Person #2

Ethics Final Exam

5/10/17

**II: Autonomy**

I believe autonomy is extremely valuable in life and in any profession. A person should have some form of say in what they are doing. I feel autonomy is important because it is almost a part of someone’s humanity to make decisions. I do think that full autonomy is extremely dangerous to how our society is built. If anyone could run around doing anything they wanted because they could, we would have a timeline that would be like “The Purge”. Luckily we have some form of rules enforced by the government to prevent that. These rules limit our autonomy for the end goal of safety.

As a computer science major, I feel that client autonomy should be limited to an extent. If I had to develop a website for a client, I would want to establish a mix of a paternalistic model relationship and a contract model relationship. I wouldn’t want to have a complete paternalistic relationship because if the client has any changes or suggestions in the middle of the project, I may not have to change what I’m doing because I wouldn’t have to. And I don’t think an entirely contract relationship would be a good idea unless the client has a coding background as well. Also if the client doesn’t know what he/she is talking about then it could lead to some issues later on in project.

I would want a part parent model relationship to make sure what the client is asking for is reasonable and within my expertise. Also, if I would let a client that has no computer expertise help with the decision making in the coding section for the webpage the project would take a lot longer than if I were to step in and just do the project. I do feel the contract model relationship would be helpful so the client can have a big part in the design section. If the webpage looks like what the client asked for, then there shouldn’t be as much complaining if something looks off or the client doesn’t like it.

In this example I feel that we can limit the client’s autonomy by limiting their influence on the execution of the coding process. The client may ask for reports on how the code is coming, but I feel the client should not interfere with how the code is written unless it is necessary. The reason limiting a client’s autonomy is important is so that a professional may do their hired job. Unless a client has important information to add or any helpful advice, they should leave the professional alone because the professional should have the training to know what he/she is doing without the clients help.

Another example of how limiting a client’s autonomy is a good thing can be that the suggestion given by the client can result in a bad outcome. The professional can then stop the client from making the bad decision and come up with a better solution the problem.

**III: Justice**

I believe justice for Utilitarianism is based on deciding which action will generate the most utils. For example, if a jury that was assigned to the court case was entirely utilitarian, they would decide to make the person guilty or innocent based on the amount of utils he/she had generated. If the jury were entirely rule utilitarian, they would try to create a rule for every case of the same crime.

In deontological ethics, I believe justice is directly affected by what your paramount duty to society is. For example, bring back the jury case from earlier, but this time with deontological ethics beliefs shared among all the jury members.

The jury’s decision would be heavily affected by what their duty tells them to do. So if you have all the jury members have different duties from one another, that jury will take a while to create a decision if those duties don’t align nicely. The jury members would be influenced even more if they took more of a Ross approach to deontological ethics. According to Ross, non-maleficence is the paramount duty for everyone. So if the sentence was for execution, the jury would find the person guilty of their crimes but would no to the execution just because of the “no harm” mentality.

Virtue ethics would find justice in a situation based on how a moral exemplar would take action in that particular scenario based on how they have acted in similar scenarios. To bring back the jury case again, there are multiple unclear ways to this outcome if all of the jury members have virtue ethics beliefs. The best case scenario regarding time to make a decision would be in all the jury members have the same moral exemplar. It may not be just, but it would be the fastest way to make a decision. On the other hand, if all the jury members had a different moral exemplar that all conflicted with everyone else’s, a decision would not be made in a timely manner or at all if people are too strong in their beliefs.

I feel that utilitarianism has the most emphasis on justice. If something is going to cause the most utils, it will generate the best result in most cases. I didn’t think deontological ethics was a great decision for justice because of the option to have a duty higher than creating a just answer to the case is available. I also thought the concept of no harm may come to be a limiting justice factor as well because sending someone to jail could harm that individual physically and mentally. I didn’t think virtue ethics was the best one for justice either due to the fact that an individual could chose the wrong moral exemplar or misconstrue how the moral exemplar acted the way he/she acted. There also maybe a hidden determining factor that may cause a moral exemplar to create an exception case opposed to what they would really do in a situation. So this too may case a misinterpretation of if someone was trying to reference this moral exemplar for help in decision making.

I don’t believe any of the ethical theories are perfect by any means, or are really at fault for not putting so much emphasis on justice. These three theories are more for a business environment opposed to a government environment. The utilitarian ethics in a workplace is not as useful to me because of how long it would take to calculate the utils to a situation that is pretty simple to answer. Deontological ethics is more useful in a business environment because it just relies on a professional to know what their duty is and to just do it. The virtue ethicist I believe has one of the easier ethical codes to follow in a workplace. The professional just has to ask what their moral exemplar would do in that situation and then do something similar.

**IV: Risk**

I believe that the professionals should monitor how much risk their product should have in a moderately paternalistic way. It is a way that the professionals can cover their assets and choose how much risk their company wants to go through. The consumer will always find a way to modify the product to generate their own risk regardless of how the manufacturer sees the product’s final design. For example, in certain videogame communities, people may mod their games so they do some funny things or fix bugs in their games that the developers haven’t patched yet. The downside of this is if a player created mod is done incorrectly it could potentially cause more harm to the user’s computer than the original broken game.

I believe utilitarianism would be the best ethical theory to calculate risk in the most efficient manner. In the ethical theory, utilitarianism is all about calculating utils and the outcome of a circumstance based on the actions of people. The whole ethical theory is built upon finding the risks in a certain scenario’s outcome. For example, a utilitarian professional could calculate how many utils to adding or removing a feature and make a decision based on the results. Another reason utilitarianism would be better to use in this scenario is that it is so black and white with its decision making. It also can help create guidelines to a process so that if something creates a certain value of utils, the product can be sold. That util threshold can be established to whatever value the company or professional sees fit.

The reason utilitarianism is better in this instance than deontological ethics is that deontological ethics focuses on duty. This duty may limit the amount of risk autonomy that a professional has if the duty is at a high enough priority. For example, engineers have a paramount duty to protect the safety of the public. If the product has a slight chance to cause harm, it may limit the risk autonomy for a company because of the engineer. This risk may cause the engineer to whistle blow if the risk is severe enough.

The reason utilitarianism would be better than virtue ethics in this case is that virtue ethics can be so broad and open to interpretation on how much risk a professional can afford. For example, a professional or company can follow a very strict moral exemplar or a very lax moral exemplar. With utilitarianism, the risk has a potential to be put in a black and white perspective on what needs to be done. Virtue ethics can be a wild card on whether or not the ethical code will interfere with the amount of risk. Virtue ethics has the potential to make a systematic way of calculating risk, but it would be easier to just use utilitarianism which already has a system for calculating risk.