**Social Engineering Ethics**

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One of my favorite shows is called, “White Collar” which streamed for 5 seasons, with Matt Bomer and Tim Dekay, because it one man who has to work under the FBI while resisting his urge to social engineer and con people into giving him expensive art. It also has the view of the FBI agent handler needing to watch him so that he can prevent any sort of bad social engineering.

Imagine there is large stack of money behind a desk that belongs to a very rich man who got his money in ripping poor people off out of their homes and it can easily fit into your backpack. All you have to do is sweet talk the secretary into getting you a glass of water for you to quickly grab it and walk away. Do you sweet talk to secretary? Or do you move on even though that man probably doesn’t that money that he has? Following through with that plan would require social engineering. So that begs the question: Should people have to serve prison time for social engineering? Even though the man has a lot of money and he didn’t come by this money in a good way, it is never good to steal from someone no matter the circumstances, so yes people should have to serve prison time engaging in illegal actions involved with social engineering.

The first reason why people should serve time for social engineering is for the public view of security in their lives. Our daily lives are governed by how we feel about what is going on it the world. Think about how some people respond to having an Alexa in their home and how they are scared of getting spied on, people are scared of that. So now if people left their house and every time they walked by someone, was working inside a coffee shop, or waiting in line, they have to be worried about someone cloning their phone device because there is no actual repercussion if someone does that. This could cause the world to live in even more anxiety then it already does which could cause less productivity. It would also overall cause panic in the world which could lead to a less friendly world which is obviously terrible.

The second reason why I believe people should serve time for social engineering is because of the wide variety of things potential social engineers have access to which may cause certain things to shut down. For example, there is a video game called League of Legends. Many people will create accounts and then find as many people as they can and then send discord invites over chats which would allow these people to find out you email, and discord profile so they could continue to contact you outside of the league world. This problem actually used to be so big that they had to shut down all of the social part of league for a little while. This caused a lot of issues because one of the best parts of league was connecting with your friends and you couldn’t do that. While yes this was just a video game this can happen in similar circumstances on many different platforms that don’t just include video games. A more recent case is when the Corona Virus hit the United States and it caused everybody to go on lockdown and have everything online. Zoom became extremely popular, but this allowed for social engineers to badly affect these meetings. They engineers would join these calls and post links inside of them and some people would click on them thinking it is from someone else who is trusted by their company. The link would take them to a sketchy website or cause some sort of download which would make the users email, passwords, banking information, and many other things known to these terrible people. This caused zoom to have to work tirelessly to fix this issue and the people who did this either faced no repercussions or just a little. Overall, events like these cause programs to lose out on certain things because these social engineers aren’t punished as much for their actions.

The third and final reason why I believe people should not use social engineering in a bad way is because, the people that are capable of social engineering, are actually smart individuals and they could be using their skills to help other people. Just look at Kevin David Mitnick born August 6, 1963 in Van Nuys, California, U.S. This man was born at a prime time for social engineering but he used his abilities against society and not for it. Now he is a security consultant for fortune 500 companies and even the FBI. If only this man decided at the beginning of his life to help others instead of attacking them, he could have made and even better impact on the security world. Also, the reason why he turned his life around was because he was in prison, therefore, the prison actually convinced him to make the world a better place with his skills.

Overall, the negative use of social engineering should be met with the hard hammer of justice which would disincentivize others from using their abilities for terrible purposes, and instead use it for the good of the security world. People with these skills should try to be like the Kevin Mitnick now instead of the one in the 1980’s and 1990’s who was only hurting people with his skills.