

Copyright Infringement

I am a fourth-year Engineering student and I pleaded guilty to copyright infringement. I will be facing **three years of suspension** from the University. Not only that -- beforehand I was required to appear in court in New York because I was **sued by the publishing companies**. In the long run it turned out to be a **financially costly** situation in addition to the three years of suspension.

This story began with multiple offences of selling PDF solution manuals to textbooks online. These textbooks were used at various universities and colleges in Canada, the USA, and many other parts of the world. I did this because I was in desperate need of money to cover myself financially through school. I had family problems that made that difficult. In this world education is key to get anywhere in life and I do realize that. If I could I would have got a job but at the time things were difficult economically and it was hard to find one. I realized when a person is in desperate need of money they will do things out of the norm. All my life I was an honest person and never cheated or did anything to harm anyone. But even though I had good intentions it does not justify the fact I did something wrong.

The main fact here is that I committed a crime. My case in court was filed as a civil case but it could have easily been filed as a criminal case. If that were to have happened, my life/career as an engineer would basically be guaranteed to be over. This is due to the fact that a large sum of money was involved in this matter and my actions hurt the profit gained by authors and the book companies. I don't want to pass my knowledge to anyone else and give people ideas. I don't want them to repeat my mistakes.

My case was settled out of court. I paid the book companies and agreed that I would not commit an offence like this again. A civil litigation lawyer who understood my situation was really hard to come by. Not everyone has such a deep understanding of the things I did because it was complicated. **The amount of sleep I lost, and time consumed by this, was just staggering.**

After going through this I decided to become a better person and be honest for the rest of my life. People in today's world don't realize trademarks and copyright are a serious matter. **People everywhere break copyright laws left and right without even realizing it;** either at home, school, or at work. For example, people share PDF files of published works, download movies or music, take other people's work, edit it, and claim it as their own, burn various media files onto a CD and pass them on to friends, photocopy books, put in PPT presentations facts or images found on the net without acknowledging them, write a paper or journal article without the proper use of references, etc. By doing this **we cheat the authors** of their great work. If I was to put my life or valuable time into something I worked hard on, I'd like to be recognized for it and rewarded appropriately. Therefore you have to **put yourself in the authors' shoes and see what harm you are doing to them.**

Going through this **I made myself a better person** and stayed faithful to that. I stopped doing illegal activities and found myself a job and worked full-time while being a full-time engineering student. I got four hours of sleep daily, but in the long run I felt good about myself. Not many people can do what I did, and that gave me the strength to go on and finish engineering to the end. Later down the road the University was notified of my past actions through a tip. Even though that phase of my life was over it did not matter. The University had the right to punish me because my actions fell under "academic dishonesty." While I was a student, I offered the manuals to University students here and I sold them using University property. So once again I had to relive my past and recall everything. I had the option of telling the University what I did in detail or not. Being truthful to my commitment of being a better person I explained my story to the best of my ability. This resulted in a three year suspension. I was lucky. **It could have been worse. I easily could have been expelled** and lost the four years of education that I worked so hard for.

What I learned from my experiences is that **life is easier when it is honest**: it makes you feel good about yourself and your achievements. I promised myself to be a better person and I intend to stick with that for the rest of my life. **My advice to other students: if you lead a life that involves cheating and lying it will come back to you sooner or later**; what goes around comes around. But if your heart is pure with good intentions life will take a turn for the better. Sometimes an experience like this is necessary to open up one's eyes. Even though I do regret what I did, and suffered because of it, to go on one must look at the good that came of this. Overall, I became a stronger person in many ways. I am not saying to go out there and do bad things so you can gain this experience, but to those who are academically dishonest, look at the overall picture and see that every little experience builds a person and makes one stronger. We are all human and make mistakes; **the only mistake in life you can make is one that you learn nothing from.**

- Fourth-year Engineering Student