

Professional Issues in IT

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Framework for Ethical Decision Making

- Ethical Decision Process involves individuals
 - Individuals in their Personal Lives
 - Individuals in Organizations (procedures, organization pressure)
- Note: Our attempt at decision making will involve generalizations of typical behavior patterns

- Is the work environment too competitive & demanding? If so, this places great pressure on the employees. Examples:
 - Unrealistic Budgets
 - Tight deadlines
 - Bonus incentives for performance goals
 - Aggressive competition from peers
 - Politics
 - Harassment

Who is Responsible for all of these?

Factors and Processes Leading Towards Ethical Decisions

Intensity of Ethical Issue

- Intensity: How important it is to the organization and/or individual?
- Individual Intensity: An individual's perception of social pressure and harm decision will have on others
- Manager responsibility to make subordinate aware of intensity

Individual Factors

- Personal perceptions of right and wrong (Learnt from family, social groups, religion, education, Age)
- Affected by Time an individual gives to decision making can also play a role
- Does gender affect decision making? Female more soft? Males more hard?

Organizational Factors

- Organizational factors play a more dominant role over individual factors (but family & friends may still influence them)
- Ethical decisions usually made by groups and committees

Opportunities

- Opportunity: Conditions in an organization that limit or permit ethical or unethical behavior
- Example: Encouraging ethical behavior using policies of reward
- Example: Discouraging unethical behavior using effective barriers (e.g. bribe vs. gift)

Factors and Processes Leading Towards Ethical Decisions

Intensity of Ethical Issue

Individual Factors

Organizational Factors

Opportunities

- Dilemmas: Choosing between right and right
- No software, formula will tell us whether decision is right or wrong
- Decision: The last step taken by individual.

Evaluations & Intentions

Ethical or Unethical Behavior

- If intentions inconsistent with ethical judgment, individual may feel guilty
 - This is the 1st sign that may suggest ethical decision could be wrong
 - Very variable from time to time

Role of Leaders

- Who are the leaders? Supervisors? Managers? CEO? Directors?
 - Anybody who passes you the blueprint of how things are done in an organization (culture of organization)
 - Must be able to guide and direct others towards achieving a goal
 - Must be able to play impact in ethical decision making (by playing motivating role) in-line with company policies
- Lee Kun-hee: CEO of SAMSUNG resigned in disgrace in April 2008) after being accused of evading \$ 128 million and bribing government officials
 - 1 ½ years later, South Korean government pardoned him
 - He resumed back as SAMSUNG CEO almost 2 years later
 - Kim Yong-chul: Chief legal counsel writes book “Think Samsung” in 2010, revealing more shocking details of his corruption
- 47% employees of large organizations think that their senior leadership in their firm is highly ethical !!!



“Small Virtues: Entrepreneurs Are More Ethical,” BusinessWeek online, March 8, 2000, www.businessweek.com/smallbiz/0003/ib3670029.htm?scriptFramed (accessed August 17, 2009).

Leadership Styles

- **Coercive Leader:** Demands instantaneous Obedience and focuses upon achievements only (good for times of crisis but creates negative climate otherwise)
- **Authoritative Leader:** Inspires followers to follow a vision (general case, but most effective style)
- **Affiliative Leader:** Values peoples, their emotions, their requirements, creates friendship and trust with people in order to promote goals
- **Democratic Leader:** Involves participants to reach collaborative decisions

Moral Philosophies

- The specific principles (or rules, or values) that people use to decide what is right and wrong
 - Used to settle conflicts in decisions
 - Decisions are optimized for mutual benefit of all groups
 - Different types of Moral Philosophies!!!
- Moral Philosophy != Professional Ethics
(person specific) (person + group specific)
but we have seen in framework that they are linked

Goodness

- Clearly defined good and bad? Lesser good and better good?
- Aristotle: Goodness = Happiness
Happiness is the universal goodness
- Immanuel Kant: Goodness = Goodwill applied towards accomplishments
Accomplishments is the universal goodness
- Moral philosophies revolve around theory of goodness, what it is, and how it is obtained, and who will benefit from it.

Teleology

- An act is morally right if it leads to some desired results such as Pleasure, knowledge, career growth, utility, wealth, fame, good family life,
- An act is morally right if it leads to a “consequence”
 - Consequence that benefits an individual (**Egoists**)
Wealth, good family life, fame, etc.
 - Consequence that benefits others, but own self-interest is paramount (**Enlightened Egoists**)
E.g., Employee reporting another employee for malpractice for the only reason that he may come into good books of employer
 - Consequence that benefits the greatest number of people (**Utilitarians**)

Teleology: Utilitarian Decision Making

- Perform systematic comparison of costs and benefits to all affected parties (Cost-Benefit Analysis)
- Calculate a utility of consequences for all alternatives
- Select the one which results in greatest benefit
- How does one put a cost on life or environment?
- E.g., in a risky job, the employee life is at risk. But if employee does the job, will bring in a lot of money to the company + the employee.
- How to do cost-benefit of life vs profit?

Kantianism: Immanuel Kant



- Moral philosophy that focuses on:
 - **rights of individuals** (equal respect to all)
 - **intentions** associated with particular behavior
 - rights can be upheld if people act upon **duties**
- Consequences is given secondary priority
- Argue that somethings must never be done, even if they have maximum utility of consequences
 - E.g., it is wrong to kill a person even if it has great social utility. Utilitarians may argue that it is justified because of the social utility !!
- Freedom of Conscience Freedom of Consent
Freedom of Speech Freedom of Privacy

Kantianism

- If a factory employee dies on production line, Kantians will argue to modify the production line no matter how big the cost (even if it means bankrupting the company)
- Utilitarian will argue that company should not be bankrupted and to benefit all, heavy compensation should be paid to employee

Virtue Ethics

- Best ethical decision is one that best reflects the moral virtues of ourselves and our communities
 - Trust
 - Self-Control
 - Fairness
 - Honesty
 - Learning
 - Courtesy
 - Moral Leadership
- A superior decides that company should give a “gift” to secure a contract. You think it is a “bribe” and stand against decision.
Some colleagues will call you brave !
Other colleagues will call you stupid !

Common Good Approach

- Ethical choice is one that advances the common good (society as whole instead of individuals or businesses)
- A government invests in a bus service for **common good** of transportation for public. But it involves huge costs. Should the government do it?
 - Perception of common good varies with society/group.



Relativists: Fairness Approach

- Derive ethical decisions from individual and group of people around individuals
- When Formulating a business strategy, relativist will try to
 - anticipate conflicts that arise between different philosophies of members of organization as well as suppliers, and customers.
 - take a decision based on consensus
 - take a decision that is fair to all parties (without favoritism and discrimination)
- A director decides to give vacation to muslim employees on account of Eid. To be fair to other minorities, he/she also gives vacations for Christmas, Easter, Holi, Diwali, Baisakhi, Chinese New Year,

Is it practical to be fair?

Ghazalian Ethics



- کیمیائے سعادت، احیاء علوم الدین، میزان الاعمال
- Blend of contemporary philosophy and religion
- Happiness is the chief goodness, but contains two sub-divisions; **Worldly** and **Other-Worldly**
- **Other-Worldly** happiness cannot be achieved without certain **Worldly** virtues:
 - Moral Virtues
 - Logic and Reasoning
- But man is imperfect by nature; hence his objective in world is to obtain perfection using concept of **Ma'arifat**;
- Only then can worldly virtues be developed through education and training (or for Prophets using Revelation)

Relativists & Utilitarians

- Table of Issues/Questions vs Stake-Holders/Options
- Assignment of Weights
- Questionnaire/Survey

- What if an ethical issue cannot be resolved through any given set of moral philosophy (or if there is conflict of moral philosophies)
 - Apply relativist approach?
 - Get a better understanding of the issue !!! (4-step process)

Process of Ethical Decision Making

- 1) Describe & Analyze a Real Case ...
Get the Facts, Prepare a scenario**
- 2) Identify the Stake-Holder Network and their Positions**
- 3) Identify the Ethical Issues in making a Decision.
Also identify the consequences of this decision**
- 4) Develop and evaluate alternate options. Weigh various guidelines and principles, e.g. presence of laws, personal principles, etc.**

Stakeholders

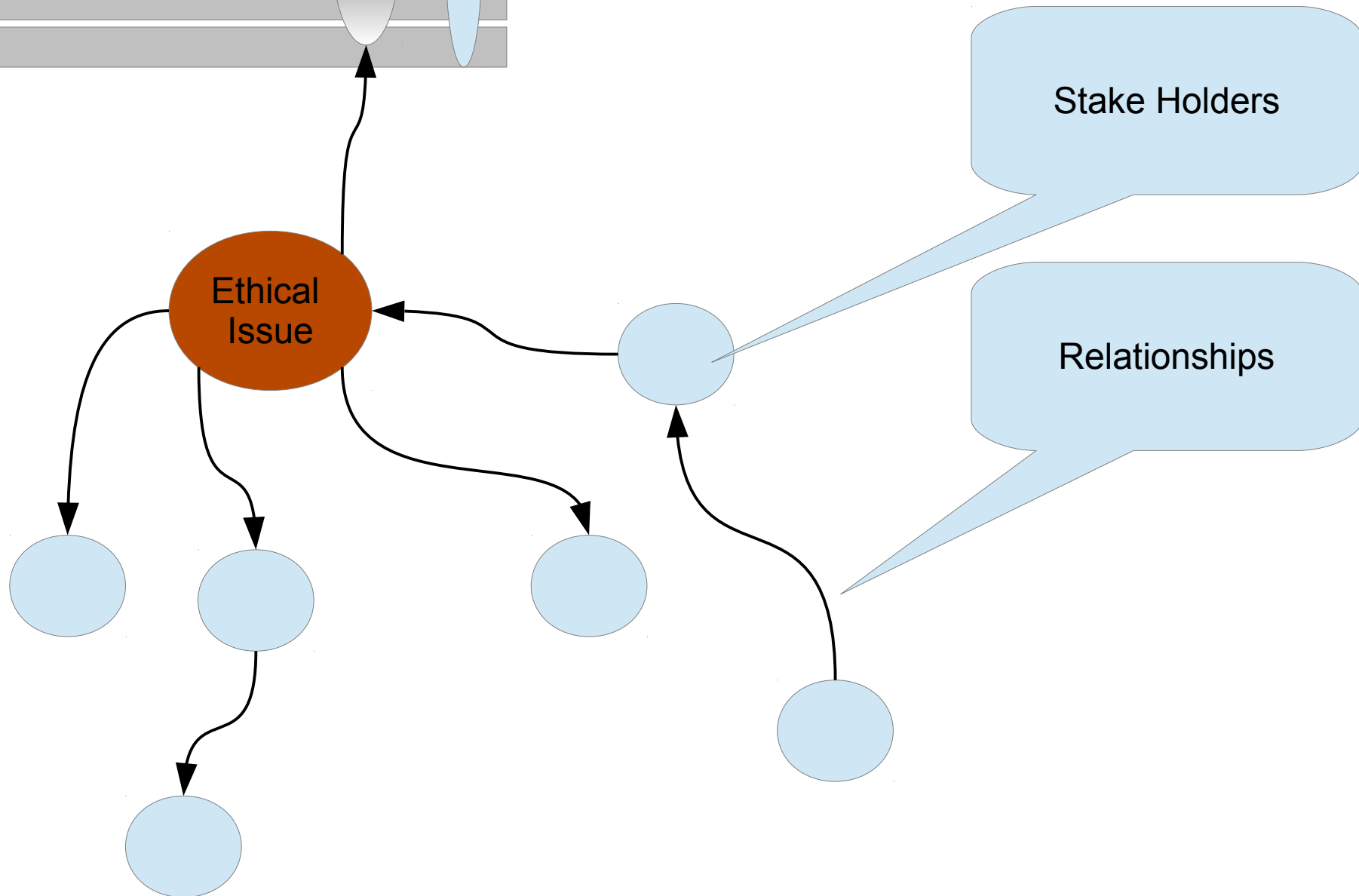
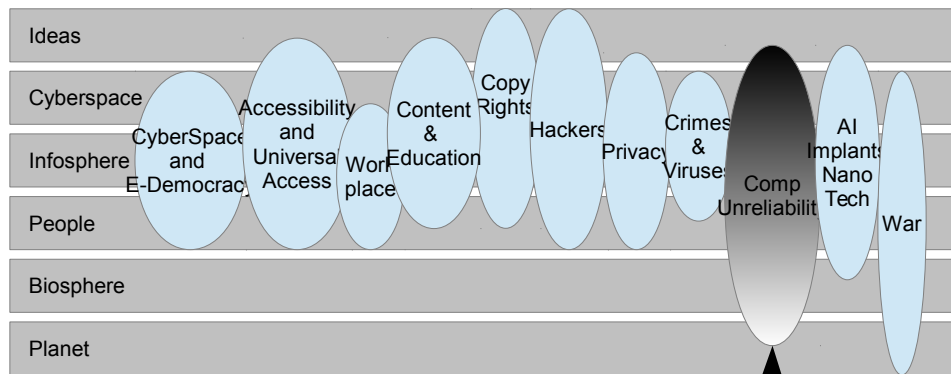
- **Primary Stake-Holders:**

Individuals/Groups whose continued association with a company is necessary for company's survival
(Employees, Customers, Investors, Share-holders)

- **Secondary Stake-Holders:**

Do not engage in company transactions, but affect its working and operations
(Media, Associations, Watchdogs, Special Interest Groups, standardization organizations, competitors)

Stake-Holder Network



Case Studies

- Is Hacking a Computer Crime?
- Youth and On line Friends: Ethical Risk of Social Networks
- Cyber Censorship

Assignment

- Describe and Analyze a Real Case
- Identify the Stake-holder Network
- Identify the Ethical Issues
- Identify and evaluate the course of Actions