

The Hand book of information and Cyber Ethic

Chapter10: Ethical interest in free and open source software

Amazonlink:

http://www.amazon.com/Handbook-Information-Computer-Ethics/dp/0471799599/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1233037513&sr=1-1

What I expect to learn:

- Why is it that many are interested in open source free software
- The relation of ethical values with open source software

Quote:

“Service learning, a concept that is becoming a part of the mission of many higher education institutions, also influences the choice between open source software and proprietary software. Consider a scenario in which a software engineering class is to produce a piece of software for local charity. The choice between open source alternatives and proprietary alternatives is not to be taken lightly. Seemingly, open source software makes good sense for both the students and the charitable organization. The cost is low and, presumably, the quality is sufficient. Yet there are long term costs that are faced by the charity (as well as any business making such a choice).”

Book Review:

While the Internet’s rapid expansion has enabled an equally rapid expansion of web based professional services, it has not been matched by the consideration and understanding of the related ethical implications. The growth of new opportunities is accompanied by equal, if not greater, growth in ethical issues for businesses seeking to expand their offerings via the Internet. These issues include the quality of services and information, privacy and security, nature of relationship, forms of delivery, contractual considerations, and regulation and enforcement.

Computers have a central and growing role in commerce, industry, government, medicine, education, entertainment and society at large. Software engineers are those who contribute by direct participation or by teaching, to the analysis, specification, design, development, certification, maintenance and testing of software systems. Because of their roles in developing software systems, software engineers have significant opportunities to do good or cause harm, to enable others to do good or cause harm, or to influence others to do good or cause harm. To ensure, as much as possible, that their efforts will be used for good, software

engineers must commit themselves to making software engineering a beneficial and respected profession. In accordance with that commitment, software engineers shall adhere to the following Code of Ethics and Professional Practice.

The Code contains eight Principles related to the behavior of and decisions made by professional software engineers, including practitioners, educators, managers, supervisors and policy makers, as well as trainees and students of the profession. The Principles identify the ethically responsible relationships in which individuals, groups, and organizations participate and the primary obligations within these relationships. The Clauses of each Principle are illustrations of some of the obligations included in these relationships. These obligations are founded in the software engineer's humanity, in special care owed to people affected by the work of software engineers, and in the unique elements of the practice of software engineering. The Code prescribes these as obligations of anyone claiming to be or aspiring to be a software engineer.

What I have learned:

- The distinction between free and open source software
- The difference of open source from proprietary software
- How proprietary software developer deals with customers

Integrative Question:

1. What is open source software?
2. Why is it free?
3. What are the ethical responsibilities of software developers?
4. What is proprietary software?
5. What is the difference of open source and proprietary software?