

## **Introduction to the Minitrack -- Intellectual Property Rights in the Digital Economy: Issues, Economics, Law and Ethics**

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The emergence of new digital technologies and the increasing pervasiveness of the Internet have led to a renewed examination of intellectual property rights. The papers in this minitrack tackle the intellectual property rights from a variety of vantage points; legal and policy, economic and ethical, and behavioral dimensions that make important contributions to our understanding of property rights in the increasingly digital world. The first paper in this minitrack looks at a key legal issue in trademark and domain name ownership. As the number of Internet sites that conduct commerce and facilitate collaboration continues to expand, the ownership of domain names has emerged as an important new battleground for organizations. The paper by de Vuyst examines the legal arena in the clash between trademark owners and top level domain name (TLD) claimants. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has adopted a uniform policy for dispute resolution. The paper provides a comprehensive review of dispute resolution schemes and provides useful guidelines for the warring parties and the registrars. The paper by Rodhain and Agarwal examines ethical and privacy issues pertaining to email usage in workplace. Email continues to be the dominant online mechanism used for both business and personal communication. The paper adopts a behavioral perspective that the email policy is an embodiment of managerial beliefs and values about the employer-employee relationship and the role of communication in the workplace. The paper examines employee attitudes towards email, their perceptions and expectations regarding the privacy and ownership of email, and a variety of work environment characteristics. The theoretical model and the ensuing empirical evidence, drawn from two nations, provide useful guidelines to

organizations in drafting and implementing effective email policies. The paper by Kwong and Lee examines the growing problem of music piracy on the Internet via technologies such as peer-to-peer computing. The thrust of this work is to understand the factors that affect a user's intention to use the exchange mode of music piracy. Drawing from theories in psychology, criminology and organizational behavior this paper develops a research model of relevant antecedent factors and the processes involved in music piracy. The final paper in this minitrack, by Gopal and Gupta, explores the interrelating effects of software piracy and bundling on the business strategy of software publishers. The Internet and sharing technologies have accelerated the problem of software piracy, and this has significantly undercut the profits of software publishers. The paper presents an analytical model that depicts the economic incentive structures for consumers and publishers, and derives several key results. They propose the concept of phantom piracy, where a software publisher can derive higher profits even with higher levels of piracy for one of the products in the bundle. They also derive conditions where the piracy level of the bundle is smaller than the piracy level of the individual products in the bundle. Their work provides a useful tool for software publishers to effectively market and package a plethora of related software products. The papers in this mini-track make important contributions to our current understanding of issues related to intellectual property. However, we have barely begun to scratch the surface. As organizational assets increasingly turn digital, intellectual property can be expected to be the "front-and-center" issue of business strategy and negotiation for a wide spectrum of organizations.