EGAIS Final Conference

The ethics of the future:
co-responsible implementation of governance
approaches in technological projects

Monday, 23 January 2012 (9.00 am – 3.30 pm)

CCAB (Albert Borschette) Building
Rue Froissart 36, Brussels, Belgium
Room AB-4C

An open conference inviting those interested in the ethical governance of emerging technologies to share their point of view and contribute to the definition of a co-responsible ethics of the future

Conference aims:

- To **present a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the current state** of current ethical governance measures within EU technical and development funded projects.
- To **illustrate the EGAIS policy recommendations** for concretely embedding ethics into any technological development practices, specifically European funded projects but also relevant to other spheres.
- To **stimulate a discussion** on potential new research streams stimulated by the EGAIS recommendations inside the ethical governance debate.

Participants:

Stakeholders invited to attend include – but are not limited to – *scientists, academics and researchers in the field of emerging and converging technologies and ethics, policy makers, the European Commission and reviewers of projects in ICT programmes, the scientific community, project leaders of technical projects, developers and the IT industry, and the civil society (representatives of international public organisations and agencies)*.
The conference programme has been designed to allow for dialogue with all stakeholders, and includes presentation sessions for the main representatives of each category of stakeholder.

Participation to the event is free but **registration is mandatory**. To register, please contact Alessia Santuccio (alessia.santuccio@unicatt.it) by **Monday January 16th**, providing your name, job title, institution/organization and contact information.

How can each one of us, as technology user/developer/financial backer, define values that are at stake due to the nature of the technology being used in relation to the context within which it is produced; and what meaning do we give to these technologies?

(EGAIS project Deliverable D3.1)

The EGAIS Final Conference

The EGAIS final conference aims at presenting the project findings and results to a broad audience of stakeholders, belonging to the academia, the research field, the policy field, the technological industry and the civil society. The conference is intended to prompt reflection on the way which new governance and assessment guidelines can address the issue of integration of ethics into technical development projects and applications across the European culture of technological innovation.

The conference will be organised around common streams and topics which have been key concerns throughout all of EGAIS's activities, when key stakeholders were involved into the assessments and evaluations of the project's results to ensure that the investigations were grounded in the practical experiences:

- "Theoretical landscape" of the EGAIS research: the limits of rational approach, the open method, the comprehensive proceduralism and ethics reflexivity

- Policy recommendations for heterogeneous categories of stakeholders, as derived from EGAIS results

- Lesson learnt and future research needs in the field of ethical governance of technological projects and emerging technologies

Objectives (and contents):

The EGAIS final conference aims to engage all participants and stakeholders' representatives in active exchange of perspectives. It will take stock of the lessons learned over the project and look ahead through the major trends impacting on the future of ethical governance in emerging technologies.

The general aim of the event is threefold:

1. to **generate a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the current state** of what we know about the existing ethical governance measures within EU technical and development funded projects and to present the deficiencies in ethical governance mechanisms EGAIS has identified.

2. To **provide examples of good practice and guidelines** for concretely embedding ethics into projects in any European technological development practices.

3. To **stimulate a discussion** on their potential to enrich mainstream research streams.

In addition to the above, the final conference is intended to be a cross-fertilising event aiming at:

➢ promoting the exchange of information and knowledge between practitioners, researchers, community members and policy makers on the issue under investigation;

➢ presenting and promoting innovative and good practice examples developed within the framework of EGAIS;

➢ building capacities among practitioners, researchers, community members and policy makers;

➢ initiating collaboration and networking between stakeholders who have a strong interest on the issue under investigation and who want to be co-responsible of the ethics of the future.

The EGAIS Project

EGAIS Objectives

EGAIS - The Ethical GovernAnce of emergIng technologies: New Governance Perspectives for Integrating Ethics into Technical Development Projects and Applications, is an EU funded project addressing one of the key issues financed by the Commission in the area of ICT within the VII Framework Programme: the ethics of technology.

Despite numerous attempts to identify current and future issues in ethics of technology, there is currently a lack of a broader understanding of emerging issues that could be used to inform EU policy development.

Firstly, most research undertaken in the area is specific to technologies, applications, or ethical theories. While such research is of course necessary, it fails to live up to the requirements raised in the current work programme in Science in Society, which requires the identification of new ethical issues and their relevance.

Secondly, specific research in areas that are already perceived to be problematic (e.g. privacy in ubiquitous computing, brain-machine interfaces, human implants etc.) is relevant and important but by definition fails to address the novelty aspect required. The ethical norms that should rule new technology development projects are in most of the cases not well grounded and/or are defined without taking into account the context of their definition / applications. This is one of the main reasons why most research projects fail in - recognizing ethical issues; facing those ethical issues; obeying the (ethical) normative requirements by properly integrating them into the governance of the project itself.

Thirdly, the EGAIS research shows that there is a gap between the technical and ethical communities which, if reduced would benefit the development process. Practically, the main problem consists of a deep lacking of background: the strong push for technology development too often obscures the need for any deep ethical consideration before a technical project is funded, developed and deployed. This gap could be addressed through the capacitation of actors who are involved in designing, producing, marketing, promoting, regulating, using and consuming technologies via a learning process that involves democratic and interactive collective decision making processes (ethics of co-responsibility). At this level, political institutions, such as the European research, innovation and specifically ICT policies play an essential and 'guiding' role in shaping the future trajectories of technological innovations and their ethical implications.

Within this scenario, EGAIS investigated ethical governance procedures in EU research projects applying analytical and theoretical models to empirical research in technology. In detail, the following areas of technology were examined: Ambient Intelligence, nuclear technology, nanotechnology, hazardous activities. Also, the existing EU governance mechanisms were taken into consideration, directly involving the EU ethical experts, policy makers and reviewers.

The overall aim of this empirical analysis was to characterise the existing limits of current approaches of ethical governance in projects with a technical development. This characterisation took to the definition of a sound framework for improved governance mechanisms that identifies and addresses potential ethical issues arising from new and emerging technologies in the early stages of development.

The governance framework was soundly based on governance theory and empirical evidences. It was built up with the important commitment and involvement of the project stakeholders (project leaders of technical projects, EU Commission, ethical experts and researchers, academics, civil society etc.). With the key insights and evaluation feedback EGAIS was able to collect directly from those stakeholders through interviews, face-to-face meetings and internal Workshops, it was possible to define new form of scientific and technical European project governance capable to produce the creation of ethically acceptable project outcomes, following the analysis of the way actual European project structure governance seeks to recognize and address ethical issues.

To summarise, the EGAIS project has contributed to the progress beyond the state-of-the-art by:

➢ Embedding ethical considerations of governance into the technology development culture of the European research.

➢ Suggesting new form of scientific and technical European project governance capable to produce the creation of ethically acceptable project outcomes.

➢ Providing a governance framework able to identify and address ethical issues arising from new and emerging technologies in early stages of development.

EGAIS Key Data

EGAIS is a 34 months project financed by the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme FP7/2007-2013 under grant agreement n° SIS8-CT-2009-230291.

EGAIS started on May 1st 2009 and finishes on February 29th 2012. It has received a subsidy of 837.685,00 Euros by the Commission.

The EGAIS Consortium

Coordinated by the Catholic University of Milan (UCSC), the Consortium is composed by 3 more partners: Facultes Universitaires Notre Dame de la Paix Namur (FUNDP, Belgium), Middlesex University (MU, United Kingdom) and Institut Catholique des Arts et Métiers (ICAM , France). These Consortium partners have strong and consolidated experience in the field of ethics, organisational theories and ICTs and represent many of the leading scholars in the field.

The Institute of Information Science Maribor (IZUM) was a partner of the EGAIS Consortium from May 1st 2009 to March 31st 2011.