UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON SCHOOL OF LAW

STATEMENT ON COMPUTING ETHICS

You are responsible for adhering to the University of Dayton's Policy on Fair, Responsible and Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources. Not adhering to this policy could result in negative consequences, including the loss of your internet privileges and fines. This policy can be viewed at http://www.udayton.edu/~udit/ethics/guidelines.htm.

One important part of this policy that we all need to be aware of is that you may not use the University of Dayton's network for "unauthorized access, reproduction or use of the resources of others is prohibited." This means that you cannot get on the university's network and violate copyright laws. If you download illegal copies of music or participate in a file-sharing program (e.g. LimeWire, Kazaa, Morpheus), even if you have only legally purchased copies of music in your shared files, you are likely violating copyright laws. If you have one of these file-sharing programs on your machine but you set it to not share files, this does not necessarily protect you, as the settings can reset, and your files can be available for sharing even without your knowledge of it. You could also accidentally place other software programs into your shared folder, and even though this would be an accident, it would still be illegal.

Certainly, the most obvious consequence of participating in these file-sharing programs is not only the disciplinary actions of the university, but also the legal ramifications. All these activities that violate copyright law are illegal. It is not difficult for you to be caught, as many companies have employees who search the internet for this kind of illegal activity all the time, and then report it when they find it. It is important that all of us, particularly law students who need to be of good moral character to pass the bar exam, not break the law!

These file-sharing programs have other consequences as well. Each time you send a request to see if someone has a song, it sends that request to everyone who uses the program, which is somewhere in the millions. Then, the computers of those millions of people respond. All this traffic clogs up the university's network and slows it down. Then, when you are trying to do research for school, you may notice a slow network and wonder what's wrong, when part of the problem is all this traffic from a program you are running on your computer.

These file-sharing programs also download large amounts of spyware to your computer. Spyware is bad for your system for many reasons, and can ultimately result in your computer crashing and/or having to be completely rebuilt. As a result, you could lose any files that were stored on your computer and not backed up somewhere else. Even if spyware does not result in such extreme circumstances, it does clog up your computer and slow it down.

Because of all the problems associated with these file-sharing programs, it is the recommendation of UDSL that you do not download or use these programs at all. Prevention is the best solution to the problem.