

Article questions

[Technology](#), [Information Technology](#)



1. What is the main argument (thesis) of this article? The main argument of the thesis is contained at the end of the first paragraph of the article, that is, “ Government should devise regulations that can be applied across law-enforcement jurisdictions and national boundaries, in order to make the Internet more secure.” (Mann & Belzley, 2009, p. 1)

2. Is there a problem with the authors’ main thesis? Do the authors, in this article, reach all the destinations for which they originally set out?

The problem with the authors’ main thesis is that they implicitly assume the ability to effect law enforcement measures across various jurisdictions and boundaries is solely within the capability of the government. On the contrary, this could only be realized by bilateral and multilateral agreements with the governments of other countries, because U. S. law is not automatically recognized and enforceable in other countries. By ignoring the realities of this important point, the authors therefore were unable to thresh out all the concerns surrounding their arguments that would make their thesis viable.

3. What are the differences between verifiable facts and the authors’ values/opinions?

Facts are concrete data or pieces of information that are observable with the senses or verifiable and capable of corroboration from authoritative sources such as books, encyclopedias, or institutional databases. Facts that are verified are held to be absolute truths that are incontestable. Opinions, on the other hand, are products of subjective perceptions and personal judgements, founded on the individual’s values, which may or may not ring true with other people with a different set of values and different perspectives. Opinions may be validated if sufficient facts are offered in

support of the opinion. Without facts, however, the opinion remains invalidated and lacking in authority sufficient to be relied upon.

4. Are the authors' assumptions valid? Why or why not?

In the article given, the authors' assumptions cannot be called valid.

Assumptions by themselves are suppositions and require support in terms of facts and other authorities, in order to be accorded credence. This article fails to give any manner of numeric or qualitative data to support its assumptions, nor does it cite authoritative sources for them.

5. What are the biases (stated or unstated) in this article, if any? Explain.

There may be several biases in this article, but two appear to be more dominant. These are:

(1) The article places the proliferation of online pirates and services illegal in the U. S. jurisdiction squarely on the failure of lawmakers to pass stricter regulatory laws; and

(2) The article is likewise biased against internet intermediaries, and takes the fact that they profit from any transaction they facilitate as their motivation for encouraging illegal online activity.

6. What are at least two alternative conclusions to the issue discussed in the article other than what the authors state in the final paragraph?

Two alternative conclusions to the issue presented that the article could have supported are:

(1) That the development of technology and protocols may likewise improve online security. Legislation is not the only solution to internet crime.

(2) Another viable solution is the education of the public as to practices that improve on safety and make piracy more difficult.

Together, these two measures are immediately applicable and may prove to be more effective than a lengthy legislative process that cannot only have indirect effect on individuals. It takes time before implementing regulations that give effect to laws are perfected, by which time the nature and tactics of internet crime may have evolved to a higher or more complex level.

7. Which logical fallacies did you find in the article? Name at least one.

(1) Straw man:

“ Internet intermediaries often play critical roles in the illicit behavior that frustrates regulators. Indeed, Internet intermediaries often profit directly from transactions that effectively would be banned in an offline environment.”

In this statement, the position of internet intermediaries is oversimplified, and its worst possible motive – profit generation – is unduly overemphasized, tending to make the statement misleading.

(2) Ad populum and Post hoc ergo propter hoc:

“ The pirates have arrived on the high seas of the online world and the lack of regulation makes their predations all too easy.”

The statement makes an emotional appeal on the negative implications of “ pirates on the high seas” while at the same time it directly juxtaposes the lack of regulation as the cause. In truth, proliferation of piracy may be addressed by technical means such as constant improvement in software and hardware.

8. While reading the article, did you take anything for granted? Did you believe certain arguments, implications, or conclusions while reading the

article that now, upon further reflection, you realize were questionable?

Explain.

Yes, I initially believed the argument that the government's failure to enact proper laws is the major cause of proliferation of internet crime. However, as the article progressed I realized two things. First, the article makes lots of allegations but gives no specific names, statistics, cases, or details that would convince the reader of its position; instead, instances described proved that Congress has been taking initiatives to address specific problems. Second, there was no examination of the opposing arguments to prove that these are not sufficient barriers to its own thesis, or other alternative solutions besides resort to legislative measures. It is also bothersome that there is no mention of what specific measures the authors would urge Congress to take.

9. From what point of view is the article written? Is it a fair point of view?

Why or why not?

The article is written from the point of view of oppositionists to the government. The article is written with an unfair and imbalanced viewpoint, because it resorts to government bashing with numerous allegations but little factual evidence to support its contention that internet piracy is principally caused by the failure of government legislation. The article is also unfair to internet service providers and other so-called online intermediaries, particularly paypal and ebay which it mentioned by name, because the authors do not present specific factual and verifiable data in support of their allegations. Some statistics and cases presented to irrefutably lead to the conclusion would have substantiated the article's unfounded accusations. In

short, the article is myopic and lacks a holistic perspective.

10. Reflection on the process: What did you learn from this process?

The process of this activity has enlightened me on the subtleties of discourse and debate. All too often we are misled by what appears to be compelling arguments for one position or another, but when we look closely at these arguments, the recognition that they lack factual evidence or that they are biased or unfair often alerts us to the false conclusions we are led to espouse. Because of this exercise, I am more aware of how to understand and judge for myself whether or not arguments tend to clarify or mislead on the issues. I find that the lessons I have learned from this exercise will be of great help to me in more insightfully charting my future personal and professional future.