

Scenario #2

The main ethical dilemma in this scenario is whether or not it is okay to sell people's data without their consent, seeing as they want to sell old data. However, the data is anonymous so it won't be linked to the person it corresponds to, so would that be okay to sell? Under current regulations data can legally be sold as long as it prioritizes transparency, user consent, and compliance with data protection laws. The company usually makes the users aware of this through privacy policies or cookie banners. So the company has the rights to see the users data as long as the users are aware that their data could potentially be sold, but I do feel it's kind of slimy to put that information in privacy policies as almost no one ever reads them, but then again the info is there its up to the user if they actually pay attention to it or not. To make a better decision on what to do in this scenario I would need to see how selling data not only benefits the company but how it affects the amount of users that the app receives. If people become aware that their data is being sold, even anonymously, it could lead to less people using the app and then negatively affect the company even though selling data could lead to potential gains. Then again if the users are made aware of their data being potentially sold through a privacy policy which they probably won't read, then the users may never become aware that their data is being sold for company profit. I also want to know how it is possible that we can get users' past data if we had resolved ourselves to discarding data once we were done with it. This could mean that we weren't honest with our users and actually never discarded their data and could always get a hold of it.

I think the best possible course of action is to remind the people you are working with of the original ideology of the company, and how that ideology of not giving in to “surveillance capitalism” and that what sets our company apart from others is that we don’t use other people for our benefit and instead are completely transparent while ensuring our users privacy and protection. By doing this we keep our loyal users and they can be certain that we aren’t just using them but instead they are using us, the way it should be. The other course of action that we could take, that I would not recommend, is going through with selling the data. This could lead to loyal users leaving the platform as they don’t want their personal data to be used for other purposes and leading to company losses instead of gains. Selling the data also goes against the original ideology of the company and would not set us apart from any other company that is just out to maximize profit regardless of their users well being instead of being a company that prioritizes their users.

In regards to the ACM code of ethics and professional conduct we can start by looking at 1.3 and 1.6, be honest and trustworthy, and respect privacy. If we implement the privacy policy along with selling data it is technically honest, but it is a slimy way to make users aware that their data is being sold so it can lead to the company not being seen as trustworthy. Respecting a users privacy could be seen as selling the users data anonymously, however an even better way to protect a users privacy is to not sell their data at all. 3.1 should also be discussed, “Ensure that the public good is the central concern during all professional computing work”. If we begin to sell users data then the public good, our users, would not be the central concern, our companies profit would then be the main concern.

So in conclusion I believe that the best course of action would be to maintain user privacy and not sell their data and actually discard their data once we are done using it for their benefit. We need to maintain the ideology we had when we created the company and put the users above our own gains. We need to be ethical by being honest, trustworthy, respectful of our users' privacy, and ensure that the public good is the center focus. All of this can be achieved if we don't sell our users information for our own personal gain and make sure we actually get rid of the data we used once we are done using it for the users gain.