

Intellectual Property Rights

The United States and a ^{(significant) #} handful of other countries enforce what is known as intellectual property rights. These rights safeguard individuals and companies from theft of their inventions, ideas, literary works, etc. Outside of basic ethical conduct, the countries that choose to protect intellectual property do so to stimulate economic growth through company investments in new technology, jobs, and opportunities. Currently, the act of violating intellectual property rights is becoming quite common ^{place?}. Some violations may be considered minor, such as "ripping" a few songs from the internet. Other more serious violations could include stealing circuit designs from engineering firms. A good question to ask is ^(?) where does the conception of these unethical thoughts begin? I believe the answer may lie in where it all began, educational institutions.

The issue at hand in many educational facilities is the unauthorized copying and redistribution of documents such as homework and test solutions. Although this is known to happen from grade school ^(and?), it becomes more critical when it occurs in collegiate academia. If students conduct this behavior while they are getting their education, how will they act when confronted with a problem in the working world? They will do either one of two things: realize they should have discovered the benefits of learning to think for themselves and find a new career path or do as they always did, *and* use someone else's idea. When or if this happens, this individual will probably think

back to the first time he ^{agreement} decided to take the easy way out and realize their choice had unforeseen consequences.

There is no question about it, cheating is wrong, and it happens to be one of the fundamental basics of ethical decisions. Although it isn't obvious at the time, cheating primarily affects the guilty. If the cheating occurs on a homework assignment, the evidence will be brought forth upon examination. If the unauthorized document is a test solution, then the student won't acquire a good understanding of the material. This will become apparent when ^{agreement} they arrive at their first job and then affect the ^{agreement} employer who has lost time and money in their new investment.

When the moment comes, the student has the right to accept or reject such documents, for it is purely ^{agree} their choice and their personal view on ethics. However, it is ^{agreement} their obligation in following codes of ethics, especially in the field of engineering, not to do so. By rejection and taking the right path, the student is not only benefiting themselves, but quite possibly the lives of other individuals. These responsibilities not only apply to the student accepting, but also the individual who is distributing. This person has the right to make the option available, but should also be aware of the poor character he is displaying.

Universities should also feel obligated to make aware the consequences of cheating to students. ^(Many) Most institutions try to do this by developing an honor code ^(in to) which students should abide. To guard against students who have cheated their way through the system, employers should perform thorough background checks and interviews to ensure they are hiring ~~is~~ the right person.

effect on other students, faculty, institution?

many don't; it was relatively rare until very recently

Now that the effects have been brought forth, the question is what can be done to try and solve this problem. Unfortunately, the lure of cheating will always exist. There are people who ^{agreement} either don't care or think about the consequences. An obvious, and ultimately naïve, solution would be to eliminate the solutions that are circulating throughout the student body. The truth is, if answers can't be found from student to student, then ^{agreement} it can be found on the internet. I feel the most effective way would be to model good virtues and judgment. This solution can be carried out by simply saying, "No thanks," when offered the chance. Hopefully, this will cause the individual to reflect on the matter and plant a seed of virtue in their head. The next time someone offers them the solutions to the next "Electronics One" assignment, they will also say, "No," and cause ^a ripple effect.

How does all of this relate back to intellectual property rights? In a sense, by deciding not to take the easy way out, you are protecting the intellectual property right of yourself and others. By enforcing the idea of using unauthorized documents as unethical, it may ^(???) instantiate throughout society ^(to begin) a wider spectrum of people who think for themselves and not rely on other peoples' work.

intro/facts 2
 affected parties 1
 consequences 2
 duties 3
 virtue 3 (primarily a virtue issue of few affected parties)
 solution 2

maybe
 "create throughout society a wider spectrum..."

Lots of agreement errors.
 Easily fixed if you pay attention: make your hypothetical students either plural or gendered!
 writing 3 → 1

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