

Reflective

Technology, Information Technology



Reflection Introduction Ethics in information technology can be broadly defined as protection of personal as well as others' safety and rights.

Information technology promotes sharing of information. It is imperative that only lawful and rightful use of information is made. The negative societal implications of information technology include but are not limited to unwanted exposure, distorted relationships, and loss of privacy.

Body

Some of my take-aways regarding issues of security at the social networking sites are that the problem is here to stay for a long time and may even aggravate with the passage of time. The most important areas of concern include but are not limited to the availability of data of the users of social networking sites to third parties that they can use for surveillance, commercial purposes or purposes of data mining, the availability of facial-recognition software that can identify individuals easily in the photos shared on social networking sites, and the availability of such applications that gather and share the users' private information without letting them know. In addition to all these problems, cookies are used to track the online activities of the users after their visit to a social networking site. Location-based social networking is used to stalk or to supervise the physical movements of the users. Overall, the issue of identity theft over the social networking sites challenges the e-commerce industry's success because of the numerous negative implications of the practice on the society.

This has impacted my understanding of the ethical issues in such a way that I now feel that ethical issues are omnipresent. The tendency to violate the fundamental issues of ethics is not limited to specific agencies in our society;

today, every individual sitting at home is empowered to threaten the security of others. It almost costs or takes nothing to make a fake profile of somebody on a social networking site and there is no accountability for the same. It is hard and perhaps, impracticable to take objective steps to protect the identity at social networking sites as such efforts come in the way of globalization.

Understanding the risks of security posed by the social networking sites, I would remain very cautious in the information I share. For the most part, it is the individual users' own responsibility to be careful, and responsible in their use of the social networking sites. Objectionable or private pictures must not be uploaded on the social networking sites from the start; only then can they not be traced by hackers. To alleviate the issue of security at the social networking sites, users would have to bring a holistic change in their understanding of and approach toward the social networking sites. They would have to use these sites rather than having these sites use them. Time spent on social networking must be limited.

Conclusion

As we move toward becoming increasingly globalized, ethics in IT faces new challenges. IT plays a role in promoting globalization, but also causes many ethical problems. One of the numerous challenges is subjectivity about which country's laws should be followed by transnational companies. For example, in 2002, Yahoo informed the Chinese government about two journalists that were prodemocracy as a result of which the journalists were jailed and tortured (Schultz, 2008, p. 261). They later sued Yahoo in response of which, Yahoo said that it was just complying with the law of China. Whether Yahoo

should have done this remains a debatable question. A social contract approach needs to be adopted to deal with the global ethical problems enabled by IT. In the age where the world has become a global village, the importance of social networking cannot be overemphasized. The responsibility of protecting their personal image and rights rests with the individual users.

References:

Schultz, R. A. (2008). Information Technology and the Ethics of Globalization.

Retrieved from <http://proceedings.informingscience.org/InSITE2008/InSITE08p259-269Schultz513.pdf>.