

Research Ethics

Research Ethics

- Research ethics typically refers to fair treatment of subjects
- Concerns are much broader
 - Intellectual Property (Ownership of ideas)
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Support and Participation
- Your supervisor will help keep you out of some problems
 - Your supervisor will be the source of others
- Thanks to Lee Osterweil for some of this material

Intellectual Property

- Ideas are the bread and butter of research
 - Ownership is important
 - Example: citations in paper
- Evaluation is based on ideas (that are brought to fruition)
- Issues
 - Jointly developed ideas
 - Returning to an idea
 - "Contamination" through supervisors
 - Going from a research idea to a commercial proposition

Authorship

- Your name on a paper asserts that you were a substantial contributor
- All authors should agree on this
 - Discuss beforehand
 - Discuss again at the end
- You are responsible for all of it
 - If it is wrong, you are to blame (even if a coauthor made the errors)

Plagiarism

- Putting your name on someone else's work
 - This is theft of intellectual property
- Intellectual property is all academics have
- Plagiarism is grounds for summary dismissal

Duplicate Submission

- Having "the same" paper under review in more than one place at the same time
 - A serious insult to the community
- Software Engineering journals and conferences are particularly sensitive to this

Falsifying Results

- Your data don't as good as you would like...
- You intend to do the work, but didn't before the submission deadline...
- ...I'll just fudge things and fix it later

- Don't do this
- It will catch up with you

Conflict of Interest

- Researchers often occupy different roles simultaneously
 - A.k.a. wearing different hats
- Satisfying roles may require conflicting actions
 - Examples:
 - Lecturer for a course and TA supervisor
 - Ph.D. supervisor and business partner
 - Author and reviewer

- Conflicts need to be balanced carefully
 - Sometimes they can be resolved through frank discussion
 - Sometimes there are no solutions

Being a Good Colleague

- Support the communities you are in
 - Committees
 - Energy
 - Sharing opinions
- Reciprocity
- Don't place inappropriate burdens on colleagues
 - If you agree to do something, follow through
 - Never do a bad job