

1. The main ethical question or questions faced by the main character:
 - a. Should Beerz sell customer location data?
 - i. Does the company's need for profit outweigh the need for privacy?
 - ii. Would the benefits outweigh the risks / is this actually in public interest, or is it just capitalism?
 - b. Is selling old user data ethical AT ALL when users did not agree to have that information stored in the first place?
 - c. Can the company responsibly handle sensitive user data as-is? If the data is being sent through GET requests, that doesn't sound too secure to me. Then there's the whole problem with "anonymous" location data. As we discussed in class, location data can never truly be anonymized.
 - d. Is raising ethical questions within the company worth my job? It could also come with significant social tension.
2. For each stakeholder (or category of stakeholders) in the scenario, identify the stakeholder's relevant rights.
 - a. Me, CEO, CTO, and also Brad (the annoying guy): basic necessities (food, housing etc) which are dependent on job/money, career fulfillment and happiness, right to freedom of speech and ideas, right to privacy
 - b. Users: rights to privacy, safety of data collected
3. List any information missing from the scenario that you would like to have to help you make better choices.
 - a. Is there another mechanism for the company to make this money (advertisements, charging a fee for advanced versions of the app, etc)? Could these methods plausibly make a similar amount of money as selling data?
 - b. Is this money necessary for the continuation of the company, or is it simply because of corporate greed?
 - c. To whom will the company sell this data? How will they use it and what are the moral implications of those uses?
 - d. Does everyone in the company share the same no-surveillance-capitalism beliefs that the CTO does? Is this promise part of advertising or other public-facing statements about the company, i.e. do users have reason to believe the company will follow through on privacy?
 - e. Will the company choose to sell only newly collected data, or will it sell old data stored in GET requests?
 - f. If the company decides to sell the data, will users be explicitly aware?

4. Possible actions (in order of increasing assertiveness) and likely consequences:
- a. Go along with whatever the CEO decides and quietly work on making current / future practices more secure (like those GET requests)
 - i. I will keep my job and possibly increase my chance of getting promoted and having more sway down the line. Would it be too late to make meaningful changes then? Is Brad going to get in my way of fixing current issues in order to fuel his boot-licking ideas?
 - b. Go to the CTO and ask her to do something
 - i. I already know she agrees with me that this situation is less than ideal. Banding together could make us braver and our argument stronger. However, if I ask her to go in on standing against this, I'm putting her job at risk as well as mine.
 - c. Speak up in the meetings about the ethical dilemmas at hand
 - i. The CTO would likely support my ideas, but the CEO and Brad may disagree. This may undermine my credibility in their eyes in the future. Alternatively, this may be enough to prompt the CEO to change direction on his own.
 - d. Advocate strongly against selling user data
 - i. Flipping out during the next meeting will certainly get across that I am passionate about user-privacy and against surveillance capitalism. However, when I get angry, I am likely to not communicate as effectively. This may shift the focus of the problem from the ethical dilemmas to my hatred of Brad. Regardless of my interpersonal issues with Brad, speaking directly against the visions of the CEO may cost me my job. Then I won't be able to afford food for me or my bearded dragon, and Sandy deserves better than that.
 - e. Outright refuse to code programs that threaten user privacy
 - i. This is similar to quitting, but it ensures that my bosses have to fire me, which ensures that they have to give me severance pay. Additionally, it shows my dedication to the company while expressing my opinions about the importance of user privacy. A bold statement like this will force the CEO to weigh whether this venture is worth losing his top developer (me), which might be enough to sway his opinions.
 - f. Quit
 - i. By quitting, I am definitely making a statement to the company and am refusing to participate in data collection that goes against my morals. However, the company will likely just hire another programmer to fill my job who does not have the same moral qualms as me.
 - g. Go public and start a smear campaign
 - i. If I continue to work at Beerz, this campaign will have to be done secretly. This will allow me to keep my job as long as I retain my own anonymity. Hopefully public pressure will force the CEO to change tactics. One downside of this approach is that running a nationwide smear campaign against the company I currently work for and in fact like working for will make me nauseous, and keeping the secret will eat me alive.
 - ii. This smear campaign is also an option if I quit or am fired from Beerz. This would hopefully prompt the public to get involved in the user privacy debate. This also prevents morally abandoning the issue, which may happen if I were to quit or get fired. However, it may be harder for me to find my next job, as I become known for slandering my old company.

5. Relevant guidance from the [ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct](#):

- a. Section 1.2 states that computing professionals should avoid harm, which includes the disclosure of unnecessary information. It says that this should be done “unless there is a compelling ethical reason to do otherwise”; money is not a compelling ethical reason.
- b. Section 1.3 asks that they be honest and trustworthy, that there is “an additional obligation to report any signs of system risks that might result in harm”. It suggests blowing the whistle if this harm is significant but that misguided reporting can be harmful itself, so it is important to evaluate the individual situation.
- c. Section 1.6 says that computing professionals should “only use personal information for legitimate ends and without violating the rights of individuals and groups”. This involves taking necessary precautions to anonymize data, ensure accurate data, and ensure security. It also emphasizes the importance of “transparent policies” with users on how their data is being used and informed consent for their data to be shared.
- d. Finally, Section 3.1 states that company leadership should “Ensure that the public good is the central concern during all professional computing work”. In this case, profit is not relevant to the public good, but privacy is.
- e. All of these will support my arguments against selling user data.

6. Responses to our questions in part a, and our recommended action

- a. Beerz should not sell customer location data. The need for profit in no way outweighs the ethical importance of data and user privacy.
- b. It is not at all ethical to sell old user data. The users did not consent to this use of their personal information when they downloaded the app. This data was collected when the company planned to immediately discard all user data after use; this choice to sell the data goes against the original intentions and promises of the company.
- c. The company does not seem well-equipped to safely and responsibly handle sensitive user data in the current state. The GET requests thing makes me extremely nervous, and that was brought up as a mere afterthought, months after the code was released for use. It seems that prioritizing security practices for features already in use would be a much better use of coder/developer resources at the moment.
- d. The importance of bringing up the ethical dilemmas at hand is worth the risks to my job that may come with it. Additionally, I believe these risks are small to begin with. As a phenomenal developer, my skills are more in demand, and I could get a job elsewhere. However, Beerz would have to work quite hard to replace me. Furthermore, they would be even less likely to fire both me and our CTO. For this reason, the best course of action will be to go to the CTO first, discuss our options and tactics, and band together. Then we will raise these ethical concerns at the meeting together. If it comes to a debate, we will be ready to defend our side, but it may be enough to simply raise the questions.