**IEEE 2017 Ad Hoc Ethics Committee on Programs**

**Ethics Update from Dr. Greg Adamson**

**IEEE Board of Directors sets ethics as a priority in 2017**

IEEE has had a Code of Ethics for more than 100 years. Throughout its 45 year history, SSIT has devoted significant effort to giving that code real meaning for practicing technologists. On occasion that was a challenge. In recent years, however, we have seen a significant growth in the public’s understanding of the need for ethical approaches, both our professional activities and in the way we create and build new technologies.

Today ethics is receiving more attention by technologists than ever before. Reasons include:

* The financial impact of deliberate unethical activity, particularly Volkswagen’s (VW) US$15bn fine and reparations after evidence of falsification in code, and a recent FBI arrest of a VW executive.
* The impact of accidental unethical activity, particularly the US$44bn fines and repa rations for BP following Gulf of Mexico oil spill.
* A rise of ethical considerations in autonomous design, including cars and weapons.
* The White House October 2016 report on AI, with a focus on ethics.
* A call on IEEE and other professional organizations (ACM, AAAI) from a [White House sponsored workshop](http://bmsmail2.ieee.org/ctd/lu?RID=1-49YECLJ&CON=1-1LK-1559&PRO=&AID=&OID=1-473KTVP&CID=1-43T10SV&COID=1-49QUUUI&T=https%3a%2f%2fartificialintelligencenow.com%2fmedia%2fdocuments%2fAINowSummaryReport_3_RpmwKHu.pdf&Z=97d6d91f5a2c8038ac306a91c379a5dc&TN=artificialintelligencenow.com%2fmedia%2fdocuments%2fAINowSummaryReport_3_RpmwKHu.pdf&RT=Clicked+On+URL) to review or create Codes of Ethics reflecting the advent of AI.

Today there are more than two dozen initiatives, activities or events run by IEEE that include a significant ethics component. These include the [IEEE Global Initiative for Ethical Considerations in Artificial Intelligence and Autonomous Systems](http://bmsmail2.ieee.org/ctd/lu?RID=1-49YECLJ&CON=1-1LK-1559&PRO=&AID=&OID=1-473KTVP&CID=1-43T10SV&COID=1-49QUUUI&T=http%3a%2f%2fstandards.ieee.org%2fdevelop%2findconn%2fec%2fautonomous_systems.html&Z=3868dd1dbf4acb9d31d294fdfa3ca9&TN=standards.ieee.org%2fdevelop%2findconn%2fec%2fautonomous_systems.html&RT=Clicked+On+URL). The IEEE Standards Association has established the P7000 standard series on the inclusion of ethical considerations in design. The Technical Activities Board (which includes SSIT) has established an Ad Hoc Committee on Design for Ethics to meet the need to incorporate ethical considerations in technology design, something relevant across the Technical Societies and Councils. SSIT supports several ethics initiatives including the IEEE Ethics conference.

To coordinate this range of activities the IEEE Board of Directors has created the IEEE Ad Hoc Committee on IEEE Ethics Programs. This will focus on creating a roadmap for linking all the various activities as a part of making IEEE a global focus for ethics in technology.

If you are interested in getting involved in any of these activities, contact Greg Adamson at [g.adamson@ieee.org](mailto:g.adamson@ieee.org).

Source: IEEE SSIT Newsletter – February 2017