**Thoughts on Ethics and Engineering**

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Ethics are a foundation of understanding and incorporating morals in decision making. The Code of Ethics are a set of policies created to acknowledge the importance of morals and their presence in creation within a company or industry. IEEE has a Code of Ethics that are to outline and recognize the ethical responsibilities that professionals are expected to abide by. In essence, these are a way to ground creators by understanding that blind creation does come with ethical consequences, and a code of ethics limits and creates a base starting line, so that no one goes “too far” by breaking one of such policies. Especially with the current technological climate, it is easy to get carried away and to be caught up with the advancement without thinking if there can be serious repercussions of the creation.

When in the face of an ethically compromising situation, I would think about what is at stake, how I would feel being on the “other side” of the possible risk, and then possible solutions to avoid such a risk. I think of my values and how to avoid the 5 P’s, pressure, pleasure, power, pride, and priorities. I want to consider as many possible solutions to a compromising situation, and then more if any of such solutions ever put the code of ethics at risk. A big mistake and temptation of people in general is to bring one of the 5 P’s to the forefront of thought, rather than erasing it. As the Virtue of Ethics outline, generally an ethical dilemma is due to one of these 5P’s, so it’s clear that the absence of these are necessary for the best outcome/solution to one.

In the third meeting of EE 394 we discussed a situation in which there had been a murder investigation, and it is said that an Amazon Echo may be a critical piece of evidence to help with the case. To my understanding, the debate was surrounding if the company should be allowed to share confidential information they had data on. The question is, who is allowed to access such information? Our group had a mutual agreement that as a purchaser of the product, you were understanding that you were surrendering your privacy to the company as data. We believe it is the company’s data now, and that you gave them that as a consumer to their product. I personally believe that while it is the company’s data, police should be able to produce a warrant for access. I do not believe that a company should disclose this data with anyone outside of the company except for a court of law. For example, I don’t think that unless it was specifically disclosed in terms and conditions for a consumer to agree upon, that a company should be able to sell your private information to anyone unless it was to be used for evidence in court. But even still, I think that a warrant should be mandated with specific reasoning for a search for such info.

In our study, I think that pressure was a major issue. As a company, since there was no law to surrender the information, it puts them at a compromising position. Do they supply the police with the data they can give them or do they compromise their ethics and give it to them for the circumstance? But who is there to stop them in the case another compromising situation occurs? Do they stay consistent or surrender it to case scenario? There was pressure on them, especially because of the situation and the fact that law enforcement and legality was brought into question. There was a question of power, if surrendering the data was a misuse of power. And lastly, I think priority was challenged due to the idea of putting their consumers’ sense of security over the moral dilemma of trying to help solve a murder case. I don’t believe that pride or pleasure were really a factor for the company because giving the case the data would not have been any necessary gain for them.