

Isaac Flores

Professor Montoya

Cybersecurity Ethics

18 July 2024

Case Analysis 3

The article describes the controversy about an Equifax data breach and its business ethics as it applies to credit reporting, data management, and privacy protections of its clients.

Furthermore, the article describes the outrage clients have with Equifax seems to not being able to be attacked or reformed. The credit reporting agency was explained to take financial numbers, have the numbers run through algorithms, and produce scores that affect the ability to attain assets. These scores affect mortgages, tax rates, and interest on loans. These scores are necessary to conduct business operations. However, some clients have an issue with the lack of ability to step out of the credit system without not using phones, credit, and specific jobs. Another issue is in regards to the seemingly inability for a credit bureau to change data if it is reported wrong.

Lieber describes Equifax in a negative manner so as to suggest Equifax being a business not able to appropriately respond to customer needs because of the breach that affected Equifax's access to the internet and data records. In this Case Analysis, I will argue that contractarianism shows us that the Equifax breach harmed clients by carelessly handling important client data and was morally bad.

A key point that Friedman explains in the first reading was the act of a corporation to take some form of responsibility when facing controversial management of its clients values. Friedman's perspective of how a corporation's values can often be different than a person's values. This can be further examined when considering the necessary resources that are often

needed to keep a business running with a large number of supporters, investors, and clientele. Money is often prioritized by a business compared to the client's values so the business continues to run to fulfill the values of the clients. Friedman makes an interesting point when describing the concept of the government's role in taxation as being pushed to a specific extent so as to be supported by the people. The American Revolution being mentioned by Friedman is interesting as a lack of representation regarding taxation was one of the reasons that war was started.

Using the concepts of holding a corporation responsible and taxation needing to be ethical, the case can be understood through an ethical perspective. In respect to the clients of Equifax, this concept of taking charge and holding a corporation responsible is a key point in maintaining an ethical business model in the modern world filled with ethical policies and terms of use policies made to help clients. In the article, Lieber's description of Equifax can be considered unethical as a result of continuing to charge its clients to freeze their credit files even after announcing their intent to stop charging their clients. Furthermore, Equifax is implied to be stealing client money and data. This a clear unethical way of taxing and collecting funds from its clients. Considering the perspective of Friedman and the description of the Equifax controversy, it can be quite reasonable to consider Equifax as being unethical from a moral perspective.

Contractarianism can provide an opportunity to assess the Equifax case through a specific ethical and moral perspective. Contractarianism focuses on the idea that there is a social agreement between people to agree to a specific set of rules with the intention of providing a fair life for everyone. When analyzing Lieber's description of the client outrage, contractarianism can have the effect of viewing Equifax as somewhat moral. For example, Equifax provides a somewhat centralized standard to produce credit scores that impact people's ability to obtain

assets. These standards can be considered agreed upon by at about a couple thousand people or so as about a two-thousand people or so were mentioned in the article. While Equifax charged its customers for freezing financial files, mishandling their data, and had bad policies regarding changing wrongfully reported information, it is also a service provider many people agree to. Furthermore, the controversy about Equifax is about its business ethic and not whether or not it should be shut down; it seems as if Equifax serves a specific purpose. The use of the veil of ignorance in relation to contractarianism can make a specific standard apply to anyone regardless of age, race, or gender. Furthermore, I think that the ethically moral thing to do was to hold Equifax responsible for what it had done in support of a kind of Equifax reformation that would prioritize its business model in favor of data protections rather than profit with the intention of providing a set of rules most people might agree to.

The concept regarding the demand for top corporate officers earning the maximum amount of profit in favor of finding a way to manage resources in the best way possible. The demand can be considered to come from a moral perspective. The reasons for the demand include several factors including giving support to black ghetto properties and businesses, providing training for the unemployed, and contributing to charitable activities. This is an interesting thing to consider as this demand to engage in ethical activities instead of engaging in activities that will increase profit can often be quite hard to focus on when running a business.

The concept of adapting a new social contract was explained by Anshhen in the second reading. Furthermore, the concept of social dynamic evolving can be a reason as to why there is a need for a new social contract. This idea is explained by Anshen as being an alternative option to destructive war between nations. This concept is explained further by Ahshen as being a

crucial strategy to use as a response to new dynamics made to meet new social needs and economic needs.

The concept of a new social contract can be applied to the controversial actions of Equifax and how it can be applied to the client of Equifax in need of some kind of revision. Anshen describes a new social contract that can be made in favor of economic and social satisfaction. Equifax is in need of a contract made with its clients in an attempt to guarantee economic satisfaction in relation to its services, credit reporting, and ethical business model. Furthermore, this can positively affect its social reputation with its customers. This concept can help avoid a type of destructive outcome as described by Anshen in the reading if a social contract is gained. Furthermore, a destructive outcome is a term that can be used to describe the Equifax breach and how Equifax responded to it.

Using the idea of contractarianism to assess the positives and negatives to design a social contract that can be accepted by a large portion of people can be difficult to consider. However, it must be a standard benefiting everyone despite race, age, or gender if it is to be made using a contractarian perspective. This ethical concept can lead a corporation like Equifax to focus on a more humanitarian mission rather than a self-centered profitable mission. A self-centered profitable mission is what caused the poor response Equifax had to the breach and can be considered a result of lack of adaptation to a new social contract. I think Equifax could benefit from forming a social contract that benefits most people as it relates to the ethical idea of contractarianism in relation to forming an agreed upon contract. It's important to note that satisfying everyone's needs is difficult and may not be accomplished as new changes need to be made in response to the changing times. Rather than using the veil of ignorance to choose self interest, I think that a lack of focusing on yourself and more on everyone else is a key point to

contractarianism. Furthermore this can ensure a standard of agreed upon ethics in a contract that most people agree to in an attempt to live a fair life. This can relate to the direction Equifax could take if it focuses on a humanitarian perspective.

The response that Equifax had and its business model was the object of controversy in the articles described by Lieber. Through analyzing Friedman's work regarding taking responsibility and taxation in an ethical perspective should be missions that Equifax agrees to. Anshen shows the advantages to support a new ethical contract rather than engaging in destructive actions. These concepts that were discussed by the authors in the readings can help analyze the case and possible solutions to the ethically bad Equifax business model and values. Furthermore, I think that using the contractarianism perspective of an agreed upon social contract is increasingly relevant to Equifax and the modern world that is in need of an agreed upon set of standards. The issue with this proposed solution of the social contract would be the need to adapt the contract to address new issues if they arrive. The solution regarding holding Equifax responsible for reformation requires a large amount of people to make happen. The article mentioned about a couple thousand people affected by the Equifax breach that could make a difference if they became united. Consequentialism can also be a standard set in the social contract as what is moral must be defined by a group of people for it to be designed, executed, and supported.