

MISUSE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

AMANPREET

Introduction

The word 'IT' stands for Information Technology and it is defined as a part of engineering that contributes in creating and studying computer systems and computer application as well as being part of telecommunication, helping to retrieve, store and transmit data. In this current era many impossible things has been made possible with the help of Information Technology. In fact, many organizations are computerized and they use information technology in many ways in their day-to-day routine. The use of IT has becomes part of everybody's life. Information technology has many norms and rules that one should follow and respect. This is where the ethics of information technology comes into action. Ethic is the reflective study of the general nature of moral values, legal and social issues. There are some rules to be followed and standard to direct and control conduct of an individual at professional level. Most of the professional organizations which deal with computing have published their code of ethics.

Objective

One should study computer ethics because doing so will make individuals behave like responsible people. One should also study computer ethics as it will keep the latter away from computer abuse and catastrophes. These can be done by studying the different code of ethics. A code of ethics is defined as a means to promote a variety of purposes and goals, in other words, it is a way to promote many motives.

Misuse of Information Technology

Computer crime is a very vast topic. It includes many mal functions by computer users. It is all about making bad use of information technology for personal interest or in order to create troublesome situation for others.

Plagiarism is one aspect. It is passing off the work of other people as your own without giving any credit to them. Piracy is another topic worth thinking about because people make a lot of effort and spend lot of money to create or make something where other just make a copy of them instant of buying the original one. Crackers are basically attention who break into computer system and make illegitimate use of them. With the rapid evolution in Information Technology, the numbers of crackers are also growing. It is very difficult to get hold of all these issues that is why we have some association running, aiming to reduce and stop these concerns.

Ethics from different perspective

When talking about ethics in information Technology, there are different issues that come in our mind. In order to deal with these problems, there are many associations that have been created and some of them have been mention below.

"Many professions have established professional societies which have adopted codes of conduct. For example, the medical profession established the AMA (American Medical Association), and the legal profession established the ABA (American Bar Association)" (Tavani 2007, p.100). These two associations deal with code of conducts of their members. The Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) and the Institute for Electrical and Electronics Engineers-computer society (IEEE-CS) are examples of professional societies recognized by the computing profession. The Association of Information Technology Professional (AITP) deals with level of conduct for professional.

Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)

Here we will be looking at the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers code of ethics. The IEEE code of ethics contains ten general directives. The first four teach members to accept responsibility in making engineering decisions consistent with the safety, health and welfare of the public. The second command is to let alone difference of opinion wherever possible. The third instruction is to be honest and the fourth is not to accept bribery. These four commands are same for both ACM and the IEEE code of ethics.

The member of the IEEE needs to accept responsibility in making engineering consistent with the safety, health and welfare of the public. They also need to avoid real conflict of interest wherever possible. They need to be honest in their work and while handling the organization's data. A member of IEEE should support colleagues and subordinates in their happening and achievements.

"The IEEE code gives a list of categories for nondiscrimination, but does include anything that might be interpreted to include" sexual preference" (Bowyer 2001, p56).

The Association of Computing Machinery

"In 1992, the ACM adopted a new code of ethic and professional conduct with supplemental explanation and guidelines. The ACM code of ethics consists of eight general imperatives, eight specific professional responsibilities, six organizational imperatives and two elements for compliance" (Bowyer 2001, p.50).

Here we are looking at a scenario where a member of the ACM has to implement general moral. He will have to contribute to the society. He will have to avoid harm to others; he will need to be honest and trustworthy. He will have to be fare in his decision making and fair judgment. He will also need to respect property rights including copyrights and patents. He will have to give proper credit for knowledgeable property. He will need to respect the privacy of others, and he will also need to keep confidentiality.

Now, we are looking at some more qualified duties, as an ACM computing professional, a member will have to work hard to achieve the highest level in both the development and outcomes of skilled works. He will need to obtain expert skills, which means that he will need to show that he can perform skillfully. The member needs to know and respect the laws belonging to the appropriate profession. He will need to give performance review of computer systems and their impacts together with the analysis of possible risks as well as respect arrangement made and the given responsibilities. He will need to improve good understanding of computing. And finally he will get the opportunity to use computer and communicating resources but with authorization.

Regarding the Organizational Leadership Imperatives, a member of the ACM will need to handle social duties of the members of an organizational unit and fully take over his responsibilities. The member also needs to practice personnel and resources to design and build information system that will raise the self respect of the member. He must ensure that the members, who are getting access to the computer system and those who will be affected, will have their needs clearly stated during the assessment. Afterwards the system must be formalized to such a level so that it satisfies all the needs. The ACM member should also create favorable circumstances for others in the organization to absorb notion and bound of computer systems.

There should be accordance with the code. The member of the Association of the Computing Machinery has to retain and boost the rules of the code. The member will also have to treat violation of this code unstable with membership in the ACM.

The Software Engineering Code of Ethics

The Software Engineering code of ethics starts with a summary of eight general ethical rules. "The eight views represent different areas of concern for the software engineer: public, employer, product, judgment, management, profession, colleagues and self" (Bowyer 2001, p.51). Computers have a role in industry, government, medicine, education and many more. Software engineers role start with the implementation part in the software life cycle where they deal with coding of the software systems. Software engineers have relative chances to perform well without causing harm. Together with the commitment, software engineers shall stick to the following code of ethics and professional procedure.

The code contains definite rules related to the behavior of and decisions made. It is not expected that the individual parts of the code is to be used in isolation to justify errors. The code prescribes these as duties of anyone targeting to be or aiming to be a software engineer. The code is not a simple ethical procedure that brings ethical decisions. In some instances, the level could be in conflict with each other. Ethical conflicts can best be reported by considerate consideration of important rules, rather than blind confidence on guidelines. These rules should make a difference to software engineers to consider who is altered by their performance. In all these decisions, concern for health, safety and welfare of the public comes first, which means that the public interest is the most important.

Software engineers shall perform reliably with the public interest. In other words, software engineers should be very loyal to their job. Software engineers shall act in a way that is best for their client and employer. Software engineers should also ensure that their outcomes meet the highest skilled standards possible.

Association of Information Technology Professionals (AITP)

The AITP code of ethics comes in two parts. One of which is the code of ethics and the second one is the standards of conduct. Sections of the standard of conduct are related to the member's obligations to management.

A member of the AITP code of ethics should be honest in all professional relations. He should be loyal and there should not be any kind of whistle blowing at any point in the organization. He should be ready to share his experience and knowledge with the other members. He should not take credit for work that he has not done, unless given permission. He should not take advantage of other members who lack experience or knowledge. The member should be up to date and he should have the skills required. Members should not make use of computer system for personal use.

Conclusion

The whole idea here was to see how ethics have become part of information technology and what the implementations of those ethical codes are. The code of ethics discussed here are more of voluntary kind in other word there is no observance against disobedience. Discrimination based on sexual preference is still a major concern in the community these days. Licensing is another issue worth talking about because companies or individual tend to buy a computer program and then have it installed on different systems. This debate will never come to an end until your internal moral sense guide you to take a step forward for the welfare of the Information Technology society, as it is always said "lead by example".

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Online Resources

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- <http://www.bcs.org/server.php?show=ConWebDoc.2914> (last accessed 06.02.2010)
- http://www.southernct.edu/organizations/rccs/resources/teaching/teaching_mono/moor/moor_definition.html (last accessed 08.02.2010)