CSCI 215 Social & Ethical Issues In Computing

Class 12 – Classical Ethics, and Consequences of Bugs

The best thing about a boolean is even if you are wrong, you are only off by a bit.
Notes

• Grades are updated – email me if not
• This week the proposal is due
  • Recitation this week is to work on your proposal.
  • Due date extended to Friday – if you want to work in a group, but do not have one, please fill out the form on D2L. If your group is smaller than 3, and you’re willing to take on somebody looking for a group please also fill out the form

• Recitations (Today)
  • Roberts 208
Question

• Who has been to the American Computer Museum here? (within the last 5 years)

• Who has taken a TOUR of the American Computer Museum?
Clarification

If Wikipedia is “accurate”, why can’t I cite it?
Review

Fred is trying to install Firefox on his computer. He downloads it from www.notactuallyfirefox.com/. The program does install firefox, but unbeknown to Fred, it also installs a key logger. What kind of virus is this?
A. Worm  B. Trojan Horse  C. Dementor

What has Fred’s computer likely become?
A. WereComputer  B. Mutant  C. Zombie

Flashback: What does COPPA stand for?
Classical Ethics

• What does the term “ethics” mean?
  • moral principles that govern a person's or group's behavior

• What does “Moral” mean?
  • concerned with the principles of right and wrong
Classical Ethics

Golden Rule
• Do onto others as they would do onto you
• Example: Fred reviews his roommate’s code for bugs because he would want his roommate to review his code for bugs.

• Negative Golden Rule?
  • don’t do unto others as we would have others not do unto us.
• Example: Betsy doesn’t steal her roommate’s lunch because she would not want her roommate to take her lunch

• What are some strengths and weaknesses with this approach?
Classical Ethics

Subjective Realism

• Do what you think is right

• **Example:** Carla finds a minor bug in her favorite app. The bug means the score is not calculated correctly. She reports it to the developer (without expecting any kind of reward) because she believes it the right thing to do.

• What are some strengths of this approach? What are some weaknesses?
Classical Ethics

Divine Command Theory

• Bible/Torah/Book of Mormon/Quran

• **Example:** Billy very badly wants the new Xbox, and he has an opportunity to take one without anybody finding out. He does not do it because the bible says it is wrong to steal.

• What are the strengths and weaknesses of Divine Command Theory?
Classical Ethics

Cultural Realism

• Right and wrong are relative to your culture – follow what your society says is right and wrong. Don’t butt into other cultures.

• **Example:** A Canadian citizen Susan is visiting Fred in New York. She is bothered by the death penalty, but keeps her opinions to herself because this is America and not Canada.

• What are some good things and bad things with this approach?
Classical Ethics

Kantianism

• Always do what is right, regardless of outcomes. What if everybody did it? Very logical approach to ethics.

• Example: George told a lie to keep Fred from being murdered. This is an unethical act because the act of lying is wrong, regardless that it saved Fred’s life.

• Example: Spamming is immoral – if everybody spammed then the system would collapse

• Strengths? Weaknesses?
Classical Ethics

Utilitarianism or Act Utilitarianism

• If good outweighs the bad, it is right. *The ends justifies the means*

• **Example**: The government can keep detailed records of everybody, because even if it stops one terrorist attack, it is worth it.

• Strengths? Weaknesses?
Classical Ethics

Social Contract Theory

- Follow your society’s laws, if you don’t like them just leave.

- Example: Our Canadian friend Susan changed her mind on the death penalty and now thinks it is an appropriate punishment for people. She should move to the US.

- Strengths? Weaknesses?