

## Professional Computing CITS3200 Ethics Essay, 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester 2009

This essay topic requires you to explore some of the issues associated with copyright, freedom of access to information and piracy. You are required to approach the subjects in an impartial, professional manner, clearly recognising both sides of the issues, and in particular with reference to the Australian Computer Society's Codes of Ethics and Professional Practice, indicating where and how aspects of those Codes are relevant.

The Pirate Bay organisation and website (<http://thepiratebay.org/>) were started by the Swedish anti-copyright organisation Piratbyrå in the late 2003 (<http://www.piratbyran.org/>). Since October 2004, it has been devoted instead to promoting file sharing amongst individuals via the BitTorrent protocol. It is currently among the top 100 most visited websites worldwide.

The Pirate Bay has been embroiled in numerous police raids and lawsuits associated with the alleged use of its services to share copies of music, movies and other material which is covered by copyright or it is otherwise improper or illegal to copy and distribute.

You are required to research the services provided or promoted by The Pirate Bay, the technology and protocols it uses, and the responses (raids and lawsuits) made to it by the authorities and copyright holders.

Then address the following questions:

1. Summarise the services and technologies that The Pirate Bay provides.
2. Is there an arguable case for promoting "piracy" as The Pirate Bay has been convicted of doing?
3. Someone has said "guns don't kill people, people kill people; in the same way The Pirate Bay doesn't undertake or actively promote piracy, its users do"; analyse this approach as a basis for defending The Pirate Bay.
4. What beneficial aspects are there of a service like The Pirate Bay, and to whom are they beneficial?
5. The Pirate Bay utilises the BitTorrent file sharing protocol; is there anything intrinsically illegal or inappropriate about this protocol? Can you identify legitimate and valuable uses for it?
6. Is it legitimate, as a kind of public protest, to promote file-sharing of copyright material to force copyright owners to adopt more modern distribution mechanisms? Do you think the Music Industry (for instance) would not have adopted on-line distribution (like iTunes) had it not been for the pressure applied by questionable services like Napster and Kazaa (in their original forms)?

Your essay should be approximately 1500-2000 words. For readability please:

- Use a serifed font, e.g. Times rather than Arial.
- Include references in the text to ACS clause numbers (eg 4.3.3),
- Use 1.5 line or double spacing (in MS Word: Format -> Paragraph -> Line Spacing).
- Use Harvard format for your references. For assistance with this see:  
<http://libguides.library.uwa.edu.au/harvard>

Please understand that if you refer to someone else's work you will normally paraphrase their remarks and include a citation (in Harvard format). If you use the authors' exact words that is a quotation, so should be surrounded by quotation marks and include a citation. Cutting and pasting without quotation marks, and particularly without a citation, is plagiarism.

A sample essay may be found at:

<http://undergraduate.csse.uwa.edu.au/units/CITS3200/essay/SampleEssayPC307.pdf>

Finally, please hand in a hard copy of the essay to the CSSE office and also electronically via cssubmit, pdf preferred. See the Unit Timetable on the Project web page for the date and time that the submissions close.

### **Acknowledgement**

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Michael J. Wise

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