

## IS 628: Computer-based Information Systems

### Reading Preparation Assignment

### Chapter 15

### Social, Ethical, and Legal Issues

---

Read Chapter 15 of the text, pp. 575 – 591.

Be prepared for class discussion based on the following questions:

1. Describe the services provided by a credit reporting service such as Experian, Equifax, and TransUnion. How are these services provided?
2. Suppose you are the victim of an identity thief who continues to use your identity and to ruin your credit rating after you have discovered the problem. What problems do you have in clearing your name? How could the laws be changed to help you in this process?
3. What do U.S. laws require a financial company to do in regard to sharing information that it has collected on its customers?
4. What do we mean by “intellectual property”? What are the differences between intellectual property and real property? Should someone be able to own intellectual property? Why or why not?
5. What is the difference between a copyright and a patent on a computer program?
6. The RIAA asserts that downloading copyrighted music on the Internet without paying for it is stealing, but lots of people are doing it. Is this ethical? Why or why not? If this is not ethical, why are so many people doing it?
7. The U.S. Patent Office is granting patents on computer processes such as Amazon’s “one-click ordering.” Should patents be granted on such computer-supported business processes? Why or why not?
8. In reference to a company sharing information that it has collected about a customer, what is meant by “opt-in”? By “opt-out”? In your opinion, which of these is preferable?
9. In the United States, information that a company collects about the customer is legally the company’s property. In the European Union, this information is the individual’s property. Explain why there is this difference in the legal treatment of this information.
10. Some people believe that “access to computers should be unlimited and total” and that “all information should be free.” Do you agree with these statements? Why or why not?
11. In your opinion, what is the most important social issue raised by the pervasiveness of IT? Why? How can society best deal with this issue?
12. In order to protect against terrorists, the U.S. government is collecting more and more data on individuals into comprehensive databases. Have you any concerns about this? Why or why not?
13. Although this practice might invade individual privacy, many companies use IT to measure the quality and quantity of an employee’s work. Discuss the ethical implications of this practice.