

COM6655 Professional Issues

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Week 3 Tutorial

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Tutorial: Another ethical dilemma

Mitron is a large computer hardware and software vendor. Anthony Frasier is a software-support analyst for Mitron's Bristol office. Anthony is on the phone with customers much of the time. He reports the customer's program bugs to Engineering, and he gives his customers software patches or workarounds directly over the phone....

Work in breakout groups

Be ready to report back at the end

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SLIDE 2

Ethical issues (1/2)

- Utilitarian view – an action is right if it promotes the most happiness
- Taking the work makes quite a few people happy – Anthony, Mary, Bristol Council, affected unemployed
- But ... it harms Mitron
- Common issue with utilitarian ethics; harm to a minority can be justified through benefit to the majority

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SLIDE 3

Ethical issues (2/2)

- Another view (Kant) – would you want everyone to behave in this way?
- Golden rule – treat others in the way you would wish to be treated yourself
- Personal relationships are important in this scenario, as they often are in real-life dilemmas

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SLIDE 4

Legal issues

- Conflict of interest
- Financial regulations
- Contract law
- Possibly law of confidence may apply if he is sharing information not in the public domain

University contract

- All members of staff are required to abide by the terms and conditions of their appointment. This may include the requirement not to undertake any other paid work, unless the permission of the Director of Human Resources to do so on terms and conditions approved for the particular undertaking in question has been obtained.
- Consultancy appointments should not be undertaken with a third party with whom there exists collaborative or contractual research projects.