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Intro Info Tech

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Week 9 - Ethics Paper

Ethics Paper

Hacktivism or a hacktivist is a person or a group of people that access a website or network in hopes to spread a social or political message. Contrary to malicious hackers who hack computers in hopes to steal sensitive and or private information or cause harm, hacktivist do complete similar form of disruptive activities to highlight political or social causes. They carry out these tasks to exercise civil disobedience. “Acts of hacktivism may include website defacement, denial-of-service attacks (DoS), redirects, website parodies, information theft, virtual sabotage and virtual sit-ins.” This group is driven by the need to abolish government control and censorship of web technologies and content.

Hacktivist have a major impact on the computing and internet world. They give a voice to those who do not have one and exposes those they deem criminal. Although they all claim to be working for the greater good, some believe there are several negatives involved. “Hacktivists receive little to no accountability for their online actions. Through the use of proxy servers and other similar online tools hacktivists are able to remain anonymous regardless of what they do online. Whatever the intentions, a crime committed for good or evil is still a crime and in real life perpetrators still have to answer for their actions. This thinking should apply to the online world as well however hacktivists are able to get around any legal consequences by hiding behind their proxy servers. Without accountability any cybercrime can occur without the hacker themselves fearing any consequences for their actions. Without fear, hacktivists can do whatever they want.” Hacktivist are sometimes viewed as criminals that aren’t forced to pay for their crimes and although they believe to be fight for good not everyone may agree with their cause or methods.

The pros to hacktivism are that often times it gives power to the average person and allows anyone who wants to learn coding or who already knows how to code an opportunity to participate in the movement. ” Take Random Hacks of Kindness. This joint initiative between Microsoft, Google, Yahoo!, NASA and the World Bank focuses on problem solving, specifically to bring together subject matter experts around disaster management and crisis response. Through events featuring “apps competitions,” “hackathons” and “technology for social good,” the group has proposed solutions for a variety of issues such as tracking broken wheelchair lifts in public transportation; tracking cell phone and Wi-Fi signal strengths in areas with damaged infrastructure during disaster scenarios; and mapping incidents of sexual harassment in Egypt to identify “safe zones” where there are fewest reports.

A less clear-cut situation happened when Westboro Baptist Church announced its intentions to picket funerals of Sandy Hook victims. The hacktivist vigilante group Anonymous launched a series of attacks on the church, accessing and releasing private information of Westboro Baptist members online and shutting down several of their websites. One hacktivist even hacked a spokesperson’s Twitter account. Polling showed that a clear majority supported Anonymous’s actions in silencing the “hate group.””

I believe that hacktivism is a positive tactic in fighting social justices. In modern society it is hard to speak your opinion and display findings without receiving backlash. I believe hacking is a way to express your freedom of speech and I also believe that if you are smart enough to obtain information that will benefit the great good without repercussions you should take that opportunity.

Changes in technology can change the issue in many ways. If white hat hackers make systems more complicated to hack, then hacktivist will not be able to obtain or share information public due to new restrictions. Also, if they are able to trace it back to a network and discover the identity of the hacktivist then they may face legal action and danger due to no longer being anonymous to the public.

An article I utilized was *Hacking and Hacktivism: What it is and How Can it Affect Us.* This is a credible source because of the multiple reference he sites.

Work Cited

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