

Ethics in Information Technology: **A closer look from a Christian perspective**



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Intended Purpose

We aim to scrutinize how can Christian information technology (IT) professionals interpret existing codes of ethics in their industry.



Relevance

- Information and Communication Technology is ubiquitous, thus there is an increased demand of professionals in this area worldwide.
- Most modern day businesses are becoming digital firms.
- Therefore these businesses will require ethical professionals to help their organization operation



Approach

Two codes of ethics, the Association of Computation Machinery (ACM) Code of Ethics and the British Computer Society (BCS) Code of Conduct, are examined in the light of the Scriptures.



Preliminary Findings

The analysis of two code of ethics reveals that:

- Sets of rules in the information technology sector may provide a way for Christian professionals to exercise their faith.
- Currently codes of ethics are encouraged but not enforced.
- Professionals might be exposed to challenging decisions that may contradict the ethics code and more importantly their faith.



ACM Code of Ethics [3]	BCS Code of Conduct [4]	Comments
1. General Moral Imperatives	1. Public Interest	
1.1 Contribute to society and human well-being.	1.a Have due regard for public health, privacy, security and wellbeing of others and the environment.	As stated in Mark 12, 30-31: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this, love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these". These ethics points can be derived from the first commandment, as avoiding to harm others and always seeking the general welfare is a manifestation of love to the neighbor. In addition to the commandment the beatitude: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God", since by following this code of ethics principle a professional is upholding the peace.
1.2 Avoid harm to others.	2.f Avoid injuring others, their property, reputation, or employment by false or malicious or negligent action or inaction.	
1.3 Be honest and trustworthy.	3.e NOT misrepresent or withhold information on the performance of products, systems or services (unless lawfully bound by a duty of confidentiality not to disclose such information), or take advantage of the lack of relevant knowledge or inexperience of others.	These principles are closely related to the 8 th commandment: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor", lying in the exercise of the profession may result in a deficient product or service. Proverbs also reminds us to be honest and tell the truth (Proverbs 12:17), and encourages honesty with rich blessings (Proverbs 28:20)
	2.a Only undertake to do work or provide a service that is within your professional competence.	
	2.b NOT claim any level of competence that you do not possess.	
1.4 Be fair and take action not to discriminate.	1.c conduct your professional activities without discrimination on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, marital status, nationality, colour, race, ethnic origin, religion, age or disability, or of any other condition or requirement.	In a time when women were discriminated and sick people were thought to be damned, the Lord Jesus Christ taught to accept people, to love all as they were brothers. This principle is an application of that same concept.
1.5 Honor property rights including copyrights and patent.	1.b Have due regard for the legitimate rights of Third Parties	The 7 th commandments states: "You shall not steal", in this items of the code stealing extends to intellectual property. Although this kind of property is not physical violating this principle implies taking something without permission.
1.6 Give proper credit for intellectual property.	1.b Have due regard for the legitimate rights of Third Parties	
1.7 Respect the privacy of others.	3.d NOT disclose or authorize to be disclosed, or use for personal gain or to benefit a third party, confidential information except with the permission of your Relevant Authority, or as required by Legislation.	Discretion is a virtue since it honors the trust that a person or a company has placed in an individual. Proverbs 8:12 "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion".

QR Code for more details of the codes compared



Codes Compared

Lessons Learned

- The main learning outcome of this poster is the relevance of interpreting existing codes of ethics in the IT industry from a Christian perspective.
- Evidently information technology is important, and since the way the world works nowadays depends on it, great care should be given to the ethical professionalism of people working in this area.
- The presence of a code of ethics does not guarantee that misconduct is absent or that transgressions will not occur. Therefore the codes are but a guide that professionals should follow. However for Christian professionals, there is a higher code, inspired by God, in the Holy Scriptures.

**Your comments are
highly appreciated.**

Thanks, gracias, merci, danke, xiexie, arigato, obrigado...

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