Webshop ethics analysis

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# What is ethics in software engineering?

In software development one important thing to always keep in mind is that you are making something that will be used by a large quantity of people. Because of this ethics regarding software engineering are focused on the privacy and safety of the software’s users. You do still make a product so practises that would you an unfair advantage such as buying out retailers are deemed unethical. Lastly something to keep in mind is the impact your software will have on the job market. In recent developments in software have resulted in replacing human workers with machines. Thus, it is important to keep in mind that a program might result in the firing of multiple people (*Continuing Education For Professional Engineers PDH-PRO   » Ethics in Software Engineering: A Key Component Of Professional Practice*, z.d.).

# Why is ethics important in software engineering?

If no regard is placed on ethics while creating a program there is nothing to stop a program from harming its users. Private information could end up being leaked or people with health complications could be unable to use a program created to make life more convenient.

# What do you have to do as a software engineer to address ethical aspects in your work?

I must stay away from making unethical decisions as much as possible as well as knowing when I am making an unethical decision and the potential harm I may be doing by making that compromise (*Continuing Education For Professional Engineers PDH-PRO   » Ethics in Software Engineering: A Key Component Of Professional Practice*, z.d.).

# How do you know that your ethical considerations match with those of other software engineers?

I can make sure my decisions are ethical by upholding to three main standards. These standards are:

* Respect user privacy: Make sure your software is safe to use by consumers.
* Promote fairness: Your program should not supress the opportunities of others unless necessary.
* Benefit society: A program should not make certain aspects of life more difficult or tedious to do.

# Which ethical aspects play a role in your project?

Because people might stop going to stores in the real world less store clerks could end up being hired. My program actively takes away those jobs because it is not necessary for a person to stand in a store when people are often going to be ordering items from the comfort of their own homes. However, a web shop will also create jobs as the ordered products will not arrive at the customers door on their own. The consumer’s safety is also playing a role in my project as I need to make sure the information of my customers is safe. I am also obligated not to use any of the customer’s information to make more money by for example selling it to other companies. Lastly, I must not use my program to scam my customers.

# Do you foresee ethical conflicts caused by your software? What kind of?

There might be an ethical conflict in my program when it comes down to security of a customer’s password. Because a password needs to be known by the web shop to verify a person is who they say they are a set password needs to be saved in a database.

# Can you do something to avoid or minimize these conflicts?

I will need to investigate ways of obfuscating passwords, so it is not saved as plain text but something unintelligible for humans but translatable for a machine. This will not make user information 100% safe as anyone with access to the database and the correct translator could still get access to people’s accounts, but it is one of the best solutions there is.

# Citations

*Continuing Education for Professional Engineers PDH-PRO   » Ethics in Software Engineering: A Key Component of Professional Practice*. (z.d.). <https://pdh-pro.com/pe-resources/ethics-in-software-engineering/#:~:text=Ethics%20in%20software%20engineering%20is,the%20impact%20of%20unethical%20practices>.