

On Intellectual Property II

Here is further proof that believers in so-called “intellectual property” are trying to fit a round peg into a square hole: an owner of an idea may continue using his idea without ever becoming aware that it has been “stolen”. Try that with a wallet, or a car, or a laptop. Stealing property means removing it entirely from its owner’s ability to continue using it. You might steal someone’s property without them ever noticing, sure, but as soon as they go to use it, if it’s truly been stolen, it’s no longer where it was. It’s gone. Why is that? Because it’s finite and scarce, and therefore subject to conflict over its use. Ideas are neither finite nor scarce, and therefore not subject to conflict over their use. An infinite number of people may use a given idea simultaneously, all without any other user even being aware of it. “Stolen” and the owner never has to know; how’s that for misleading euphemism? And that’s today’s two cents.