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<p style="text-align:center">Copyright and Licensing Ethics</p>

The laws of copyright in the US provide protection for original works of authorship including literature, musicals, movies, songs, architecture, and even computer software. This idea has been around since the beginning of US history as stated in the US Constriction, "Congress shall have Power . . . To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries." — US Constitution Article I, Section 8 (National Archives, 2021). The law does allow for computer software to be licensed by copyright, covering only certain aspects such as HTML, derivative computer programs, computer screen displays, video games, and object code (US Copyright Office, 2020). Owning a copyright license to a computer program means that another company or individual cannot steal your work and use it as their own program to be sold. However, only the object code of a program can be protected, which means that the functional aspects of a program and the algorithms are not protected and open to public use.

There are many different types of copyright licenses specifically for computer software that all provide different protections. There are Open Source Licenses that basically allow free use or distribution of source code and then there are more restrictive licenses such as a proprietary software license. If I were to choose a License for my software, I would pick a subscription-based license. A subscription-based copyright license is a proprietary software

license that requires a company or individual to pay a monthly fee for the use of my software (Ivanti, 2022). For instance, if I had a network security company with my own security software and sold it to another company for use, they would have to pay me monthly to maintain access to the software and for me to ensure it is running properly or perform any necessary maintenance on it. With a subscription-based license, the software is never released publicly so I can modify the code how I want to with no one else having the permission to do so. Another License I would pick to use for my software would be a User-based License. A User-based License says that I only have to give access to certain users for my software, such as a CISO or IT manager, via a secure username and password (Ivanti, 2022). I think this would also be a very good option for my security software by making my code more secure through minimal access.

There are many resources available on the internet that provide help to those learning how to code including forums that sometimes deliver entire programs for free to the public like Stack Overflow or GitHub. I believe that these resources are very helpful and you can learn a lot from them, however, this is where the line should be drawn. Open Source code on the internet should only be used for educational purposes and should never be copied and used in industry. I believe that code on the internet should be used as a general resource to follow the algorithms and basic structure. Copying sections of code and using it in a program for any reason can be a very dangerous thing because not understanding what each part of your code does means you will never learn how to be a good programmer. In the workplace, I believe that it should be treated much the same as in the classroom, using online resources as strictly a guide. Matthew 7:12 says, "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." (BibleGateway, NIV). As a Christian, I am obligated to follow the law and respect others and their property.

References

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