

## IT 134 – SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

### Project on Ethical Dilemmas in Information Technology

**Objective:** The objective of this activity is to help students explore and understand the social and professional practices in information technology by discussing ethical dilemmas.

**Instructions:** Read the following case studies and discuss your solutions to the given ethical dilemmas by answering the guide questions per case study.

**Case Study 1:** An e-commerce company has been collecting data on its customers' browsing and purchasing habits for years. They recently discovered that they have been inadvertently collecting sensitive personal information such as medical history, sexual orientation, and political beliefs. They have not obtained explicit consent from their customers to collect this information, nor have they disclosed the collection of this information in their privacy policy. The company's CEO is torn between the legal and ethical responsibilities to disclose the data breach and the potential harm that may come to the company and its customers if the information is made public.

#### **Guide Questions:**

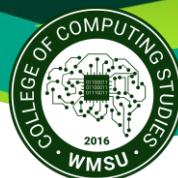
1. What ethical issues are raised in this case study?
2. What are the legal requirements for data privacy in this situation?
3. What potential harm could happen to the company and its customers if the information is made public?
4. What are the potential consequences of not disclosing the data breach?
5. What are the potential consequences of disclosing the data breach?
6. What would be the most ethical course of action in this situation?

#### **Case Study 2: Social Media Monitoring**

A large tech company monitors the social media accounts of its employees to ensure they are not sharing company information or making negative comments about the company. One employee discovers their account is being monitored without their knowledge and is uncomfortable with the invasion of privacy.

#### **Guide Questions:**

1. What ethical issues are raised in this case study?
2. Does the company have the right to monitor employees' social media accounts?
3. What is the employee's responsibility to the company regarding sharing information or making negative comments?



4. Should the company inform employees that their social media accounts are being monitored?
5. What are the potential consequences of monitoring employees' social media accounts without their knowledge?

### **Case Study 3: Autonomous Vehicles**

A self-driving car company is testing its vehicles on public roads. During one test, the car malfunctions and causes an accident that results in serious injuries to a pedestrian. The company is facing legal and ethical dilemmas in deciding how to respond to the accident.

#### **Guide Questions:**

1. What ethical issues are raised in this case study?
2. What legal responsibilities does the self-driving car company have?
3. Who is responsible for the accident, the car, or the company?
4. Should the company continue testing self-driving cars on public roads?
5. What are the potential consequences of self-driving cars on public safety?

### **Case Study 4: Bias in AI**

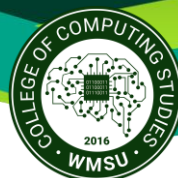
A company has developed an AI-powered hiring tool that uses algorithms to screen job applicants. The company discovers that the tool is biased against female candidates and candidates of certain ethnicities. The company is faced with a dilemma in deciding whether to continue using the tool or discontinue its use and potentially face a loss in revenue.

#### **Guide Questions:**

1. What ethical issues are raised in this case study?
2. What is the impact of biased AI on job applicants and the hiring process?
3. What is the responsibility of the company in addressing bias in its AI tools?
4. Should the company continue using the biased AI tool?
5. What are the potential consequences of using biased AI tools in the hiring process?

### **Case Study 5: Privacy and Security in Healthcare**

A healthcare provider stores patient data on a cloud-based platform that is accessed by doctors and other healthcare professionals. The platform is hacked, and the personal information of patients is stolen. The healthcare provider is faced with a dilemma in deciding how to respond to the data breach.



### **Guide Questions:**

1. What ethical issues are raised in this case study?
2. What legal responsibilities does the healthcare provider have?
3. What is the impact of the data breach on patient privacy?
4. Should the healthcare provider inform patients of the data breach?
5. What measures should the healthcare provider take to prevent future data breaches?

### **Case Study 6: Intellectual Property Rights**

A software company has developed a new application that uses technology patented by another company. The software company is faced with a dilemma in deciding whether to license the technology from the other company or risk a patent infringement lawsuit.

### **Guide Questions:**

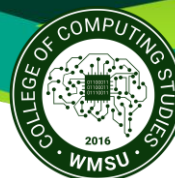
1. What ethical issues are raised in this case study?
2. What are the legal responsibilities of the software company?
3. What is the impact of patent infringement on innovation and competition?
4. Should the software company license the technology or risk a lawsuit?
5. What measures should be taken to prevent patent infringement in the tech industry?

### **Case Study 7: Responsible Use of Technology**

An employee at a tech company creates a software program that can be used to break into computer systems. The employee is torn between the potential financial gain from selling the program and the ethical and legal implications of creating such a tool.

### **Guide Questions:**

1. What ethical issues are raised in this case study?
2. What legal responsibilities does the employee have?
3. What is the impact of creating a tool that can be used to break into computer systems?
4. Should the employee sell the software program or report it to their employer or law enforcement?
5. What measures should be taken to prevent the creation and sale of harmful technology?



### **Case Study 8: Access to Technology**

A school district provides students with laptops for remote learning during the pandemic. However, some students do not have access to reliable internet at home and are unable to participate in online classes or complete assignments. The school district is faced with a dilemma in deciding how to ensure all students have access to technology and the Internet.

#### **Guide Questions:**

1. What ethical issues are raised in this case study?
2. What is the impact of the digital divide on students' education?
3. What responsibility does the school district have to ensure all students have access to technology and the Internet?
4. Should the school district provide internet access to students who do not have it at home?
5. What measures can be taken to bridge the digital divide and provide equitable access to technology for all students?

### **Case Study 9: Artificial Intelligence and Personal Privacy**

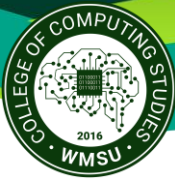
A company created an AI-powered personal assistant that can perform various tasks, such as scheduling appointments and making online purchases. The assistant collects personal information about the user, such as their location and search history. The company is faced with a dilemma in deciding how to balance the benefits of the technology with user privacy concerns.

#### **Guide Questions:**

1. What ethical issues are raised in this case study?
2. What is the impact of collecting personal information on user privacy?
3. What responsibility does the company have to protect user privacy?
4. Should users be given control over what personal information is collected and how it is used?
5. What measures can be taken to balance the benefits of AI technology with user privacy concerns?

### **Case Study 10: Social Responsibility in Technology Companies**

A large tech company is accused of unethical business practices, such as mistreating employees and engaging in monopolistic behavior. The company is facing public backlash and potential legal action. The company is faced with a dilemma in deciding how to respond to the accusations and improve its social responsibility practices.



**Guide Questions:**

1. What ethical issues are raised in this case study?
2. What is the impact of unethical business practices on employees, competitors, and consumers?
3. What responsibility does the tech company have to act in a socially responsible manner?
4. Should the company make changes to its business practices and improve its social responsibility practices?
5. What measures can be taken to encourage tech companies to act in a socially responsible manner?

**Group Members:**

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