27 August 2019

I have seen the ethics code before, going into this assignment. However; taking a more in-depth look at it this time as a senior instead of a sophomore I see it in a completely different day. Probably because of professors like PhD. Tag, I see this code of ethics as very poorly written. By this I don’t mean that the overall point is lost or that it is irrelevant, but that the point can be interpreted many different ways.

For example right off the bat in paragraph 1 (referring to the full version, not the quickie) it states that software engineers should conduct their efforts in such a way that they will be “used for good, [and] software engineers must commit themselves to making software engineering a beneficial and respected profession.” Many different people, from many different walks of life define words such as “good” and “respected” in many different ways. North Korea for example doesn’t hold much value in life unless you are the countries leader, therefore making the definition of these words vastly different. The last sentence of the second paragraph and the first sentence of the third paragraph are almost in complete contradiction to each other. Stating that “The Code prescribes these as obligations of anyone claiming to be or aspiring to be a software engineer” then in the next breath saying “It is not intended that the individual parts of the Code be used in isolation to justify errors of omission or commission.” Just like with most things in life, taking this code is not an all or nothing thing. There will be instances when we as professionals make a mistake and don’t abide by some of the “obligations” this code promotes. Unfortunately, the people creating programs behind a computer are…well people. I have not met a so called “perfect person” yet. Everyone makes mistakes, but then we need to point out the particular part of the ethics code that has been broken so that it can mitigate the chance of the same individual to do it again. This just being the tip of iceberg, but alas I digress the rest for the time being.

Although I have many different qualms about the language that is used throughout this entire code of ethics, I do agree with the fundamental principles that they are trying to encourage. I have heard many different technology conferences over the past few years and have heard many different theories as to where the world of programming, or for this course software engineering, could be headed. But none said it better than “Uncle” Bob Martin in *The Future of Programming* when he said that either we as a profession learn to keep ourselves in check or the government will step in and impose on our creative liberties. At this point he was talking about how programmers run the world, seeing how we are in everything from medicine, to cars, to even how big of hand towel size you get in the bathroom. So while I believe that the wording could/should be more focused, I do believe that as a computer professional we do need to conduct ourselves in a manner that makes people envy that they aren’t us. But still maintain our humility and keep the world spinning in a positive direction.