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03/28/2018

Week 9

I think it is important to discuss and rigorously implement ethics discussions in the schooling for computer scientists. However, I feel there are two problems that are not addressed in doing so. The first is that given enough money there is usually someone who will do anything and second many software engineers/developers never go to college. This is hugely contrasting to the fields of physics, chemistry, engineering and so on.

I don't see how teaching ethics in during the education of a student would stop someone from paying any computer scientist an indescribable amount of money to preform unethical data analysis for their own gain. It just doesn't seem like something we can stop unless there are firm laws in place to protect data privacy. Even then, as we've seen recently, some people are above the law, especially once they are part of the government so how do we stop the government from being unethical? Any government, if it so chooses, can and has the power to force citizens into its bidding. The power to do harm exists, it will be used for harm and not help. I think this is an inalienable "rule" that exists for humans. As long as new technology has the potential to do harm that harm will be exercised. For this reason, I think it's important to teach ethical practices to computer scientists but maybe we just lack adequate ethical teachings for almost all people and better ethics education across the board is necessary, not just for computer scientists. We then run into the problem in which a dive into ethics during college is a dive into classes not teaching someone more information regarding their computing ability. How many kids want to take computer science ethics over a software engineering course? If it were me, I'd be taking the course that makes me a better software engineering team member, to learn things like AGILE and SCRUM over computer ethics given the choice.

The next problem with implementing ethics courses for computer science/engineering and software engineering/development degrees is that a huge portion of the field hasn't and won't go to college. You might argue that those won't be the people developing the newest tech and researching the next biggest findings. I'd refute that with the fact that at this day and age anyone can make an app, and for that reason anyone has the potential to make something culturally disruptive. It is these culturally disruptive applications (often times not made from the newest research) that are having a far larger impact on society than the newest research in the computer science field for the time being. With that in mind, society needs to understand when things are going down the wrong rabbit hole and when it's time to reign things in. That's a tall task to ask for but I don't see that happening by merely educating the computer scientists with more ethics classes. Everyone, needs more ethics classes. We need a higher ethical "floor" for society. Until then, the people who are rich and determined will be able to pay for anything that helps them further their exploits regardless of the ethical dilemma involved.