

Planning my Growth and Development from a Code of Ethics and Vital Soft Skills

I have come up with a small personal code of ethics that is definitely subject to change throughout my life but could be used as a good starting point. This will provide me with some helpful guidelines to follow while on my life-long career journey. I have come up with three main ideas that I should follow that all come from ideas throughout the length of this course but also my own past experiences. The main golden rule that I have come up with is to try preventing harm and causing gain / happiness. The next idea to follow is that I must hold myself accountable and accept the repercussions for what they are. I cannot passing those off to someone else and make them take the blame. The third and final idea for my code of ethics is to have continuous learning and understanding with the ones I work with. This one would ultimately be different based on my work environment / line of work.

Now for the first idea of my code of ethics, I want to prevent harm and cause the greatest amount of benefit. To explain this further, I mean that I can't simply weigh my actions from only my direct benefit and harm or of those in my technical field. Rather, I think that I need to weigh the effects widespread throughout the company or agency that I am working for. For example, let's say I want to set up a new X to help protect Y. I should try to weigh the financial burdens on our business or how urgent this is over other issues the company is dealing with. I should be asking the questions like what will this help protect, what are the repercussions if we don't do this, and how much are the costs on the company, workers, and consumers. Then, trying to answer these questions from all sorts of perspectives including my own or a purely financial view. This way I am trying to be objective and reduce my own biases in my actions.

Now, the main reason I have this as part of my code of ethics stems straight from why I want to work in cybersecurity in the first place and said in the very first paper. I want to help people, and I think of the cybersecurity field as a place where I can do that. In ways like helping prevent the theft of people's information. However, the little life of fantasy in my head has been crumbled up and thrown away. This is in part thanks to what seems like almost every lecture in some way talking about how important it seems that we as cyber professionals can communicate with those that are not in IT or security. We have the expertise to fix the issues but need to get others to provide the resources and opportunity to use said expertise. This means that I can't simply use my own technical field to think out the harm and benefits, but must think of the effect of the company as a whole and the consumers as well. On top of all this, I have kind of resonated with utilitarianism this entire semester from the beginning. I think of it as a generally useful way to value and consider my decisions as ethical, so it seems natural to have it as my first spot golden rule in my code of ethics.

For the second idea of my code of ethics, I will hold myself accountable for my actions and accept their repercussions. To expand this further, I would add that I also should be able to justify my

own actions before I take them. That way I can defend myself and my thinking. This idea builds off of the previous as a way to handle my ideas of harm and benefit to be more of an objective case that others can understand. I think a good example of this would be if I said “No” to introducing a security technology that could help prevent X. But if X happened, that would look very bad on my part. I would recognize that I am the one at fault, but would also try to explain why I think we didn’t need the new technology. This links back to my first code where ultimately I would have weighed the options before me and would think of it objectively to explain my actions.

The main reasoning I have my second part in my code of ethics comes me valuing my own integrity quite highly, and this is also seems to held by the ISC2’s Code of Ethics, which says for me to “act honorably, honestly, justly, responsibly, and legally” in their ethics canons. So holding myself accountable seems like the right thing for me to do to keep my integrity high. As well as what was said in the Forbes article over influencing people, doing this and owning up to my mistakes allows me to build up trust and build relationships. Also, my idea of ensuring my actions are justifiable comes from our lecture over breaches, it was talked about having to defend your actions and decisions in court, which seems terrifying. So like before, if I said “No” in that case and the breach happens because of me, I may have to defend my actions and even explain it to lawyers and in court as to why I thought at the time my actions and final decision was the right choice. It think that this act of holding myself accountable by following this rule helps me build trust with other but also within myself. As well, it could hopefully save my a—behind.

The third and final idea in my code of ethics is that I will try to continuously learn. This is meant in a way of technical understanding of security and technology / software that is used. However, also in ways to understand others and the not so technological parts of the business. I am going to be working with advanced technology and both people that understand it and those that don’t. That way I need to be able to work and communicate with all kinds of people. Ultimately, I am trying to expand the sets of knowledge to new fields while also developing my understanding of these others better. This works as a sort of backbone to my other two codes of ethics by building up knowledge that would be used to accurately defend myself and weigh my actions from multiple angles.

My main reasoning behind this code comes from the never ending idea in my life that learning never ends. This has been coming from my parents since I was a child to even this very course at ISU. In fact, I think every semester that I have been at ISU I’ve been told that employers want interns or long term employees that want to continue learning. I was even reminded again during our soft skills lecture and in the ISACA’s Code of Professional Ethics when it says that I should “maintain competency in [my] respective fields”. So it is clear that this idea is very important not just to the security line of work but to almost all other fields of work. What is even better though is that I love learning new information, as long as it interests me. Just about everything I seem to be interested in though can relate back to cyber security is someway. I remember from lecture there was a chart going other sciences can cybersecurity draw from like cognitive psychology, politics, and engineering/technical. These are all

ideas I would love to learn about, well except it's missing military history from ancient Macedonia to the Cold War.

Just following my personal code of ethics isn't really going to succeed with career goals. I also need to identify soft skills that I need to develop and improve upon to help my professional development. We went over many soft skills in our course lectures and in some articles we were told to read. Now, all of these skills are incredibly useful in their own right, I think some are much more useful for others in the cybersecurity line of work. There are two big skills that I stick out that would think are vital to my success in the field if I want to succeed. The first is my ability of non-technical communications i.e. talking across the aisle to those that are not in IT or cybersecurity and wouldn't understand the techno speak. Finally, the other skill would be my ability to build & maintain trust and credibility, which is vital if I want to get others to take me seriously and value my opinions.

The first skill of being able to understand and communicate seems like the most vital soft skill that I or any real security worker could need to get anything done. From our lecture on soft skills, it was talked about how cyber professionals have to explain complicated ambiguous issues to those that have the power to help fix them. So that means I as a worker in the field may need to convince others from different departments that issues X and Y are very important and need to be fixed. However, I need resources to help correct it. If I were to speak techno jargon with the people that can help, then I might as well try speaking in binary to them. It wouldn't work to help get them to understand why X and Y are so important. That's why I need to learn their way of speaking and understand the issues they go through and care about, so I can communicate with the department. That way I describe and support the issue in a way that makes sense to the people I am meeting with.

The other skill of building trust and credibility seems incredibly necessary as well, since if people don't trust my words and actions or think I lack credibility then they won't take what I say seriously or will look down on me. This goes along with something from our soft skills lecture, we are talking about building trust and relationships. Along with that, it was said how without trust we are fighting uphill to get others on our side, and with only one screw up can ruin your reputation for a long time. So without sufficient trust and credibility, I will slow my ability to grow and achieve in the cyber field, but also means that I cannot adequately do my job as well like assisting those outside of my field. I do think my code of ethics would help me here. Like I said, in Forbes on being an influencer, owning up to my mistakes and being held accountable will help me build trust with others and relieve some tension.

Those were some of the important soft skills that will be useful in my professional growth. However, just about all soft skills are incredibly useful. So what soft skills do I think I would struggle with, then? The big one that I would say I am almost always doomed to fail is being able to treat myself

right. I always over exasperate my own ability and stretch myself too thin. As well, I would say I'm introverted which I think makes building up relationships harder for those that are more extroverted.

The smaller soft skills that I think I will like be struggling with come from trying to build relationships. I think this comes from an introverted nature, but I tend to stick with a few people rather than being friends and open with many people. This is not to say I am quiet or a loner, but I just think my way of doing things in a work environment may not be the easiest to help building trust or credibility with others as it is bound to be slow. Like I said before, these ideas are vital to the functioning of my career, so I need to work on fixing my ways. I would think with being like this I may be easier to write off or be defined by assumptions on me, like what was said with building credibility in our soft skills lecture.

Now for the worst issue that I think I deal with, I would say that fail to treat myself correctly at time because I always try to overstep my actual abilities. This comes down to being not able to accurately manage how much time it takes to do certain activities and always taking on too many things that I want to do. So guess what it comes down to is me miss prioritizing activities and not setting boundaries with myself. These are vital skills for the cyber field like from our soft skills lecture where it said "Prioritization is survival in infosec" and "Having consistent boundaries builds trust and stability". However, I just think that if I am struggling with these kinds of ideas internally and within college life, then it would be fair to think that I could struggle in the workforce with them both externally and internally. These skills are good things I should try to develop better start now. In fact, I have actually fixed up prioritization skills over this semester quite a bit having hit a big slump from the first midterms and falling behind a week in some classes. I caught back up getting the needed work done first and not get lost with other things I wanted to do like unneeded programming.

Over the course of this paper, I have gone over my personal code of ethics that would be of use for my own growth and development, some soft skills that I think are extremely vital to my career, and some other soft skills that I need to work and develop on over the course of my growth. Hopefully, this will be useful and guide me to some success in my career. As well, feel free to leave a message about my ideas, if you can, and what do you think of as other useful codes or skills that I should add?

(Thank you for the wonderful this semester, Ben. - Not added to the word count.)