

AD SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF TECHNOLOGISTS
WHISTLE BLOWING

Technologists are employees of private companies or government agencies. As such they owe allegiance to their employers. But they are also ^{professionals} citizens and, as such, they have the responsibility of "blowing the whistle", i.e. objecting and even going public, if they become involved in projects ^{that are technically flawed or} likely to hurt the public interest. In fact about one in ten of the engineers asked in one survey (Westin 1986) reported that, within the past two years, they had had to object ^{on moral grounds} to some work or practice of their corporation. However, only a few bring such matters to the public attention, and when they do so they can be expected to be fired; only four states in the US have passed laws protecting "whistle blowers" from reprisals.

Westin, A. (1986) Professional and ethical dissent. Technology in Society 8:335-339.

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