

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO
Mechanical Engineering

IE 446
Problem Set #12

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Due: 26 Apr 2000

Reading: http://www.mojones.com/mother_jones/S077/dowie.html

The URL above contains an article that appeared in Mother Jones in 1977 about the Ford Pinto, one of the more famous cases of engineering design, ethics, and cost-benefit analysis. Please read the article and answer these questions:

Consider three points of view: the point of view of Ford management, the point of view of Ford engineers, and the point of the view of the writers of the article. (If you think there are other important points of view, feel free to include them as well). What do you think each of these groups of people would call “Quality”? Given their points of view, was the Pinto a “high-quality” car? Can you say that anyone was right or wrong? Should anyone have behaved differently? Do you think your answers would be different if I had assigned an article written by someone in Ford management?

Please answer the questions in a coherent essay, NOT one question at a time. (I didn’t number the questions, neither should you). This assignment is worth a full 20 points. You get full points for turning in anything that makes me believe you thought about the problem, but only if you bring it to class on Wed. April 26, or get it to me before class begins.