

Organizations and their employees face numerous ethical challenges in conducting business. Internet and digital technologies make it easier than ever to assemble, integrate, and distribute information, unleashing concerns about the appropriate use of customer information, the protection of personal privacy, and the protection of intellectual property. Other pressing ethical issues that information systems raise include setting standards to safeguard system quality that protect the safety of the individual and society, establishing accountability for the consequences of information systems, and preserving values and institutions considered essential to the quality of life in today's information society. International treaties and Interpol, enabled by global information systems, have made it possible to extradite, prosecute, arrest, and imprison business managers suspected of criminal activity on a global basis. Information systems raise ethical questions for both individuals and societies because these systems create opportunities for intense social change and, thus, threaten existing distributions of power, money, rights, and obligations. Although business firms in the past often paid for the legal defense of employees enmeshed in civil charges and criminal investigations, firms are now encouraged to cooperate with prosecutors to reduce charges against the firm itself. Failures in ethical business judgment are not usually masterminded by employees of information systems departments, but information systems are often instrumental in many of these frauds.