

Factors of professionalism and computer professional bodies



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Week 1 –Professionalism

Group Discussion

(a) There are many different definitions of a professional. Discuss in general terms what you think are the most important factors to being a profession.

Rank the factors you have in order of importance.

Consider why you feel some factors are more important than others.

There is discussion about who is a professional. Some said professional is a one who is good in particular job or engaging in a given activity as a source of livelihood or as a career. The group members agreed the definition as follows,

“ a skilled occupation, within an organised framework, having an accepted body of knowledge, structured training, requiring maintenance of skills, guided by a code of conduct”

A professional is a person who acquires formal certification from professional body based on his academic background or/and work experience and also whose capability could be judged against established standards.

All the group members generally agreed that the most important factors to being a profession include high degree of knowledge, association with a professional body, adherence to the code of conduct, structured training, ethical behavior, trusted competence, and commitment to continuous development of a profession.

Competence is the ability to identify the problem and solve it by utilising available resources. So it is the most important factor. Academic background, academic will help the professional to learn the specialised knowledge of profession. The learnt knowledge may prove a helpful tool for a competent professional. Good communication skills help in dealing with clients, colleagues and superiors. A professional with good communication skills will be able to significantly do well. Reliability/Dependability is a factor of importance and may sometimes supersede other factors. Integrity of a professional drives him/her to follow the work ethics and code of conduct in principle. Self-evaluation and discipline is a factor that motivates the persons to achieve more and to improve the skills.

(b) Differentiate between a professional and an expert. Does a professional need to be an expert?

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As adjectives, the difference between expert and professional is that expert is extraordinarily capable or knowledgeable while professional is of, pertaining to, or in accordance with the (usually high) standards of a profession.

As nouns the difference between expert and professional is that expert is a person with extensive knowledge or ability in a given subject while professional is a person who belongs to a profession.

A professional is not necessarily an expert.

(c) A Is a computer person with a high level of knowledge and skill automatically considered to be a professional?

No, cannot be considered as a professional unless he practices and gain experience and perform the activity as a source of livelihood or as a career.

Individual Questions

(a) The BCS definition of a professional and two other definitions. Compare the definitions, what do they have in common?

The BCS considers a practitioner a professional, if one possesses (BCS Professional):

Appropriate degrees. Skills and competency. Motivation for self-development (theoretically and practically). Respect for code of conduct.

Two other definitions:

Person formally certified by a professional body of belonging to a specific profession by virtue of having completed a required course of studies and/or practice. And whose competence can usually be measured against an established set of standards. a professional (of a job) has a high level of education and training.

In common it says professional need education and practise.

(b) The role of the BCS.

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IT Members' representation. To establish relationships with industry and academia. To establish relationships with governments. To work for the betterment of entire human society.

(c) An overview of other professional bodies that exist for the IT industry.

The Association of Computer Professionals (ACP) is an international body started in 1984. Its key aim is to set and maintain ICT industry standards by providing an independent examination body for ICT professionals. The membership of the ACP is a mix of academic and business professionals within the field of computing.

IACSIT is a registered international scientific association of distinguished scholars engaged in Computer Science and Information Technology. The IACSIT members include research and development center heads, faculty deans, department heads, professors, research scientists, engineers, scholars, experienced software development directors, managers and

engineers, university postgraduate and undergraduate engineering and technology students, etc.

The National Computing Centre (NCC) is an independent membership organization for IT professionals and is the single largest and most diverse corporate membership body in the UK IT sector.

Socitm (Society of Information Technology Management) is the membership association for all ICT professionals working in local authorities and the public and third sectors, and suppliers to those sectors. Socitm provides a widely-respected forum for the promotion, use and development of ICT best practice.

Set up in 2001, the UKWDA (UK Web Design Association) brings together more than 10,000 British web industry professionals under one supportive umbrella organization.

Women in Technology started in 2005 with one goal in mind: to help women build successful and satisfying careers in the IT industry.

Institute of Analyst and Programmers, The Institution is Britain's leading professional organization for people who work in the development, installation and testing of business systems and computer software.

The UK IT Association (UKITA) was established as the private sector organization responsible for the development of a credible and thriving IT industry across the United Kingdom.

Week 2 - Professional Bodies and the BCS

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Group Discussion

What do you think should be the main roles and purpose of the BCS? To make a better society
Share and exchange IT expertise and knowledge
Supporting professionals
Setting standards and framework
To build strong relationship with academia, industry, policy makers and governments to promote IT. What do you consider to be the benefits of becoming a BCS member? Professional development
More training opportunities
Networking
Mentoring
Employability
Professional recognition in the IT domain
Best support from peers through IT forums
How do you think your employment opportunities benefit from joining the BCS?

BCS provides a platform to communicate with Entrepreneurs, Departmental heads, CEOs etc. This networking helps in getting more employment opportunities.

From the video clip it can be seen that role models are important in all professions. From a historical perspective, why are the following people important: Charles Babbage, Ada Lovelace, Alan Turing, Timothy John Berners-Lee, Bill Gates, Gordon More (of More's law), Philip Don Estridge, Steve Jobs, John Von Neumann?

Charles Babbage : Pioneer of programmable computer.

Ada Lovelace : The first computer programmer.

Alan Turing : Widely considered as the father of artificial intelligence.

Timothy John Berners-Lee : The pioneer and inventor of WWW.

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Bill Gates : Co-founder of Microsoft.

Gordon Moore : The Moore's law predicts the technology advancement in computing industry

Philip Don Estridge : Father of IBM PC.

Steve Jobs : Chairman and CEO of Apple Inc.

John Von Neumann : The originator and pioneer of linear programming, self-replicating machines, stochastic computing.

Discuss three other current role models within the computer (IT) industry, state why they are considered as role models.

Today almost all web page use jQuery. jQuery is the most popular JavaScript library in use today, with installation on 65% of the top 10 million highest-trafficked sites on the Web. John Resig is an American software engineer and entrepreneur, best known as the creator and lead developer of the jQuery JavaScript library. At the very young age created jQuery and with the noble thought he made as open source. To me he is great role model for his hard work and better example in adding value to the society.

Dennis MacAlistair Ritchie (September 9, 1941 – c. October 12, 2011) was an American computer scientist. He created the C programming language and, with long-time colleague Ken Thompson, the Unix operating system. He is a legend whose inventions are significant to the modern computing. He added value to the society by contributing to the society.

Mark Elliot Zuckerberg : Co-founder of Facebook. To create revolution in the social media world.

Individual Questions

Find two other professional bodies (not BCS) and compare the aims and mission statements of each.

Socitm (Society of Information Technology Management) is the membership association for all ICT professionals working in local authorities and the public and third sectors, and suppliers to those sectors. Socitm provides a widely-respected forum for the promotion, use and development of ICT best practice.

TheNational Computing Centre(NCC) is an independent membership organization for IT professionals and is the single largest and most diverse corporate membership body in the UK IT sector.

Comparison

Most of the aim and mission of the above two are similar .

SOCITM delivers Professional development, Peer support, Policy & influence, Research & improvement

NCC delivers a continuum of services including; independent and impartial advice and support, best practice and standards, personal and professional development, managed service delivery, awareness raising and experience sharing.

What do you think is common to all profession bodies? Are some more important than others - can you priorities?

All professional bodies focus on:

Gain new skills, competences, experiences and receive credible recognition. Network, collaborate and share practice with peers, suppliers and national programmes. Representing members at appropriate national and regional bodies. Research to enable the organisation in contributing to more effective and efficient public services.

In order to establish priority among the professional bodies it is important to consider its global acceptance and credibility. In my opinion ACM and IEEE based professional bodies may be considered as more important.

Week 3 -Code of Conduct and Digital Identity

Group Discussion

Do you feel that it is necessary for all professional bodies to have a code of conduct?

Yes, I do feel that it is necessary for all professional bodies to have a code of conduct; because it will serve as a guide for individuals as well as organizations. Adherence to the code of conduct will ensure to collaborate, share best practice, access industry-recognized training, and find the very best work.

Is there an argument for all professional bodies to have the same code of conduct?

For easy understanding and easy accessible same code of conduct can be developed and implemented. So, it will be easily for working across the globe. However, it is possible to have various separate clauses to support certain interest groups depending on the nature of business.

What penalties should be included within a code of conduct? Discuss a range of offences and possible penalties

Code of conduct should clearly state minor as well as major penalties. For instance, minor penalty can be imposed on misuse of resources; and a warning letter would be sufficient. However, major penalty such as termination from services should be imposed in case of physical violence and bullying etc. Also, restriction to certain benefits and privileges based on poor work ethics may encourage a professional to improve his/her attitude toward the work.

State the type/name of Social Media you use and provide details of the type of information you make available.

I use social media to connect with friends, search jobs, latest trends and to keep updates with current affairs.

Facebook- To connect with friends, relatives, current etc. Even now it is used as a platform to sell things. As a computer student, I explore Facebook as I can to know the feature as it is considered as a powerful tool. From election

campaign to product launch started using Facebook. I have given my basic details and made details visible only to close circle.

Linkedin-HR people uses LinkedIn to recruit people so I have an account. I have provided my education details and skill set available to all to improve my employability.

Twitter- To follow the trends and get updates.

Does the content you ' post' remain private or is it public? A Do you make conscious decisions between private and public ' posts'?

Mostly I share useful blogs and posts which doesn't hurt others so I share publicly. However, service provider has access to my posts even if they are private. Personally, I feel that once you have uploaded something it is already in public domain.

Can you recall any of the terms of the agreement to the social media site(s) you are using? Is there a case that the terms of agreement should be written in an ' easy to understand language'?

No, I couldn't recall any rules. It will be great if rules are made available in other languages too.

Provide an argument for keeping social and professional media separately.

This will help us in separating private and professional identities as well as lives of other people. Usually professional media such as linkedin. com is accessed by people with mature attitude towards the uploaded contents.

Normally social media space is swarmed by internet trolls and people with non-serious attitude toward personal stuff of other people. I would recommend for keeping the social and professional media separate.

Provide some guidelines on how to use Social Media wisely?

Use account from secure access (HTTPS). Do not access from public systems. Make sure you log out / sign out after access. Set security and privacy up to an appropriate level. Do not post sensitive information.

The lecture slides provided a summary only of the BCS code of conduct, read in detail using the link provided in the lecture, the full BCS code of conduct.

Summarise the code of conduct of TWO other professional bodies - do not use the codes of conduct covered in the lecture/tutorial.

The code of conduct of ACM focuses on positive contribution towards human society. A Moreover, honesty and truthfulness are considered as key attributes of members. Finally, respecting the privacy of others is considered as a must trait for any member. Similarly, no discrimination should be made among members based on their ethnicity is the corner stone of IITP's code of conduct. Furthermore, the code also stresses upon integrity, honesty and dignity in its members. Finally, continuous professional development is also an important aspect of this code.

Compare and contrast the BCS code of conduct to (a) above.

Commonalities : professionalism, dignity, honest, truthfulness and positive contribution towards human society.

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Contrast : BCS does not tolerate any kind of fraud and bankruptcy as well it does not allow any kind of conflict of interest.

Comment on the theme running through each of the Codes of Conduct

Following are the main themes of the code of conduct:

Discourage discrimination. Positive contribution. Professionalism. Promoting education and reliable practices.

Provide an overview of THREE networking sites that may be used for either social and/or professional networking.

(i) Facebook - online social media and social networking service based in Menlo Park, California, United States.

(ii) Google+: Google+ is an interest-based social network that is owned and operated by Google.

(iii) LinkedIn: A networking site for educational, business and professional purposes (LinkedIn)

What are the advantages/disadvantage and possible dangers of using a digital presence?

Advantages : Networking and marketing, global reach, following the trend.

Disadvantages : Privacy breach, data loss/ corruption and may expose to false message.

Week 4 -Ethics

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Group Discussion

(a) Are the 10 'commandments' in computer ethics still relevant today? Do they need to be updated? Eg. Is cyber bullying or 'grooming' covered within the rules?

The Ten Commandments are mostly relevant today and should be implemented in true letter and spirit (Virginia Tech). However, some scholars think that they are simplistic and restrictive therefore, they can be updated to handle contemporary and future issues.

(i) What are Sally's legal responsibilities?

Sally's legal responsibilities are professionalism and honesty.

(ii) Does Sally have any legal protection?

She should have legal protection by law. In case of any grievances employees usually have access to complaint office or other services that support and guide the grieved employee for the best of his/her interest.

(iii) Analyse the Case study in terms of the Golden Rule and Utility Principle.

Golden rule demands truthfulness and honesty; therefore, Sally should tell the client the real situation. Since untruthfulness and dishonesty may harm large number of humans; therefore, utility principle also demands that Sally should show the exact picture to the client as well as her boss.

Sally should have avoided this situation by informing her boss in advance of the current situation.

(iv) A Would your analysis of the ethics of this case change if Sally had been present during her boss's conversation with the client, but had not been asked to agree with his assurances?

Golden rule and utility principle demand that Sally should communicate right information to the client and specially the boss.

(v) What if the client had asked Sally a question, the honest answer to which would contradict her boss?

Honesty and truthfulness are key attributes of a professional. On a human perspective, it is also important that her boss should not feel contradicted in front of the client. But it can be tackled with effective communication like Sally telling a suggesting her views that she doesn't the conversation.

(vi) Would your analysis of the ethics of this case change if the software was for stock management rather than the control of machinery, with no threat to human safety?

Golden rule and utility principle are not sympathy or application specific.

Individual Question

Jane downloads a copy of an e-book from an illegal file sharing web site.

Analyse the situation in terms of the Golden Rule and Utility Principle from both Jane's and the author's point of view.

This act of Jane is illegitimate contradicting both the Golden rule and Utility Principle.

What conclusions can be drawn?

Proper actions should be taken against these illegal websites.

The education of Golden rule and utility principle should be more propagated.

What sort of difficulties are there in applying the Golden rule and the Utility principle?

Selfishness and lack of education are two main barriers in applying the Golden rule and Utility Principle.

Week 5 -Legal Issues

Group Discussion

As a professional, to what extent do you feel that you should be aware of the legal issues surrounding IT?

A professional should have theoretical as well some practical knowledge of: Software law, software patents, the Internet, data and security (professional legal ethics). Also to secure Intellectual Property (IP) for clients, an IT professional should be well informed on legal obligations and rights in digital world.

Create a list of possible ' holders of data' who may be storing your personal data. Do you have a problem with large organisations selling your data? In today's society, should we have such a thing as personal data (exception banking and medical)? Email service providers. Social and professional

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networking sites. Google cloud storage systems. Search engines. Bank. Mobile Application providers like play store, iTunes etc.

Practically, personal data is taken by almost all the applications when we need to use their facilities. They are received by sign up or register form.

Discuss the differences between Shareware, Freeware and open source software.

Freeware : The software that is available free-of-cost.

Shareware : Some utilities of the software are free-of-cost and others are not.

Open source software : Source code is available for reusability and modification purposes.

As a ' first thought', identify and discuss some of the legal issues/problems surrounding cloud computing. Reliable data availability should be provided at all time. Data should be well protected and secured. No data loss or corruption. Availability of data should be insured at all locations. Easy and instant access

A professional software developer, working for a software house, has been contracted to developing a software package that involves accessing a company's data base. Who does the software belong to: the contractor, the software house or the company? Explain your answer.

The software will belong to the contractor because the contractor has initiated the project and will be bearing all the subsequent costs. Also, the contractor would be legally eligible to sell the software to any third party.

Who owns the intellectual property rights of the software: the contractor, the software house or the company? Explain your answer.

The intellectual property rights may be owned by the software house solely or jointly with the contractor as laid out in the agreement.

What if there is a problem with the software and the database is corrupted, who is responsible?

Under the event of any software malfunction the software house will stand responsible. It is the responsibility of the software house to ensure the secure and smooth operation of their product and the contractor pays for this service.

Discuss: the term hacking; is there ever a case for Hacking? Is hacking always illegal? - Google " Hack anonymous"

Hacking is involved in all forms and types of communications. Phone hackers used to make free phone calls and listen to other people talking on the phone. With the internet hacking has a very wide and large playing field. For IT industry hacking is serious issue and it has caused significant losses to many big corporate e. g. Sony, Microsoft and Intel etc. In simple words any activity that involves unauthorized access or falsely impersonating is termed as hacking. In recent times there are several hacking incidents for example US Korea standoff over the hacking reports of Sony Entertainment and governmental information leaks by Anonymous. The term hacking is normally misunderstood; it is not illegal all the time. For instance, police can

do hacking to extract information from dubious computers for the safety and security of common people.

Summarise the legal issues associated with developing and hosting a web site.

Copyright concerns
Domain name concerns
Trademark concerns
Defamation
Linking and framing

Summarise the details of the Data Protection Act.

The Data Protection Act 1998 provides a framework as well as a benchmark that ensures security of individual's personal data. The misuse or illegal access to someone's personal data falls under direct breach of civil liberties. Also it is the responsibility of the company to provide safe and secure data access. Data handling should be under the framework of people's data protection rights.

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