

Reflective Writing Assignment

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Phil 355E: Cybersecurity Ethics

Once I obtain my degree in cybersecurity, I am hoping to work in the healthcare compliance sector, where I can combine the skills gathered in my majors and my fourteen-year career experience. Working in the healthcare field has educated me on the increasing technological regulations to address the ethical conundrums about how to properly provide care and privacy to patients in a landscape that was formerly conducted in person and on site. The introduction of the uncharted territory of technology has presented new oversight in how care is provided and if these methods should be widely adopted. The industry has been plagued with Malware and Ransomware and in fact, even my employee data has been exposed in my line of work. The HITECH ACT, HIPAA, PCI DSS and the proposed Healthcare Cybersecurity Act of 2022 have been introduced and established to assist with addressing these challenges and I look forward to being a part of further regulation adherence in the compliance realm to allow a seamless and protected healthcare experience to patients and employees of the future.

Since I first started my coursework for the major of my first degree, Human Services, ethical practices were drilled into my thoughts. I thought I had had the answers for what to do in any scenario my field of work would present to me. However, once I entered the field, I found this was not the case. At times, it was difficult to adhere to my professional ethical code, my personal ethical code, the laws, the needs of my clients and that of my employer. I faced various conflicting ethical situations, and at times I did not feel at peace with my decisions. I would often lay awake at night try to assess how I could have better handled a situation. From these instances, I gained wisdom from my missteps, and I was able to improve my ethical judgements. This allowed me to excel at helping my clients, professional relationships, work performance and obtaining a good sleep at night. I also learned how advocate for ethical practice in a professional manner within my field, and so I came into this class thinking I knew right from wrong without giving it much thought.

I absorbed some new ethical tools during the course of this class, some of them familiar and some of them brand new. I explored, consequentialism, utilitarianism, contractarianism, ethics of care, virtue ethics, Confucianism and Ubuntu. These ethical tools gave me different lenses through which to view complicated scenarios with differing interests. Utilizing them together allows me to look at more ethical concerns that may arise in my field of work I gained a deeper understanding of how privacy affects others, the militarization of cyber tools, whistleblowing procedures, the fifth domain of war, the consequences of machine learning on politics and psychology of the masses, and corporate social responsibility. We are increasingly using ourselves and personal data as digital currency in exchange for social acceptance, money, and social networking. This allows unethical actors to exploit this to their benefit.

Facebook's machine learning algorithms and their impact on the world deeply resonated with me. We learned about it in contexts of political elections, data gathering, psychological influence, its ability to accelerate a company's profits, and its use as a tool in cyberwarfare, cyber operations, and cyber-attacks. After reviewing the cases I immediately asked for my data profile and to have my information deleted. I also attempted to change all of my permissions, but that is an endeavor that will take some time. It has also become a hot topic in my conversations with the overturning of Roe vs Wade. It does seem that many people outside of the IT, military and cybersecurity fields are unaware of the impact of Facebook. After gaining a better comprehension of the situation it was difficult to determine who was ethical and who was not ethical. One thing I was able to ascertain for certain, is that companies need to do more cost analysis on data mining and machine learning and ascertain a better code of conduct, before it will have to be legislated.

A historical prospective of the ethical concerns in business and how their scope of care might differ from my own was an interesting course topic. It gave me pause to ponder how healthcare and technology fields are merging and how one of the tenants in the medical field is, "Do no harm," and how does this fit in with responsibility to shareholders and employers whose interests are at times at odds with best practices and models of care. It was thought-provoking to see how business ethics have developed into models that show more care to the environment, its customers, and the world around it, as technology has allowed businesses to have a greater realization of their interdependence with the world around it. This interdependence does not always have to be juxtaposed against profit as thought in previous models, as customers are more likely to hold businesses accountable for their actions with their access to technology increasing their mindfulness of the impacts of businesses. It always helps to understand what other people might view as ethical versus unethical, why, and which situations fit these criteria. I discovered that sometimes an action in itself might be ethical, but it can have far reaching unethical consequences. As a leader in the cybersecurity field, I will have a duty to my employers and the world around me to navigate this appropriately.

One short story assigned to us, "Girl in Wave: Wave in Girl," by Kathleen Ann Goonan, was essential to my development in this course. It really gave me a deep understanding of Virtue Ethics, and how technology is allowing us to connect with each other in an unprecedented way. Technology has ushered in a new age of literacy and empathy much like in the story. The problems enter when someone is controlling what we become literate in. It can develop people into kind, ethical, thoughtful persons, it can morph us into ignorant, intolerant hate mongers, or we can become someone in between. In the story, many people were opposed to a technology that would allow people with intellectual disabilities to gain intelligence because of the negative things they were told about it while the main character Melody transformed from a depressed individual with low self-esteem, her family from an arguing underachieving and low-income household to a successful loving home and her society into a highly evolved empathetic society with highly advanced technology. Melody helped shape this new society by becoming an advocate and a moral exemplar. Virtue Ethics is all about developing your personal character and doing the right thing in the right situations for the right reasons, and it is a part of my personal code of ethics. As a cybersecurity professional, I want to be a moral exemplar of professionalism, empathy, and ethics. I want to help mold and shape the industry and other professionals into the best reality possible.

The field of cybersecurity is not new, but in a lot of ways it is uncharted terrain. As a practitioner of cybersecurity, it is my duty to seek the knowledge of those who came before me, join an organization that will help me maintain my ethical code, and to seek knowledge outside of my job assignments. How will my contributions affect the society at large? How can I contribute to building an ethical standard for the field of cybersecurity where there is none? How can I protect my company from liability with minimal monetary costs? I know that I will make mistakes, and it will be my duty to ensure they are not repeated through advocacy and education. It will also be my responsibility to be knowledgeable about the field of cybersecurity and the possible ripple effects to everything dependent upon it. I will need the alert to any ethical problems that I might see arise. This class helped me improve upon my skills on utilizing various resources to present the best case for ethical considerations in the appropriate method of reporting.

This was the most difficult class in my academic career. The coursework was rigorous, and I had a lot of personal, work and health issues I was not used to dealing with. Those who know me would often say that I am never at a loss for words, but when sitting down to assemble arguments for my case analyses, I would find myself at a loss for words. Applying various ethical tools to various situations really made me dig outside of my personal biases and thoughts to consider other points of view. To add to that, I had to incorporate the thoughts and views of two different authors for all of my case analyses and stay on topic for one train of thought versus addressing all of my opinions on every aspect of the cases. This will be invaluable to me in the compliance field, as I will have to marry the interpretation of the law, my employer's mission statement and goals, my personal ethics and the needs of the clients, their customers, and stakeholders to determine if something is ethical, in compliance with guidelines, and if new guidelines need to be established to protect everyone involved in the best possible manner. I look forward to tackling these issues in the future to grow into the best cybersecurity professional I can be.