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Lab - Create Your Personal Code of Ethical Conduct

Objectives

Part 1: Research Approaches to Ethical Decision Making

Part 2: Research Code of Ethics

Part 3: Develop Your Own Personal Code of Ethical Conduct

Background / Scenario

When confronted with an ethical dilemma, what do you consider when making a decision?

Suppose you find a new USB 3.0 flash drive in the computer lab, what would you do? A student in your class says they found a site on the internet that has all of the class exams and quizzes with answers, what would you do?

Working in Cybersecurity is not always about stopping cyber attacks. As a Cybersecurity specialist, your organization may entrust you with some of the most sensitive data. As a result, you will be confronted with challenging ethical dilemmas, which may not have an easy or clear answer. For example, when researching a security breach, are the personal devices of employees and their personal content included?

The focus of this lab is to research approaches or perspectives for ethical decision making. Next, you will research code of ethics and finally you will create your own personal code of ethical conduct.

Required Resources

- PC or mobile device with Internet access

Instructions

Part 1: Research Approaches to Ethical Decision Making

There are several approaches or perspectives on Ethical Decision Making, including Utilitarian ethics, the Rights approach and the Common Good approach. Other ethical decision models include the Fairness or Justice approach as well as the Virtue approach.

In this part, you will research each ethical decision model or framework and then formulate the underlying principle from that approach.

Use an internet browser to research approaches to ethical decision making.

Step 1: Research Utilitarian ethics

Define the underlying principle for the Utilitarian Ethics approach.

The underlying principle of **Utilitarian Ethics** is the **"greatest happiness principle"** or **"principle of utility."** This approach asserts that the morally right action is the one that maximizes overall happiness or well-being while minimizing suffering. In other words, an action is considered ethically right if it results in the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

Answers will vary but should include on maximizing the greatest good for the most people.

Step 2: Research the Rights approach to ethical decision making.

Define the underlying principle for the Rights approach to ethical decision making.

The underlying principle of the **Rights Approach** to ethical decision-making is that individuals have inherent rights that should be respected and protected in any decision or action. These rights are typically understood as moral entitlements that every person has simply by virtue of being human, regardless of the consequences of actions.

The Rights Approach is rooted in **deontological ethics**, especially the philosophy of **Immanuel Kant**, who emphasized the intrinsic worth of individuals and the importance of treating people as ends in themselves, not merely as means to an end.

Answers will vary but should include the fundamental rights of the individual and how we live our lives, as well as respecting others and how they live their lives.

Step 3: Research the Common Good approach to ethical decision making.

Define the underlying principle for the Common Good approach to ethical decision making.

The underlying principle of the **Common Good Approach** to ethical decision-making is that ethical actions should contribute to the well-being of the community as a whole, emphasizing the importance of shared values and resources that benefit everyone. This approach focuses on promoting conditions that enable individuals and groups to thrive collectively rather than solely pursuing individual interests.

This approach is rooted in **communitarian philosophy**, which emphasizes collective action and mutual support to achieve societal well-being, and is often linked to principles of justice and fairness within a community.

Answers will vary but should include the focus of community. Individuals should pursue the values and goals shared by other members of the community.

Step 4: Research the Fairness or Justice approach to ethical decision making.

Define the underlying principle for the Fairness or Justice approach to ethical decision making.

The underlying principle of the **Fairness or Justice Approach** to ethical decision-making is that individuals should be treated equally and fairly, with a focus on distributing benefits and burdens in a way that is just and impartial. This approach emphasizes fairness in how people are treated, decisions are made, and resources are allocated, ensuring that no one is unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged.

This approach draws on the ideas of philosophers like **Aristotle**, who advocated for treating equals equally and unequals unequally according to relevant differences, and **John Rawls**, who developed the concept of "justice as fairness" with principles like the "veil of ignorance" to ensure impartiality in decision-making.

Answers will vary but should include the fairness of the outcome. Is the outcome equal for everyone? The outcome should not impose favoritism nor discrimination.

Part 2: Research Code of Ethics

Most organizations develop their own code of ethics. Developed by management, this document is based on values and principles to promote the company business with honesty and integrity.

In this part, you will research computer code of ethics and cybersecurity code of ethics.

Use an internet browser to research code of ethics.

Based on your research, create a list of at least ten items. The list should be sequential from most important to least important.

1. **Protect Privacy** – Ensure the confidentiality of sensitive personal and organizational data.
2. **Do No Harm** – Avoid actions that can harm individuals, organizations, or the public.

3. **Maintain Integrity** – Be honest and truthful in all professional activities.
4. **Protect Systems and Networks** – Ensure the security of systems and networks against unauthorized access or breaches.
5. **Respect Intellectual Property** – Do not use or distribute copyrighted software or data without permission.
6. **Avoid Conflicts of Interest** – Avoid situations that may lead to bias or personal gain at the expense of professional responsibilities.
7. **Be Transparent** – Disclose known security risks and vulnerabilities promptly and accurately.
8. **Avoid Misuse of Privileges** – Do not exploit your access to systems and data for unauthorized purposes.
9. **Comply with Laws and Regulations** – Follow all relevant legal and regulatory requirements, including cybersecurity laws.
10. **Commit to Continuous Improvement** – Continuously update skills and knowledge to adapt to evolving security threats.

Answers will vary, but may include some of the items below:

1. Information stored on the computer should be treated as seriously as written or spoken words.
2. Respect the privacy of others.
3. Creation and usage of malware is illegal and must not be practiced.
4. Should not prevent others from accessing public information.
5. Overwhelming otherâ€™s system with unwanted information is unethical.
6. Sending inappropriate messages through email or chat is forbidden.
7. Do no harm with a computer
8. Comply with legal standards
9. Be trustworthy
10. Maintain confidentiality

Part 3: Develop Your Own Personal Code of Ethical Conduct

A code of conduct provides guidelines for acceptable as well as unacceptable specific behaviors.

Based on your research, develop a list of your own personal code of ethical conduct.

Create a code of ethics list of at least ten items. The list should be sequential from most important to least important.

1. Thou shalt act with integrity and honesty in all computing practices.
2. Thou shalt respect the privacy and confidentiality of others information.
3. Thou shalt ensure that all actions taken with technology are legal and ethical.
4. Thou shalt not use technology to cause harm or damage to individuals or systems.
5. Thou shalt protect and preserve the confidentiality of proprietary and sensitive information.
6. Thou shalt seek proper authorization before accessing or using others digital resources.
7. Thou shalt not plagiarize or misuse intellectual property and creations of others.
8. Thou shalt be mindful of the impact of technological decisions on society and the environment.
9. Thou shalt respect and follow guidelines and policies established by organizations and institutions.
10. Thou shalt continuously strive to improve and update one's skills and knowledge in ethical computing.

Answers will vary but may include the ten commandments below.

1. Thou shalt not use a computer to harm other people.
2. Thou shalt not interfere with other people's computer work.
3. Thou shalt not snoop around in other people's computer files.
4. Thou shalt not use a computer to steal.
5. Thou shalt not use a computer to bear false witness.
6. Thou shalt not copy or use proprietary software for which you have not paid (without permission).
7. Thou shalt not use other people's computer resources without authorization or proper compensation.
8. Thou shalt not appropriate other people's intellectual output.
9. Thou shalt think about the social consequences of the program you are writing or the system you are designing.
10. Thou shalt always use a computer in ways that ensure consideration and respect for other humans

Reflection Questions

1. Is there a Cyber Security incident you remember where the company acted ethically or the company acted un-ethically? Explain.

   Company: Microsoft

   Incident: WannaCry Ransomware Attack (2017)

   Explanation: When the WannaCry ransomware attack affected numerous organizations globally, Microsoft acted ethically by taking several steps to address the crisis. They released security patches for unsupported versions of Windows, such as Windows XP, to help mitigate the threat. This move was particularly notable because it demonstrated a commitment to public safety and responsibility, even though these systems were no longer officially supported. By making these patches available, Microsoft helped prevent further damage and provided a way for affected organizations to protect themselves.

   Answers will vary but may include Equifax data breach.

2. What is a weakness or drawback to Utilitarian Ethics?

   Difficulty in Measuring Happiness: Quantifying and comparing the happiness or well-being of different individuals can be challenging. Different people have different values and preferences, making it hard to measure and aggregate happiness in a meaningful way.

   Ignoring Individual Rights: Utilitarianism often prioritizes the greater good over individual rights. This can lead to scenarios where the rights or well-being of a minority are sacrificed for the benefit of the majority, potentially justifying actions that may be considered morally unacceptable, such as discrimination or exploitation.

   Predicting Consequences: Utilitarianism requires predicting the outcomes of actions to determine their morality. However, predicting the future consequences of actions is often uncertain and complex, which can lead to unintended negative outcomes.

   Potential for Justifying Harm: In some cases, utilitarian ethics might justify harmful actions if they lead to a perceived greater overall benefit. For example, it could theoretically justify actions like lying or violating privacy if it leads to a greater overall positive outcome, which may conflict with other ethical principles.

   Short-Term vs. Long-Term Consequences: Utilitarianism can struggle with balancing short-term benefits against long-term consequences. Immediate actions might seem beneficial but could have negative long-term effects that are not immediately apparent.

   Equity and Fairness Concerns: Utilitarianism may not account for the fair distribution of benefits and harms. Even if an action maximizes overall happiness, it might still lead to unfair treatment of certain individuals or groups.

   Answers will vary but may include the lack of fundamental individual rights.

3. Based on your list of code of ethics, which is the most challenging item in your list to implement?

   9. Thou shalt be mindful of the impact of technological decisions on society and the environment.

   Reasons for Difficulty:

   1. **Complexity of Impact Assessment:** Evaluating the broader societal and environmental impacts of technological decisions can be complex and require extensive analysis. This includes understanding potential long-term consequences, unintended side effects, and the cumulative effects on various stakeholders.
   2. **Balancing Competing Interests:** Technological advancements often involve trade-offs between different interests, such as innovation versus privacy, convenience versus security, or economic growth versus environmental sustainability. Making decisions that account for all these factors can be challenging.
   3. **Evolving Technologies:** The rapid pace of technological change means that the impacts of new technologies may not be fully understood at the time of their development or implementation. This can make it difficult to anticipate and address potential negative effects.
   4. **Diverse Stakeholder Perspectives:** Different stakeholders may have conflicting views on what constitutes a positive or negative impact. What benefits one group might harm another, and balancing these perspectives requires careful consideration and negotiation.
   5. **Ethical Trade-Offs:** Sometimes, technological decisions might have to prioritize certain ethical principles over others. For example, advancing technology might improve efficiency but also raise ethical concerns about privacy or job displacement.

Answers will vary but may include those items that are out of the control of the cybersecurity specialist. Example when to notify the public of a security incident.