

Intellectual Property (IP)/IP Management Course for Public Agencies

Case Studies

Sample Case Study Scenario 1

Mr X is a mechanical engineer from Agency A. He is seconded to Agency B to develop new technologies for Singapore's athletes to use in the upcoming Olympic Games. His secondment contract does not address the issue of IP rights.

Mr X is sent to the Singapore Sports School, where he observes Olympic hopeful, Joseph Scoring, having trouble with his goggles because they are always getting fogged up. Mr X has a 'eureka!' moment and decides to develop vapour resistant goggles for the Singapore swim team, to be called Vaporize.

The vapour resistant goggles will be using confidential technology which was developed by Mr X's previous employer, a private automobile manufacturer called Autocars Pte Ltd ("Autocars"). They had developed vapour resistant windshields for cars. Mr X's employment agreement states that he cannot use Autocars' confidential information after he leaves Autocars' employment.

As Joseph Scoring has said that his current pair of goggles is not fashionable and cool enough, Agency B decides that a swimmer must look cool when wearing Vaporize.

Agency B decides to have a design competition to see who can come up with the coolest goggle design. The competition is open to students from School of the Arts, who contribute sketches and mock-ups of the new goggle designs. Prize money was given to the winners of the competition.

After Vaporize has been developed, Agency A, wants to provide Vaporize to parking attendants for use when they issue fines. Due to its anti-fog properties, Vaporize can help the parking attendants identify the cars with incorrect parking coupons in events which will give rise to vapourisation, e.g. during heavy perspiration and in rainy days.

Agency A feels that since Mr X is their employee, they should not have to obtain a license from Agency B to use Vaporize.

Questions

- a) Is it permissible for Agency B to use the technology from Autocars Pte Ltd to develop Vaporize?
- b) What steps should Agency B take if it discovers elements of Vaporize borrowed from Autocars Pte Ltd's concept?

Sample Case Study Scenario 2

Ban Luck (Ms Ban) is a communications officer from Agency D.

To ensure everyone in the organisation is aware of "hot-button" issues related to gambling, Ms Ban sends weekly updates to all staff through the office newsletter, titled "Luck's Letters".

Ms Ban sends Luck's Letters through email. The latest edition of Luck's Letters includes the following content:

- 1) A Facebook page containing a cartoon by prominent activist, Alexis Ow. The cartoon depicts a political figure collecting \$100 in casino levies from a long queue of people.
- 2) A summary of an article reproduced from *The Straits Times* describing the possible bad effects of casinos.

- 3) A web link to a forum post on popular online forum, SoftwareZone.

Ms Ban is also preparing a presentation for the World Casino Summit.

In order to make the presentation more interactive, she embeds a video clip extract of a BBC documentary on gambling in her PowerPoint presentation.

Questions

- a) Can Ms Ban:
- i. Reproduce the Facebook page cartoon;
 - ii. Include a summary of *The Straits Times* article; and/or;
 - iii. Include a web link to a forum post on SoftwareZone?
- b) Do you think Ms Ban can embed a video clip extract of a BBC documentary on gambling in her presentation for the World Casino Summit?