

Apple Security

1 Apple has always prided itself in the security of its products, even to the point that the majority
2 of apple users feel safe using using apple computers without a virus protection software. As the
3 technology has become more entangled, the need to keep users safe has increased. When Apple
4 released their new operating system, OS X El Capitan, they decided to remove user access to the
5 system's most important files; the current security system does not allow non-Apple verified prod-
6 ucts to install anything in the top level directories of the operating system. Under Utilitarian ethics,
7 it is unethical for Apple to take away a user's access to his or her own operating system.

8 Apple's removal of top level permissions appears at first to be a smart choice on their part. Apple
9 reasoned that they wanted to protect their users by not allowing malicious programs masquerading
10 as friendly applications. Under Utilitarianism, there is a lot of good produced by doing this. Apple
11 is preventing common users from acquiring viruses due to not being computer literate. This action
12 produces a lot of good for both Apple, who gains more support from their users, and the users
13 themselves, who are secure. However, not all Apple users are developers; in fact the majority of
14 programmers use Apple machines (Purdy). This is due to the accessibility of programming tools
15 available for Apple. In addition, OS X is a UNIX based architecture. UNIX based architectures are
16 meant to allow users to have complete control over the operating system. By removing the access
17 to the top level directories, developers are forced to forgo installing many open source programs
18 that are not approved by Apple. This hurts developers who produce new software and do not want
19 to buy in to the Apple Developer's Program. In addition, many tools that developers rely on are

20 blocked from installation, which affects the productivity of developers. Since Apple's user base is
21 more developers than common user, this produces a lot of bad.

22 Apple's implementation of the security features included in El Capitan was not widely known
23 when the new operating system was announced (Haslam). Apple forces developers who want to
24 use the Apple Store to distribute applications to sign up for a developers account. The account
25 is not free; it costs developers \$100 per year. It appears that Apple did not want to publicize the
26 security features since it would drive developers away from using the new operating system, and
27 therefore depriving apple of developers who could be forced to pay to use the Apple Store. Under
28 Act Utilitarianism, this is not necessarily a bad action. From an individual perspective, Apple does
29 need to make a profit, and they do distribute, for free, the operating system and the majority of the
30 tools developers need. Under an Act Utilitarianism, the goods provided by Apple to the developers
31 contributes more good than overall harm done by the forced security measures. Rule Utilitarianism,
32 however, focuses on the ethical actions being willed into universal rules (Quinn 75). Under Rule
33 Utilitarianism, Apple withheld important information about its operating system from both users
34 and developers alike. If all the important information about an operating system was omitted, then
35 no one would use that operating system. Overall, Apple is not only hurting itself, but also its all of
36 its consumers.

37 The security measures implemented in El Capitan have been attributed to Apple becoming more
38 irrelevant as other competitor companies have grown (Bowles); some developers have claimed
39 that Apple's new security measures are a ploy to convince many users to continue to buy from the
40 technology giant (Bohn). Under Utilitarianism, Apple's actions may be considered ethical if the
41 quantity being measured is money. If Apple cannot keep users, then the company will go out of
42 business, and users will be forced to completely change operating systems. This will produce a lot
43 of bad, but not as much as a company lying to its users.

44 Apple's decision to block access to root files has caused many developers to completely rework
45 their products in order to allow users to continue to use them. Under both Act and Rule Utilitar-
46 ianism, this can be seen as unethical, largely due to the fact that Apple did not publicize the new

47 security measures included in the operating system. Apple, however, has promised a way to re-
48 move these features as the operating system becomes more popular. While this may help Apple
49 make amends with the developers, the damage has already been done, and many developers have
50 already designed their programs to work with the new security updates.

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