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- a. **Dutch scholar Mark Bovens describes accountability, in essence, as the following: when someone is given responsibility or task, they transparently explain and justify their conduct to a forum that judges it against standards. Consequences, positive or negative, may follow based on the judgment. Throughout this project, we acted as investigators to uphold the system of accountability created by the San Francisco lawmakers: listers must register with the city's planning office and put the business license's number on Airbnb's website, Airbnb must display some effort in validating these policy numbers, and third parties can register a complaint of illegal short-term rentals with the city planning office. We used web-scraping to do the latter using several hours of our personal time. Do you think this current system provides adequate accountability around short-term rentals in San Francisco? In your response, describe why you believe the system is adequate or inadequate, using Bovens definition. If you believe the system is inadequate, discuss a possible change in actions required of at least one stakeholder (the San Francisco Planning Office (SFPO), Airbnb hosts/listers, or the developers at Airbnb.com) to improve accountability in this system.**

Based on Bovens' definition of accountability, the current system for regulating short-term rentals in San Francisco needs to be revised. While responsibilities are clearly defined in that hosts must register with the planning office and display policy numbers, the enforcement mechanisms for this need to be stronger. Airbnb's reliance on hosts to use valid policy numbers without verification of whether these numbers are accurate allows for fraud to be easily conducted. Also, SFPO's limited resources to enforce their policy results in an enforcement process that places too much burden on third-party investigators to identify violations. To improve accountability, Airbnb developers should create a system that cross-references policy numbers with SFPO's database before a listing goes live. This would ensure listings meet the standards of the SFPO, enhancing transparency and enabling more consistent enforcement. By shifting some responsibility to Airbnb, the system would better align with Bovens' framework, ensuring conduct is judged and justified more effectively.

- b. **So far we've discussed three key stakeholders that play a role in regulating Airbnb listings in San Francisco: the San Francisco Planning Office (SFPO), Airbnb hosts/listers, and Airbnb developers. For this question, identify one additional stakeholder that is impacted by or could help improve the regulation of short-term Airbnb rentals in San Francisco. Using Bovens' description of accountability, explain what specific actions or changes in behavior you think this group could implement to improve the accountability and regulation of Airbnb listings in the city.**

Another stakeholder in the regulation of short-term Airbnb rentals in San Francisco is the local community and Airbnb users. These groups are impacted by the presence of short-term rentals, as they can drive up housing costs, increase noise, and alter the character of residential areas. Using Bovens' description of accountability, the community could play a more active role by working with the SFPO to monitor and report listings that are not validated. They could implement a process for collecting and submitting evidence of illegal rentals, such as keeping records of unregistered listings or repeated disturbances. For example, they could provide a phone number or email address to contact if you discover an issue with an Airbnb rental. This could be monitored by Airbnb or the SFPO. Also, they could advocate for harsher penalties for hosts that are not aligned with SFPO policy, ensuring

consequences are enforced. By formalizing their role in the accountability process, community groups would provide a layer of oversight, helping to hold both hosts and the SFPO accountable to the established regulations.

- c. **As discussed in the introduction, the legality of web scraping is still uncertain in the US. Skim through the Legal Issues section of Web Scraping in the US on Wikipedia and this article about the legal issues with the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, and describe at least one factor you believe is important to consider when discussing the legality of web scraping and why.**

One critical factor to consider in web scraping is the difference between accessing publicly available data and violating a website's terms of service. Under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, accessing data without authorization is illegal, but people have debated whether web scraping public data constitutes unauthorized access. For example, some suggest that scraping publicly accessible data, without breaching barriers like passwords or firewalls, is not a violation of the CFAA if it does not violate the TOS of a website. This debate emphasizes the need for legal standards to balance public access to information and the rights of website owners to control their data.

- d. **Scraping public data does not always lead to positive results for society. For example, look to Facebook–Cambridge Analytica data scandal - Wikipedia or Clearview AI - Wikipedia. While web scraping is important for accountability and open access to information, we must also consider issues of privacy as well. Many argue that using someone's personal data without their consent (even if publicly provided) is unethical. Web scraping requires thoughtful intervention. Develop at least two guidelines you think are important to consider when deciding whether to do web scraping. According to Bovens' definition of accountability, describe how these guidelines should be enforced and by whom.**

Further, ethical web scraping requires thoughtful guidelines to prevent misuse. One important guideline is purpose guidelines, which would state that scraping should only be conducted for purposes that serve the public like research or oversight, and should avoid collecting personal data without consent. Another key guideline is data minimization, which means scraping only the data necessary for the intended purpose to reduce privacy risks. To ensure accountability, these guidelines should be enforced by an ethics board and by lawmakers, who would assess the legitimacy of scraping activities. Violations should lead to penalties to maintain transparency and uphold ethical standards in data use.