



ETHICS-TECH is a transdisciplinary team of researchers committed to bringing ethical reflection to bear on technologies to help older Canadians in maintaining their autonomy, health and social participation, including technologies used in the care and support of older adults. To be successful, it is important that we understand and respect how social (together with cultural) factors may influence ethical analysis.

Ethical decision-making can be seen as a matter of balancing basic ethical considerations in order to arrive at the best course of action in a particular circumstance, all things considered. The following principles are the unifying ideas for ETHICS-TECH that frame the ethical issues addressed in each project:

- **Autonomy:** preserving the right of individuals to make decisions about their own lives and their right to privacy (while fully understanding that what makes us individuals, in part, are our close relationships with family, friends and communities)
- **Beneficence:** the shared responsibilities we have for each other
- **Non-maleficence** (doing no harm)
- **Justice:** the need to guarantee equitable access to new technologies so as to benefit as many people as possible

ETHICS-TECH will focus its research on the development conceptual frameworks and methods for structuring research, educating stakeholders and facilitating policy. It will investigate factors that are most likely to contribute to disparities and ethical issues in the development, adoption and diffusion of emerging technologies. Privacy and security are examples of factors that should be examined in the design and implementation of technologies. Special features of the ETHICS-TECH approach include the following:

- Using longitudinal designs to investigate ethical issues in the adoption of technologies at all stages of their development and commercialization, from prototype to post-implementation.
- Exploring ethical issues in the context of cultural and social minorities (*e.g.*, language minorities, and systemic barriers encountered by persons with cognitive impairments).
- Focusing on technology for independent living that supports chronic disease management, activities of daily living and social inclusion, as well as the empowerment of technology users.
- Exploring how ethical dilemmas are resolved when there are conflicts between the basic ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence and justice (*e.g.*, when the benefits of using technology allows for greater independence yet introduces the conflict of potential intrusion on privacy and disrespect of consent).
- Exploring ethical dilemmas that might arise in the adoption of technology by caregivers and professionals, including when technology users live in aggregate residential settings (*e.g.*, group homes, long-term care facilities, etc.) where the needs and preferences of one individual might differ from another, and congregate care (namely Canada's commitment to deinstitutionalization in all forms).
- Recommending policies that can be directly put into place to improve ethical development, adoption and diffusion of technology in Canada.
- Exploring and enhancing the mechanisms for implementing research into policy through strategic application of the results of implementation science.