

## **Part 1: Ethical Dilemma**

In this case report, we are resolving an ethical decision to be made by Roger Gleason as the 'math lab' coordinator for City High School. After receiving a donation of 22 Power Macintosh computers from a local company, the school administration decided to allocate 14 of those machines to a mathematics lab which would be overseen by Mr. Gleason. Unfortunately, the software Mr. Gleason believes will be the most beneficial to students is very expensive. The school maintains a copy of the software, but only one license is available. Insisting that there is no funding available for additional licenses, the school principal, Mary Lou Duffy, asks Roger to make copies of the software from the disk they already own. What is the best course of action Roger can take?

## **Part 2: The Role of Information Technology**

In order to understand the case, it is important to examine the aspects of information technology which are involved. Firstly, there are the donated computers which the school is now in possession of. As discussed in the case, this is an enormous benefit to the school. Automating some of the tasks typically burdening the teachers allows for the entire system to operate more efficiently. However, the computers cannot provide the maximum benefit available without the appropriate educational software installed. While Roger could easily copy the software on to additional disks, this action breaks the End User License Agreement which the school agreed to abide by when it purchased the program from the software company.

## **Part 3: The Stakeholders**

We have identified four primary stakeholders – and the rights which pertain to them – that will be directly impacted by Websense's decision:

1. **Roger Gleason:** A teacher at City High School, he has been appointed as coordinator of the math lab utilizing 14 donated Power Macintosh systems at. His primary right as an educator is to provide the necessary environment for the students to learn in. He is an advocate for the student body of the school, but also has a right to protect his own career when making decisions as the coordinator of the program.
2. **Mary Lou Duffy:** She is the principal of City High School, and Roger Gleason's direct superior, and intermediary between him and the school administration. She has a right to ensure the educational requirements of the student body are met according to laws and regulations

pertaining to this region. Lastly she has a right to administrate other school affairs in the way she determines to be in the school's best interest.

3. **Students of City High School:** The students of the high school are the direct beneficiaries of the new computer lab, and of the tentative MATH TUTOR program. They have a right to be educated in a fair and thorough manner according to laws and regulations pertaining to their region.
4. **Software companies:** The creator of the MATH TUTOR program which Mary Lou has instructed Roger to make illegal copies of. The software company has a right to a profit, and a right to run its business as it sees fit.

#### **Part 4: Courses of Action**

Below are the courses of action (COAs) we estimate to be the most significant for consideration by Websense:

1. **Roger Gleason could do nothing.** Roger would likely be reprimanded in some manner for shirking his responsibilities as the coordinator for the math lab program, not only because he failed to make the educational software available, but primarily because he did not pursue any alternatives whatsoever. Mary Lou Duffy would also be impacted negatively, as her superiors will see placing trust in Roger as a bad decision which reflects poorly on her as the principal of the school. The students will receive the greatest effect, in that not only will they be unable to utilize the computers intended for them, there is also a significant chance that the community will see this failure to take advantage of the donation as an incentive to stop donating altogether. The software company is the only stakeholder which is neither negatively nor positively affected by this COA. Their software will not be put to good use, potentially generating more sales, popularity, perhaps, in the distant future, new employees who as young people found the software fascinating. However, there is also the positive effect that they will not lose any profit due to copying of the software by Roger.
2. **Copy the software and carry on with the plan to provide the program to the students.** By copying the software, the students will see the most immediate benefit. With access to this learning tool, the students will be able to get an education beyond their expectations, and the teachers overseeing their learning will have additional time to potentially get training in

education techniques, refine their curriculum, or spend more one on one time with students who require special attention. Mary Lou and Roger also benefit immediately. They have demonstrated their ability to 'get the job done' as the administration directs, and for Roger, it is of the utmost importance to provide his students with this opportunity. The software company is negatively affected by the copying of the software; if the school had purchased 14 copies of the program, the company stands to make approximately \$7,000. While the benefits of this CoA are satisfactory in the short term, the obvious ramifications involved with copyright infringement of the software could be serious for the school. While they are saving \$7,000 up front, they could end up paying a substantial amount in any lawsuit which may surface. Also, we must consider the potential damage to the reputation of the school, along with Roger and Mary Lou.

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4. Attempt to compromise with the software company, as the school has not investigated whether or not they'll offer charity copies of the program for over a year. The software company may have changed their policy on giving away additional copies over the year. This is a very reasonable CoA, as there is a lot of leverage indicating it may work in the school's favor. The year before, the school had no basis for getting
5. Look for another software option, inferior to MATH-TUTOR. This solution provides an overall benefit to all stakeholders involved, other than the original software company. Roger Gleason will not have to face an unethical decision, and Mary Lou Duffy will be able to satisfy the financial requirements imposed on her by the administration. While the students will not receive the best educational software possible, they will receive more than they would if they had no program to speak of. Furthermore, if the student body shows substantial signs of improvement, perhaps this will motivate more funding for better programs in the future.

### **Part 5: Deontological Perspective**

Approaching the situation from a deontological perspective, Websense, as a for-profit business, has a right to seek out revenue through whatever legal means it deems appropriate. Furthermore, they want to provide a comprehensive product which meets their client's needs. In the case of the Saudi monarchy, Websense is providing software which gives KSA the ability to control access to information on the Internet, a major concern for their religious and political leadership, as well as the

majority of their citizens. The Divine Command theory of deontology, which is a “cluster of related theories that state that an action is right if God has decreed that it is right,” is a uniquely fitting perspective that can allow us to gain clarity on the way KSA, and conservative Muslims, perceive the ethical ‘pros’ of broad censorship. If an entire culture has its foundation in religion, and that religion draws its ethical compass from one source – the Qur’an – in this case, then the logical conclusion is that the monarchy governing that culture will provide a service which they perceive as allowing citizens to ‘do good’ as defined by their religious beliefs. The software Websense is providing may appear to Americans, or progressive Saudis, as oppressive, from the perspective of the Saudi monarchy it is an important tool enabling them to carry out their duty to the Saudi people. To the Saudis who support censorship, it provides the exact functionality they see necessary to protect themselves from material which may offend their religious beliefs. We prioritize the rights of the Saudis who support censorship, and the monarchy itself, because they are in line with the rules defined as morally right by the country in which they live. This fulfills Websense’s right to a profit as well.

#### **Part 6: Teleological Perspective**

From an altruistic perspective, the best option ethically for Websense would be providing the service with some level of compromise. If the correct agreement is reached, Websense can receive their profit, provide a quality service, and remain on the good side of the business community both in the U.S. and internationally. Websense isn't providing KSA with software which directly prohibits free speech, and will not modify its software in such a way as to do so. It is providing KSA with a product which controls exposure to material which the majority of KSA citizens, conservative Sunnis, agree is obscene. This fact may even apply to some of the Saudis who oppose censorship of freedom of speech, right to dissent, etc. This option certainly benefits the most people, and it can be argued that an even *smaller* minority than the progressive Saudi community will be negatively impacted by this option. KSA loses the ability to proactively control dissent on the web, but provides their populace with a tool to prevent exposure to what many consider material that could greatly offend their sensibilities as Muslims.

#### **Part 7: Our Recommendation**

We believe that Websense should offer the Saudis the software as-is, which we will assume is limited to filtering specific, sexually explicit, or other obscene content. Websense will make no agreement to furnish a program which specifically limits the ability of human beings to carry on

conversations about politics, religion, or other subjects which do not have intrinsic 'explicit' values. Lastly, if the KSA government does not agree to this deal, we think it is in the best interest of Websense to refuse provision of the service. This COA solves the ethical dilemma by addressing both perspective of ethics used in our analysis. It ensures that nearly all the rights of each stakeholder are met to the maximal degree possible. With these compromises, we also provide an altruistic solution that creates some risk for Websense, but would provide a better solution to all parties involved should the risk be rewarded. At present, the United States' relationship with Saudi Arabia as an important ally in the Middle East provides us with political strength in the region, strategic maneuverability, and access to a wealthy trade circuit. Another important fact to consider is that Saudi Arabia in particular is a stronghold of very conservative Islamic views.

It is impractical to believe that a software company, by not providing a service viewed as by the majority of the population and region, will affect much change. In fact, doing so may create disdain for Western business in the region altogether. However, should KSA not agree to the terms, then Websense has fulfilled its moral obligation by not offering a service which we believe provides an unethical amount of censorship. The ability to express your thoughts is inherent in your free will as a human being. While there are certainly stipulations to that, particularly in very orthodox religions such as Sunni Islam, as an American company it is important that Websense realizes that there is an expectation for American values to define their actions to some degree. This means recognizing the need to make a profit *and* empathize with international imperatives which encourage critical thinking among individuals, such as the KSA population.

In the future, Websense could construct a business code of ethics which reinforces the ideals they've demonstrated with this business transaction. In doing so, any potential fallout with Saudi Arabia caused by this transaction could be avoided in the future by making it clear exactly what Websense is willing to provide. Regardless of the Saudi's decision, Websense's choice reflects sound judgment in an international environment.

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