

COMPUTER ETHICS: YOUR CHOICE ESSAY#3

DUE: Friday, December 6, 2013

Your third and final essay assignment is similar to the previous two assignments. The major difference is you get to select both the topic and the type of ethical analysis to justify your position. The length should be similar to that of your second paper, approximately three pages long (1500 words or less). You must email the paper to croyden@cs.holycross.edu by 3 p.m., Monday, November 25, 2013 **and** turn in a printed version in class the same day.

Your purpose in this writing assignment is to find and think about a computer ethics issue in the popular press, explain it concisely, and then analyze it according to the criteria given below.

Your paper should be written in six sections. Give each of these sections the title shown below in bold face. Skip a line between each section.

Section I. Names.: The first item in this section should be your own name. On the next line, name the course (CSCI 328), the assignment (Essay #3. Computer Ethics in the News), and the title of your essay. These four items should appear on separate lines, single spaced.

Section II. Reference(s): You should research the topic for your essay. You should find at least three articles related to your topic. Describe carefully where your reader could find the references you used in preparing to write the essay. For each website you cite, include the URL, the author or organization, the article title, the magazine or program title, the date of publication, page numbers, the date you accessed it, and the date it was last updated. Use a standard citation format for any other type of source you use. In addition to identifying your primary source(s), if you use someone else's words or ideas anywhere in your paper, you should indicate that use with quotes or with a paragraph set off with indentations and blank lines. Always advertise your sources and use complete endnotes. To not do so risks the serious charge of plagiarism. (One good source for citations is The Little, Brown, Handbook, 2nd Edition, by H. Ramsey Fowler. Endnotes are discussed on pages 480-489.)

Section III. The Technology Issues: Explain to your reader the most important points in your article /topic pertaining to the technical issues. Assume the reader is a reasonably intelligent undergraduate liberal arts student with some technical expertise about computers. Be concise, but don't leave out any details important to the ethical issue.

Section IV. Stakeholders/The Human Values at Stake: In this section, explain to your reader why the technical issues in this article/issue are important to humans. List all

the "players" and tell what is at stake for them in the ethical issue. What people, groups of people, and/or organizations either care or should care about this issue/decision? How are they affected, directly or indirectly, by the issue/decision? What are the costs and benefits, the risks and opportunities, involved? The questions should not be answered one after another in your section. Instead, think about all these questions and then write a concise answer to the following broad question: "Who are the stakeholders in this situation, and what human values do they have at stake?"

ONE OF THE FOLLOWING POSSIBLE "SECTION V'S":

Section V. An Analogy: Use an analogy (or several) to explain your reasoning about this issue. (Remember: Using an analogy effectively requires more than just a statement. You must explain why the situation/activity is the same, and how it is comparable or different. When you make an ethical argument based on an analogy, you should illustrate the ethical differences and similarities between two situations. If the difference(s) is(are) too significant, the analogy may not be applicable.) You might choose two analogies and explain why you think one is more appropriate than the other. Whatever analogy or analogies you decide to focus on should illuminate the ethical issue.

Section V. Utilitarian Analysis: Using the criteria of a utilitarian analysis, describe how the issue should be decided and why. Remember, in this type of analysis the consequences are central.

Section V. Deontological Analysis: Review in the textbook what Johnson considers deontological. Make an argument about the ethical issue using a deontological strategy.

Remember don't argue about what is right in this section; that's for your last section. In this section, discuss the analogy or analogies, and their similarities and differences to the situation, the utilitarian analysis, or the deontological analysis.

Section VI. Conclusion: Based on your analysis, explain what you think is the right thing to do/right action to take. You are required to take and defend a position on this issue. "I'm not sure what to do" is not an acceptable conclusion. You don't have to be certain, but you do have to make a decision. Your essay should talk about what is right to do.

Clear thinking is revealed in clear writing. Spelling, grammar, and style all count. Follow the instructions above carefully.

One of the aims in this course has been to become more aware of the technical decisions being made in our society, and how they change our society and our lives. This paper gives you a chance to look for one such decision, to consider it in detail, analyze it, and then explain your conclusion.