Workshop: Aesthetics of Information Ethics.
By Paolo Cirio, 2017.

The so-called information revolution brings us an increasing number of pressing ethical issues. Artists can be particularly sensitive to these issues and they are able to question ethics by proposing and challenging perceptions and scenarios beyond common understanding. This process can become part of the work of art through participants commenting and responding to the artist's propositions.

As an Internet artist and activist, Paolo Cirio has been working for over a decade with online privacy, fake news, piracy, algorithms, big data, leaks, and hacking. He explores boundaries and consequences of reconfiguring, exposing, and creating social relations within the risks of challenging institutions and making compromises for artistic and social agendas.

Paolo Cirio works on a reflection of the complexity of information ethics and how central it is today. He is interested in how aesthetics can navigate the uncertain and unjust social conditions produced by information systems. He examines liability of algorithms, responsibility in anonymous networks, exploitation of shared content and labor, censorship on social media, freedom of speech used to harass, public shaming to condemn, hacking to protest or leak, and micro-targeting for political campaigning. In order to inspire inquiry and policy making, the artist questions what can be justified and sacrificed to balance freedom, empathy, justice, and accountability.

Paolo Cirio’s workshop presents a set of ethical questions concerning historical cases, hypothetical scenarios, and particular technological systems that affect personal and societal conditions. The artist will pose discussion topics which the students can debate, such as hypothetical information policies and the questionable ethics of some artworks. These ethical questions will also be shown on the floor, the boards, and the screens in the space. In this immersive workshop, students will build paths in the space to navigate complex ethical issues and arguments. Students will also give feedback on shared documents, have discussions with people who have different opinions, and develop their projects during the workshop.

This project addresses specific highly problematic cases like the Facebook Files, Right To Be Forgotten, Wikileaks DNC leak, Predictive Policing, and Cambridge Analytica, and generally, emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Darknet. These issues urgently need democratic debate. The discussion can’t be limited to technocrats, legislators, coders, and opaque internal policies of private entities. Art can play a role in this process of creating awareness and reflection on difficult ethical questions by making them relevant and engaging.

In the workshop Paolo Cirio will also discuss his ongoing campaign Right to Remove to bring a form of Right To Be Forgotten in United States. His proposal for this specific Internet policy is at the heart of the philosophical questions for balancing social accountability, freedom, empathy, access, and human rights on the Internet.

This workshop elicits and addresses participatory decision-making on ethical issues affecting the security, privacy, and dignity of everyone for a just and equal society. Nevertheless, discussing the aesthetics of information ethics will help artists and audiences to assess contemporary works of art.
Some problematic issues that will be discussed during the workshop:

**Misleading Polarities in Information Ethics:**

- Participation - VS - Coercion
- Emancipation - VS - Exploitation
- Freedom - VS - Control
- Inclusion - VS - Exclusion
- Access - VS - Withholding
- Commons - VS - Property
- Private - VS - Public
- Opacity - VS - Transparency
- Privacy - VS - Surveillance

- Obscurity - VS - Exposure
- Empathy - VS - Humiliation
- Anonymity - VS - Accountability
- Responsibility - VS - Impunity
- Reputation - VS - Scoring
- Autonomy - VS - Manipulation
- Educating - VS - Misinforming
- Quantifiable - VS - Undetectable
- Simplicity - VS - Complexity

**Some problematic issues concerning information ethics:**

**Search engines & social media moderation:**

- Hate Speech
- Harassment
- Trolling
- Bullying
- Blackmail
- Stigmas

**Social Profiling:**

- Social score & bias
- Consumer profiling
- Racial profiling
- Sex offenders
- Criminal records
- Predictive Policing

**Privacy and surveillance:**

- State and corporate surveillance
- Cryptography for power structures
- Cryptography for individuals
- Public shaming

**Security:**

- Hacking
- Leaks
- Theft

**Piracy:**

- Copyright
- Trademark
- Royalties
- Fair use

**Sharing Economy:**

- Labor rights
- Private property

**Media and politics:**

- Targeting Voters
- Fake News

**Algorithms:**

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Artificial Intelligence

**Blockchain, deepweb, and darknet:**

- Anonymity
- Trust
- Privacy
- Fraud
- Cruelty

**Digital Currencies:**

- Transparency
- Access to means
- Volatility

**Robotics:**

- Automated weapons
- Automated labor

**Infrastructures:**

- Decentralization
- Cloud servers
- Net neutrality
- Internet of things
- Ecological destruction
Should fake news on social media be removed by Internet companies themselves?
Should we remunerate the open source code utilized by big corporations such as Google?
Should the coders of algorithms with racial biases be legally accountable?
Can the hacking of political parties during election be justified?
Should we be able to trace individuals who use digital currency, such as Bitcoin?
Should Facebook delete posts concerning hate speech toward refugees?
Should the documents leaked by Snowden be made available to everyone – not only journalists?
Should public figures on Twitter be given access to block other accounts?
Should politicians be able to use fully cryptographed communications for work?
Should voter profiling and databases being banned?
Should vulnerable individuals be protected online even if they are key to public debate?
Should political spending for online ads be regulated like they are on TV?
Should electronic voting be completely avoided and analog systems restored?
Should ads managed by algorithms be considered physiologically manipulative advertising?
Machine Logic: Our Lives are Ruled by Big Tech's ‘Decisions by Data'

The Guardian
The EU is Right to Take on Facebook, but Mere Fines Don’t Protect Us from Tech Giants

The Guardian
Why Are We Giving Away Our Most Sensitive Health Data to Google?

The Guardian
Right to be forgotten: Swiss Cheese Internet, or Database of Ruin?

The Guardian
If Fake News Fools You, It Can Fool Robots, Too

Bloomberg
Obfuscation: How Leaving a Trail of Confusion Can Beat Online Surveillance

The Guardian
How Europe is Fighting to Change Tech Companies' ‘Wrecking Ball’ Ethics

The Guardian
In the Wake of Apple v FBI, We Need to Address Some Uncomfortable Truths

The Guardian
Artificial Intelligence is Ripe for Abuse, Tech Researcher Warns: ‘A Fascist's Dream’

The Guardian
The A.C.L.U. Needs to Rethink Free Speech

NY Times
Algorithms: AI’s Creepy Control Must be Open to Inspection

The Guardian
Forget Far-Right Populism – Crypto-Anarchists are the New Masters

The Guardian
We Can’t Ban Killer Robots – It’s Already Too Late

The Guardian
Make Algorithms Accountable

NY Times
Why is Silicon Valley Fighting a Sex Trafficking Bill?

The Guardian
Why Does Facebook Allow Advertisers to Target 'Jew Haters'?

The Guardian
Scholar Says Google Criticism Cost Him Job: 'People are Waking Up to its Power'

The Guardian
Why is Google Spending Record Sums on Lobbying Washington?

The Guardian
Far-right 'Free Speech Week' at Berkeley Collapses in Recrimination and Discord

The Guardian
Tech Firms Open to Changing Law to Combat Sex Trafficking

Wired
Forget Wall Street – Silicon Valley is the New Political Power in Washington

The Guardian
'From Heroes to Villains': Tech Industry Faces Bipartisan Backlash in Washington

The Guardian
'Our Minds Can Be Hijacked': the Tech Insiders Who Fear a Smartphone Dystopia

The Guardian
As Google Fights Fake News, Voices on the Margins Raise Alarm

NY Times
Data Power Could Make 1984 ‘Look Like a Teddy Bear’s Picnic’

Irish Times
Rethinking Ethics Training in Silicon Valley

The Atlantic
Tories Refuse to Disclose Content of Facebook Adverts Targeted at Marginal Seats

Independent UK
Facebook and Google: Most Powerful and Secretive Empires We've Ever Known

The Guardian
How Do You Stop Fake News? In Germany, with a Law.

Washington Post
Data Populists Must Seize Our Information – for the Benefit of Us All

The Guardian