Scenario

- You work as a manager for a small application developing business, OPS P/L. Your specialty is in 'Office' applications, specifically spreadsheet and small database applications.

- You have been asked to develop a forecasting spreadsheet application for a new client, ABCD P/L, a small business that has just set up a brand new peer-to-peer network of PCs, each installed with a modern 'office' suite of programs. This represents ABCD's first move into computerisation.
Upon talking to the owner/manager of ABCD about the requirements of the spreadsheet you are developing, you by chance ask them about where they purchased their computers and network. The owner/manager of ABCD replies that they got a "really good deal" and that "one quote stood out from the rest". The PCs and network were installed by CSP P/L, a business you are familiar with.

• After further examination, an application developer informs you that one of the reasons for the low quote was that CSP P/L provided the PCs and network, and "threw in" an unlicensed copy of the office suite on each PC. What do you do?

What do you do about ABCD?

- Nothing – design the spreadsheet as requested
- Inform ABCD about licensing responsibility and still design the spreadsheet
- Refuse to design the spreadsheet until they have legal copies
- Other???

What do you do about CSP?

- Nothing
- Ring them and give them a chance to "fix" it by providing license
- Report them to an association like the ACS
- Report them to the legal authorities
- Other???
Ethics defined

- A code or set of principles by which people live
- What is considered to be right and what is considered to be wrong; what ought to be done, not what is being done
- A complex issue based on the assumption that people are rational and make free choices

Ethics theories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Metrics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stockholder</td>
<td>Maximize stockholder wealth, in legal and nonredundant manners</td>
<td>Will this action maximize long-term stockholder value? Can goals be accomplished without compromising company standards and without breaking laws?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder</td>
<td>Maximize benefits to all stakeholders while weighing costs to competing interests</td>
<td>Does the proposed action maximize collective benefits to the company? Does this action treat one or more of the company stakeholders unfairly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social contract</td>
<td>Create value for society in a manner that is just and nondiscriminatory</td>
<td>Does this action create a “net” benefit for society? Does the proposed action discriminate against any group in particular, and is its implementation socially just?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethics...

- Plato – (429-347 BC): ‘the good life’
- Aristotle (384-322 BC): ‘moderation in all things’
- Epicures (341-270 BC): ‘pursuit of pleasure’
Ethics...

- Kant (1724-1804): deontologism
  - an action is right or wrong regardless of motive or consequences
- J. S. Mill (1806-1873): consequentialism
  - right or wrong depends upon its consequences
  - behaviour should bring about the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people

Ethical dilemmas faced by IT/IS professionals

- Exist in their everyday work life
- Obligations toward their employers, customers, co-professionals and the general public
- Issues arise from devices, systems, their quality and safety, and services of professionals
- Obligations often come into conflict one with another, and require resolution
  - Sale of an over-engineered & expensive system to gullible customers
  - "Throwing in" Unauthorised copies of copyrighted software
  - Doing a job for a client which you may find offensive
  - Possession of unsolicited information

Ethics vs. Law

- Ethical
  - Based on customs and beliefs about how people should treat each other
  - Judged by individuals
  - Price of nonconformance is criticism or ostracism
  - May differ from society to society or region to region
- Legal
  - Based on precedence, or code law
  - Appointed judges
  - Price of nonconformance fines or jail sentence
  - Also may differ from society to society or region to region

Source: Alter S, Information Systems, 2nd Ed., Benjamin Cummings, California, 1996
Control of Information

• In 1986, Richard Mason identified major ethical issues in his research paper titled “Four ethical issues of the information age” (MISQ 10(1): 5-12 March).
• These are seen just as important today and are incorporated into codes of best practices for both IS and internet protocols.
• Summarised by the acronym PAPA
• Privacy; Accuracy; Property; Accessibility

PAPA

• Privacy:
  - What information must a person reveal about one’s self to others?
  - What information should others be able to access about you – with or without your permission?
  - What safeguards exist for your protection?

EPIC PRIVACY THREAT INDEX
PAPA

• Accuracy:
  Who is responsible for the reliability and accuracy of information?
  Who will be accountable for errors in information?

PAPA

• Property:
  Who owns information?
  Who owns the channels through which information is transmitted?
  How should access to this scarce resource be allocated?

PAPA

• Accessibility:
  What information does a person or an organization have a right to obtain?
  under what conditions and with what safeguards?
Something to ponder on

The government has decided as a security measure to implant microchips under the skin of all asylum seekers and refugees who enter Australia. You are a software developer who has been asked to build the database which will keep track of these people.

What are the arguments of the case for and against whether you should take on such a project?

Emerging issues – Managing internal ethical concerns

- Clogging networks
  - Lesser productivity
- Monitor online activities
  - Informed
- Restrict access
  - To certain Internet sites
  - Prevent conducting private business on company time

Managing external ethical concerns

- Principles for handling customer data
  - Use data collected to provide improved customer service
  - Do not share customer data with others outside your company without customer’s permission
  - Tell customers what data you are collecting and what you are doing with it
  - Give customers the right to have you delete any of the data you have collected about them
Professional codes of ethics

• Many professions have established their associations or societies
  – AMA (American Medical Associations)
  – ACS (Australian Computer Society)
  – ACM (Association for Computing Machinery)

• Code of Ethics

  • Inspire – stimulus for ethical conduct
  • Guide – for morally complex situations
  • Educate – members about their ethical responsibility
  • Discipline – specify grounds for punishing members
Professional Codes

- Rules that govern the conduct of members
- Members assume a moral obligation to conform
- Conformity is a condition of membership
- Violation can result in exclusion

ACS Code of Ethics

- Note 4.4 Standards of Conduct
  - “The list of standards is not necessarily exhaustive and should not be read as definitively demarking the acceptable from the unacceptable in professional conduct in all practical situations faced by a member.
  - “A member is expected to take into account the spirit of the Code of Ethics in order to resolve ambiguous or contentious issues concerning ethical conduct”

Advantages of a Code of Ethics

- Set out the ideals and responsibilities of the profession
- Exert a de facto regulatory effect, protecting both clients and professionals
- Improve the profile of the profession
- Motivate and inspire practitioners, by attempting to define their raison d’être
- Provide guidance on acceptable conduct
- Raise awareness and consciousness of issues
- Improve quality and consistency
Disadvantages of a Code of Ethics

- Whether the so-called standards are obligatory, or are merely an aspiration
- Whether such a code is desirable or feasible
- Whether ethical values are universal or culturally relativistic
- The difficulties of laying down universal guidance considering the heterogeneous (widely dissimilar) nature of the profession
- What is the point of specifying responsibilities, given the limited regulatory function of a code.

Influences on behavioral choice

- Environment: time, place
- Individual: family, peers
- Society: social norms
- Belief system: religious, morale
- Legal: environment, current laws
- Professional: current code of conduct

Role of Ethical Education and Training

- To make defensible moral judgment
- To reflect critically on the moral principles and ideals involved in a particular situation
- To have a framework for critical analysis
The professional dilemma

- Professional duties and responsibilities (sometimes) conflict with organisational goals and outcomes.
- Ethical behavior can conflict with legal statutes and/or contractual obligations.
- The professional needs knowledge and skills to resolve these conflicts by themselves as the situations arise in particular contexts.

A Practical Ethical Test

- "Before you act, be sure you will be comfortable with an Age story, tomorrow morning, reporting what you did."

Communications with Children
Communications with Children

- Children’s Online Privacy Protection
- Restrictions on data collection must be followed by electronic commerce sites aimed at children
- Who is responsible for protection?
  - Government
  - Parents
  - ISP
  - Schools
  > to install filtering software on computers

Disney Online Registration Page for Children Between the Ages of 13 and 18