

Ethics in Operating Systems

The Ethical Dilemma of Surveillance Software

CSCE 311 - Operating Systems

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[Photo of ethical debate concept]

Introduction

Modern OSs include telemetry and tracking tools.

These raise ethical concerns around privacy, consent, and transparency.

Ethical frameworks are needed to balance innovation and user rights.

[Photo of privacy policy document]

Surveillance in OSs

Examples: Windows, macOS, Android.

Collect diagnostic, usage, and sometimes biometric data.

Users often lack true consent or control over data collection.

[Photo of a surveillance camera]

ACM Code of Ethics Perspective

- Avoid harm.
- Respect privacy.
- Ensure transparency and societal benefit.

Telemetry often undermines user autonomy.

[Photo of ACM logo]

Christian Ethical View

- Mark 12:31: Love your neighbor as yourself.
- Proverbs 11:1: Honest and fair systems delight the Lord.
- Stewardship: Developers must act as ethical stewards of powerful tools.

[Photo of a Bible with moral keywords]

Professional Responsibility

- Informed, optional, and reversible consent is crucial.
- EULAs hide key info; opt-outs often disable features.
- Ethics demand user-first, privacy-respecting design.

[Photo representing digital consent form]

Proposed Solutions

1. Transparency by design.
2. Minimum necessary data collection.
3. Third-party audits.
4. Developer ethics training.

[Photo of a checklist for ethical practices]

Conclusion

Surveillance in OSs poses real ethical challenges.

Respect for user dignity must guide development.

Combine professional and Christian ethics for better systems.

[Photo of green checkmark and justice symbol]

References

- ACM Code of Ethics (2018)
- The Holy Bible (ESV)
- Forbes: Telemetry in Windows 10 (2019)
- EFF: Surveillance Self-Defense (2023)

[Photo symbolizing reference materials or citations]