

Reading Week Report on Ethical Frameworks

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1 Cisco's Ethical Framework

Founded in 1984, Cisco has exponentially grown into a highly competitive tech mecca of the world, employing over 70,000 people with a revenue of 50 billion USD. [1] Due to the magnitude of the company, Cisco systems has had to build and enforce a rigorous ethical framework to decrease the firms susceptibility to misconduct. The CSR global report focuses on the, 'Culture of Integrity,' being the backbone to a flourishing company. [2] Cisco has implemented a COBC (Code Of Business Conduct) that 'employees are required to certify compliance with each year.' Along with Ciscos own Suppliers Ethics Policy, Cisco have adopted RBAs (Responsible Business Alliance) Supplier Code of Conduct. 'The Code sets baseline expectations that promote trust and underpin our direct supply chain relationship.'

The 2018 COBC in summary is a 'reflection of Ciscos values and a toolkit that you should reference in making business decisions and resolving many issues that you may encounter.' [3] It focuses on seven key areas:

1. 'I am Ethical'- Highlights the importance of questioning every daily decision you make; ensuring that it is in compliance with the law, Ciscos own policy, and your own integrity as a human being. By installing this as a key message to all employees greatly reduces the risk of violations to the code being made initially.
2. 'I share my concerns' - Focuses on employees duty of care for each other; encouraging people to be on the lookout for violations of company policy that could harm Cisco and its reputation. 'We also encourage you to come forward with situations that just dont feel right.' Cisco have also installed a 24hour, multilingual Ethics line to anyone uncomfortable voicing concerns to their HR representative. This allows for a communal atmosphere in the company leaving little margin for corruption.
3. 'I respect others' - This policy is self explanatory, primarily fixating on their zero tolerance of harassment, bullying, discrimination, and narcotics on premises. 'Im treated with respect and dignity. In return, I recognise my duty to act responsibly, be a team player and treat others with respect and dignity. Valuing everyone strengthens our collaboration and productivity.'
4. 'I use resources responsibly' - Cisco expects all employees to be resourcefully aware, ensuring waste and 'abuse' is minimised. Although Cisco approves the companies assets for 'limited personal use,' They do explicitly state that 'Your use of the companys resources is not private.' One policy I found particularly of interest was asset use for Political purposes: 'Company contributions No assets, including time at work, use of Cisco premises or equipment, or direct monetary payments, may be contributed to a political candidate, political action committee, or ballot measure without the written permission of the Vice President of Worldwide Government Affairs.' - Potentially a new policy instated after the controversial election?
5. 'I avoid conflict of interests' - Highlights that Cisco employees must separate their personal views from the firms, always striving to do their duty

by the company. Examples include, 'Investment in a private company that is a Cisco competitor, partner, customer, supplier or potential candidate for acquisition'

6. 'Gifts, travel, and entertainment policy' - Cisco understand the importance of building lifelong relationships within the industry, however demands the utmost transparency in all benefits received and given, keeping all connections appropriate and ethical. 'Approval required if value is above 250 USD or difficult to determine.' (for all received gifts.)
7. 'I am trusted with data' - Cisco uses their 3 keys terms, 'Trustworthy, transparent, and accountable' to 'protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of confidential, personal, and proprietary information, whether it belongs to Cisco, our employees, our customers, vendors, partners, or others with whom we do business.'
8. 'I am accurate and ethical with finances' - This policy again falls under respect of others and responsible resource use, however Cisco have chosen to hone in on this topic thoroughly, highlighting that 'All Cisco employees are personally responsible for any company related funds that they control.' Hence failing to do so honestly will result in disciplinary action. Cisco also focuses on employees with financial reporting responsibilities, ensuring they all do right by the company, and not just trying to make their 'numbers work.'

Cisco also holds annual ethics, anti corruption and human rights training allowing all of their employees to be fully educated in Ciscos ethical framework and the consequences of violation of that act.

2 Application to the Killer Robot case study

Multiple incidents that resulted in the death of Bart Matthews could have easily been avoided if Cisco's ethical framework was implemented correctly. [4]

1. Samuels lifting code from the PACKSTAT 1-2-3 not only is an illegal copyright act, but also violates Ciscos policy, as Samuels explicitly told Yardley in an email. It was Yardleys duty as a Cisco employee to do right by the company and voice Samuel's obvious ignorance to company policy.
2. Reynolds violated the conflict of interests policy when he fired Anderson for challenging her superiors decision on employing the waterfall method. As the policy states, all employees must do right by the company, including accepting that just because you are superior, doesnt mean you are correct.
3. Johnson breached all policies regarding respect of employees when he pressured Yardley into creating fraudulent software tests. Again under Ciscos policies this would never have occurred. Cisco have an ethical network available for all employees to use, allowing concerns to be taken above a specific manager in the company.
4. The ethical finances policy was breached when Johnson hired 20 new employees onto the project. Although there is nothing illegal about this

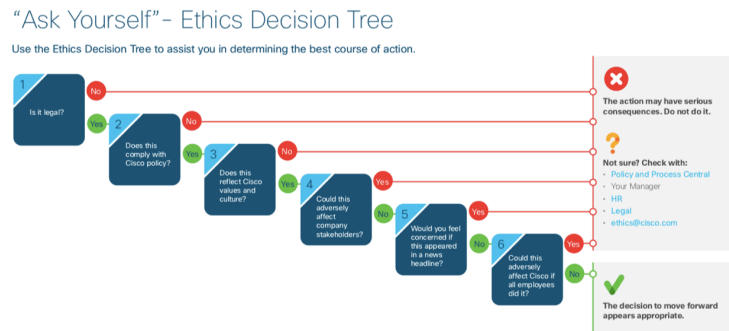


Figure 1: Cisco's Ethics Decision Tree [5]

action, it did undermine and abuse the companies resources, potentially putting stress on other sectors. Under Ciscos policy this fund would have not been approved and hence the money could have been put to better use, perhaps investing into a safer, more compatible GUI.

5. I believe also Matthews acted unethically when he clearly knew he had not received enough training to operate the robot independently. Although the lack of training was not his fault, Matthews should have made the ethical decision to not use the robot. Looking at Cisco's ethical decision tree, (figure 1) his behaviour clearly violates majority of these assumptions, and he should have acted appropriately on this ideology.

3 Comparison to other Ethical Frameworks

I believe that Cisco's ethical framework is extensive enough to cover all the problems that rose from the killer robot case, however to support my claim I will compare it to numerous other frameworks to show Cisco is the ideal candidate.

3.1 IEEE-CS/ACM

Their ethical framework is very similar to Cisco's, using the 7/8 principles as a guide for all their employees. IEEE cover: Public, Client And Employer, Product, Judgement, Management, Profession, Colleagues, and Self- Each policy being very specific to a computer scientist/engineer. For example details of debugging and testing defined software are mentioned under product. I don't feel IEEE has put enough focus on data protection - This is a huge problem today with the public feeling like they are constantly being violated of their privacy and I don't feel the issue was thoroughly handled in the framework. Cisco had a whole section about being trustworthy with data, making it the better option. [6]

3.2 Apple

Apple have undergone a massive, positive ethical shift since Tim Cook became the new CEO. Certainly Apple's previous framework was a feeble attempt and in turn became a wormhole for unethical behaviour to occur. (Fox Con) Apple now focuses on three key areas; People, Planet, and Progress and has made attempts to reconcile it's reputation. However, Apple still has no bullet pointed ethical code of conduct which does leave a lot of grey areas and concerns whether their ethical framework would be extensive enough to have prevented Matthew's death. [7]

3.3 Dell

Dell again have a framework akin to Cisco's; with the emphasis on Dell being a company of communication - they encourage people to speak out about issues to improve the overall atmosphere and success of the company. Dell also have an established ethics line and ethics training for all employees. Compared to Cisco, I think Dell has been slightly too generalised in terms of technical errors. I understand Dell has a wider range of employees in its grasp hence a more 'skim the surface' type of framework but I feel they should have compiled a designated section for programmers/engineers to allow for a succinct and more applicable framework. [8]

3.4 Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure

In terms of frameworks, this one is certainly exhaustive although I understand why as AI cars are a new venture, hence every precaution must be taken. This framework is very different from the others as it is built around the ethics that must be programmed into the cars software instead of how employees of the sector should behave. For this reason the framework is somewhat challenging to compare to Cisco's as well as applying it to the Killer Robot case. For example, principle 7 states that human life must take priority over all else hence in the event of a collision, 'the software must be programmed to accept damage to property or animals.' This is a very valid ethical principle however does not connect to the robot case study. [9]

3.5 IBM

IBM is another tech giant, successfully running for over a century. Companies like these have so much experience in the business world that their ethical framework's are not to be questioned. It is extremely extensive yet still succinct and covers every area of their own backs. One point I did find of interest is their scepticism towards AI and how it goes against IBM's ethical values. - A very interesting view for a tech company to hold when AI is the 'predetermined future.' Perhaps they have already seen the consequences? Compared to Cisco however, I feel IBM is it's biggest competitor and I would feel comfortable implementing either to the killer robot case, yielding a result of no casualties. [10]

4 Conclusion and Referencing

4.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, I do feel Cisco (with IBM a close second) has the best ethical framework to apply to the case study. Although it is the best option, there is no perfect framework hence always room for improvement.

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