

For every individual in every profession it is important to have, and to follow, a “Code of Ethics”. It is important because it allows the individual to find their fit in the corporate world. Each person has their own definition of what is ethical, and it is up to each person to use that specific definition they have to meld into the workforce. They do this by comparing their “Code of Ethics” to the codes that companies have. If the individual’s code is not compatible, or eventually becomes incompatible, then the individual has a clear idea that they can no longer work for or support their role in that workplace. A defined “Code of Ethics” essentially sets the parameters for employer-employee compatibility.

For example, if I believed that publishing a paper with incorrect data was unethical but my employer did not, then the decision to leave the company would be clear to me. My ethical interests would be misaligned with those of the company I worked for and that should be all any one needs to make a decision on an ethical difference situation.

In CPRE 394, we discussed an article about using the information from an Amazon Echo to help solve a murder. The question posed in the article was who the information belongs to. That question itself, which we were encouraged to discuss, is not a question of ethics. That is a question of legality. On the side of the engineers of Amazon, there is nothing ethical that they must weigh in their minds in that moment. Everything regarding that situation resides in the terms of the purchase of the device and who the data on that device actually belongs to. However, if the question was something like, “Should an engineer remove the data from the device going against the legal precedents of the terms of purchase?”, then there would be an ethical dilemma. Would the individual weigh the solving of a murder over the strict regulations and rules of a certain contract? This is what we as a group came to the conclusion of. The inherent situation given to us was worthless from an ethical point of view. Going further into our made-up ethical scenario, we decided that human life and the preservation of it was valued more than money or corporate secrets.

From the Virtues of Ethics, we decided that Integrity, Charity, and Responsibility were the three that most closely related to this specific case, the Amazon Echo one. Those three virtues would be the most related to valuing solving a murder over moderately legal procedures. Together they would value other people over one’s self and money which related back to what we said earlier about human life. The other virtues, while important, just did not seem to emphasize these beliefs strongly enough for us to choose them for this particular case.