

Peer response 3 – Thaimu

Thaimu's comprehensive analysis effectively demonstrates how AllTogether's decision to release inaccessible software violates multiple principles within the BCS Code of Conduct (British Computing Society, 2022), particularly regarding public interest and professional competence. His legal framework analysis correctly identifies the UK Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018 as key compliance requirements, while his application of BCS principles clearly illustrates how prioritizing launch deadlines over accessibility constitutes a breach of professional duty. The analysis effectively connects legal obligations with professional ethics, demonstrating how accessibility failures represent both discrimination and professional negligence.

The most pressing issues Thaimu raises center on the tension between commercial pressures and professional obligations, exemplified by leadership's dismissive question: "How many blind people use our product, anyway?" This attitude reflects broader systemic problems in technology development where accessibility is treated as an afterthought rather than a fundamental design requirement. The case study's revelation that post-release support costs exceeded proactive accessibility implementation costs supports research by the Business Disability Forum (2020) showing that inclusive design reduces long-term operational expenses (Business Disability Forum, 2025). Thaimu's emphasis on the BCS requirement to "promote equal access to the benefits of IT" aligns with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), which establishes accessibility as a human right rather than charitable accommodation (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2006). The hidden control design pattern failure demonstrates how seemingly minor interface decisions can create systemic exclusion, supporting Gregg Vanderheiden's principle that "what is essential for some is good for all" in universal design (Vanderheiden, 1991). Microsoft's inclusive design methodology provides a practical framework for operationalizing these principles, showing how considering permanent, temporary, and situational disabilities during development improves usability universally (Holmes, 2020).

Thaimu's conclusion that accessibility should be "a core marker of quality and competence" reflects the evolution of professional computing standards toward inclusive practice. The AllTogether case demonstrates that professional ethics in computing must encompass proactive consideration of diverse user needs, moving beyond compliance to embrace accessibility as fundamental to technical excellence and social responsibility.

References:

British Computing Society (2022) *BCS Code of Conduct for members - Ethics for IT professionals*. Available at: <https://www.bcs.org/membership-and-registrations/become-a-member/bcs-code-of-conduct> (Accessed: 31 August 2025).

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