

Moral & Ethical Factors

F1 Moral and ethical issues

With the use of information technology, there has arisen a number of questions over morality and ethics. A lot of this is a matter of personal opinion and cultural bias. Some people will see the privacy of their data being impinged upon and feel it is an affront to their freedom. However, some feel it is necessary for the benefits we get from it, including improving our safety. The right and wrong of these sorts of questions are important to consider to ensure we don't do something immoral and unethical.

Factor	Explanation
Environmental	The growth of information technology has caused an increase in landfill trash (technotrash). It also consumes materials, power, chemicals & water to produce technology. We also use more power to run our technology systems. This is all harming the environment.
Unequal Access	Many poorer people have very limited access, or no access at all, to information technology. This is impacting on the poor, especially young people, as they cannot use these for things like education.
Online Behaviour	Poor online behaviour is a relatively common issue. Acting poorly online can affect your employment and can lead to legal problems. Being the victim to abuse online can lead to suicide. The rules for good online behaviour is known as netiquette.
Globalisation	Information technology is increasing globalisation, where the world is becoming more interconnected and integrated. This can lead to outsourcing which affects employment. It is also seen to affect cultures, spread disease and increases pollution.
Freedom of Speech	We use information technology to freely express views and opinions. However offensive opinions are often censored to prevent causing offence. Some see this as a violation of their freedom of speech.
Acceptable Use	Most businesses have acceptable use policies to govern how employees use their IT systems. This covers things like sites they can visit, the language they can use and sharing copyright material. This can lead to termination of contract if breached.
Health & Safety	Health & Safety concerns have grown with IT systems. RSI, eye strain and tripping hazards are just three examples. Businesses must make sure they take care this doesn't affect employees causing injury.
Copyright	The downloading of copyright material without permission is a big problem with IT systems. It is costing people and businesses a lot of money where people access movies, images, music, etc. for free. This can cost people their livelihood.
Computer Misuse	The threat of computer misuses, such as hacking and viruses, is very real. While some attacks are just a nuisance, it can also be very serious, costing an organisation a lot of money which could cause them to go out of business.
Protection of Data	Organisations and individuals must protect the data of others. If they do not then the people who have had their data stolen could be seriously harmed, such as having their identity stolen or money from their bank.
Privacy	Privacy is a big concern. More and more information about us is appearing online. We often aren't even aware of this, such as when people share images of us. This information can be misused, such as with cyberbullying or identity fraud.
Accessibility	Organisations should make sure their IT systems are accessible to people with disabilities. This might involve installing adaptive technology. This is to stop them from discriminating against individuals which cause stress, upset and affect employment.

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