Data mining ethical concerns

Data mining is increasingly being used by companies so that they can get more information about their customers and analyze it so they can serve them better. Where data mining has its advantages, there are also a number of disadvantages. Most of these are ethical concerns about information gathering and sharing. When customers fill out a form of any kind, their information goes into a database. Whatever information companies get about their customers goes into a database (Exforsys, 2010). Moreover, firms monitor their customers shopping habits and purchases and store this in their databases.

As a customer, this makes me feel very uneasy. This is usually without the consent or even the awareness of customers (Linstedt, 2004). Therefore, this is ethically wrong as people whose information is being gathered are not even aware of it. Moreover, gathering of information for internal use of the organization is not even the biggest concern; this information is also sold to other organizations. Therefore, customer information is also being shared over the internet and many people can get their hands on it.

This is also without the consent and/or awareness of the customers themselves. In summary, the way information is gathered and the way it is shared is unethical and makes me uncomfortable because of the many privacy concerns I have such as identity theft, sharing of confidential information such as bank account numbers, etc. For customers like me, companies should allow us an ' opt out option' so we have a choice as to whether we would like to be a part of the whole information gathering process.