

relate to individual people or organisations.

Case Study: An information manager working for a professional services firm had many years' experience of electronic information resources. She had been one of the early users of online databases with complex command language and dial-up access. She had seen the rise of CD-Roms, DVDs and, of course, the worldwide web with its much more intuitive and user-friendly databases. Despite these apparent improvements in accessibility, she continued to use some 'old favourites' and, unsurprisingly, had gained considerable knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of these products as well as a great deal of ease of use.

Whereas the information manager felt confident when using these products, she was aware that other information products were available with ostensibly better content and functionality. However, she hesitated in changing to those potentially better products, partly because of the increased cost presented by some, but principally because she did not want to work with unfamiliar products after so many years. This gave rise to an ethical conflict of which she was aware. She reported her dilemma to her line manager, highlighting the breakdown in her impartiality in selecting products when old ones came up for renewal, and the fact that her actions meant that she was compromising her professional integrity and, indeed, the absolute value of the information service she provided.

In seeking to remedy this dilemma, the information manager presented a case for more funding for electronic information products on the grounds that the added cost of the products and of training was outweighed by the additional benefits which would be generated by the better information. However, there remained many

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