



The National Computer Ethics
8 Responsibilities Campaign

To BUSINESS/COMPUTER ASSIGNMENT DESKS

For Immediate Release

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MAJOR EFFORT TO RAISE NATIONAL AWARENESS OF ETHICAL ISSUES
FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY USERS LAUNCHED WITH BACKING OF LEADING
AMERICAN COMPANIES, ORGANIZATIONS, USER GROUPS AND CONGRESS

Washington, D.C., June 21, 1994 -- A new campaign designed to make the ethical and responsible use of information technology a national priority was announced today on Capitol Hill, with support from America's leading computer software, technology, chemical and financial companies, trade membership associations and end user groups.

At a 9:30 am press conference held in the congressional Rayburn House Office Building, the National Computer Ethics and Responsibilities campaign (NCERC) was unveiled. The NCERC is designed as a formal, non-partisan effort to promote ethical computing and information practices, and to help -- through raised awareness, debate and educational tools -- arrive at faster solutions to ethical dilemmas prompted by development of the "information superhighway."

Chief sponsor of the NCERC launch is The Computer Ethics Institute. Additional sponsors or affiliates include: the Atterbury Foundation; American University; the Boston Computer Society; the Business Software Alliance; CompuServe; Computing Technology Industry Association; EDUCOM; IEEE Computer Society; the Jefferson Circle; Merrill Lynch; Monsanto; National Computer Security Association; Privacy Rights Clearinghouse; Software Creations BSS; Software Publishers Association; Symantec Corporation; the Washington Consulting Group; and Siff Davis Publishing.

"If we combine the known costs of just the obvious unethical and illegal uses of computer information technology such as telephone and PBX fraud, computer viruses and software piracy, then as a society we are spending tens of billions of dollars annually," said Dr. Peter Tippett, NCERC co-chairman, "not to mention the human and social costs of such activity."

Tippett, who is also Director of Security and Enterprise Products for Symantec Corporation's Peter Norton Group, of Cupertino, CA, also warned "If we add to these problems, unethical or unseemly behavior which isn't illegal, but which nevertheless exacts a heavy toll, then it is clear we are in the midst of a serious computer ethics void."

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Tippett added "We hope to make the NCERC effort the hi-tech equivalent of Lady Bird Johnson's 'Keep America Beautiful'

campaign."

The press conference featured invited guests such as: Rep. Edward Markey, chairman, House Telecommunications c Finance Subcommittee; Rep. Charlie Rose, Chairman, House Administration Committee; and Rep. Bill Orton, Founder of the House Information Technology Caucus. Rep. George Brown, chairman of the House Space and Technology Committee, also lent his support to the NCERC. Scott Charney, Chief, Computer Crime Unit, Criminal Division, Justice Department and F. Lynn McNulty, National Institute of Standards and Technology, also spoke.

The news conference also featured a variety of ethics announcements by NCERC supporters. For instance, Symantec corporation announced it would offer free copies of Norton Utilities, Norton AntiVirus, SUM or SAM software to bulletin board operators who post one of the many codes of information ethics on their systems. The world's two largest organizations of computing professionals, the ACM and the IEEE, announced a joint effort to establish internationally-recognized standards for the professional and ethical conduct of software engineers. Still another development found the Atterbury Foundation announcing it would fund proposals to create a kindergarten through 12th grade Computer Ethics Education Program.

The press conference was followed by a 90-minute technology demonstration as well as a round table panel discussion by NCERC participants on topics which included Privacy; Virtuality; Intellectual Property; Fallacies and Unethical Computer Behavior.

"In ethical terms, the 'virtual' world of computers and communications is uncharted territory," said NCERC's other cochairman, Nick Routledge. "The latest generation of information technology makes it possible to harm others in new ways," he said. "If we can help educate people about ethical issues prompted by the digital convergence," he said, "then a whole generation of computer users -- one hundred million strong and growing -- will benefit in the long run."

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