

PRACTICE CASE STUDY

The Case of the Troubled Computer Programmer

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(This case study was developed from a scenario provided by Olga Rosas-Velez, presented before the DOLCE workshop, summer 2000.)

You are a computer programmer working for a small business that provides specialized financial services to local, mostly small businesses. You have been working for company X for about six months. Recently X has been occupied with reengineering the inventory system of a local hardware chain, ABC Hardware. The objective is to enable ABC to keep better track of their inventory, to be more responsive to changes in customer demand, and to adopt a “just in time” strategy to reduce inventory.

Your supervisor calls you into his office. “Do you know of any existing software products to help ABC keep better track of its inventory?” You mention a particular product that you have worked with in another job and point out that ABC could use it without any modification. The only drawback, you point out, is that this software is somewhat expensive. Your supervisor leans back in his chair, puffs on his cigar and says, “That’s no problem. We have that software. Why don’t you just install it on ABC’s computers?”

You diplomatically indicate that this would violate the licensing agreement X has with the developers of the software. “Do it anyway,” your supervisor says. “Nobody’s going to find out, and ABC is a very important client. We need to do all we can to keep them happy.”