Chapter 17
Digital Confidence in Business:
A Perspective of Information Ethics

Lichun Chiang
National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan

ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to understand the perceptions of employee information ethics using a company within the Environmental Protection Science Park in the southern part of Taiwan. The two purposes of this research are (1) to understand the environments of employees who understand information ethics, and (2) to clarify variables regarding information ethics which could provide a framework for policy controlling information ethics for businesses related to information technology (IT). The findings of this study show respondents understand the concept of unethical or illegal use of IT. All respondents perceived unauthorized behaviors, such as illegal downloads and reading other IT accounts without permission as unethical behaviors.

INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, Information Technology (IT) has been applied in organizations, including public and private sectors. Researchers Hauptman (1988), Carr (2003) and Kostrewski and Oppenheim (1980) wrote articles on ethical issues for an information age. Kostrewski and Oppenheim (1980) pointed out user ethical issues, such as confidentiality of information and the many aspects of social responsibility of an information scientist. Hauptman (1988)

and Carr (2003) showed ethical challenges in the context of trust in librarianship, and addressed user ethical problems related to privacy, information access, copyright and codes of ethics. The ethical problems in information work span the unauthorized use of work facilities, confidentiality of inquiries, bias in presented results and many aspects of social responsibility for an information scientist.

Information ethics has developed as a discipline in information science. It has evolved with many other disciplines as a confluence of the ethical concerns of media, journalism, library and information science, computer ethics (including cyberethics),

management information systems, business and the internet. Certain IT ethical problems are intertwined with organization interests such as copyright and privacy (Schultz, 2006). Mathiesen (2004) addressed informational ethics and the value that information has in human life, and that information access via information technology is related to individual privacy, secrecy, censorship, and the rights enjoyed by owners of intellectual property (which involve restricting access to information.) Information ethics can provide an important conceptual framework to understand a multitude of ethical issues arising from new information technologies, such as privacy, intellectual property, filtering, censorship, and the digital divide (which is about who should have access to information and under what conditions.) Thus, information ethics is required to specify the relationship between people and information within an information society.

This study aims to examine the perceptions of employee information ethics by studying a company in the Environment Protection Science Park, Kaoshiung County, Taiwan. The two purposes of this research are (1) to understand those employees who understand information ethics in the workplace, and (2) to clarify variables in information ethics which could provide a framework for policy controlling information ethics on high-tech businesses. The questionnaires were designed after review of literature regarding information ethics, and sent to workers in the Epoch Energy Technology Corporation within the Science Park to help us better understand employee intentions for observing information ethics in the business field.

The study is divided into four parts. First is a review of the theoretical literature on ethics and information technology and a discussion of some supporting experimental evidence. Second is a presentation of the research method used in this paper, including the methodological approach, analysis variables, case sampling, and questionnaire design. The third section analyzes the research results and attempts to identify the influential factors and properties of information in the Science Park. The last section contains a discussion of the implications of these results and identifies future work that should be done in this area.

BACKGROUND

Information is intrinsically important and valuable (Van den Hoven, 1995; Floridi, 2006). Information Technologies have revolutionized information delivery in business, from its production and management to its consumption, thus deeply affecting our moral behaviors. As Cowton and Thomspon (2000:165) stated, "codes of conduct are one of the most visible features of business practice associated with business ethics." Ethics is concerned about what people should do and also referred to by 'morality,' 'value,' and 'justice, and it is associated with the value or goodness of things and situations and with the justness of institutions (Schultz, 2006) Ethics are related to particular professions often requiring a high level of education, skill, and intelligence, such as doctors in hospitals and computer experts in high tech companies. These professionals receive trust from society and have a responsibility to act in an ethical manner. Therefore, ethical rules follow from the existence of professions (Parker, 1968). User incentives to follow ethics are bookended between two moral attitudes: (1) the moralistic attitude according to which the quality of character of the member of society ought to be a central public concern and (2) the economic attitude means private vices come from public benefits; that is, the incentives are the aggregate outcomes of individual choices and not their motivation or moral quality (Grant, 2006). Ethical problems arise because they involve conflicts between different interests that cannot be resolved on the level of interests alone. Wu and Tsang (2008) studied factors of participant trust and institutional trust in the virtual communities,

Related Content

Multi-Criteria Decision Aid for Group Facilitator Election: Application to a Collaborative e-Maintenance Process
Adnane Laredj, Baroudi Roubaand Claude Duvallet (2019). *International Journal of Decision Support System Technology (pp. 93-102).*
www.irma-international.org/article/multi-criteria-decision-aid-for-group-facilitator-election/216943

Land Governance Measurement
 (2020). *Utilizing Decision Support Systems for Strategic Public Policy Planning (pp. 75-88).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/land-governance-measurement/257620

Top Management's Role in Promoting Decision Support Systems Efficiency: An Exploratory Study in Government Sector in Saudi Arabia
Abdullah Ibrahim Alkraiji (2021). *Research Anthology on Decision Support Systems and Decision Management in Healthcare, Business, and Engineering (pp. 1409-1429).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/top-managements-role-in-promoting-decision-support-systems-efficiency/282648

Predictive Analytics of Social Networks: A Survey of Tasks and Techniques
Ming Yang, William H. Hsuand Surya Teja Kallumadi (2014). *Emerging Methods in Predictive Analytics: Risk Management and Decision-Making (pp. 297-333).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/predictive-analytics-of-social-networks/107911

Alignment Of Organizational Strategy With Information Technology Strategy
Tamio Shimizu, Marley Monteiro de Carvalhoand Fernando Jose Barbin (2006). *Strategic Alignment Process and Decision Support Systems: Theory and Case Studies (pp. 106-139).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/alignment-organizational-strategy-information-technology/29709