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Ethics Paper

A big issue that I see that will be in my field of work is hacking. The reason I see this as a big problem is because it violates a few ethical codes and moral codes but at the same time it can be something that brings benefit to people and the world. Take for instance, the United States of America hacking Russia. The US federal government pays people to hack into the Russian government and public facilities as they have done to us, hacking pipelines, electrical grids, etc.¹ I do believe it violates different moral codes like in the Bible where it says, “Thou shalt not steal.”² In a sense you are stealing from both the Russian government and the people of Russia. The reason you are taking from the government is self-explanatory as you are destroying and tampering with the systems that they have put in place using their own money. The reason it is stealing from the Russian people is the fact that you are making their lives harder and driving up the prices for gas, if you hacked the pipelines, electricity, if you hacked the power grids. You are taking their money since the people must pay for their necessities. The problem is at the same time you are trying to damper and hinder the war machine of the nation. This in turn can help save lives of both the attackers and defenders of the war. Another problem with this dilemma is the fact that you cannot openly come out and say, “yes, I hacked them” because it can cause

¹ (Patteson, 2022)

² Exodus 20:15, KJV

another war or other implications that might turn out to be worse than what has already happened. This violates another of the ten commandments in which God has Moses write down on the stone, “thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. [sic]”³ Hacking anybody also violates the US law code in multiple sections, “(4) knowingly and with intent to defraud, accesses a protected computer without authorization, or exceeds authorized access, and by means of such conduct furthers the intended fraud and obtains anything of value... (5)(A) knowingly causes the transmission of a program, information, code, or command, and as a result of such conduct, intentionally causes damage without authorization, to a protected computer; (B) intentionally accesses a protected computer without authorization, and as a result of such conduct, recklessly causes damage; or intentionally accesses a protected computer without authorization, and as a result of such conduct, causes damage and loss.”⁴ This means that hacking anybody is a federal offense by the US government even if the government tells you to. It also is in violation of the IEEE code of ethics, “to avoid unlawful conduct in professional activities, and to reject bribery in all its forms;”⁵ which specifically speaks about unlawful conduct and being paid to do something illegal is in and of itself a form of bribery and violates the second part of that same part.

The course of action that I would suggest and one that I would take myself is to evaluate does the good outweigh the bad. If it does not then there is no reason to do it and are being a hindrance to society and your fellow man. I personally feel ready to make the decision if this happens, though I do not want to be put in that place in the first place. The problem with all of this is that not helping society and possibly stopping an attack is that again you violate the first

³ Exodus 20:16, KJV

⁴ FindLaw.com - 18 U.S.C. § 1030 - U.S. Code - Unannotated Title 18. Crimes and Criminal Procedure § 1030. Fraud and related activity in connection with computers - last updated January 01, 2018 | <https://codes.findlaw.com/us/title-18-crimes-and-criminal-procedure/18-usc-sect-1030.html>

⁵ IEEE Board of Directors. "IEEE Code of Ethics." Code of Ethics. 2020.

part of the IEEE code of ethics which is, “to hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public...”⁶ The reason that you violate this is you are not holding paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public since you could help more people by hacking. Also, there is no way to compromise in this aspect since if you do compromise you get neither of the good effects and only put more blame on yourself and more pain on others. My stance on this is, is that I would hack because I am fine with being blamed for damaging a necessary item if it would benefit more people and be better for society. I will be violating the US law code but I could be saving lives at the same time so I will take my chances.

The similarities and differences of the ethic codes of ACM and IEEE are in my words, ACM’s code of ethics which summarizes to, “Respect a person and his property, be professional in all areas, be a good leader, and follow the rules as stated by the code”.⁷ The second code is IEEE’s, “Uphold the highest level of integrity and professional behavior, treat everyone equally and without bias, be the bigger person, and help your colleagues to follow the rules.”⁸ There are a few differences and similarities in the two codes. The similarities include focus on a singular person, requires a person to be a leader, do not discriminate, be professional when receiving and giving criticism, and ensure everyone follows the code. The differences include IEEE’s does not go into respecting the work required to make new items, IEEE’s is not as specific as ACM’s, and ACM’s does not explicitly state that when a conflict of interests arises to tell the affected parties. The main principle that I will pick from ACM is 1.3 “Be honest and trustworthy.”⁹ This follows Biblical principal of being steadfast and trustworthy. It tells you to be honest and trustworthy

⁶ IEEE Board of Directors. "IEEE Code of Ethics." Code of Ethics. 2020.

⁷ ACM. "ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct." Code of Ethics. 2018.

⁸ IEEE Board of Directors. "IEEE Code of Ethics." Code of Ethics. 2020.

⁹ ACM. "ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct." Code of Ethics. 2018.

which fits perfectly with the verse, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”¹⁰ It also tells you to follow the eight commandment, “Thou shalt not steal.”¹¹ For IEEE’s I will look at II, “To treat all persons fairly and with respect, to not engage in harassment or discrimination, and to avoid injuring others.”¹² Which boils down to do not discriminate or be hurtful to others that are not the same as you. Which follows the Biblical principle of not to discriminate. This is explicitly written in the verse, “So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality,”¹³ since as we are to follow God’s example, we are also to show no partiality.

¹⁰ 2 Timothy 2:15, KJV

¹¹ Exodus 20:15, KJV

¹² IEEE Board of Directors. "IEEE Code of Ethics." Code of Ethics. 2020.

¹³ Acts 10:34, KJV

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