

Mohamed Darbi
Dr. Hepting
CS 280
April 20, 2020

How is Empathy Important for Computing Professionals upholding the ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct?

Empathy is often something that is looked over because of the greed of corporations and the fact that money is the primary purpose for many computing corporations. Companies will often give priority to increasing revenue then they will to empathy and ethics. The importance of empathy is huge and the facts of the matter is that empathy and especially ethics in business is always a grey area. Empathy as defined by the oxford dictionary is: The ability to understand and share the feelings of others. Personally, I feel as if empathy was more prioritised for computing professionals we would not have as many cases of companies selling their users data. To understand how important empathy is for computing professionals we must first understand how the lack of empathy is detrimental to technological advancements and detrimental to the practice of all computing professionals in general.

The lack of empathy is a huge problem in many computing industries. The one I would like to speak about first though is that of the video game industry. The video games industry is one the most notorious for preying on young people and using unethical business practices. The lack of ethics in the video game industry is hugely important. As someone who plays video games from time to time, I have spent some time with EA Sports and their respective video games and can say first hand that they have game mechanics in their game that is only meant to lure people into spending money instead of mechanics in the game meant to be for playing the game in other more ethical companies. They just recently had a lawsuit filed against them because of this exact reason. The lawsuits main argument was “The plaintiffs say that EA uses this technology -- whose stated intention is to allow AI to adjust difficulty on the fly to keep players from becoming either too bored or frustrated with the challenge level of a game, keeping them playing longer -- to push players into purchasing more loot boxes in the form of Player Packs, saying that it effectively makes even high stat players not play as well as they should.” (Valentine, Para. 3). An incase you wanted a deeper understanding on how loot boxes are predatory it is best defined as: “Predatory monetization schemes typically involve in-game purchasing systems that disguise or withhold the true long-term cost of the activity until players are already financially and psychologically committed.”(King, para. 2) in my opinion as This is a great example of a huge company located here in Canada that preys on the misfortune of it’s players and forgoes all of the ACM Code of ethics in order to fatten their pockets. It is the sad truth of a lot of computing

industries. The rich will go against all ethical codes similar to the ACM if that means they can get a bigger payday.

Another example of a company that also places very little priority on ethics is another video game company named Ubisoft. Ubisoft has a track record of straight up lying about their games as well as showing footage of their game pre-release and then when the game comes out the amazing pre-release footage of the game is nowhere to be found. The games are advertised as being something and what the users get after buying the game is something completely different which allows for the company to steal the money of their player base and provide a sub-par product. Similarly to EA, Ubisoft was hit with a lawsuit. The crazy thing about Ubisoft in particular is that they are computing professionals and as computing professionals they are being sued by a "France-based union Solidaires Informatique is working on a collective lawsuit against Assassin's Creed publisher Ubisoft,..." "The repeated acts of harassment and sexual assault, sexist acts and discrimination, as well as the impunity that the group has been subjected to over many years, must be explained and repaired," the group said in its statement."

These two examples of computing professionals and the companies they work for are examples of what can happen if empathy is not prioritised especially at the top of the companies. Empathy and caring for other people as well as making a great product will lead you to success. The lack of empathy is not necessary to be successful. Because I have given you two examples of companies that lack ethics and empathy for those they work for and with I will give you an example of a video game company that is successful and time and time again has shown major empathy for its player base. On May 18th, 2015, a company named CD Projekt Red (based out of Poland) released one of the most anticipated games of the decade. They released a game called the Witcher 3: Wild Hunt and on December 10th 2020, they released another blockbuster of a game called CyberPunk: 2077, both times they released their games on a DRM free platform, which effectively means people who can't afford to buy the game for \$80 CAD could play the game for free. This is an example of computing professionals who show empathy and compassion and are rewarded for it and are beloved by the whole video games industry. I believe to treat people with respect and treat them ethically whether it's the people you work for or the people you sell your product to is imperative.

Bibliography and Works Cited, Assessment

King, Daniel L, and Delfabbro, Paul H. “Predatory Monetization Schemes in Video Games (E.g. ‘Loot Boxes’) and Internet Gaming Disorder.” *Addiction* (Abingdon, England), vol. 113, no. 11, 2018, pp. 1967–1969.

This source really highlights what I was thinking of in terms of predatory behaviour by computing professionals in the video game industry. Also this source is directly from the U of R library therefore, it should be as reputable as possible.

Batchelor, James, et al. “French Union Preparing Collective Lawsuit against Ubisoft amid Abuse Allegations.” *GamesIndustry.biz*, 22 July 2020,
www.gamesindustry.biz/articles/2020-07-22-french-union-preparing-collective-lawsuit-against-ubisoft-amid-abuse-allegations.

Rebekah Valentine Senior Staff Writer Wednesday 11th November 2020. “EA Faces Yet Another Class-Action Lawsuit Connected to Loot Boxes.” *GamesIndustry.biz*,
www.gamesindustry.biz/articles/2020-11-11-ea-faces-yet-another-class-action-lawsuit-over-alleged-use-of-dynamic-difficulty-adjustment.

This website’s reputation is pretty high in terms of video games. They are the elite in terms of news and are usually pretty accurate and they don’t fabricate the news. Also the website is huge and articles on many many different video game related news. Gamesindustry.biz has a reputation of being accurate on the news and I deemed it usable because I was citing a news article from this website which is a videogames news website.