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## PANEL 17 ETHICAL USE OF COMPUTERS: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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## PANEL 17

### ETHICAL USE OF COMPUTERS: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

**Panel Chair:** Faye P. Teer, James Madison University

**Panelists:** Karen A. Forcht, James Madison University  
Richard O. Mason, Southern Methodist University  
F. Warren McFarlan, Harvard University

The subject of computer security and computer-based crime have been the focus of substantial debate during the past decade. However, the issues involved are far from resolved. A variety of measures have been instituted, enforced, and monitored to ensure that computer centers are not vulnerable to human intervention, whether accidental or intentional. In the past few years, interest in the issue of ethics has been heightened as we now focus on the "people side" of computer security. The copying of a software program for a friend, while in direct violation of copyright laws and, therefore, technically a crime may not be considered as serious to the user as stealing a physical system component or sabotaging a system for profit or revenge. The paramount question then becomes "What are the definitive responsibilities of computer center employees or persons having access to software and information to the public they serve -- the ultimate user or owner of the information -- in creating an environment of security and in practicing solid, ethical standards in regard to the valuable data they use when performing their jobs?" Many professional groups are attempting to formulate some definite guidelines in this computer "sea of uncertainty" by proposing formal codes of ethics.

This panel will discuss:

1. The importance of ethics in the computer environment.
2. Critical issues/questions concerning ethics.
3. Current research into ethics issues.
4. International perspectives on ethics.
5. The impact of ethics on individuals, the information systems profession, organizations, and society.