**Case Study**

Leslie is a cybersecurity consultant approached by a new startup, BioHack, which plans to develop a revolutionary but controversial new consumer product: a subdermal implant that will broadcast customers’ personally identifying information within a 10-foot range, using strong encryption that can only be read and decrypted by intended receivers using special BioHack- designed mobile scanning devices.

Users will be able to choose what kind of information they broadcast, but two primary applications will be developed and marketed initially: the first will broadcast credit card data enabling the user to make purchases with the wave of a hand.

The second will broadcast medical data that can notify emergency first responders of the users’ allergies, medical conditions, and current medications.

The proprietary techniques that BioHack has developed for this device are highly advanced and must be tightly secured in order for the company’s future to be viable.

However, BioHack’s founders tell Leslie that they cannot presently afford to hire a dedicated in-house cybersecurity team, though they fully intend to put one in place before the product goes to market.

They also tell Leslie that their security budget is limited due to the immense costs of product design and prototype testing, so they ask her to recommend FOSS (free open-source software) solutions for their security apparatus and seek other cost-saving measures for getting the most out of their security budget.

They also tell her that they cannot afford her full consulting fee, so they offer instead to pay her a more modest fee, plus a considerable number of shares of their company stock.

1. What risks of ethically significant harm are involved in this case? Who could be harmed if Leslie makes poor choices in this situation, and how? What potential benefits to others should she consider in thinking about BioHack’s proposal?
2. Beyond the specific harms noted in your answer to 1.1, what are some ethical concerns that Leslie should have about the proposed arrangement with BioHack? Are there any ethical ‘red flags’ she should notice?
3. What are three questions that Leslie should ask about the ethics of her involvement with BioHack before deciding whether to accept them as clients (and if so, on what terms?)
4. Can you think of any specific conditions that Leslie should ask BioHack’s founders to agree to before she can ethically accept this arrangement? What are they?

Source: An Introduction to Cybersecurity EthicsShannon Vallor, Ph.D.  
William J. Rewak, S.J.