

Ethical Analysis Assignment #2

CMSC 304

In this assignment, you will consider the ethical tradeoffs made by a hypothetical WikiLeaks employee that was sent a large archive of “leaked” and potentially sensitive information. This individual is responsible for indexing, reviewing, redacting^[1] (possibly using automated text processing techniques), and curating the WikiLeaks website/database for use by the Internet public.

In your paper, you must identify (two or more) ethical questions or situations that this individual would face, and analyze them using the Ethical Framework.

Here are some thoughts you may want to consider:

- Given the size of the archive you were sent, examining every document for items to redact may not be possible. What level of review and due diligence is enough? How might (or can?) technology assist in this effort?
- What if some of the material to be “leaked” contained classified national security information?
- What if some of the material to be “leaked” contained proprietary business secrets?
- How would you balance the interests of the public’s right (or need) to know and a company’s (or government’s) right/desire to maintain secrecy?
- How would you balance your duties to your Wikileaks employer (i.e., corporate goals in advocating/providing public access to “leaked” documents) versus your responsibilities as a citizen and Internet user?
- What ethical ‘calculus’ would guide your decisions and actions?

As with the previous assignment, the expected length is 2-4 pages in a standard single-spaced, 11 or 12 point font report style (approximately 1000-2000 words). As always, it’s OK to submit a longer analysis (but not more than 8 pages, please).

[1] Redaction is the process of removing data or information that can directly or indirectly be used to identify a person, organization, program, or other matter. The intelligence community also calls this “sanitizing” a document before releasing it publicly.