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CSE 488

In today's society is beginning to rely more and more on piracy. The reason for this is how the economy is unstable. Being unstable people are relying on stealing things such as intellectual property and neglecting privacy to do so. In the article *Data theft from firms topped a trillion dollars in 2008: study* McAfee estimated "that the global damage from data loss to top one trillion dollars". Though spread over 800 companies that participated in the study it is still a high amount. I will cover what ethical issues that are believed to encompass the people in the article. Then I will lead into what codes of ethics that each one is violating.

In the article *Data theft from firms topped a trillion dollars in 2008: study* according to the study that was conducted there is a high increase in cyber crimes. These cyber criminals let on that they are ethical egoist. Ethical egoism, which can also be stated just as egoism, is a form of ethics that is defined as actions that are good for ones self-interest. It is a normative that is shown by "cyber moles" or the laymen term criminal or criminal syndicates. These organized groups are looking for their self-interest because they see crime as a "business". They perceive themselves as a "business" because they are only doing what they need to do to maximize their profit by stealing intellectual property and personal information. They also display a form of situational ethics as well. Situational ethics is simply defined as "a system of ethics by which acts are judged within their contexts instead of by categorical principles". These

organized crime groups present this form of ethics due to the fact they feel it is morally correct

for the actions they are conducting due to benefiting themselves. These actions become

normative when seen within these groups because doing so this makes them happy. It gives

them pleasure because they are able to profit from these actions.

The for-profit corporations that are mentioned in the article show a form of a

Utilitarianism form of ethics. This is a form of ethics that is defined as wanting to maximize

happiness with the minimization of pain. Having hundreds of companies participating in a

survey they attempt to display themselves as utilitarian. The for-profit corporations as a whole

attempt to display themselves in this manner, though the for-profit corporations are truly egoist.

The reason for their existence is to make profit. If there is any property damages such as

intellectual property being stolen the corporation does not look out for the consumer due to

raising prices on their products to compensate for their losses.

The employees of the for-profit corporations are seen as egoist because they are trying to

benefit themselves for the current economic situation. Everyone in a that is in an employed

environment will always want to climb the ladder even in cases where they take unethical actions

to do so. It was also stated in the article that, "an increasing number of financially challenged

employees are using their corporate data access to steal vital information". This is a question of

situational ethics due to the current global economy being distorted. Since the employees of

these for-profit corporations are receiving pay cuts or are unable to receive promotions they seek

ways to gain some sort of compensation from other corporations. By violating ethical codes

instantiated by IEEE and ACM also contracts that are agreed upon by the employee when first being employed, they are considered criminals. For-profit corporations that give a compensation to these criminals are in violation themselves by both the IEEE and ACM code of ethics.

In order to continue one must understand what intellectual property is interpreted as. Intellectual property is defined as "property that results from original creative thought, as patents, copyright material, and trademarks." This means whenever someone creates something from his or her own mind is considered intellectual property. For example, whenever a person creates a type of document, for example such as this paper, would be considered intellectual property. This neglects the medium that it is created on or created. As when using other ideas that are intertwined within any intellectual property they must be cited and created for. Such as when a programmer creates a certain program on any given machine that is from their creative mind, it is considered intellectual property. Though questions arise when a creative mind works for a for-profit corporation or any corporation because then who does the intellectual property belong to. There is a sense of entitlement for the person who creates the property, though to legal agreements it is made for the corporation and hence must be kept private. This is why people who work for these corporations share their product ideas as long as they receive some sort of compensation though neglecting ethical imperatives such as conflict of interest.

For the employees that steal from their employers and then trade intellectual property for compensation violate the second imperative of the IEEE code of ethics. It states that one must "avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest whenever possible, and to disclose them to affected

parties when they do exist". This imperative is seen easily when a employee is trying to receive compensation for trading intellectual property, which then leads to IEEE's imperative number six and number seven. The seventh imperative states that one must "...credit properly the contributions of others". If the employee were to exchange trade secrets for compensation the employee nor the other corporation no longer is contributing to the original creative mind that created the intellectual property. Since ideas are being traded the ideas can be subjected to malicious actions. This then leads to the ninth imperative in the IEEE code of ethics.

This also applies to the unemployed. which may have worked for any given corporation for-profit or not. By taking ideas that they may or may not have worked on during the time they were employed, if they were to trade intellectual property for compensation they would be considered as criminals. Another example of unethical conduct would be if one were to download pirated software because it would break the contractual agreement for the end users.

The employers also subject themselves to common imperatives that are broken by the for-profit corporations. One imperative that is contradicted is section 1.2 of the ACM code of ethics which is not to cause harm to others. When for-profit corporations follow the imperatives they are subjecting themselves to lacking immediate control over the market. If simply offering bribes or compensations for intellectual property they gain a way to be ahead in the market. By violating these imperatives they are "harming", section 1.1 ACM, other for-profit corporations by putting them out of business by taking their intellectual property and changing it for their

own expense. This disrespects the copyrights of given intellectual property because it is illegally distributed without consent from its original creative mind which violates section 1.5 and 1.6 of the ACM code of ethics. If for-profit corporation were to trade for intellectual property in an illegal manner this would cause harm to the consumer population. This would cause the company who was vandalized to raise prices for their products to compensate for the loss of profit. Also, if the company who gains the intellectual property illegally it may not be fully documented and there could later be consequences with either the software or hardware that was distributed.

The "cyber moles" and organized crime groups violate all aspects from both the IEEE and the ACM code of ethics but follow their own. The main issue with cyber moles is that of violating privacy policies. Privacy is defined as "The state of being free from public attention", such as trade secrets or account information. As stated in the article *Data theft from firms topped a trillion dollars in 2008: study* they use a technique to infiltrate into ones computer called "phishing" and the term used for CEO's is called "whaling". These techniques are referred as "[using] deceptive emails or other online ruses that trick people into revealing passwords, account numbers, or other sensitive information". By stealing this information for these groups for their own gain violates some imperatives from both IEEE and ACM, though use of information would and could violate more imperatives based upon how the stolen information is used.

In conclusion reviewing different ethical normative s as well as imperatives the

overall process for for-profit corporations is crooked. The CIO's, CEO's, employees and the unemployed violate both the IEEE and ACM codes of ethics and therefore even if they violate these codes in order to be happy they are ultimately causing harm to society. I believe that in order for losses to go down the economy would have to change and then it would be reflected in a positive manner.

Work Cited

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