

Introduction

After reading through and contributing to the collaborative discussion posts from the other students and receiving feedback from Mario and Thomas on my initial post I have learnt a lot about the importance of ethics in IT and the role it plays to ensure there has been no wrongdoing. I believe gaining insights from my peers is invaluable as they have a lot more experience than me and were able to provide insights that I had not previously considered.

In my initial post I explored the ethical, legal and social implications from the Malware Disruption case study provided by ACM (ACM, 2018). The case study looked at the mistakes made by Rouge Services and how they were complicit with Cyber-criminals using their web hosting services to perform malware attacks. Due to the laws surrounding malware varying from country to country having a global consensus on the ethical considerations helps to ensure some form of consistency even if there are not legally binding.

Mario's Response

Mario suggested that I referenced how the ACM Code of Ethics (ACM, 2021) and the BCS Code of Conduct (BCS, 2022) are aligned as there is a lot of overlap between the two. When reading the posts of the other students I noticed that some of the other students pointed how the specific sections of the ACM Code of Ethics are related to the BCS Code of Conduct. I thought this explanation added a lot of value to their post as it showed how while the ethical guidelines vary between organisations the general principles are still the same. I agree with Mario that this explanation would have improved the quality of my initial post.

Thomas's Response

Thomas suggested that I considered the ethical implications of all those involved in the case study not just Rouge services. The reason I didn't do this in my initial post was due to the suggested word count. Even though I believe my reasoning for not adding this was valid I agree with Thomas that my post could have benefited from the ethical concerns for those who built the worm that forcibly took Rouge Services offline as it would have demonstrated my ability to look at the bigger picture by considering the legal, ethical and social concerns for everyone involved. For example, while the intentions of the worm were to prevent any further harm ultimately the worm caused harm to Rouges Services more legitimate clients thereby breaking ethical principles related to unintentional harm and destruction of data even though they had good intentions. To quote Kristin Hannah, a number one New York Times bestselling author "It's not intentions that matter, It's actions".

Conclusion

While the ethical guidelines provided by ACM (ACM, 2021) and BCS (BCS, 2022) are good idea in theory as they are a useful tool in educating people on what it means to be ethical the usefulness of them can be brought into question as they are not enforceable as they are merely guidelines and not laws as such individuals and organisations can choose to ignore them.

References

ACM (2018). *Case: Malware Disruption* - ACM Ethics. Available at: <https://ethics.acm.org/code-of-ethics/using-the-code/case-malware-disruption/> [Accessed 14 November 2024].

ACM. (2021) ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Available from: <https://www.acm.org> [Accessed 14 November 2024].

BCS. (2022) BCS Code of Conduct. Available from: <https://www.bcs.org/media/2211/bcs-code-of-conduct.pdf> [Accessed 14 November 2024]