



IEEE Cases 1999 - Intensive Care

Author(s)

Stephen H. Unger

Year

1999

Description

A fictionalized case about a software engineer whose job was threatened for disagreeing with management about cutting back on testing.

Body

George Ames, a young software engineer worked for a hospital computer department. He was assigned to work with the people in the intensive care unit (ICU). The computer group was working on the interface between a piece of commercial data processing software and various units in the ICU, including real-time patient monitoring devices.

From the manager down, the computer group was not technically up to the mark in experience or in education. They were falling significantly behind schedule. George learned that they were seriously considering cutting back on testing in order to close the schedule gap. Appalled at this idea, George argued strongly against it. In this case, his arguments had some effect, but he was nevertheless given the clear impression that his prospects with this organization were now significantly impaired. Apparently, part of the problem had to do with a reluctance on the part of higher management to clash with the physician who headed the computer group. George felt that the basic problem was incompetence and he did not see how he

could be effective on his own in combating it.

Notes

Author: Stephen H. Unger, Columbia University.

Presented at the OEC International Conference on Ethics in Engineering and Computer Science, March 1999.

Rights

Use of Materials on the OEC

Resource Type

Case Study / Scenario

Topics

Collaboration

Employer/Employee Relationships

Safety

Workplace Ethics

Discipline(s)

Computer Sciences

Computer, Math, and Physical Sciences