# Unit 7: Legal, Ethical, and Societal Issues in Media Information

## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Targets</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson 1: The Ethical Use of Media Information</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jump Start</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn about It!</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check Your Understanding</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore and Create!</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson 2: What Is the Copyright Law?</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jump Start</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn about It!</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check Your Understanding</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore and Create!</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson 3: Current Issues on the Copyright Law</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jump Start</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn about It!</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check Your Understanding</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore and Create!</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Let’s Create!</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Check</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wrap Up</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bibliography</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Answers to Check Your Understanding</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glossary</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
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</table>
We always talk about how media information literacy plays an important role in our everyday lives for it rests at the very heart of our freedom to information and of expression.

Media and information literacy empowers an individual with the understanding needed to look at different media platforms and its functions. It implores us to critically look at content and make informed decisions as to whether these are valid or not. We recognize the importance of this “literacy” as we also embrace our role as users and producers of information and media content.

In this unit, we shall dive deeper into the legal, ethical, and societal issues concerning media literacy. We will center on the laws concerning the use, abuse, and responsibilities when handling media and information. The ongoing debate on copyright issues, fair use, and cybercrimes will also be raised in this unit to further enlighten ourselves with the vast scope of power media and information hold. And to recognize the different concerns, challenges, and opportunities new media and technology present.

Fig. 1. The Ecology of MIL: Notions of MIL from UNESCO. This shows all categories encapsulated in media information literacy.¹

Essential Question

- What can we do to promote ethical use of media and information?
- What laws and rules must we abide in when using and producing media and content?
- What are the current issues, challenges, and opportunities surrounding media and technology in terms of information dissemination?

Learning Targets

In this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain actions to promote ethical use of media and information.
- Demonstrate proper conduct and behavior online (netiquette, virtual self).
- Put into action their personal resolve to combat the digital divide, computer addiction, copyright infringement and bullying.
- Put into practice their understanding of the intellectual property, copyright, and fair use guidelines.
- Explain copyright, fair use, etc. vis-a-vis human rights.
- Discuss current issues related to copyright vis-a-vis government and private sectors’ actions.
- Enumerate opportunities and challenges in media and information.
Lesson 1: The Ethical Use of Media Information

The term “ethics” refers to a moral guide and standard for one’s actions. We will discuss how society plays a role in the way we use media, technology, and information responsibly.

Jump Start

Instruct the class to stand at the back of the room. The teacher mentions a statement, and you must take one step forward if it applies true for you. Take a step back if it does not apply to you, or if you do not know if it does.

Statements:

1. I have my own laptop to use.
2. I have access to a LAN / WIFI internet.
3. I have a flat screen SMART TV at home.
4. I own a smartphone.
5. I have a postpaid cell phone plan.
6. I am connected to the Internet through FIBR technology.
7. I own more than one cell phone, or tablet, or music player.
8. I use a smartwatch.
9. I am subscribed to a monthly application like Netflix, iFlix, Spotify, Hooq, and the like.
10. I am confident to type 50 words per minute using the keyboard.
11. I am a member of at least two social media platforms.
12. I like taking pictures of almost everything with my smartphone.
13. I update myself with the latest news and trends via social media.
14. I do my research papers online.
15. I spend most of my free time using a gadget.

At the end of the statements, ask/tell the students to observe who are nearer the front of the room and who were left behind. Reflect with the following questions in mind:

Why is there a big / small difference among the class? How does being in front or at the back make you feel? Discuss the answers as a class.
Learn about It!

With the advent of the internet, innovations and technologies made almost everything possible. Information becomes readily available, accessible, and widespread. With the rising popularity of social media, people ventured out into expanding their identities not just physically but also virtually. It has answered the human need to be **belong**, to create, and to collect.

The internet opened a global village wherein users find it more economical and entertaining to connect with others. We establish ourselves online and connect with our virtual friends. Social networking enables us to **collect** anything from virtual friends, to thumbs up likes, comments, to online followers. The need to **create** also shows in our strive to always take that “selfie” or “ootd” (acronym for outfit of the day). We become “curators” of our own experiences, learnings, and knowledge. The internet and technology made such changes possible for everyone to be media producers and creators.

**Our Virtual Self**
As soon as we access the internet, we create a trail of data that is constantly filed and stored someplace. These wide array of data ranges from emails, photos, text messages, browsing history, phone calls, videos, online shopping, and many more. This trail creates our new identities known as the **virtual self**.

The littlest bits of data that makes up our virtual identity has become a valuable form of currency. It helps companies determine what advertising, content, or services best suits you. As soon as you click or type any information online, you have already imprinted your virtual self.

**Digital Divide**
Going back to our reflection from the Jumpstart activity, you can observe how some of you were left behind or advanced compared to the others. It means that there is a gap even among your friends in class.

The term **digital divide** is described as a “gap” found between individuals, social classes, businesses, and even countries with different socioeconomic backgrounds and their ability to access and use information communications technology. Traditionally, its basis was on the question of having or **not** having access. However, with the rise of mobile smartphones
worldwide, this *inequality* has now become about having more or less internet bandwidth, and having or *not* having the internet technology skills to utilize it.\(^2\)

An idea of “being left behind” in the digital literacy race do exist. Owning new technologies, accessing new content and services, and having the confidence and competence in using these devices are just some of the skills we constantly strive to have today. This digital divide is not limited to the physical, material, and technical gap but also tackles on a gap in digital knowledge.\(^3\)

**EXAMPLE**

Give concrete situations when you observe digital divide. What simple steps can you do as a student to bridge this digital divide?

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**Netiquette**

Netiquette stems from the word “internet etiquette” which generally refers to rules or conventions of correct behavior and politeness in online situations. Although it was a term coined by Virginia Shea in her book, “*Netiquette*”, online users and digital technologies such as emails, the internet, and chat rooms follow it.\(^4\)

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The very basic rule is on the do’s and don’ts of email communication. Remembering that an email is an electronic version of a formal letter. It must include a subject line, a salutation, an introduction, a concise body, and a proper opening and closing line.4

From Shea’s rules, other institutions followed and listed down their own netiquettes. There are numerous netiquette rules about posting on social media sites, typing text messages, and a lot more.

When we go online, our virtual selves enter what she calls cyberspace, which has its own unique culture. The indirect approach of connecting to people in the internet often leads to a few social mistakes. We might be misinterpreted and offend others, or we might understand some things and get offended. Oftentimes, we forget that behind those usernames, are real people too. These rules were written for both digital natives and digital immigrants.

**Digital natives** are people that have grown up in the age of the internet or the digital age while **digital immigrants** were born years before them only acquiring familiarity with these digital technologies and systems as an adult.

**Dangers of Technology**
The numerous opportunities and freedom the internet offers may also lead to abuse and misuse.

**Cyberbullying** is any form of harassment that happens over the internet. This happens when a communications technology like the computer, smartphone, or other devices are used to deliberately damage or hurt others through aggressive behaviors. Some of these hostile
behaviors include, but are not limited to, sending malicious or hate text messages, and posting or sharing antagonistic comments or messages in social media. These actions were purposely done to embarrass, shame, and even degrade other people.\(^5\)

**Copyright infringement** is the misuse of information protected by the copyright law without permission. Most cases of these include plagiarism and piracy.

**Computer or internet addiction** is the dependence of some individuals and their inability to control the use of these devices and technologies often stopping their normal activities daily. They also show signs of distress and or irritability when weaned off these devices.\(^6\) Their sometimes complete reliance towards this technology often leads to other issues like violent behaviors, lack of sleep, and inability to focus on other tasks.

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\(^5\) Legal, Inc. US. “USLegal.” *Cyber Bullying Law and Legal Definition* | USLegal, Inc., definitions.uslegal.com/c/cyber-bullying/.

Check Your Understanding

Answer the following questions.

A. Knowledge / Comprehension.
   Give the correct term for the definitions given.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is the <em>inequality</em> of having more or less internet bandwidth, and having or <em>not</em> having the internet technology skills to utilize it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is the dependence of some individuals and their inability to control the use of the internet and computer devices and technologies often stopping their normal activities daily.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It refers to the people that have grown up in the age of the internet or the digital age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is also called “internet etiquette” which generally refers to rules or conventions of correct behavior and politeness in online situations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is the misuse of information protected by the copyright law without permission.</td>
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</table>

B. Application.
   1. What qualities of digital divide make it a big issue in schools?
   2. What other areas of communications technology can computer and internet addiction be observed?

C. Synthesis.
   1. Why is it important for us to study netiquette rules?
   2. How can you bridge the gap of digital natives and digital immigrants?
Explore and Create!

1. Netiquette
   a. List down your own netiquette rules as students.
   b. State the steps and reasons why these rules are important for you in class or in school.

2. Design a Program
   a. Design a program or activity to inform more people about the problems posed by the digital divide.
   b. Come up with three concrete solutions on how the government and other organizations can help close this divide.

3. Daily Media Habits
   a. List down your daily media habits, how long, and what devices you use.
   b. Explain if you find yourselves following or violating the netiquette rules or the copyright law discussed.
   c. Reflect on how you can make a change with this habits.
Lesson 2: What Is the Copyright Law?

Unintentional plagiarism is still a bad practice in research. Also, laws about copyrights must be respected. What does the Copyright law stands for, promotes, and protects?

Jump Start

Study the case about Ed Sheeran's almost forgotten “Photograph”

In 2016, Vanity Fair published a news article about how Ed Sheeran allegedly “copied” another artist, Matt Cardle's song.

Read and listen in this link: https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2016/06/ed-sheeran-photograph-lawsuit

After reading the article and listening to the audio in class. Find a partner to discuss the following questions:

● How is Sheeran’s work similar to Cardle’s?
● What possible sanction might Sheeran and his group receive? Describe both parties actions.
● Do you think technology and the internet have made “copying” easier? Does it impede and lessen people’s creativity? Explain your answer by citing examples.

Learn about It!

If you try to search “plagiarism cases” in a search engine, it would give you results arranged according to how scandalous the cases were. In the Philippines alone, approximately 400,000 Google search results about plagiarism cases would come up. This is an alarming issue that we face worldwide. From photographs, videos, research papers, to song compositions and medleys, everything has been plagiarized in some way. When do we draw the line between
inspiration and copying?

**Freedom and Responsibility**

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

This sentence is directly quoted from the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (also known as the UNDHR). This is a document drafted by different people with legal and cultural backgrounds from all over the world. It states how each individual is entitled to his or her own opinions. We commonly call this as free speech or freedom of expression. We would see this right practiced and exercised everyday. Due to digital technology, we get to spread our ideas and information faster and easier.

However, knowing this basic human right and being able to practice it is just one part of it. We also have to act *ethically*. We know that individuals come from different cultures, social backgrounds, and different ideological systems. **Ideology** is a set of beliefs or principles belonging to an individual or group that can be viewed as a complete vision, or a way of looking at things. And with this, ideologies will clash, one’s freedom of expression might hinder or negatively affect another’s.

In line with this, the Philippines has established laws that ascertain the promotion of this human right while ethically acknowledging the differences of individuals. These are through the Freedom of Information Bill, Fair Use Policy, the Copyright Law, and the Intellectual Property Code to name a few.

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**Did you know?**

The head of the United Nations is the Secretary-General. They are appointed based on geographical rotation, but never from the five permanent Security Council member states. The current Secretary-General is Ban Ki-moon from South Korea.

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All Under the Law

Republic Act No. 8293 commonly known as the Philippine Copyright Law states that any original tangible material with a known creator of a published book, research paper, journal articles, web content, pictures, graphics, music or videos is protected under this law. Original tangible materials include those of content and information published physically or online in the internet. This law also includes the Intellectual Property Code which covers the rights of a copyright holder to the attribution, integrity of ownership, and protection of all his/her original works. Another provision of the Copyright Law is the Fair Use Policy. Under this, non-profit educational institutions and libraries are allowed to use someone else’s original and copyrighted work guided by specific rules and guidelines. This also covers unpublished works in the Philippines.

Recently, the government pushed a bill in Congress called the Freedom of Information Bill. With this, every Filipino citizen can have access to all information about all government agencies in the country. All information about policy development, including researches conducted, official acts, decisions, and transactions can be accessed by any Filipino. This seeks to promote transparency and good leadership in the government.

Let’s Analyze!

Use the sample case study in our early discussion.
How can we make sure this does not happen to us as media content creators and producers?
When is it illegal or prohibited to use someone’s work? Can you use it for school reportings? How about for research papers?

Let’s evaluate!

With the freedom to express yourself and voice out your opinions comes a heavy responsibility of doing it ethically. How will this knowledge about the Copyright Law help you in your future researches and educational endeavors?

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8 Copyright Law of the Philippines, ipfs.io/ipfs/QmX0ypizjW3WknFijnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Copyright_law_of_the_Philippines.html.

9 “Brigham Young University Copyright Licensing Office.” Copyright Basics | BYU Copyright Licensing Office, sites.lib.byu.edu/copyright/about-copyright/basics/.

Check Your Understanding

Answer the following questions.

A. Knowledge / Comprehension.
   Identify the term defined. (5 items)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is also called the Republic Act No. 8293. It states that any original tangible material with a known creator of a published book, research paper, journal articles, web content, pictures, graphics, music or videos is protected under this law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is a set of beliefs or principles belonging to an individual or group that can be viewed as a complete vision, or a way of looking at things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This covers the rights of a copyright holder to the attribution, integrity of ownership, and protection of all his/her original works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is a document drafted by different people with legal and cultural backgrounds from all over the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Under this provision, non-profit educational institutions and libraries are allowed to use someone else's original and copyrighted work guided by specific rules and guidelines.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Application.
   1. What type of tangible materials are covered by the copyright law?
   2. What type of institutions are covered by the Fair Use Policy?

C. Synthesis.
   1. Why is the Freedom of Information Bill important for ordinary Filipino citizens?
   2. Explain how to ethically practice freedom of speech.
Explore and Create!

Case Study: Copyright Infringement / Plagiarism

Research on a case that violated the Copyright Law in the Philippines. Report and discuss in the class the following:

a. What provisions under the Copyright Law was violated? Why was this considered a violation?

b. Do you think that the violator is guilty? Why or why not?

c. What could they (the violators) have done differently to prevent this from happening?
Lesson 3: Current Issues on the Copyright Law

The Copyright Law has been a debatable topic for some time now because of the rapid emergence of digital media and platforms. The line differentiating inspirations, adaptations, recreations to copying, and plagiarizing creative content has been steadily thinning. It has always begged the question, until when does the Fair Use Policy allow us to use someone else’s work before we call it a copyright violation?

Jump Start

Editorial Cartoon Analysis

Look at the editorial cartoon above. Analyze the dialogue and symbolisms presented in the drawing. Answer the following questions:

- What does this cartoon trying to say? What issue is the cartoon trying to address?
- Do you agree with the message of this cartoon? Why or why not?

Fig. 2. The music industry when it comes to copyright laws. ¹¹

Learn about It!

Adhering to our basic human right to express ourselves, we constantly yearn to express our views and opinions to the world. With the help of social media and the internet it has become a habit to share a part of ourselves to the world. Our virtual identity constantly seeks to create, curate, and collect.

The Copyright Law in the Philippines is laid out to us to set rules and standards for content creation, production, and dissemination. The government has enacted the Freedom of Information Bill to further show their transparency and accountability in their given roles for the citizens. Private sectors steadily utilize the use of new digital technologies such as the internet to connect and communicate their knowledge and ideas to a wider audience.

Although there are many positive opportunities for media and information, it also has a downside to it. The ease in uploading original content in the internet and its easy access pose a challenge to the current copyright laws.

The Anti-Camcording Act of 2010 seeks to eradicate one of the rampant problems of the Philippine film industry - film piracy. This law penalizes illegal video recording, distribution, selling, and possession of unlicensed films. ¹² According to the dictionary meaning, piracy is the act of illegally copying someone’s product or invention with proper permission. This is similar to plagiarism but piracy is geared more into the redistribution and profiteering. Another issue we often encounter is censorship. This is the subduing, and or prohibition of any part of books, films, news, language, and information that are considered indecent, politically or socially unacceptable, or a threat to security.¹³

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¹³ “Censorship | Definition of Censorship in English by Oxford Dictionaries.” Oxford Dictionaries | English.
The government has constantly tried to address these issues by creating different organizations and works with other organizations as well. You can see advocacies and public service announcements during movie previews that show harsh consequences for individuals who violate the anti-camcording act.

The **MTRCB** or the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board is in charge of regulating what televisions and movies show to the public. They are also in charge of rating TV shows and films accordingly.

**EXAMPLE**

Piracy is a very rampant problem of the copyright law. The internet helps propagate this theft through torrent sites and illegal downloads. What are other forms of piracy and copyright infringements that you know?

The **OMB** or the Optical Media Board under the Office of the President implements the rules and regulations under the Optical Media Act of 2003. They are also the key government agency in battling film, video, and music piracy in the Philippines.

The **IPOPHIL** or the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines is government agency that grants patents to innovative inventions and protects these individuals by strictly enforcing the intellectual property rights of the country. A **patent** is a license from a governing authority given to an inventor, or creator of original content or invention, for a right of title for a set period of time. An invention or creation with a patent excludes other people from making, using, or selling it without permission not under the guidelines of the Fair Use Policy.

**Let’s evaluate!**

Why is there a need for anti-camcording law? Are the punishments for these laws justifiable? Are the government's actions enough to answer the issues surrounding the copyright law?

**Check Your Understanding**

Answer the following questions.

A. **Knowledge / Comprehension.**
   Identify the term being defined. *(5 items)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They are the key government agency in battling film, video, and music piracy in the Philippines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>This is a government agency that grants patents to innovative inventions and protects these individuals by strictly enforcing the intellectual property rights of the country.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>This is a license from a governing authority given to an inventor, or creator of original content or invention, for a right of title for a set period of time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This law penalizes illegal video recording, distribution, selling, and possession of unlicensed films.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>This is the subduing, and or prohibition of any part of books, films, news, language, and information that are considered indecent, politically or socially unacceptable, or a threat to security.</td>
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</table>

B. **Application.**
   1. Why are patents important?
   2. How has the government answered the challenges of the Copyright Law?

C. **Synthesis.**
   1. Why is censorship important in television and films?
   2. Why is piracy considered an illegal activity?
Explore and Create!

New Media Reflection

1. Choose a new media technology application (like Youtube) and device (smartphone) that you normally use daily.
2. List down its benefits to you and to others.
3. Reflect on the challenges it also poses to its users. Explain how it is a challenge and a problem.
4. Research a news article or feature article that highlights its use, benefit, and challenges.
5. Write an advice you can give people when using these apps or devices.
Let’s Create!

“PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT”

Goal:
- Your task is to create a 3 to 5 minute public service announcement video.
- The goal is to disseminate information about your chosen advocacy.
- The problem/challenge is to list down all issues and problems about your chosen topic and present it with the given time.

Role:
- You are part of the organization tasked to promote the advocacy.
- You have been asked to present a PSA on any of the following topics:
  - Anti-piracy / camcording law
  - MTRCB ratings and what it means for viewers
- Your job is to gather information and create a PSA video.

Audience:
- The target audience is the class.
- You need to convince both the client and the audience about your chosen advocacy.

Situation:
- The challenge involves video production and information dissemination.

Product/Performance and Purpose:
- You will create a 3 to 5 minute PSA video showcasing your chosen advocacy.

Standards & Criteria for Success:
- Your report needs to be presented in class.
- Your work will be judged by the class and the teacher.
- Your product must meet the standards of the rubric.

Your paper will be graded according to this rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Beginning (0-1 point)</th>
<th>Developing (2-3 points)</th>
<th>Accomplished (4-5 points)</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>General</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Content (Focus on details/events are clearly evident; it is clearly related to the topic.)</td>
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<td>Organization (Logical progression of details/events; clear transitions between ideas.)</td>
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<td>Conventions (spelling, mechanics, grammar and usage)</td>
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<td><strong>Task-specific</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of Information Presented (no plagiarism, proper citations done, with bibliography)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical Presentation (video editing was smooth, audio was clear, with subtitles, details and facts are visible in the video)</td>
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Total Score: 22
## Self-Check

Please fill in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>I think I need more time and assistance.</th>
<th>I have a minimal understanding of it.</th>
<th>I am confident that I can do this with ease.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can explain actions to promote ethical use of media and information.</td>
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<td>I can demonstrate proper conduct and behavior online (netiquette, virtual self).</td>
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<td>I can put into action their personal resolve to combat the digital divide, computer addiction, copyright infringement and bullying.</td>
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<td>I can put into practice their understanding of the intellectual property, copyright, and fair use guidelines.</td>
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<td>I can explain copyright, fair use, etc. vis-a-vis human rights.</td>
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<td>I can discuss current issues related to copyright vis-a-vis government and private sectors' actions.</td>
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<td>I can enumerate opportunities and challenges in media and information.</td>
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Wrap Up

- Your virtual identity is important when navigating in the digital world.
- We must recognize the existence of the digital divide and take actions in bridging the gap between those who have and those who have none.
- The Copyright Law and its provisions protect original content creators.
- All original tangible works published or unpublished are protected under the Copyright Law and the Fair Use Policy of the Philippines.
- The OMB, MTRCB, and IPOPHIL are just some of the agencies the Philippine government has established to promote and ensure the safety of our digital and media content.
“Brigham Young University Copyright Licensing Office.” Copyright Basics | BYU Copyright Licensing Office, sites.lib.byu.edu/copyright/about-copyright/basics/.


Copyright Law of the Philippines,
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Glossary

**Censorship** - it is the subduing, and or prohibition of any part of books, films, news, language, and information that are considered indecent, politically or socially unacceptable, or a threat to security.

**Computer or internet addiction** - it is the dependence of some individuals and their inability to control the use of the internet and computer devices and technologies often stopping their normal activities daily.

**Copyright infringement** - it is the misuse of information protected by the copyright law without permission.

**Copyright law** - it is all original tangible works are covered under this law

**Cyberbullying** - Any form of harassment that happens over the internet.

**Digital divide** - it is the *inequality* of having more or less internet bandwidth, and having or *not* having the internet technology skills to utilize it.

**Digital immigrants** - they are the people born years before the digital age, only acquiring familiarity with digital technologies such as the internet and other digital systems as an adult.

**Digital natives** - they are the people that have grown up in the age of the internet or the digital age.

**Ethics** - they are moral principles that tell us whether an action is right or wrong

**Fair use policy** - it allows the use of someone else’s original and copyrighted work within specific rules and guidelines

**Ideology** - it is a set of beliefs or principles belonging to an individual or group that can be viewed as a complete vision, or a way of looking at things.

**Intellectual property code** - it covers the rights of a copyright holder to the attribution, integrity of ownership, and protection of all his/her original works
**Netiquette** - it is also called “internet etiquette” which generally refers to rules or conventions of correct behavior and politeness in online situations.

**Patent** - it is a license from a governing authority given to an inventor, or creator of original content or invention, for a right of title for a set period of time.

**Plagiarism** - it is committed when you use someone else’s work as your own without giving them proper credit.

**Universal declaration of human rights** - it is a document drafted by different people with legal and cultural backgrounds from all over the world.