Unit – Ethics in CS

Essential Questions:
How should ethics play a role in our decisions when using computers?
What is an individual's responsibility to act ethically?
What is the government's responsibility to define ethical behavior?

Lesson #6 – Review Bombing and Trolling

Objectives -   SWBAT identify the ethical concerns of coordinated attacks like "review bombing" .
Supporting EQ: Should trolling be protected as free speech?

Standards (Rhode Island Computer Science Standards)
3-RC-CU-1 Evaluate the ways computing impacts personal, ethical, social, economic, and cultural practices.

Overview
Do Now: Have you ever "trolled" or been "trolled"? What happened?
Activity: Students will read about various "review bombing" attacks and coordinated attacks (The Boys tv show, The Last of Us Part 2, K-pop Trump rally), then discuss if they believe these coordinated attacks were ethically justified, and why. Students will argue if these types of coordinated attacks are free speech that should be protected, or if participants should be held accountable.

Notes
After reading about a few different mass trolling incidents, students will decide which, if any, of the coordinated attacks were ethically justified. Students will make a post on a Jamboard that represents a spectrum from right to wrong, where I believe most students will land somewhere in the middle, on the idea of doing a coordinated trolling attack. Is it a legitimate form of protest, or is it abusing a platform and therefore should be stopped?

After this, students will break out into groups and come up with a list of rules or a description of what constitutes justified trolling (i.e. who is the target? What is the reasoning? What is the nature of the attack? Etc.).

They will follow this up by finding online (Wikipedia article posted below) two instances of mass trolling, one that passes their rules and is therefore justified, and one that does not, meaning it shouldn't be allowed to happen.

Handouts
Jamboard for students to post their opinions, break-out rooms to discuss their rules.
In-Person Learning Alternative:
This lesson would be best conducted on computers, but could also be done on a whiteboard and posters.

Resources
https://tvweb.com/the-boys-review-bombing/
https://www.inverse.com/gaming/last-of-us-2-review-bombing-metacritic-open
https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jun/21/trump-tulsa-rally-scheme-k-pop-fans-tiktok-users
https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/06/23/darker-side-tiktoks-trump-rally-trolling/
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Review_bomb#Notable_examples

Assignment/Assessments
The set of rules and the analysis of two review-bombing attacks in particular.