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Tech Ethics

Copyrights are useless if not enforced

Last summer, a 29-year-old computer engineer began a 46-month sentence in federal prison, convicted of charges that many resnet-surfing students at Texas A&M could easily find themselves charged with as well.



CHRIS JACKSON

The crime is digital copyright infringement, and the criminal is anyone who downloads or distributes illegal copies of copyrighted digital media, a commodity that has become the cheapest form of entertainment — it's free.

Yet the crime is so commonplace that many who commit it don't even realize it. After all, downloading a movie, a music album or an artist's entire repertoire only involves a movement of the mouse and a quick double-click. Computer users will continue to violate copyright laws as long as the chance of getting caught is as slim as it is now.

"A number of people don't even know (this type of file sharing) is illegal," said Jeff McCabe, Associate Director of Information Technology Issues in A&M's Computing and Information Services Department. "Part of it is an awareness problem, and part of it is that people just say 'I don't care.'"

The government has taken action with the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, and the Recording Industry Association of America is on a rampage against those who sell bootlegged music CDs and DVD movies, yet it is still incredibly easy to get a hold of illegal music. KaZaa, Direct Connect and Hobbes are common utilities used for peer-to-peer file sharing. All are readily available and all are perfectly legal to use. These utilities provide an excellent interface for file sharing between computers on campus and on the Internet as well because of their simplicity. Users easily copy their CDs or DVDs to their computers and share the contraband.

These utilities contain disclaimers that warn against distributing copyrighted material. A

user can search for a music file, but it is impossible to discern which files are free to distribute and which files are illegal copies. Basically, anything goes.

McCabe holds that even though copyright violations are easy to commit, there is really no excuse for them to occur.

"You could go out and buy a gun, and rob a place with it (fairly easily). You could copy music and share it, also," McCabe said.

Yet getting online and double-clicking a file to download does not seem so wrong to those who do it. More than 2.6 billion songs are illegally downloaded in the United States each month, according to musicunited.org, a music industry organization that speaks out against digital music piracy. Music listeners clearly do not liken music piracy to armed robbery.

The United States government does, however.

"According to the DMCA, you shouldn't be circumventing any copyright," McCabe said.

Each of the 2.6 billion songs downloaded every month carries with it a \$30,000 fine and a possible federal prison stay, according to a CIS information page. Students or other users may not be trying to break the law when downloading music files, but ignorance is never a defense.

How then can people be

expected to comply with laws that they do not know exist? Ignorance in numbers leads to violations in numbers as well. A strong push against piracy should be taken if users are expected to quit stealing copyrighted material.

CIS posts an information page outlining the consequences of illegal file sharing deep on its Web site. File sharing utilities such as KaZaa and Direct Connect mention in documentation that users should not share copies of files they do not own. Yet illegal file sharing is rampant on campus — and around the world — because of its ease and appeal. Until some accountability is introduced, media thieves have no reason to quit trafficking in free information — the cheapest commodity in the world.

"The crime is so commonplace that many of those who commit it don't even realize it."

Blood clots kill 60,000 yearly

By Lauran Neergaard
 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — If you're lying in a hospital bed, chances are doctors didn't check you for a silent killer — one that causes some 60,000 potentially preventable deaths per year.

It's called "deep vein thrombosis," when a dangerous blood clot forms deep in the leg muscles. The clot sometimes floats into the lungs, causing sudden death.

Such clots made headlines a few years ago when seemingly healthy people collapsed after long airplane flights. Take an overseas flight today and you'll probably see a video advising walking around or at least wiggling your legs frequently to keep clots at bay.

While that's good advice, it provides a skewed vision of the clots: most actually occur when people are hospitalized for surgery, trauma or some other reason. Worse, although simple steps can prevent blood clots in hospitalized patients, troubling new research suggests too many physicians either don't know to check for the risk or they forget.

Now a group of doctors and federal health officials are trying to raise public awareness of DVT, so more physicians will check for it — and so people at risk can take steps to protect themselves, whether they're entering the hospital or taking a long trip.

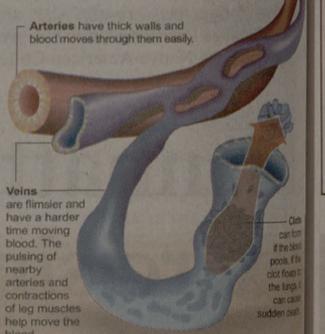
"There are so many preventable deaths," laments Dr. Samuel Goldhaber of Harvard Medical School. "It's become a crisis."

Goldhaber is conducting the largest study ever done on who gets DVT and why, using a registry of 5,000 DVT patients from 180 hospitals. Findings so far are "quite shocking," he said: More than half of the people who developed DVT while hospitalized for other reasons never got the clot-preventing care that doctors should have administered.

There aren't precise counts,

Working hard to move the blood

The heart pumps oxygen-rich blood through arteries to the rest of the body. Veins carry the blood back to the lungs for an oxygen refill. Fighting gravity to push blood up from the legs is a hard job, one that can be complicated by illness, injury or prolonged inactivity.



- Risk factors:**
- Hospitalization for acute illness or surgery
 - Immobility during long travel, by plane or car
 - Obesity
 - Pregnancy
 - Birth control pills or estrogen therapy
 - Smoking
 - Relatives with blood clots
 - Being over age 40
 - High blood pressure, heart disease or cancer

SOURCE: Clinically Oriented Anatomy

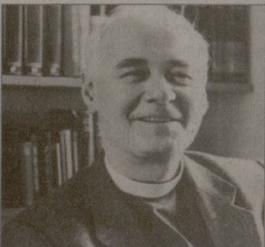
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two views on the origins of the universe



Rev. Dr. John Polkinghorne:
 Polkinghorne made a 25-year career as a theoretical particle physicist before he decided in midlife to enter the seminary and become an Anglican priest. Polkinghorne has written that he respects both science and religion and believes that science's search for understanding ultimately leads to God.



Dr. Alan Guth:
 Guth, a National Academy of Science member and physics professor at MIT, is known as the father of the "inflationary universe" theory, which holds that a repulsive force embedded in the universe caused the inconceivably rapid early expansion of the Big Bang.

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By L THE

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By Laure THE BAT

In the Febri Vanity Fair ma nist Edna Evera letter from a what she the Spanish langua in the real worl Everage re "Who speaks S are really despo The help? Your Her respons Mexican cultur Texas A&M's the Awareness American Cult two-day progr Tuesday in ro writer's claims. CAMAC c efforts Tuesday ing a panel mac sors and jo addressed the n of Latinos in t these stereoty and how to dea After CAMA to the magazi their offense, responded with ogizing for an article cause American co there was no int any stereotypes Dr. Man Rodriguez, asso in the Departm and Classical