Computer Ethics and Law(SEN22387E)

Course Instructor

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Topics to be covered

- Introduction to computer ethics
- Engineering ethics
- Scientific ethics;
- Informatics Ethics and Rules
- Informatics Ethical Standards and Codes
- Computer software and intellectual rights
- Information Flow and Personal Privacy
- IT Crimes and Risks; Local and International IT laws
- Examination of Case Studies

What is Computer Ethics

- Computer ethics is the exploration of moral dilemmas(conflicts) and societal impacts connected to the use of technology.
- It covers issues like **privacy, intellectual property, cybersecurity, and the digital divide**.

Why Computer Ethics matters?

- Because it affects how we interact with technology daily.
  - Without ethical guidelines, advancements in tech could lead to:
  - misuse of data, invasion of privacy, and widening the gap between different societal groups (digital divide).

Assessment

- Final 40%
- Mid exam 30%
- Assignment 20%
- Quiz 10

What is ethics

- Ethics is set of guidelines that command what is considered **right or wrong** behavior within the profession, focusing on the impact of **software development on individuals and society**

- The norms and codes that sets the rules to be followed in electronic and network environments in short are called informatics ethics.

- The ethics can be written or unwritten rules.

What is ethics

- Information ethics can be generally considered as an umbrella concept that addresses several ethical issues that arise with the use of information and communication technologies (ICT).

- Computer ethics can be defined as a dynamic and complex field of study that addresses the relationships between concepts, policies and values in continuously developing computer technologies.

Code of Ethics vs Code of Conduct

- A Code of Ethics governs decision-making, and a Code of Conduct govern actions. They both represent two common ways that companies self-regulate.

- Code of ethics, also referred as 'constitution of a company' is value statement, with general principles to help guide employee behaviour. The document outlines a set of principles that affect decision-making.

- The Code of Ethics can help guide decision-making when faced with ethical dilemmas or debatable situations.

Code of Ethics vs Code of Conduct

- A Code of Conduct applies the Code of Ethics to various relevant situations.

- A rule in the Code of Ethics might state that all employees will obey the law. A Code of Conduct might list several specific laws relevant to different areas of organizational operations, or industry, that employees need to obey.

- The Code of Conduct outlines specific behaviours that are required or prohibited as a condition of ongoing employment. It might forbid racial intimidation or viewing inappropriate or unauthorized content on company computers.

Code of Ethics vs Code of Conduct

- Codes, along with other measures, have helped some companies dig themselves out of scandals, and have helped many companies build a healthier workplace climate and reputation.

- An example of an ethical dilemma employees regularly face is gift-giving and accepting. This can sometimes be tricky to navigate because, in some cultures, small gifts are tokens of respect and gratitude. Acceptance of large gifts may produce the appearance of an improper relationship between the company and the recipient and vice versa

Source: https://etico.iiep.unesco.org/en/code-conduct-vs-code-ethics-whats-difference

Professional code of ethics

- **Professional Codes of Ethics** are established guidelines that regulate the behavior of individuals within a specific profession, ensuring that their actions conform to ethical standards and meet societal expectations.

- **Purposes**: -
  - **Guidance**: They provide a framework for ethical decision-making, assisting professionals in managing intricate scenarios where moral conflicts may occur.
  - **Accountability**: Codes establish standards for professional conduct, ensuring that individuals are held accountable for their actions and decisions..
  - **Public Trust**: By adhering to a code of ethics, professionals can enhance public confidence in their integrity and commitment to the public good.

Are professional code of ethics important?

Are professional code of ethics important?

- Answer: Yes,
  - Professional Codes of Ethics are essential in maintaining high standards within professions, particularly in rapidly evolving fields like software engineering.
  - They assist professionals recognize their broader responsibilities and encourage ethical behavior that prioritizes public welfare over personal or corporate gain

Differentiated professions

- A differentiated profession refers to a specialized field in which professionals have special skills, knowledge, or approaches that make them distinct from others in the same industry.

- The Differentiation can be due various factors, including advanced education, specialized training, unique methodologies, or a commitment to ethical standards.

- For example: doctors, lawyers, etc.

Do you think software engineers are differentiated professionals?

Engineering Ethics

- Are codes of ethics and guidelines established by engineering professional societies or organizations that set the standards of behavior and ethical conduct for engineers.

- The primary purpose is to ensure that engineers adhere to high ethical standards in their work and uphold the interests of society, the environment, and public safety.

- Engineers are responsible for designing and developing products, systems, buildings, and infrastructure that impact people's lives daily.

- Therefore, it is critical that they follow ethical principles when performing their duties to avoid adverse consequences

Engineering Ethics

- Its significance
  - helps build credibility among peers and clients in the industry
  - help prevent legal issues from arising due to unethical practices
  - Engineering codes of ethics play a crucial role in maintaining professionalism within the field

Engineering Codes of Ethics versus Professional Codes of Ethics

- Engineering codes of ethics are unique because they place a strong emphasis on the safety and well-being of the public.
  - engineers have a significant impact on society since their actions have serious consequences for the people who use their products and services.
- Engineering codes of ethics include specific guidelines for addressing technical issues and making decisions related to complex projects.
- engineering codes of ethics often emphasize the importance of continuing education and ongoing professional development

https://pdh-pro.com/pe-resources/common-features-of-engineering-codes-of-ethics/

Principles of Engineering code of Ethics

- To be continued...