

# IPRO Ethics Reflective Report

(Ross Hill)

In an IPRO, ethical issues that would be faced in an actual professional situation are fully present and need to be accounted for. In my IPRO, 347, there are a number of ethical challenges that are present; ones relating to the interaction between team members and ones relating to the nature of the project in general. I am a part of the mechanical automation team within my IPRO and my team and I are tasked with automating a process that is currently done manually. Information is key to my team's efforts to accomplish our goal but its generation, use, and dissemination can give rise to some ethical difficulties.

Even in the interaction of my teammates and I, dealing with information can give rise to potential ethical issues between team members. It is important for us to be honest about where information came from, both among ourselves and when discussing our info with others. When one of our teammates comes up with an idea for our project, if they got it from somewhere else, they need to say from where they got it and, if they came up with the idea themselves, they need to receive credit for their idea from the rest of the team. This is both in keeping with the professional standards for engineers as laid out in the National Society of Professional Engineer's (NSPE) code of ethics: not passing off someone else's work as your own, and in keeping with the general standard of giving others the respect for their ideas like you want them to show for yours. Also, when I or another teammate is giving a report to our whole IPRO, we need to give credit to the teammates who developed ideas or physical items so that their contribution can be made known. It is important to give credit where credit is due so that all team members feel acknowledged and so that an environment of idea stealing and mistrust is not built up between my teammates and I. By giving credit where it is due and being honest about the source of our information, we can build a team environment that is fair, equitable, and honest. However, our team doesn't just deal with information within our own circle.

There are inherent ethical challenges in dealing with our client and the information that they are willing to provide. When my team visited our client, we were allowed to see many confidential machines and processes that our client uses to operate their business. We were required to sign confidentiality agreements before we were allowed to see anything so that our client felt comfortable giving us the information that we needed to do our job. It is important that my team treat all information that we receive from our client as confidential so that our professional relationship remains strong and so that we act at the level of professionalism that is expected of engineers. The NSPE code of ethics states that an engineer must not divulge any information from any client or from his employer without prior, written permission. We as a

team need to hold to this directive so that we can continue to receive the information we need from the company while not endangering our client's ability to remain competitive in their market. We need to keep our technical information between ourselves, the client, and any future continuation of our IPRO. By doing so, we will be operating at the highest degree of professionalism possible (in terms of our handling of information) and we will represent well both ourselves and our university.