

**I PRO 320:  
Socio-Professional Networking: An Online Teachers' Community  
for the Chicago Public Schools**

**Spring 2008**

**Code of Ethics**

## Layer 1: The Law

**Canon:** We will work hard to ensure the teachers' privacy through recognition of security. We will also remain informed of the federal laws governing identity theft and participation in online communities.

**Pressure:** There is a pressure to complete the project by the deadline. Also, we do not have the time or adequate resources to enforce maximum security on the site we are creating.

**Risk:** There is a risk that identity theft of a user will occur if they reveal personal identification information to the community of teachers.

**Risk:** There is a risk that we will post information from outside sources and cite them incorrectly or ignore citing them at all.

**Measure:** A measure to avoid these risks would be to ensure that all the project members have familiarized themselves with the relevant laws and regulations of online privacy terms and citing published works.

## Layer 2: Contracts and Agreements

**Canon:** We will work to ensure that no confidential user data will be made available to a third party or used at all to identify the users in ways they do not wish to be identified. Furthermore, controversial content will not be deleted unless it poses a risk to users.

**Pressure:** There is a pressure to make an agreement with CPS to share data in certain circumstances, which may not be entirely in keeping with the spirit of our agreement with the users. These circumstances could include complaints by students or other teachers against teachers for purposes other than criminal activity.

**Pressure:** There is a pressure to moderate the content of the site. This pressure may come about through a worry that CPS officials will remove their approval from the site, or that users concerned for their employment prospects will abandon the site if content perceived as unlikely to be approved of by CPS administrators is added.

**Risk:** There is a risk that we will break our agreement with the users of the site (i.e. teachers) to not disclose their private data for any purposes, including to companies for marketing purposes, to CPS administrators for potentially disciplinary purposes, or to students.

**Measure:** A step we can take to avoid this risk is to closely monitor who can access site data (i.e. not giving people, other than those directly involved in the project, administrative access).

## Layer 3: Professional Codes

**Canon:** We will observe the National Society of Professional Engineer's code of ethics that has established the code of conduct and guidelines that engineers are expected to exhibit the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

**Pressure:** There is a pressure to complete the project-related tasks and deliver the final product in a very limited amount of time.

**Risk:** There is a risk of violating the NSPE code of ethics by producing an unsatisfactory or problematic product due to the time pressure. The NSPE code of ethics states that we should "hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public."

**Risk:** There is a risk of not following the rule "Engineers shall undertake assignments only when qualified by education or experience in the specific technical fields involved," as stated by NSPE code of conduct, by forcing under-qualified project members to perform tasks simply to meet the goals of the project plan.

**Measure:** Every employee will be provided a copy of the NPSE code of conduct and it will be discussed at orientation.

#### **Layer 4: Industry Standards**

**Canon:** According to industry standards, we will create a knowledge repository that is intuitive to use, immediately useful, and makes available the tools that are currently in demand. We will not resort to a mere duplication of previous efforts remain innovative, while conforming to the above requirements.

**Pressure:** There is a pressure to find features and ideas that are popular on other websites considered to be at the head of the industry.

**Pressure:** There is also a pressure to find content which will be useful for teachers as they browse the website before its final form is delivered.

**Risk:** There is a risk that in finding useful features or content, we may do more than is considered an acceptable amount of copying and end up plagiarizing the source, which is clearly unethical behavior.

**Measure:** By searching for copyright information on a website prior to taking ideas from it, we can avoid accidentally stepping outside the acceptable level of material borrowing. In cases where this information is ambiguous, we can take the extra step of attempting to contact the owner of the material in question to avoid undesired conflicts in the future.

#### **Layer 5: Community**

**Canon:** In the process of data accumulation and evaluation, we will work hard to produce a finished product that takes into account the many demographics which the CPS is composed of, and do so in an honest and respectful manner

**Pressure:** There is a pressure to conduct face-to-face interviews and focus groups while adhering to a tight budget and time constraints.

**Pressure:** There is a pressure to recruit willing participants of the CPS as quickly as possible, in order to begin gathering suggestions regarding site features.

**Risk:** There is a risk that by only visiting schools close to IIT, our focus groups fail to obtain suggestions and feedback representing the needs of all CPS demographics.

**Measure:** By planning ahead and making prior arrangements, we should be able to visit schools in a number of different neighborhoods and sides of Chicago, thus reflecting the standards and expectations of their relative communities.

#### **Layer 6: Personal Relationships**

**Canon:** All project members will be honest in reporting their contributions to this project and will also be respectful and truthful while commenting on the work done by their peers.

**Pressure:** There is a pressure to produce deliverables and to perform as well as other project members, in order to reach the goal of building a social-professional networking site for CPS teachers.

**Risk:** There is a risk that we will take credit for others' work, in an attempt to seem more impressive before the team.

**Risk:** There is a risk that we will create strife among ourselves because of the desire to produce an impressive product and succeed individually.

**Measure:** Any project member who notices such behavior should report to the other project members or the project leader, depending upon the severity of the offense made.

## **Layer 7: Moral and Spiritual Values**

**Canon:** We will behave morally in every aspect of this project by adhering to the general rules of integrity and honesty. We will also attempt to ensure that our final product does not disregard any particular group's moral or spiritual values, be it through our own work or the materials posted by the community of users.

**Pressure:** There is a pressure to create a successful social-professional networking site for Chicago Public School teachers by the end of the Spring 2008 semester.

**Risk:** There is a risk that in an attempt to complete our project, we will ignore the moral and spiritual values of the users and/or our fellow project members.

**Risk:** There is a risk of users misusing the forums or unintentionally posting material that is offensive to individuals of a certain race, gender, color, religion, or national origin.

**Pressure:** There is a pressure to monitor the forums, in order to ensure that no users' moral or spiritual values are grossly offended or disregarded.

**Measure:** Every employee will be shown a video on workplace discrimination based on race, gender, color, religion, or national origin.