

**CIS 490/590**  
**Computer Ethics**  
**Spring 2013**  
**Exercise #5**  
**Who owns Information?**

DUE on Thursday May 9, 2:00 p.m. (beginning of class)

**This assignment is graded and will be handed in.**

**Deliverables: Bring two printed copies of your answers to class.** You will hand in one and use one for discussion during class on Thursday.

The purpose of this exercise is to understand the complexity of the ownership of information, how it changes with new technology, and how it should be regulated, if at all. We will practice on a particular case.

After reading and understanding the ideas presented in lecture and in the suggested readings, please read the case for this exercise called "Location-sharing app *Highlight* gets biggest update since launch" by Emily Price at Mashable.com, July 19, 2012. You might also find it useful to examine Facebook's Privacy Policy, and the following discussion of legislation, "Sneaky Apps that Track Cellphones", New York Times, Dec 23, 2012.

All these readings will be found on our class website under the READINGS page at the following URL:

<http://www.cs.uoregon.edu/Classes/13S/cis490/READINGS/readings.html>

If you choose, you may freely search for any web sources that discuss this topic, but give citations if you use their ideas or quotes.

Please answer the following questions in ONE page maximum<sup>1</sup>:

- 1) Describe in the first paragraph what Highlight does and where it gets the information that is used in the application.
- 2) Describe in a second paragraph what ethical issues regarding surveillance and third party use of information are raised by Highlight.
- 3) Using ethical analysis: Should applications like Highlight be banned?  
Support your arguments with specific legal information, other example apps, and your own experience. Give details!

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<sup>1</sup> Paper format is single-spaced and with 1" margins, 12 point Times font. At the top, please state your name, the Exercise #, and the date. The paper must follow professional standards for format and citation. It must have excellent spelling and grammar.

Consider the following points:

- a. What economic advantage is there to Highlight to offer a free app? What economic advantage is there to selling/buying third party information about people? Do you think that Facebook has a right to sell your information to another party? Can we change that?
- b. What US legal limitations are there on surveillance? Does this apply to Highlight? Do you think that Highlight is a stalking application? Why did Facebook pull its *Find Friends Nearby* app? Does opt-in and opt-out solve the privacy problem of using GPS data for these applications?

**Policy on Graduate Student Grading:** Since this is a combined undergraduate/graduate class, graduate student answers on exercises and discussions will be held to higher expectations of quality.

**Policy on Late Assignments:** All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date due. Since we will discuss the assignments at that time, you must be present in class to receive credit. Late assignments will not be accepted. If you think you have a legitimate reason to argue for an exception from this rule, make sure that you communicate it *prior* to the due date.

**Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism:** Assignments constitute a large part of evaluation; hence it is crucial that they reflect your individual or group work. Any traces of plagiarism, i.e. copying someone else's work, will be dealt with according to the University regulations. On the other hand, I encourage you to share ideas and discuss the material in the lectures and textbook with other members of the class.