

Responsibility of the Creator

Testing and responsibility could be the difference of the life of a patient or an everyday worker when it comes to software development. People place their lives in the hands of software everyday and trust that it will not only work but work safely. Though, when it comes to amounts of testing the company has to foot the bill and it is a lengthy process. It is almost impossible to make anything foolproof, as Adam Douglas says in the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy "A common mistake that people make when trying to design something completely foolproof is to underestimate the ingenuity of complete fools." So, it comes down to the question of how much testing is enough? While the company is responsible for the software it sends out I believe they have to be held accountable within a reasonable manner. If something very niche happens then that is one thing but if core functions are failing or obvious stress test are breaking it then the company has to be held responsible for the product they pushed. In the case of the THERAC-25, it should have obviously gone through more testing. The fact that the software was written by one individual with no oversight and no checks or testing is absurd for a machine of such caliber. I understand that the cost was not there, though I believe that the machine should be fully tested and sold at a cost that is representative of that. While that might mean less people get to have access to the machine it does not justify sending out a faulty machine. The ACM Code of Ethics states that we are morally called to contribute to society and human wellbeing as well as avoid harm, also strive to achieve high quality. Sending out faulty and/or untested code does not meet these moral standards, no matter the cost. The IEEE Code of Ethics states something even stronger as it opens with that we are morally called "to hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public, to strive to comply with ethical design and sustainable development practices, to protect the privacy of others, and to disclose promptly factors that might endanger

the public or the environment.” This clearly indicts the pushing of faulty software to save cost on the other end. While the company is not responsible for niche issues it is responsible for testing their code to the highest degree that they can. As the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 10: 23-24 ““Everything is permissible” – but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible” – but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others” (NIV). When a company pushes untested code, it is only in their own interest and does not do any good for the others who have to rely on the software.

I believe that a certification should not be required of software engineers as I believe it is just another barrier. It is the responsibility of the hiring company to properly vet their hires and make sure that they are qualified for the position. As well, a certification will not prove more than a college degree will. If they can make there way through a college degree and not be competent than I am sure they can make there way through a certification as well. I think the certification does not hold any weight as it does not prove anything. College students get a base of knowledge at their university and gain experience through real world jobs. The list of experience speaks for itself. The only time a certification could come into play would be if you had no job experience but got the certification to show that you could do it. Though, while useful there is no reason something like that should be required. I believe it is on the company to vet their hires accordingly and to put people of competence in position to oversee important developments. It should not be on the individual to keep the company in check as that is the responsibility of the company. The extra expenses that come with vetting proper hires and fully testing code is apart of owning a business. For the company to complain about that is them just not wanting to do their job so they can cut cost and have more money internally. It is just as much my job to write solid code as it is the company to make sure I can and am writing it.

Works Cited

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