Individual Systems Theory and Ethics

Class: CS4320

Exercise 4.1

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| Selection: A retailer selling your personal information to others for profit | Ethical Quandary | | | |
| \*ST (Sociotechnical system) \*TS (Technical System) | Confidentiality | Competence | Intellectual Property Rights | Computer Misuse |
| Trust between the users and the retailer (ST) | x |  | x | x |
| B2B contact to facilitate dealing of data sales (TS) | x |  |  |  |
| Method of data capture (TS) | x |  | x | x |
| Database (TS) | x |  |  |  |
| User Interface (TS) | x |  |  |  |
| Servers (TS) | x |  |  |  |
| Customers' privacy (ST) | x |  |  | x |

I picked “A retailer selling your personal information to others for profit” for this assignment. In the grid, I put ethical quandaries by which we can evaluate different components of sociotechnical and technical systems. First, there you see a sociotechnical system which is a trust layer that is established between the customer and the retailer. In order for this to make sense, there needs to be a trust from the customers to the retailer so the customers would give their personal information to the retailer. The customers expect retailer to keep their personal data safe in their database. Second, there you see business to business contact to facilitate dealing of data sales that is a technical system. In the given situation, the ethical violation occurs in the transaction of selling the data to another company for their profits because the retailer does it without getting a permission from the customers. Some of the customers may agree, but the opposite things can be said. Therefore, we see a violation of ethics for those who would not agree on their personal information being sold.

The method of data capture listed in the grid above also can be a big factor in the context of ethics since there are ways to get data from the customers who do not intend to provide. The user interface and server can be potentially misused internally by the employees of the retail as well, which can make actions that customers will not want them to make.