

## Initial Post

by [Marwa Alkuwari](#) - Friday, 13 June 2025, 6:15 PM

Number of replies: 3

### Abi's Ethical Dilemma – When Integrity Meets Interpretation

Abi's role as both a researcher and a statistical programmer places him at the intersection of data, ethics, and accountability. Upon discovering that the cereal Whizzz may be harmful, Abi faces an ethical fork in the road: to report the findings as they are, or selectively frame the results to favor the manufacturer's narrative. While he may not alter the data, selectively choosing analyses that suggest positive outcomes is ethically questionable.

According to the BCS Code of Conduct, professionals must “not misrepresent or withhold information on the performance of products... or take advantage of the lack of relevant knowledge or inexperience of others” (BCS, 2022, p. 3). Presenting only favorable outcomes while concealing negative ones violates the principles of honesty, public interest, and professional competence. Abi is ethically bound to report the full spectrum of results and to clearly label the limitations and implications of the findings.

The Menlo Report reinforces the principle of “Respect for Law and Public Interest,” urging transparency and accountability, especially when the findings could influence public health decisions (Finn and Shilton, 2023). If Abi withholds harmful data, he not only risks professional sanctions but also contributes to potential public harm, undermining consumer trust and scientific integrity.

Furthermore, in the context of AI and statistical ethics, Corrêa et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of “non-maleficence” and “transparency” as global ethical priorities. Abi should anticipate misuse of his findings and mitigate this risk through disclaimers, transparent reporting, and, if necessary, escalation to ethics committees or whistleblowing channels.

In summary, Abi should present both the negative and positive findings, accompanied by a detailed explanation of methods and limitations. Upholding ethical standards ensures he fulfills his duty not only to his client but to the public and the profession. Integrity in data analysis is not optional—it is foundational to responsible research.

## **References:**

1. BCS (2022) Code of Conduct for BCS Members. Swindon: BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT. Available at: <https://www.bcs.org/media/5356/bcs-code-of-conduct.pdf> [Accessed 13 June 2025].
2. Finn, M. and Shilton, K. (2023) ‘Ethics governance development: The case of the Menlo Report’, *Social Studies of Science*, 53(3), pp. 315–340.
3. Corrêa, N.K., Rodovalho, L.R., de Almeida, L.G. and da Silva, F.M. (2023) ‘Worldwide AI ethics: A review of 200 guidelines and recommendations for AI governance’, *Patterns*, 4(2), p. 100857. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.patter.2022.100857>.

## In reply to Marwa Alkuwari

### Peer response

by [Jaafar El Komati](#) - Thursday, 19 June 2025, 7:54 PM

Thank you Marwa for your post. I really like how you showed Abi's challenge as not just a professional issue but also a broader ethical responsibility to society. Your mention of the BCS Code of Conduct (2022) highlights that integrity isn't just about avoiding data manipulation—it also means being open about what the analysis might mean.

I agree with your reference to the Menlo Report's focus on "Respect for Law and Public Interest" (Finn & Shilton, 2023). When statistical results could affect public health, this principle is very important. Abi's duty goes beyond just following contracts; he needs to make sure his work doesn't mislead or cause harm, whether on purpose or by accident.

Your use of Corrêa et al.'s (2023) ideas about non-maleficence and transparency in global AI ethics is very relevant. It reminds us that ethical duties in data analysis are becoming more international and involve many fields.

Also, I think your suggestion to add disclaimers and involve ethics committees or whistleblowing channels is smart and proactive. If Abi expects his work might be misused, taking these steps shows he's thinking ahead and serious about his professional responsibility.

Overall, you've captured what it means to act with integrity in today's data-driven world. Abi's honesty isn't just ethical—it's key to keeping public trust in science and technology.

## References

- BCS (2022). *Code of Conduct for BCS Members*. Swindon: BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT. Available at: <https://www.bcs.org/media/5356/bcs-code-of-conduct.pdf>
- Corrêa, N.K., Rodovalho, L.R., de Almeida, L.G., & da Silva, F.M. (2023). Worldwide AI ethics: A review of 200 guidelines and recommendations for AI governance. *Patterns*, 4(2), 100857. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.patter.2022.100857>
- Finn, M., & Shilton, K. (2023). Ethics governance development: The case of the Menlo Report. *Social Studies of Science*, 53(3), 315–340.

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### Re: Initial Post

by [Sultan Alaryani](#) - Thursday, 19 June 2025, 11:07 PM

Your post provides a strong and thoughtful overview of Abi's ethical responsibilities, especially in balancing professional obligations with public interest. I particularly appreciate how you linked Abi's situation to the BCS Code of Conduct (2022), which clearly reinforces the duty of honesty and transparency. Your reference to the Menlo Report and the principle of "Respect for Law and Public Interest" (Finn & Shilton, 2023) added depth and helped highlight the wider impact of selective reporting on public trust.

I agree with your point that integrity in data analysis is foundational—not just a choice. It's also good that you acknowledged the role of disclaimers and ethical escalation if needed, as these are practical steps that professionals like Abi can take when facing dilemmas.

One area that might be explored further is how researchers can balance transparency with confidentiality, especially if pressured by sponsors or under non-disclosure agreements. Looking into how ethics committees manage such conflicts could provide even more clarity on Abi's options.

## **References:**

- BCS (2022) Code of Conduct for BCS Members. Swindon: BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT. Available at: <https://www.bcs.org/media/5356/bcs-code-of-conduct.pdf> (Accessed: 19 June 2025).
- Finn, M. and Shilton, K. (2023) 'Ethics governance development: The case of the Menlo Report', *Social Studies of Science*, 53(3), pp. 315–340.
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## In reply to Marwa Alkuwari

### Peer Response

by [Koulthoum Hassan Ahmad Flamerzi](#) - Monday, 30 June 2025, 9:31 PM

Thanks, Marwa, for your thoughtful breakdown of Abi's ethical pickle. I honestly share your view: being open and showing everything, the data says isn't optional when lives could be on the line.

Your mention of the BCS Code of Conduct from 2022 hits the mark. That code lays out why IT people and data experts should always put the public first and speak honestly. I'd add that hinting at a friendly reading of the numbers while leaving out key facts is, at best, flirting with manipulation-a grey zone researchers need to steer clear of.

I liked how you brought in the Menlo Report's push for public good, too (Finn and Shilton, 2023). Once we gather data, we often forget that our results can steer big decisions, like which products stay on shelves for consumer safety. Your reminder that ethics boards-or even whistle-blowing-are real options, even under pressure, is spot-on; far too many people let fear choke off that escape route.

Lastly, Correa et al. (2023) sketch a global overview that frames the other sources. Non-maleficence, a familiar idea in healthcare, also lives in data work, warning practitioners against charts or models that poison rather than enlighten.

All told, your answer meshes high-level ethics with on-the-ground responsibility. Abi must tell the full story, flag weak spots, and keep the public's trust front and centre.

### References:

BCS (2022) Code of Conduct for BCS Members. Swindon: BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT. Available at: <https://www.bcs.org/media/5356/bcs-code-of-conduct.pdf> [Accessed 13 June 2025].

Finn, M. and Shilton, K. (2023) Ethics governance development: The case of the Menlo Report, *Social Studies of Science*, 53(3), pp. 315340.

Correa, N.K. et al. (2023) Worldwide AI ethics: A review of 200 guidelines and recommendations for AI governance, *Patterns*, 4(2), p. 100857. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.patter.2022.100857> .