

SELF-DETERMINATION AND INFORMATION PRIVACY: A PLOTINIAN VIRTUE ETHICS APPROACH

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Abstract

The question of privacy is crucial to computer ethics and cyber ethics inquiries. Modern discussions emphasize the need for informational self-determination and control of the flow of personal data on computers and computer networks. Information privacy is usually defined as the ability or the claim of an individual or group to determine for themselves, when, how and what data about themselves are shared with or communicated to others. However, a virtue ethics perspective of information privacy has not been sufficiently investigated in modern studies. Plotinus' notion of self-determination is related to virtue ethics, human freedom and intellectual autonomy. Plotinus' philosophical account of self-determination is not an action-based moral claim or ability, but a self-centered virtue ethic prerequisite for the quality, unity and freedom of the self. In this paper, I shall argue that a Plotinian virtue ethics approach of self-determination can enlighten computer ethics and cyber ethics discussions of information privacy and human freedom.