

Information Technology and Ethical Issues

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ABSTRACT

A definition of Ethics is "moral principles that govern a person or group's behavior". Every advancement in information technology is accompanied by at least one ethical quandary. From Facebook to email updates, computer users are unaware of the fine balance between ethics and profit struck by providers. Software developers, businesses and individuals must think about the rights and wrongs of using information technology every day. The fundamental issues underlying the world of information technology are the end user's expectation of privacy and the provider's ethical duty to use applications or email responsibly. As much as information technology is important to our lives in general and social values in particular, it is facing some serious ethical challenges and it is up to the IT experts and users of information technology to be ready for these challenges. This paper deals with different ethical issues related to information technology advancements.

Keywords

Ethics, Information Technology

1. INTRODUCTION

Information ethics has been defined as "the branch of ethics that focuses on the relationship between the creation, organization, dissemination (spread information), and use of information, and the ethical standards and moral codes that governs human conduct in society". It provides a critical framework for considering moral issues concerning informational privacy, moral agency (e.g. whether artificial agents may be moral), new environmental issues (especially how agents should behave in the info sphere), problems arising from the life-cycle (creation, collection, recording, distribution, processing, etc.) of information (especially ownership and copyright, digital divide, and digital rights). Information ethics is related to the fields of computer ethics [2] and the philosophy of information

2. OBSERVATIONS

The growth and development of the Internet has made it possible to store a large number of individuals' personal data by relying on advanced information systems and the abuse of personal data and privacy violations in the field of information technology is increasing [1].

The lack of scientific integrity in educational environments that make the most use of technology is an issue that should be considered. Illegal downloading of software is common among all social classes specially the students. The use of social networks is an inseparable part of the lives of many people and the nature of students. These cases have different effects on their lifestyle, especially on their academic performance and the length of their studies [2], [3].

Today, forging digital documents such as counterfeiting digital signatures, digital images, etc. is an important topic in the field of information security and computer ethics. Online gambling (using online websites where members can participate in a variety of games without having to be present at the site, in which everything is done online from opening an account to transferring funds, withdrawals, playing games, etc.) is increasing. Cases such as cyber bullying and communicating with anonymous individuals, visiting them, sharing the stimulating content on the Internet, and sharing personal information on the Internet have been recognized as the dangers of Internet communications in the new era [2]. All of these cases are examples of issues that affect ethics in information technology and it is necessary to rank such issues in terms of society in order to provide a better insight to provide strategies and programs in which negative measures are converted to the positive affairs or ethical issues in the field of information technology are observed. The tools provided by information technology has brought some serious challenges.

Security: With tools like the internet, hackers have found it very easy to hack into any computer or system as long as it is connected on internet. Hackers can easily use an IP (Internet Protocol) address to access a user's computer and collect data for selfish reasons. Also the wide spread of internet cookies which collect information whenever we use the internet, has exposed IT users to high risks of fraud and conflicting interests. Many big companies use these cookies to determine which products or service they can advertise to us. When it comes to online banking, the transfer of money can easily be interrupted by a hacker and all the money will be transferred to their desired accounts, which affects both the bank and the customers who is using online banking technology.

Privacy Issues: As much as information technology has enabled us to share and find relevant information online, it has also exploited our freedom of privacy. Their so many ways our privacy is exploited, (1) use of internet webcams, experienced computer users can turn on any webcam of any computer online and they will have access to your private life, many celebrities have been victims of these online stalkers. (2) use of social networks, the main concept of these networks is to connect with new and old friends then share your life with them, however, the loop hole in this, is that when ever some one access your shared life data like photos, they can like it and send it their friends who are not your friends, which might expose you to users with wrong intentions to use your data, also some companies are known for spying on their employees via these social networks.

Copyright Infringement: Information technology has made it easy for users to access any information or artifact at any given time. With the increased development of music sharing networks and photo bookmarking sites, many original creators of these works are losing the credibility of their works,

because users of IT can easily gain access and share that data with friends. Free music and file downloading sites are popping up on internet every day, lots of original work like music albums, books, are being downloaded for free. In this case one legitimate user will purchase the book, software, web template or music album, and they will submit it to a free download site where others will simply just download that data for free.

Increased pressure on IT experts. Since information technology systems have to run all the time, pressure is mounted on IT experts to ensure the accuracy and availability of these systems. Many big organizations which need to operate 24 hours will require a standby IT team to cater for any issues which might arise during the course of operation. This pressure results into stress and work overload which some times results into Imperfection.

Digital divide: Information technology has many opportunities and it has shaped many industries in developed countries; however, developing countries have difficulties of enjoying the same benefits of Information technology. To get these benefits they have to train their labor and users should also adopt the new culture which is a bit costly in these developing countries. In some remote areas they do not even have power, so information technology tools like computers cannot be used.

3. CONCLUSION

In this study the ethical and social issues in the field of information technology is evaluated. As more emerging information technologies pop up on the market, most of the IT experts and users do not know how to go about the challenges brought about by these technologies. Information technology is facing major challenges which are lack of privacy, security, copyright infringement and increased computer crimes. Criminals have been eagerly utilising the many loop

holes technology offers. Since information technology greatly aid the speed, flow and access of information, cyber crime has become an ever rising profession. Many businesses and organizations are at risk of becoming a cyber victim on a daily basis, as most, if not all business are based on some digital network. This paper deals with various ethical issues related to information technology.

4. REFERENCES

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