KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS AND COMPUTING

STUDY GUIDE FOR CERTIFICATE OF COMPUTER   SCIENCE

NCIT213   FUNDAMENTALS OF COMPUTER ETHICS

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Study Unit 5 Ethical code of contact in ICT

Introduction

This unit intends to provide students with overview of the Ethical code of conduct in ICT, cyber law and Importance of cyber laws in Uganda

Learning Outcomes of Study Unit 5

Upon completion of this study unit, you should be able to.
1. Explain the ethical code of contact in ICT.
2. Explain the importance of cyber laws in Uganda.
3. Explain the ten Commandments of computer ethics

ETHICAL CODE OF CONDUCT IN ICT

A code of ethics is a document that outlines a set of acceptable behaviors for a professional or social group; generally, it is agreed to by all members of the group. The document details different actions that are considered appropriate and inappropriate.

A good example of a code of ethics is the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct of the Association for Computing Machinery, an organization of computing professionals that includes academics, researchers, and practitioners.

In the ACM's code, you will find many straightforward ethical instructions, such as the admonition to be honest and trustworthy. But because this is also an organization of professionals that focuses on computing, there are more specific admonitions that relate directly to information technology:

- No one should enter or use another's computer system, software, or data files without permission. One must always have appropriate approval before using system resources, including communication ports, file space, other system peripherals, and computer time.
- Designing or implementing systems that deliberately or inadvertently demean individuals or groups is ethically unacceptable.
- Organizational leaders are responsible for ensuring that computer systems enhance, not degrade, the quality of working life. When implementing a computer system, organizations must consider the personal and professional development, physical safety, and human dignity

of all workers. Appropriate human-computer ergonomic standards should be considered in system design and in the workplace.

One of the major advantages of creating a code of ethics is that it clarifies the acceptable standards of behavior for a professional group. The varied backgrounds and experiences of the members of a group lead to a variety of ideas regarding what is acceptable behavior. While to many the guidelines may seem obvious, having these items detailed provides clarity and consistency. Explicitly stating standards communicates the common guidelines to everyone in a clear manner.

The Ten Commandments of computer ethics

1) Thou shalt not use a computer to harm other people: If it is unethical to harm people by making a bomb, for example, it is equally bad to write a program that handles the timing of the bomb. Or, to put it more simply, if it is bad to steal and destroy other people's books and notebooks, it is equally bad to access and destroy their files.

2) Thou shalt not interfere with other people's computer work: Computer **viruses** are small programs that disrupt other people's computer work by destroying their files, taking huge amounts of computer time or memory, or by simply displaying annoying messages. Generating and consciously spreading computer viruses is unethical.

3) Thou shalt not snoop around in other people's files: Reading other people's e-mail messages is as bad as opening and reading their letters: This is invading their privacy. Obtaining other people's non-public files should be judged the same way as breaking into their rooms and stealing their documents. Text documents on the Internet may be protected by **encryption**.

4) Thou shalt not use a computer to steal: Using a computer to break into the accounts of a company or a bank and transferring money should be judged the same way as robbery. It is illegal and there are strict laws against it.

5) Thou shalt not use a computer to bear false witness: The Internet can spread untruth as fast as it can spread truth. Putting out false "information" to the world is bad. For instance, spreading false rumors about a person or false propaganda about historical events is wrong.

6) Thou shalt not use or copy software for which you have not paid: Software is an intellectual product. In that way, it is like a book: Obtaining illegal copies of copyrighted software is as bad as photocopying a copyrighted book. There are laws against both. Information

about the copyright owner can be embedded by a process called **watermarking** into pictures in the digital format.

7) Thou shalt not use other people's computer resources without authorization: Multiuser systems use **user id's** and **passwords** to enforce their memory and time allocations, and to safeguard information. You should not try to bypass this authorization system. **Hacking** a system to break and bypass the authorization is unethical.

8) Thou shalt not appropriate other people's intellectual output: For example, the programs you write for the projects assigned in this course are your own intellectual output. Copying somebody else's program without proper authorization is **software piracy** and is unethical. **Intellectual property** is a form of ownership, and may be protected by copyright laws.

9) Thou shalt think about the social consequences of the program you write: You have to think about computer issues in a more general social framework: Can the program you write be used in a way that is harmful to society? For example, if you are working for an animation house, and are producing animated films for children, you are responsible for their contents. Do the animations include scenes that can be harmful to children? In the United States, the **Communications Decency Act** was an attempt by lawmakers to ban certain types of content from Internet websites to protect young children from harmful material. That law was struck down because it violated the free speech principles in that country's constitution. The discussion, of course, is going on.

10) Thou shalt use a computer in ways that show consideration and respect: Just like public buses or banks, people using computer communications systems may find themselves in situations where there is some form of queuing and you have to wait for your turn and generally be nice to other people in the environment. The fact that you cannot see the people you are interacting with does not mean that you can be rude to them.

Cyber law

Cyber law is the part of the overall legal system that deals with the Internet, cyberspace, and their respective legal issues. Cyber law covers a fairly broad area, encompassing several subtopics including freedom of expression, access to and usage of the Internet, and online privacy. Generically, cyber law has been referred to as the Law of the Internet.

Importance of cyber laws in Uganda)

Just like any law, a cyber law is created to help protect people and organizations on the Internet from malicious people on the Internet and help maintain order. If someone breaks a cyber law or rule, it allows another person or organization to take action against that person or have them sentenced to a punishment.

Cyber law is important because it touches almost all aspects of transactions and activities on and concerning the Internet, the World Wide Web and Cyberspace. Initially it may seem that a Cyber law is a very technical field and that it does not have any bearing to most activities in Cyberspace. But the actual truth is that nothing could be further than the truth. Whether we realize it or not, every action and every reaction in Cyberspace has some legal and Cyber legal perspectives.

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Such crimes may threaten a nation's security and financial health. Issues surrounding this type of crime has become high-profile, mainly those surrounding cracking, copyright infringement. There are problems of privacy when private information is lost or intercepted, lawfully or otherwise.

Cyber crimes can involve criminal activities that are traditional in nature, such as fraud, forgery, theft, mischief and defamation.

Review questions:

4. Explain the ethical code of contact in ICT.
5. Explain what cyber law means
6. Explain the importance of cyber laws in Uganda.
7. Ten Commandments of computer ethics

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