ETHICS IN PROJECT IMPLICIT

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Ethical considerations play a large role in the development, use, re-use, or mis-use of this software. The primary concern with our software, as it is a psychological test, is the possible misinterpretation of the results. This program, using Project Implicit as a model, was created solely as an educational tool to allow interested individuals to gain greater awareness about their own unconscious preferences and beliefs. It is important to distinguish, however, that the implicit biases this type of test may reveal do not necessarily correlate with personally held beliefs. For example, you may believe that women and men should be equally associated with "science" - yet, your automatic associations may show that you (like many others) associate male (more than female) with science. Consequently, the results of this test SHOULD NOT be used to make decisions about yourself or others, simply as a tool for your own self-education. Misinterpretation of the results in such a way can cause unintended ethical consequences.

The ethical considerations about quality of life are tied to the interpretation of results. As stated previously, this test should not be used to judge oneself. Just because a user shows an implicit association does not necessarily allude to a prejudice or other character flaw. Also, the implicit associations do not necessarily manifest themselves in the user's behavior; an internal bias is negligible in comparison with the user's actions. Quality of life may also be affected if a user chooses to disregard the manual and use the results to make decisions about themself or others.

Use of power may also be a consideration with this software. The designers of the software may have access to a user's information and results, but this will all remain anonymous as the user's name will not be stored with their results. It is therefore up to the user whether they choose to share their results with others, and the dangers with misinterpretation will then apply.

As the program is intended as an educational tool only, there should be no noteworthy issues with risks and reliability involved. If the program fails, the user may not gain the information that they desired, but it should not harm them in any way. If the program returns flawed results, they may not receive the correct information, but they will still hopefully gain awareness about the presence of implicit biases. However, the program must remain in context; any adaptation of the program must be carefully compared with the original study to ensure that it accurately represents the original intentions. If the test is changed too much, the results may not give any meaningful information.

Property is another ethical consideration. As this test was modelled after Harvard's Project Implicit, we must be careful that we do not infringe on any copyrights. However, since we modelled the format but came up with our own content (i.e. test theme and prompts), our program should be legitimate. One other thing we have to be careful of is our use of pictures. As they were taken directly from the internet, we again had to be careful not to commit any copyright infringements. With further work on this program, it may be wise to use our own original images.

As our program elicits information from its user, privacy is a top priority. As mentioned before, the program does not store the user's name after the program has ended. The
retained demographic information and results are all anonymous. Also, the instructions at the beginning of the test ask the user to accept the terms of use, so there should be no privacy issues. If, however, the program was adapted to store all of the user's information, this would be a breach of privacy.

Our program in its current form deals well with issues of equity and access. This is open use software, and will be available on the St. Olaf computer science wiki for use by anyone with the capability to download and run it. The program is designed to be user-friendly, and no type of expertise should be necessary to run the program or interpret the results with the assistance of the available user manual.

Honesty and deception is important whenever there is private information being given and diagnostic tests being performed. Firstly, the code will be readily available for anyone who wants to examine the inner workings of our program. Secondly, for those that may not have the skillset to evaluate the code, the user manual will also be available. This user manual makes the workings of the test transparent, describing not only how the test works but also how the results are calculated and how they should be interpreted.

In conclusion, all of these ethical considerations are important when developing this type of software. Our program as it currently exists may not breach any of these issues, but it is still possible that misuse of the program through misinterpretation of results or an adaptation of the program from its current state may bring larger ethical issues into play.