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Ethics Examples

Instructions

Example 1: Discriminatory pricing

We consider it unethical for e-commerce softwares to "discriminate" loyal customers by offering them abnormally higher prices. Sometimes, softwares utilize big data to determine if a certain customer is loyal – if they are unlikely to compare prices on other platforms manually. In this case, the software engineer(s) have the chance to take advantage of the customers' trust to profitize more. Softwares may hide the normal prices and show higher prices instead. On the other hand, softwares may offer favored prices to new customers in order to win them over. The engineers should indiscriminately offer the same pricing information for all customers for the sake of fairness.

Example 2: Insufficient hate speech regulation on social media platforms

We contends that insufficient hate speech regulation on social media platforms is unethical. Hate speeches can make negative impact in the real world. But we acknowledge that it is hard to draw a line between combating hate speeches and preserving freedom of speech. It is hardly the software engineers or the products' fault when some users abuses the platforms.

Example 3: Violation of personal data privacy

We argue that softwares should not leak users' personal data to third parties without the users' acknowledgement. Softwares must not disclose users' personal information(email address, phone numbers, etc.) If they do, they may bring countless troubles to the users. The problem is on both engineers and the product. Engineers should not brings out any data that can trace back to individual users. The product should clarify the issue and agree with the users at first.