Introduction

For your first writing assignment, you will be investigating the case of The Gamma Group, the developer of a software exploit tool for remote computer monitoring called *FinFisher*. *FinFisher* is an advanced spyware tool that can read encrypted files, intercept emails and eavesdrop on voice over IP calls. Use of *FinFisher* has been implicated in human rights violations in countries around the globe, including Egypt, Bahrain, and Ethiopia.

Start by reading the links provided below to familiarize yourself with the facts. The first three links in particular will give you basic facts about the software, the impact this technology has on its victims, and a response from the company to their critics. Based on the readings and any research you care to do on your own, you should form your own opinion about who should be held morally responsible for the abuses of this software. **Do your best to make a logical and professional argument about who you believe should be held responsible and why.** In the course of your argument, you should address the following questions:

- Did the developers intend for the software to be used this way?
- Did you find Muench’s responses to Gallagher’s inquires satisfactory? Why or why not?
- What ethical concerns do surveillance tools like *FinFisher* present? Are any of them novel?
- Section 1.3.2 of the textbook describes James Moor’s notions of “policy vacuums” (when no explicit policies are in place to cope with a new technology) and “conceptual muddles” (when a new technology blurs the lines between what were traditionally distinct ideas.) What policy vacuums and conceptual muddles are involved in this technology? Can you think of a way to resolve them?
- As computer professionals, how should we respond to this situation? Do you think the actions of The Gamma Group reflect negatively on our industry?

References:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FinFisher
http://notes.rjgallagher.co.uk/2013/03/gamma-finspy-surveillance-ethics-martin-muench.html
http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/sep/16/wikileaks-finfisher-files-malware-surveillance