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A tough question someone could ask would be "if you could use a computer to steal enough money such that neither you nor any member of your family would ever have to work again, AND there was no chance that you would get caught, would you steal the money?” To be able to provide for yourself and your family without risk of legal retribution is a very tantalizing proposal for any person, but it is ethically wrong to steal from other people. The main argument against stealing the money is that we live under an idea of a social contract and because of that contract, it is wrong to take from other people. The social contract is an invisible contract that guides society and provides ideas of moral and immoral actions no matter the circumstances

Contractarianism is the idea of the social contract, where in a society people are under a contract to live with other people and that stealing for example is something that is considered immoral in a this type of society. Contractarianism also implies “ people are primarily self-interested, and that a rational assessment of the best strategy for attaining the maximization of their self-interest will lead them to act morally and to consent to governmental authority”, so that people will naturally enter into this social contract to not do things such as “steal” because it would also affect self-interests. In this example, we see that stealing would be also the benefit of your family, but if it were morally right to use a computer to steal money the, that would imply that someone else could server their own interests and use a computer and steal money from you and your family, and then it becomes a vicious cycle of people stealing from each other. The idea of a social contract began with Plato and his “Crito” where it was pointed out that by living in a society we implicitly agree to live by these social rules, such as stealing or murder is wrong. The social contract is used to create order within a society and if people did not abide by some sort of informal agreement then there would be chaos, and that cannot justify stealing even if it meant taking care of your family for the rest of everyone’s lives, there has to be some sort of order or everyone would be a target of personal interests without fear of punishment.

The social contract can be found from before even Plato, by looking towards the Bible. The Bible introduces an idea of a social contract in Exodus 20:1-17,where God gave Moses the Ten Commandments for which the Israelites were to live by, and one of those commandments includes “thou shalt not steal”. From a strictly Christian point of view, the commandments are the most important laws God has handed down for all people to live by, but if you were to take God of the equation, then these laws also make perfect sense as a social contract to live by. The ten commandments also includes laws about murder, lying, and to not desire what other people have, and gives a group a guide into what is right and wrong in society. If everyone abides by the Ten Commandments, or a social contract, then people can live in relative harmony with each other. If we do not live by any of these, then stealing the money with a computer my not be wrong any more, but then it would not be immoral if someone physically or electronically stole the money from you, or worse yet, cause more suffering by going further than stealing and attacking you and your family.

It is ethically wrong to steal from our look into the social contract, but one case where stealing would not be wrong, would be if everyone gave up the social contract, but instead were following a system of anarchy. An idea of stealing being wrong is that it is taking the property of another human being for oneself, but if the idea of a person owning property were taken out of the equation, then it would not be stealing anymore and would be taking what is available for one’s own means. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon was a French anarchist that wrote [*What is Property? Or, an Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/What_Is_Property%3F)and touches upon the idea of what property really is from an anarchist’s point of view. If we were to develop a society as described by Proudhoun, then stealing money via computer would not be wrong, but at the same would there even a reason or need to steal money in that type of system?

We still live in a society governed by the social contract, so that in reality it is still wrong to take any property from anyone, no matter the circumstances. The option of gaining enough money for life, for you and your family, without fear of reprisal is a temptation indeed and it would be hard to say that no one would think hard about making a decision, and very few, if any would immediately say no thank you to that type of proposition.