

Professional Ethics

Lecture 6

Computers & Society (CPSC 430)

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<https://www.students.cs.ubc.ca/~cs-430/>

Is Software Engineering a Profession?

- In many ways software engineering is similar to other professions such as law or accounting
 - Dependence on professional education and practical training
 - Professional associations (IEEE, ACM)
 - Potential for bad decisions to cause significant public harm
- It's not a “full-fledged” profession:
 - No formal accreditation/licensing system
- All the same, sensible to ask software engineers to follow a code of ethics.
 - One with significant support is described in the book.
 - Nothing it says ought to come as a big surprise at this point in the course 😊.

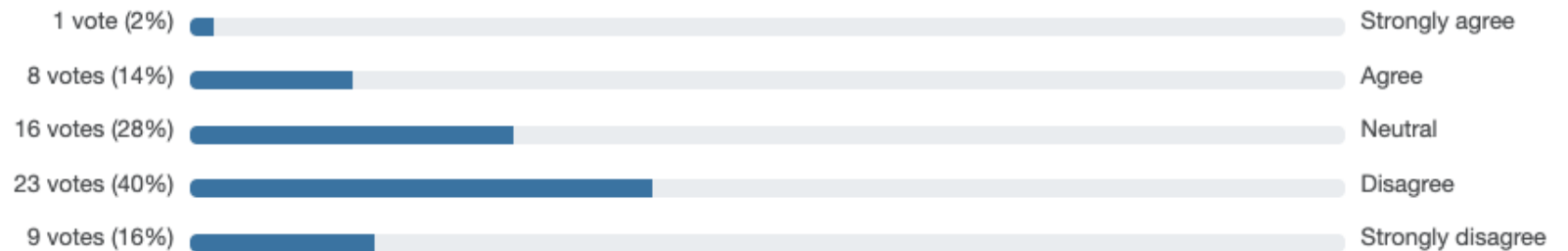
Whistle-Blowing

- Revealing a real or potential harm to the public being caused by your employer.
 - Not an attempt to take revenge on the employer, e.g., for turning down a promotion
 - Not an attempt to avoid personal responsibility for a problem that is about to come to light anyway.
- *Under what circumstances is whistle-blowing morally justified? When is it morally necessary?*

Professional Ethics

“Computer scientists and data scientists should not aid in the development of autonomous weapon systems.”

A total of 57 voter(s) in 1124 hours



Case Study

- **Software Recommendation**
 - Sam Shaw sought advice on how to improve security of his business's local area network
 - Professor Jane Smith answered Sam's questions
 - She also recommends, NetCheks, a software package to him to identify security problems
 - She does not mention the "best buy" option
 - She does not mention that she is shareholder of NetCheks
- **Did Professor Jane Smith behave ethically?**