#### **1. What Does It Mean to Be a Professional in IT?**

* **Definition of a Professional:**
  + A **professional** is someone with special knowledge and training in a particular field. They make important decisions, help society, keep learning, and work well with others in their field. They also follow rules and have certain rights and responsibilities, as set by laws and regulations.
* **Are IT Workers Professionals?**
  + IT workers, such as programmers, system analysts, and IT managers, are often seen as professionals because they have specialized knowledge and skills. However, they are not always considered legal professionals, like doctors or lawyers, because they don't require a state license to work and aren't held legally responsible for mistakes in the same way.
  + Not all IT jobs require advanced education or long-term training, and since IT workers aren't licensed by the government or held accountable for malpractice, they aren't legally classified as "professionals" in the strictest sense

**Malpractice is when a professional makes a serious mistake or fails to do their job properly, causing harm or damage.**

### **The Changing Professional Services Industry**

IT workers are part of the **professional services industry**, even though they aren't officially recognized as professionals. This industry is changing a lot, which impacts how IT workers need to think and work to be successful.

### **Seven Forces Changing the Industry:**

* + **Smarter Clients**:  
    Clients today know more about their needs and can negotiate better deals. They expect good value for their money.
  + **More Rules (Governance)**:  
    After many scandals, clients don’t trust service providers as much. This has led to more rules and regulations that companies must follow to stay accountable.
  + **Instant Communication**:  
    Technology has made communication faster. IT workers can quickly share updates and work with clients and team members, helping complete projects on time.
  + **Transparency**:  
    Clients now want to see the progress of their projects in real-time. This means IT workers need to be open and provide regular updates, increasing accountability.
  + **Outsourcing Parts (Modularization)**:  
    Companies can hire other businesses or freelancers to do specific parts of a project. This makes work more flexible but requires good coordination with outside help.
  + **Global Competition**:  
    Services can be offered from anywhere in the world, making the competition tougher. IT workers need to find ways to stand out and offer something special.
  + **Standard Services (Commoditization)**:  
    Many basic IT services are now treated like standard products that clients can easily compare by price. IT workers need to offer extra value, like better service or specialized knowledge, to compete well.

These changes mean IT workers need to adjust their skills and ways of working to succeed in the fast-changing industry

#### **3. Managing Relationships in IT**

* **With Employers:**
  + IT workers need to follow company rules, especially about using IT resources properly. Issues like software piracy (illegally copying software) can lead to big legal and financial problems.
  + **Example:** If a company discovers that an employee is using unlicensed software, the employee could lose their job and the company could face heavy fines.

**With Clients:**

* Good client relationships are built on trust and honest communication. Problems can arise if an IT company recommends its own products just to make a sale, even if it’s not the best option for the client.
* **Example**: If an IT company suggests its own software to solve a problem, it must ensure it’s the best choice, avoiding any conflict of interest.**Fraud and Misrepresentation in IT**:  
  Fraud happens when an IT worker tricks a client to get goods or services. Misrepresentation is when incorrect or incomplete information is given to a client, which can lead to a wrong decision. If the client enters a contract based on this, they may have the right to cancel or ask for compensation.
* **Breach of Contract in IT**:  
  A breach of contract happens when one party doesn’t follow the agreement. If serious, the other party can cancel the contract and ask for a refund. Issues like unexpected costs or delays can cause clients to blame IT workers for fraud or contract violations. These conflicts are usually resolved outside of court, as it’s often hard to figure out who is at fault.
* **With Suppliers:**

A **supplier** is a company or individual that provides products, services, or solutions to another business. In the IT industry, suppliers offer things like software, hardware, or cloud services to meet the technological needs of businesses.

* + It’s important to be fair and honest with suppliers. Accepting gifts from suppliers might look like a bribe.
  + Building good relationships with suppliers is important for IT workers. This helps in sharing useful information and ideas for innovative, cost-effective solutions. It's essential to treat suppliers fairly, avoid unreasonable demands, and maintain a positive attitude to foster cooperation.
  + However, unethical actions can arise, such as bribery, where gifts or favors are offered to gain business advantages. The U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) makes it illegal to bribe foreign officials. Clear guidelines exist to distinguish between gifts and bribes, emphasizing transparency and honesty in all dealings to prevent corruption.
  + **Example:** An IT manager should refuse any gifts from a supplier that could seem like a bribe, following the law and company policies.
* **With Other Professionals:**
  + IT professionals should follow ethical standards, avoid exaggerating their qualifications, and keep confidential information private. They usually feel loyal to their colleagues and follow a code of conduct, with senior members mentoring juniors. However, actions like lying on a résumé or sharing private company details may seem helpful at first but can harm a career and the profession if discovered
* **With IT Users:**
  + IT workers should help users understand how to use systems properly and avoid unethical behavior, like sharing private data inappropriately.
  + **Example:** Providing clear guidelines on using company software can prevent employees from copying software for personal use.
* **With Society:**
  + IT professionals must make sure their work doesn't harm others. What they do can affect many people. For example, if an IT worker creates a system for a chemical plant, they need to ensure it’s safe. If the system fails, it could put workers and people living nearby at risk.

#### **4. Professional Codes of Ethics**

* **Purpose of Ethics Codes:**
  + Codes of ethics are guidelines that tell professionals what is right and wrong. They help maintain high standards and build trust.
  + **Example:** The ACM (Association for Computing Machinery) code of ethics helps IT professionals make decisions that are good for society and avoid causing harm.
* **Why They Matter:**
  + Following an ethics code can help professionals earn respect, avoid mistakes, and maintain public trust.
  + **Example:** An IT professional who follows ethical guidelines will be trusted more by clients and colleagues, leading to better job opportunities.

Professional codes of ethics are rules that guide how people in a profession should act. They help ensure good behavior, like being honest and continuing to learn. Following these codes helps build trust, maintain high standards, and make better decisions in the workplace.

#### **5. Certification and Licensing**

* **Certification:**
  + Certification shows that an IT worker has specific skills and knowledge. It’s usually optional and not the same as licensing.
  + Certification shows that a professional has specific skills and knowledge recognized by an organization. It’s usually optional and may not require a code of ethics, but employers view it as a sign of expertise. While some certifications can improve salaries and job chances, they don’t replace real-world experience.
  + **Example:** A CISCO certification can help a network engineer get a better job because it proves their expertise.
* **Licensing:**
  + Licensing, while uncommon in IT, could ensure that IT professionals meet certain standards and follow a code of ethics.
  + Government licensing is a permission granted by the state that allows someone to work in a specific profession or operate a business. It usually requires passing a test and is meant to protect public safety, applying to fields like medicine, law, and engineering. While some argue that licensing IT workers could improve standards and ethics, **there are challenges, such as a lack of universally accepted knowledge and standards in the fast-changing tech field.**

#### **6. IT Professional Malpractice**

* IT professionals have a responsibility to avoid mistakes that could harm others. If they fail to do so, it could be considered malpractice.
* **Example**: If an IT consultant doesn't protect a client's database and hackers steal the data, they could be held responsible.

IT Users

As employees have more access to computers and the internet, using IT ethically is important. Issues like software piracy, using work resources for personal activities, and sharing sensitive information can hurt productivity and security. To encourage good behavior, companies should have clear policies on how software should be used, what’s acceptable, and how to protect sensitive data. This helps improve productivity and accountability.

**What is Compliance?**Compliance in professional practices means following laws, regulations, and ethical standards to ensure responsible and transparent conduct in a specific field..

**Importance of Compliance:** IT professionals need to follow specific laws, like the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, which sets guidelines for managing company data and financial records. This is important to ensure everything is done legally and to avoid fines or other penalties.

**Example:** An IT company might create strict procedures to make sure they follow the law. This could involve carefully handling financial records to avoid any mistakes that could lead to legal issues.

**Challenges:** Following all the rules can be tough because there are many, and sometimes they might even contradict each other.

Compliance means following rules and laws, which can be hard because there are many that might not agree with each other. Companies can use software to keep track of these rules, hire experts for help, and have a Chief Compliance Officer to oversee everything. An audit committee checks if the company’s accounting is correct and if they follow the law, while internal audits make sure company policies are followed and that assets are protected.

**Example:** A company might hire a compliance officer, someone whose job is to make sure all the company’s activities are legal and meet industry standards, helping the company avoid any problems.

### **Common Ethical Issues for IT Users**

1. **Software Piracy:**
   * Unauthorized copying or using software without a license.
   * In a corporate setting, IT professionals may be held accountable for such actions.
   * Copying software from work to use at home is illegal.
2. **Inappropriate Use of Computing Resources:**
   * Using company resources for personal activities like social media, chat rooms, or gaming.
   * Reduces employee productivity and can be a waste of time.
3. **Inappropriate Sharing of Information:**
   * Organizations store sensitive data, including private employee and customer data, and confidential business information.
   * Mishandling or unauthorized sharing of this data can lead to serious consequences.

### **Supporting Ethical Practices of IT Users**

**Policies to Prevent Misuse:**

* **User Rights and Responsibilities**: Define acceptable behavior and actions.
* **Boundaries**: Clearly state what is and isn't allowed regarding IT resources.
* **Enforcement**: Allow management to take action against violations.
* **Productivity Boost**: Proper policies can lead to better IT services and increased user productivity.

**Key Policy Components:**

1. **Software Usage Guidelines:**
   * Clearly state the rules for using company software.
   * Offer home-use agreements with software providers at discounted rates.
2. **Appropriate IT Resource Use:**
   * Define how company hardware, software, and networks should be used.
3. **Data Protection:**
   * Secure systems by implementing data protection measures.
   * Maintain a corporate firewall to safeguard against security threats.

**These guidelines ensure that IT users follow ethical practices, leading to a safer and more productive work environment.**

### **Philosophy of Ethics in Professional Practices**

Ethics in the workplace is about making good decisions and acting in ways that are fair, honest, and respectful. Let's dive into some key ethical principles that are important in any professional setting.

#### **Punctuality**

Punctuality means being on time, whether it's arriving at work, attending meetings, or meeting deadlines. Being punctual shows that you are reliable and respect others' time. When you're consistently on time, it builds trust with your colleagues and managers, making you a dependable team member.

#### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is about keeping sensitive information private. In the workplace, you may have access to confidential information like customer data, company secrets, or personal details of colleagues. It’s important to keep this information secure and only share it with people who are authorized to know. Breaching confidentiality can lead to serious consequences, including loss of trust and legal issues.

#### **Discipline**

**Discipline** means following rules, staying focused, and keeping control of yourself. In a job, discipline helps you stay organized and reach your goals. It includes being consistent, arriving on time, and meeting deadlines. Being disciplined not only helps you work better but also makes you known as a dependable professional.

#### **Human Ethics**

Human ethics are the basic moral principles that guide how we treat each other. This includes being honest, fair, kind, and respectful in all your interactions. In the workplace, human ethics guide how you interact with colleagues, customers, and clients. Treating others with respect and fairness helps create a positive work environment and promotes teamwork.

#### **Interpersonal Skills**

Interpersonal skills are the abilities that help you interact effectively with others. These skills include communication, empathy, listening, and teamwork. Good interpersonal skills are crucial in any job because they enable you to work well with others, resolve conflicts, and build strong professional relationships. When you communicate clearly and show empathy, you foster a collaborative and supportive workplace.

#### **Computing Ethics**

Computing ethics refers to the responsible use of technology and data. This includes:

* **Data Integrity:** Data integrity means keeping data accurate, complete, and reliable. It ensures that the information is correct and hasn’t been changed or tampered with, either accidentally or on purpose.
* **Coding Protocols:** Following best practices when writing code. This means writing clean, efficient, and secure code that others can easily understand and maintain. Adhering to coding protocols helps create reliable software that meets the needs of users.
* **Respecting Data:** In any job that involves handling data, it's crucial to respect the privacy and security of that data. This means not sharing sensitive information outside of the company or using it for unauthorized purposes. Protecting data is a key ethical responsibility.

#### **Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Expression**

**Freedom of expression** is the right to express ideas, beliefs, and opinions through various forms like speech, writing, art, or even actions. It includes creative work, protests, and social media posts. For example, creating a painting to share a social message is an exercise of freedom of expression.

**Freedom of speech** is the right to express opinions and ideas specifically through spoken words without fear of censorship or punishment. For example, giving a speech at a rally or sharing your views in a discussion are examples of freedom of speech.