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CS 3001

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Studio Discussion Questions

ACM Section 3.7:

1. What does this really mean?

This excerpt conveys that regardless of how simple or insignificant a computer system may seem, they can still prove to have immense impact on society. This is in large part due to the application of the technology in other fields such as healthcare and government. As such, if even a seemingly small system negatively affects society when used by others, computing organizations are held responsible for ensuring such systems don’t lead to these types of issues.

1. What companies does this apply to?

“Computing organizations” as mentioned in the last response applies to any company that develops or manages computer systems so that they can be used within other contexts, such as developing healthcare software to be used to diagnose patients.

1. What should those companies do differently?

Companies should thoroughly test their technologies for biases and ensure they are accessible to all potential users. As such, they can come up with standards that all their products should pass to meet these criteria.

1. Should those companies be more regulated by the government?

These companies should be more regulated by the government. Government intervention should be used to ensure that incoming technologies would not breach ethical guidelines. However, due diligence would need to be taken to ensure that an over abundance of regulations does not prevent developers from creating new and innovative technology.

ACM Section 1.2

1. Why is it worded this way?

This section of the ACM is worded this way to clearly define what it means for a computer system to harm. By clearly explaining that there are several types of harm of varying severities and that regardless of whether the computer system was designed with malicious intent or not, this policy conveys that companies should make efforts to avoid harm, and highlights what general areas they should put their efforts towards and be aware of when designing technology.

1. If you create a video game that encourages people to play very long hours, is that compatible with 1.2? Why or why not?

If the game encourages users to play long hours by implanting a user interface that rewards addictive behavior, then it would definitely not be compatible with this section of the ACM, as it would be causing harm to their users by perpetuating harmful behaviors such as addiction, ultimately negatively impacting their lives.

1. Can you name software by well-known companies that violates 1.2?

One famous and relevant example of this is Facebook, which has several concerns of its technology facilitating malicious behavior such as cyberbullying, hate speech, and the harassment of marginalized groups. In this way, they have not taken enough steps to adhere to ethical guidelines, and their software violates section 1.2.

Example of a Code of Conduct:

1. How do some of these standards and responsibilities relate to the ACM code and the Software Engineering code of ethics? (QUESTIONS 1 AND 2)

This code closely relates to the ideas of inclusivity and responsibility outlined in the ACM code. This example code of conduct emphasizes that all users should be welcome to safely use their technologies, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, etc. In this way, they adhere to inclusion guidelines. They also pledge to be held responsible to ensuring their platform fosters a positive environment. This applies to both the ACM code and the Software Engineering because these are their official stances towards these ethical issues and its also the approach they take when developing software, to adhere to them via software engineering practices.

1. Who does this code of conduct apply to?

Contributors, maintainers, and anyone that contributes to, manages, or represents the platform.

1. Would you work for them? Why or why not?

I would work for them. Based on their code of conduct, this company greatly prioritizes ethical frameworks for their products, so as someone who works for this company, I would be able to dedicate my time to furthering the adherence to these guidelines.