Case of the Killer Robot

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Description

A synopsis and index of the documents in the Case of the Killer Robot, a detailed hypothetical scenario that combines elements of software engineering and computer ethics. The case consists of several FICTIONAL newspaper articles.

Body

The Case of the Killer Robot is a detailed scenario that combines elements of software engineering and computer ethics.

The scenario consists of fictitious articles that touch on specific issues in software engineering and computer ethics. The articles discuss programs such as programmer psychology, team dynamics, user interfaces, software process models, software testing, the nature of requirements, software theft, and privacy. A major consideration is "when is the software good enough?"

The articles in the scenario begin with the indictment for manslaughter of a programmer who wrote faulty code that caused the death of a robot operator. Slowly, over the course of many articles, students are introduced to factors within the software company that also contributed to the accident. They are shown software development as a social process. It is hoped that students will begin to realize the complexity of the task of building real-world software and to see some of the ethical issues intertwined in that complexity.

This scenario is about 70 pages long and includes some tongue-in-cheek humor.

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Discipline(s)

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