Autonomous systems and the law - an Anglo-Saxon perspective"
Regulating Robots

- UK perspective on law and robotics
- There isn’t one
- Thank you for your attention!
- (Pub now?)
More seriously though

- Pierre Legrand “Legal mentality”
- Distrust of “top down”, concept driven legal solutions
- Instead, find a “good fit” to solutions that have worked well in the past
Regulating Robots
Problem

• How to address something that is categorically new?
Regulating Robots

1) Why

- They learn
- They display signs of autonomous behavior
- They can make decisions
- They are therefore not totally predictable
Regulating Robots
Regulating non-human, autonomous decision makers - really a new problem?
Regulating Robots
Revisiting the Victorians
Problems II

- Relies on “shared understanding”

- “reasonable”, “equitable”, “man on the street test” etc

- But what do we do if there aren’t yet any established practices?
Soft law, self-regulation, ethical debate

- Robots are multi-use tools. Robots should not be designed solely or primarily to kill or harm humans, except in the interests of national security.

- Humans, not robots, are responsible agents. Robots should be designed & operated as far as is practicable to comply with existing laws and fundamental rights & freedoms, including privacy.

- Robots are products. They should be designed using processes which assure their safety and security.

- Robots are manufactured artefacts. They should not be designed in a deceptive way to exploit vulnerable users; instead their machine nature should be transparent.

- The person with legal responsibility for a robot should be attributed.
Revisiting offline and online equivalence

• “the use of autonomous agents should not permit the controller of the artefact to avoid liability he would have incurred had he acted himself or though a human”
Procedural aspects

- Robots should provide forensically sound records of their “decision making progress”, ideally verbalising this as an explanation for action.
Soft law, self-regulation, ethical debate

- Industry standards with limited effect to exclude liability
- Strict liability
- Efficiently priced insurance markets
- Possibly mandatory insurance
Robots: anything they do, animals can do better?
Regulating Robot speech: precedents?
Rights, rank, relation?

• Some tasks require a special status, e.g. An officer giving orders or a policeman asking for ID

• This may require extending the law, where appropriate, to machines, giving them de facto rank

• Emotional attachment to robots can create interests worth protecting
Polly asks: any questions?