

# WISDOM AND THE IS CURRICULUM: IS ETHICS NECESSARY?

**Peter Anderson**

*The Australian Catholic University*

**Louis Sanzogni**

*Griffith University*

## ABSTRACT

*Technology and the associated scientific theory do not contain within themselves a theoretical base to guide if, why and how they might be wisely used (other than, of course, technical instructions). Ethics units in the IS curriculum are required to help promote and develop appropriate human wisdom, particularly in a technological culture where mechanistic conceptions may trivialise the dignity of the human person. Wisdom in the Platonic sense, is knowledge of what is, of what is real, of what actually is the case. It is knowledge of the real world as distinct from the world of the legal, of conventions, or of appearances, the world which appears to be the case. In its practical aspects (ethics) it is a knowledge of the purpose of human life, human happiness and well being, and of the means to attain that end. In its speculative aspects, it views all that exists as a rationally ordered and harmonious whole. Socrates is wise in that he is committed to the world which is the case. In this he is involved in the pursuit of wisdom and may be truly called a philosopher. We therefore argue that without an ethical perspective, various humanly devaluing philosophies may be accepted by default. Detectable, for example, in technological thinking is the materialist philosophy of mechanism. In fact, by default, science often assumes a mechanistic philosophy leading to a materialism devoid of ethics, which grew out of the origins of modern science. The discourse of artificial intelligence studied in IS units is used to illustrate these issues.*