Case Presentation

2.7 Veil of Censorship

1. Websense specializes in an internet filter software that restricts access to unauthorized websites. Saudi Arabia is a potential customer, who wants to use the software on a State wide scale, which would disable its citizens to view specific content such as pornography, or anything that criticizes the Saudi regime or Islamic religion. Saudi Arabia already has a contract with Websense competitor, Secure Computing whose contract is expiring. Is it unethical to provide a program, which from our democratic, culture beliefs, violates basic human/civil rights, regardless if their culture (it is the law to only practice Islam, and no other religion in Saudi Arabia) accepts this kind of governance? Should Websense sale their Internet filtering product to Saudi Arabia knowing that their product will filter Internet access to the Saudi people, regardless if their moral values different from our cultural norms?
2. In the Veil of Censorship Case, the main IT component is the filtering software produced by Websense. If the sale goes through with the Saudi government, it will be the first showcase for their program on a wide scale/ state platform. They have sold to Fortune 500 companies before, but this deal will in itself, showcase Websense. It should also be noted that their competitor, Secure Computing, already provides the Saudi regime with a similar product, and their contract is due to expire. Another obvious component in this case is the Internet and Networks that the filtering software will apply to.
3. **Stakeholders:**

**Websense:** Has the right to sell their product to any customer. It is ultimately up to that customer to utilize the software as they see fit. Websense has the right to showcase their product and achieve competitive advantage with an enhanced product by expanding the boundaries it has not yet crossed such as country or state wide filtering.

**Saudi Arabia Government/ Regime:** Saudi Arabia has the right to protect its cultural norms of what they believe is ethical and supported by the people. Saudi Arabia is not a democratic country. The only religion that is legally allowed to be practiced is Islam and the Islamic religion governs their laws and their way of life. Any type of expression that leads to disorder or division is prohibited.

**Saudi Arabian Citizens:**  Have the right to Freedom of Speech and Expression from the United States democratic and social moral/ ethical values. However, as a citizen of Saudi Arabia, their cultural norms (alcohol consumption is illegal, no movie theaters, all media including news and television is highly censored) have the right to have such material censored out to protect their society.

**Secure Competing:**  Has the right to sell their product to any customer and allowing that customer to utilize the software as they please.

1. **Make the Sale with no Exceptions:** If Websense was to get the contract with the Saudi Arabian government, they have the choice to sell their product and allow the Saudi government to sensor out any material they deem necessary. If this was to happen, from our American stand point where freedom of speech and expression is held in high regards, then Websense will be violating the Saudi Arabian people’s basic human/ civil rights. The citizens would never be introduced to any outside thinking, ideas, or perspective other than what is taught in the regime. However, it is acceptable by the Saudi people to have such sensor ship. It is a country whose laws are based off the Islamic religion and is the only religion allowed to be practiced. These strict codes of behavior/ ethics is embedded in their culture, much like Christianity and democracy is in our society. It is also important to point out that Saudi Arabia is not the only country to censor the internet from their citizens.

**Do NOT Sale to Saudi Arabia:**  Websense has the option to not sell their product to the Saudi Arabian government. With Websense being an American based company, they could decide to uphold our cultural beliefs of freedom of speech and expression by not allowing the Saudi government to suppress the basic rights of the Saudi people with their software. They will of course miss out on the sale and the show case of their product on a larger scale. Secure Computing will probably sign another contract with the Saudi government and the people of Saudi will still be restricted from specific genera of information, not just from the internet, but other sources as well, including the news, television, and other media. If Websense did decide to not sell the software, then they may receive high recognition from the U.S people and other societies that share our normative cultural beliefs.

**Make the Sale with Exceptions and the Saudi Government Complies: ……..**

**Make the Sale with Exceptions and the Saudi Government Denies: ……….**

1. **Deontological Perspective:** Do not Sale to the Saudi Arabian Government from our American ethical views…..

**AND/OR**

Make the Sale according to the Saudi Arabian’s view point……

1. **Teleological Perspective:** Do not Sale to the Saudi Arabian people.If everyone had internet restrictions by the government, especially in America, it would violate our Freedom of Speech and Expression as well as our Right to Privacy. Lack of diversity, learning, perspective……..

**AND/OR**

Make the Sale. Many countries do censor internet content and it depends on the society or cultural norm of the people to determine if it could be a universal law to that group of people. We can’t necessarily deny them their idea of morals/ ethics, and in turn press our views on to their culture……

1. From a business stand point I would recommend them to sell the product. This also seems to be socially accepted in Saudi Arabia……

A personal perspective, I would not sell to Saudi Aribia. I value my freedom of speech, and I like having all the offered information on the web to gain knowledge and make my own opinion on matters……..