

Some New Commandments

The Ten Commandments that God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai, as recorded in the Book of Exodus of the Holy Bible, have become a subject of controversy in the 20th and 21st centuries. Protests are voiced in many locations when they are posted in schools or courthouses or on other government property.

The Bible tells us that the Commandments were given by God Himself. Scripture relates: "When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, He gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God" (Exodus 31:18). Those instructions have become the basis of our law.

Recently, I ran across another set of Ten Commandments – ones proposed by the Computer Ethics Institute, a project of the Brookings Institution. Since we all have computers (or you wouldn't be reading this; unless, that is, someone printed it off for you), these instructions give us food for thought, and, hopefully, motivation to act accordingly. Here they are:

1. Thou shalt not use a computer to harm other people.
2. Thou shalt not interfere with other people's computer work.
3. Thou shalt not snoop around in other people's computer files.
4. Thou shalt not use a computer to steal.
5. Thou shalt not use a computer to bear false witness.
6. Thou shalt not copy or use proprietary software for which you have not paid.
7. Thou shalt not use other people's computer resources without authorization or proper compensation.
8. Thou shalt not appropriate other people's intellectual output.
9. Thou shalt think about the social consequences of the program you are writing or the system you are designing.
10. Thou shalt always use a computer in ways that ensure consideration and respect for your fellow humans.



These may not be sacred writings, but they are, indeed, good rules to live by in a technological world.

--Beecher Hunter