What are the consequences of "cybersquatting"? How do communication and legal scholars and legislators forge ahead in the Internet era to create intellectual property (IP) policy tailored to online content?

Janet Ofano, a student in the Department of Communication's graduate program, Communication and Media Technologies, has provided some of the answers necessary to understand Internet copyright law. Her paper earned her one of the highest accolades from the Eastern Communication Association's annual conference: the top competitive paper in the Communication and Law section.

In "Diluting, Infringing, Confusing and Cybersquatting: Domain Name Disputes and The Consequences of Treading on the Wrong Domain," Ofano argued that Internet Trademark law tends to favor the trademark holder over any petitioners for already-held trademarks.

While First Amendment-related questions raised by this new trend have forced communication scholars and political scientists alike to search for an appropriate solution, the struggle between dynamism and stasis in the question of a need for laws devoted specifically to Internet content is really the same question of control and freedom. It is simply given a new context.

Ofano also examines the dance between conservative and liberal ideas and how they play out in argument for and against statutes like the Anti-Cybersquatting Consumer Protection Act (ACPA), as well as in many other major proposals for policy change. She addresses these significant divergences of opinion on how to handle online content, trademarks and copyright.

Ofano enters the fray in Domain Name Disputes, exploring this dilemma from every angle. She also informs readers of the intricacies of Internet Trademark law as well. Her paper provides a thorough examination of three new laws dealing explicitly with online content, and also looks into two cases that have the distinction of having helped to define current IP policy.

The paper fulfilled a requirement for Communication Law and Ethics, a CMT core course taught by Dr. Elaine Spauld.

Social Work Students Making a Difference

Pictured here are RIT students learning to become professional social workers. Each year, over 70 social work students participate in RIT and Rochester community activities. Through their participation in field placements, the Student Social Work Organization (SSWO), and the Phi Alpha social work honor society, these students make a difference.

Every year approximately 20 senior social work students intern at agencies in the Rochester area. Each student works 30 hours a week for six months in an agency setting. They get real-life experience in working to address conditions that limit people's ability to improve their quality of life. RIT social work students are at the Rochester School for the Deaf, AIDS Rochester, Monroe County Department of Social Services, Protective Services for Children, Preferred Care, as well as many other public and private human service agencies.

Last year these students worked 12,000 hours in local agencies providing services. They also provide new perspectives, resources from the classroom and instructors, and energy to these agencies.

Members of the Student Social Work Organization (SSWO) are involved in a number of activities across campus. "Our students joined over 300 other social work students from U.S. colleges and universities to learn more about the social work profession.

The second field trip was a visit to the University of Toronto's Social Work Master's program. There was a campus tour and relevant workshops. "We went to the Canadian Center for the Victims of Torture. We learned about the situations of immigrants and refugees who have sought the help of the Center," explained Deguire. Overall, the first international trip was a resounding success. "The exposure to a different culture, different ideas, and a foreign welfare system has increased our knowledge of international social work..."

The Phi Alpha social work honor society—Theta Lambda chapter—provides opportunities for students to learn about and serve their community. Currently the honor society students are working at the Crestwood Children's Center.

Indeed, through many initiatives such as these, the RIT social work students are making a huge contribution to the RIT and Rochester community.