Hacking Digital Ethics

By David J. Krieger and Andréa Belliger

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A redesigning of digital ethics to address the problems of the global network society

This book is not a critique of digital ethics but rather a hack. It follows the method of hacking by developing an exploit kit on the basis of state-of-the-art social theory, which it uses to breach the insecure legacy system upon which the discourse of digital ethics is running. This legacy system is made up of four interdependent components: the philosophical mythology of humanism, social science critique, media scandalization, and the activities of many civil society organisations lobbying for various forms of regulation. The hack exposes the bugs, the sloppy programming, and the false promises of current digital ethics, and, because it is an ethical hack, redesigns digital ethics so that it can address the problems of the global network society. The main idea of the book is that the social world of meaning is based on information, which, because of its relational nature, must be understood more as a common good than as private property. A digital ethics that relies upon humanistic individualism cannot address the issues arising from the global network society based upon information. This demands a complete revision of the philosophical foundations of current digital ethics by means of a redesign of ethics as a theory of governance by design.

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