

A. Identify the main ethical question or questions faced by the main character (“you”) in the scenario.

The main conflict presented in scenario #2 mainly involves the question about the privacy and usage of users’ personal data when using the Beerz app. In its development of version 2.0, the CEO of the company is thinking about bringing in more revenue, but this would result in scraping the old location data that probably should have been thrown out.

A company should try its best to make as much money as possible with two different possibilities: (a) gaining profit from the company’s products or new features, i.e. from the subscription system, and (b) saving costs and expenses. This leads to the question: how should we preserve the privacy of personal data while still making revenue?

B. For each stakeholder (or category of stakeholders) in the scenario, identify the stakeholder's relevant rights.

CEO

- Makes executive decisions regarding the company
- Strategic direction
- Operations

Me and co-worker

- App development and feature implementation
- (This should include access to code we have used along with whatever the code outputs, meaning access to things like logs)

C. List any information missing from the scenario that you would like to have to help you make better choices.

- What does “discarding data” or “scrubbing” data entail exactly?
- What is anonymized location data?
- There should be terms of services that should outline any privacy policies in technicality, but whether users actually read them is another can of worms
- Is it right to assume that location data stored in the log refers to all-time data?

D. Describe your possible actions, and discuss the likely consequences of those actions.

First, is the data encrypted? There should be such measures put in place so user location data will not be so easily accessible. Having the location data directly in the URL and stored in the logs does not sound like a secure way to store data. With this, it’s difficult to generate additional

revenue from the aforementioned way the CEO mentioned, but it would protect user data as promised. Or, if possible, dispose of the logs after some time.

The terms of service and privacy policy should be upfront and transparent about what part of the user's data the company will be accessing in exchange for using their app subscription. This is something that can be done to avoid legal troubles regarding privacy: if a user tries to sue the company for privacy breach (or something similar), the company can state it was in the terms of service, which is something the user agreed to upon subscribing.

While this is good for legality and, theoretically, transparency, it's also a bit misleading considering all users need to do is check a box under most cases saying they agree to the terms of service and privacy policy. It's unlikely they will actually read through these terms carefully. So, the fact the user may be unaware old data can be accessed and used rather than disposed cannot be dismissed.

E. Discuss whether the ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct offers any relevant guidance.

In the ACM, they state that "computing professionals should not access another's computer system, software, or data without a reasonable belief that such an action would be authorized or a compelling belief that it is consistent with the public good." I feel like the connotations of "public good" can be a little bit ambiguous, but overall the motivation behind what the co-worker and CEO is suggesting is to generate even more revenue.

Furthermore, they say, "Professional competence starts with technical knowledge and with awareness of the social context in which their work may be deployed." What stands out to me is the social context... This may be important to take into account. Social computing is a field within computer science that can possibly offer more guidance. In other words, how do people interact with the Internet and with applications in general?

F. Describe and justify your recommended action, as well as your answers to any other questions you presented in part A.

As suggested, there are a couple ways for a company to make money. In business, it's essential to find a way to save costs – either reduce the cost of a current service, replace a service with a cheaper one, or eliminate unnecessary services entirely. In this way, while the money coming in would stay the same, the cost is less, effectively raising profit.

It may be worthwhile to look into options to save cost for the company, and so then there will be less problems dealing with location data. Privacy features can be implemented and old location data can be discarded without much worry. Also, updating privacy policies or making changes to uphold the promise made to me in the first place about how data is discarded will be recommended to uphold trust with the users, as stated in the ACM.