Number	LANCS-D4.3-RN-Paternalism	A-PI--
Title	Research Note (RN) for D4.3	
Subtitle	Issues in Focus : **Paternalism**	

PROBLEM		SOLUTION			Research Note	X	Selected Annotation	

Categories: | | |

Summary:

This note addresses the issue of decision-making by ICTs and humans on behalf of persons, and takes issue with lack of transparency in who /what configures operations and functionalities.

CONTEXT

Mundane and specialised objects on a network or infrastructure, interconnected to exchange information, sensory data and data-managing capabilities, raise question about the extent to which automation can result in decisions made on behalf of persons and in their best interest (see key reading, Aarts and Encarnação, 2006, Aarts and de Ruyter, 2009; European Commission, 2011; ISTAG, 2001; Wright et al, 2008).

FACTS

Individuals already configure applications / devices to make decisions for them, including any of the timers and trackers in ordinary settings, such as:
- alarms
- virus upgrades
- washing cycles
- satellite navigation

'Other people' (organizations, institutions) configure applications / devices to intercept and interact with individuals on the basis of a public good, a service or convenience, such as:
- speed cameras
- traffic control
- automated doors

None of these applications are fantastical achievements in the development of machine intelligence. They are designed and configured to act on cue and do not 'reason' for themselves strictly speaking.

COMMENT

The notion of paternalism in relation to advanced ICTs is highly problematic:

1. There are limits to delegating decisions to algorithms, in particular, in critical operations. These limits are not always clear in advance which draws attention to wishful enactment of promise and expectations in the face of what may actually be achievable in delegating decisions to computational functions, e.g., for:

- managing illness or chronic conditions
- managing traffic and public safety operations
- managing security

2. Another problem turns on concerns about transparency of human and machine action *in situ*, or lack thereof:
   - How are the boundaries drawn within which decisions on behalf of persons or in their best interest are made and justified?
   - Who / what can configure a device / system to intercept and interfere with persons, and under what circumstance?

Consortium Partner | LANCS