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Letters to the Editor - Engineering moniker - the sequel

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by Reader

Regarding Stephen MacLean's letter (see July 5 CC, p. 16), Mr. MacLean's statement that the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE) is "within its rights . . . to restrict the title of software engineer to those with an accredited professional engineering degree and registration" would be detrimental to society.

We, too, believe safety should be a factor in software engineering. However, enforced measures to restrict the practice of software engineering to professional engineers could harm the public by excluding vital software systems expertise and skills that thousands of IT professionals possess.

IT professionals have a right to practise. It is a misunderstanding that CCPE has control over the term "software engineering." CCPE has control over the term "professional engineer." In fact, software engineering originated in computer science and developed connections to engineering much later.

Beyond the terminology issue, we believe the required components for restricting the right to practise in software development do not currently exist. The development of a universally recognized body of knowledge and standards of practice is critical to managing a licensing process. A rush to license this emerging discipline without these components would have negative effects on the public.

Our goal for the Canadian economy and on behalf of all IT professionals is to work for a mutually beneficial solution, much like other countries have already done. A joint accrediting body would be better positioned to ensure continuing innovation in this emerging discipline, while supporting the need to protect the public.

CIPS appreciates the strong support it has received from the IT industry and thanks companies such as Microsoft Canada, which has recently made public its stance on this issue. CIPS will continue to defend the rights of IT professionals and encourage CCPE to work amicably with us to resolve this issue quickly and fairly.

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