

April 15, 2005 -- Lecture 33



22C:169

Computer Security

Douglas W. Jones

Department of Computer Science

Law and Ethics

Ethics first!

It is unethical to tolerate or enable evil

identity theft

forged e-mail headers on spam

theft of computing resources

theft of intellectual property

violation of expectation of privacy

Where use of security technology
could prevent these, failure to use
such technology is unethical

Elementary ethical dilemmas

Dual use technologies

Knives are essential kitchen implements

Knives can be used to commit murder

Reasonable ethical conclusions

It is ethical to make and sell knives

It is ethical to possess knives

Your ethical obligation is to:

a) not abuse knives yourself

b) not allow them to be abused

Ethical obligations of computer owners

Protect legitimate users

It is unethical to be unprepared for likely attacks or accidents

Prevent theft of data or resources

It is unethical to leave something of value where it might tempt someone

It is unethical to allow resources to be used for improper purposes

In sum, operating an insecure computer system is unethical

Ethical obligations of computer users

Be careful about how you use computers
Understand what data needs securing

Be careful with authentication tools
Password security

Be observant of evidence of trouble
Report security breaches
Report improperly secured resources

Ethical obligations of developers

Anticipate security needs of likely users
*Unethical to develop insecure
systems for users who need security*

Anticipate potential abuse of the product
*Don't sell to those with unethical intent
Don't develop products with no ethical use*

Be honest about what you've developed
Don't mislead users about it!

Intellectual property

It is unethical to quote without attribution
plagerism is even worse

It is unethical to charge for work you did not do
selling someone else's work is dangerous

This leads to a dilemma:
Is it ethical to steal from a thief?

Many of the questions about the
ethics of copyright infringement
boil down to this!

Ethical obligations of lawmakers

It is unethical to enact

nonsensical laws: Legislating Pi
unenforceable laws

Such laws make a mockery of law
and reduce respect for all law

laws without intent to enforce

Such laws are dangerous because
of the threat of arbitrary enforcement

laws that contradict ethical obligations

Such laws convince people that
the law itself is unjust