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CPRE 394

4/19/21

<p align="center">The Importance of Ethics in Modern America</p>

As companies grow in their strength and influence under the free market system, laws and regulations can only do so much to curb malpractice. Engineers have a profound impact on society, with their design choices having direct consequences that change lives and shape how the world operates; this is why we have a code of ethics. Our codes of ethics help to guide us to making decisions that err on the side of caution so that our creations work for the benefit of society and do not harm the public.

When involved with an ethical dilemma, I take a lot of time to think about a solution. I analyze the factors that put me into the position, I look at the relevant legal issues that might arise, and I examine the effects of making each choice. It is especially important, in my opinion, to examine long term benefits and consequences of your actions, as long-term decision making is a powerful key to improving society as a whole.

For example, an issue examined in class was the Amazon Alexa issue, where investigators are attempting to retrieve data from an Alexa enabled device in order to prosecute a murder case. In this situation, Amazon was put into a dilemma because prosecutors wanted more evidence to build their murder case on and the use of smart speaker data as evidence is extremely new to the judicial system. By analyzing the relevant case law, one can see that Katz v. United States and United States v. Jones both affirm a relevant, constitutionally protected right to privacy within the United States. Additionally, it is quite easy to examine how creating a long-term trend of supplying police with any requested data could lead down a slippery slope of selective enforcement. We all break laws fairly regularly; giving law enforcement nearly unlimited data from our private residences could lead to police only enforcing laws

against people they dislike. We see this issue even without allowing police to "invade" our homes virtually, by examining how police have historically selectively enforced traffic violations.

Because there was no warrant (and even if a warrant was issued it would need to be specific in place, time, and what it was seeking to find) and I think that the long-term consequences of allowing police to quickly and effectively retrieve data from a private residence would be harmful to society, I would choose not to provide ANY of Alexa's data to law enforcement officials. Many classmates in my discussion group landed on the same answer, however their rationale was quite different. My fellow classmates chose to instead rely on a less legal, and more consumer-focused background for their arguments. One classmate pointed out that implementing a backdoor method of access for police may be a security risk for customers. Another pointed out that customers would feel less comfortable with their devices, and may be less inclined to purchase them, if they know that police could be listening through them at any moment.

In this case, even though my classmates and I tackled the issue from different angles, we ended up with the same conclusion; this isn't always the case, and many times coming at a dilemma from different angles will often result in different solutions. Because of this problem, enumerated codes of ethics are necessary to help guide us solid solution.

The code of ethics relevant to the current discussion is the Virtue Ethics, which are: Integrity, Honesty, Fidelity, Charity, Responsibility, and Self-Discipline. The virtues most relevant to this are Honesty, Responsibility, and Integrity. I believe these three, while in conflict here, represent the issue best. Charity, Self-Discipline, and Fidelity are not really relevant, because Amazon makes clear in their TOS that they can do whatever they'd like with your data, and there is no obvious case of over-indulgence that would facilitate Self-Discipline as a relevant virtue. I chose Honesty because Amazon is choosing not to be open and transparent with the police, however this is in direct conflict with Integrity and Responsibility, because Amazon would not want its decision to endanger or burden society by introducing a selective enforcement problem. In this case, Integrity and Responsibility overcome the

Honesty virtue. I do not think it would be necessary to add another virtue to the list, because the list is fairly all-encompassing already.

As the endless march of technological progress bounds onward, engineers will continue to have a profound impact on the quality of life in our societies. Because of this, and the numerous problems associated with tackling ethical dilemmas from separate angles, codes of ethics are needed to help solve ethical issues quickly and effectively for the benefit of society. With the help of ethics codes like the six Virtue Ethics or the IEEE Code of Ethics, we may not be able to make society perfect, but I believe we can get pretty darn close.