Intellectual property rights and costs are major concerns when choosing course materials, so below are five tips to help you wade through the sensitive business of balancing the academic tradition of collaborative inquiry with copyright. But first, it’s important to unpack what goes into creating a case.

The first and foremost ingredient in a case study is the monumental effort of our authors, from both within Ivey and around the globe, who help students everywhere stay current with changing business issues. On top of the preliminary research and networking required to find suitable host companies and issues, authors spend countless hours interviewing decision makers at organizations, researching relevant information and then setting the scene for transformational learning to occur each time their case is discussed in a class. Classroom testing and revision is key, too, which adds more time.

Where does copyright come in? To purchase a case is to acknowledge the author’s efforts. Case usage adds up each term, helping educators prove the worth of their case writing when seeking tenure, dealing with accreditation bodies and so on.

As a non-profit publisher of these works it is our goal to expertly refine these cases and get them into the hands of students at a competitive price. After faculty review and approval, Ivey publishes annually almost as many cases as there are days in a year. Couple these efforts with worldwide distribution and there is clearly more to a case study than meets the eye.

**Tip #1: Re-frame the cost of the case**

Michael Leggio, who is a lecturer and the associate chair for the department of business administration at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, put it this way:

“Usually the cost for a Starbucks product is between 6 and 10 dollars. I mention to them that for their 6-10 dollars they are essentially renting that product for one day. However, the benefit of the $3.75 used to purchase the case study lasts the entire semester, and contributes to their academic success, which then supports their success as a business professional after they graduate.”

**Tip #2: Set expectations on the first day**

Ethan Pancer, assistant professor of marketing at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax, includes a brief preamble at the beginning of his lecture to discuss intellectual property and fair compensation.
Tip #3: Ask students what it might be like to share their property with strangers

Vasile Zamfirescu, a faculty member at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey, uses a quick comparison to hit it home:

“In my classes, this means that students are expected to work on the project throughout the term and they may not free-ride on their peers' performance or use their teammates’ materials. I emphasize the idea that, since they don't use their classmates' tangible possessions such as cars or mobile phones, they should not use intellectual property which they haven’t acquired themselves.”

Tip #4: Keep things fresh

Changing the syllabus every so often will not only make it harder for students to find answers online, it will also help keep your materials up-to-date with evolving trends and issues in business. We know this takes time, so contact our team to help you update your syllabus and find the right materials.

Tip #5: Explain that purchasing course materials is an ethical decision

Becoming an ethical professional starts in the classroom. Students who steal materials might help their individual situation, but what if someone stole theirs? Leggio again turns things back on the students. “I ask them what they would think if someone in the class used their paper and submitted it as their own for marks. I hope that by changing their perspectives I can also change their behaviour,” he explains.