

Ethics Essay

As professionals in the workforce, we may be faced with ethical dilemmas from time to time. We took the time in Cpr E 394 to study the IEEE Code of Ethics along with other guidelines and applied this knowledge to an ethical case study. Now, we can examine the purpose and conclusions drawn from the assignment.

Having a code of ethics is important for many reasons. First, we need to be able to respond to situations that may be under question. Without a framework to view what is or is not a breach of ethics, it is harder to make a decision that is right. Second, consistency is important with any code of conduct. We need to follow the same protocol when dealing with ethical situations to avoid any hypocrisy. When I am faced with an ethical decision, I would want to do whatever is best for all parties involved. This along with following a code would allow for ethical decisions to be made.

In the ethics discussion, I detailed an issue faced by a data analyst after he received unwanted data that contained personal medical information about individuals with work-related injuries. Apart from that, we observed ethical breaches committed by both Volkswagen and Ford, the issue of Amazon releasing data from its Echo smart speakers, and the effect of advertisements in social media on the consumer. In my group, the discussion that occurred was around the Ford issue, social media issue, and big data issue.

I will examine the discussion around my own post here. The conclusion that my peers and I reached is that the character in the story, Marcus, who sent the personal information to a coworker, was applying pressure. From the 5 P's, we know pressure is precursor to an ethical dilemma. In addition

to that, my peers pointed out that Marcus had broken two points in the IEEE 7.8 Code of Ethics: “To be honest and realistic in stating claims or estimates based on available data” and “To avoid injuring others, their property, reputation, or employment by false or malicious action.”

Relevant to this issue are three points from the Virtue of Ethics. First, there is integrity. Marcus lacked good ethical judgement when he sent the personal data to his coworker John, and he continues to lack integrity when he insists that the data be included in the reports. Second, there is responsibility. Marcus was not being responsible with the data he had acquired. Although the algorithm John created hashed the personal information, they were not in a position to simply glance through the raw data. This endangers the privacy of those whom the data is about. Third, there is honesty. It would be dishonest to produce a report where you claim to have hashed the personal data about the individuals under study when you examined some of that personal information. The remaining three virtue ethics (fidelity, charity, and self-discipline), while still important, do not necessarily pertain to this situation.

Overall, this assignment generated constructive thoughts about ethical situations. I feel I am better prepared to deal with these sorts of dilemmas in the future. I am glad to have had the chance to discuss these important issues with my fellows in the ECpr E community.