

11.2_D

ReviewNotesDifference between ethical and legal standards

- legal standards: rules enforced by govt. → what you HAVE to do
- ethical standards: general ideas of what societies and individuals think is right or wrong → norms and principles individuals follow
- Bynum (2004) considers ethical issues in computing

Important to be aware of laws that apply to your work

- national and international laws
- legal issues: criminal (govt. takes somebody to court) OR civil (individual or company takes another individual or company to court)

Need to justify actions if you break the law

- principle of greater good: more people will benefit than suffer
- rely on personal beliefs of right and wrong

Computers harmful?

- data collection → fear of a 'Big Brother' society
- Privacy Act US 1974 → Solove (2004) – law didn't go far enough
- EU → GDPR

Copyright/digital rights management (DRM)

- World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) → international treaties
- Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) US (1998) – criminalize tech. to avoid DRM protection
- Funnell (1999) 'Dissecting the "Hacker Manifesto"'

Computer misuse

- Computer Misuse Act, UK (1990)
- Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime (2001)

Civil law – contract law disputes

- Lloyd (1993) *Information Technology Law*

Company regs. not enough to avoid legal issues

- e.g., Volkswagen co. fines + softw. eng. crim. case

Summary

11.2_D Model answers

Review

What are the differences between ethical and legal standards?

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Summary

Legal standards (rules enforced by government) and ethical standards (ideas of what is right and wrong) both important for computer professionals. Laws relevant to computer professionals include national and international laws and criminal and civil laws. Ethical principles, such as the principle of greater good, can help to justify if the law is broken. Three key areas of legislation are important in preventing harm. Data collection laws (e.g., GDPR in the EU) protect individuals' privacy. Various laws based on WIPO treaties prevent theft from copyright holders. Laws on computer misuse (e.g., Computer Misuse Act, UK 1990) prevent harm from cybercrime. Civil law is also important for resolving contract law disputes. Lloyd (1993) *Information Technology Law* a good source for this. Knowledge of law and ethics important because company regulations are not enough to avoid legal issues (e.g., Volkswagen software engineers' criminal cases).