism in Ethics**
 - Might be most sceptical with regard to ,persuasion‘
 - Strong notion of ,autonomy‘ (e.g. Kant, Neo-Kantianethics, Critical Theory)
 - => greatest challenge

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Central Ideas of Rationalism

- **Rationalism in Ethics**
 - (RE1) „Ethical judgements are best justified, grounded and applied by way of rational argumentation/investigation“ (Epistemological Requirement)
 - (RE2) „For an action to be ethical it is required that it is motivated by reason/rational insight into good“ (Motivational Requirement)
 - (RE3) „Social Implementation of Morality is best done by ways of implementing rational deliberation“ (Social Requirement)


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The Rationalist Ideal

- Knowledge of the good ← REASON
- ↓
- Performing of good action ← REASON
- ← Foster use of REASON
- Social Institution ← Foster use of REASON
 - E.g. : Parliament, Democracy; Public Education

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Example: Discourse Ethics



- Neo-Kantian cognitivist approach
- Intersubjectivity vs. Transzendental Subject
- ‚Transformation of Philosophy‘ (Apel)
- Idea of universal discourse-community (Apel, Habermas)
- Two types of Rationality
 - Communicative rationality (ethical knowledge)
 - Strategic rationality (know-how, technical knowledge)

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Strategic Rationality

- AIM: Domination, Exercise of Power
- Knowledge how to achieve an end
 - Technological knowledge
 - Ways of manipulation
 - Of Nature
 - Of Others: The other as means for my ends
- Anthropological Root:
 - Subject-Object Relation, Dominion over Nature

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Communicative Rationality

- Ideal of „rational consensus“
 - best way to find truth in ethical matters
 - impersonal, universal aspect of argumentation
 - Symmetric relation
 - force of the better argument vs. Force of hierachy/power
 - Implicit norms in every communication (discourse norms)
- Anthropological Root
 - Social nature of humans / emancipatory interest

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What about ‚Persuasion‘?

• Communicative R. • („Convincing“)	Values	Symmetry
	↑	
	– Persuasion (????)	
	↓	
• Strategic R. • („Manipulation“)	Know-How	Assymetry

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The Challenge of Persuasion

- Discourse Ethics and ‚Persuasion‘
- ethical questions:
 - (When) is it allowed to use a type of stratigic rationality for the sake of ‚ethical rationality‘?
 - If we use ‚persuasion‘, how can we make it less ‚strategic‘ and more ‚communicative‘?

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Part 3 DISCOURSE ETHICAL GUIDLINES FOR PERSUASION

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Four Intuitions

- 1. „Persuasion should be based on prior (real or counterfactual) consent“
- 2. „Ideally the aim of persuasion should be to end the persuasion“
- 3. „Persuasion should, if possible, favor factual feedback over other means of persuasion“
- 4. „Persuasion should grant as much autonomy as possible to the user“

Intuition 1

- „Persuasion should be based on (counterfactual) consent“
 - „Golden Rule of Persuasion“
 - "The creators of a persuasive technology should never seek to persuade a person of something they themselves *would not consent to be persuaded to do*"
- (Berdichevsky & Neuenschwander)

Intuition 1

- Golden Rule analogy to Rawls' thought experiment
- Smoking-Counterexample
- Appealing to ‚rational, ideal consense‘ rather than real factual willingness

Intuition 1 - continued

- For questions of philosophical justification: thought-experiment of Golden Rule and counterfactual acceptance
- For implementation of technology:
 - User should *know* that he will be subject to persuasion
 - User should (in principle be able to) *consent* to it

Intuition 2

- 2. „Ideally the aim of persuasion should be to end the persuasion“
- Assymetrical Relation in changing behaviour
 - Manipulation:
 - keep the other unfree, subject to your will
 - Education: make the other free, create autonomy
 - Notion of enlightenment, rational ideal of helping to gain moral autonomy
 - Do the good (maybe because you are persuaded)
 - Aim: Do it freely (as free choice)

Intuition 2 - continued

- Applied to PT:
 - Aim: Behaviour change („doing the good“)
 - (1) temporary limited
 - Persuasion should be seen as means, therefore preferably be temporary
 - „don't persuade continuously, but only if user keeps wrong behaviour“
 - (Example: use of RSI guard)
 - (2) explain, give reasons
 - It should be obvious or explained to the user, why the behaviour is desired

Intuition 3

- 3. „Persuasion should, if possible, favor factual feedback over other means of persuasion“
- Example: Wattson Energy Meter
 - Discourse: Communication directed at „truth“
 - Computer machines, seen as reliable,
 - But this means feedback must be ‚objective‘ and ‚testable‘
 - Reason, factual feedback: more objective, can be more easily controlled



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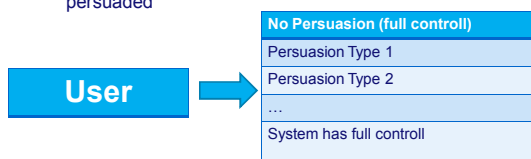


Intuition 4

- „Persuasion should grant as much autonomy as possible to the user“
- Autonomy
 - Notoriously difficult to define
 - One Aspect: giving options

Intuition 4 - continued

- (2) Combination of Autonomy and Persuasion?
 - Systems that let the user decide *if* he wants to be persuaded
 - Systems that let the user decide *how* he wants to be persuaded



Summary

- 4 ways to make persuasion ethical
- Against Assymetry
 - Shared values and consensus about the aim
 - Dynamic (temporal) persuasion as in ‚education‘
- Against Manipulation
 - Provide the user (the link to) facts and arguments
 - Give user autonomy / choice of options

Thanks for your attention!

Questions?

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