Reflective Activity: Ethics in Computing – Research Methods and Professional Practice – Zihaad Khan

One of the highlights of the Stahl et al. (2016) paper is the actionable advice for stakeholders on ethical issues. Ethical issues related to security, privacy and data protection are of utmost importance within a company. As a computing professional, I believe the following actions are necessary to address ethical issues:

- Risk Assessments and Security Audits – Regular risk assessments and security audits are necessary to ensure that potential threats and vulnerabilities are identified and mitigated. This would ensure that firewalls and various encryption protocols are in place and are providing the necessary protection in line with the ACM Code of Ethics (ACM Ethics, 2018) principle 2.9 which states that "Computing professionals should perform due diligence to ensure the system functions as intended and take appropriate action to secure resources against accidental and intentional misuse, modification, and denial of service." By performing risk assessments and security audits, data breaches can also be avoided.

- Maintain a sense of transparency and openness regarding data handling within the company. Not only does this align with the ACM Code of Ethics (ACM Ethics, 2018) but the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as well. Furthermore, this would assist to build trust with stakeholders and customers ensuring and instilling confidence in them regarding data handling.

- Continually stay up to date with the latest regulations such as the GDPR as well as the data protection laws relevant to the countries that the company is operating in. This would help me to ensure that my company is complying with all relevant regulations and to advise management on any necessary changes to company policies and procedures. Adherence to regulations not only protects the customers and the company, but it also shows the company's commitment to ethical behaviour (Stahl et al., 2016).

- Performing regular training workshops using the ACM Code of Ethics (ACM Ethics, 2018) and the BCS Code of Conduct (BCS, 2022) to raise awareness of ethical issues as well as highlighting best practices in the industry used to deal with these issues (Bott, 2014). Furthermore, encourage employees to report any unethical behaviour in the workplace. This creates a learning and an "ethical" culture within the organisation.

In conclusion, performing risk assessments and security audits, maintaining transparency and openness, continually staying up to date with regulations as well as performing regular training workshops are ways to address ethical issues. While the above list of actions is not exhaustive, I believe it does provide mechanisms to address ethical issues within an organisation.

References

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