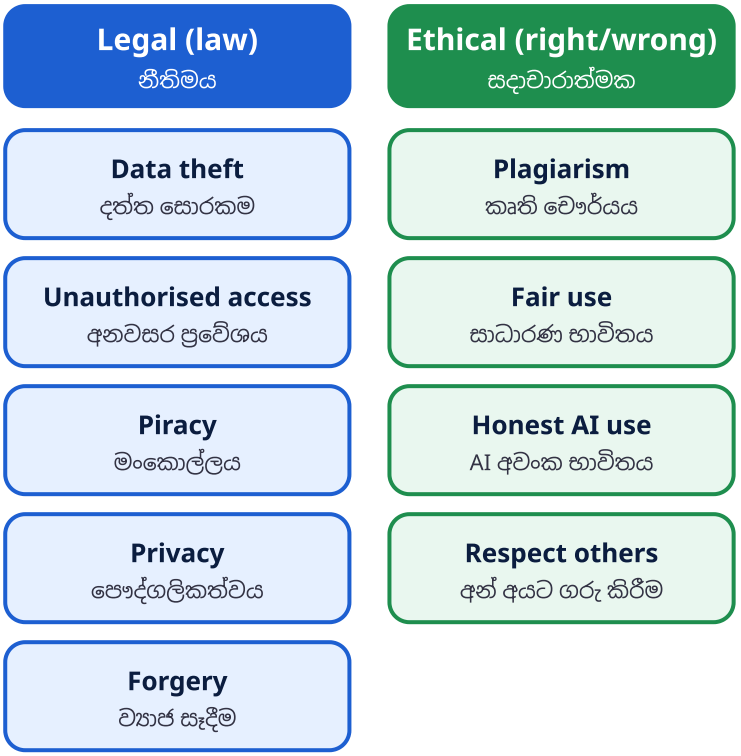
G.C.E. O/L Grade 11 ICT · Lesson 6

# 6.7 Legal and Ethical Issues in ICT: Copyright, Privacy and Sri Lankan Laws

**Syllabus 15.7.** ICT can be used in wrong ways. Some wrong acts break the **law** (legal issues) and some are simply **unfair or dishonest** (ethical issues). You will learn about data theft, unauthorised access, intellectual property, privacy, forgery, Sri Lanka's ICT laws, fair use and plagiarism.

## 1. Legal issues




Main legal issues in ICT.

| Issue | Meaning | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Data theft | Stealing or copying data without permission | Copying a customer list to sell it |
| Unauthorised access | Entering a computer or account without permission (hacking) | Logging in to a friend's account |
| Privacy | The right to keep personal information private | Posting someone's phone number online |
| Forgery | Making fake documents or changing real ones with a computer | A fake certificate or edited bill |

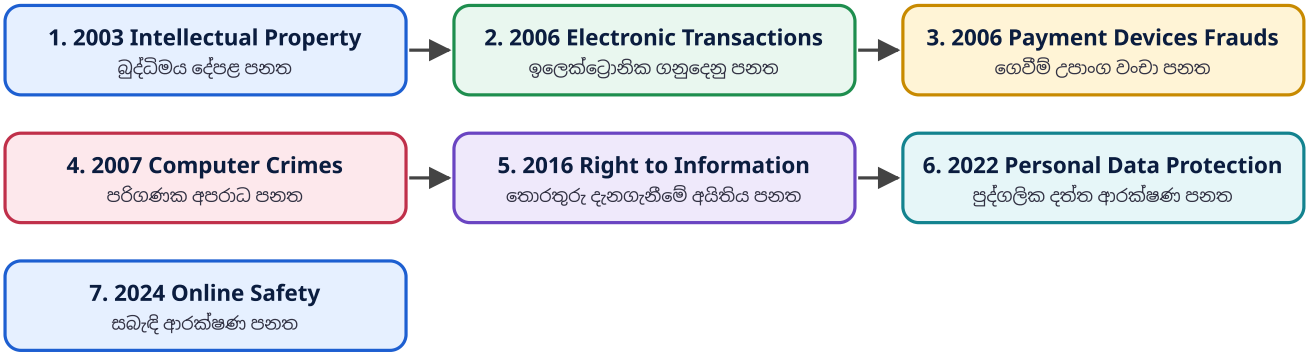
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## 2. Intellectual property

**Intellectual property (IP)** is something created by the mind, such as a song, book, software or invention. The law protects it:

- **Copyright** © – only the creator can copy and sell a song, book, film or program.
- **Patent** – protects a new invention so others cannot copy it for some years.
- **Piracy** – illegally copying or sharing software, films or music. It is a crime.

## 3. ICT laws in Sri Lanka




Sri Lanka's ICT legal framework on a timeline.

| Act | Number | What it does |
|---|---|---|
| Electronic Transactions Act | No. 19 of 2006 | E-documents and e-signatures are legal. |
| Computer Crimes Act | No. 24 of 2007 | Hacking, unauthorised access and data damage are crimes. |
| Intellectual Property Act | No. 36 of 2003 | Protects copyright, patents and trademarks. |
| Payment Devices Frauds Act | No. 30 of 2006 | Card and payment device fraud is a crime. |
| Right to Information Act | No. 12 of 2016 | Citizens can ask for public information. |
| Personal Data Protection Act | No. 9 of 2022 | Organisations must protect personal data. |
| Online Safety Act | No. 9 of 2024 | Deals with harmful online statements. |

> 💡 Easy memory trick: 2003 IP, 2006 ETA and payment fraud, 2007 computer crimes, 2016 RTI, 2022 PDPA, 2024 Online Safety.

## 4. Ethical issues

**Fair use** means you may use a small part of someone's work for study, news, review or teaching, **if you name the source**. **Plagiarism** means copying someone's words or ideas and saying they are yours. It is dishonest, even if it is not always a crime.

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**Fair use**
Quote two lines of a poem in your essay and name the poet.

**Plagiarism**
Copy a whole web page into your project with no name.

**Piracy**
Download a paid game free from an illegal site.

NEW 2026 2026: under the **PDPA (2022)** organisations must ask before they collect your data and keep it safe. Using **AI** tools to write homework and handing it in as your own is **plagiarism** – say when you used AI and check its facts.

## Key Words

**Data theft** – Stealing or copying data without permission.

**Unauthorised access** – Entering a computer system without permission.

**Hacking** – Breaking into a computer or network.

**Intellectual property** – Work created by the mind, such as songs, books and software.

**Copyright** – The creator's right to copy and sell their work.

**Patent** – Protection for a new invention.

**Piracy** – Illegally copying software, films or music.

**Privacy** – The right to keep personal information private.

**Forgery** – Making fake documents with a computer.

**Fair use** – Using a small part of a work for study and naming the source.

**Plagiarism** – Presenting someone else's work as your own.

**PDPA** – Sri Lanka's Personal Data Protection Act No. 9 of 2022.

## Sample Q&A

### 1. What is the difference between a legal issue and an ethical issue?

**Answer:** A legal issue breaks the law; an ethical issue is unfair or dishonest but may not be a crime.

### 2. Which Sri Lankan law makes hacking a crime?

**Answer:** The Computer Crimes Act No. 24 of 2007.

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**3. What is the difference between copyright and a patent?**

> **Answer:** Copyright protects creative work like songs and software; a patent protects an invention.

**4. What is piracy?**

> **Answer:** Illegally copying or sharing software, films or music.

**5. How can you avoid plagiarism?**

> **Answer:** Write in your own words and name every source you use.

**6. What does the PDPA of 2022 do?**

> **Answer:** It makes organisations protect people's personal data.

## MCQ

**1. Logging in to a friend's e-mail without permission is**

A. unauthorised access
B. e-learning
C. fair use
D. a patent

**2. Selling copied DVDs of a new film is**

A. a backup
B. telemedicine
C. fair use
D. piracy

**3. A new kind of solar charger can be protected by a**

A. firewall
B. patent
C. copyright
D. password

**4. The Computer Crimes Act of Sri Lanka is**

A. No. 9 of 2022
B. No. 12 of 2016
C. No. 24 of 2007
D. No. 19 of 2006

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**5. Which law protects people’s personal data?**

A. Personal Data Protection Act 2022
B. Electronic Transactions Act 2006
C. Intellectual Property Act 2003
D. Payment Devices Frauds Act 2006

**6. Copying a web page into your project and calling it your own is**

A. a patent
B. plagiarism
C. mixing
D. fair use

**7. Quoting two lines of a song in a review and naming the singer is**

A. piracy
B. forgery
C. fair use
D. data theft

**8. Making a fake birth certificate on a computer is**

A. fair use
B. copyright
C. simulation
D. forgery

**9. Which term means: “Stealing or copying data without permission”?**

A. Data theft
B. Forgery
C. Patent
D. Intellectual property

**10. Which term means: “Entering a computer system without permission”?**

A. Unauthorised access
B. Fair use
C. Piracy
D. Copyright

**11. Which term means: “Breaking into a computer or network”?**

A. Privacy
B. Plagiarism
C. Hacking
D. Patent

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**12. Which term means: “Work created by the mind, such as songs, books and software”?**

A. Piracy
B. Forgery
C. Intellectual property
D. PDPA

**13. Which term means: “The creator’s right to copy and sell their work”?**

A. Data theft
B. Copyright
C. Fair use
D. Privacy

**14. Which term means: “Protection for a new invention”?**

A. Forgery
B. Unauthorised access
C. Plagiarism
D. Patent

**15. Which term means: “Illegally copying software, films or music”?**

A. Fair use
B. Piracy
C. PDPA
D. Hacking

## Structured Questions

**1. Name and explain two legal issues in using ICT.** *(2 marks)*

> Data theft: stealing data without permission (1); unauthorised access: entering a system without permission (1)

**2. Explain copyright, patent and piracy.** *(3 marks)*

> Copyright protects creative work (1); patent protects an invention (1); piracy is illegal copying (1)

**3. Name three ICT laws of Sri Lanka with their years.** *(3 marks)*

> Electronic Transactions Act 2006 (1); Computer Crimes Act 2007 (1); Personal Data Protection Act 2022 (1)

**4. What is the difference between fair use and plagiarism?** *(2 marks)*

> Fair use: a small part for study with the source named (1); plagiarism: presenting others’ work as your own (1)

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**5. Give two ways to protect your privacy online.** *(2 marks)*

> Do not post personal details such as address or phone (1); use privacy settings and strong passwords (1)

## Summary

- Legal issues break the law; ethical issues are unfair or dishonest.
- Legal issues: data theft, unauthorised access, privacy, forgery.
- Copyright protects creative work; patents protect inventions.
- Piracy is illegal copying.
- Computer Crimes Act No. 24 of 2007 covers hacking.
- PDPA No. 9 of 2022 protects personal data.
- Fair use: small part, for study, name the source.
- Plagiarism: passing off others' work (or AI work) as yours.

## MCQ answer key – 6.7

1. **A** – It breaks the Computer Crimes Act.
2. **D** – Illegal copying = piracy.
3. **B** – Patents protect inventions.
4. **C** – CCA = 2007.
5. **A** – PDPA No. 9 of 2022.
6. **B** – Always name sources.
7. **C** – A small part + the source = fair use.
8. **D** – Fake documents = forgery.
9. **A** – Data theft – Stealing or copying data without permission.
10. **A** – Unauthorised access – Entering a computer system without permission.
11. **C** – Hacking – Breaking into a computer or network.
12. **C** – Intellectual property – Work created by the mind, such as songs, books and software.
13. **B** – Copyright – The creator's right to copy and sell their work.
14. **D** – Patent – Protection for a new invention.
15. **B** – Piracy – Illegally copying software, films or music.

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