

## What's Right and What's Wrong LINK-UP page 16 of the text

### Morality and the Speed of Technological Change

As you read in this Link-Up, most people learn their values from several sources and in many cases, the boundary between right and wrong is clear. For example, you know that it is against the law to steal a CD. Most Canadians would also see stealing as morally wrong, as well as illegal. Sometimes, however, the boundary between what is right and wrong is unclear. Is making a copy of a friend's new CD theft? How does this action differ from taking the CD without paying for it?

New laws can be slow to catch up with technological developments. As a result, there are times when you have to rely on your own sense of morality to guide you in deciding what is right and wrong. You may be guided in these decisions by what your family has taught you, your religious beliefs, or the standards in your community. **Peer pressure**, the opinions of friends or classmates, can also have an effect on your opinions.

One way to test the soundness of your opinions is to share them with others. The exercise below is called a "consensus exercise." It is meant to help you share your ideas with others and reach a general agreement on a decision. Reaching a consensus means seeking the opinions of others and coming to a decision that most people share. Not everyone, however, has to agree with the final outcome.

**peer pressure:** being influenced by people in your age group

In this exercise, you are asked to read four statements. You are then to react to each of the statements

- on your own
- with a partner
- with three other students
- with seven other students

Here is how it works.

**Step 1:** Carefully read each of the following statements on your own. Do not discuss the statements with others at this stage. Indicate if you agree or disagree with the statement by writing A (agree) or D (disagree) after each statement.

**Step 2:** Find a partner. Compare your answers to the statements and discuss why you chose to agree or disagree. You can change your answer if your partner's position is convincing.

**Step 3:** Together with your partner, find another pair. Compare answers to see if there is a consensus. If there is no consensus, discuss the situation and work towards a general agreement.

**Step 4:** Repeat the process with another group of four. Your group should now consist of 8 students. Compare answers with members of this larger group and try to reach a consensus on statements where opinions vary.

### **STATEMENTS**

There is nothing wrong with downloading music and movies from the Internet for personal use.

Making a copy of a friend's new CD is just as much theft as stealing a CD from a store.

It should be against the law to talk on a cell phone while driving a vehicle.

Because of the pace of change in information technology, teens should not be bound by the values of older generations.

### **WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

1. Did you change your initial opinion as a result of your discussion with others? If so, why?
2. Is this a good way to reach a decision on issues? Why or why not?