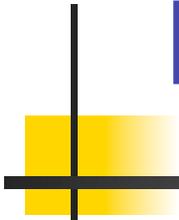


CS305 Topic – Professional Ethics



- What is a Profession?
- Professional Ethical Guidelines

Sources: Baase: *A Gift of Fire* and Quinn: *Ethics for the Information Age*

What is a Profession?

- High level of education
 - Initial and continuing professional education
- Apprenticeship
 - e.g., Internship/fellowship for doctors
- Accreditation/Certification/Licensing
 - Not everyone can practice
 - Professional society
- Code of ethics
 - Decisions have impact
 - Society expects professionals to act for public good

Computer/Software Engineers

- Certification and licensing not needed
- Consequently,
 - No college education required
 - No apprenticeship required
 - No membership in professional society required
 - No continuing education required
- Most c/s engineers are part of a team; they don't work directly with clients
- Yet, c/s engineers have ability to harm public

Ethical Guidelines for Computer Professionals

- ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct
 - Adopted in October 1992
 - Consists of 24 imperatives formulated as statements of personal responsibility
- IEEE/ACM Software Engineering Code of Ethics and Professional Practice
 - Adopted by IEEE-CS and ACM joint task force in 1999

ACM Code Highlights

- Contribute to society and human well-being
- Avoid harm to others
- Be honest and trustworthy
- Be fair and take action not to discriminate
- Honor property rights including copyrights and patent
- Give proper credit for intellectual property
- Respect the privacy of others
- Honor confidentiality

IEEE/ACM SE Code

Preamble:

- Software engineers have opportunities to do good or do harm
- Software engineers ought to be committed to doing good
- Eight principles identify key ethical relationships and obligations within these relationship:
 - Public, Client and employer, Product, Judgment, Management, Profession, Colleagues, Self
- Code should be seen as a whole, not a collection of parts
- Concern for the public interest is paramount

SE Code Highlights

- 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

Discussion Questions

- Your company has 25 licenses for a computer program, but you discover that it has been copied onto 80 computers. You informed your supervisor, but he/she is not willing to take any action. What would you do next?
 - Give up; you did your best to correct the problem
 - Call the software vendor and report the offense
 - Quit your job
- Are “whistleblowers” heroes or traitors?