Practical Assessment Week 7

RMIT University - PCP/APD 2019 Semester 2

Consider the following questions, find and discuss the relevant issues, and write the answers. A "yes" or "no" answer is insufficient for the following questions. You need to show your thought process and use good arguments to justify your position.

Mark: Each question has 1/3 mark

ACTIVITY ONE

Consider the below Scenario

- "In September, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that many VW cars being sold in America had a "defeat device" - or software - in diesel engines that could detect when they were being tested, changing the performance accordingly to improve results. The German car giant has since admitted cheating emissions tests in the US. VW has had a major push to sell diesel cars in the US, backed by a huge marketing campaign trumpeting its cars' low emissions." (bbc.com)
- The EPA said that the engines had computer software that could sense test scenarios by monitoring speed, engine operation, air pressure and even the position of the steering wheel.

Consider the following questions for the teamwork.

1. If you worked for VW and your boss asked you to write this "cheat software", what would you do?
2. Organise a *meeting agenda* and *discussion points* for the meeting that you will have with your higher authority at VW in order to address your concerns. How will you approach this in your meeting and which negotiation practices will you use to put your opinions across?

ACTIVITY TWO[1]

Describe the process of ethical deliberation that you would use in trying to resolve the following dilemma.

You have been working for the XYZ Computer Corporation as an entry-level software engineer since you graduated from college last May. You have done very well so far; you are respected by the management team, are well liked by your fellow engineers, and have been assigned to a team of engineers that has consistently worked on the most critical and valued projects and contracts that XYZ Corp has secured. XYZ's most recent contract is for a U.S. defence project involving the missile defence system, and again you have been assigned to the engineering team that will develop the software for this project. However, you are staunchly opposed to the project's objectives, so you ask to be reassigned. Your supervisor and coworkers, as well

[1] Tavani, Herman T.. Ethics and Technology: Controversies, Questions, and Strategies for Ethical Computing, 5th Edition, Wiley, 2015. ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rmit/detail.action?docID=5106471.

as upper management, are disappointed to learn of your strong feelings about this project. You are asked to reconsider your views, and you are promised a bonus and a substantial pay increase if you agree to work on this project during the next year. You also discover from a colleague that refusing to work on this project would greatly diminish your career advancement at XYZ and may even make you vulnerable in the event of future layoffs. To compound matters, you and your spouse are expecting your first child in about three months, and you recently purchased a home.

What would you do in this case? Explain the steps that you would take in this situation and justify them with clear reasoning.

ACTIVITY THREE[2]

In analysing the following scenario,
1. What course of action would you take?
2. Would you be willing to blow the whistle? Explain your position.

For the past six months, you have worked on a project to develop a transportation-related software program for the city of Agropolis, a project designed to make some much needed improvements to Agropolis's system of public transportation. You and your team of programmers have worked very hard on this project, but you have encountered difficulties that could not possibly have been anticipated in the original design plan; these difficulties have put your project significantly behind schedule. The city transportation planners are nervous, because they depend on the software from your company to get the new transportation system up and running. And the management at your company is very uncomfortable because it signed a contract to deliver the required software on time. Although the software is not yet foolproof, testing so far reveals that it works about 99% of the time. The few glitches that remain apply only to the transportation system's backup code, which arguably would be needed in only the most severe emergencies. Residents of the city are also eager to have the new transportation system in place.

A decision is made by the management of your company and by the managers of the city transportation system to go ahead and implement the software as it is. They base their decision on the probability that a backup system would not be needed for several months (at which time the remaining bugs should be fixed). A decision was also made by the management groups on both sides not to announce publicly that the software still has a few bugs. You and a few of your coworkers believe that the bugs are more dangerous than the managers are willing to admit. What would you do in this case?