

## CS/PHIL 201 Discussion Prompt Response

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If you are submitting late or individually, list the instructor(s) that has granted the accommodation		

Response to Prompt for Module # 14 on topic Attention Economy

What should a PR person **should say** with regards to the ethical theories and professional codes of conduct discussed in class. Then, reflect on what someone **will say** in the real world. How are these different? And what, if anything, should we do when a company fails to meet its moral obligations?

From a deontological ethical theory, the company is still conducting in an ethically permissible way because they are not breaking any rights of their users. The users accepted the app and have the right to remove it from their devices and discontinue its use. Thus, the resulting harms are from the use of the user themselves and it is their responsibility and right to do what they believe is the best course of action.

From a utilitarian view, the PR person should address that these harms do take away from the maximum utility of persons involved. Although, it subtracts from the overall happiness/welfare, the maximum utility still outweighs the harms because there are significant positives from ad agencies, most users, and all of the company employees.

Lastly, from a virtuous viewpoint, the social media company should be truthful and upfront with their users and state the possible harms they face by using the application. They should then state that there are likely non-virtuous users choosing vices resulting in this possible harm.

The PR person should also thank the whistleblower and state that they have job security and apologize for not acting sooner.

I think the PR person would say all the above, but they would most likely avoid the virtuous viewpoint because it may turn users away from their product.

If the company fails to meet its moral obligations to say all the above, especially warn users of the risk in using the application, users should either take the risks seriously and boycott the application or understand the risks and go about the app consumption at their own risk. It is difficult to pass blame on a social media company when the risks of using the application are most commonly applied by other users within the app and by yourself through comparison.