Scenario 1

Alexis, a gifted high school student, wants to become a doctor. Because she comes from a poor family, she will need a scholarship in order to attend college. Some of her classes require extra research projects in order to get an A. Her high school has a few, older PCs, but there are always long lines of students waiting to use them during the school day. After school, she usually works at a part-time job to help support her family.

On some evenings Alexis goes to the library of a private college a few miles from her family’s apartment, where she always finds plenty of unused PCs connected to the Internet. On the few occasions when a librarian asks her if she is a student at the college, she says “Yes,” and the librarian leaves her alone. Using the resources of this library, Alexis efficiently completes the extra research projects, graduates from high school with straight As, and gets a full-ride scholarship to attend a prestigious university.

Questions
1. Did Alexis do anything wrong?
2. Who benefited from Alexis’s course of action?
3. Who was hurt by Alexis’s course of action?
4. Did Alexis have an unfair advantage over her high school classmates?
5. Would any of your answers change if it turns out Alexis did not win a college scholarship after all and is now working at the Burger Barn?
6. Are there better ways Alexis could have accomplished her objective?
7. What additional information, if any, would help you answer the previous questions?
~ Scenario 2

An organization dedicated to reducing spam tries to get Internet service providers (ISPs) in an East Asian country to stop the spammers by protecting their mail servers. When this effort is unsuccessful, the anti-spam organization puts the addresses of these ISPs on its “black list.” Many ISPs in the United States consult the black list and refuse to accept email from the blacklisted ISPs. This action has two results. First, the amount of spam received by the typical email user in the United States drops by 25 percent. Second, tens of thousands of innocent computer users in the East Asian country are unable to send email to friends and business associates in the United States.

Questions

1. Did the anti-spam organization do anything wrong?
2. Did the ISPs that refused to accept email from the blacklisted ISPs do anything wrong?
3. Who benefited from the organization’s action?
4. Who was hurt by the organization’s action?
5. Could the organization have achieved its goals through a better course of action?
6. What additional information, if any, would help you answer the previous questions?
**Scenario 3**

In an attempt to deter speeders, the East Dakota State Police (EDSP) installs video cameras on all of its freeway overpasses. The cameras are connected to computers that can reliably detect cars traveling more than five miles per hour above the speed limit. These computers have sophisticated image recognition software that enables them to read license plate numbers and capture high-resolution pictures of vehicle drivers. If the picture of the driver matches the driver’s license photo of one of the registered owners of the car, the system issues a speeding ticket to the driver, complete with photo evidence. Six months after the system is put into operation, the number of people speeding on East Dakota freeways is reduced by 90 percent.

The FBI asks the EDSP for real-time access to the information collected by the video cameras. The EDSP complies with this request. Three months later, the FBI uses this information to arrest five members of a terrorist organization.

**Questions**

1. Did the East Dakota State Police do anything wrong?
2. Who benefited from the actions of the EDSP?
3. Who was harmed by the actions of the EDSP?
4. What other courses of action could the EDSP have taken to achieve its objectives? Examine the advantages and disadvantages of these alternative courses of action.
5. What additional information, if any, would help you answer the previous questions?
Scenario 4

You are the senior software engineer at a start-up company developing an exciting new product for handheld computers that will revolutionize the way nurses keep track of their hospitalized patients. Your company’s sales force has led hospital administrators to believe your product will be available next week. Unfortunately, at this point the package still contains quite a few bugs. The leader of the testing group has reported that all of the known bugs appear to be minor, but it will take another month of testing for his team to be confident the product contains no catastrophic errors.

Because of the fierce competition in the medical software industry, it is critical that your company be the “first to market.” To the best of your knowledge, a well-established company will release a similar product in a few weeks. If its product appears first, your start-up company will probably go out of business.

Questions

1. Should you recommend release of the product next week?
2. Who will benefit if the company follows your recommendation?
3. Who will be harmed if the company follows your recommendation?
4. Do you have an obligation to any group of people that may be affected by your decision?
5. What additional information, if any, would help you answer the previous questions?