

CS 3001-C: Computing, Society, and Professionalism

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Week 5: Professional Ethics
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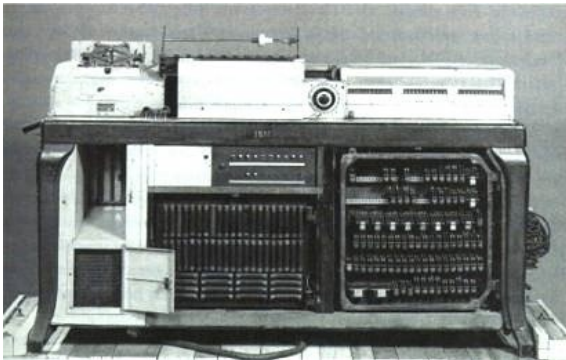


Do computer professionals need to worry about ethics like lawyers or physicians?

A Computer Professional's Story



- Jacobus Lentz, Dutch inspector of population registries before World War II
- Partnership with the Nazi Government
- Role in Hitler's Final Solution





Do computer professional need to worry about ethics like lawyers or physicians?

Privacy and security

Recall Therac-25

Financial decisions (e.g., tax software)




Preamble of Code

Software Engineering Code of Ethics: 8 Key Principles:


- Public
- Client and Employer
- Product
- Judgment
- Management
- Profession
- Colleagues
- Self




PUBLIC - Software engineers shall act consistently with the public interest




CLIENT AND EMPLOYER - Software engineers shall act in a manner that is in the best interests of their client and employer, consistent with the public interest




PRODUCT - Software engineers shall ensure that their products and related modifications meet the highest professional standards possible




JUDGMENT - Software engineers shall maintain integrity and independence in their professional judgment




MANAGEMENT - Software engineering managers and leaders shall subscribe to and promote an ethical approach to the management of software development and maintenance



PROFESSION - Software engineers shall advance the integrity and reputation of the profession consistent with the public interest



COLLEAGUES - Software engineers shall be fair to
and supportive of their colleagues



SELF - Software engineers shall participate in lifelong learning regarding the practice of their profession and shall promote an ethical approach to the practice of the profession

Analysis of the Code

- Questions demonstrating the multi-faceted grounding of the code:
 - Who is affected?
 - Am I treating other humans with respect?
 - Would my decision hold up to public scrutiny?
 - How will those who are least empowered be affected?
Are my acts worthy of the ideal professional?

Alternative List of Fundamental Principles

- Be impartial
- Disclose information that others ought to know
- Respect the rights of others
- Treat others justly
- Take responsibility for your actions and inactions
- Take responsibility for the actions of those you supervise
- Maintain your integrity
- Continually improve your abilities
- Share your knowledge, expertise and values



Class Discussion– Analyze the Software Engineering Code of Ethics

Class Discussion -- Software Recommendation

- List of clauses associated with these fundamental principles:
 - (Public) 2.06 Be fair and truthful in all matters
 - (Public) 2.08 Donate professional skills to good causes
 - (Judgment) 3.06 Disclose conflicts of interest
 - (Judgment) 3.07 Avoid conflicting financial interests
 - (Profession) 6.09 Place professional interests before personal
 - (Profession) 6.13 Share software knowledge

Class Discussion -- Software Recommendation

- Relevant fundamental principles:
 - Be impartial
 - Disclose information that others ought to know
 - Share your knowledge, expertise, and values



Conclusion

- Professor Smith should have revealed her conflict of interest to Mr. Shaw.

Whistle-Blowing

- Examples situations:
 - Actions/products of employer can potentially harm the public
 - Fraudulent use of tax dollars



Morality of Whistle-Blowing



Whistle-Blowing as a Moral Duty