

**Title:**

The Transformation of Morality and Ethics in the Information Age  
by Phillip Brey

**Abstract:**

This proposal follows up on the statement in the call for papers that the conference organizers are “particularly interested in papers on the historical development of information laws and ethical theory”. In my paper, I aim to analyse how the shift from an industrial to an information society has changed our moral priorities and moral discourse, both in everyday morality and in the field of ethics. The transition to an information age has made certain moral values and principles more important, others less important, and has changed the way we interpret and apply existing moral values and principles. I will particularly focus on four values that have gained added importance in the information age: privacy, freedom (of speech, in particular), property rights, and justice. I will study how each value has been transformed in the transition from an industrial to an information age, and how new ethical issues have come up in their application to digital information and information technologies. I will consider both how the particular properties of digital information (technology), and how these values are altered because of larger social, cultural and economic changes, including the challenges of globalization. For example, property rights are challenged because of the fact that property becomes easily replicable in the information age, and all values are challenged because of globalization and the fact that in many countries, these values are not unconditionally supported. I will conclude with a general analysis of how the information age has transformed ethics and morality.