

**Knowledge Management**  
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**Lecture – 34**  
**Ethical Issues**

Okay so in continuation of our discussion about a legal disputes in our KM base systems.

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**Legal disputes in knowledge based system**

- If the developer is a company employee, the organization is also involved in the negligence action.
- If a knowledge based system is a product, proving negligence is unnecessary to hold the developer liability
- If a knowledge based system is a service contract law of the state will apply.
- Case involving warranties require the uses to show who is at fault.

We have seen that the who is going to be held responsible for liability or negligence, it could be the knowledge developers or the users or even the experts also if he is not transfer the copyright okay. Now if your developer is person from the organization okay. Then he could also be involved in negligence process okay. And if it is a product then it is very difficult to prove negligence on the part of the developer right.

And if you are knowledge base services in a service contract then you have to see that the law of the state will apply depending upon the law you are going to be either held responsible. And then the classes of strict liability could be applied or negligence would be applied okay. Then there could be certain cases involving warranties also which are to be shown whether who is going to beat fault.

For example you purchase a product and have damaged it okay I mean during the warranty I mean the organization may not be held responsible because it is very clearly written on the product that if you are going to create any kind of damage by your activities then the

organization may not be responsible for the product.


But if there is anyone anything wrong with the product even if it is not functioning properly when you have purchased the it and it is covered by the warranty then the organization is going to either replace it or repair it free of cost. So these are some of the issues related to warranties right. Now there could be other issues related to web linking domain or web linking and domain name is right okay.

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**Web linking domain name issues**

- In E- commerce unique knowledge about a product , a company or service resides in websites.
- Hyperlinks- infrastructure of the internet is designed around to link text or images addresses automatically
- This jumping from one page to another raises some legal issues-
  - Referencing a linked site without permission from the site owner
  - retrieving or downloading information without referencing or permission
  - Unauthorized use of company's trademark
  - Adding a web programme to a comany's website without permission



Because in e-commerce basically unique knowledge about a company service that is a because e-commerce is done through websites right. And then these e-commerce companies create hyperlinks and the kind of infrastructure that they use is Internet. So what happens suppose you are going to buy a product? You visit a website of an e-commerce if Flip kart okay.

So once you believe visit the website of the flip kart what happens it automatically takes you to different kind of products categories. So what you do depending upon your requirement you are going to click on that. And then it takes you to another area. So this is connected to hyperlinks okay from one place to another place. Whether it is going to create any legal issues or not okay.

Because if you are going to link your site with certain issues which is owned by other people then there could be a legal problem. But if it is not then it may not be there right. And that is why if you look at e-commerce websites when what they do basically they try to create it in

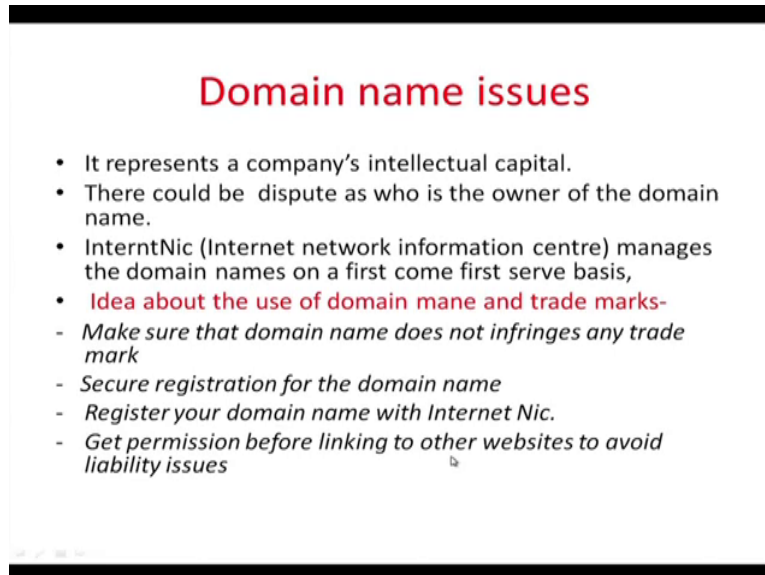
such a way okay. So that this hyperlink is taking you to a product and based on your specification you look at the product so you are not going to the original sellers.

But you are going to order the product to the e-commerce site say Flipkart and Flipkart is going to negotiate and has a contract with another site which is going to say or seller which is going to sell you the product right. Similarly there could be other issue relate to the referencing okay. Suppose you are going to give reference of a link site without any permission of the South site owner, then it is liable to legal actions.

Similarly if you are going to retrieve and download any information from the website or internet using it without reference or permission then again it becomes a legal issue. Or if you are using the companies trademark illegally then again it is a problem, and you could be held liable for that and strict legal actions may be taken against you okay.

So these are some of the issues related to web linking or domain name also issue then issues are there.

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### Domain name issues

- It represents a company's intellectual capital.
- There could be dispute as who is the owner of the domain name.
- InterntNic (Internet network information centre) manages the domain names on a first come first serve basis,
- **Idea about the use of domain mane and trade marks-**
  - *Make sure that domain name does not infringes any trade mark*
  - *Secure registration for the domain name*
  - *Register your domain name with Internet Nic.*
  - *Get permission before linking to other websites to avoid liability issues*

Because you know that domain name actually represents the company's intellectual capital okay. And you know that two companies cannot have the same in domain okay. If two companies have the same domain name that could be a legal dispute that whose actual owner of the domain right. And that is why you will find that each organization has its own domain name.

And it is actually managed by Internet that is Internet network information centre. Which basically manages the Internet and domains domain names under first-come first-services basis so effective one domain has not been allotted to one particular company others cannot make use of this right, because domain name and trademarks are very much related. And make sure that your domain name does not infringe any trade mark okay.


Similarly you also may make sure that your domain name is registered with the Internet provider. You secure it go for registration your domain name with the Internet information centre. And also get permission before linking to other websites to avoid liability issues okay it is very important. For example suppose you are using LinkedIn it is a domain name with it has its own trend part okay.

So people post things and they also give link okay. So they must get permission from their ammunition to create a link in the LinkedIn for that particular site which will take you from LinkedIn to another website okay. Otherwise there could be issues or conflict and legal issues may be there.

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### The malpractice factor

- Malpractice in KM is negligence applied to knowledge developers for design defects in KM system for professional use.
- Knowledge developers must be professionals to be held liable for malpractice.
- There is no standardization or certification for knowledge developers

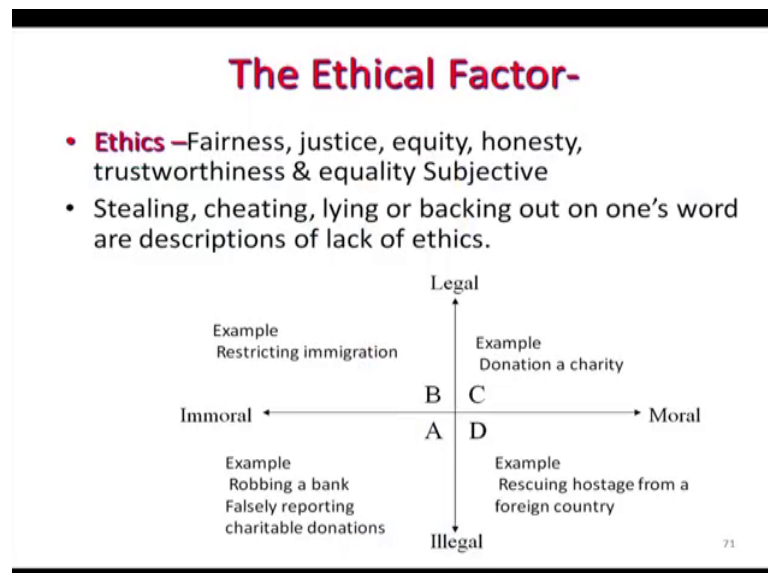


Another important issue is related to malpractices which is a very common. So what kind of malpractices happens okay? Malpractices are less legal and more ethical in nature because you know that is where you are going to apply certain you are not very careful you are going to apply certain things okay. Both the experts the knowledge developers and because of which you know there are certain defects in the system which cannot be used properly okay.

And make sure that when you are going to develop knowledge and you are going to put it in the system as a developer and expert make sure that. No kind of malpractices are allowed of either it is to use or design or the defect of the system okay. And so far there is no standardized certification for knowledge developers and that is why sometimes they are saved out of liability in a strict action okay.

Because if you are a certified developer then you could be held responsible if you are going to design a system which is defective in nature okay. Right so these kinds of malpractices are adopted. Now after discussing about the legal factor next that we are going to discuss is about the ethical factor okay.

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That is basically concerned with the use of knowledge of the knowledge management systems. Now if you look at ethics in general basically there is lot of issues that becomes a related ethics. Some of the concepts are which are related with ethics include like fairness, status, equity, honesty and trustworthiness, equality okay. But most of these concepts are very subjective in their approach.

For example fairness in one context may not be fairness in another context okay. Even the principles of justice vary from culture, from one culture to another culture from one context to another context right. Equity means different things to different people okay. Now when it is very difficult of the conceptually define what is honesty okay. What you are talking about is the level of honesty.

So it is very subjective in nature right similarly when you are talking about trustworthiness. What is trustworthiness? It is based on the relationship of the two people who is going to trust on whom right ? But when it comes to knowledge management it is to be applied that whether you are going to have trust on the system. Whether the experts are going to have trust on the knowledge tool.

Because that is very important for sharing the knowledge. So that tacit is tacit knowledge is transformed into explicit knowledge right. Now you also need to apply the principles of equality. Equality means that whether access of knowledge is equally available to anyone who is who requires it to use right. But if you look at these terms they are very subjective in the assistance. But they are related to ethics.

Now comes to another question that comes into mind is, what is unethical behavior in context of the organization. Like if you are going for stealing, lying, cheating or backing out if you are given certain commitments you are coming out of it right. Then these are some of the ethical descriptions right. It means that you are not ethical in your approach or behavior. But this is very general in context right.

Now if you look at this figure it talks about of whether you are ethical or not specially moral and immoral okay or whether it is legal or illegal. Now if you look at this and on this, forequarter right. One side you have legal on the other side you have illegal right. Similarly you are also having moral and immoral. Now if you look at this ABCD okay.

Something which could be called as illegal as well as immoral like when you are going to rob a bank, you go for false reporting about your donations and this kind of things right. Similarly it could be immoral but it is legal. For example restricted some of the developed countries have gone for a strict putting certain restrictions to immigrations right. Because though it may be legal it may not be legal because it does not allow free movement of their people right.

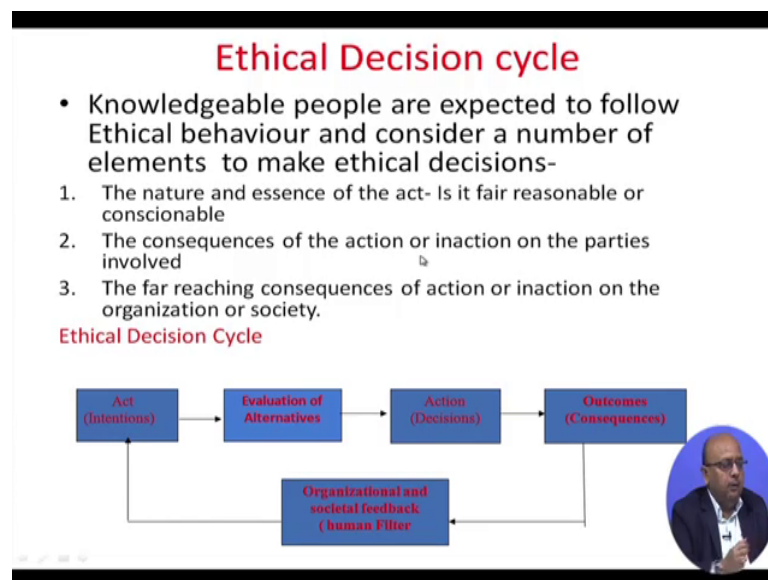
Though it could be immoral but it is legal because depending of the context of the country you go for restricting immigration is to your country right. Now move from there to something that is both legal as well moral ethical. For example you are giving donations for a good cause or a charity right. Now something that could do moral but not legal right. For example if of rescued hostages from a foreign country it could not be legal.

Because that law does not permit without visa to enter into a new country but it is legal it is more ethical because if you do not rescue those hostages they are likely to die. Because you know that recent crisis lot of people are moving from one country to another countries okay. Many Arab countries or Syrian countries are that side of country is moving to Europe now okay.

You must have heard about certain conditions where people have drowned. The boats have subsidized lot of people have died okay. Or they have not been allowed to immigrate. Similarly there have been a lot of human effort have been there lot of hostages are been rescued and they have been given shelter. So though it may not be legal but at the same time it may not be moral. It is in more general context.

Now we will see that how it is applied in the context of knowledge management okay.

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So what we are going to share is that yes knowledgeable people also expected to follow ethical behavior okay. And then they are going to consider certain parameters to see that they are more ethical in nature right. Now whether it is fairly reasonable and whether your conscience allowed for it or not okay. First thing that is the Nature and essence of that act. If you are using their knowledge whether it is fair and reasonable.

The next question that whether you are going to ask is whether what the consequences of that particular action or the parties that is involved right. Now apart from the consequences of the parties you also look at the Long-Term consequences of your actions or not doing any action


on the part of the organization on the society. So if you look at this, this is a decision cycle which talks about the act or the intentions to start with.

Then you evaluate those alternatives take particular decision or action. Then you also measure the consequence of that particular action then you go for a human filter get the feedback. And then based on this feedback and then you are going to Act again. So your act or intentions are evaluated and then you see that which act or decisions that is given good results. And whether you are going to continue with that or not.

For example one of your act or intentions has not resulted in good results. You get the feedback so you drop it. So if you look at ethical decisions okay. When you have to make ethical decisions you have to see that what are the options that are available to you? And which decision you are going to take? And make sure that is more ethical in nature. Then you look at the consequences get the feedback if the feedback is right at on it.

Continue with that one if it is not then you leaves out. So that is what ethical decisions are then what is the major facts to ethics? Today networks, computers you heard lot about it today.

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### Major threats to Ethics

- Faster computers & networks
- Sophisticated telecommunications & routers
- Massive distributed databases
- Eases of access to information & knowledge base
- Transparency of software

Starting with hack, hacking, cybercrime, security privacy these are the issues which are associate with this okay nowadays you have sophisticated telecommunication routers which could be used for that okay. you have massive distributor data which are subject to theft and these kind of things are there okay. And then whether you allow people to have information

and knowledge or not okay.

And then how transparent is when you are going to develop a software the issue of transparency comes into the picture. so what we are going to discuss one by one is what kind of threads are created when it comes to knowledge management system because all of them are vulnerable to this.

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Another issue is that you need to improve the ethical climate of the organization okay. When I am talking about ethical climate is that you need to inculcate a culture, a value system in the organization. So that people behave ethically that is very important and it is the part of the management to ensure that an ethical climate is created okay. So what are the things that need to be done okay. It is very, very important to have this resource and system in place.

So that you ensure that people are not going to act unethically and for that you require top management support right. For example by nature people could engage in certain unethical behavior. so how top management is going to detect them. I give one example say for example in the revenue department or the police department okay you expect them to unethical when you go to fire.

And you ask them for certain things to do and then they ask for certain favors okay. May be monitory or non monitory. So how you are going to handle this issue, you have resources what you can do you can go far certain observations on a regular basis on a real-time basis okay. you can go for CCTV cameras which you which can provide you real-time observations

how people are behaving or whether people are engaging ethical behavior or not.

But for that what you require is commitment and support from the top management and resources are required. that is basically policing that is one approach that could be used to in to engage and ensure that people are typical in their behavior and they engage themselves ethically in their activities that is one thing.

Now second thing is that you, that is more implied or behavioral with you are people voluntarily follow certain code of ethics so what you do you develop certain coding word of ethics. You communicate the people what to do what not to do what are the things that are desirable and what are the things which are not desirable in the work place. And then you communicate it to the people.

Say for example you that the government has come out with a sexual harassment act okay. so you must communicate to every people that what kind of activity comes under sexual harassment. you must people must be committed right. Otherwise if an act is found which cover which is covered under which comes under premises of sexual harassment act then you are liable for illegal actions okay.

But before that you need to communicate and develop a code of ethics for this kind of activities. Then you also need to develop these kind of orientations in the people through training and development activities. So that they can internalize and they can understand what is ethical and what is non ethical okay.

And similarly you need to motivate people and you also tell them and convinced that what are the benefits of being honest and not losing the integrity because integrity and honesty is something that is very important okay. And it is very important for lot of the jobs, for example if you are working in a call centre first and foremost require apart from technical knowledge is you understanding activity.

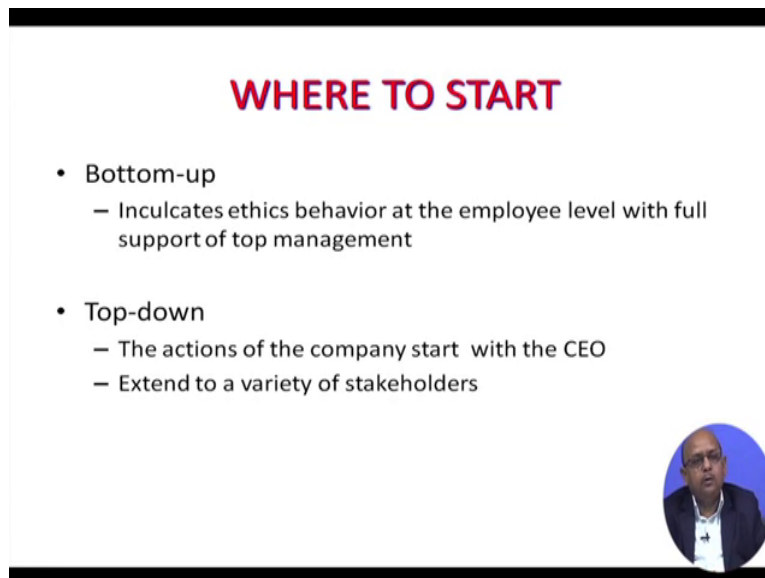
Otherwise these ethical issues for example your engaged in data theft kind of activities then what will happen the companies going to lose its advantage, for example you are working in defense. So what matters most is your honesty and integrity. So it is expected to create a climate and culture in the organization through training and development activities make

them understand communicate them so they understand the role of ethics in the organization.

And if anybody is engaging in any kind of unethical behavior, it is the responsible the of the management to deal it severely and promptly. So you need to take immediate actions if some if any unethical behavior is reported by the people okay. Whether it is on the part of the negligence or otherwise also you make sure that if any person is making any kind of unethical behavior it is reported and due actions taken immediately okay.

If you are going to take prompt and due action immediately then it gives a message to others. if they are going to indulge in these kind of activities than it is a problem and that is why it is expected that they are not going to engage themselves in unethical activities.

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**WHERE TO START**

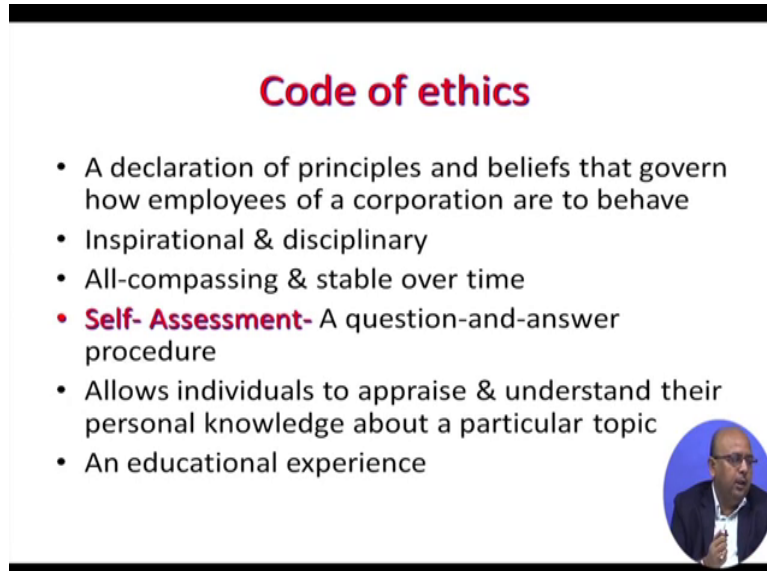
- Bottom-up
  - Inculcates ethics behavior at the employee level with full support of top management
- Top-down
  - The actions of the company start with the CEO
  - Extend to a variety of stakeholders

So where to start to when it comes to improving unethical sorry ethical climate in the organization. Either start from the bottom or you start from the top right. So you need to inculcate ethical behavior with the support of the top management starting from the bottom so make sure that it is communicated down the line or from the lowest level to the highest level and then you engage all the stakeholders in the process communicate them.

Tell them what is ethical what is not ethical and also tell them that if any kind of unethical behavior will be treated with exemplary punishment so that people deter. Also try to make sure that you are not going to only polish do some policing to see that they are engaged in unethical behavior or not, but you also try to motivate them to be more ethical or through a culture and also provides some kind of incentives.


And support to those who are going to engage in ethical behavior right, so you can either top-down or a bottom-up approach.

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**Code of ethics**

- A declaration of principles and beliefs that govern how employees of a corporation are to behave
- Inspirational & disciplinary
- All-compassing & stable over time
- **Self- Assessment-** A question-and-answer procedure
- Allows individuals to appraise & understand their personal knowledge about a particular topic
- An educational experience



Similarly you can go for code of ethics, code of ethics is a written statement okay. A declaration or written statement of what to do and what not to do okay, it is going to be create some kind of motivation and discipline among the people okay and make sure that everybody has it and everybody is committed about it okay and then you see whether people are going to follow it or not okay.

And then you have a set of questions and ask people to assess themselves using those questions to see whether they understand it or not whether they are able to evaluate their behavior using these text to identify whether their behavior is ethical or unethical in nature and this could be a kind of educational excellence for them so that they are able to understand themselves with of the behaving ethically or not.

So it is very, very important to have a code of ethics in each organization and make sure that people are going to voluntarily follow it. You do not force them to do it otherwise there could be problems okay. So make sure that you have a code of ethics in the organization.

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## Privacy factor

- Notice
  - Right to be told in advance
  - Choice
  - Final say regarding the use of personal info
- Access
  - Access & correct any personal info
- Security/integrity
- Enforcement
  - Backed by the courts if any principles are violated



Then another issue is related to privacy okay. When you are going to work in an organization you also look at privacy and privacy is ethical issue okay. So you do not like to involve others into your personal spaces at times right because suppose you are sending him a mail or email. Now whether your email is being monitored or not, so it could be a privacy issue right.

Now organization have may have a policy not to allow you to use personal mails at the workplace that could be email policy. But when it comes to privacy then you tell them what is to be done and what not to be done what comes under privacy what comes under public domain right, that very important. For example there are four areas which is related to privacy that is notice okay.

Right to be told in advance must tell people what is to be done what not to be done and it is their choice whether they want to make it keep it in public domain or not. Similarly any kind of personal information must not be diverse or put into or displayed into public space for others right. Unless people want it right it is very important.

Similarly access of information and whether the correct information has been put into on the website or the domain relate to the employees right. now whether access and characters of any personal information is a personal choice of the person or organization allows it to have access to anybody or no it could be accessed by that the administrative.

Because they are going to feed the data and could will only be accessed by the people who are going to use it. So it is more ethical approach that is to be followed by the organization.

Another important security and integrity of the employees, security of the data and integrity of the employee these are issues okay so make sure that the data which is confidential you have security measures for them at the place in the system.

And also make sure that integrity of the employees is not at stake, because if integrity is at stake then you cannot expect them to be in their ethical approach. Similarly you can use certain enforcement in courts okay. When you can take certain legal actions if you find that any of these people were being violated by people and they are going to engage in certain unethical behavior, so these are the issues related to privacy.

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**New technology related ethical problems**

- Traditional rules of conduct are not always applicable to a new medium
- A question that often arises: Should a device, a technique or technology be restricted because people can use it for illegal or harmful actions as well as beneficial ones?

**Example** *Mobile phones with cameras. Pupils at school take photos of other pupils in the shower, and publish the pictures on the Internet*



Now there are a lot of issues which are coming up which are related to ethical problems and that is related to technology right, for example traditional rules of conduct are known not always to any new medium. For example that is given here the question which arises that should a device, a technique or technology be restricted because people can use it in illegal or harmful actions as well as beneficial actions.

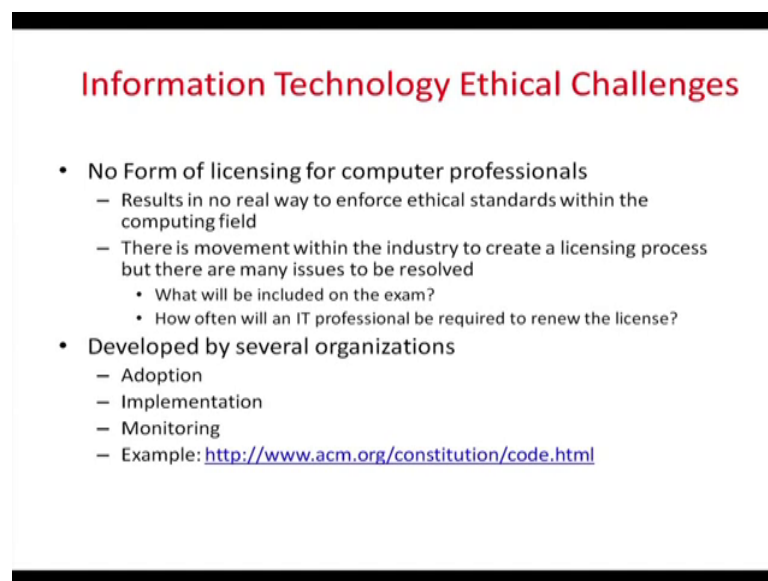
You know that for examples take mobile phones with cameras right. They may take that to that schools can take photographs okay, in different conditions and in put into the public domain whether it is legal or not or whether that is ethical to do or not that is to be seen. So it is very, very important that how you are going to deal with ethical problems related to the technology okay.

For example people or schools are coming with mobile phones inside in the class and

listening songs or playing games up chatting with that okay. It is a desirable thing. it may not be legal you are not going to ask questions related to the legality act but whether it is ethical or desired or not that is why you need to decide about the code of conduct depending upon the kind of technology you are going to make use of it okay.

So when it comes to use of technology you have to decide as a organization that what kind of code of conduct is going to be prevalent in the organization right that is more correct as far as IT is concerned okay.

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**Information Technology Ethical Challenges**

- No Form of licensing for computer professionals
  - Results in no real way to enforce ethical standards within the computing field
  - There is movement within the industry to create a licensing process but there are many issues to be resolved
    - What will be included on the exam?
    - How often will an IT professional be required to renew the license?
- Developed by several organizations
  - Adoption
  - Implementation
  - Monitoring
  - Example: <http://www.acm.org/constitution/code.html>

Or specially there are lot of ethical challenges have come up when it comes to information technology okay. For example there is no licensing for computer professionals anybody can use computers so how you are going to enforce ethical standards in the computing field right. Now there is a process in the moment that is going on to establish some kind of licensing processes but there are lot of issues need to be reward actually resolved .

Before you are going to provide license to computer professionals because nowadays you know that everybody is using computers right, so if you are going to provide a license for computer use okay so that they are going to use it more ethically and legally okay they know the nuances of use how to is to use why it is to use in this kind of things.

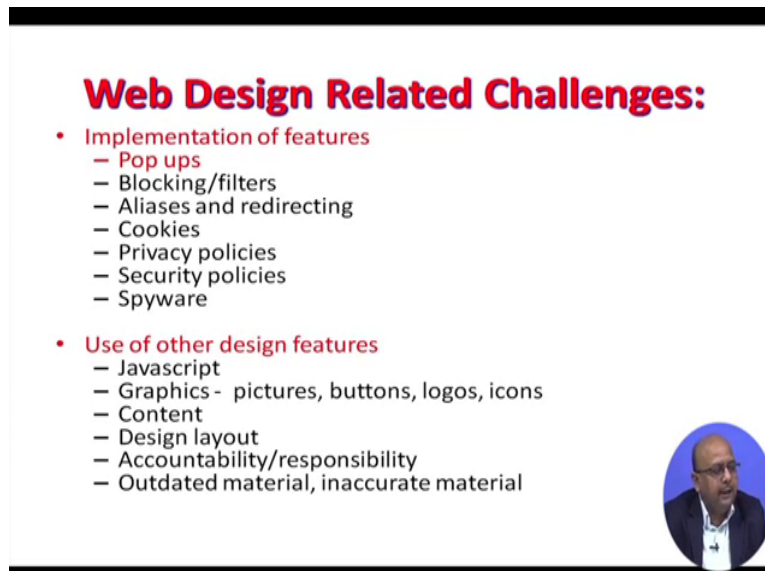
So if you are going to take legal action for that it is not possible okay. and then if one want to provide license then how you are going to provide, whether you are going to take a test for that okay and what kind of say requirement would be there for it professionals to have this

okay.

So you know that these kind of things have been developed by many organization today okay. One example that i given here especially the use of computers related to implementation monitoring there are lot of code of conduct have been identified by various organizations. Which are in which are prevalence in many organizations and if you go to this link you can find out certain codes for it professionals okay.


Which is to be used by them while working with the computers right so it has become a major challenge for ethical issues okay?

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**Web Design Related Challenges:**

- **Implementation of features**
  - Pop ups
  - Blocking/filters
  - Aliases and redirecting
  - Cookies
  - Privacy policies
  - Security policies
  - Spyware
- **Use of other design features**
  - Javascript
  - Graphics - pictures, buttons, logos, icons
  - Content
  - Design layout
  - Accountability/responsibility
  - Outdated material, inaccurate material



They could be issues related to web design related challenges also for example if you are going to design a web so when it comes to implementation related issues related to redirecting, cookies, privacies, security, spyware, pop-ups, are going to block pop-ups or allow them whether you have blocking a filtering mechanism computers okay.

Similarly whether your house cookies to be there or not okay, what could be the privacy plus policy whether like you have security system so that you can login passwords even to open a computers. Nowadays bio metric information is being used as password that is for security basically. And then you have a lot of spyware so you have anti viruses and these kind of things in the system okay otherwise your systems might be hacked.

So these are ethical challenges that is created because the computers and web design okay,

now lot of features are being adopted by it people to make sure that these issues do not come like they use graphics contained that the design layout they also fix accountability and responsibility okay and they also make sure that outdated inaccurate materials are not there okay.

And they are using certain languages to ensure that the design features are correct and it follows all ethical norms of the organization.

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### Commerce Related Challenges

- Fraud
- Taxation
- Free Trade
- Gambling
- Auctions
- Spamming
  - Who were Canter and Siegel?
  - Spamming cell phones?
- Term papers for sale
  - Atlanta Journal Constitution article

Then the other challenges like commerce related challenges how you are going to detect fraud okay transactions fraud okay, because you know that online transactions there is a possibility of fraud of having transactions you have encrypted security then how you are going to you know whether you are going to use it for taxation purposes for free trades or for gambling's, you know online gambling takes place.

Then for auctions also you are going for online that was bouncing up one for online auction today then how you have spamming so that you do not allow access to information at certain restrict information at certain place like you know in jails okay. You have jammers which does not allow inmates to have access to any kind of information from outside okay so these kind of things are there okay.

So then you know that nowadays even students use sole assignment. So you have websites which sell you assignments okay. Whether you are selling of assignment is ethical in nature or not. so these are some of the issues because you know that the transaction or money is

involved in all these cases okay. So to secure you have to make sure that when you are going to ensure the confidential, privacy and security of the system make sure that these kind of unethical concerns are taken care right, that's all okay, thank you.