

COMPUTER ETHICS: YOUR CHOICE ESSAY#3

DUE: Monday, May 7, 2012

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. This is to be a short paper, approximately three pages long, double spaced. You must email the paper to `croyden@cs.holycross.edu` by 10:00 a.m., Monday, May 7, **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. You should research your topic and find at least 4 articles from reliable sources, as discussed last semester.

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 (MONT 113G), 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. 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 III. 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? 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 IV'S":

Section IV. 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) 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 IV. 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 IV. 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 V. 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, and you should support this conclusion based on your analysis from section IV, and information from your research.

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.

Section VI. Reference(s): You should research the topic for your essay. 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 cite your sources as we discussed in the first semester. In the text, cite the author and year in parentheses after the cited text. In the References section list all your sources using MLA or APA format. (If you're not sure which to use, I prefer APA).