Hello, my name is Landon Moon and today I’ll be going over the importance of professional ethics in our corporate and educational lives.

So, to begin, what is professional ethics, professional ethics is the process of determining what is right and wrong in our professional environments. To help demonstrate the importance and process of professional ethics, I’ll be going over a hypothetical scenario about some students and a paper they want to release.

So, these students were working on a project at MIT. The result of this project was a paper outlining the security vulnerabilities of the local transit fare system. The transit authority got wind of the student’s discovery and decided to ask a judge to ban the students from presenting their findings. The judge approved the request. Now the students have an important decision to make, should they abide by the judge’s order or should they release their findings and possibly hurt the transit system.

When going through the process of professional ethics, the first step is to determine the primary and secondary stakeholders. In this scenario, the primary stakeholders would be the students and the transit authority because they are the ones that are directly affected by the decision. You might ask who the secondary stakeholders in this scenario are. Well secondary stakeholders are still affected by the decision but not directly. Some of them would be MIT or the people who use the transit system. There are many more that you should think about.

Now that we have our stakeholders, we must determine what responsibilities each of them have. The students are responsible for the outcomes of releasing their information over the security vulnerability. Because of this, the students have a responsibility to release the information to force the transit system to fix the vulnerability and a responsibility to not release it, so they don’t harm the transit system. Now the responsibility of the transit authority is focused on the integrity of the transit system. If the transit authority allows the security vulnerability or the knowledge about it to harm the transit system, then they are being irresponsible.

You might be able to deduce the best decision the students can make. Instead of simply releasing or erasing their findings, the students should ask the judge to allow them to release their findings after the transit system has fixed the vulnerability. This way the vulnerability is fixed and the none of the stakeholders are harmed.

While this scenario is pretty easy to determine what is right and what is wrong, a lot of other decisions in professional environments are not so clean cut. I hope going over this scenario has helped you understand the importance of professional ethics and the basic process of it.

Are there any questions about the scenario or any other cases you might think of?

Thank you for your time.