

CSCE 390

Notes for CSCE 390,
Professional Issues in Computer Science and Engineering

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Course goals, themes, issues, etc.

- What are my rights?
- What are my personal responsibilities?
- What are my professional responsibilities?
- How should I decide how to act when conflicts arise?

Fundamental Assumptions

“How should I *decide how to* act when conflicts arise?”

is not the same as

“How should I act when conflicts arise?”

- Sometimes there is a fundamentally Right Way to Act, and you should know what that is.
- Sometimes there is no fundamentally Right Way to Act, and you should know how to analyze a situation from both sides.
- Sometimes the principle is clear, but it is not clear how to act based on that principle.
- Some principles are universal, and some are specific to the world of computing.

Context: American precedents, law, and policy

This discussion (in the United States) takes place in the context of United States civil and constitutional law and precedent.

Some issues (IP) involve international law, which can differ from U.S. law.

American precedents, law, and policy (cont'd)

- Peter Zenger
- The First Amendment
- “clear and present danger”: Schenck v. United States.
- Daniel Ellsberg
- The Official Secrets Act
- “no redeeming social value”
- “community standards”

American precedents, law, and policy (cont'd)

“due process”

American precedents, law, and policy (cont'd)

- The 14th Amendment from which we get the notion of “due process”:
“Section 1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

Context: American precedents, law, and policy

- What is your “work product”?
- Who owns your “work product”?
- What is “intellectual property”?
- What is “obvious to one skilled in the art”?
- What are the differences among a copyright, a trade secret, and a patent?
- What might be different about software than about other things?

Context: American precedents, law, and policy

What ought one to do when one's employer requires behavior that, although demanded by the contract of employment, runs counter to one's personal or professional ethics or one's understanding of the law?

How do we deal with the fact that computing technology is moving faster than law and policy?

What are the norms in the computing world?