

Kush Patel

Professor Ghdadami

CPSC 315

9/9/2024

Ethical Decision Making

There are many Real World Tech Dilemmas that happen around the world, many of them have to do with Social Networking Platforms. One Major Dilemma that happens in everyday life with Social Media is when “A social media company wants to sell users' personal data to advertisers to generate more revenue, which helps keep the platform free”. Many social media companies sell people's personal data like who they are subscribed to, where they live, their age, and other demographics just so they can make more money in order to keep their platforms free. One ethical theory we must use in order to look at and analyze this dilemma is Utilitarianism, because Utilitarianism can help us understand the decisions on whether or not we should share other people, it also helps us who benefits from this, who is more happy, and who is more likely to feel satisfied. I think that based on the decision of Utilitarianism, given that there are more risks than benefits I think that it is an unethical and a wrong action for a social media company to sell other people data, while the company may benefit and make more money, many of its customers wouldn't want to use this app or products from this company and because of the less customers, their business and revenue will go down and eventually end up becoming bankrupt.

Utilitarianism is a belief in which we decide if the benefits outweigh the risks, then the action is good and ethical to happen. In “Ethics for the Information Age”, it states “an action is good if its benefits exceed its harms, and an action is bad if its harms exceed its benefits”, this quote is explaining that if there are more benefits than risks the action is considered good, ethical and safe for it to happen and it'll lead to more happiness and benefit everyone in the long term, whereas if there are more risks than benefits then it'll lead to more dissatisfaction among its buyers and because more people are dissatisfied they may not want to use the app, which can

lead to less customers and less customers mean less revenue being generated. Utilitarianism is also called “the Greatest Happiness Principle”, and because of its name, they are trying to get as much happiness as possible and given in that scenario that only the company is happy along with a few customers who don’t care about their privacy, it violates that principle. The risks of sharing private data are violation of privacy, data breaches, erosion of user trust, potential for manipulation, legal risks, and a negative impact on digital rights, because of data breaches, it can lead to so many long lasting negative effects, such as a person’s data being stolen, identity theft, fraud, people could lose their money, records could be falsified, and many more negatives, people will lose trust in this company, and they may stop using this company’s app as a result, which will lead to less revenue and money making in the long run. For the company and its advertisers they may have more benefits than risks, whereas for the users there are more risks than benefits, and given that there are more customers than advertisers and the company, there are more risks than benefits, and because of this the Greatest Happiness Principle will become worthless and happiness will decrease. While there may be notable benefits, the risks are more serious which can hurt the company in the long term.

Given that this ethical theory aligns with my views of selling other people private data is unethical and wrong, because I think that if there are more negatives than positives than we shouldn’t do that action, and because of that action it may hurt more people than the company, like I don’t like it when my private information and data is being shared out to the public because it can harm me in many ways, than help me and because of this i’ll be less likely to use this application and because of this it’ll hurt its revenue in the long run. This theory aligns with my personal views a lot because I want to have more happiness in the world in which everyone is happy. I want to have less suffering in the world, and because of this theory, it aligns with my

views that sharing private data is unethical. I want more people to be happy that way. If more people are happy, then I'll be happier myself. I think the company shouldn't sell private information and data to make revenue, they must add new features that don't involve selling private data, if they want to make everyone happy and increase revenue.