

# Information Ethics Review Board

Melody Bentfield, Leanna Denton, Susan Loy, Theresa Rottinghaus, Sarah Tenfelde-Dubois

September 21, 2007

LI 801

Emporia State University

---



# The Issue:

Legitimate Business Practices

and

Intellectual Property

VS.

Respect for Privacy

# Parties with something at stake

- **John Flora** -- owner of Northwest CatchIt.
- **Prosthesis** - prosthetics company that sold John a database with the names and address of its customers, including a three-year-old girl.
- **Marketing Consultant** -- hired (assumption) by John to expand his business. Recommended buying Prosthesis's database.



# Principles of Information Ethics

- 1) Respect for intellectual property.
- 2) Respect for privacy.
- 3) Fair representation (no deceptive business practices).
- 4) Non-maleficence (do no harm).

# Application of Principles

- 1) Get your facts straight.
- 2) Identify the moral dilemma.
- 3) Evaluate the dilemma with the previous principles and your gut moral feelings. Which side has the most ethical support?
- 4) Test your solution--will it withstand public scrutiny?

# Legal Rights

## JOHN

- John did not deceive the recipients of his advertising campaign:

## PROSTHESIS

- Sales and Purchases of names and addresses for marketing purposes is a legal and common business practice.
- Society honors entrepreneurial efforts that is making profit from ideas/inventions--basis of commerce.

## FAMILY

- Are names and address really personal or private information as this information could be accessed in numerous other ways? (The issue in this case may be the age of this particular recipient).



# Future Prevention

Database owners should:

- get permission before using private information for secondary purposes

- provide customers with a convenient (yearly) opportunity to inform them of what use is made of their information (be specific on what information is used), ask for consent, and provide a free opportunity to correct inaccuracies

# Future Prevention: 1973 Code of Fair Info Practices

- No secret data record-keeping systems should exist.
- People must be given the opportunity to find out what information is recorded about them and how it's used.
- People must be allowed to prevent personal information being used for purposes other than what it was originally collected for.
- People must be given the opportunity to correct information about themselves.



# References

- Severson, Richard J.. Principles of Information Ethics. 1997. M.E. Sharpe. Armonk, NY.
- Rubin, Richard E.. Foundations of Library and Information Management. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Neal-Schuman, Inc.. New York, NY. 2004.