



Case Study #2: Saving Software

“Ok, class...we’ve only got about 5 minutes left before the end of the period. At this point, you need to save your work on your network space and make a back-up onto your floppy disk. Be sure to turn this project in before you get on the school bus.” As Mrs. Varkian gave these instructions, she walked around the lab and noticed that Molly was upset.

Molly looked up at her teacher and said, “Mrs. Varkian, I missed most of the class today because I had to take the vision test. I barely got to use the graphics program. Will we be coming back in here this week?”

Mrs. Varkian shook her head. “No, Molly, I am afraid we won’t be using this package for quite some time. We can create an alternate assignment for you tomorrow.”

Molly responded quickly, “But, I really wanted to finish drawing my dog. I really like the program---I don’t want to do a different assignment. That doesn’t seem very fair. We just got a new computer, but it doesn’t have this program on it. Could I take the disk home and work on it tonight? I could bring it back in the morning. What do you think?”

Mrs. Varkian thought about it for a minute, and picked up the disk. She read the license agreement. “Well, I think we could do that. This individual disk has a separate site license. I’ll uninstall from this machine and let you take it home. But, you have to promise me that you’ll uninstall the program before coming back to school. I’ll send the details home in a note to your Mom.”

Molly smiled. She couldn’t wait to get home.

Once she got home, she found her brother Rich doing his homework and her mother was at the grocery store. She told her brother about her note for mom and wondered if he would install it for her. He was glad to help her. He installed the software and let her do her assignment. When she was done, she reminded her brother to uninstall the software with her teacher’s instructions and he promised he would after he finished the problem he was doing.

Molly said, “OK. Thanks for your help.” She put the disk and her assignment in her book bag and went upstairs to play.

Rich finished his homework and remembered about uninstalling the software, but when he saw the assignment his sister had left open on the monitor, he got interested in what this software could do.

He played around with it for a while and thought to himself that it would not really be hurting anyone to leave the software on the computer. He could put it in his personal folder and no one would know that he didn't uninstall it.

Rich started moving the program and hesitated. "This was ok wasn't it?" he wondered to himself.

Discussion Questions:

- Is it ok for Rich to install the software and keep it? Why / Why not?
- Is it ok for Molly to use the software for one night, uninstall it, and return it? Why / Why not?
- Is keeping the software the same as stealing? Why / Why not?
- Is Rich lying by not telling anyone that he has installed the software? Why / Why not?