

Narrative as a Tool for Clarifying Ethical Challenges in Engineering

Presented by Michael Skirpan

Abstract: Translating between the space of technical choices and that of social impacts is a difficult yet important task. As software and algorithms mediate more of our daily activities, it is important that we retain agency to uphold human values within these systems. In this talk, we will look at how socio-technical narratives can act as a boundary object between the domain of engineering decisions and that of normative values. We will overview the challenges that face computer scientists and the public to ensure value-driven technics in the coming decades. Considering this challenge, we will look at how to using narrative as a translation tool might help engineers, legislators, and business leaders discover ethical boundaries and frameworks that could support policy making. We will then look at a novel theatre project, *Quantified Self*, that used narrative as a tool for education and dialogue, bringing together engineers and the lay public.

Bio: Mike Skirpan is a recent graduate from University of Colorado's Department of Computer Science where his PhD work focused on ethical engineering through novel pedagogy, technological design, and public communications. He primarily looks at the impact of Big Data technologies, such as AI, IoT, and social media, and how to responsibly design systems that use our personal data. His play, *Quantified Self* won a national award from the Knight Foundation and his work has been featured in academic, journalistic, and business publications. He is now the executive director of Community Forge, a community center in Wilkesburg, PA, and is the founder of Probable Models, an ethical engineering consulting and research firm.