Midterm Write-up

1. Ethical Issue:

One issue that the YO app runs into in terms of the ACM Code of Ethics is that it does not “Contribute to society and to human well-being”. While the YO app is a fun way to communicate with friends, it does not contribute much to advancing society or human well-being. While it was not intended to do so, it still had the opportunity and did not capitalize on the opportunity to provide a benefit to humans.

Another possible issue is the “Be fair and do not take action to discriminate” part of the code of ethics. While the app itself does not discriminate against any of its users, it could be used by people to discriminate against each other. With the addition of the punctuation at the end of the “Yo’s” there exists the opportunity to send hateful messages to those that have angered you. This is a form of discrimination and bullying that can be levied against unsuspecting users of the app.

The last ethical issue that could arise is the “Respect privacy” part of the code of ethics. Since the ability to add punctuation to the end of messages now exists, there could be a way to figure out the type of connections that people have. This data could be mined by the company that runs the app and sold to social media companies and other entities that would have a vested interest in the way that you interact with people. This would be a huge invasion of the privacy of the users and certainly a violation of the Code of Ethics.

1. Legal Issues

One legal issue stemming from the app is whether or not it is facilitating bullying. With the ability to send messages that could be interpreted as angry, it could be a way that users of the app can harass other users. A legal question would be whether Yo has a responsibility to protect its more vulnerable users from others.

Another legal issue is with the feature that allows you to send your location with a Yo message. If there are kids that are younger than 13, it could be a violation of COPPA laws that prevent people from preying on young children. Yo could be facing lawsuits from both regulatory government agencies and the parents or guardians of children that were tracked and harassed by older users.