

Ethics Essay

Technology should be used to positively impact life throughout the world. This is why following a code of ethics is so important. With being an engineer, you need to commit yourself to the highest ethical and professional conduct. Educating yourself on prior ethical issues will help in knowing how to respond to new ethical situations that may arise. Reflecting upon your personal morals may assist you in upholding righteous decisions.

A code of ethics outlines an organization's guidelines in regards to honesty, integrity, and professionalism. Organizations create a code of ethics to list their expectations to all members involved within the organization. Following the ethics of the organization or company you work for is expected, since it instills trust within the customers. When faced with an ethical situation it's important to take it seriously, and consult your company's code of ethics. Using prior experience, good or bad, will help to make a better informed decision this time around. Also, all of the consequences of your end decision need to be accounted for, to ensure your decision is the ethical one. In class we discussed prior ethical situations, and how the given companies handled them. Through these situations I realized that companies don't always uphold their code of ethics, as seen with the Ford Pinto issue. Ford realized prior to shipment that the car was susceptible to catching fire when rear-ended at speeds over 20 miles per hour. They decided to go ahead with the shipments, as they calculated that it would be cheaper to deal with consequences, than it would be for the engineers to actually fix the problem. This unethical decision led to the death of a driver in a Ford Pinto not long after.

The class discussion on ethics seemed pretty united. Everyone upheld the IEEE Code of Ethics when posting their responses to the given ethical situation examples. Although I agreed with all the responses given by the class, there is a possibility that certain situations can bring with it a variety of decisions. One of the ethical situations that I read about involved the police wanting to get Amazon to hand over data recorded by an Amazon Echo that may help with their murder investigation. While I believe consumer privacy is most important, even in police investigations, I could see there being an differing view to mine. When considering how the Virtue of Ethics applies to this situation, I believe that the three most applicable virtues are responsibility, honesty, and integrity. Amazon's responsibility in this situation is to keep consumer privacy as their number one priority. In doing so, consumers will see the company as having integrity and honesty, since they didn't go against their ethics. The other three virtues that don't apply as much in this situation include fidelity, charity, and self-discipline.

Throughout life there will be situations that arise in which an ethical decision will need to be made. Consulting your organization's or company's code of ethics should be your first step in the process, as well as considering prior ethical situations, and how they were handled. All of the consequences that will come as a result of the decision should be considered to help ensure the final decision is the moral one.