

Summary of ethics and plagiarism



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Ethics of Using Information It's 2007 and we have so much information available at our disposal. With just a few clicks of the computer keyboard, we have a vast amount of websites, documents, blogs, dictionaries, journals, articles, etc. With so much information available ethics (correct conduct when using this information) comes into play. One of the most common issues is Plagiarism. Plagiarism is when one uses another's information and/or ideas without properly citing and crediting that person.

Plagiarism can be done intentionally or unintentionally. Examples of serious plagiarism are allowing someone to write a paper for you, using a paid service to write your document, and borrowing sentences and sentence structures from a document. All of these are a clear breach of ethical academic conduct and would be considered cheating. It is important to cite where you got the information and use proper citation when doing this to avoid committing the act of plagiarism.

Copyright laws are put into place so that one cannot copy or reproduce another's work without their permission. A person that obtains a copyright owns the right to control who makes copies and can even sell and license this right. A person may pay to buy this right and use your copyrighted material. There are distinctive guidelines as to what is and isn't copyrightable and how to go about the process of copyrighting your idea or creative work.

An example of a copyright law violation would be to reproduce a CD without the artist's permission. This is a very common violation and punishment can be hefty fines and even imprisonment. More and more the music industry is

cracking down on people that reproduce and download copyrighted material. Ethics of information used to be primarily focused on library but has since spilled over into such as computer information, media, journalism and internet.

Other Ethical concerns that come into play are censorship, privacy, access to information, balance in collection development, copyright and fair use. While we do have freedom of speech, we do not have the right to take another's words and use them as our own or use inappropriate content for that which it is intended for. Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*. New York, 1992, Templeton, Brad A brief intro to Copyright. Online. .. Richard J. Severson, *The principles of information ethics* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997).