

# LEGAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES IN ICT

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# Introduction

- The rapid rise of technology has raised a host of legal and ethical issues that are unique to the 21st century.
- Material on the internet is protected by copyright.
- There is no legal right to copy other people's work or make it public on the internet.
- As information technology becomes increasingly influential, the ethical and legal considerations become similarly relevant.
- Advances in communication technology have outpaced the development of accompanying legal standards and ethics codes.

# Ethical and legal issues confronting ICT

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with what is considered to be right or wrong. Following are some issues:

1. Privacy
2. Digital Ownership
3. Data Gathering
4. Security Liability
5. Access Costs

# Privacy

- Most people have their personal data spread throughout the digital world.
- Even things thought to be secure, such as email or private accounts, can be accessed by unintended sources.
- Privacy has evolving legal implications, but there are also ethical considerations.
- Do people know how their accounts are monitored?
- To what extent is such monitoring occurring?

# Digital Ownership

- Digital mediums have allowed information to flow more freely than before.
- Legal and ethical backlash.
- Things can be easily copied and pasted online, which makes intellectual property hard to control.
- Legal notions such as copyright have struggled to keep up with the digital era.
- Music and entertainment industries have pushed for greater legal protections.
- other activists have sought to provide greater freedoms for the exchange of ideas in the digital realm.

# Data Gathering

- Everyone knows that their online lives are monitored.
- The United States has even passed legislation allowing the government to actively monitor private citizens in the name of national security.
- debate about what information can be gathered and why.
- Do people know what information is being monitored?
- Do they have a right to know how their data is being used?

# Security Liability

- Security systems for digital networks are computerized in order to protect vital information and important assets.
- this increased security comes with increased surveillance.
- it is a question of what risks are acceptable and what freedoms can be forfeited.
- IT professionals need to balance risk with freedom to create a security system that is effective and ethical at the same time.

# Access Costs

- Proponents want the Internet to remain open to everyone while some businesses want to create tiered access for those who are willing to pay.
- The issue even extends to private Internet usage since the cost of service in some areas may be cost prohibitive.
- The larger ethical question is whether or not digital exchange is now a universal right.
- The cost of access can impede business growth, entrepreneurial spirit and individual expression.



# Ethical practices

- Plagiarism – copying material without attributing or referencing the source of the information.
- This could also involve using websites which sell essays or coursework.
- Sending spam (i.e., the same advertising to millions of people) – people waste time deleting spam if the spam filter allows it through.
- Companies monitoring staff use of the Internet and .
- Some organizations will even read personals.
- Using someone's wireless Internet connection without permission.
- Sometimes it is possible to connect to the Internet using an open network. The net result of using the network is to slow the network down for legitimate users.

# Accuracy of Information

- There is no guarantee that any information on the Internet is accurate or true.
- Some web sites giving medical advice have been known to give wrong information but they are not held liable.
- Magazines can write untrue stories.
- Individuals can spread malicious rumors about people.

# Censorship

- No-one owns the Internet.
- It is international.
- Material which would be illegal if published in hard copy form is freely available on the Internet e.g. racist propaganda, bomb making instructions, pornography.
- Some say the Internet should be censored but who will do the censoring and how can centralised control be implemented.
- If you ban sites will they become more appealing so people will search for them more avidly

# Moral issues

- Spreading rumors – it is easy to spread rumors using the Internet.
- When rumors are started over the Internet it is difficult to identify the person responsible.
- Inappropriate websites – people are able to view inappropriate material such as pornography, racism, violent videos, how to make explosives, etc.
- Bullying – in chat rooms, by , in blogs, by text message is a problem especially for the young.
- Deliberately setting up websites containing incorrect information – people may rely on and use this information thinking it is correct.