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Ownership in the Digital Age

Legislating Information

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Ownership in the Digital Age

In the digital age, the lines between public use and ownership and lease are blurred by the power endowed to us by technology. Technology brings humanity together and enables it to connect with one another better than possible before. This also means that sharing is easier than before. Physical ownership is transient in the real world: an object can be handed off to another like nothing. A misplaced item can simply be stolen. Things can be taken simply because they can be taken. The digital realm is certainly no different in this aspect. While it is immoral to possess things that do not belong to someone else, by contract or otherwise, ownership and domain of intellectual property is a matter to be contested.

Intellectual property is a sensitive subject in the modern age. There is hardly any distinction or any precedent that can be set empirically. Humanity must be trusted in order to make the right choices regarding dominion and domain. However, there exists some scripture that could be used as a guideline in order to better make these assertions. Everything in existence is the result of God and God's will. Therefore, his domain spans over anything imaginable. This obviously includes personal property, and more specifically, intellectual property. This is a type of property of the most transient kind. Once a concept is embedded in the mind of a human being, the concept cannot be relinquished or withheld from another. Scripture maintains this

viewpoint in Leviticus 25: 23, as it says, “the land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you reside in my land as foreigners and strangers.”(Holy Bible, Leviticus 25: 23) This likely referred to personal property in particular. More importantly, the implications of this verse are suggesting that nothing in this world is forever and nothing in the world inherently belongs or shall belong to humanity. In fact, life is borrowed, this plane of existence is borrowed. To contest over possessions would be to fight over stolen goods: ultimately, ridiculous and pointless.

Wisdom and knowledge are attributes derived from God. However original our inventions may seem, the foresight has always existed there. There is nothing that can escape the vision of omnipotence. Possessions are transient, connections are transient, stories are transient- why should information not be transient? The means for it to be transferable exist and are well-equipped to share to any end user. The safeguards for the distribution of intellectual property are merely a defense for corporate interest. There is absolutely no reason in the modern age to prohibit emulation.

Ultimately, theft is wrong. However, with such “theft”, there is an obvious fault and victim and mind. Plainly emulating an invention raises the concerns as to whether something is an invention, an innovation, or an improvement. Making such a distinction would be the first step in legislating intellectual property, and not defending a perceived fault. It is difficult to define what an “original” concept is because of the nature of the world that humans inhabit. Inventions turn into innovations, subsequently, innovations have improvements. Eventually, the end-result may not resemble the prototype that set it in motion. The concept is what remained

through the progression. Determination and drive can be discouraged, but information cannot be suppressed.

Works Cited

1. *Holy Bible*, New International Version, Biblica, 2011.