

Communication ethics and skills

Profession



Professionalism: Codes of Ethics, History and the Social Responsibility of Engineers

This topic spurred from a magazine I read written by Davis Michael, "Three Myths about Codes of Engineering Ethics." Mr. Michael addressed in his article something known as three myths about engineering codes of ethics. First, that the first codes of engineering ethics put loyalty to the client or employer ahead of the public interest. Second, that engineering codes of ethics should be mere moral guides rather than legalistic rules, and finally, that codes of engineering ethics are too vague to provide much guidance. Based on Mr. Michael selection of the codes of engineering ethics he linked professionalism with the codes of ethics as an engineer. He discussed basically a western idea of what constitutes a "profession" might be applied any country, especially how the profession of engineering differs from the function, discipline, and occupation of engineering. To do this, he explains the connection between the term "professions" to the hard-to-translate term "code of ethics". However his objective argues that to understand engineering or any other occupation, as a profession is to adopt a certain concept of it, a concept that is neither old nor (yet) universal.

Furthermore another book I read by Calvert, Monte. A. 1967, "The Mechanical Engineer in America." discusses the professionalization of mechanical engineering during nineteenth century and the conflicts that existed between mechanical engineers who had been trained through apprenticeships in the shop, and a new generation of college-educated engineers. He founded of the American Society of Mechanical Engineering from 1880 onwards, and the struggles between these two groups as the organization began debating the need for licensing, formal code of ethics and an active political role for the profession. Apparently the need for

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engineering societies to broaden their ethical outlook to focus on the broader social responsibilities of professionals and their focus on making service to humanity a paramount responsibility, rather than focusing their efforts on disciplining the misconduct of individual society. The uniqueness of the engineering profession in that it is one of the old professional activities whose practitioners can be held to account for their failures, according to publically promulgated standards. However, the public generally has a limited understanding of what engineers do because they do not understand the nature of risk or the limited extent to which individual engineers are responsible for the construction, use or maintenance of their designs. We as engineers can discuss how, because of the complex nature of engineering as a profession, engineering integrity is also complex and engineering education should emphasize this to members. This is indeed a matter you all can ponder on and add to for the integrity of our professionalism. Please feel free to discuss this. Thank you.