

Lab Exercise #9
Computer Ethics- Intellectual Property Rights and Privacy
Computer Science 2334

Your Name: _____

~~Group Members:~~ This exercise is to be completed individually.

Learning Objectives:

- To be able to analyze ethical situations.
- To be able to make ethical judgments based on intellectual property concepts, the consequences of different approaches to intellectual property, and existing legal instruments that protect intellectual property.
- To be able to make ethical judgments based on privacy issues and the consequences of different approaches to privacy.
- To demonstrate your understanding of intellectual property, privacy, and computer ethics through the analysis of several case studies.

Instructions:

Read the case studies included in this lab exercise. Develop and write a response of a few sentences for each case study that addresses the exercise posed at the end of the case study scenario.

You should consider the principles of a professional organization relevant to CS when answering these questions. As discussed in email, it is your responsibility to locate a code of ethics from a relevant professional organization to use in the completion of this lab.

Use only the space provided for each scenario for your response.

You should spend approximately 15-20 minutes per scenario.

Once you have completed the exercises in this document, you will submit this lab exercise handout for grading.

At the end of lab, the entire class will discuss these scenarios and the various responses developed by the students.

The cases in this lab exercise were dreamed up by Prof. Hougen. Any similarities to any persons, living or dead, are purely coincidental.

Scenario 1. (Hypothetical)

Jim needed to take some general elective courses for his college degree program, so he enrolled in “Semiotics, elucidation, and relational meaning in Mother Goose stories” which was being offered by the School of Semiology at his university. He had no idea what the course was about but it fit his schedule. The course involved 12 written assignments on which Jim did well and, now that the semester is almost over, he expects to receive a ‘B’ grade in the course (although he still has no idea what the course was about).

Today is the last day of class, and the professor teaching the course has just announced that all of the students’ written assignments in the course have been uploaded to “CopyingSeach.com” which the professor explains as follows:

CopyingSearch.com is an online service to which this university subscribes. CopyingSearch attempts to detect plagiarism by comparing newly uploaded materials to previously uploaded materials as well as materials available on the web. It will then present the person uploading the material with a report comparing the uploaded material with similar materials CopyingSearch has managed to locate, if any. CopyingSearch.com will keep copies of all uploaded materials for use in future searches.

The professor then goes on to explain that she is sick and tired of plagiarism and will review all reports returned by CopyingSearch and, if any show signs of plagiarism, she will charge the student who has submitted the assignment with academic misconduct.

Jim is outraged. He argues that it is theft of his intellectual property to provide copies of his written assignments to CopyingSearch.com, which CopyingSearch will use to make money by charging subscribers to compare new materials to Jim's materials. Jim says that, at the least, he should be paid for the use of his assignments.

Exercises.

Find at least one ethical principle from a professional code of ethics that is relevant to this scenario. List the principle, **give its source**, and *explain* why you think it is relevant.

Say whether you think the professor teaching this course is abiding by the principle you listed and *explain* how you came to that conclusion.

Give one likely motivation for the actions of the professor and *explain* how you concluded that was a likely motivation.

Explain how the professor could improve her ethical decision making.

Response (Scenario 1):

Scenario 2. (Hypothetical)

Prof. McMinn is grading projects near the end of the semester when he hears a knock on the door. He opens the door to find a woman standing there who says, “I am Mrs. Schmidhuber. My daughter Laura is in your class. I am very worried about her. She is terribly upset about the low scores you have given her because, if she gets a bad grade in this course, it could cause her to lose her scholarship. And then where will she be? She is really distraught about this. I mean, she is really torn up. I don’t believe that you have given appropriate consideration to her circumstances, I mean in terms of make-up work or deadlines or things like that.”

Prof. McMinn is taken aback. “Mrs. Schmidhuber,” he says, “I’m sorry that Laura is so upset. She always seems fine when she’s in class. I mean, I know she wasn’t pleased with the score on her midterm but she still seemed upbeat – she said she knew she could do better on the final. I’m sure she will – she’s done so well on the homeworks since then! And, as for my consideration of her circumstances, I can assure that I have taken every appropriate action. Disability services told me to give her extra time on her exams and to allow her to take them in a quiet room they have, so I did. That is what *they* told *me*. *I’m* not an expert on ADD. *They* are! And Laura was fine with that. She told me that it wasn’t the room or the time that was the problem. It was her boyfriend. That is what she told me. I can’t really give extensions for something like that. People distract each other. She should have told him she was too busy.”

Exercises.

Find at least one ethical principle from a professional code of ethics that is relevant to this scenario. List the principle, **give its source**, and *explain* why you think it is relevant.

Say whether you think Prof. McMinn abided by the principle you listed and *explain* how you came to that conclusion.

Give one likely motivation for Prof. McMinn's actions and *explain* how you concluded that was a likely motivation.

Explain how Prof. McMinn could improve his ethical decision making.

Response (Scenario 2):

