Lab Exercise 10 – Computer Ethics: Intellectual Property Rights and Privacy
Computer Science 2334
Due by the end of your assigned lab period (Thursday, May 3, 2012)

Your Name: _____

~~Group Members:~~   This exercise is to be completed individually. _____

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Objectives:

1. To be able to analyze ethical situations.

2. To be able to make ethical judgments based on intellectual property concepts, the consequences of different approaches to intellectual property, and existing legal instruments that protect intellectual property.

3. To be able to make ethical judgments based on privacy issues, the consequences of different approaches to privacy, and laws regarding privacy.

4. To demonstrate your understanding of intellectual property, privacy, and computer ethics through the analysis of case studies.

Instructions:

Read the case studies included included in this lab exercise. Develop and write a response of a few sentences for each case study that addresses the exercise posed at the end of the case study scenario.

You should consider the principles of a professional organization relevant to CS when answering these questions. As discussed in class, it is your responsibility to locate a code of ethics from a relevant professional organization to use in the completion of this lab.

Use only the space provided for each scenario for your response.

You should spend approximately 15-20 minutes per scenario. Once you have completed both exercises in this document, you will submit this lab exercise handout for grading.

After you have had a chance to read and respond to each scenario, the entire class will discuss the scenario and the various responses developed by the students.

The cases in this lab exercise were dreamed up by Prof. Hougen. Any similarities to any persons, living or dead, are purely coincidental but potentially awesome.

Scenario 1. (Hypothetical)

Rick is the IT specialist for OK Security Pictures, Inc. (OKSPI). OKSPI operates video security systems in many Oklahoma businesses including casinos, strip clubs, and liquor stores. Rick installs and maintains the video security systems that record activities at these businesses. Rick also handles OKSPI's own computer systems that keep track of all its business transactions and provide OKSPI's employees with email, web access, and other general computing needs.

OKSPI's systems work by having cameras at the businesses constantly viewing "high traffic areas" such as entrances and "areas of concern" such as gambling tables and cash registers (where someone might try to get away with something through "slight of hand") and saving the videos to computer hard drives. Each video is saved for 24 hours before being overwritten by another. This duration is believed to be sufficient because if something happens (like a robbery), a copy of the video could be made for police before the hard drive is overwritten. Some of these businesses also have security guards.

One day, Rick's doorbell rings and he finds a man standing there in a dark suit. The man introduces himself as FBI Agent Cooper, shows Rick his badge and ID, and proceeds to explain the following.

Mugsy Lawless is wanted for questioning by the FBI regarding murders in six states during the past 10 years. However, the day before the FBI had planned to pick him up and bring him in for questioning, he disappeared. For the past month, no one has seen him at his New York apartment, his New Jersey home, or his place of work (a deli in New York where he is the manager). The FBI doesn't know where he is. However, they have some ideas. For one thing, he has relatives in Oklahoma City, as well as several other places around the country. For another, he likes gambling, strippers, and alcohol.

This is where Rick comes in. The FBI doesn't have the manpower to watch all the places Mugsy might show up. Therefore the FBI would like Rick to change the way OKSPI's video systems work. In addition to saving the video to disk, the FBI would like to have additional computers installed at each business to process the video streams in real time, looking for faces using advanced face recognition software. These faces would be matched against stored images of Bugsy Lawless. If a match is found, the corresponding video stream, starting 10 minutes before the match and continuing for 20 minutes after the match, will be sent over the business' high-speed Internet connection to the local FBI office for confirmation. If the agent there agrees with the match, agents will move in to pick up Mugsy.

Rick thinks this is very cool. Helping the FBI! He quickly agrees and is told that the next day a white van will deliver the computers and all he has to do is install them, turn them on, and not tell anyone. The van shows up as scheduled and Rick does exactly what he was asked to do.

Exercises.

Find at least *two* distinct ethical principles from a professional code of ethics that are relevant to this scenario. List each principle, **give its source**, and *explain* why you think it is relevant.

For each principle, say whether you think Rick abided by (that is, followed) the principle you listed and *explain* how you came to that conclusion.

Give at least one likely motivation for Rick's actions and *explain* how you concluded that was a likely motivation.

Give at least one entity (person or group of people) who would be likely to benefit from Rick's actions and *explain* how you concluded that entity would be likely to benefit.

Give at least one entity (person or group of people) who would be likely to be harmed by Rick's actions and *explain* how you concluded that entity would be likely to be harmed.

List at least *two* ethical-decision-making problems, each of which is likely to have contributed to at least one of Rick's decisions and *explain* how you concluded that each was a likely problem.

List *two* ethical-decision-making strategies that Rick could employ to improve his ethical decision making and *explain* how he might employ those strategies in this situation.

Response:

Scenario 2. (Hypothetical)

Gertrude loves parody. She loves Weird Al Yankovic's parody songs more than she does the originals. She loves the Colbert Report much more than any actual news commentary shows. She even loves "Bored of the Rings" more than "The Lord of the Rings." Not surprisingly, one day Gertrude decides to do a parody of her own.

She has long laughed at the dancing of teen idol Minty so she decides to do a parody of Minty's dance number from his latest song and video "Fresh This!" First she fires up iTunes and buys an MP3 of "Fresh This!" She hates to give Minty more money than he already has but what else can she do? It isn't like "Fresh This!" is available for free! Then she puts on a goofy imitation of his clothes and proceeds to dance a wild and stupid version of his dance with the video camera running and "Fresh This!" blasting in the background. Unfortunately, she is interrupted a couple of times by her "dumb brother" and is annoyed by his shouts and the phone ringing a few times. Still, she makes it through and mostly has a great time doing it. Next she uses some "super cool" software she downloaded from somewhere on the web to cut out the interruptions, add some video effects similar to those in the original video, and dub the original song over the audio track on her recording so that no one has to hear her brother or the phone. Finally, she uploads her completed video to her own website and puts a lower quality version on YouTube with a link back to her website.

Exercises.

Find at least *two* distinct ethical principles from a professional code of ethics that are relevant to this scenario. List each principle, **give its source**, and *explain* why you think it is relevant.

For each principle, say whether you think Gertrude abided by (that is, followed) the principle you listed and *explain* how you came to that conclusion.

Give at least one likely motivation for Gertrude's actions and *explain* how you concluded that was a likely motivation.

Give at least one entity (person or group of people) who would be likely to benefit from Gertrude's actions and *explain* how you concluded that entity would be likely to benefit.

Give at least one entity (person or group of people) who would be likely to be harmed by Gertrude's actions and *explain* how you concluded that entity would be likely to be harmed.

List at least *two* ethical-decision-making problems, each of which is likely to have contributed to at least one of Gertrude's decisions and *explain* how you concluded that each was a likely problem.

List *two* ethical-decision-making strategies that Gertrude could employ to improve her ethical decision making and *explain* how she might employ those strategies in this situation.

Response: