Unit 1 Reflection

This unit introduced the impact of ethics in computing research and the concepts of inductive and deductive reasoning. I found it intriguing how relevant the differences are between the two types of reasoning. This is because inductive reasoning seems, in my opinion, to be the most natural approach to reaching conclusions ("theory") concerning every topic in life. People often fall into the trap of reaching conclusions based on assumptions; assumptions are problematic because they do not consider facts. In contrast, I think deductive reasoning is harder because it starts from an idea, requires facts ("observations") and thereafter a conclusion is formed.

Another focus of this unit was the challenge to consider ethics and morality. I learned of ethics guidelines provided by bodies such as British Computing Society and Accelerated Computer Machinery. Ethics is particularly relevant for computing professionals since they must consider the data they operate on, particularly privacy of that data. Because data makes up the foundation of all information systems, and people are users with intentions and goals for the data, it stands to reason that ethics in computing attempts to guide the behaviour of people in their use of computing devices. Behaviours include hacking, agency, access, and usage actions such as corporate social responsibility, privacy, or dignity. Ethics guidelines apply especially to the field of artificial intelligence such as transparency (Walmsley, 2021), facial recognition, or mass data collection without consent.

This unit I submitted an initial post that considers ethics in computing based on a case study focused on dark user experience patterns: techniques used to direct users to make choices not necessarily in their favour. This was an interesting case study to consider because of its relevance to almost all websites I visit. After reading this case study, I am now more aware of the blatant use of these techniques which I think exist because of two pertinent points: people's predictable psychological behaviour, and drive for profits or control. Considering these points raises an important question of how computing professionals are to approach them from an ethics perspective. Additional research into ethics and morality will certainly help to uncover several answers.

References

Walmsley, J. (2021). Artificial intelligence and the value of transparency. *AI & SOCIETY*, *36*(2):585-595.