

Professional Ethics in Computing: Seminar 2

Consider this scenario carefully:-

Abby & Bella are interns working at the same desk for a software company. Each is given **a separate programming task**. One afternoon Abby looks across to Bella and spots that she has been able to download proprietary software source code from an external software provider and is using **chunks of code** to complete her programming task.

Later, all the interns, including Abby, Bella and 4 others, meet to discuss progress with their line manager Cassy. During the meeting the line manager praises Bella in particular for completing her task successfully and earlier than planned. At this point, Abby announces to Cassy, in the meeting, that she saw Bella copying and using code from proprietary software, and that Bella's actions were wrong and unfair. Bella defends herself by saying that the code was available on the internet and using it is not wrong, so long as the work gets done, and Abby is jealous since **she was not able to complete her task on time**.

Please discuss these questions:-

- (1) Who are the agents in this scenario?
- (2) Did Abby do anything wrong?
- (3) What do the ethical theories you have learned in Lecture 2 tell us about this, if anything?

Consider:

- Deontological ethics (categorical imperative);
- Utilitarianism;
- Contractarianism;
- Ethics of caring.