

### Required Student Instrument: Part 2

Dear student. Consider your project for this quarter. The problem you have worked on almost certainly has multiple professional, ethical, legal, security and social implications. For example, suppose you had written a compression algorithm that allows you to add a password requirement to unzip the file.

Write an essay describing how your project *does* or *might* have given rise to an ethical issue.  
Write an essay describing how your project *does* or *might* have given rise to a legal issue.

**ANS:**

Our project could give rise to an ethical issue as it involves the collection of user information. Our project involves collecting millions of tweets from users and associated metadata such as the user's location. While this is all public information as the tweets are posted publicly and the location information is only available if specified by the user, it could still pose some ethical issues.

Since we are creating a website that would make all of these tweets available in one way or another, we need to approach the creation of this website in an unbiased manner such that we present all topics and information equally, without the contents of the tweet or search results to be modified in any way. This is important because censorship is a major topic when discussing ethical issues. If we were to manipulate the data we downloaded in such a way to make a presidential candidate seem more favorable, that would be a form of censorship. If we were remove negative opinions of what we think is clearly the wrong solution to a world issue, that would be censorship.

Additionally, if were paid to promote a certain company or product over others in search results or trending information without disclosing to the end user that it is a sponsored result, there would be a clear violation of ethics. These examples are more definite, but there could be more obscure ones that derive from these basic ideas.

There could be potential ethical issues because while a user may have allowed their profile to be public, they most certainly did not give explicit consent to us to keep their tweet

indefinitely and do with which whatever we see fit. This would be an issue because while we could assume that the public availability of the tweet allows us to use it, that user's account could have been compromised and be broadcasting private information. The victim would then think that all would be fine once they deleted these malicious tweets, but we would still have our own copy of them.

Another potential ethical issue arises from the fact that we can profit from these downloaded tweets. This can be done in more ways than one, but it often simply involves a simple API call in response to one of the downloaded tweets to either follow or retweet the user. This is because users often host self-serving contests on Twitter to gain attention to themselves or a product. However, it would still be unethical to automate entries to such contests as you would clearly have an unfair advantage over the average user. This would involve more work than what we have done so far but it is not very difficult to implement and entries could be automated through a simple script.

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