Building ethics into standards

BSI’s CPIN and Public Interest Network (CPIN) works with other consumer groups at national, regional and international level to make sure that consumer ethical concerns and priorities are considered in the development of standards which impact consumers.

Consumer organizations have played an important role in representing the consumer voice in the development of ethical-focused standards. Such standards include ISO 26000:2010 (Social responsibility) and ISO/TS 17033:2019, Ethical claims and supporting information – principles and requirements, which help to address consumer confusion around ethical claims.

Further information

AMEC
European consumer voice in standards
amelcom.net
BSI
UK’s national standards body. To find out more about standards or to get involved: bsi.group.com
-bsi-UK

ISO COPOLCO
Consumer Policy Committee of the International Organization for Standardization
iso.org/copolco

Consumers International
A membership organization that brings together 200+ consumer groups worldwide
consumersinternational.org

BSISO

BSI Consumer & Public Interest Network (CPIN)?

CPIN is an independent network of volunteers to ensure ethical matters are considered in the development of standards. CPIN works alongside the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to ensure that consumer and public interest organizations are able to guide industry through membership of BS ISO/TC 106 and the BSI Consumer Forum, which combine representations from consumer and public interest organizations in the UK.

CPIN aims to:
- Ensure that standards address real issues that matter to real people
- Give voice to all consumers, including children, older people and those with disabilities
- Add value to standards and help to build consumer confidence and trust in businesses that use them

CPIN focuses its work in five priority areas, where it believes there is high potential for consumer detriment, to improve outcomes for consumers, and to encourage harm improvement in various areas of life:
- Consumer safety
- Consumer vulnerability
- Digital
- Services
- Sustainability

How CPIN plays a vital role in ensuring ethical behaviour is built into standards

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CPIN is an independent network of volunteers trained to represent the UK consumer voice in standards. Consumer representation is essential to build consumer trust and ensure that standards that address consumer issues are robust, fit-for-purpose and future-proof.

CPIN focuses its work in five priority areas:
- Consumer safety
- Consumer vulnerability
- Digital
- Services
- Sustainability
Ethics and CPIN’s priority areas

Encouraging organisations to adopt ethical policies and practices underpins much of CPIN’s work to prevent consumer harm across its five priority areas.

Consumer safety

Many products can be physically harmful to children’s safety. For example, through malfunctions or child labour, working tracks on ride-on toys, or insufficient support for children with special needs. Consumer safety requires robust oversight of ethical claims, so effective regulation, such as labelling, is needed to ensure the safety of products and protect vulnerable groups.

Consumer vulnerability

Ethical issues arise in the digital space and are complex. The implications of using artificial intelligence (AI) are always ethical. Ethical decisions in technologies such as facial recognition and autonomous vehicles can gather vast amounts of data, which can impact the safety of local communities.

Robot ethics

Robotic devices and applications are increasingly coming into contact with consumers. BSI’s multi-disciplinary device guide to ethical design questions the role of robots and robotic devices. By providing organisations setting that space, Consumer safety and vulnerability needs of all consumers (including vulnerable groups) are considered.

Sustainability

Sustainability is at the heart of an organisation’s ethical profile, increasing the impact of its operations on the environment and society. Consumers are also increasing their expectation of ethical supply chains, so ethical considerations in the digital space must ensure data privacy and personal data.

Services

Services, who wish to make or offer ethical policies, must be able to do so coherently – both such operations with a focus on non-financial services, services to consumers should be the same across all stakeholders.

Digital

Ethical issues in digital space are complex. The implications of using artificial intelligence (AI) are always ethical. Ethical decisions in technologies such as facial recognition and autonomous vehicles can gather vast amounts of data. The potential for “flawed” learning by AI, increased monitoring and surveillance by the internet, growing reliance by organisations on algorithms and constant evolving; few more so than the ethical design of robots and robotic technologies. BS 8611, Robots and robotic devices – guide to the ethical design, development and application of robots and robotic devices — guide to the ethical design.

Unethical practices can have a devastating impact on consumers, for example, through in-built biases relating to gender or race.

Global standards, such as ISO 39003, Guidance on ethical considerations in the context of autonomous vehicles, are used to support the circular economy by enabling products that are easier to repair and keep running, and recycling and remanufacturing products and packaging using less virgin raw materials.

Robotics

Robotics and automation – guide to the ethical design, development and application of robots and robotic devices. BS 8611, Robots and robotic devices – guide to the ethical design.

Ethics and Artificial Intelligence: What does good look like to consumers? BSI Consumer Forum Conference Summary Report, 26th June 2019 – for a copy of this report, email consumer@bsigroup.com

Consumer safety

Through product actions, many organisations in the same way, so too can they develop their skills, learn new skills and expand their knowledge.

Consumer vulnerability

Ethical considerations for autonomous vehicles

Ethical considerations have a huge impact on the development and implementation of autonomous vehicles. Beyond ensuring that safety for the benefit of robot, there are the ethical considerations for autonomous vehicles. As well as the development of robots that can interact with other smart devices. BS 8611, Robots and robotic devices – guide to the ethical design, development and application of robots and robotic devices – guide to the ethical design.

CPIN’s priority areas are increasingly cited as a potential solution to the UK’s social care crisis. The ethical implications of using robots are complex, and often arise in contexts such as through the work they can be used.

Looking to the future, the role of robots is increasingly cited as a potential solution to the UK’s social care crisis. The ethical implications of using robots are complex, and often arise in contexts such as through the work they can be used.

Concerns raised by stakeholders at the BSI Consumer Forum Conference 2019 include:

• The potential for ‘flawed’ learning by AI

• Increased monitoring and surveillance by the internet

• Growing reliance by organisations on algorithms

• Constant evolving; few more so than the ethical design of robots and robotic technologies

Robotic devices and applications are increasingly coming into contact with consumers. BSI’s multi-disciplinary device guide to ethical design questions the role of robots and robotic devices. By providing organisations setting that space, Consumer safety and vulnerability needs of all consumers (including vulnerable groups) are considered.

Global standards, and supply chains need to have robust oversight of ethical claims to make it difficult to present false standards that can be dropped across different market segments. This can facilitate organisations to develop the social and ethical aspects of technologies that details ‘what good looks like’.

Encouraging organisations to adopt ethical policies and practices underpins much of CPIN’s work to prevent consumer harm across its five priority areas.

In real-life, businesses and consumers can be more likely to see there, yet information about ethical practices is not always easy to find. Yet, while companies

Consumer shows that an organisation’s ethics are increasingly important to consumers when choosing to do business with them.

Unethical behaviour towards consumer harm directly, if companies are being demonstrated their ethical credentials, consumers may no longer do business with them. Yet information about ethical practices is not always easy to find. Yet, while companies make ethical claims, consumers may not know if they are credible.

Easy to find and, when companies ethical practices is not always use them. Yet information about their ethical credentials, companies clearly demonstrate consumer trust; conversely, if unethical behaviour erodes consumer shows that an organization’s ethics are increasingly important to vulnerable consumers, or food producers not using pesticides or supply chains, service providers taking account of the needs of economic justice and sustainability issues - whether that’s manufacturers Ethical practice by organizations encompasses a broad range of social, economic, cultural, health, environmental, and human rights concerns.

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Building ethics into standards
Standards can play a vital role in improving consumer outcomes, by detailing good practice for organizations such as government, public authorities, manufacturers, retailers and service providers, to follow. They can help providers build ethical behaviour into all aspects of their business to secure consumer trust and avoid reputational damage through poor practice.

BSI Consumer & Public Interest Network (CPIN) works with other consumer groups at national, regional and international level to make sure that consumers’ ethical concerns and priorities are considered in the development of standards.

Consumer organizations have played an important role in representing the consumer voice in the development of ethical-focused standards, such as ISO 26000:2010 (ISO/IEC 26000:2010 Social responsibility), which provides guidance on social responsibility to support organizations in the development of sustainable and ethical businesses, whether operating in developed or developing countries.

Further information
ANEC
European consumer voice in standards
www.anec.be

BSI
UK’s national standards body. To find out more about standards or to get involved:
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Ethics in standards
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Ethical practice by organizations encompasses a broad range of social, economic justice and sustainability issues – whether that’s manufacturers and retailers having a policy requiring fair pay throughout their supply chains, service providers taking account of the needs of vulnerable consumers, or food producers not using pesticides or chemicals that may damage the environment. Research from Ethical Consumer shows that an organization’s ethics is increasingly important to consumers when choosing to do business with them.

Unethical behaviour towards consumer harm, fraud, if companies are being demonstrably unethical, consumers may be more likely to be more discerning. Yet information about ethical practices is not always easy to find, and while consumers may make ethical calls, consumers may not be fully aware of exactly what ethical practices mean. Ethical practice by organizations encompasses a broad range of social, economic justice and sustainability issues – whether that’s manufacturers and retailers having a policy requiring fair pay throughout their supply chains, service providers taking account of the needs of vulnerable consumers, or food producers not using pesticides or chemicals that may damage the environment. Research from Ethical Consumer shows that an organization’s ethics is increasingly important to consumers when choosing to do business with them.

Global markets and supply chains mean that it is important that businesses consider the wider impacts of their activities in order to maintain their ethical credentials. Companies clearly demonstrate this to consumers when choosing who to do business with1.

This can facilitate organizations in the development and communication of their ethical practices.

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Ethics and CPIN’s priority areas

Beginning with the basics, it is important to consider what organisations need to do to ensure that they have a culture of ethical practice. This can facilitate organizations in the development and communication of their ethical practices.

Consumer safety

Ethical considerations for autonomous vehicles

Consumer vulnerability

Robot ethics

Digital

Services

Sustainability

Ethical behaviour underpins consumer trust. In fact, if companies are simply demonstrating their ethical credentials, consumers may be more likely to choose them.

Unethical behaviour can undermine consumer trust. If companies are not being honest about their ethical practices, they can develop a reputation for not being ethical. This can undermine organizations’ ability to communicate their ethical practices.

Consumer awareness of risks can be low. The potential for ‘flawed’ learning by AI systems is obvious when technology is ‘AI enabled’ meaning that consumer awareness of risks can be low. For example, there is a real risk of bias in AI systems that are not adequately trained to avoid harming people. Unethical practices can risk physical harm and, in some cases, can lead to breaches of consumer safety.

Sustainability should be at the heart of an organization’s ethical policies. Increasing the impact of its operations on the environment and society is critical. Companies should also consider the environmental impact of their operations, such as their use of energy, water and materials.

Ensuring organisations adopt ethical policies

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