

What was morally wrong about writing the code for the pharmaceutical quiz?

"The Code I'm Still Ashamed Of" by Bill Sourour is an essay of reflection. Sourour shares an ethical dilemma he faced early in his career as a developer. Sourour describes his experience working for a marketing company that asked him to create a website for a pharmaceutical client. The website included a quiz designed to recommend a specific drug to young women, regardless of their responses. He then mentions how he was ashamed and uneasy upon learning that the drug, which was presented as a solution for acne, had severe side effects. These side effects included depression and suicidal thoughts. He felt conflicted about his role in promoting a potentially harmful product, especially since the marketing tactics were deceptive. Ever since, he has questioned the ethical responsibilities of developers and the potential consequences of their work. The article highlights the moral responsibilities that come with the power to influence people's lives through technology. In this Case Analysis, I will argue that the ethics of care reveals the code was morally problematic because it prioritized profit over the well-being of users. Sourour should have acted differently, and he knows that now.

Through reading about the ethical issues presented in Bill Sourour's "The Code I'm Still Ashamed Of," it is essential to understand key concepts from the Codes of Ethics. This is especially the case when talking about the responsibilities of developers. The Code of Ethics focuses on principles such as integrity, responsibility, and respect for individuals. The ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct mentions respecting privacy, avoiding causing harm, and having integrity. Conduct work in a manner that provides benefits and minimizes negative impact. Avoid misleading information as best you can. Promote and encourage ethical behavior within organizations as well as support others and guiding them in an ethical manner. Take responsibility for one's actions and decisions. You must also be prepared to address ethical issues if they present themselves. The IEEE Code of Ethics emphasizes an obligation to avoid deceptive practices. You must be honest with your claims and data. , and they should not engage in any deceptive acts. Improve your understanding of technology, its appropriate application, and potential consequences. It is essentially saying that you

should do your research before making claims. Those who uphold the IEEE Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct are expected to treat everybody with respect and avoid harassment or discrimination based on race, religion, gender, age, disability, or nationality. Proper credit must be given for the contributions of others. Credit should be given to those who deserve it. It is essential to protect the privacy and confidentiality of others and ensure that information is used responsibly. They should also seek and/or accept criticism in stride. The major point of contention In Sourour's case is the harming of others. The deceptive marketing tactics employed by the pharmaceutical company violated this principle. The website mentioned that he developed had a quiz that was designed to point to a specific drug regardless of the responses. The drug had severe side effects of depression and suicidal thoughts. It serves as misrepresentation and is directly doing harm. By creating that website, Sourour was complicit in promoting a product that could have severe consequences. The ethics of care emphasizes relationships and empathy. The company's website was designed to exploit users by suggesting a drug that was not necessarily appropriate and ended up doing significant harm. From the perspective of the ethics of care, Sourour's role in this situation can be seen as failing to prioritize the well-being of the users. He may have been keeping his head down and doing his job, but he failed the principles of the ethics of care. It is clear that Sourour should have acted differently and he is completely aware. It obviously would have been ideal to prioritize the health and safety of users and avoid any deaths. Sourour's decision to participate in the project, despite his concerns, suggests a compromise of ethical principles. After the entire incident, as stated in the text, he now seems to be aware and on track following the Code of Ethics as well as the ethics of care.

Mary Beth Armstrong's "A Comparison across the Professions of Medicine, Engineering, and Accounting" explores how each profession defines and enforces its ethical codes. In medicine, the ethical framework is deeply rooted in the Hippocratic Oath. This would mention confidentiality and informed consent. The patient must be prioritized and decisions must be made that benefit the health and well-being of their patients. Engineering ethics focuses on public safety and reliability. Engineers follow principles that require them to avoid conflicts of interest, act with integrity, and ensure

that their work does not harm in any way. Accounting ethics hone in on the honesty and accuracy of data. Accountants must focus on the objective, also avoid conflicts of interest, and make sure they are working with accurate financial information. Ethical standards in accounting aim to prevent fraud and ensure the integrity of financial practices. Each profession has distinct characteristics and priorities, however, they all include the importance of upholding integrity, avoiding harm, and being responsible for the interests in mind of their clients. Mary Beth Armstrong calls this a fiduciary duty. Sourour should have acted with the principles in mind outlined by Armstrong. It would suggest that Sourour had a moral obligation to refuse participation in the deceptive project. By taking a stand against the unethical practices, he would have demonstrated a commitment to the well-being of the users and also upheld his fiduciary duty. A fiduciary duty is the legal responsibility to act solely in the best interest of another party. It is often characterized by having good faith and loyalty. It emphasizes the obligation that a fiduciary has to protect and serve the interests of those who have placed their trust in them. This duty is prevalent in various professional relationships. An example of this would be a lawyer. They must have the best interests of their clients in mind. Violating a fiduciary duty, even accidentally, constitutes a breach of ethics. An accidental violation could occur due to negligence or a misunderstanding of the fiduciary's responsibilities, but it still undermines the trust of a relationship. This is exactly what happened in the case of Bill Sourour. Intentional violations of fiduciary duty are viewed as acts of betrayal. Deliberate instances would be actions like embezzlement of funds. This would also be a representation of conflicting interests. Maintaining fiduciary responsibility is crucial for preserving the trust and integrity essential to these professional relationships. Sourour could have also sought alternative ways to address his concerns. For instance, he could have reported the issue to higher authorities within the company. Mary Beth Armstrong's exploration of ethical principles across professions, along with the ethics of care, provides comprehensive guidelines and a framework for analyzing Bill Sourour's actions in "The Code I'm Still Ashamed Of." Sourour's involvement in the creation of a deceptive marketing tool violated key ethical principles, including fiduciary duty and professional competence. The ethics of care further highlights the moral shortcomings of his actions, emphasizing the need for

empathy and responsibility in professional conduct. Based on this assessment, the right course of action for Sourour would have been to refuse to aid in the unethical behavior of the project, prioritize the well-being of the users, and demonstrate a commitment to ethical standards.

"The Code I'm Still Ashamed Of" by Bill Sourour and the outline of the Code of Ethics by Mary Beth Armstrong go hand in hand. Armstrong provides a perfect guide for the response that Sourour should have conducted. Armstrong inadvertently presents a compelling case for examining the ethical responsibilities of developers through established Codes of Ethics and the ethics of care. In this case analysis, the ethics of care reveals that the actions that took place were morally problematic. As stated previously, Sourour recognizes that he should have acted differently. Developing a Code of Ethics offers several benefits for a company. It helps to attract and retain employees as well as clients. Company culture and values will have a developed framework to help guide the organization. A Code of Ethics builds customer trust, reassuring customers that the company values integrity and will operate honestly. It provides a clear reference for the enforcement of correcting wrongdoings. A Code of Ethics will benefit any business by preventing potential problems in the future.