Koi McFarland

Prof. Henderson

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CSCI 325 Ethics Paper

In the modern age, societal harm can be done on unprecedented scales. One significant way for this harm to be done is through computer science. Whether through scammers, malicious malware viruses, the hacking of company assets, or even the stealing of personal data, computer harm damages our world in so many ways. People who enter the field of computer science or even people who are merely interested must consider what they might do in the presence of such harm. The fact that these harmful occurrences happen so often speaks to the sinful nature of humanity and reveals why humanity needs Christ.

As a computer science student looking to join the workforce soon, I do not foresee many ethical dilemmas regarding my job choice. However, I can certainly think of problems that are more likely to appear in my career choice. Firstly, because I have signed up for the SMART scholarship with the DOD, I will be working as a civilian worker for the government. Now, I do not fully trust the government and think they have left many of God's morals. I do not know what ethical dilemmas they might put me through, if any, but I know there is certainly a chance of that happening. In these times, I will look to scripture; the Apostle Paul writes this about the government, "Obey the government, for God is the One who has put it there. There is no government anywhere that God has not placed in power" (Rom. 13:1-2). This speaks to how I should obey the government (especially if I work for them), but it also says that the government gets its authority from God, so if the government commands me to go against God, I shall refuse.

I firmly believe that the most substantial way to prepare and deal with any ethical dilemma, let alone in computer science, is to look to scripture. I do not have the strength to personally overcome many challenges on my own, but when I look to God, I can find strength there. "I can do all this through him who gives me strength" (Phi. 4:13). I do not know how prepared I feel in the face of ethical challenges relating to my field. I can only trust that God will walk me in the path of righteousness. Actions I will take to prepare myself for these challenges include avoiding any situations where ethical dilemmas might be involved. For instance, if I were to work at Facebook and I saw the direction the company was heading when they started to "pay teens to install VPN that spies on them" (TechCrunch), I would simply start looking for another job after prayer. Another situation would be if I were asked by a higher-up to program applications or devices that steal information or gather information against the client's knowledge, such as the creepy Amazon Alexa and its constant listening and information gathering. According to this article, "there are even humans listening to your requests" (NYTimes), which is something I would never feel comfortable or morally right about programming. I would need to leave that company or move to a different coding department.

There are excellent computer science codes of ethics, such as the ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct and the IEEE Code of Ethics. They both have sound Biblical principles that they encourage programmers to apply to their work life. The ACM Code of Ethics has the "Be honest and trustworthy" principle. This is quite basic and obviously supported by the Bible, but it is an essential principle to live by. Colossians (3:9) says, "Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices." Ephesians (4:25) says, "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of

one body." There are many more verses in the Bible about integrity, so it is safe to say that it is an imperative principle.

Furthermore, the IEEE Code of Ethics has a similar principle that states: "To uphold the highest standards of integrity, responsible behavior, and ethical conduct in professional activities." But instead of stating the same thing again for the IEEE, I will give Biblical support for their principle that states, "to maintain and improve our technical competence and to undertake technological tasks for others only if qualified by training or experience, or after full disclosure of pertinent limitations" This principle states that we should work hard and improve our skills which is Biblical. However, in the Bible, we should work hard for the Lord, not for men. Psalms (90:17) says, "Let the kindness of the Lord our God be over us. Make the work of our hands last. Make the work of our hands last!" Moreover, the IEEE principle also states that we should undertake tasks for others. This is also Biblical, as Jesus states in Mathew (5:41), "If a man asks you to walk a mile with him, do it. Then walk another mile with him."

In conclusion, there can be many ethical dilemmas in my future regarding my field, even if I have a hard time seeing it now. But I know that God will be my side through scripture and prayer. This verse from Jeremiah (29:11) gives me comfort in the face of challenging times, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

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