

Tutorial

Week 7

Question

1. List some benefits of free software.
2. What was one type of controversial patent for a software-related innovation?
3. Your uncle owns a sandwich shop. He asks you to write an inventory program for him. You are glad to help him and do not charge for the program. The program works pretty well, and you discover later that your uncle has given copies to several friends who also operate small food shops. Do you believe your uncle should have asked your permission to give away your program? Do you believe the other merchants should pay you for the copies?

Question

4. What are the four factors to consider in deciding whether a use of copyrighted material is a fair use? Read a license agreement for a software product. It could be a game, operating system, video editor, tax preparation program, and so on.

(a) What does the license agreement say about the number of copies you can make?

(b) Does it specify penalties for making unauthorized copies?

(c) Was the agreement easy to read before purchase (e.g., on the outside of the package or available on a website)?

Question

- 5. A political group organized a forum on its website to encourage people to post and comment on individual newspaper articles relevant to political issues of concern to the group. Other participants added their comments, and debate and discussion of the articles continued. Two newspapers sued, arguing that posting the articles violated their copyrights. Analyze the case. How do the fair use guidelines apply? Who should win.