

Ethical Analysis of A Security Related Scenario
Scenario 2

- A. The main ethical dilemma faced by the main character is whether to go along with the CEO's profit making idea and potentially scrape old user location data from archived web log or stay loyal to the original vision of this company as preserving user privacy and not participating in surveillance capitalism.
- B. Rights of each person:
 - a. CEO rights: The CEO has the right and, furthermore, incentive to pursue profit. This would benefit them financially if they have stakes in the company, satisfy the board of directors and let them keep their job, and position themselves for future CEO positions. In the same vein, they want to keep the company successful which would likely concern backlash the company faces and the smooth compliance of workers.
 - b. CTO: The CTO has the right to pursue the financial and long-term success of the company. They also have the right to prioritize the vision of the company, especially to keep workers on board with the trajectory of the project. Additionally, they want to be associated with a good project in terms of its reception and compliance of the team.
 - c. Board of directors: The board of directors has the right to hire or fire the CEO and the motivation to protect the interests of the shareholders.
 - d. Shareholders: The shareholders have the right to choose the board of directors and have their personal and financial interests prioritized. This may extend to people buying in because they believe in the vision of a project.
 - e. Your rights: You have the right to determine whether to make a given contribution to a project. You also have the right to quit, whether announced or not. Like the CTO, you may want to be associated with a financially and receptively successful project and preserve the vision of a project.
 - f. User rights: Users have the right to their privacy being protected. They also have the right to receive the service they are promised.
- C. Necessary info: It would be helpful to know the previous terms of use for Beerz 1.1. This would help determine whether or not it is even legal to scrape and sell old location data. On the same note, we might need clarification on where this company exists. The startup's location will determine what laws it is subject to, helping clarify what we are allowed to do with user data. It would be nice to know the motivations of the shareholders and other workers of the company, specifically how attached they are to the anti-surveillance capitalism values of the company. If there was a strong attachment to these morals, starting to sell data could result in a loss of funding as shareholders pull out and loss of productivity as workers quit.

D. Possible actions:

- a. Option 1: Begin selling data. The result of this outcome depends on the discussed gray areas in part C. It is likely that such an approach would be profitable, pleasing the CEO and shareholders. However, it could also alienate some shareholders and workers, leading to large hiccups in funding and development. This could become a scandal for the company, marking a stain on the resumes of those involved. It could also go relatively unnoticed and the company may be able to recover and tamper down on bad press. Users might object to the change and quit usage, but will likely not notice as surveillance capitalism is an unavoidable fact of life nowadays. In the worst case, the startup may face legal challenges and have its actions found illegal, making things very difficult for everyone involved.
- b. Option 2: Refuse to go along with the idea and quit. You would no longer be associated with any negative consequences of the project, but would also miss out on the funding. In all likelihood, your absence would not stop the startup from pursuing the profit of data selling. Users would still have their privacy arguably infringed on, which you may have been able to prevent by staying with the company.
- c. Option 3: Refuse to go along with the idea and fight it from inside. This could take many forms, you could try to make a moral appeal to the CEO or others involved in the company, you could try to convince them the decision will be unprofitable because it will face pushback, you could convince them it is illegal, you could even organize some sort of general protest in the company to force them from selling data. This could result in you getting fired from the company and the data being sold anyway, in which case you are left in the same camp as option 2. Your arguments may fail to be convincing, in which case you could choose between options 1 and 2. You also may be able to convince the company not to sell data, which would protect the privacy of users but has an opportunity cost for profit and could make you enemies within the startup.
- d. Option 4: Fight the idea from the outside. You quit and then try to organize some sort of protest or strike against the policy of data selling, either rallying those within the company to stop working, telling users of the app to delete it in protest, or summoning legal forces to declare the sale as illegal. The outcome of this failing or succeeding would be whether or not the privacy of users is protected. Regardless, this would be a huge commitment of time and effort on your part. It would earn you some public goodwill for standing up against surveillance capitalism, but earn you many enemies in the startup and the tech world as a whole. You may even be down financially as a result, especially if you pursue legal action and lose.

E. Relevant guidance: The ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct seems to highlight the responsibility of the computer scientist towards the public. Specifically,

section 2.8 clarifies that computing and communication resources should only be accessed in the name of public good. This directly relates to the sale of data, which is not required for the public good and only benefits private interests. Additionally, considering section 1.6, users deserve to be informed about how their data is used and should only have the minimum necessary amount of their data collected partially for safety reasons. This goes against the idea of selling data, which would accumulate more data than necessary and use it for reasons that won't benefit the user.

- F. Recommended action: I think the protagonist in this situation should first take option 3, then taking option 4 if this fails. Consulting the ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, and thinking of general ethical principles, it is unethical and unnecessary to sell location data of users. Shareholders and the CEO can still profit from an app that doesn't sell data, which could fail but would not saddle anyone with moral controversies. The protagonist should try to stop the sale of data, starting inside the company because it may not be necessary to quit in order to fight. If this fails, they should at least alert the public of the change to warn them, fighting as much as they have the power to.