

Reflective Writing

Cybersecurity Ethics

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Over the course of this semester, there have been a great many different ethical topics, perspectives and ideas that I have engaged with. From the different systems of ethical beliefs such as deontology and consequentialism to interesting ethical questions such as what level of responsibility do companies like Facebook have in stopping the spread of misinformation, this course has shown me more ways of looking at ethics and ethical questions than I had ever considered before. This most affected me through the teaching of the various different systems of ethics. I had never heard of many of these ethical systems before this course, and so learning about them has impacted the way that I view ethics itself. The three topics and ethical ideas that I will be discussing in this reflection are consequentialism, deontology and ubuntu as these are the ethical systems that most intrigued me and made me reflect on the way that I understand ethics throughout this course.

The first ethical system I learned about in this course was deontology. Deontology is the ethical system that cares only about if an action is itself morally right or wrong, not about what the consequences of such actions may be. This idea of ethics was invented by philosopher Immanuel Kant and is one that has strict rules for ethics, rules that must not be broken if an action is to be considered ethical. This view makes sense to me as there is a universal acceptance that certain actions are inherently immoral, such as murder. Though I believe that this way of viewing ethical decision making is one that is too rigid, as in my eyes it seems too constricting,

involving a sort of ethical right or wrong with no room for nuance. For example, under deontology, theft is wrong regardless of the motives or consequences, if a mother steals food for her starving children, the theft of such food would still be immoral and as such the moral option under deontology would be for her not to steal, even if it means the woman's children starve as a consequence. This moral system does, however, help me deepen my understanding of the actions of others, as many people do follow this system of morals, and it also has great influence on our society as a whole, and for this better understanding I am happy that I learned about deontology.

The next ethical system that had an impact on me was consequentialism.

Consequentialism is a system of ethics that focuses on the consequences of actions to determine if they are moral, and is the system that I believe in the most. Consequentialism deems that the action that results in the most good as a consequence of the action is the action that is the most moral. In the same prior example of a woman stealing food to feed her children, the consequences of stealing would be that the woman's children wouldn't starve, thus making stealing the food the moral action under consequentialism, even if stealing itself is bad. This focus on the consequences of actions is why the system doesn't fall to the same trappings of deontology in my eyes. This ethical system is my favorite of the ones covered in this course, and I have incorporated it into making my own ethical choices, so it has certainly been impactful in changing my ethical outlook.

The final system of ethics is ubuntu. Ubuntu is a system of ethics defined by the togetherness that it promotes. It is defined by the idea that only together can humanity flourish, and as such it is important to recognize and assist the community so that the community can in turn recognize and assist you. This idea of togetherness and making decisions that treat every part of your community well for the mutual benefit of everyone in the community is one that is

very impactful. This loyalty to the collective community helps to strengthen the community, and in turn strengthens all who are in the community, so making decisions that respect and show compassion to one's community are ethical decisions. This togetherness has helped me understand how important the collective of humanity is, and making decisions that help not only humanity as a whole, but each individual in that community is a very commendable form of ethics that I have incorporated when making my own choices.

This course has changed my perspective on how to act ethically, and the different systems of ethics have not only helped how I view ethical choices myself, but also how I understand the perspectives and morals of others. This insight will prove incredibly useful when it comes to making ethical decisions in the world of cybersecurity, as well as in other facets of my life. Of all of the ethical rulesets, I align most with consequentialism, though it does undoubtedly have its own flaws. These flaws in consequentialism can, however, be helped through the use of other systems in situations where consequentialism falters, allowing for a more well rounded and capable system of ethics. It is because of this better understanding that I am glad to have taken this course and learn all that I have about ethics.