

# Apt install ethics

## Workshop on the challenges of ethics in IT configuration

Ludo Gorzeman and Paulan Korenhof

June 16, 2020

### Abstract

*Apt install* is the key command that many IT engineers are bound to use when setting up a new system or application for others or herself to use. During the install, software needs to be configured, often presenting the engineer or administrator with several options. Generally under time pressure, and the prospect of impatient users who do not read before they click, the engineer quickly configures the system as good as she can. However, during this configuration, she will in many cases be confronted with choices, the consequence of which impacts how users interact with and relate to the software. While these configuration choices generally take place in the margin of software implementation, their impact on the human-computer interaction is significant and in many cases — as we will show — these are ethical choices.

Starting from the concrete practice of software configuration, we will explore what we perceive to be one of the core challenges of philosophers of technology and ethicists: how to bring philosophical theory into practice. In this workshop we aim to help bridge this gap by giving philosophers a taste of the practical ethical challenges that IT engineers who see to software configuration can find themselves confronted with, while at the same time providing insight in the impact of IT configuration. As the IT engineer is the one who brings ethics into the practice of software implementation, her perspective will be our starting position. By presenting the workshop participants with concrete cases and problems taken from the real life experience of IT engineers, we ask the participants to choose how they would address a particular issue if they were the engineer.

Per case we will then discuss the choices made in the group, highlight the different ethical implications and options per case, and assess how we as philosophers can assist and advise IT engineers on how to make configuration choices.

This workshop can take place when being physically together in a room, but it can also take place completely online. We ourselves have sufficient infrastructure to make this happen.