**UECS3313**

**Computer Ethics and Professional Responsibility**

**Tutorial 3**

**Freedom of Speech**

1. Describe in detail the two main ethical issues that large online companies such as search engine providers face with regards to freedom of speech.
2. State the 3 principles underlying freedom of speech based on the United States First Amendment.
3. Smaller companies or individuals that publish material online are not subject to the same business or social pressures as larger companies. Briefly describe the ethical issues that they face in publishing sensitive material.
4. Provide two ethical arguments against leaking, and provide four examples of types of wrong doings that might justify leaking documents that prove them.
5. Discuss in detail two main ethical considerations and the corresponding actions to address them, in the event that one discovers there is a good justification to leak material.
6. Many countries have varying levels of censorship of free speech and political freedom. Online companies face ethical issues when operating in such countries. Provide 3 arguments to support these companies following the censorship laws, and 3 arguments against.
7. There have been proposals to pass laws that make the sending of spam email a crime. Discuss the ethics of this.
8. A software company that has decided to create a browser plug in that is capable of blocking all advertisements appearing on a website or search engine result based on a list of banned sites that it maintains. This is similar to the concept of banned email addresses or domain names that are used in spam filtering software on email clients. Identify and analyze the conflicting ethical considerations in providing such a product to the general public.
9. Consider a country which has laws that protects freedom of speech and freedom of religion. The issue of abortion is extremely controversial in this country, with different states enforcing different laws. In a particular state where abortion is legal under specific circumstances, a religious organization runs a website where they post lists of abortion clinics, doctors who perform abortions and judges who support abortion rights. This information is already available from many different printed public directories, but the site provides a central point to collate and present all this information in a systematic manner. The site also provides updated news feeds on incidents involving the killing or physical assault of these doctors, as well as acts of arson and vandalism perpetrated on the clinics. It is the only anti-abortion website in the country that does this. A variety of emotionally charged arguments from a religious viewpoint are presented on the immorality of abortion and a blanket condemnation of everyone who supports it. However, there is no expression of any opinion about what should be done against people who support or help to carry out abortions.
10. Analyze 3 ethical issues that this organization should carefully consider if it wishes to continue operating this site, and what possible modifications it can make to the website in consideration of these issues.
11. Various human rights activists have called for the government to shut down the site completely. Provide one argument to support and oppose such a move, and suggest an ethically acceptable course of action.
12. Consider a junior-level state employee in Selangor, Malaysia who is charged with preparing the administrative documentation related to bids from private companies for state project tenders. While going through a recent tender involving both the state and federal government, she discovers that one of the bids from a company had not being discussed in the state executive meeting where these bids had been deliberated upon. She also discovers that this company had correctly submitted its documentation for the bid and was a lower bidder than the actual company that won the tender. An informal memo notes down that this decision was made by one of the top state government officials, and the actual reason was stated in a letter from this official to the members of the state executive. This letter, as well as the official deliberations of the executive meeting, is not accessible to this employee at her current status. The employee is however aware of the official government policy of awarding tenders to the lowest bidders in order to minimize waste and eliminate corruption.
13. Discuss the ethical issues that this employee must consider carefully if she feels that there is some cover up going on, and she wishes to whistle blow on it.
14. What actions should she ethically take first before proceeding with any whistle blowing effort?
15. Assuming that she has exhausted all the actions in b), what are the 2 main issues she needs to consider carefully with regards to the Whistle Blower Act 2010 if she wishes to proceed further?
16. Assume now that she has managed to gain access to all the relevant documents, which she believes provides strong evidence of corruption involving many higher level government officials. She decides to provide this evidence to the operator of a popular blog from an opposing political party. What are the ethical responsibilities of this operator if he decides to make these documents publicly available on his blog?