

Running head: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY EDUCATION IN SCHOOL

Stop Piracy with Edification:
Intellectual Property Education in School

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The global population is showing substantial disregard for intellectual property. As children, they practice the production of illegal music copies for friends and family and engage in plagiarism. Adults commit in addition software piracy, the purchasing of pirated video, and various other copyright violations. The utter disregard of such works and creativity is stumping innovation and stems from the lack of adequate intellectual property education. As an academic course counselor, I propose that elementary, middle, and high schools introduce Intellectual Property Education in to their current curriculum. This would effectively and noticeably decrease copyright infringement and would promote a sense of appreciation for creation. Yet, copyright laws and trusted systems should still be in position to prevent further encroachment.

The total copyright industry gross domestic product (GDP) of the U.S. in 2001 was \$791.2 billion to include core, partial, distribution, and copyright-related components (Siwek 10). Of that figure, \$9.5 billion is estimated to be the U.S. trade loss due to international copyright piracy (IIPA 2). This enormous amount represents the major victim of copyright violations: the American economy and consequently the American people and worldwide economy suffer. Students fail to realize that copyright infringement is not a victim-less crime and that it is destructive to both the financial and information economy. They carry such beliefs throughout their lives unless they are educated with proper information concerning intellectual property and reminded of the victims that would ensue. The Intellectual Property Education program I suggest would definitively place faces on the victims of breaching copyright law.

Students are afraid to cite material in their compositions because they either don't know how to or they believe that they will receive less a grade if they cite another's work. With the electronic emergence of the World Wide Web (WWW), there has been greater and easier access to information and the opportunity to copy material has largely increased by the simple "copy-paste" method. The Intellectual Property Education component would contain subsections to include proper citation and the negative effects of plagiarism, thereby promoting the use of reference, valuing and respecting other's and their own ideas, and hindering plagiarism from entering their papers. The students would be able to apply the same theories to other intellectual property and make correlation with harmful effects of abusing and infringing those properties.

Most children who copy and "burn" music CD's for distribution to family and friends do not realize the wrongdoing they have committed nor do they understand that they have violated the law. Although, a small portion of students know at some degree that their actions are unlawful, educating them on the enduring consequences of impudence for intellectual property rights would hamper their illegal activities. An integral section of Intellectual Property Education should focus on the legal aspects and critical points that affect them, such as the history and tenure of copyright, the constitutional prose that delegates authority to the U.S. Congress for intellectual property law, the historic and current protection of intellectual property owners internationally, and the legal implications that could follow violations. Opposition may contend that the "court battles" of today may confuse students, but it would provide opportunity to teach the students briefly of the legal system and roles of different governing bodies within a nation. In the course of teaching of ethics, piracy, infringement, plagiarism, trusted systems, and violations, you would ultimately teach them to respect creation, both theirs and others. The key emphasis of the entire Intellectual Property Education program should be to illustrate the foundation of intellectual property law – the

advancement of the general public through progression of knowledge by enriching the conception and allocation of a wide selection of works.

When a child with proper intellectual property education thinks of burning a CD music or downloading copyrighted music from the Internet (via the numerous means available), he will be reminded of first and foremost the moral problems that would ensue and next, if even necessary, the legal implications. Currently, the students lack knowledge about intellectual property and make inappropriate decisions when it comes to the ethical use of computers in their lives. In a recent international study, over 20% of middle-schoolers in both the U.S. and China believe they have the right to obtain illegal software (Cui 22). Over 30% believe they have the “understandable and normal” right to copy software (Cui 23). A significant margin exist between self-reported knowledge on intellectual property compared to their actual examination scores on this subject indicating over 80% of students have not even heard of intellectual property and notably intellectual property protection (Cui 51). These findings show that students are not knowledgeable of intellectual property, how unethical it is to violate copyrights, what is meant by authorized and fair use, and the value of their own work. These noticeable computer ethical problems are encountered when students are actually learning computer uses and functions. If they are shown that copying software or music is a normal and understandable practice (as indicated by the statistics of the study), especially when they are in the process of being educated on the means of performing such acts (the computer and Internet), they will assume that performing these activities are typical and proper. But, until educators in schools represent otherwise with Intellectual Property Education in schools increasing peer and social sanctions against infringement, this awful practice and train-of-thought will continue to flourish.

When students reach the point of valuing their original ideas and recognize creativity, they are encouraged to use their talents and compose unique material. During the Intellectual Property Education at school, healthy and active discussions would stimulate individual input, acceptance of the intellectual property concept, and understanding that defiance does lead to consequences, victims, and harm. Educators will track down specifically the financial ladder from the time a musician composes a music CD, to the recording process, contractual agreements, managerial duties, mass distribution, and promotional advertising. The educationalist will then demonstrate the impact a child burning a CD has upon each and every member of the ladder to include the general public. The overall magnitude of the impact must be expressed because a single child's piracy is not momentous; their collective piracy affects the economy and finances of the individuals involved in the specified industry.

The Intellectual Property Education curriculum should seek to provide the rationale for copyright holders' exclusive rights for a particular time period. Teaching the students of the incentive to creators and that eventually the material will be distributed widely in the public domain is essential. All intellectual property at last becomes a part of the world's resources. This promotion of innovation will diminish copyright infringement and as these individuals grow older, they are better able to utilize their originality to produce personal and commercial revenue and wealth. The ideology would then perpetuate in the general arena and be passed generation to generation, thereby decreasing the level of exclusive rights contravention.

The structure of elementary and middle- and high-school (secondary) education is dramatically different. As students progress from an general elementary school where a single teacher perhaps with a co-teacher instruct the entire class throughout the day, middle and high school education is taught subject to subject (usually six courses a term) by different teachers (as in colleges). On the elementary level, instructors should teach their students on

intellectual property as single component of the general curriculum once a semester. In secondary education, intellectual property can either be a component of a course (for instance, National History and Academic Reading & Writing) or an entire course itself. Schools who employ the former option of an Intellectual Property component in a larger single course should dedicate a decent portion because of the great projected discussions involved. Larger schools can better utilize Intellectual Property Education as an individual course, if they make it mandatory for student participation. In fact, when I design courses for Branford Grove School, I include Intellectual Property Education in both formats (component and individual courses) and they all been approved by the University of California course accreditation system.

Oversimplification of the intellectual property message is a dangerous approach that obscures the authentic and legitimate discussions of the scope of copyright law. In a society that respects intellectual property, copyright laws and its enforcement should be the principal means of actively thwarting piracy, and the reliance of trusted systems (hardware and/or software that attempts to prevent piracy that is eventually rendered ineffective) is decreased.

The lack of education concerning intellectual property has lead to infringement, disrespect for other's ideas, nearly ten billion dollars of U.S. financial loss, and worst of all, the hindrance of creativity and ingenuity. Childhood plays a large role in copyright violations, and many students do not even know the crimes and wrongdoing they commit while performing piracy. The immersion of Intellectual Property Education into the course curriculum of elementary, middle, and high schools will promote innovation and successfully reduce infraction. Students would become conscious of the basic doctrine and ethical standards of intellectual property law. More contributions and deposits to the information age would result, instead of mere removals and withdrawals. Intellectual Property Education in schools may not hinder the performance of commercial pirates; however, with trusted systems and copyright laws, it would in due course deter infringement.

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