

Behavior as an Employee

CS103F: Ethical Foundations of Computer Science

February 26, 2019

Discussion: The Challenger Disaster

What do you do when your company is doing something wrong?

- Internal reporting is when someone in the company reports an immoral or illegal action within the organization
 - Allows company to respond and correct without bad publicity
 - Punishing or discouraging internal reporting will often eventually lead to whistleblowing
- Whistleblowing is when someone in the company reports immoral or illegal activities to an outside organization
 - Publicizes company's actions to general public
 - Allows for government fines or prosecution if laws or regulations are being violated
 - Whistleblowers protected from company retaliation by many state and federal laws
- So why is this so difficult?

That said...what do you owe your employer?

Time Theft

- When an employee is paid for an amount of time they haven't worked
 - Spending extra time in the break room
 - Rounding out minutes of hours worked
 - Browsing the Internet, doing online shopping, or social while at work

Except...

- “The supervisor told me that one of her employees, a salaried exempt IT person named Sonya, should be disciplined for 'theft of time' because she was spending too much time online...the next day I had Sonya in my office half in tears talking about quitting. ‘My supervisor comes from the Dark Ages!’ she said. ‘I was online researching software packages like she asked me to last month. I hadn't had a free minute to get to it until yesterday.’”

Time Theft in Software Development

- Time theft as “minutes worked” makes sense in a factory setting
 - Not being on the line slows down the line’s overall productivity
- Harder to quantify in software development
 - “Seat time” (i.e. time spent in front of computer) is not necessarily productive time
 - The actual writing code is a relatively small part of software development
 - Overworking mentally can actually slow down development process
- Companies often gauge productivity via “sprints” (usually two-week cycles for developing a feature/part of a feature)
 - ...But not always the case!
 - Some companies still take a very traditional approach to time theft

What's the best way to work?

- Focus on a single task for a large (~90 minute) block of time
 - No multitasking
 - No notifications
 - No social media
- Take regularly scheduled breaks or as your attention wanes
 - Stretch
 - Take a walk
 - Talk through a problem with an available team member (if they have headphones on, do not disturb!)
- Be respectful about lunch breaks
 - Great time to socialize with colleagues and make friends!
 - Pick a restaurant that is reasonably close to avoid long drive times

Resource Stealing

- Taking company resources for your own uses
 - Using printers or copiers for non-work-related activities
 - Using CPU/GPU time for non-work-related programs
- What about using your work e-mail for personal uses?

Example: Bitcoin Mining

- Admittedly hard to estimate energy costs
- Digiconomist estimates the network of computers that verifies bitcoin transactions draws 3.4 Gigawatts (GW)
 - 20.1 terrawatt hours (TWh) per year of energy
 - Equivalent to energy use for the entire nation of Morocco
- Point is, if you're using someone else's cluster for your mining, they're paying the energy bill and thus unwittingly subsidizing your profits

Taking Job Offers

- What do you do if you have multiple job offers?
- When should you accept an offer?
- What if one company is pressuring you to accept before you're ready?

iClicker Check in!

What do you do if you've accepted one job offer then get offered a better one?

- A) Take the original offer
- B) Decline the original offer and take the better one
- C) Fake your death and start a new life to avoid any fallout

References

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