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### Ethical Dilemmas with Work and Faith

One of the biggest challenges that I will face in my professional life will involve the privacy of others. I am a very nosey person. I find myself constantly battling with myself for getting involved into other people's business. I just want to find out all the information that I can about everything and everyone around me. When it comes to the professional world, companies gather every keystroke, every click, and everything in between from their online users. The dilemma that is present here is where is the line drawn between a person's right to privacy versus a business's right to gather information from their users. The personal dilemma that I would face is what side of that line I would be standing on, and how would I handle working for a company that had a different view than me on the issue.

I can see both sides of the argument. On one side, companies can use all the data that they have collected to tailor their products and services to better fit their customer's needs. This can greatly increase the customer's experience and improve the quality of life for all that use this business. Not only that, but it can also help the company increase profitability and create growth for the business. A survey by the "Economist Intelligence Unit reported that 60% of the professionals they quizzed feel that data is generating revenue within their organizations and 83% say it is making existing services and products more profitable" (Marr, 2016). This could create more jobs and help the economy.

This all sounds amazing but when does the collecting become too much. At what point does the customer have a right to privacy, and how transparent do these companies need to be about how much data they are collecting? That same survey found that just “34% of respondents said that they feel their organizations are “very effective” at being transparent with customers” (Marr, 2016). If personal data is no longer going to remain personal, a company should be upfront about it.

One of benefits of the massive amount of data collecting is the impact that it has had on the criminal justice system. Almost everyone uses technology in their daily lives, including criminals. These companies are collecting more than just personal information. These companies, “also often have access to the contents of their users’ emails, text messages, call logs, photos, videos, documents, contact lists and calendars” (Nicas, 2021) and can share this with law enforcement. This information can be used to find and bring criminals to justice. This benefits the entire criminal justice system from local law enforcement agencies all the way to the federal government. In a way, these companies are helping build a safer community.

On the flip side, criminals can also gain access to this information to cause harm in many ways. There have been many data breaches in recent history that have caused millions of people’s personal data to be compromised. JPMorgan was breached back in 2015, and it’s estimated that over 100 million people’s personal data was compromised. That personal data included a lot of their financial records which could destroy a person’s livelihood. Financial data is not the only kind of information that hackers are after either. That same year, Ashley Madison was hacked (Botha1, Grobler, Eloff). The information that was leaked from their databases could have done just as much damage as leaking someone’s financial information.

There are a lot of pros and cons when it comes to data collection and privacy. One can argue heavily in favor of either side. I am personally all for companies gathering this information, so long as they are fully upfront about it and can protect it. The challenge here is that not every company is going to fall in line with my perspective. It was stated earlier that only a third of professionals surveyed felt their companies were being fully upfront about what their company was doing with all the user data.

The ways that I could personally handle this dilemma are to find a company that fits with my moral code. This would involve me doing a lot of research on what policies companies follow when it comes to data collection and protection. During the interview process, I would have to ask questions revolving around it as well. It would narrow down the options I would have to job opportunities, but it would help build my sense of morality. I am more than prepared to do that. I have worked for companies where I do not agree with certain policies that they have. It not only makes it harder for me to perform at my job, but it makes going to work less enjoyable. When my employer and my values are in line, it helps me produce my best work and makes going to work enjoyable.

The ACM and IEEE Code of Ethics both have good guidelines to help people remain true to the Christian faith. The first point that is made in the IEEE Code of ethics is, “to hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public, to strive to comply with ethical design and sustainable development practices, to protect the privacy of others, and to disclose promptly factors that might endanger the public or the environment” (ieee.org). That statement is extremely loaded but boils down to one thing: take care of the people and environment around you. The Bible says, “You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell, for I the LORD dwell in the midst of the people” (Numbers 35:33-34). God created us in

His image and created this place as a gift for us to live. To respect His creations is to respect God, and to cause harm to others or the world around us disrespects His work. We need to maintain these gifts that He gave us.

The ACM Code of Ethics also fall in line with His word. One of their points is simply to be honest and trustworthy. Be honest about what your work does, its limitations, and to be fully transparent about what you are capable of accomplishing ([acm.org](http://acm.org)). This falls directly in lines with His teachings. In 2 Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2 Timothy:15). We are all always being watched by Him. If we are not fully being honest with someone, He will always know. God wants us to have the integrity to do the right thing and be up front about who you are and what you do. This is one of my core beliefs because to be honest with myself and to others, is to be honest with Him.

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