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Ethical Issues in Computer Science

Although computer science is one of the most rapidly growing fields of study, there are still several ethical issues being resolved relating to the digital world. One of those issues is the rising threat of identity fraud in the workplace. This paper talks about the afore-mentioned issue and presents possible solutions that a computer scientist could use in order to make his job a safer place to keep confidential employee information.

Possibly the biggest ethical dilemma that I believe I will probably face as a computer scientist is the issue of identity theft. Identity fraud has grown as a significant threat in recent years because of the anonymity the internet can provide. The article “Identity Theft vs. Identity Fraud - What's the Difference?” states that, “Technology now enables criminals to commit identity theft on a broad scale — hacking into business and government computer systems, for instance, to steal the personal information of millions of people at once. The hackers can then use the stolen personal information, such as full names, birthdates, and Social Security numbers, to commit their crimes” (LifeLock). Although the internet is a great way to share and store information, criminals can steal valuable information from people by hacking into it. Unfortunately, identity theft is one of the most common forms of theft in the United States presently. The article “Facts + Statistics: Identity theft and cybercrime” states that, “Criminals are engaging in complex identity fraud schemes that are leaving record numbers of victims in their wake. The amount stolen hit $16.8 billion last year as 30 percent of U.S. consumers were notified of a data breach last year, an increase of 12 percent from 2016. For the first time, more Social Security numbers were exposed than credit card numbers” (Insurance Information Institute). This act of stealing is blatantly condemned by God in Exodus 20 when he says, “You shall not steal” (ESV, Ex. 20:15). Therefore, any Christian computer scientist should have the intention of doing what they can to prevent digital identity fraud from occurring in their businesses and homes.

As a manager of cybersecurity in a major business, a person would have easy access to other employees’ personal information. With such easy access would come the temptation to use it for his own benefit. In order to avoid making such a mistake, that person could take several precautions. Such a temptation could be avoided simply by reading Scripture. In addition to Exodus 20, there are several other verses that warn against the danger of theft. For example, Proverbs 10:2 says, “Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death” (ESV, Prov 10:2). If that person still felt tempted, he could have somebody monitor his work and act as a liability. That way, the tempted individual could not have the ability to steal private information in secret.

If I ever become a manager of cybersecurity for a major company or get any job relating to the monitoring of a company’s database, I personally feel very prepared if I was presented with the opportunity to steal a fellow employee’s private information. Since I have adopted the Christian morals my parents taught me, I recognize that stealing in any form is both disgraceful to God and detrimental to others, not to mention the severe consequences identity theft would bring. As a result, I presently do not have any desire to steal someone else’s private information. Under the circumstance that I was tempted to do so in the future, I would probably apply the methods I mentioned before in order to overcome those wrong desires. Reading Scripture is a good way for me to remember God’s truth and make right decisions. In addition, having somebody monitor my online activity while at work would be a great precaution if I ever felt persuaded to commit identity theft. Taking into consideration the previous techniques for avoiding temptation, I think I am well prepared if I ever feel tempted to commit identity theft in the future.

In conclusion, identity theft is a serious crime that computer scientists are subject to being tempted to do on a regular basis. The widespread influence of this dilemma displays how important it is for computer scientists to prevent such things from occurring within their own facilities. To prevent falling for such temptations, Christian workers in the cybersecurity field need to consistently refer to the Word of God in order to focus on truth and gain the strength to overcome temptation. Also, asking management to monitor their work would aid in preventing employees from illegally accessing private information about other employees from the business’s database. I believe that by utilizing these methods, other employees and I would be able to prevent a large portion of identity theft from inside the workplace and encourage the application of integrity in our fellow workers.

Works Cited

“Identity Theft vs. Identity Fraud – What’s the Difference?” *LifeLock,* <https://www.lifelock.com/learn-identity-theft-resources-identity-theft-vs-identity-fraud-whats-the-difference.html>.

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*The Bible*. English Standard Version, Crossway Bibles, 2016.