Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering
ENCS4210 - Computer Engineering Ethics

Ethics Homework

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1   The situation

"Alexis, a gifted high school student, wants to become a doctor. Because she comes from a poor family, she will need a scholarship in order to attend college. Some of her classes require students to do extra research projects in order to get an A. Her high school has a few older PCs, but there are always long lines of students waiting to use them during the school day. After school, she usually works at a part-time job to help support her family. One evening Alexis visits the library of a private college a few miles from her family's apartment, and she finds plenty of unused PCs connected to the Internet. She looks over the shoulder of another student to learn a valid login/password combination. Alexis returns to the library several times a week, and by using its PCs and printers she efficiently completes the extra research projects, graduates from high school with straight A's, and gets a full-ride scholarship to attend a prestigious university."

2   Analysis

2.1   Kantian View of the situation

From the Kantian point of view what Alexis did is not acceptable and was not ethical, because she broke an obvious moral principle when she decided to look over the shoulder of another student and use his credentials, what she did was not focus on the moral principles and duties that guide her actions from a Kantian point of view.

2.2   Act Utilitarian point of view

From Act Utilitarian point of view what she did was ethical, because, from Act's utilitarian point of view, we did the kind of mathematical equation to calculate the benefits on one hand and to calculate the maximization of overall happiness over the maximum of the destruction of sadness her doing could cause, and analyzing the situation we can see that her action won't cause any problems to anyone since the library of the college is always empty, and using it would help her through her studies and making her homework on time, so from this point of view what she did is acceptable.

2.3   Rule Utilitarian point of view

From Rule Utilitarin point of view what she did was not ethical, for one reason which is in this ethical framework if we accept or allow something to someone then we have to make it a rule for everyone, regarding their situation and background, thus if we allow that every student like her regarding his situation and background be able to look over the shoulder of another student and use his cardinals to sign in a private university library, then first of all the library will be full, and there will be no place for anyone, also we will be endorsing cheating and stealing other students credentials, so from this point of view it is not acceptable to do what she did and it was unethical.

2.4   My personal analysis

In my point of view, it would be much better if she explained herself to the librarian in the private university, to have access to the library computers, since the library is not

busy, also, on the other hand, she is having a tough time coming from a poor family and have to provide for her family , and in this case if the librarian will accept this hopefully and give her access without the need of stealing another student email and password.