

Reflective Writing

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Among various issues that greatly influenced my thoughts throughout this class are data ethics and user privacy, cyber warfare and moral responsibility, and professional ethics in technology. All these areas tested my original assumptions and made me think harder about the ways in which ethical principles are applicable in real-life contexts.

To begin with, my attitude towards data ethics, in particular towards publicly available information, has shifted significantly. Initially, in the course, I assumed that when data is publicly available, its use is usually okay. Nonetheless, having participated in the conversations on contextual privacy and informed consent, I am now aware that accessibility does not necessarily mean that one is permitted to do something ethical. For example, the analysis of the cases of scraping and use of online profile data made me understand that people do not provide information to be used without any limitations, but in the context of networking or self-presentation. In situations where organizations capture, compile, and reuse that data without prior permission, the organizations are likely to infringe on the expectations and autonomy of the users. I have shifted my thinking from a limited legal view to an expanded moral-ethical view that emphasizes fairness, transparency, and respect for people. Now I understand that ethical data use involves more than going by rules; it involves sensitivity towards what people want their information to be used for, as well as how. Takeaway: the fact that something is legal does not imply that it is morally right; one should always pay attention to the background situation and people behind the data.

Second, the issue of cyber warfare greatly enhanced my knowledge of contemporary warfare and responsibility. At first, I perceived cyberattacks as not as damaging as standard warfare, as they are not necessarily associated with physical violence. Nonetheless, the

awareness that the operation of cyber can be applied to critical infrastructure, including hospitals, communication systems, and power infrastructure, altered this image. Such attacks may result in massive disruption, panic, and even indirect damage to the civilians. I also realized how challenging it is to use traditional ethical models, such as just war theory, in the cyber environment, where the limits between military and civilian targets are not well defined. This smattering of complexity led me to understand that harm is not a simple physical one but also systemic and long-term. Ethical work in this field is associated with foreseeing the indirect consequences and securing vulnerable groups, despite the fact that injury is not always evident. Takeaway: Ethical judgment should consider the indirect and long-term consequences of an action and not necessarily immediate or visible damage.

Lastly, my perception of professional technology ethics has also gained a more critical and reflective approach. I used to perceive technical work as a bit disconnected from moral decision-making and thought that the obligation was primarily on organizations or leaders. Nevertheless, the case of deceptive medical software showed that single professionals contribute significantly to averting harm. Code writing or system design is not ethically neutral; it has a direct impact on people's lives. I now understand that in executing orders, it is the responsibility of professionals to challenge harmful practices. This is a view that focuses on integrity, honesty, and bravery at the workplace. Takeaway: It is an ethical responsibility of a professional to be ethically accountable, not merely technically competent.

In summary, these three areas have assisted me in going beyond the superficial thinking to a more profound and intricate comprehension of ethics. Now I understand that ethical decision-making is the process of balancing between the legal standards, moral principles, and human outcomes when conflicts arise in difficult situations. More significantly, I have learned

that ethics is not a theory or an abstract idea but a practical obligation that ought to determine all the decisions that one makes on a daily basis.