

# Business law: legal environment and online commerce

Law



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Question # 2: What changes should be made to copyright law to reflect the ease with which much creative material can be reproduced and distributed over the Internet? What concerns are there with any such law?

The US government provides that the law of the country should protect inventions of individual people. Any person involved in copyright or duplicate work without permission of the inventor must be responsible for the action.

There are several laws that govern this issue in the US. For instance, the Criminal Trade Secret Law of 1996 protects any company from losing information illegally to another competing firm. When the coca-cola company filed a case against its competitor Pepsi-cola, the court affirmed to be illegal for Pepsi to gain such knowledge through illegal means (Cheeseman, 2009).

The US patent period states that the inventor has authority to use his invention for twenty years before coming to the public domain. It also identifies that signed patents last for fourteen years. This was done by the court system to harmonize the US patent system with the other nation's patent programs. The American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 incorporated internet and E-commerce business models into patents. This is quite contrary to the former law, which stated that intangible business methods do not fall under the patent category. For example, mathematical signs such as ( $E = mc^2$ ) was among the intangibles. Therefore, it was under those items that cannot be patented. The E-commerce, which uses the computer system and business procedures to produce tangible results, is under tangible patents currently. This makes re-printing or reproducing information through the computer impossible without the author's authority.

The street case that involved Street Bank & Trust Co. with Signature

Financial Group Inc. marked the true journey for the law. Most people and businesses are filing for patents with the relevant office to secure their business models. All the patents that have been under e-commerce and the internet are moving towards that direction. Some of these methods include data processing like accounting, finance, business management areas, electronic shopping, business practice and inventory management. Since this is a new area in law, the PTO office is experiencing setbacks in processing most of the business patents. This indicates the evolution of the patent legal process into the information and technology era.

### Implications

This is quite damaging to a technologically growing world. It is most important to share the available information through the internet. This can easily facilitate faster development in the current computer era. It is not logical to make an invention then entitle it to the owner for twenty or fourteen years (Cheeseman, 2009). This will result into very slow growth of technology and information. To be more specific, there is low information sharing through the internet and computer systems. There is also limited sharing of information in business since the law does not allow. If one company is allowed to do businesses like electronic shopping without other businesses involvement, it may cause a lot of delay to customers. Other customers may not be able to buy through the same company. This law can be changed so that individuals and business premises can share information freely.

### Reference

Cheeseman, H. R. (2009). Business Law: Legal Environment, Online

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