

1) The purpose of following a “Code of Ethics” is to establish what is and is not acceptable in the professional world of Engineering. Different people hold different morals, and therefore a code of ethics creates a common ground that isn’t as binding as law, but still creates a form of peer accountability.

2) I follow a fairly utilitarian view of ethics - “the greatest good for the greatest number”. I do not believe that things are absolutely good or absolutely evil. Therefore, when I am looking at a situation I examine it upon its effects (including future effects) rather than whether the action itself is morally reprehensible. On the other hand, pure utilitarianism can have some pretty dicey results, so sometimes I have to fall back to whether something violates my personal conscience.

3) Unfortunately, my other group members did not show up for our meeting with the professor. Therefore he and I discussed 2 case studies in detail (Who Can Change Proprietary Source Code.docx Intellectual Property.docx), and briefly examined a third (Citicorp tower). For this assignment I will focus on the proprietary source code case study. The professor and I actually held fairly specific views. We agreed that he should have talked to the first company before using their software in his new job, even though he didn’t have any contract dictating that. We felt that at this point, he had to talk to the first company about it, even if it cost him his job or reduced his chance at promotion. Ethically, the second company should understand this, but we can’t control their behavior.

The professor actually talked to me about a similar situation that a colleague of his recently was involved in. He explained that the resolution to that conflict was to make the project open source.

4) I chose three virtues: Responsibility, Honesty, and Integrity.

Responsibility - Responsibility involves being accountable for your actions. In this case study the individual clearly feels guilty for his actions, he knows that he has behaved improperly, and therefore it is important for him to take responsibility for his actions.

Honesty - Honesty is an important virtue. Not only does it entail being truthful about your actions, but it also includes fairness. The individual in this case study should be truthful to the old company, open with them, and fair to them. Letting the new company capitalize on the effort of the old company is not fair.

Integrity - Integrity is kind of the glue that holds the other virtues together. It is integrity that often leads you to follow the other virtues. Therefore integrity made the cut because it encompasses my arguments above.

Charity could be relevant if he can get the project to become open sourced. Otherwise, I am not convinced that fidelity or self discipline are as relevant.