Cyber ethics codes and theories philosophy essay

This case is related to a person who was known as the biggest threat to a Cyber security community- Kevin Mitnick. Mitnick was accused of breaking into computer systems of individuals and of many different companies around the world. He was also accused of altering information sometimes for his personal goods and also, always causing great expense to the owner of the computer. He was also charged with an accusation of giving trouble at many places in setting up new security measures to keep him out. Adding to all these, Mitnick were also charged with violation of the conditions of his probation from previous convictions for other computer crimes.

Mitnick was on the run from many years. The FBI had been trying unsuccessfully to locate him by tracing his access to the Internet. Mitnick wasn't finally caught until he made the mistake of breaking into the San Diego Supercomputer Centre. His hacking led him to some of the files of computer security expert Tsutomu Shimomura. This hacking angered Shimomura who agreed to help the FBI track Mitnick down. For two weeks Shimomura helped FBI for searching Mitnick, finally tracing him to an apartment complex in Raleigh on 15th Feb, 1995. Mitnick's communications were monitored and at 1: 30am when he went on-line, federal agents moved in and arrested him.

This case study brings out the different ethical theories related to Kevin mitnick's life and all his crimes. This study also enlightens the fact about US government and FBI and other people related to the case of Mitnick. Different ethical theories are applied regarding the punishments and probations he got for his crimes. The main ethical theories which are applied

regarding this case are divided into three parts each with its own internal meaning and understandings. They are: –

Ethics is defined as the study of morality. Ethics and morality in different circumstances connotes varied and complex meanings. Each and everything which is opposed to public policy, against public welfare and which may disturb public tranquillity may be termed to be immoral and unethical. Ethics is the study of what it means to " do the right thing". Morality is a system of rules for guiding human conduct and principles for evaluating those rules. Some rules of conduct guide our actions at ethical level by helping us frame social policies.

Why study Ethics?

Everyone should study ethics for preparing ourselves for confronting different ethical issues in different fields of life like professional behaviour, human behaviour towards others and fields like computing, engineering, technology etc. For ex: – " Do not steal others thing" is an ethical principal which we learn during our childhood times from our parents. By studying ethics, we can understand the complexity of different conflicting ethical principles. After learning about ethical subjects, we can think critically and independently in order to analyse and resolve many different ethical tensions and problems around the world. We can also use our individual creativity to understand different ethical consequences of design and other computer professional decisions.

What is Cyber Ethics?

Cyber ethics is the study of moral, legal and social issues involving cyber technology. It evaluates the social policies and laws that we frame in response to issues generated by the development and use of cyber technology. The codes of ethics for cyber world area mainly related with issues such as: –

Seeks to gain unauthorized access to the resources of the Internet.

Disrupts the intended use of the Internet.

Wastes resources (people, capacity, and computer) through such actions.

Destroys the integrity of computer-based information.

Keeping personal data record whose very existence is secret.

Information about the person that was obtained for one purpose from being used or made available for other purposes without the person's consent.

Any organization creating, maintaining, using, or disseminating records of identifiable personal data.

IEEE Code of Ethics

1. To accept responsibility in making engineering decisions consistent with the safety,

Health and welfare of the public, and to disclose promptly factors that might endanger

the public or the environment.

2. To avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest whenever possible, and to disclose them to

Affected parties when they do exist.

3. To be honest and realistic in stating claims or estimates based on available data.

4. To reject bribery in all its forms.

5. To improve the understanding of technology, it's appropriate application, and potential

Consequences.

6. To maintain and improve our technical competence and to undertake technological tasks

for others only if qualified by training or experience, or after full disclosure of pertinent

limitations.

7. To seek, accept, and offer honest criticism of technical work, to acknowledge and correct

errors, and to credit properly the contributions of others.

8. To treat fairly all persons regardless of such factors as race, religion, gender, disability,

age, or national origin.

9. To avoid injuring others, their property, reputation, or employment by false or malicious

action.

10. To assist colleagues and co-workers in their professional development and to support

them in following this code of ethics.

Ten Commandments of Computer Ethics

The ethical values as defined in 1992 by the Computer Ethics Institute; a non-profit organization whose mission is to advance technology by ethical means, lists these rules as a guide to computer ethics:

Thou shall not use a computer to harm other people.

Thou shall not interfere with other people's computer work.

Thou shall not snoop around in other people's computer files.

Thou shall not use a computer to steal.

Thou shall not use a computer to bear false witness.

Thou shall not copy or use proprietary software for which you have not paid.

Thou shall not use other people's computer resources without authorization or proper compensation.

Thou shall not appropriate other people's intellectual output.

Thou shall think about the social consequences of the program you are writing or the system you are designing.

Thou shall always use a computer in ways that ensure consideration and respect for your fellow human.

ISC Code of Ethics

ISC an organization committed to certification of computer security professional has further defined its own Code of Ethics generally as:

Act honestly, justly, responsibly, and legally, and protecting the commonwealth.

Work diligently and provide competent services and advance the security profession.

Encourage the growth of research – teach, mentor, and value the certification.

Discourage unsafe practices, and preserve and strengthen the integrity of public infrastructures.

Observe and abide by all contracts, expressed or implied, and give prudent advice.

Avoid any conflict of interest, respect the trust that others put in you, and take on only those jobs you are qualified to perform.

Stay current on skills, and do not become involved with activities that could injure the reputation of other security professionals.

Why We Need Ethical Theories?

Ethical theory assumes that people are rational and make free choices. We need ethical theories for guiding us in analysis of moral issues. We need these theories to evaluate that whether there is any simple, alternative scheme that we could use in our moral deliberations. We need these theories to tell everyone that don't expect same from everyone in return as you do. And we also need these theories to stop flaws from this society such as: –

People disagree on solutions to moral issues.

Who am I to judge others?

Ethics is simply a private matter?

Morality is simply a master for individual cultures to decide.

What is Consequence-based Ethical Theory?

This theory is also referred to as Consequentialism. It refers to those moral theories which hold that the consequences (i. e. outcomes) of a particular action form the basis for any valid moral judgment about that action or create a structure for judgment.

According to this ethical theory, an individual act or a social policy is morally permissible if consequences resulting out of it produce greatest amount of good for the greatest number of persons affected by act or policy. This view is often expressed as the aphorism " The ends justify the means".

What is Duty-based Ethical Theory?

" Duty ethics tells us to do the right thing because it's the right thing to do"

Deontological (duty-based) ethics are concerned with what people do, not with the consequences of their actions. Duty serves as a foundation for morality.

Do the right things ƒ Do it because it's the right thing to do.

Don't do wrong things ƒ Avoid them because they are wrong.

Under this form of ethics you can't justify an action by showing that it produced good consequences, which is why it's sometimes called ' non-Consequentiality'. Duty-based ethics teaches that some acts are right or wrong because of the sorts of things they are, and people have a duty to act accordingly, regardless of the good or bad consequences that may be produced. Deontologists live in a universe of moral rules, such as

It is wrong to kill innocent people

It is wrong to steal

It is wrong to tell lies

It is right to keep promises

What is Character-based Ethical Theory?

Also referred to as " Virtue ethics", they focus on criteria having to do with character development of individuals and acquisition of good character traits. They are " agent-oriented" theories which emphasis on being a moral person through proper training for achieving moral virtues such as temperance, courage etc.

What virtue ethics refers to, rather, is a collection of normative ethical philosophies that place an emphasis on being rather than doing. Another way to say this is that in virtue ethics, morality stems from the identity and character of the individual, rather than being a reflection of the actions (or consequences) of the individual. One reason why virtue ethics can be popular and why they make an important contribution to our understanding of morality is that they emphasize the central role played by motives in moral questions. To act from virtue is to act from some particular motivation, thus to say that certain virtues are necessary for correct moral decisions is to say that correct moral decisions require correct motives.

Differences between Three Ethical Theories

Consequentialism is usually understood as distinct from deontology, in that deontology derives the rightness or wrongness of an act from the character of the act itself rather than the outcomes of the action, and from virtue ethics, which focuses on the character of the agent rather than on the nature or consequences of the action itself. The difference between these three approaches to morality tends to lie more in the way moral dilemmas are approached than in the moral conclusions reached. For example, a consequentialist may argue that lying is wrong because of the negative consequences produced by lying – though a consequentialist may allow that certain foreseeable consequences might make lying acceptable. A deontologist might argue that lying is always wrong, regardless of any potential " good" that might come from lying. A virtue ethicist, however, would focus less on lying in any particular instance and instead consider about a decision to tell a lie or not tell.

If we compare Deontologists with Consequentialists we can see that Consequentialists begin by considering what things are good, and identify ' right' actions as the ones that produce the maximum of those good things. Deontologists appear to do it the other way around; they first consider what actions are ' right' and proceed from there.

Consequentialism can also be contrasted with virtue ethics. Consequentiality theories pose that consequences of action should be the primary focus of our thinking about ethics, virtue ethics insists that it is the character rather than the consequences of actions that should be the focal point. Some virtue ethicists hold that consequentiality theories totally disregard the development and importance of moral character.

About The Case

Introduction

Kevin David Mitnick (born August 6, 1963) is a computer security consultant and an author now. He was the world-famous controversial computer hacker in the late 20th century. Also, at the time of his arrest, was the most wanted computer criminal in United States history. He was accused of many different cyber crimes for which he got punishments and probations.

But according to Kevin, he was not a malicious hacker, what he did wasn't even against the law when he began, but became a crime after new legislation was passed. His treatment by the federal government was based not on the crimes, but on making an example of him.

Organizations/people involved

KEVIN MITNICK ƒ The hacker

JOHN MARKOFF ƒ The Journalist

TSUTOMU SHIMOMURA'S ƒ Security Expert

NEW YORK TIMES

U. S. JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (FBI)

DIGITAL EQUIPMENT CORPORATION (DEC)

IBM, MOTOROLA, NOKIA, SUN MICROSYSTEMS

PACIFIC BELL