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Dear Ed:

Yes, I was able to get the ACM code using your instructions; it turned out we also had it in our code's file. I have three comments.

First, it is, of course, a new code (1992) in an unusual format. In this respect, it resembles the 1979 IEEE code that, after much boasting and a few years of use, was junked in 1990 for a traditional format. Whether ACM's new format will prove another fad, or instead an enduring contribution to code writing, remains to be seen. On principle of engineering conservatism alone ("avoid fads"), I think we are justified in staying clear of it for a decade or two.

Second, the ACM's codes format could not easily be imposed on what came out of our e-mail deliberations. What we produced was, in essence, a combination of ACM's "General Moral Imperatives" (some of which, I hasten to add, seem to be more controversial than "moral imperatives" should be, e.g. "give proper credit for intellectual property") and the more specific imperatives in secs. 2-4. But our system of organization strikes me as more useful than ACM's. The big difference between the two codes is that the ACM's has "Guidelines" and ours does not. I think the idea of Guidelines--or, more exactly, a commentary--for the Imperatives is all right (though nothing yet suggests we need one). But the actual Guidelines do not strike me as very informative, certainly not informative enough to justify the space they take. So, I say that, inch for inch, our code 3 to 5 times more useful (and user friendly) than ACM's.

Third, that's my opinion based simply on looking at the documents. It is, however, not my opinion alone. The two CS faculty at IIT who have used both the old ACM code and the new in teaching both prefer the old for convenience, clarity, and simplicity. So, I think we were wise to go our own way.

Sincerely,

Michael Davis