Chapter 36
CyberEthics Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This chapter analyses the role of cyber ethics and other related issues such as electronic commerce (e-commerce) and customers' protection, privacy, anonymity, psychological and mental wealth-being. It focuses on consumerism cybercrimes such as consumer fraud, online deceptive advertisements, financial fraud and also on social cybercrimes such as pornography, racism, xenophobia, bullying, sexting, cyber hate and cyber staking. Most importantly, this chapter identifies and illustrates how confrontation and prevention tools, including security education and research, are instrumental to overcoming cybercrime on a longer term basis. The chapter is based on a case study and examines the existing literature review in correlation to the existing practices of the Cyprus Safer Internet Center operating in Cyprus – CyberEthics.

INTRODUCTION

Today's society depends largely on the previously unknown *windows* that technological power in amalgamation with the rapid development of the Internet, have opened. These windows enable an unobstructed route of communication and ceaseless spread of information (Pittaro, 2007). As Spinello (2011, p. 60) asserts "few would have predicted the Internet's explosive growth and persistent encroachment on our personal and professional lives." The cyberspace thus became a considerable globally overused forum for social, economical and informational operations (Spinello, 2011). Nonetheless, "computers systems have often proved to be insecure, unreliable, unpredictable and that society has yet to become to terms with the consequences" (Forester & Morrinson, 2001, p. ix). The Internet has not only been used largely for enhancing social and economical opportunities for people, but it has also been used as a tool by offenders in order to harass, threaten, violate and offence other users (Pittaro, 2007). Consequently, new societal needs are observed and cyber ethics is responsible for facing these needs and giving guidelines for the appropriate behaviour on the Internet.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the role of cyber ethics in dealing with essential ethical issues such as privacy, anonymity and mental health. It mainly focuses on the new cyber crimes that are related to the recently developed social networks.

The most important tool for facing effectively these problems is prevention and education. This chapter constitutes an analysis of cyber crimes, cyber ethics, and the role of security education and prevention in enhancing cyber ethics.

Further, this chapter focuses on online consumerism and enhances discussion related to consumer protection when using the internet. It outlines how and under what circumstances cyber users may be ethically violated in a consumer context. It illustrates how ethical behaviour and actions are considered as vital elements of the societal marketing perception and concludes that prevention and cyber-education may protect cyber consumers and enhance the online marketing conviction.

The chapter uses a case study approach on the Cyprus Safer Internet Center to address these issues. The Cyprus Safer Internet Center aims to assist and guide on issues related to online safety and hazard, in order to promote cybercrime prevention. It also focuses on confronting new cybercrimes throughout security education by informing and educating young people, educators and parents regarding cyber morality. The use of case study was seen as an appropriate method as it allowed the integration between theory and practice and the evolvement of important conclusions and recommendations to be used by all relevant stakeholders. The use of a case study that corresponds to a particular contemporary phenomenon such as cyber ethics education and safety helps to achieve an exploratory study where the cyber problems, needs and solutions are discussed and explored. The collection of relevant data was gathered by the use of both primary (exploring a case study) and secondary data (existing literature review).

LITERATURE REVIEW

"Ethical consideration now is generally declared to be indispensable in shaping technology in a socially acceptable and sustainable way" (Grunwald, 2000, p.181). The word *ethics* comes from the ancient Greek word *eche* which means character and is thus best defined by a set of theories that are based on certain rules and principles helping people distinguish right from wrong (Kizza, 2011). Consequently, cyber ethics is based on the code that gives guidelines for the proper behaviour on the Internet, for the good to be achieved on both an individual and societal basis (Bawa & Marwah, 2011). Similarly, Baird et. al., (2000, p.10), defined cyber ethics as the: "exploration of the entire range of the ethical and moral issues that arise in the cyberspace." As cyberspace becomes broader and more popular, its meaning increases in importance.

Observing the last two decades, it has been argued that in parallel with the significant development of the Internet, cybercrimes have also been multiplied. Specifically, the first generation in 1980s started with the whiz kids, and continued from 1990 up to 2000, with virus attacks spread widely to computer networks. At the beginning of the century, the attacks became more targeted (targets were specific companies and institutions) and mainly focused on financial gains (Kizza, 2011). Today, we have already passed into the fourth generation of cybercrimes. This generation is characterised by the development of social networks. The social networking sites help people of any age to communicate and publicise their information and pictures to their friends. This is a new era that is unpredictable and distressful, as it leads to a lot of complications related to privacy, data protection and confidentiality issues (Moiny, 2011).

The problems and issues related to cyber ethics vary. Such problems may be related to privacy and anonymity, intellectual property or computer crime (Bawa and Marwah, 2011), loss of customers' data and financial fraud (Kizza, 2011), use of pornography, racism, data theft and privacy invasion (Baird et al., 2000). In addition, a lot of cybercrimes such as cyber bullying, identity thefts, sexting and compromised accounts are related mostly to the social networking sites.

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