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Ethics for a Student in the Modern Era

In the modern era of technological development, information is a commodity freely available to all ask of it. At any moment, any particular individual could use their phone or computer in order to look up exact details on even the most niche, unimportant events in human history. While this is undoubtedly a massive boon to the learning experience of new generations, it can be seen as a double-edged sword as well. With such a wealth of information at their fingertips, it can be all too easy to become complacent. Why bother learning the material when it can be so readily looked up? It is an everyday occurrence for young school children to question their teacher’s commands with the notion that they will never have to care about the material when they are older. With age comes wisdom, however, and those who have matured have a readily available response: looking up an answer is not the same as learning the answer. This is the key to unlocking the true potential of the gift we have all been given in the internet: to use it as a tool to grow, not just a cheat sheet to breeze through life without ever growing as an individual.  
 While it is one thing to say that it is objectively better to not lean too much on the internet for support, the notion is also firmly backed up by ethics. The idea that using another’s work for your own personal gain is bad is not new, but it is a concept that matters doubly so when you consider the sheer ease of which the internet can be abused. And when in a career such as those that stem off of computer science, upholding high standards and morality becomes an everyday affair. At any moment, the internet could be used to forge most if not all of any particular assignment or task, especially when it comes to code. As stated in article 1.3 of the ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, “honesty is an essential component of trustworthiness,” with “deliberately false or misleading claims, fabricating or falsifying data, offering or accepting bribes, and other [such] dishonest conduct” being anemic to good, well-crafted work (ACM). As a student going for a computer science degree, the omni-present temptation to utilize the internet’s myriad resources to skate through my learning process is by far the biggest challenge. One of the most important traits of a student is, as put by the IEEE Code of Ethics, “to seek, accept, and offer honest criticism of technical work, to acknowledge and correct errors, and to credit properly the contributions of others” (IEEE). To simply take the work of others would be a disservice to them and myself, and shielding myself from criticism by only ever offering false work is avoiding honest critique. The Bible has a lot to say about this topic, such as in 1st Corinthians 10: 23-24, as ““I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but not everything is constructive”” (*New International Version,* 1 Corinthians 10: 23-24). While we are technically capable of doing what we want, and most likely would not be called out on it, we have an obligation as Christians and simply good people to be constructive for others, and most importantly ourselves.

The strength to overcome this temptation must come from our faith in ourselves, others, and most importantly, God’s plan. We must have the confidence that our work is good and worthy of what we have been taught and gone through, that we may showcase our understanding of the topic at hand. We must trust that our work will be received honestly by others, so that we may receive real feedback and critique so that we can improve as students, and as people. Most of all, we must trust that day in and day out, all that we do is in line with God’s personal plan for us. As Christians, our faith is critical in dealing with life’s conflicts, and this is no difference. The strength to get through the day to day strife ultimately, always, comes from God. Personally, I believe that I am relatively well prepared to get through this issue in this period of my life. While I have issues with work ethic and tardiness, the temptation to cheat and bypass learning opportunities is not something that has struck me in a long time. My issues are mostly that of motivation, not lack of confidence. I believe that, when it comes down to it, I will put out good work that I can be proud of. I earnestly believe that I can succeed without utilizing such methods, and I am confident in my learning ability. I believe that honesty is a core tenant of a successful academic environment, and I try to go about my learning process upholding the ideals put forth in this paper. While the internet is a great tool, it can become a crutch, as well.

Works Cited

“7.8 IEEE Code of Ethics.” *IEEE: Advancing Technology for Humanity.* [www.ieee.org/about/corporate/governance/p7-8.html](http://www.ieee.org/about/corporate/governance/p7-8.html). Date Accessed- 6/18/2020.

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