



UNIVERSITY
of York

Ethics

or, Why we don't blow up sheep

Alice Wakely, Research Strategy and Policy Office
Phil Wiles, Research Grants and Contracts
Spring Symposium, 16 April 2018

What do you get if you cross
an octopus with a cow?



A stern rebuke from the Research
Ethics Committee and an
immediate cessation of funding

Case study

EU funding 'Orwellian' artificial intelligence plan to monitor public for "abnormal behaviour"

The European Union is spending millions of pounds developing "Orwellian" technologies designed to scour the internet and CCTV images for "abnormal behaviour".

By Ian Johnston

9:08PM BST 19 Sep 2009

A five-year research programme, called Project Indect, aims to develop computer programmes which act as "agents" to monitor and process information from web sites, discussion forums, file servers, peer-to-peer networks and even individual computers.

Its main objectives include the "automatic detection of threats and abnormal behaviour or violence".

Project Indect, which received nearly £10 million in funding from the European Union, involves the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and computer scientists at York University, in addition to colleagues in nine other European countries.

UK News

News »

In UK News



Celebrity Sightings: 25 March



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'Raises ethical questions' vs 'Unethical'

University staff undertaking research in an area where the FCO advises against all travel

Conducting interviews with individuals who could be at risk of reprisal...

...including children

'Putting up barriers to research' vs mitigating risk

-  Consultation with appropriate professionals over measures required to ensure the safety of staff
-  Suitable safeguards in place to protect the safety of interviewees
-  Standard procedures in place for safeguarding minors

Not trying to be difficult or stop anyone from doing anything, but it's important to ensure that the University is in a position to defend its researchers and the research which they carry out under its auspices

'Just a box ticking exercise'....?



Important to look at the bigger picture, identify risks and make concrete proposals for how these are to be mitigated



Ethics committee members can help and advise (although they won't do it for you)

Do you like box ticking?

yes

no ✓

Code of practice and principles for good ethical governance

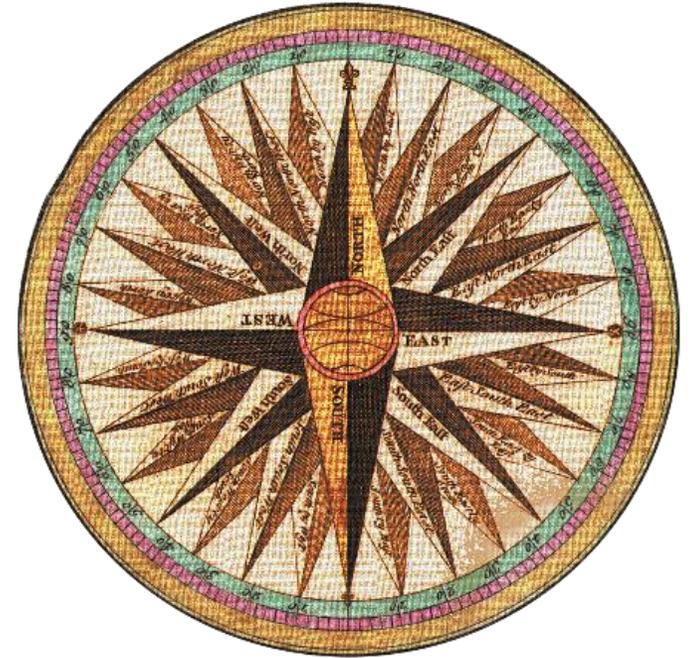
Key principles:

1. Avoidance of harm, to

- the welfare and interests of participants in and subjects of research (humans, human tissue, animals)
- researchers
- cultural heritage
- the natural environment
- the reputation of the department, the University and academia as a whole
- the welfare and interests of the wider community.

2. Informed consent

<https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/governance/research-policies/ethics-code/>



Where are ethical considerations likely to arise?

- Research involving humans, including personal data
- Human tissue and/or other material
- Animals
- Potential or actual application to cause harm or infringe privacy (e.g. surveillance, defence)
- Sensitive information, materials, techniques or findings, particularly those which might be subject to misuse
- Impact on and/or risk of damage to the environment
- Sponsors/participants/associates with implications for the impartiality of the research process
- Sponsors/associates with a controversial ethical record
- Risk of psychological or physical harm to the researcher
- Activities conducted overseas or in collaboration with overseas partners, in particular countries with emerging economies, and regimes with a poor human rights record or identified as dangerous
- Conflicts of interest



The University does not work with or accept funding from the tobacco industry

Ethical review

- All research undertaken in the University's name or on its behalf, regardless of funding source, which falls within the scope of the University's ethical framework should be submitted for review and formal approval via the structures set out in the University's Code of Practice.
- Projects must have been signed off before the activity in question commences.



Departmental/subject level ethics committees

- **Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body**
Chair: [Dr Marika Kullberg](#)
- **Arts and Humanities** - comprising Archaeology, History of Art, English, History, Music and Philosophy
Chair: [Dr Keith Allen](#)
- **Biology**
Chair: [Dr Dawn Coverley](#)
- **Economics, Law, Management, Politics and Sociology**
Chair: [Professor Tony Royle](#)
- **Education**
Chair: [Dr Nadia Mifka-Profozic](#)
- **Environment**
Chair: [Dr Peter Howley](#)
- **Health Sciences**
Chair: [Dr Stephen Holland](#)
- **HYMS**
Chair: [Professor Thozhuzat Sathyapalan](#)
- **Languages and Linguistics**
Chair: [Dr Marton Soskuthy](#)
- **Physical Sciences** - comprising Chemistry, Computer Science, Electronics, Mathematics and Physics
Chair: [Dr Kanapathippillai Cumanan](#)
- **Psychology**
Chair: [Dr Philip Quinlan](#)
- **Social Policy and Social Work**
Acting Chair: [Dr Julie Rugg](#)
- **Theatre, Film and Television**
Chair: [Ms Anna Bramwell-Dicks](#)
- **York Neuro-imaging Centre (YNiC) Research**
Chair: [Professor Gareth Gaskell](#)



What does an ethics application typically cover?



Project summary



Funding source



Participant recruitment, information sheets and consent forms, including safeguarding



Handling incidental findings



Data collection, storage, protection and access



Risks to participants/researchers/University and how these will be mitigated



Conflicts of interest



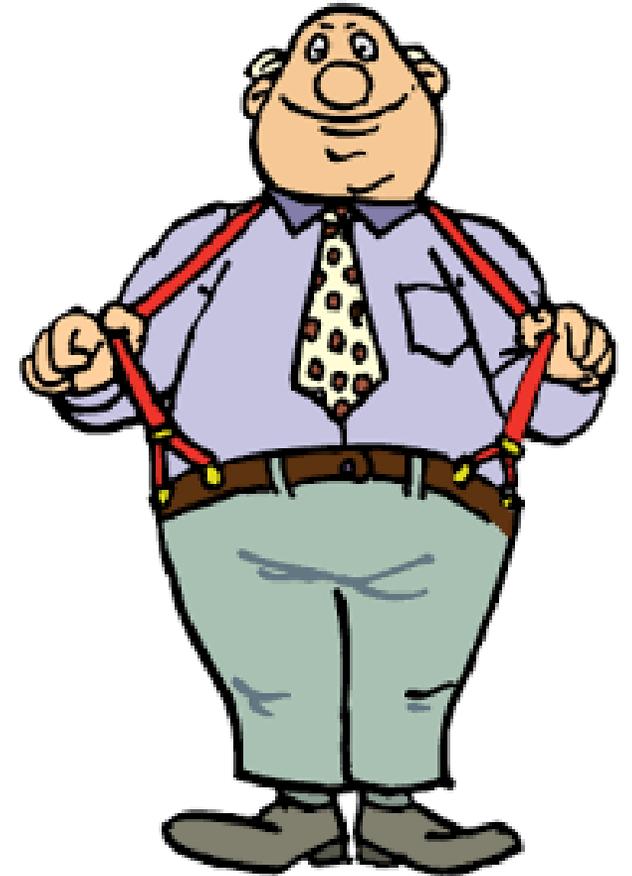
Health and safety/insurance arrangements



Local requirements for research carried out overseas

External ethical review

- Ethical approval by an outside body is sometimes required (e.g. lead partner; NHS).
- If research is being carried out overseas, local ethical approval (or equivalent) for the country or countries in question must be in place.
- In such cases, the University's policy is that an appropriate internal ethics committee should also be involved, either
 - (i) To maintain oversight of the outcomes of external ethical processes on the University's behalf; or
 - (ii) To carry out an additional internal review where the external process is not commensurate with that of the University, or where the Chair of the internal ethics committee judges it appropriate according to the scale of risk involved.
- Applies to staff-led research only; for student-led research internal as well as external review is a requirement.



Full details: *Code of Practice and Principles for Good Ethical Governance*, paragraphs 3.3 – 3.5.

Accountability

The fundamental responsibility for identifying and responding to ethical considerations, referring them for review, and securing approval before the activity commences lies with the PI.

Failure to do so can constitute misconduct.

Informal advice available from:

- a member of the appropriate departmental/subject level ethics committee; and/or
- the RSPO.



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This Project is assigned to you, Pre-award Admin, RGC - UK Research Councils and Research and Enterprise Admin.

Bid Development

ℹ Press **Edit Details** to edit bid information. When you are ready, **Submit for Approval**.

Edit Details Submit for Approval Abort

Summary | Details | Budget | Partners | Peer Review | **Ethics** | Documents | Milestones | Benefits | Risk | Split | Comments

Ethics Complete Ethics Checklist

1. Please confirm the following:

I have read the University's Code of Practice and Principles for Good Ethical Governance (available at: www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/governance/policies/ethics-code/).

▾

2. Does the project fall within the scope of the University's framework of ethical principles?

▾

3. If No, please explain briefly why this is the case:

4. If Yes, please endorse the following statements:

(a) I have taken ethical considerations into account in the project design.

▾

(b) If the project goes ahead, I will ensure that it undergoes formal ethical review as required by the University's Code of Practice and Principles for Good Ethical Governance, prior to the commencement of the research.

▾

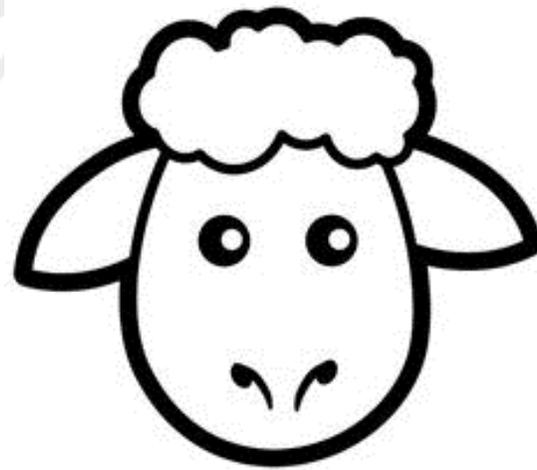
(c) Once available, I will upload evidence of the relevant notification(s) of ethical approval for the project to the Worktribe Documents Tab, tagged as 'Ethics approval evidence'.

▾



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Quiz





Questions?

- **Key Contact**

Alice Wakely

Research Strategy and Policy Office

alice.wakely@york.ac.uk / ext 2712

- **Where to find further information**

<https://www.york.ac.uk/about/organisation/governance/sub-committees/ethics/>