

Sara Hendren:

There are lots of podcasts about the ethics of technology, but Sketch Model, this series is different. We're zeroing in on engineering education on the classroom as a formative site that shapes the ethics of technology. How do students in the much lauded STEM field, that's science, technology, engineering, and math, learn to address the humanistic concerns about technology? The why and should questions about what they make, whether in code or with robotics or AI. How is it that social and political concerns are so easily cut out of technical training? And what would it look like to bring them back in?

Lynn Andrea Stein:

Students weren't asking whether they could design the thing right? They were asking whether the thing they were being asked to design was the right thing.

Sara Hendren:

We'll talk about some of the surprising trends that are happening in engineering education now.

Erin Cech:

As students went through their engineering education, they became less interested in ethical concerns. The importance to them of understanding the consequences of technology actually declined over the course of their engineering education, and [inaudible 00:01:16]

Sara Hendren:

We'll also talk about the history of ethics and politics among engineers over the last century.

Matthew Wisnioski:

If you go back to 1972 and create a laundry list of all of the issues at the core of this technology and society debate, near the top is militarism, you have corporatism, environmental destruction, sexism, racism, this sense of humans have lost control of our trajectory. All of these probably sound pretty familiar if we look at life [inaudible 00:01:48].

Sara Hendren:

And we'll hear about the practical matters about what to do next. We'll explore the difficult and rewarding work helping students of technology build with ethical questions intact.

Mimi Onuoha:

Sometimes the students will become fixated on what do you know how to do? But what I want them to think about is what do you choose to do in this moment? You have to think about the context and the audience and the place where it is and who you're talking to and why. You have to just deal with so much more, that it doesn't become this simple optimization of one variable. Instead, it's like you're going to juggle, you got to juggle it all, which is life.

Sara Hendren:

And we'll consider what it's all for.

Erhardt Graeff:

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The ways that we design these tools can have effects on folks that allow or disallow them to receive public services. Right? Can increase the likelihood that someone ends up in prison. Can result in folks falling out with their loved ones and disagreements about values and disinformation, depending on how they use online technologies.

Sara Hendren:

We've got seven thinkers, historians, engineers, artists, scholars, to walk us through some big philosophical issues and some very practical how-to ideas. And these conversations are for anyone invested in the joyous under construction laboratory style classroom. The one that's full of prototypes and ideas in formation that set the stage for our shared built future. Sketch Model is a production of Olin College and is supported by the Mellon Foundation. You can hear all six of these episodes and read about the entire Sketch Model project on our website at sketchmodel.olin.edu. That's sketch model, S-K-E-T-C-H-M-O-D-E-L.olin.edu. Hope you'll join us for the series.