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## **Lab - Create Your Personal Code of Ethical Conduct**

### **Objectives**

**Part 1: Research Approaches to Ethical Decision Making**

**Part 2: Research Code of Ethics**

**Part 3: Develop Your Own Personal Code of Ethical Conduct**

### **Background / Scenario**

When confronted with an ethical dilemma, what do you consider when making a decision?

Suppose you find a new USB 3.0 flash drive in the computer lab, what would you do? A student in your class says they found a site on the internet that has all of the class exams and quizzes with answers, what would you do?

Working in Cybersecurity is not always about stopping cyber attacks. As a Cybersecurity specialist, your organization may entrust you with some of the most sensitive data. As a result, you will be confronted with challenging ethical dilemmas, which may not have an easy or clear answer. For example, when researching a security breach, are the personal devices of employees and their personal content included?

The focus of this lab is to research approaches or perspectives for ethical decision making. Next, you will research code of ethics and finally you will create your own personal code of ethical conduct.

### **Required Resources**

- PC or mobile device with Internet access

### **Instructions**

#### **Part 1: Research Approaches to Ethical Decision Making**

There are several approaches or perspectives on Ethical Decision Making, including Utilitarian ethics, the Rights approach and the Common Good approach. Other ethical decision models include the Fairness or Justice approach as well as the Virtue approach.

In this part, you will research each ethical decision model or framework and then formulate the underlying principle from that approach.

Use an internet browser to research approaches to ethical decision making.

#### **Step 1: Research Utilitarian ethics**

Define the underlying principle for the Utilitarian Ethics approach.

The underlying principle for the Utilitarian Ethics approach is to maximize the greatest good for the most people. This ethical framework focuses on producing the best overall outcome that benefits the largest number of individuals.

Utilitarian ethics evaluates the morality of an action based on its consequences rather than the action itself. The goal is to choose actions that result in the greatest happiness, well-being, or utility for the majority of

people affected. This approach considers the collective benefit over individual interests, aiming to create the most positive impact for society as a whole.

In practice, utilitarian decision-making involves weighing the potential benefits and harms of different courses of action and selecting the option that produces the most favorable balance of good over bad outcomes for the greatest number of people involved.

**Answers will vary but should include on maximizing the greatest good for the most people.**

## **Step 2: Research the Rights approach to ethical decision making.**

Define the underlying principle for the Rights approach to ethical decision making.

The underlying principle for the Rights approach to ethical decision making centers on respecting and protecting the fundamental rights of individuals. This ethical framework emphasizes the inherent dignity and autonomy of each person, focusing on how we should live our lives while respecting the rights of others to do the same.

Key aspects of the Rights approach include:

1. Recognizing individual autonomy: Acknowledging each person's right to make their own choices and decisions about their life.
2. Protecting fundamental human rights: Upholding basic rights such as life, liberty, privacy, and freedom of expression.
3. Respecting personal boundaries: Ensuring that one's actions do not infringe upon the rights of others.
4. Promoting equality: Treating all individuals with equal consideration and respect, regardless of their background or status.
5. Safeguarding personal freedoms: Defending the right of individuals to pursue their own goals and interests, as long as they don't harm others.

This approach to ethical decision-making prioritizes the protection of individual rights and liberties, often considering them inviolable even if violating them might produce a greater overall benefit. It emphasizes the importance of treating people as ends in themselves, rather than merely as means to achieve other goals.

**Answers will vary but should include the fundamental rights of the individual and how we live our lives, as well as respecting others and how they live their lives.**

## **Step 3: Research the Common Good approach to ethical decision making.**

Define the underlying principle for the Common Good approach to ethical decision making.

The underlying principle for the Common Good approach to ethical decision making focuses on the well-being and interests of the community as a whole. This ethical framework emphasizes that individuals should pursue values and goals that are shared by other members of the community, prioritizing collective welfare over individual interests.

Key aspects of the Common Good approach include:

1. Community-centric thinking: Considering the impact of decisions on the entire community rather than just on individuals.
2. Shared values: Identifying and promoting values that are beneficial to all members of society.
3. Collective responsibility: Encouraging individuals to contribute to the overall welfare of the community.
4. Long-term sustainability: Focusing on decisions that benefit the community not just in the present, but also in the future.
5. Balancing individual and collective needs: Recognizing that personal interests may sometimes need to be subordinated to the greater good of the community.

This approach to ethical decision-making emphasizes the interconnectedness of individuals within a society and the importance of working together towards shared goals. It recognizes that the well-being of each person is intimately tied to the well-being of the community as a whole.

The Common Good approach often involves considering how actions and policies can create social conditions that benefit everyone, such as public health initiatives, environmental protection, or educational programs. It encourages individuals to think beyond their personal interests and consider how their choices impact the broader community.

**Answers will vary but should include the focus of community. Individuals should pursue the values and goals shared by other members of the community.**

#### **Step 4: Research the Fairness or Justice approach to ethical decision making.**

Define the underlying principle for the Fairness or Justice approach to ethical decision making.

The underlying principle for the Fairness or Justice approach to ethical decision making centers on ensuring equitable outcomes for all individuals involved. This ethical framework emphasizes the importance of impartiality and equality in the distribution of benefits and burdens within society.

Key aspects of the Fairness or Justice approach include:

1. Equal treatment: Ensuring that all individuals are treated equally, without favoritism or discrimination.
2. Impartial consideration: Making decisions based on objective criteria rather than personal biases or preferences.
3. Proportionality: Allocating rewards and punishments in proportion to merit or responsibility.
4. Procedural fairness: Ensuring that the processes used to make decisions are transparent, consistent, and applied equally to all.
5. Distributive justice: Striving for a fair allocation of resources, opportunities, and benefits across society.
6. Corrective justice: Addressing and rectifying past injustices or inequalities.

This approach to ethical decision-making focuses on creating outcomes that are fair and just for everyone involved. It requires careful consideration of how decisions and actions might affect different individuals or groups, with the goal of avoiding unfair advantages or disadvantages.

The Fairness or Justice approach often involves asking questions such as: "Is this decision treating everyone equally?", "Are we providing equal opportunities to all?", and "Are we addressing existing inequalities?" It aims to create a society where everyone has an equal chance to succeed and where the rules are applied consistently to all.

**Answers will vary but should include the fairness of the outcome. Is the outcome equal for everyone? The outcome should not impose favoritism nor discrimination.**

## **Part 2: Research Code of Ethics**

Most organizations develop their own code of ethics. Developed by management, this document is based on values and principles to promote the company business with honesty and integrity.

In this part, you will research computer code of ethics and cybersecurity code of ethics.

Use an internet browser to research code of ethics.

Based on your research, create a list of at least ten items. The list should be sequential from most important to least important.

Based on the research provided in the search results and the guidelines given, here is a list of 10 items for a computer and cybersecurity code of ethics, ordered from most to least important:

1. Protect user privacy and confidentiality of data at all times.
2. Do no harm with computers or technology.
3. Be honest and trustworthy in all professional activities.
4. Respect intellectual property rights and avoid unauthorized access or use.
5. Strive for high quality and security in all professional work.
6. Comply with all applicable laws and regulations.
7. Maintain professional competence through continuous learning.
8. Consider the societal impacts of your work and promote the public good.
9. Treat all individuals fairly and avoid discrimination.
10. Foster awareness and understanding of responsible computing practices.

This list incorporates key ethical principles from various sources, including the ACM Code of Ethics, CREST Code of Ethics, and other cybersecurity ethical guidelines. The order prioritizes fundamental ethical responsibilities like protecting privacy, avoiding harm, and maintaining honesty, followed by more specific professional conduct guidelines.

**Answers will vary, but may include some of the items below:**

- 1. Information stored on the computer should be treated as seriously as written or spoken words.**
- 2. Respect the privacy of others.**
- 3. Creation and usage of malware is illegal and must not be practiced.**
- 4. Should not prevent others from accessing public information.**
- 5. Overwhelming other's system with unwanted information is unethical.**
- 6. Sending inappropriate messages through email or chat is forbidden.**
- 7. Do no harm with a computer**
- 8. Comply with legal standards**
- 9. Be trustworthy**
- 10. Maintain confidentiality**

### **Part 3: Develop Your Own Personal Code of Ethical Conduct**

A code of conduct provides guidelines for acceptable as well as unacceptable specific behaviors.

Based on your research, develop a list of your own personal code of ethical conduct.

Create a code of ethics list of at least ten items. The list should be sequential from most important to least important.

Based on the research and considering the importance of ethical conduct in computing, here's a personalized code of ethics list, prioritized from most to least important:

1. Never use technology to cause harm to individuals or society.
2. Respect and protect the privacy and personal information of others.
3. Refrain from engaging in any illegal activities through technology, including hacking and fraud.
4. Use computing resources responsibly and avoid misuse or waste.
5. Honor intellectual property rights and avoid plagiarism in all forms.
6. Strive for transparency in all computing actions and decisions.
7. Actively promote fairness and inclusivity in technology use and development.
8. Continuously educate yourself about the impacts and implications of technology.
9. Uphold information integrity by avoiding the spread of misinformation.
10. Consciously work to maximize benefits and minimize harm in all technological applications.

This personalized code of ethics aims to encompass key principles of responsible and ethical computing, emphasizing the protection of individuals and society, respect for privacy and intellectual property, responsible resource use, transparency, fairness, continuous learning, and a commitment to beneficial technological development.

**Answers will vary but may include the ten commandments below.**

- 1. Thou shalt not use a computer to harm other people.**
- 2. Thou shalt not interfere with other people's computer work.**
- 3. Thou shalt not snoop around in other people's computer files.**
- 4. Thou shalt not use a computer to steal.**
- 5. Thou shalt not use a computer to bear false witness.**
- 6. Thou shalt not copy or use proprietary software for which you have not paid (without permission).**
- 7. Thou shalt not use other people's computer resources without authorization or proper compensation.**
- 8. Thou shalt not appropriate other people's intellectual output.**
- 9. Thou shalt think about the social consequences of the program you are writing or the system you are designing.**
- 10. Thou shalt always use a computer in ways that ensure consideration and respect for other humans**

## Reflection Questions

1. Is there a Cyber Security incident you remember where the company acted ethically or the company acted unethically? Explain.

One notable cybersecurity incident is the Equifax data breach that occurred in 2017. Equifax, a major credit reporting agency, acted unethically by failing to adequately protect sensitive personal information, including Social Security numbers, birth dates, and addresses of approximately 147 million people.

The breach was attributed to a vulnerability in their system that the company had failed to patch despite knowing about it for months. Additionally, Equifax's response to the breach was criticized; they initially provided insufficient information to affected individuals and attempted to limit their liability by including

arbitration clauses in their responses. This incident highlights the ethical responsibility companies have to safeguard personal data and to respond transparently and responsibly when breaches occur.

**Answers will vary but may include Equifax data breach.**

2. What is a weakness or drawback to Utilitarian Ethics?

A significant weakness of Utilitarian Ethics is its potential disregard for individual rights. While this approach focuses on maximizing overall happiness, it can justify actions that harm or sacrifice the well-being of individuals or minority groups if such actions result in a greater benefit for the majority. This can lead to situations where ethical principles, such as justice and fairness, are compromised, as the needs and rights of individuals may be overlooked in favor of achieving a perceived greater good.

**Answers will vary but may include the lack of fundamental individual rights.**

3. Based on your list of code of ethics, which is the most challenging item in your list to implement?

The most challenging item to implement from my code of ethics is determining when to notify the public of a security incident. This decision often involves various factors, including legal requirements, potential impact on the organization's reputation, and the urgency of the threat. Striking the right balance between transparency and protecting the organization can be complex, especially when the timing of the notification could affect how the information is received or lead to panic among affected individuals. Additionally, external pressures and potential liabilities can complicate the ethical obligation to inform the public promptly.

**Answers will vary but may include those items that are out of the control of the cybersecurity specialist. Example when to notify the public of a security incident.**