

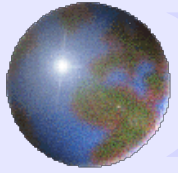
# **Virtue Ethics for GIS Professionals**

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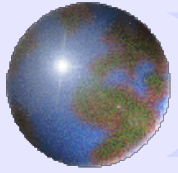
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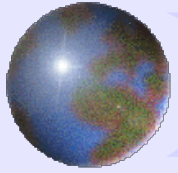
# Outline

- **Development of ethics for GIS professionals through GIS Certification Institute**
- **Characteristics of virtue ethics**
- **Virtue ethics and professionalism**
- **Challenge of nurturing virtue ethics**



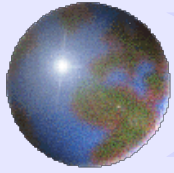
# **GISCI Ethics**

- **GIS Certification Institute (2004)**
  - **Code of Ethic and Rules of Conduct**
    - **Duties to colleagues & profession**
    - **Employers, clients, funders**
    - **Society**
    - **Individuals**



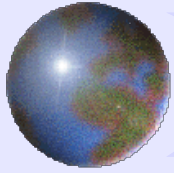
## **Critiques of codes of ethics**

- **Developed by members of profession, thus may be biased toward members of profession**
- **Codes and rules cannot anticipate every situation**
- **Codes and rules tend to identify minimum standards of performance**
- **Codes and rules do not inspire**



## **Defining Virtue**

- **A character trait, a well-entrenched disposition that reaches to one's core**
- **Concerned with emotions, emotional reactions, choices, values, desires, perceptions, attitudes, interests, expectations, sensibilities**
- **Virtuous people embrace the concept that virtue is its own reward**

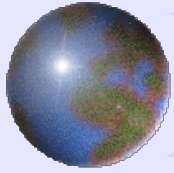


# Virtue Ethics

- **Emphasizes virtues or moral character**
- **Three central concepts**
  - **Virtue**
  - **Practical Wisdom (phronesis)**
  - **Eudaimonia (happiness or flourishing)**
- **Founders are Aristotle and Plato**

Source: “Virtue Ethics,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics/virtue/> (7/18/2003, updated 7/18/2007)

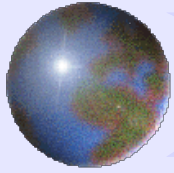
Please note that the introductory material comes from this same source.



# Critiques of Virtue Ethics

- **Not easily codified**
  - Virtue ethics: “What should I BE?”
  - Code of ethics “What should I DO?”
- **List of virtues and vices may not be identical in all cultural settings**
- **“Conflict problem”** (e.g., removing feeding tubes from someone who is brain dead); “practical wisdom” addresses this
- **“Justification problem:”** internal or external (a deity)?

**Source: “Virtue Ethics,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy**

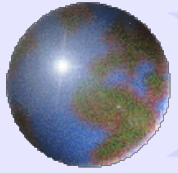


## Central Idea of Virtue Ethics

**“Virtue ethics is about desire and not about duty, about what we want to do and not what we ought to do, about personal happiness and not the greatest happiness of all.” (Devettere 2002)**

**Source: Devettere, Raymond J. 2002. Introduction to Virtue Ethics: Insights of the Ancient Greeks (Georgetown: Georgetown University Press) p. 20.**

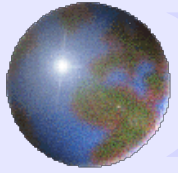




# Linking Virtue Ethics to Professionalism

- **Characteristics of a Profession**
  - **Body of knowledge (expertise)**
  - **Professional organization**
  - **Shared language**
  - **Professional culture, social ideal, “Hall of Fame”**
  - **Code of Ethics**
- **Social Ideal links to virtue ethics**

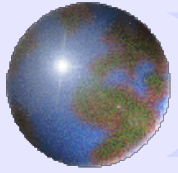
Source: Pugh, Darrell L. 1989. “Professionalism in Public Administration: Problems, Perspectives, and the Role of ASPA,” *Public Administration Review*, v. 49, pp. 1-8.



## Social Ideal

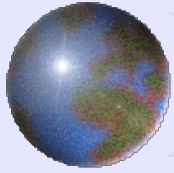
- “...an inner devotion to the task, and that alone, should lift the scientist to the height and dignity of the subject he pretends to serve” (Max Weber)

Source: Eisenstadt, S. N. 1968. *Max Weber: On Charisma and Institution Building* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press).



# Instilling Virtue Ethics

- **Education**
  - Institutions of higher learning
  - Professional organizations (GISCI, URISA, AAG,UCGIS)
- **Professional journals**
- **Case studies, narratives**
- **“Hall of Fame”**
- **Personal example**



# Challenges

- **Great variation in how and where people learn GIS**
  - **Short courses**
  - **Self-teaching using manuals and tutorials**