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ELECTRONIC  
CONFERENCE



AW & BUSINESS

# Electronic Commerce

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# Preface

*Electronic Commerce* explores how the development of an electronic, or cyber-based, infrastructure affects how business is conducted generally. Developments in information technology—not only the Internet, but also the technology of managing and analyzing information—have a significant effect on almost everything about commercial transactions. *Electronic Commerce*, therefore, covers a broad spectrum of topics. Portions of this book focus on developing business and technology practices, even where there are not yet significant statutory, case law, or regulatory developments. Our goal is to acquaint you with the major topics that you are likely to encounter in practice, representing clients in business transactions in an electronic context.

Part I discusses the infrastructure of electronic commerce, with chapters on *Setting Up Shop in Cyberspace* and *Rights in Personal Information*. Part II works through the major headings of a conventional commercial-transactions course, with chapters on *Sales of Goods*, *Licensing*, *Electronic Payments*, and *Lending in the Information Age*. Part III addresses problems of cross-border dispute resolution, a subject of particular relevance to Internet commerce given the flimsiness of geographic boundaries in cyberspace.

At each step, we consider how information technology has altered the effectiveness of old transactional forms, caused the development of new transactional forms, and raised new legal problems not adequately addressed under existing doctrine. We hope that a major feature of your Electronic Commerce course will be our Web site (<http://law.umich.edu/ecommerce>), where you can find updates reflecting the rapid pace of development, links to other sites of interest, and additional materials that deepen and expand the problem-based approach of the book. Among other things, it includes downloadable versions of the diagrams from this book, most of the material in the statutory supplement, and the material from the glossary discussed below.

*Electronic Commerce* does not assume any prerequisite courses on the part of the reader beyond the typical first-year law school curriculum. We also do not expect our reader to have a technical background. We define technical or industry-specific terms as we use them in context. In addition, we include a glossary of terms at the back of the book for reference.

Because we assume no background in such areas as trademarks, copyright, antitrust, or secured transactions, the exposition in several assignments lays down the foundations for understanding these areas. Sometimes, as a result, the breadth of coverage is challenging. We think the payoff is worthwhile: it will become apparent how many different areas of law are relevant to commercial transactions, and how advances in technology alter the contexts governed by those laws.

A major feature of *Electronic Commerce* is its problem-based assignment approach. Organized into separate, self-contained assignments, each is designed to provide enough material for one 60- to 75-minute class session. Unlike most law school textbooks, the assignments include no supplementary notes suggesting that the reader might profit by consulting cases, law review articles, or other secondary sources. The only thing needed to work through the assignments—besides this book, the statutory supplement, and an Internet connection (to view our companion Web site)—is imagination and curiosity.

Our goal at all points is to provide the reader with two things: the ability to see the grand structure of the systems that we cover, and the ability to pick up and use new systems that develop in the years to come.

Good luck. We hope that you enjoy studying the materials as much as we have enjoyed preparing them.

*Ronald J. Mann  
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# Contents

<i>Preface</i>	xxv
<i>Introduction</i>	1

## Part One

### The Context of Electronic Commerce

Chapter 1. Setting Up Shop in Cyberspace	17
A. IP Addresses and the Domain-Name System	17
B. Governance of the Domain-Name System	19
C. Registration of a Domain Name	20
Assignment 1: Trademarks and Domain Names	22
A. Trademarks and Trademark Infringement	23
B. Initial Interest Confusion	24
<i>Brookfield Communications, Inc. v. West Coast Entertainment Corp.</i>	24
C. Trademark Dilution	34
D. Personal Jurisdiction	34
Problem Set 1	35
Assignment 2: Cybersquatting	37
A. Private Responses: NSI and ICANN Dispute-Resolution Policies	37
<i>Hewlett-Packard Company v. Burgar</i>	39
B. Federal Response: The Anticybersquatting Consumer Protection Act	43
<i>Shields v. Zuccarini</i>	44
Problem Set 2	50
Assignment 3: Web-Site Development and Outsourcing	52
A. What Will the Web Site Do?	53
1. Informational Sites	53
2. Simple Storefronts	54
3. Complex Sites	55
B. Web-Site Development Contracts	55
C. Intellectual-Property Issues	57
1. Ownership of the Site	57
2. Infringement	58
D. Web-Site Hosting and Other IT Outsourcing	59
Problem Set 3	63
Assignment 4: Computer Security	65
A. The Challenge of Information Systems	65
1. Problems of Corporate Organization and Resources	65
2. Challenge of System Integration	66
3. Social Context of Information Systems	67

B. Vulnerabilities, Threats, and Safeguards	67
1. Threats	69
a. Persons Who Threaten Security	69
b. Malicious Code	70
c. Network Security	71
d. Low-Tech Threats	72
2. Safeguards	72
3. Security Technologies	73
C. Industry Best Practices and Technical Standards	73
Problem Set 4	77
Assignment 5: Records Management, Company Policies, and Electronic Evidence	79
A. Records Management	79
B. Information-Technology Policies	82
C. Electronic Evidence	83
1. Discovery of Electronic Evidence	83
a. Obtaining Electronic Evidence	83
b. Spoliation of Evidence	85
2. Admissibility of Electronic Evidence	86
a. Authentication	86
b. Best-Evidence Rule	87
c. Business-Records Exception to the Hearsay Rule	87
Problem Set 5	88
Assignment 6: Controlling Access to a Web Site	91
A. Trespass to Chattels	92
<i>eBay, Inc. v. Bidder's Edge, Inc.</i>	92
B. Misappropriation	98
C. Other Causes of Action for Unauthorized Access: Breach of Contract and the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act	99
<i>Register.Com, Inc. v. Verio, Inc.</i>	99
D. Unsolicited Commercial E-mail	105
Problem Set 6	107
Assignment 7: Liability for Web Site Content	110
A. Web-Site Operator as Publisher	110
1. Defamation and the Communications Decency Act	111
<i>Zeran v. America Online, Inc.</i>	111
2. Copyright Infringement and the Digital Millennium Copyright Act	116
<i>Hendrickson v. eBay, Inc.</i>	117
B. Linking and Framing	122
Problem Set 7	124
Chapter 2. Rights in Personal Information	127
Assignment 8: The Basics of Information Privacy	127
A. Early Development of Privacy Law	128
B. Fair Information Practices and Information Privacy Law	129

C. Fair Credit Reporting Act	131
1. Access Restrictions	132
2. Erroneous Information	133
3. Use by Potential Employers	134
4. Credit Header Information	134
5. Credit Scoring	135
Problem Set 8	136
Assignment 9: The Electronic Communications Privacy Act	138
A. Electronic Communications Privacy Act	138
<i>In re DoubleClick, Inc. Privacy Litigation</i>	140
B. USA Patriot Act of 2001	148
Problem Set 9	149
Assignment 10: Information Privacy Law Reform	152
A. Clickstream Data, Online Profiling, and Data Warehousing	153
B. Financial Information Privacy Provisions in the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act	156
1. Obligations Under GLB	157
2. Enforcement of GLB	159
3. Criticisms of GLB	159
C. Children's Online Privacy Protection Act	160
D. Privacy of Health Records Under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act	164
Problem Set 10	165
Assignment 11: Internet Privacy Policies and Related Practices	169
A. Privacy Policies	170
1. Online Privacy Practices	170
2. Developing a Privacy Policy	170
3. Revising an Existing Privacy Policy	173
B. Self-Regulation	175
1. Seal Programs	175
2. Privacy Enhancing Technologies	176
C. Enforcement of Privacy Policies	178
1. FTC Enforcement Actions	178
2. Class-Action Law Suits	179
Problem Set 11	181
Assignment 12: Transborder Flows of Personal Information	184
A. OECD Guidelines	185
B. EU Data Protection Directive	186
C. UK Data Protection Act of 1998	189
D. US-EU Safe Harbor	191
E. EU Standard Contractual Clauses	192
Problem Set 12	193



## Part Two

### The Influence of Information Technology on Transactions

Chapter 3. Sales of Goods	197
Assignment 13: Remote Contracting	197
A. Delayed Presentation of Terms ("Shrinkwrap")	197
<i>Brower v. Gateway 2000, Inc.</i>	198
B. Electronic Presentation of Terms ("Clickwrap" and "Browsewrap")	202
<i>Rudder v. Microsoft Corp.</i>	203
<i>Specht v. Netscape Communications Corp.</i>	206
C. Mail-Order Rule	212
Problem Set 13	213
Assignment 14: Electronic Contracting	215
A. Eliminating Paper Documents	215
B. Attribution	218
1. Robotic Devices	218
2. Signatures	219
C. Mailbox Rule	220
D. Mistake	221
Problem Set 14	221
Assignment 15: Digital Signatures	224
A. What Is a Digital Signature?	225
1. Symmetric and Asymmetric Cryptography	225
Figure 15.1. Conventional Cryptography	226
Figure 15.2. Asymmetric Cryptography	227
2. Digital Signatures	227
Figure 15.3. Message Digest	228
3. Public Key Infrastructure and Certificate Authorities	228
Figure 15.4. Digitally Signed Document	229
Figure 15.5. Certificate Authority	230
B. Digital Signatures in Electronic Commerce	232
1. Authentication of Network Users and Cross-Certification	232
2. Closed-Network Applications	234
3. Open-System Applications	234
Figure 15.6. SSL	236
4. Communications Security Protocols	236
C. Digital Signature Legislation	237
1. Technology-Specific Legislation	238
2. Technology-Neutral Legislation	239
3. EU Electronic Signature Directive	240
Problem Set 15	242

Assignment 16: B2B Commerce: Electronic Data Interchange and Trading-Partner Agreements	244
A. Electronic Data Interchange Overview	244
1. The History of EDI	244
2. EDI Technology	247
3. EDI Applications	250
4. Business-Process Reengineering	253
B. Trading-Partner Agreements	255
1. Writings and Records	256
2. Contract Formation and Message Acknowledgements	257
3. Security Procedures and Message Authentication	258
4. Terms and Conditions	258
5. Value-Added Networks	258
Problem Set 16	259
Assignment 17: B2B Commerce: Internet Exchanges	262
A. B2B Internet Exchanges: An Overview	262
B. Structure of a B2B Internet Exchange	264
1. Market Models	264
2. Technology of a B2B Internet Exchange	265
3. Legal Form: Exchange Members Versus Owners	268
4. Antitrust Considerations	270
C. Terms and Conditions of Exchange Transactions	271
1. Exchange Membership	271
2. Terms and Conditions	272
3. Payment	273
4. Information Practices	273
Problem Set 17	275
Assignment 18: Internet Auctions	277
A. Auctions and Auctioneers	277
1. Traditional Auctions	277
2. Licensing of Auctioneers	279
3. Non-Auction Remedies for Fraud	281
B. Online Auctions	283
C. Online Reverse Auctions	286
Problem Set 18	287
Assignment 19: Cross-Border Sale Transactions	290
A. The Basic Transactions	290
1. Documentary-Draft Transactions	290
Figure 19.1. Sight Draft for Documentary Collection	291
a. Delivering the Goods to the Carrier	291
b. Issuing the Draft	291
c. Processing by the Seller's Bank	292
d. Processing by the Buyer's Bank	292
Figure 19.2. Documentary-Draft Transaction	293
Figure 19.3. Issuing the Letter of Credit	294

2. Letter-of-Credit Transactions	294
Figure 19.4. Payment by Letter of Credit	295
B. Electronic Advances	296
1. Bolero	297
2. The eUCP	299
3. Future Advances	300
Problem Set 19	301
Assignment 20: Taxing the Internet	303
A. Taxation by Local Jurisdictions	303
<i>Quill Corporation v. North Dakota</i>	303
B. Taxation by National Jurisdictions	310
Problem Set 20	312
<b>Chapter 4. Licensing</b>	<b>313</b>
Assignment 21: The Basics of Licensing	313
A. The Concept of a License and the Law That Governs It	313
B. Scope	315
<i>Boosey &amp; Hawkes Music Publishers, Ltd. v. The Walt Disney Company</i>	316
C. Warranties and Other Obligations of the Seller	320
1. Noninfringement	321
2. System Integration	321
D. Termination and Remedies	322
1. Licensor Default	322
2. Licensee Default	322
Problem Set 21	325
Appendix: XYZ Enterprise Service Agreement	327
Assignment 22: Preemption Issues in Licensing Transaction	341
A. Two Paradigms	341
1. The Distinction Between Fact and Expression	341
2. First-Sale Doctrine	342
<i>Bobbs-Merrill Co. v. Straus</i>	342
3. Fair Use	344
B. Efforts to Enhance Control	345
1. Technological Restrictions	345
2. Restrictions by Transactional Design	346
a. Is a Licensee an "Owner"?	346
<i>DSC Communications Corp. v. Pulse Communications, Inc.</i>	347
b. Can the License Retain Greater Rights for the Licensor?	352
<i>National Car Rental System, Inc. v. Computer Associates International, Inc.</i>	352
3. Can the Licensor Prohibit Assignment by the Licensee?	356
Problem Set 22	357

Assignment 23: Custom Development, Mass Market, and General Public Licenses	359
A. Software Development: Source and Object Code	359
B. Custom Software Development Agreements	360
1. Product Specifications and Delivery Schedules	360
2. Acceptance Testing	360
<i>Rocky Mountain Microsystems, Inc. v. Public Safety Systems, Inc.</i>	361
3. Source-Code Escrow	365
C. Mass-Market Software Licenses	366
D. General Public Licenses and Open Source Software	368
1. GNU General Public License	368
2. Mozilla Public License	369
3. Open Source Initiative	370
Problem Set 23	371
Assignment 24: Information Licensing	374
A. Information as Commercial Property	374
1. Special Characteristics of Information	374
2. Information in Internet Commerce	375
B. Legal Protections for Information	376
1. Copyright	376
2. Trade Secret	377
3. Misappropriation	377
<i>National Basketball Association v. Motorola, Inc.</i>	377
4. Contract	380
5. Trespass to Chattels	381
C. EU Sui Generis Right in Databases	381
<i>British Horseracing Board Ltd. v. William Hill Organisation Ltd.</i>	381
Problem Set 24	388
Assignment 25: Antitrust Issues in Licensing Transactions	390
A. The Basics of Antitrust Law	390
1. Unreasonable Restraints of Trade	390
2. Monopolization	391
B. The Players	391
C. Antitrust and Intellectual Property	392
<i>Image Technical Services, Inc. v. Eastman Kodak Co.</i>	394
Problem Set 25	398
Assignment 26: Microsoft	400
<i>United States v. Microsoft Corporation</i>	400
Problem Set 26	424

Chapter 5. Electronic Payments	427
Section A. Electronic Technology and the Checking System	427
Assignment 27: The Road to Truncation	427
A. The Basics of Check Collection	428
Figure 27.1. Direct Payment	429
1. Direct Presentment	429
2. Indirect Collection	429
a. Clearinghouse Collection	430
b. Direct-Send Collection	430
c. Federal-Reserve Collection	430
Figure 27.2. Clearinghouse Collection	431
Figure 27.3. Direct-Send Collection	431
Figure 27.4. Federal-Reserve Collection	432
Figure 27.5. MICR Line	433
B. Allocation of Loss in the Checking System	434
1. The General Rules	434
2. Special Liability Rules (Negligence and the Like)	434
C. Payor-Bank Truncation	435
D. Depository-Bank Truncation	438
1. Factual Summary	438
2. Legal and Practical Issues	439
a. Dispersed Processing of Checks	439
b. The Need for a Tangible Image	440
c. A Middle Ground for Now: Recovering the Originals	441
Problem Set 27	441
Assignment 28: Electronic Checks	444
A. POS Conversion	444
Figure 28.1. POS Conversion	445
B. ACH "Checks"	448
Figure 28.2. ACH "Checks"	449
C. True Electronic Checks	450
Problem Set 28	453
Section B. Internet Payments and Emerging Payment Systems	455
Assignment 29: Paying for Retail Internet Purchases	455
A. Credit Cards	455
1. Fraud	456
2. Privacy	459
3. Micropayments	460
B. Debit Cards	461
Problem Set 29	463
Assignment 30: Person-to-Person Payments	465
A. Providing Funds for Payment	466
B. Making Payments	468

C. Collecting Payments	470
Problem Set 30	471
Assignment 31: Electronic Bill Presentment and Payment	473
A. How It Works	473
1. Biller Web Sites	473
2. Bill Aggregators	474
Figure 31.1. Bill Aggregators	475
B. Errors	476
1. Customer Errors	476
2. Bank and Intermediary Errors	477
a. Bill-Distribution Errors	477
b. Excessive and Duplicative Payments	478
3. Biller Errors	479
C. Fraud	479
1. Interloping Bills	479
2. Interloping Payments	480
Problem Set 31	480
Assignment 32: Electronic Money	483
A. Portability: Stored-Value Cards	484
1. History and Basic Concepts	484
2. Using Stored-Value Cards	486
a. Storing Value on the Card	486
b. Spending the Value from the Card	487
c. Obtaining Payment from the System	488
3. Error and Fraud in Stored-Value Card Systems	488
Figure 32.1. Using Stored-Value Cards	489
B. Remote Transactions: Internet-Capable Electronic Money	491
1. Obtaining E-money	491
2. Spending E-money	492
3. Clearing and Settling E-money Transactions	493
Figure 32.2. Using Electronic Money	494
4. Problems with E-money Systems	494
a. Privacy	494
b. Duplicate Spending	495
c. Forged Ecoins	496
Problem Set 32	497
Chapter 6. Lending in the Information Age	501
Section A. Lending Against Intellectual Property	501
Assignment 33: Lending Against Copyrights	501
A. The Basics of Secured Lending	501
B. The Copyright Act	503
1. The Basics of Copyright	503
2. Perfecting Security Interests in Copyrightable Materials	504
<i>National Peregrine, Inc. v. Capitol Federal Savings</i>	
& <i>Loan Ass'n</i> (In re Peregrine Entertainment, Ltd.)	505

<i>Aerocon Engineering, Inc. v. Silicon Valley Bank</i> (In re World Auxiliary Power Co.)	510
Problem Set 33	514
Assignment 34: Financing the Acquisition of Software	517
A. Software Leases	517
Figure 34.1. Software Leasing	518
Figure 34.2. Article 9 View of General Intangibles	520
B. Finance Licenses	522
Figure 34.3. Finance Licensing	523
Problem Set 34	523
Assignment 35: Lending Against Patents	525
A. The Basics of Patent Law	525
B. Perfecting Security Interests in Patents	526
<i>Moldo v. Matsco, Inc.</i> (In re Cybernetic Services, Inc.)	526
Problem Set 35	537
Assignment 36: Lending Against Other Forms of Intellectual Property	539
A. Trademarks	539
<i>In re Together Development Corporation</i>	539
B. Trade Secrets	542
C. Web Sites and Domain Names	544
<i>Network Solutions, Inc. v. Umbro International, Inc.</i>	544
Problem Set 36	552
<b>Section B. Electronic Enhancements of Lending Transactions</b>	<b>554</b>
Assignment 37: Registry Systems—Electronic Filing	554
A. The Basics of Loan-Supporting Filing Systems	554
B. Updating Personal-Property Filing Systems	556
C. Updating Real-Property Filing Systems	560
1. The Existing Mortgage Filing Systems	560
2. E-SIGN and Electronic Mortgage Filings	561
D. Problems with Electronic Filing	563
Problem Set 37	564
Assignment 38: Account Systems—Financial Assets	566
A. Account-Based Lending Systems	566
Figure 38.1. Account-Based Lending Systems	567
B. The Article 8 System	567
1. The Direct Holding System	568
2. The Indirect Holding System	568
a. The Basic Framework	569
b. Rights Against the Intermediary	570
Figure 38.2. The Indirect Holding System	571
<i>Powers v. American Express Financial Advisors, Inc.</i>	572
c. Rights Against Third Parties	576
3. Lending Against Securities Entitlements	577

C. Lending Against Deposit Accounts	578
Problem Set 38	578
Assignment 39: Token Systems—Electronic Notes	580
A. Transferable Records Under E-SIGN and the UETA	580
1. The Basics of Negotiability	580
2. Negotiability Under E-SIGN and the UETA	583
3. Implementation for Real-Estate Notes	584
B. Electronic Chattel Paper Under Article 9	585
Problem Set 39	586

## Part Three

### Procedural Issues

Chapter 7. Problems of Cross-Border Dispute Resolution	591
Assignment 40: Jurisdiction and Conflict of Laws	591
A. Jurisdiction and Interstate Internet Commerce	591
1. Minimum Contacts and Internet Commerce	591
<i>Neogen Corp. v. Neo Gen Screening, Inc.</i>	591
2. Judgment Enforcement	597
B. Conflict of Laws and Interstate Internet Commerce	597
<i>CAT Internet Services v. Magazines.com Inc.</i>	598
C. Jurisdiction and Cross-Border Internet Disputes	600
1. Jurisdiction to Prescribe and Adjudicate	600
2. Jurisdiction to Enforce	602
D. Conflict of Laws and Cross-Border Internet Disputes	604
E. Jurisdiction Avoidance	604
Problem Set 40	606
Assignment 41: Contractual Choice of Law and Forum	608
A. Contractual Choice of Law	608
1. Choice-of-Law Terms and Interstate Commerce	608
2. Choice of Law and Cross-Border Internet Commerce	610
B. Choice of Forum	610
1. Choice of Forum and Interstate Commerce	610
<i>Groff v. America On-line, Inc.</i>	611
<i>Mark Williams v. America On-line, Inc.</i>	614
2. Choice-of-Forum Terms in Cross-Border Internet Disputes	616
Problem Set 41	616
Assignment 42: On-line Dispute Resolution	619
A. Alternative Dispute Resolution	619
1. Arbitration	619
<i>Green Tree Financial Corp.-Alabama v. Randolph</i>	620
<i>Brower v. Gateway 2000, Inc.</i>	625
2. Mediation	627



B.	On-line Dispute Resolution	627
1.	ICANN Uniform Dispute Resolution Procedure	627
2.	Digital Millennium Copyright Act Take-Down Procedures	628
3.	Spam and the Realtime Blackhole List	629
4.	eBay and Square Trade Mediation Service	630
5.	Automated Settlement Systems	630
C.	EU Regulation of ADR	631
1.	Arbitration Agreements in Consumer Transactions	631
2.	EU Regulation of On-line Dispute Resolution	632
	Problem Set 42	633
	<i>Glossary</i>	637
	<i>Table of Cases</i>	657
	<i>Index</i>	659