

Tim, a graduate student in applied mathematics, is hired as a consultant to a large industrial project in image processing for CT scans (identifying tumors, etc.). He is asked to write some fairly straightforward code that implements optimization routines that will be part of a software package. He's happy to have the work (they pay well) and he completes the work in a few weeks. A year later he is working on his thesis and resurrects the code that he wrote for the consulting project and finds a problem, a bug in the code. It turns out that in a very few cases the solutions he finds are just plain wrong, but most of the time it works perfectly. He has heard that the project has gone commercial and it is possible that his code is part of it. Should Tim contact the company that hired him and point out the bug?

1. No. He was hired to do a job and he did it. All software has has a few bugs, right?
2. No. It's likely that his code never made it into the final version.
3. Yes. However unlikely it may be, his mistakes may affect something as important as identifying tumors!
4. Tim should get a copy of the code and attempt to test it himself to see if it may be a problem, then decide what to do.
5. Other?