

Case Study 3 – Meta AI Case Study

PHILL 355E

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Introduction

For the 3rd case study, we will examining Amanda Silberlings's articles "The Meta AI App is a Privacy Disaster (2025)" through the lens of Virtue Ethics. Silberlings talks about how the company Meta has released an AI based app that allows people chat with AI programs that are shareable to the public. The issue with this is that many of the users do not realize their private conversations are being shared online. Some of this information includes content like addresses, names, legal or even medical information. Meta continues to make their privacy settings less transparent because at the end of the day they are for profit company which relies on data. From a Virtue Ethics perspectives Meta's action shows a poor moral judgment. A company that is built on a positive foundation would be more transparent about its privacy settings, data collections, and care for its' users like Apple.

Virtue Ethics

Virtue Ethics is based on Aristotle ideas which focuses more on who they are verses the singular action they take. Instead of asking "what rule should be followed" or "what rule would get the best outcome?" It is about asking what the good person/organization would do. Building a proper foundation with honesty, patience, and responsibility is what allows the right to do as second nature. In other words, a virtuous person should aim for what Aristotle calls eudaimonia which is a healthy, balanced, and ethical way of living. Through cases like this study Business or Tech should follow this path through transparency to the public and not cutting corners to reduce costs. Virtue Ethics is about doing the right thing when no one is watching, proper moral awareness.

Meta's Dilemma

In the article Silberlings explains how Meta (Facebook) launched its' AI based app where people could talk to an AI generated system. This system would collect and share data without general user's knowledge. With private data not being properly secure this leaks people's important data like addresses, names, health information at risk from an attack. For example, in the article Silberlings using the 2006 AOL leak as an example. Meta wants this app to create buzz and fun, but the truth is it is still half baked, and the AI world is still in a grey zone where the internet does not have proper regulations and laws that can fully protect others.

Using Virtue Ethics

Prior knowledge to reading this article I can safely say Meta does not have a great track record with people's private data and how they use this data for profits. Let's take Apple for example, with their MacOS and iOS software they introduce features that are privacy based. The apple ecosystem now comes with iCloud IP rely on which aims to protect the user's internet, like a VPN. This was an example of how a company following virtue ethics is moving in a more positive direction. Meta's way of business is gather as much information as possible to create fast profit and growth at the expense of the user. They carelessly created this product without fully taking the time to understand the consequences. Meta's choice to publish the app without clear transparency and privacy communications shows lack of proper integrity. If they acted according, then with data leak occurs it would not have been such a mess.

Resolution

According to Virtue Ethics Meta should have taken the time to polish the app while complying more in line with people's privacy from the start. Acting with virtue consists of being responsible even when its inconvenient to the host. For Meta's case that means being able to

explain privacy settings clearly, testing the app properly for cases of misuse, and just being upfront to the public before us. A company with integrity would never gamble with a user's trust just to "perform more initiative." Remember following virtue ethics metal should have prioritize their moral character by prioritizing responsibility, honesty, and user safety before publishing the app.

Conclusion

Amanda Silberlings's article does into depth about Meta lack of the care and judgement lead to a privacy and data nightmare. Through the lens of Virtue Ethics, we can see the appl itself is a good concept and works well, but the issue here is the execution. A company that acts with care for the user and privacy first would have shielded from the backlash and bad natures of the leak. Virtue Ethics reminds that ethics isn't about avoid punishment, but it is about doing the right thing because it reflects who you are. Meta's dilemma proves that good tech also requires good values behind it.