Project Milestone 2 (Due Tuesday, May 16 2006)

The purpose of this milestone is to bring your project into focus. In particular, we want you to make clear what the ethical dimensions of your project are: what ethical problem you will address and clarify.

This milestone is not a contract, but rather a status report. We want to make sure that you have your ducks in a row: that you have a thesis and, if your project is not a book report, enough sources.

You are to write a 3-4 page document that includes the following:

1. A thesis statement[1];

2. An outline of your paper; and

3. A description, since you cannot present your entire paper, of how you will focus or pare down your paper in order to present it.

Recall that the point of thesis is to drive the structure of a presentation or paper. When you generate your outline, ask yourself how each topic you add to your outline supports or furthers your thesis.

During the presentation, both partners must speak, but not necessarily symmetrically. Rather use natural breaks in the talk. A scripted debate has been used successfully in the past.

The instructions differ depending on whether you've chosen to elucidate a book or to analyze the ethical dimensions of an issue either created or exacerbated by the advance of technology.

Book

For book reports, we want your paper and accompanying presentation to be both sympathetic and critical as well as close readings of the book you have chosen. What we want to avoid is a cliff notes style summary of the work. Do *not* summarize the entire book, but chose some topics, themes, chapters on which you will direct the bulk of your effort. We want to see you wrestle with the work. Tell us where the author's argument is strong and why, as well as telling us where the author's argument is weak. Where it is weak, try to repair it.

Do *not* be credulous. Unsuccessful book reports are those in which you are unable to explain why we should be persuaded by some point the author makes. On this front, you may find it useful to to verify some of the book's claims by investigating the book's bibliography as well as searching for other related material that covers those topics in the book on which you are basing your project.

For a book report, your thesis statement should be expository.

If you've chosen a difficult book that you're having trouble unraveling, please come see us sooner rather than later so we can help you focus your efforts.

Ethical analysis of a technology topic

For this type of project, your submission must also include a list of sources.

Credible internet sources are fine: cite them by recording the url and the date of the last access you made to the material. Interviews conducted by you are also acceptable.

---

[1]Visit Wikipedia for a good definition of a thesis statement — http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thesis_statement

It is extremely hard to evaluate the quality of sources. It is possible, although unlikely, for an excellent project not to have many sources, especially when a breaking problem, like the recent Sony DRM debacle, is chosen as a project topic. As a result, we resort to heuristics: we look at the number of sources; we spot check some; and we see how well they have been used. At this stage, we will want to see at least 5 sources.

This project is not the sort of term paper you may have written in your other classes. Your grade depends on presenting at least two ethical analyzes of the material, not laying out both sides of a controversy and punting its resolution to the audience. To make this easier, I recommend that your thesis statement be argumentative: take a position on the issues you have chosen and argue which course of action is moral.