

Systems Theory Quinton Thuet

For this Ethical Discussion I chose to write about the idea of “A retailer selling your personal information to others for profit”. For this problem I found 6 socio-technical systems that could be affected if this situation were to occur. These systems are hardware, software, people, procedures, laws and regulations, and data / data structures. All of these socio-technical systems are pervasive throughout all of software engineering and must be focused on to make sure no ethical / moral problems arise due to negligence / incompetence. Within this prompt I was able to find 4 possible ethical quandaries that could arise due to negligence or incompetence. These questions are on Data use, Confidentiality, Disclosure, and Stolen Data.

First of on data use, for this prompt we were not given two bits of data that are important: first off What data is collected, and Who is it being sold to for profit. Depending on the data being collected the receiver of the data then has an ethical situation themselves on how to act upon the data, the seller also has the ethical issue of making sure the company they are selling to is not going to use this information in ways that defy the ethics of the company. Both of these situations affect the customers of the store (people) as well as the procedures needed to ensure the recipient of the data is trustworthy and up to standard. Depending on the data being shared (for example medical data) this could also lead to having to read up on laws and regulations to make sure the company is up to code and not breaking any laws. Next on the list of possible ethical quandaries we have the idea of confidentiality. With a lot of retail experiences we expect some level of confidentiality as customers which depending on the info provided to the buyer we might not get that in this situation. As well as this there are also some laws that explicitly state which data can and can not be shared with others. Another thing is to sell this information ethically there must be some disclosure to the customer as to what is being sold, in some states this is required. This also goes into how you tell them they are giving up their rights because some companies have unclear TOS which muddy the disclosure so the consumer doesn't know. Finally if the hardware / software are not kept up to standard or the security procedures for storing data are not kept up to snuff then, people's data could get stolen before it is sold leading to an ethical problem.