Professional Ethics and Responsibilities

☐ **Computer Ethics::**

o Computer ethics includes ethical issues faced by a computer professional as part of the job

o It includes relationships with and responsibilities toward customers, clients, coworkers, employees, employers, others who use one's products and others whom they affect.

o It also includes faced by people who are not computer professionals, but who manage, select or use computers in a professional setting.

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- We should:
  - Look at situations where critical decisions must be made
  - Situations where significant consequences for you and others could result from your decision
- For example: (If you are an employee of a company)
  - What if your company is about to deliver a compute system to a customer and you believe it still has serious bugs?

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- What if your supervisor asks you to make unauthorized copies of copyrighted software
- Is it right to hire foreign programmers who work at low salaries?
- What if you are assigned to a job for a client whose business you find objectionable?

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- Suppose a private company asks your software company:
  o To develop a database of information obtained from government records
  o To generate lists of convicted shoplifters
  o To generate lists of child molester
  o Marketing lists of new home buyers
  o Affluent boat owners
  o Divorced parents with young child

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- The people who will be on the lists:
- They did not have a choice about whether the information would be open to the public
- They did not give permission for its use

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- How will you decide whether to accept the job?
- o You could accept on the grounds that the records are already public and available to anyone
- o You could decide against secondary uses of information that was not provided voluntarily by the people it concerns

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- You could try to determine whether the benefits of the lists outweigh the privacy invasions or inconveniences they might cause for some people
- You could refuse to make marketing lists
- But you could make lists of people convicted of certain crimes.

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- For example:

  You are a manager of a IT company and discover that many of your employees are spending a lot of time for visiting sports, face book, stock and entertainment Web sites

- What you will do?

- Will you install monitoring software that records:
  - What sites each employee visit?
  - How much time he or she spends there?
  - Will you inform employees first?

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- You are confronting practical and legal issues and ethical ones

- There are ethical aspects to making ethical decisions in a professional context, but the decisions are fundamentally based on general ethical principles and theories.

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What is Ethics?

- Ethics is the study of what it means to "**do the right thing**". It is a complex subject that has occupied philosophers for thousands of years.

- Ethical rules are rules to follow in our interactions with other people and in our actions that affect other people. Most ethical theories attempt to achieve the same goal:

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What is Ethics?

- To enhance human dignity, peace, happiness and well-being

- Ethical rules apply to all of us and are intended to achieve good results for people in general and for situations in general, not just for ourselves, not just for one situation

- A set of rules that does this well respects the fact that we are each unique and have our own values and goals that we have judgment and will and that we act according to our judgment to achieve our goals

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What is Ethics?

- Ethical rules are fundamental and universal, like laws of science, or we could view them as rules we make up, like the rules of baseball, to provide a framework in which to interact with other people in a peaceful, productive way

- Most of the time we are honest, we keep our promises, we do not steal, we do our job perfectly. If ethical rules are good ones, they work for people, that is, they make our lives better

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What is Ethics?

- Honesty makes interactions among people work more smoothly and reliably.
- We might lose friends if we often lie or break promises
- Learning's of social institutions encourage us to do right
- We might be arrested if caught stealing
- We might lose our jobs if we do them carelessly

What is Ethics?

- In professional context, doing good ethically often corresponds closely with doing a good job in the sense of professional quality and competence

- Doing good ethically often corresponds closely with good business in the sense that ethically developed products are more likely to please consumers.

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What is Ethics?

- A Variety of Ethical Views:

- There is much agreement about general ethical rules, many different theories about how to establish a firm justification for the rules and how to decide what is ethical in specific case.

- A brief description of a few approaches to ethics is given below:

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What is Ethics?

- **Deontological Theories**
- Deontologists tend to emphasize duty and absolute rules, to be followed whether they lead to good or ill consequences in particular cases.
- One example is: Do not lie. An act is ethical if it complies with ethical rules and is chosen for that reason.

What is Ethics?

- **Immanuel Kant**, the philosopher often presented as the prime example of a deontologist, contributed many important ideas to ethical theory.

Three ethical theories are given below:

1. Principle of universality: We should follow rules of behavior that we can universally apply to everyone

2. "Respect the reason in you", that is, to use your reason, rationality, and judgment, rather than emotions, when making a decision in an ethical context, is a wise one

3. Interacting with other people: One must never treat people as merely means to ends, but rather as ends in themselves

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What is Ethics?

□ Kant took an extreme position in the absolutism of ethical rules. He argued that it is always wrong to lie; but for example, if a person is looking for someone he intends to murder, and he asks you where the intended victim is, it is wrong for you to lie to protect the victim.

□ Most people would agree that there are cases in which even very good, universal rules should be broken because of consequences.

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