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IP is intellectual property created by a person or a group from an idea, put in a concrete form which is usable in some way. IP needs to be protected by law because it tends to be copied by people for their own gain, which is unethical since a lot of effort has been put into it and it is unfair to use someone else’s labour for one’s gain without paying for it. On the other hand, ideas need to be made public for it to develop further for society’s growth. Also if it is made available without fuss to certain sections of society, there is a possibility of less infringement on IP.

## What is Intellectual Property?

Intellectual property (IP) refers to properties that is created by a person or a group of people for some particular purpose. It is generated from the mind and is given a particular form. IP includes books, paintings, drawings, musical audio or video cds, lectures, and movies. On the internet it includes graphics, audio and video files, web designs, web pages, articles, designs and of course the software.

## Why is IP thought to be a good thing?

IP is thought to be a good thing because like tangible things, when someone robs an idea or a design, or a web page or some designs from a web page or a software, which has been created by a person or a group of persons, it amounts to be a crime and is punishable by law. This protection from the law is a deterrent for the thief and a motivation for the creator. Imagine if IP is not protected, what can happen to people who put in hours, days, months and years to develop a software and it gets copied by unscrupulous people! Nobody will be bother to put their innovations for the public on the net, and people in general will suffer the loss of useful innovations and inventions.

## How is Intellectual Property different from tangible property?

Intellectual property is different from tangible property in the sense that, tangible property is easier to protect as it can be put under lock and key or can be secured by people or safety guards. IP is created and is kept in virtual world and is difficult to protect because it exist in virtual world and it is complicated to keep a tab on it. The traffic on the net and the information explosion has made it all the more difficult to keep IP from unauthorized use.

## Why are there special problems with the ownership of computer programs?

There are special problems with computer programs because they are developed with much struggle. When one has put so much hard work in it, it is not fair that someone else copies it and uses it for his/her own advantage. Also, one idea generates a horde of new ideas, then it is difficult to determine whether the copier is only inspired by the original idea and has developed his own program. No one can stop anyone from being ‘ inspired’! So it tricky to draw a line between theft and inspiration.

## Under what circumstance if any is the copying of computer software morally wrong?

When the computer software is copied before the original designer has made enough profit on the design, it is morally wrong to copy the idea and develop one’s own program.

Has protection of proprietary software gone too far? If so what are the implications for innovation and competition in the computer industry? How can we achieve an appropriate balance between those who hold legal rights to proprietary information and ordinary users who wish to access, share and communicate that information?

Sometimes these laws go too far in protecting IP. If this goes on than it would be difficult for the growth of Computer industry. The laws that govern the IP protection are doing adequate job of protecting IP. But too much protection hinders growth. The best way would be to let the common man have access to software’s which are useful for him to get on in his day to day work on the net. Students should be allowed to have access to software’s that assist them in organization of their course content and aid them in achieving their goal. The laws should be acted upon in such a way that the violator is punished, but common man should feel threatened. May be after a certain period when the innovator has made enough profit, the common man is allowed to use the software for free so that all the people can benefit from the innovations. Big players in the field should develop programmes for students and housewives for

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