

Opening Remarks

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Rev Br. Dr. P. Martin Komolmas, President Emeritus
Rev. Br. Dr. Bancha Saenghiran, President
Dr. Tarek B. Razik, Keynote Speaker
Honored guests,

On behalf of the Graduate School of Education, Assumption University, I would like to welcome all of you to the International Conference commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the Phi Delta Kappa, Honorary Society of Education (Thailand Chapter).

I would also like to thank the Assumption University for generously hosting this event, and our sponsor, Komolmas Foundation for its support.

I would also like to thank Rev. Br. Dr. Martin, without whom none of this would have been possible.

As you know, the theme of this conference is “Ethics vs Technology in Postmodern Era of Education.”

No one can deny that the news has been very clear about the direction of ethics, as well as technology. The former is declining whereas the latter is developing at a rapid pace.

Ethics requires conceptual thought. And ethics is a reliable option for technological change but is seldom considered. Whereas technology has existed throughout history as the processes and products by which humans have coped with and changed their environment (Joel price, 2008, technology and Ethics)

In today’s society, we are often faced with the task of making moral choices in difficult and complicated situations. The dilemma we face today are a far cry from the issues that our ancestors a generation or two ago faced. Today, for example, we place opinions on how we feel about GMOs cloning, stem cell research and nano-technology, as well as pornography on the internet; to name a few. These issues make ethical decisions more and more complex in a rapidly changing world. The issues themselves are often of such complexity that a person might gain a depth of understanding in several areas in order to make informed ethical decisions. Religion, science, education, technology and our cultural traditions are but some of the factors that must be considered in making good moral choices.

A challenge in technology is well stated by Juan Enriques in “As the Future catches You”. Such a challenge is in the form of three technological waves flooding the whole world, they are ICT, genomics and nano-technological. If one misses out on this

technological literacy, he will be at a critical disadvantage of not knowing what he should know.

In terms of ethics, one of the most prevalent negative underlying behaviors is selfishness or egoistic unconsciousness. Three types of selfishness are defined, namely, self-indulgence, self-righteousness and moral blindness. The worst scenario is caused by the last category—the ignorance, so to speak. Not knowing what one does not know is critical in making moral choices which are detrimental to others and society a whole. We can not afford ignorance in new technology for such unawareness leads us directly into the trap of negative ethical choices.

Our ability as educators to meet these formidable challenges depends in part on our capability to renew the institutions we have designed for this purpose. PDH is one of these institutions, and so are our schools and non-formal education. Industry and the non-profit sector have important role to play as well.

Education has always been vital to the success of individuals. In our knowledge-driven economy, it is also an investment in our collective future as society. Science and technology play an increasingly vital role in enabling and shaping our way of life and progress.

Today in these opening remarks, I simply want to highlight and briefly mention some of the key empirical questions that I expect will be addressed in greater depth in the conference presentation and discussions.

- Methods for analyzing ethical issues.
- Definitions of ethics and their needs in the current technological-driven society
- Analysis of the need for technology
- Intellectual property
- Examine the evaluation of laws as they pertain to technology
- Formulation of an explanation of software licensing agreements as applied to the educational setting
- Computer use policy
- Examination of cybercrime in the educational setting
- Identification of technology issues in K12 education that require policies for management and control
- Identification of potential dangers of student internet use.
- Examination of possible methods of preventing such dangers through software, hardware, and teaching methods.
- Identification of common types of plagiarism
- Ethical and equity issues in educational settings.
- Examination of the potential abuse of technology in schools based upon legal and ethical concerns
- Strategies to provide professional development at the school /classroom level for teaching social, ethical, and legal issues relating to technology

During the conference, there will be paper presentations focusing on practice, research, or theory later today. Tomorrow morning, an interactive dialogues capping up on presentations today will lead to possible solutions and agenda for action in talking circles. All dialogues will be guided by the four subthemes, namely

- 1) New Learning and Learners,
- 2) Curriculum and Instructional Delivery Systems,
- 3) Educational Process and its Quality Assurance and
- 4) Leadership and Institutional Management.

Finally, by joining in this conference you have already demonstrated that you care and are prepared to act. I wish you an enjoyable, exciting and educational conference.

I hope you leave here with good memories, good friends and good intentions for the future.

Thank You!