

ETHICS

SCENARIO #2: YOUR COMPANY'S CUSTOMERS' PERSONAL DATA

- A. Your proposal is well received and adds new cool and useful features to the app. It requires storing personal location information for slightly longer than Beerz 1.0. This causes your colleague to suggest selling anonymized user data for extra profit. The ethical dilemma is whether you continue on a path that may lead to user data being sold, which goes against the CTO's vision for the company. Beyond "what to do", this scenario also asks where the cut-off for "ethical data collection" is. While the features you are trying to implement do not directly contribute to surveillance capitalism, it certainly causes more user data storage, introduces potential vulnerabilities, and could slowly lead to more and more data being stored for the sake of features (data could eventually be worth a lot of money, tempting higher-ups to sell it).
- B.
- a. You: you are a stakeholder in this situation as the developer you have an ethical choice to make! While your personal data is not being sold, this does go against your ethical code as you resonate deeply with the vision of not participating in surveillance capitalism laid out by the CTO. You can try to go through internal channels to try to prevent the selling of data. If it gets really bad, you could also quit.
 - b. Beerz inc: Beerz inc would gain a substantial boost in revenue if it decided to sell user data. While this goes against the vision of the CTO, she is not the only one in a position of power. Beerz inc would be able to sell user data legally and it would be likely that many users would not realize their data was being sold.
 - c. Users: Users are the ones at risk here, as their data could potentially be sold. They have the right to request all data Beerz inc collects on them, however, this document is usually hard to read, especially without a background in technology. Beerz would need to have a privacy policy somewhere that states they collect your data, but this document most likely won't be read by most users.
- C. I would like to know what the CTO thinks of the proposal to sell anonymized data. I'd like to know the security risks of the current system as well as the potential security risks of my new implementations.
- D.
- a. You could try to protest, and hopefully prevent, the selling of future and past data. Talking with the CTO and other higher-ups while reviewing the mission and

virtues of the company may help prevent the monetization of user data in this way.

- b. You could try to protest the selling of user data but it is possible that the monetary benefit would outweigh your voice. If this completely goes against your morals you could quit and look for a job that aligns better with your views.
 - c. You could also go through with implementing your features and allowing the selling of anonymized user data. This would probably make you more money, but you would be selling your ethical soul.
- E. Yes the ACM guidelines do offer some guidance. Section 1.1 states that a computer professional should Contribute to society and to human well-being. By knowingly selling user data and going against company values, you do go against section 1.1 of the ACM guidelines. Depending on how the selling of personal data is implemented, you could also potentially violate ACM section 1.6, respecting privacy.
- F. I would recommend trying to talk to the CTO, the other higher-ups, and the coworker to revisit the company values and try to prevent the selling of personal data. As far as the features I want to implement, I believe there is a safe way to add those features without inherently compromising the security and privacy of users. While I believe that the line between what is and is not a violation of user privacy data is quite blurred, I think implementing the two features is not crossing that line as I would still be taking steps to erase user data after it had served its intended purpose. Of course, there is risk involved when holding user data longer, but as long as that is communicated transparently and most users agree and understand, the features outweigh the risk for me.