

**Moral
Rectitude**

Following a code of ethics aimed at doing the right or honorable thing, or following your consciousness to righteousness.

The ability to do what you think is morally right, despite the actions and influence of others.

Correct principles, righteousness, honorable behavior.

Having a conscience means you consider going back to the store because they forgot to charge you for an item; rectitude means you actually do.

Moral rectitude constitutes the deliberation of affective appraisal as it is necessitated by environmental necessity.

Acting very consistently in a way that aligns with your morals. Acting with moral righteousness/being uptight with actions such that you follow your morals.

Staying on a path of integrity that is defined by ethical and moral principles;

Of these three defenses, I find the cog-in-the-chain argument slightly more defensible than the other two, since it tries to diffuse the ethical blame along the chain instead of placing it all on the scientist.

I think that the “Cog in the Chain” argument is the most appropriate because I knew what I was building, there was no initial obvious controversy and the device is a single component of a larger design.

Position (c) feels a little like a remixed Nuremberg defense but is the most applicable to the situation so I’ll go with that.

... I am responsible only for those actions in which I have knowledge of potential consequences. I operated under the assumption that my research and development was for noble reasons. Science is great and important. As a scientist I only hope for the best of mankind.

I designed a prototype of this camera as part of my research group, yes. And it is also true that a more developed version of that camera was used in smart weapons technology.

However, after I made that prototype I did not have as much control over that intellectual property and how it was used, and thus I did not make the choice to use it as a weapon, even though I contributed in part to the creation of the full technology. Additionally **(and this is in the case that the project was funded knowing the desired outcome)** if I am in the wrong for creating a prototype, are the people who funded my lab and project, who knew the desired outcome, also not partially responsible? They are the ones who enabled the research, and are also scientists in theory, so they should also have been able to think of the repercussions of funding this work. Why would I be the only one to blame?

One thing that this argument makes me think of is the “guns don’t kill people, people kill people” argument that “god-fearing” American conservatives use to justify really loose gun laws in the US.

A scientist has the ethical obligation to do everything they can to avoid negative consequences, and this obligation is the same for both kinds even if it is more difficult with pure research.

I think that it is the moral duty of researchers of any discipline to evaluate the potential impact of their work, and work to reduce the possibilities of negative unintended consequences. Like the nuclear fission researcher that called for a stop of fission publications, I think it is the moral scientist's obligation to try and stop foreseeable consequences by convincing the scientific community that there are lines of knowledge that society is not quite ready to cross, and that humanity may benefit more from shelving research until society can handle it.



The ethical obligation of the scientist remains the same. It is an obligation to examine the probable results of their research regardless of how able they are to predict the outcomes. Just because pure research does not provide obvious uses at the time does not excuse the scientist of responsibility. For example pure research done on the behalf of an organization with evil intent can still be viewed as morally unworthy as even though the research itself may have no practical application at the time.

1. Some consequences of research are or might be foreseeable.
2. All scientists can be blamed for the unintended but foreseeable consequences of their actions.
3. There is an ethical obligation to consider all consequences that are or might be foreseeable.
4. Therefore, all scientists are ethically obligated to consider all consequences of their research.

From Forge's argument, if premises 2 and 3 especially hold true, then there is no distinction between pure and applied research as *any* potentially foreseeable consequence must be considered.

Pure research is among more of the domain of inquiry for inquiry sake. Applied research assumes intention of craft. In applied research one should be conscious of ethical implications of intent.

