

FIT1049: IT professional practice

Practice questions for the topics from
Week 8 to Week 11

[No lecture in Week 7!]



How to use this document

In this document you will find all the (FLUX) quizzes and questions discussed in the Weeks 8-11 lectures (NB: no lecture was held in Week 7). For the quizzes, I have provided the 'correct answers' and some additional comments, though you will have to understand that some of the questions are deliberately nuanced and/or ambiguous, and how 'correct' they are would depend on the way you look at them. As noted in the lectures, this was to promote discussion in lecture (while some were accidentally so, promoting even more discussion...), and you will thus have to understand that this document alone will not convey to you the entirety of what was covered in the lectures.

As for the nuanced/ambiguous nature of these questions, though, you can be assured however that we will not follow such a style in the actual exam, and all the actual exam questions will have clear 'correct' answers.

Also to note is that the actual exam for this unit will usually not include any multiple choice questions, but the way the questions are designed would be very similar to the ways these quizzes are constructed. For example, for a question like the one below, it is possible that you will get a short answer question instead, for which you will however provide a short written response, just like the option provided (and highlighted).

So by reviewing these question, you will learn not only how to approach these questions, but also how you can word your response in such a way to address the question clearly.

Question 3: The basics of communications

The communication models tend to assume the presence of the 'audience' as the receiver of the communication one initiates. Could a piece of communication be effective even if this 'audience' include multiple cohorts of people?

1. No – professional communications should be developed in a precisely targeted manner, and if there are multiple audiences for the given communication, it is a poorly designed one.
2. Yes – there are occasions where one initiates a communication that would be interpreted by different audiences, and this is part of the craft of professional communications.
3. Yes – the communication may well reach different audiences, but as long as it works effectively with the majority of them, the communication could be considered 'effective'.

The other type of questions you will find in this document are like the one below, which we discussed more generally in lecture. You will find some hints for you to consider how you can approach these questions, and it would be a good idea to practice writing how you can respond to these questions clearly and convincingly.

I also added some 'sample answers' where appropriate, but please note that these are 'samples'; there are different ways to respond to each question as well.

Hope you find this document useful in reviewing the contents covered in the lectures to date. We have also provided another version for the Weeks 2-6 lectures, so please have a look at it too.

Question 6: The basics of communications

Assume that you are looking for a casual position in the IT field, and your tutor suggested writing to his/her friend, Mr Bob Washingmachine, who works as a HR manager at Monash IT Consulting, an IT company. Write an e-mail message to him in the space provided below as appropriate.

FIT1049: IT professional practice

Week 8: Professional ethics and legal frameworks for IT professionals



Question 1: Contractual obligations – Non-compete clause

So you were offered a job as a full-time programmer in one of the leading game development companies in Australia. The company is extremely well known, and this is the place you always dreamt of working at. This morning you received an offer letter with a contract by email, and you were supposed to get back to the company with a signed contract. As you review the contract, most of the things were something you already expected, such as the span of working hours and leave entitlements and so on, but one thing stood out: that you will not be able to work in the same industry for five years if you ever leave the company. Is this really something they can include in the contract?

1. No – it is something they just made up, and they cannot tell you where you can and cannot work once you left the job.
2. Yes – it is a legitimate condition that the company can potentially include in the contract, and you have to accept it in order to get the job.
3. Yes – it is a legitimate condition that the company can potentially include in the contract, but you may be able to renegotiate it.

Question 2: Contractual obligations – Conflict of interest

Stick to the same scenario. While working for the company, you were approached by another game development company to do some minor programming work for their product. You feel like it would be a good experience, and think you can manage it in the evenings when you are not at work. Is there any issue with this?

1. Of course not – as long as you are not doing it during the work hours, it should be fine.
2. Yes – there will be an issue if you are working full-time already, and this will be automatically breaching the contract if you undertake more work outside.
3. Maybe – it depends.

Question 3: Non-disclosure agreement 1

So in the end you manage to do the casual work at another game development company. Your manager at the other company (where you work full-time) was actually quite supportive about it, since they consider this as a professional development opportunity for you too. Two months in, you already learnt lots of programming skills at both the companies, and have been applying the skills at both the workplaces. One day, though, you got a letter from the other company's lawyers talking about your breach of a non-disclosure agreement and confidential information, and they point to the strong similarity between the particular sections of the game you developed at each of the companies. Would this really constitute the case of the breach of those agreements?

1. No – that's how we learn things and gain our expertise, and it is impossible to police how we use what we learn in everyday practice.
2. Yes – you may have potentially breached the agreements by disclosing some of the knowledge you were not supposed to share with other companies.
3. No – you were simply doing your job with your best intention, and the similarity is simply due to the fact they were done by the same person (i.e. you)

Question 4: Non-disclosure agreement 2

In the same scenario, what's the potential consequence?

1. A block on your other company selling the game in which the similarity was found;
2. Recall and/or destruction of all copies of the product;
3. Compensation for all the damages caused for the company, and return of any profits made by the sales of the game; or
4. All of the above.

Question 5: Intellectual property

In one of the team meetings, your colleague came up with the idea of developing a game based on *Sabaac*, a fictitious game played by Han Solo in a Star Wars film. It is only a fictitious game mentioned very briefly in the actual film, so there is no record of any rules or how it is played, so the idea is to make up rules yourselves, and turn this into a mobile game and sell it to Star Wars fans (or else) on the Apple App store. Would this be a problem?

1. Yes – even if it is fictitious, the idea of the game might be protected by a patent from the film's production company.
2. No – the game does not really exist (as yet), and it is only an idea, so it is of anyone to use freely.
3. Yes – any creation by someone else would be copyrighted by the person who came up with it.

Question 6: Copyright and 'Fair Use'

So your team has gone ahead, and developed the game which is selling pretty well. Your team is increasingly keen to exploit this opportunity, and wondered if they could suggest to the management to use GIF images with images from the film, such as *Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*. The idea is to promote the game by tweeting the GIF images with captions, such as "From a Cantina, far far away to your mobile device" and "Go bust? Don't worry, we won't take your ship!" Would you think this'd cause any IP issue?

1. No. GIFs will use such a small amount of the images from the film, and those tweets use such a limited amount of words from the film it is bound to be 'fair use'.
2. No. As long as you don't include those images and dialogue in the game itself, this would be acceptable.
3. Yes. Even using a small amount of images or dialogue from the film could be infringement.

Question 7: Trademarks

Meanwhile, some of your colleagues are concerned that someone else will try and make another Sabacc game, since there are numerous rip-offs and clones online. They are thus thinking of proposing to the management to register Sabacc as a trademark to make it clear they own the game. They already searched the US trademarks register and can't find anything there, so they think this will be the best way to protect the game. Are there any problems with registering the trademark Sabacc and naming their company after the game?

1. No – Lucasfilm have not registered the trademark so it is fair to assume that whoever applies for it first would have the right to claim it as their own.
2. Yes – Lucasfilm could still have trademark protection in Sabaac.
3. Maybe – You should ask Lucasfilm first for permission.

Question 8: Intellectual property

You bring up all these possible issues with the colleagues, but they don't seem too concerned. They tell you that the app will be available on the Apple app store, and if there was any problem with it, Apple would reject it as they are very careful about what they allow there. Is this really true?

1. Yes – Apple have very careful processes to determine what should be on their app store, so any of these issues will be identified as part of these processes.
2. Yes – although it is not Apple's responsibility to check all games for IP or other legal issues, they will one way or another identify these issues and will let you know.
3. No – it is not true at all.

Question 9: Data use and privacy 1

Jun is a data analyst working in the IT department of a company that sells vitamin supplement products that are known to be effective for relief of specific diseases. One day, the Sales and Marketing department staff approached Jun to profile each of the previous clients by age, gender, ethnicity (by their last name) and types of products they purchased, so that they can 'target' their marketing activities in order to reverse the recent decline in the profit. As an IT staff member, however, Jun knows that her company's policy on the use of client data states that the company only uses such data for delivery purpose, which contradicts with the ways the Sales and Marketing department proposes to use the data. If Jun were to comply with the proposal, which one of the six core values in the *ACS Code of Ethics* ([ACS, 2014](#)) would Jun be breaching as a result?

1) The Primacy of the Public Interest; 2) The Enhancement of Quality of Life; 3) Honesty; 4) Competence; 5) Professional Development; or 6) Professionalism

Question 10: Data use and privacy 2

So you now know that Jun shouldn't be doing what the Sales and Marketing team proposed. Jun indeed responded to the Sales and Marketing staff that she won't be able to do what they suggested, and as a result, Jun had received an email from the department's manager that he will be formally writing to Jun's manager a complaint that her refusal would compromise the department's and hence the company's performance. What should she be doing then?

1. Write back to the Sales and Marketing manager to find a workable compromise;
2. Report to Jun's own manager in IT and explain the situation; or
3. Report to the police or relevant authority as a case of whistleblowing.

Question 11: Data use and privacy 3

So Jun spoke to her line manager, who then told her that the company will 'update' its terms and conditions to more generally allow the company to use all their clients' data to "provide services" to the clients and to 3rd party companies that the company has agreements with.

The manager also reassured Jun not to worry because the data will be de-identified; the Sales and Marketing team will not get the information about who is being targeted, but they will only know that advertising is being targeted to a certain number of people overall. The manager also explains that this way you will not necessarily need to handle personal or sensitive information yourself; making everyone immune to any of the ethical or legal risks.

Are you convinced?

Question 12: When every attempt failed...

Danielle is a developer working for a medium sized software engineering company. Together with her manager and two other developers, Danielle has been assigned for a project to develop an interface for the existing patient data management system used in a public hospital in regional Victoria (Australia). In the course of the project, Danielle found that the system has a series of critical errors in the way it stores the patient data, exposing the patient data potentially to those who should not have access at all. These issues however do not have any direct link to Danielle's project, and the project is going so well that it will conclude next week.

When Danielle advised this to Danielle's own management, they were not keen on doing anything, fearing that the client organisation may lose their faith on Danielle's company, and also considering that Danielle's company is not liable for this issue. Danielle also raised this to the hospital management, but they just responded that this issue has nothing to do with the project Danielle and her team was conducting.

Question 12 (cont'd): When every attempt failed...

What can Danielle do? Assume that she had exhausted all the internal processes available in her own company.

1. Don't do anything further. She had tried everything she could, but once the project is over, she would have nothing to do with this hospital.
2. Don't do anything further. She should after all respect the value of *Competence* and *Professionalism* that demands her diligence to her stakeholders, including both her employer and the clients.
3. Seek an option of anonymous whistleblowing using an independent authority and/or an independent whistleblowing platform, observing the *Primacy of Public Interest*.
4. Contact local media and/or politicians to report the issue, in light of the *Enhancement of Quality of Life and Honesty*.

Answers and comments for the quizzes

- 1) The answer is 3. Always check the extent of the clause to see how reasonable what it states is, and how it would implicate to your future career. Also note that the contract can be negotiated before you actual sign...
- 2) The answer is 3. Different organisations have different protocols around their employees undertaking paid work outside their role, and there are also some questions around both actual and perceived conflict of interest, especially when the two roles are very similar in such a scenario as this.
- 3) The answer is 2. And this is one way of such a 'conflict of interest' could manifest. Also be familiar with the idea of non-disclosure agreement and confidentiality (more to come next week), which are usually stated in the contract, making you bounded legally not to disclose (certain) information gained from your work as an employee.
- 4) The answer is 4. Not always, but as discussed in lecture, it could happen. So read your contract, and be very careful and discrete about how you use your knowledge and expertise you learnt on the job!

Answers and comments for the quizzes (cont'd)

- 5) The answer is 2. The 'idea' alone cannot be protected... Review these concepts if you are not sure.
- 6) The answer is 3. Now we are stepping into the copyright territory. Any *expressions* of ideas are protected under copyrights,. Also note the limited scope of 'Fair Use' both geographically and conceptually.
- 7) The answer is 3, or possibly 2, if the court decides that the association between the name of the game and the Star Wars franchise is strong enough for Lucasfilm to assume their right to register. The best practice of course is, to ask for permission.
- 8) The answer is 3. It is the developer's responsibility to clear all these IP requirements. That is why you need to know when to consult the expert as to future-proof your practice.

Answers and comments for the quizzes (cont'd)

- 9) The answer is **1**, though 'potential' implications would be multifaceted, including 2, 4, and 6. Note that the refusal to accept the proposal may lead to the further decline of the company's profit, and also negative impacts on the Sales and Marketing department. However, the primacy of the public stands as even stronger an imperative here.
- 10) The answer is **2**. This is where the skill to logically justify one's action comes in as an essential skills! Save the option 3 for later in case the management didn't listen (hopefully not!).
- 11) Hints: There are a number of familiar arguments here (e.g. de-identification of data, de-attribution of moral responsibilities from data handlers, 'policy updates' where the clients cannot refuse unless they stop using the services). Observe them and consider their implications.
- 12) The answer is 3. The option 1 is contrary to all the things discussed so far, and the options 2 and 4 are examples of common misreading of the values.

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Week 9: Organisational governance and information management



Question 1: Organisational structure

As an employee of an international retail company, you are visiting the New York City to meet with the North American counterpart of your IT Department in the Melbourne office. After a few days exchanging ideas with your American colleagues, you find out so much of the business processes in the US branch are different from their Australian equivalent, and you realise why there have been so many instances of miscommunications and inefficiency in the past between your (i.e. Melbourne) IT Department and the IT Department in the States when working together. Which of the following would be the likely organisational structure in your company?

1. Matrix
2. Functional
3. Divisional

Question 2: Communications and organisational structures

You are working in an organisation that has a matrix structure of management. Which of the following options describes likely challenges best?

1. The structure may result in different areas of the organisation (e.g. IT, Finance, Legal) isolated from each other, creating silos of their respective expertise that lead to lack of communications and hence inefficiency.
2. The structure would assign staff with multiple reporting lines to manage, which can lead to complexity in human resource management as well as communications to regularly maintain.
3. The structure may reinforce their own local culture and processes in an autonomous environment, and this may result in the communication errors due to the lack of shared context between different sections of the organisation.

Question 3: Documents and messages

Which of the following written communications is NOT a characteristic of well prepared documentation?

1. A well prepared document is self-sufficient, so that anyone who reads the document can ascertain who prepared the document for what purpose for whom in which circumstance.
2. A well prepared document is complete, so that it addresses its purposes internally without needing to refer the reader to sources outside the document.
3. A well prepared document is open, so that it includes a set of specific instructions and/or initiatives for the reader to follow through in order to complete the communication.

Question 4: Organisational goals and objectives

Which one of them would NOT be part of 'organisational goals'?

1. Our organisation thrives to be one of the best consulting firms in the Asia Pacific region.
2. Our organisation aims to cater for those disadvantaged, and deliver positive changes to the communities and societies.
3. Our organisation aims to deliver a 20% increase of the number of customers in the next two financial years.

Question 5: Policies and procedures

Which one of the following statements would best fit in a procedure document than in a policy document?

1. This product will not collect any personal information of its users.
2. All the personal information mistakenly recorded in the system will need to be deleted immediately.
3. The employment may be terminated if the correct procedure was not followed.

Question 6: Guidelines and best practice

Which of the following is NOT part of the purpose of guidelines and best practice documents?

1. They are another version of the procedures however with some extra details specific to the organisation in order to supplement what is not covered in the procedures.
2. They are used when there are certain processes that are recommended but cannot be enforced or prescribed uniformly across by the procedures.
3. They consolidate the ways one can achieve the highlight standard of practice when there is no legal or professional frameworks are available.

Question 7: Strategic, governance and operational documents

Which of the combination below reflects the best alignment between the examples and their respective types of documents?

1. Annual plan (strategic); Internet Use Policy for Staff (governance); Meeting minutes arising from one of the project meetings (operational).
2. Mission statement (governance); Staff Procedures on Customer Data Retention (operational); Project proposal produced to engage with a new client (strategic).
3. Whitepaper written on the topic of emerging technology (operational); Acceptable Use Policy (strategic); One of the emails sent out from the project team to a client's organisation outlining the company's position on certain legal matters (governance).

Question 8: Organisational documents and compliance

You are working in an Australian organisation however with a strong business presence in Italy. There were recently major changes to the data protection regulation in EU, and this regulation appears to be more stringent than the position your company's existing policies currently hold. What your company should do?

1. Nothing. It is not an Australian regulation, so as long as staff working in Italy are aware of this change, there is no need to change anything at this stage.
2. The current policies need to be revised and a new policy should be in place to be compliant with the new regulation, since the current business practice based on the same policy may violate the new regulation when applied in Italy.
3. The current policies need to be revised and a new policy should be in place, so that your organisation's policies would reflect the latest trend in data protection while observing the highest standard in data protection for the benefits of clients.

Question 9: Workplace behaviours 1

Anne is a mother who has two young children, and is currently working as a part-time programmer 3 days a week. She has been deployed to a team that recently lost its long-serving team member for redundancy. From the start, Anne was met with very hostile attitudes from the team members who falsely believed that her appointment was the main reason that resulted in the sacking of the said member who lost his job. Their behaviours quickly escalated into a series of bullying behaviours, and the team, for example, deliberately scheduled regular team meetings on Mondays, on which Anne does not work. Anne repeatedly raised this with the team, but they insisted that holding these meetings on Mondays is part of the 'operational requirements'. They also publicly criticised her for working part-time and verbally mocked her, while making no effort at all to share with her what is actually discussed at these meetings. Which of the following describes the situation best?

1. This is considered a form of discrimination against Anne as a working mother.
2. This is considered a bullying behaviour towards Anne.
3. This specific behaviour does not actually constitute bullying nor discrimination, and the team has a valid point holding meetings on Mondays.

Question 10: Workplace behaviours 2

In the same scenario, now you are being deployed as a new team member to Anne's team. You quickly realise that there is something going on between Anne and the rest of the team, but you were still oblivious to the team's bullying behaviours till Anne confided to you the details. Since your experience in other teams within the same company has been so positive, what she told you was initially a big surprise for you, and at the same time, you felt rather angry about the treatment Anne received to date. Which of the following would be the most appropriate action to take?

1. You as a team member speak to those identified as bullies and point out that their behaviours have been unacceptable.
2. You as a colleague encourages Anne to speak to the manager for further actions.
3. You as a staff member report to your manager these bullying incidents.

Question 11: Workplace behaviours 3

Again in the same scenario. One morning, you received an email from those engaged in the bullying behaviours. The email was legitimately operational and work related, except, at the bottom of the email you found a thread of previous emails they forgot to delete. The thread included a series of derogatory and humiliating comments about Anne, and it also implied that those participating in the exchange of such emails have intimate knowledge of Anne's children and personal life, presumably obtained from Anne's social media account visible to the public. What's your immediate step to take?

1. Notify Anne straight away since this may pose a risk to her children and personal life.
2. Forward the email to your manager with an outline of what you know about the bullying behaviours as background.
3. Speak to the manager and/or HR urgently and report this as an incident.

Question 12: Discrimination

Julian is a Project Manager working for a consulting firm. His colleague, Rachelle, worked previously with him on a same project, and during this time Rachelle confided with Julian that she had at one stage suffered from a particular mental health condition which made her attendance at work inconsistent. Now Julian is being deployed to his next project, and his manager nominated Rachelle to be one of the project members. Julian knows that it is a high-stakes project, and he requested his manager an alternative member on the basis of Rachelle's previous medical condition. Which of the following describes Julian's action best?

1. This would constitute an inappropriate behaviour involving the breach of privacy.
2. This would constitute discrimination.
3. This is simply a wise advice.

Question 13: Accessibility (and OHS)

As you join a new workplace, you realise that all the desks used in the office are fixed to a certain height. You injured your back when you were playing football in school, and since then you cannot work sitting down for long hours. You have a doctor's official advice to use a stand-up desk (or equivalent); would it be reasonable to ask your new workplace to set up a stand-up desk?

1. Yes – you can ask just in case they are happy to accommodate your request.
2. No – unless you stated and negotiated this before you sign the contract, you won't have any entitlement for this provision.
3. Yes – you can ask and negotiate what suits you and the organisation best.

Question 14: Equality and equity

You are working in a company where the leadership roles within the IT Department are occupied solely by male managers and team leaders. As part of the initiative across the company to increase female representation in the senior positions, the management is now considering only to hire female managers and team leaders for the next round of recruitment when these positions became vacant. Which of the following would be the most likely justification the company would hold?

1. This arrangement aims to achieve the provision of equal opportunities for female candidates.
2. This arrangement would provide the equity to female candidates.
3. This arrangement is nothing to do with equality or equity, but aims to increase the diversity of the workforce for creativity and innovation.

Question 15: Power abuse

Alex and Nicola are both working for the same project for three months. Alex is a Senior Business Analyst deployed from the IT Department for the new client management system, while Nicola is a Junior Marketing Officer deployed by the Sales and Marketing Department for a short term engagement in the project. Even though they are from different work areas, they both got along quite well with each other at work. One day Alex had to pick up his private mobile phone from a repair shop, but because of some issues arising from the project, he found himself not able to pick it up himself. Alex and Nicola often take a turn to pick up lunch for each other when they are busy, so Alex thought if Nicola could perhaps pick his phone up on the way back to office, since she is at another location close to the repair shop. Would that be a problem?

1. Yes. Alex should not be asking Nicola something unrelated to work during the work hours.
2. Yes. Nicola might feel obliged to say yes even if she did not want to do this.
3. No, they are friends with each other, so this is acceptable as long as Nicola is happy to do so.

Question 16: Sexual harassment

Stephanie is working in a medium-sized software development company as a frontend developer, amongst other colleagues who are all male. One of the colleagues has in his wallpaper a meme that contains a subtle yet derogatory message about women, and even though the meme is visible only partially behind numerous open windows on the screen, it bothers her personally. Stephanie respects this colleague as a developer, and finds him generally a very nice person to work with. She also knows that this colleague thinks that this meme is more like a clever satire than a derogatory joke. Which of the following describes the situation best?

1. What one has as a wallpaper is after all up to one's personal preference, and Stephanie would be asking for potentially too much a personal favour if she was to ask him to take the meme down.
2. Stephanie knows that it was not ill-intended, so she can just let it go unless she finds it unbearable. After all it is a professional workplace, so she should not be commenting on his personal preference nor judging on his sense of humour.
3. Stephanie felt uncomfortable, and that is enough a reason to raise this as an issue.

Answers and comments for the quizzes

- 1) The answer is 3. The idea is that there are 'divisions' that are geographically or functionally instituted, and each of these divisions has its own autonomous structure within. In the scenario, there are geographically separate divisions, which both has its own IT departments. Also consider potential challenges such a structure may have.
- 2) The answer is 2. The option 1 is a likely challenge for the functional structure, while the option 3 is for the divisional structure. Again, consider the differences, and their strengths and weaknesses, both for communications and business processes.
- 3) The answer is 3. This is true with 'messages', which we will cover next week.
- 4) The answer is 3. Note the difference between the directional/aspirational statements and the tangible deliverable/outcome oriented statements. Some companies may have 'missions statements' or 'value statements' in place of, or together with, what we refer to as the 'organisational goals' in the ePub.

Answers and comments for the quizzes (cont'd)

- 5) The answer is 2. The policies are usually to do with WHAT, while the procedures are to do with HOW to make what the policies outline happen. It is a useful skill to be able to contribute to policy discussion, and filter through what should be included in policies as opposed to procedures, for example.
- 6) The answer is 1. Any guidelines should not be 'another version' of the procedures, and they should have their own purpose, as outlined in the options 2 and 3.
- 7) The answer is 1. Note different examples of organisational documents. Each options are ordered with an example of strategic, governance and operational document.
- 8) The answers are 2 and 3, which represents two of the common incentives for organisations – compliance (forensic) and aspiration.

Answers and comments for the quizzes (cont'd)

- 9) The answer is 2. Note the difference between 'bullying behaviours' and inappropriate behaviours and discrimination.
- 10) The answer is 2 then possibly 3, depending on Anne's response. The option 1 may lead to victimization of Anne. The option 2 would be ideal if Anne is comfortable, but if not, you may report more generally to your manager as a serious issue within the team. One way or another the goal is to make a change; you cannot just sit on it.
- 11) The answer is 3. It is a serious issue, and needs to be dealt with urgently with appropriate levels of authority. The option 1 may not be recommended; Anne should know, but due to the seriousness of the matter, you may like to first consult how this should be communicated to Anne. That is where an organizational approach to workplace issues come in.
- 12) The answer is 1. There is also a major privacy breach here if Julian told the manager about the nature of Rachelle's medical condition.

Answers and comments for the quizzes (cont'd)

- 13) The answer is 1. There is also a major privacy breach here if Julian told the manager about the nature of Rachelle's medical condition.
- 14) The answer is 3. The organisation is expected to make 'reasonable adjustments' in order to make the workplace safe and accessible for all. The point here is to understand that it is perfectly reasonable to expect such discussion.
- 15) The answer is 2. This arrangement is not providing 'equal opportunities' as such, and that is why it can potentially be contentious. Be clear about the difference between equality and equity, and consider the challenges that come with affirmative actions (i.e. equity approach) while also considering potential 'double standards' associated with the idea of equality. The option 3 is a bit of curved ball; the first sentence is wrong in the context of the scenario, but the second part highlights the general justification for the arrangement one way or another.

Answers and comments for the quizzes (cont'd)

- 16) The answer is 3. The motivation is irrelevant in any case of harassment, and the fact that Stephanie felt uncomfortable constitutes the basis of taking a further action. What can Stephanie do? Think about it.

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Week 10: Organisational communications and stakeholder engagement



Question 1: External and internal documents 1

Ming is a business analyst working as part of the consulting team deployed by his company to a client organisation, and he is also Project Manager responsible for this deployment. One of his team members from Finance has recently spoke to Ming that she will have to be away unexpectedly to attend a family commitment for two weeks, and Ming had arranged to 'borrow' a replacement staff member even though he was working on a different project within the Finance Department.

This arrangement will not cause any changes to the project's progress, but Ming will need to implement some changes to the workflows since this replacement staff is not familiar with the background of the project. There will soon be another milestone meeting with the clients, and Ming will have to submit a progress report. Provided that he has the full authority over resourcing (i.e. no need to consult the clients of the change of staff), how Ming should communicate this to his stakeholders?

Question 1 (cont'd): External and internal documents 1

1. Ming should advise the change of staff informally to the client to reassure that there are no implications to the progress, while he does not mention the specifics of the staff changes in the report itself.
2. Ming should advise both informally and in the progress report the change of staff, including the reason for the original team member to be absent.
3. Ming does not need to let the clients know anything about the change of staff, since this change would not affect the progress of the project at all from the client's viewpoint.

Question 2: External and internal documents 2

In the same scenario, Ming will also have to submit a regular report to a group of managers at his own organisation of the progress of this deployment. What the course of action would Ming be following?

1. Ming should be covering in the report the replacement arrangement as well as the justifications and the implications of this arrangement to different sections, as well as the project's progress itself.
2. Ming would not need to be reporting on the staff arrangement, since he has the full authority over resourcing of this deployment.
3. Ming should be reporting on the project only, and have an informal conversation with his own manager in IT of the above arrangement.

Question 3: Authorship of documentation

Jasmine has just written for Christine, i.e. her manager, minutes from the latest meeting with one of their clients. In the meeting, it was clear that there were some confusion around the scope of work between Jasmine's organisation and the client's (which Jasmine could not resolve with her limited authority), and Jasmine is wondering what could be done now. Choose from the following the most appropriate approach in this situation.

1. Jasmine should send the minutes to both the clients and Christine as an accurate record of the meeting, since it was she who attended the meeting after all.
2. Jasmine should first check with Christine before sharing the minutes with the clients.
3. Jasmine should first share the minutes with the clients to see if they agree, before she sends the document to Christine.

Question 4: 'Messages' in the workplace 1

You are an IT consultant managing a project that aims to implement a new customer management system in a client organisation. For a reason beyond your team's control, the project's timeframe is becoming increasingly tight, and your team now needs additional resources in order to complete it on time. Tom, who is responsible for legal matters for the project, suggests that the team would benefit greatly if the team gets another staff member from the Legal Department, and you and the rest of the team agree. You in your capacity as the Project Manager now write an email to the managers in IT (i.e. your boss) and in Legal (from which you will hopefully get an extra staff member) to see if they are prepared to deploy an additional Legal staff member for this project. Based on this description, which management structure does your company have?

1. Matrix
2. Functional
3. Divisional

Question 5: 'Messages' in the workplace 2

In the same scenario, which of the following would be the best approach to seek advice from the two managers?

1. "Due to the reason beyond the team's control, the timeframe of the project is becoming increasingly tight. In light of this constraint, Tom suggested that the team should have an additional staff member from Legal so that the team can complete the project on time. Would you confirm that this arrangement would be possible?"
2. "Due to the reason beyond the team's control, the timeframe of the project is becoming increasingly tight. In light of this constraint, I as the Project Manager have decided that the team would require an additional staff member from Legal so that the team can complete the project on time. Would you advise if this arrangement would be possible?"
3. "Due to the reason beyond the team's control, the timeframe of the project is becoming increasingly tight. In light of this constraint, the team have agreed that we would benefit from having an additional staff member from Legal in order to complete the project on time. Would you let us know if this arrangement would be possible?"

Question 6: 'Messages' in the workplace 3

Again in the same scenario, you in the end obtained authorisation from the two managers to deploy an additional staff member. You are now writing to let your client know of this arrangement. Which of the following would be the best approach?

1. "On behalf of the project team, I am writing to let you know that we now have an additional staff member from Legal so that the project can be completed on time. Please let us know if this is an acceptable arrangement."
2. "I am writing to advise you of the deployment of an additional staff member from Legal, and this is in response to the unexpected delay caused by a reason beyond our control."
3. "Please be advised that our company has decided the deployment of an additional staff member in order to meet the project deadline. This is in response to the unexpected delay caused by a reason beyond our control. While there is no action necessary on your part, please let the project team know if you have any questions."

Question 7: Privacy and confidentiality 1

It's Monday, and your colleague, Simon, has sent you an email this morning to say that he is taking today off because he has been unwell since weekend. He might return tomorrow, but it depends on how he'd feel then. Meanwhile, one of Simon's clients contacted you after trying his work phone several times, and told you that they want to discuss with Simon something rather urgently. You know that Simon has been working with this client for some years, and that they know each other professionally quite well. What would be your response?

Question 8: Privacy and confidentiality 2

Your company has a manager whose name is exactly the same as yours. As a result, every now and then you receive emails that were directed to this manager. One morning you received another one of those emails in your inbox. You did not realise that the email was for the manager until you read one third of it, and by that time you found some details about the sender's personal circumstances, which the sender would probably like to keep private. What would you do?

Question 9: Privacy and confidentiality 3

You were reviewing the company's online registration form for events. The organiser would like to collect the registrants' email address for contact, but they also would like to collect their mobile phone number *just in case* there was a last-minutes change to the event details. Can they do that? And if so, what'd be the best practice?

Question 10: Social media for organisational use

You have just secured a graduate role at a major consulting company, and are working as an IT consultant. Being one of the latest recruits in the company, you find lots to learn about the internal protocols and acronyms, and thought of creating a portal where all the newer recruits could share their knowledge so that many would benefit from it. You have spoken to other recruits, who all thought that was a great idea, and obtained an approval from the relevant managers. Which platform would you use?

1. A social media page (e.g. Facebook)
2. A wiki
3. A blog

Question 11: Online communications and public relations

You are working as an Online Content Manager in a small design company that has recently grown its popularity through using an extensive marketing strategy using social media. The designs the company produces are often provocative, which is probably part of why it gained such popularity in recent months. One morning there was someone posting a very abusive and discriminatory comment on the company's social media page, criticising one of the company's designs recently produced. By the time you got work, there were already hundreds of responses, many of which were also abusive and inflammatory, and from your experience, you know instantly that there are some 'agitators' who are trying to provoke others. What would you do? Choose what you consider is the best approach below.

Question 11: Online communications and public relations (cont'd)

1. Ignore, and let it keep happening. Any publicity, whether good or bad, is still publicity, so why not?
2. Post your company's official response to the original post, defending your company's design policy and the designer's intentions.
3. Take the original post down, noting the abusive and discriminatory nature of the original post is not acceptable.

Answers and comments for the quizzes

1. The answer may be 1 or 3. The option 1 sounds reasonable, but there may well be a situation where the option 3 is appropriate. The idea is to determine which information should go in informal communications, and then selectively curate the information for a document to suit the purpose. Also note the 'reassurance' part of the scenario. As much as it is important to stick to the purpose of the report to be submitted, it is also important to maintain the context of communication so that the recipient of the communication will be 'prepared' to receive the communication. There is also a potential privacy issue in the option 2, which you should be able to identify.
2. The answer would be 1 (or 3). The option 1 may be the safest option in theory to inform the managers as well as formally document his management decisions, but if the manager tells him otherwise (e.g. "well, we don't usually discuss operational matters in this meeting" or something), he would do the option 3. Again, the details are not very important since these are all hypothetical, but emphasize that in professional practice one will be spending so much time creating a context before they even start writing something. There is also something to be said about the option 2; why would this be wrong? Think about the extent of authority Ming has been given.
3. The answer is 2. The minutes of the meeting will hold its power as an external document representing Jasmine's firm. Since Jasmine does not have the authority, it is best to check with Christine if the firm's position is not misrepresented here. Having said, I have heard all the three justifications one way or another in real situations with varying consequences...

Answers and comments for the quizzes (cont'd)

4. The answer is 1. This is a recap from the last week's lecture, so review if you weren't sure.
5. The answer is 3. The option 1's attribution of the proposal to Tom undermines the writer's role as PM, and may give a false impression that there is a split view within the team. The option 2 reads as though the writer is assuming the authority he/she does not have; the 'decision' is to be made by the managers, not the writer. The option 3's wording is accurate in that the team has agreed on this option, and that the managers hold the authority to decide. Consider the context, as I always say, of the communications.
6. The answer is 3. The option 1 reads as though the decision was exclusively made by the team, but the team itself does not have that authority. Also the last sentence is problematic; the client should not be deciding if this is an acceptable deployment option. The option 2 is one of those messages that leaves the recipient wonder "thanks for letting us know, but so what?" For a message to be effective, it needs an initiative/instruction for the recipient to follow. The option 3 fulfills those requirements.

Answers and comments for the quizzes (cont'd)

7. Hints: There are a number of things for you to consider. How urgent is this matter? In what way you'd let the client know of Simon's unavailability? How much information can you share about Simon with this client? And how would you phrase all these in your communication (be it an email or a telephone call)?
8. Hints: You probably would notify the sender, but how would you do that not only to point out the error to the sender, but also to reassure the sender of the fate of this information? Also consider what you would do with that email too.
9. Hints: A point to consider is whether or not 'just in case' collection of data could be justified. Have a think in terms of what is the minimum information you would require to get the registrants 'registered' (since that was the primary purpose of the form), and then consider how you could *solicit* further information that could be useful to you as well as the registrants.

Answers and comments for the quizzes (cont'd)

10. The answer is 2. Note that the options 1 and 3 are not conducive to consolidation and systematic management of know-how, and depending on the platform, the organization may not retain the ownership of the information uploaded. This of course is not a definite answer, and much depends on the context. One has to, though, be very mindful of different factors before committing to a particular platform as a means of organisational communications.
11. No 'correct' answer as such, and we have heard all of them one way or another with varying consequences. Consider the legitimacy as well as the limitation of these arguments.

FIT1049: IT professional practice

Week 11: IT security



Question 1: Recognising the risks 1

You are engaged as a programmer in a project that is highly confidential within your organisation. Which one of the following is NOT an effective strategy to maintain the secrecy of this project? (No need to go to FLUX today...)

1. Implement a set of strict protocols that define who could access which information.
2. Have the anti-eavesdropping physical facilities specifically for the project in a secret location.
3. Give a codename for the project so that others won't know what you are talking about.

Question 2: Recognising the risks 2

Bianca is a security analyst in an IT consulting firm, and over last two weeks she went through hundreds of emails employees of the client's company sent using the company's email system. This work was conducted in order to identify inappropriate use of the company's emails, and she naturally had to read some emails that included the employees' personal information and/or some personal photos of the employees, some of which were rather compromising for these individual employees. Bianca found some of the things people write in their emails rather funny, and posted on her personal blog called 'The secret life of an IT security analyst' an article about these 'embarrassing' emails however de-identified. What kind of risks can you see?

Question 3: Recognising the risks 3

Matthew is working as a Business Analyst in a major bank that is known to be a very conservative organisation. In his private life, Matthew is also an enthusiastic gamer who writes for his own private blog in which he reviews a range of games, and this blog has been extremely popular and read by many. His online persona on this blog, however, is known to be rather controversial and combative against others who post anything negative against what he wrote.

One evening he was in a fierce exchange of words with one of this readers, and wrote something as a joke that could be read derogatory to a certain cohort of the society. His post got quickly re-posted out of the original context, and it was spread as a 'horrific' comment, even attracting some media attention with his identity as an employee of the bank already identified. What kind of risks can you see?

Question 4: Identification

So, let's say that you are working as a security analyst for a private company that conducts a range of confidential and sensitive research projects outsourced by high-profile clients, such as government agencies and political parties. Your company is indeed reputed for the integrity that is well trusted by those high-profile clientele, and quite naturally your company stores a large amount of sensitive data as well as confidential clients information.

It's Monday in the morning, and as you arrive in your office, you noticed an unusual number of emails from the company's staff outside IT, reporting strange behaviors of the company's client management system. You and another colleague of yours in the IT security quickly check the system log, and you found a sign of suspicious traffic from unspecified hosts. You and your colleague then decided, as per the company's CIR plan, that you will coordinate communications and liaison, while your colleague will pursue more technical solution to the issue. What's your next step?

Question 5: Containment 1

Back in the IT security team, your manager has now declared that this is a critical incident, and set up a 'war room' to control the CIR operations. Your team gradually gathered further intelligence from other sources, and based on all the evidence, it is becoming clear that there is an unknown extent of data breach where some part of the confidential client information stored in the company's server has been compromised.

Your manager instructs the team to further contain the situation, while she asked you to keep acting as a liaison between the IT security team and the rest of the organisation. Meanwhile the IT security team's role account has been flooded by emails from the company's staff reporting all sorts of strange system behaviors... So what's your next step?

Question 6: Containment 2

So you now sent out an internal communique to inform the company's staff of the situation, and you have also made sure that the company has engaged with the relevant authorities. You then noticed that your phone started to ring. Apparently some of the company's staff posted something about the incident without knowing its seriousness, and the local media had picked it up as a potential story. It is a well-known fact that your company has an impressive list of powerful clients, so you can see why they'd be interested.

And of course, your company's clients now started contact your company using a range of channels to clarify what's going on. Now what would you do?

Question 7: Eradication

It's Day 2, and just when all the communications have gone out to stakeholders, you got your team's latest update that they have now identified and isolated the affected part of the system. They are not yet sure how long it would take to actually restore the system fully, but they seem to be optimistic, while also making the unaffected part of the system available so that the company can still operate however in a limited capacity. *Oh*, by the way, they also told you that the data has been compromised at least for last two years, the extent of which is rather hard to know...

What would you do with all this information?

Question 8: Recovery

The team has now set up a timeframe for recovery, and they are now confident that the system would be restored in the next four days or so, unless they find any other vulnerabilities in the process of recovery. The system is still not operating in its full capacity, but the company's operations seem to be coping 'okay'.

Meanwhile there are still lots of social media posts, emails and phone calls coming in to your company. You were also told by some sources that some powerful clients are demanding detailed public explanations on how the company is responding to the issue, while others are making speculative comments on the incident, fueling the anxiety of others. What's your next step?

Question 9: Lessons learnt...

So four days past, the chaos of dealing with all sorts of stakeholder engagement finally started to settle. The management, the CIR team as well as a third-party security consultant all agreed that the system could be restored however with a period of strict monitoring. The 'war room' has been dissolved, and things are starting to return to normal.

So what else do you have to do now?

Answers and comments for the quizzes

1. The answer is 1. Codenames are not very useful in this context to maintain the secrecy, and you shouldn't be talking about it (even with a codename) with others' presence if the project deserves such a high level of secrecy anyway. The option 2 might be an option, and some high-profile R&D firms do have such facilities.
2. Think of both the security and communications risks here. As for the security risks, think what you'd find useful if you were the attacker. There is a limit to how successfully Bianca could conceal her identity online, and once her organisational affiliation is known, the whole blog could well give potential attackers useful intelligence on her organisation's approach to their security operations. As for communications risks, think of the dissolution of private/public separation online (which we discussed last week). Even though 'de-identified', the fact that Bianca is publishing things she only could have known for her professional role would create both actual and perceived compromise of her and her organisation's professional integrity, potentially resulting in reputational and financial damage as well as legal ramifications.

Answers and comments for the quizzes (cont'd)

3. There are communications risks similar to the ones discussed for the previous question. In this scenario his affiliation to his employer organisation is already known, and with the spread of this incident in social media, the organisation would well consider this as a public relation incident, forcing itself to strategise how to contain the situation. From the security point of view, having such a negative attention may also attract potential attackers and motivate them to conduct their offensives specifically against the organisation.

More hints: Observe the challenges around disseminating the best practice in IT security; if you do it too much, you may also feeding potential attackers too much information about your tactics (unless disclosing such information itself is intended to be a deterrent), while not doing so enough would also result in poor security practice within the organisation, which itself is a risk. This is particularly the case when you are in a large organisation, and this is where effective organisational governance needs to come into play...

Answers and comments for the quizzes (cont'd)

Questions 4-9: These were deliberately 'open' questions to promote discussion so please refer to the recorded lectures for the discussions covered. Thanks!