Malik Stewart

Dr. Sessions

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Ethics Paper

Within the Computer Science Community the internet has made the sharing of code widespread. This comes with many advantages such as us learning from one another, writing code as a community and collaborating freely across the globe. While these are all positives, many programmers do not understand the limitations of what can and cannot be used freely in their projects. Some assume they can use anything as long as they are not profiting from it while others believe as long as credit is given to the creator, nothing is wrong. Overall programmers are unaware of their rights. What if there are circumstances where one feels that their code was used in a way that was unethical or morally wrong? Three ways to address this issue is to educate yourself on the laws of copyrights and how it relates to computer science, learn the different types of license agreements and determine which one you think is fair, and to understand what your obligations are as a programmer.

Learning the laws of copyrights will help address this issue. The definition of copyright is the exclusive legal right and protection of the owners intellectual property. This means that the creator of any intellectual property such as music, writings, code, videos, etc has ownership and control over what is done with it.

Learning the different types of licence agreements can also address this issue. A license agreement is a very broad term and can vary depending on the type of intellectual property one is

licensing. In the computer science department when using open source code or planning to make your code open source you should be aware of the different types of license agreements. Some license agreements can contain many conditions that can contain close to none or none at all. The type of license agreement I will choose for my code is the GNU AGPLv3. I chose this license because it gives me credit as the creator of the source code which follows the ACM code of ethics in section 1.5. Also it allows for others the works of those who use my work in the same way due to them having to use the same license this allows the code to be used in various ways and possibly improve upon many times over. It also discloses the original source code if anyone needs it and requires the users of the code to state the changes which can not only be useful to others but also the original creator of the source code. The conditions of this license is not only extremely fair to the creators but also extremely beneficial to the advancement of programmers and the learning environment in the computer science community. Based on these circumstances I could have more than one license, but the license I chose includes all the prior licenses conditions so there is no need.

My obligations as a programmer is to add to the programming community by giving fair usage of my code while also giving proper credits and abiding by the rights of other programs when using their code. It is my duty to consider and make sure whatever open source code I use that I am using that code to create something that abides by the code of ethics by respecting privacy in section 1.6 and don't discriminate in section 1.4. If I am using code from the internet in class, at work, or making money from it, it does matter. It matters to alway give credit to the original creators of the source code. As long you are abiding by the conditions of the license agreement that comes with that code then everything is fine.

Work Cited

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