Unit 10 Ethical Computing

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**Explain ethical computing**

Ethical computing is essentially the process by which you use your computer, and whether your uses are morally justified. “Computer ethics is the application of moral principles to the use of computers and the Internet.” (TechTerms, 2021). At the forefront of computer applications, there are decent solutions like Word Processing that simply puts your words on paper, with no two ways about it. Unethical solutions to this would be if the word processor then used your hardware in bitcoin mining while it was open, or if it contained malware on install that affected your system.

1. **Explain plagiarism and copyright infringement.**
   1. **What is the difference between the two?**

Plagiarism involves when you use what someone else has written without credit to the actual author. This can be copying text to use on school assignments, utilizing statistics that you did not develop with no regard to the engineer, or even quoting a passage without following proper etiquette for referencing it. Copyright infringement deals much more specifically with something that has legal copyright on it. If you utilize that work in a way that is not compliant with the copyright attribution, then you are violating that copyright. Examples may include using the Coca-Cola logo or font without permission from the company, using text from a copyrighted novel without permission from the author, or even clearly stealing intellectual property protected under copyright without permission.

* 1. **How do you know if you are plagiarizing or violating copyright?**

This topic may be closely entwined, but in general, it could be quite simple to tell. Other than simply not copying other works in the first place, you could pay close attention to where you’ve received that IP from. Generally speaking, if it comes from an organization or corporation, it is likely protected under copyright. There is also language in most countries such as a little c with a circle around it to tell you that work is protected under copyright.

* 1. **Research plagiarism and find an example of plagiarism that was in the news.**

There was a story quite recently in which a writer for the well-known gaming news journal IGN had one of its writers copy a game review on YouTube (BBC News, 2018). The original review came from a YouTuber talking about his impressions of the game, and shortly after the IGN journalist published their article with the same wording. The writer of the review was subsequently fired after an investigation by IGN, and the review itself was taking off the site.

* 1. **Explain copyleft.**

Copyleft is a common method of attributing your work in a way that your works and all others based on it are usable and public. “Copyleft is a general method for making a program (or other work) free (in the sense of freedom, not “zero price”), and requiring all modified and extended versions of the program to be free as well.” (GNU Operating System, 2021). With this style, a work that is copyleft compliant such as the SCP Foundation characters and lore could be used or added onto by anyone in the general public either free of charge, or with a cover fee. To this extent, any work they do with the SCP Foundation characters or lore must also adhere to the same guidelines and be able to be used by anyone for free, or with a fee.

1. **Explain software piracy.**
   1. **What are the penalties?**

Software piracy is when you use either bit of code or the intellectual property of other software to develop your own. Penalties for software piracy vary drastically by country, but for the sake of simplicity, we can use the United States court of law. According to Norton LifeLock, they are punishable by up to five years in prison, and $250,000 in fines. Though the jail sentence could be doubled for repeat offenders. Also, for any damages the originating company finds you accountable for, you could be liable to pay up to $150,000 per work (NortonLifeLock, 2021). These could add up to insurmountable pressure if found guilty, so it is especially important to pay close attention to what you are copying, and how you are doing it.

1. **Sharing an Internet connection**
   1. **Penalties**

Sharing an internet connection is only okay when you have the consent of the owner of the Wi-Fi provided. Without consent, you could face criminal charges, as it is stealing, and thus illegal. In general, it is always a good idea to get permission from the owner of anything you would like to use, as especially internet uses bandwidth to communicate, and that extra bandwidth being used up is noticeable.

1. **Explain ethical issues related to using social media.**
   1. **Give a specific example in which an employee was terminated due to actions on social media.**

The first thing that comes to mind when describing inappropriate social media posts is the Hollywood director James Gunn. He was in charge of high-budget projects like Suicide Squad of 2016, and both the Guardians of the Galaxy movies from Disney. After he put out statements that criticized former President Donald Trump, previous tweets that he made came to light and caused a scene. About ten years ago, he had made many tweets relating to his propensity for shock humor and said some disgusting things via social media. After his criticisms, those resurfaced and he lost his job with Disney as a result. Though it should be noted that he was almost immediately hired back again to continue his work on Guardians of the Galaxy 2 when the commotion settled.

1. **Explain an employer’s legal right to review employee activities using their technology in each of the following ways. For each method below, give specific examples in which the law has been upheld or applied.**
   1. **Keylogging**

Employers may install keyloggers on workplace computers, as it is not the property of the employee. One case that supports this is Ropp v. the United States in which Mr. Ropp installed a keylogger onto one of his subordinate’s computers. This went to court and was ultimately ruled in Ropp’s favor due to the WPA protecting wire and oral communications, and not electronic emails (Flexispy, 2014). This ruling helped to solidify the legality of keylogging in the workplace, as it has become much more commonplace today.

* 1. **Reading emails**

Cases like Stengart v. Loving Care Agency, Inc. have ruled that attorney-client privilege protects emails and correspondence under the law. However, in California, this has been directly contradicted by the outcome of Holmes v. Petrovich Development Company LLC. (Frye, 2017). These rulings can get relatively complicated, and as juries are made up of different people from around the country, these rulings could turn out differently. Overall, it seems to vary state-by-state and as well as how good of a lawyer you can buy.

* 1. **Monitoring Internet usage/sites visited**

As it turns out, it is legal in every U.S. state to regulate and observe which sites your employees are visiting, as well as their social media accounts during work-related times (Suemo, 2020). According to the ECPA, so long as the employer has a work-related inquiry and the computer was provided by work, they have a right to check internet access, history, and social media presence.

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