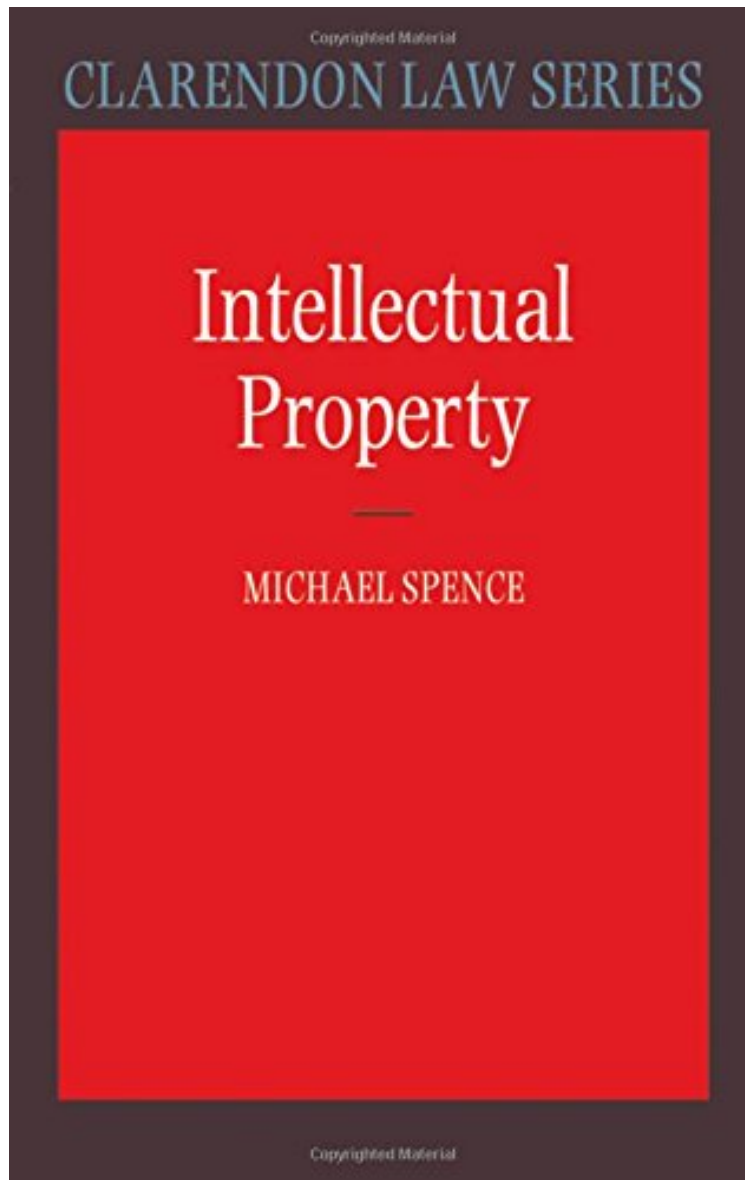


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It is essential to examine both the concept of intellectual property and the reasons why a legal system might

incorporate such a concept. We are increasingly told that the wealth of nations, consists in 'intangible assets,' which include the products of human creativity, ingenuity and effort. It is frequently argued that these assets represent the future of the developed economies and that their adequate protection by the intellectual property regimes is essential to national, regional, and even global, prosperity. We are also told that the creators of such assets have a strong moral claim to them, and that developed legal systems should recognize this claim. This text examines the ethical issues and debates surrounding intellectual property law and focuses on three aspects of the major intellectual property regimes: subject matter; the allocation of the first ownership of rights; and the scope of protection. These three aspects of the major regimes provide readers with a strong sense of the shape and purpose of the most important intellectual property systems.

About the Author Michael Spence is the Head of the Social Sciences Division of the University of Oxford, Fellow and Tutor in Law at St Catherine's College Oxford, and CUF Lecturer at the University of Oxford. He is also a Consultant to the London law firm Olswang Solicitors, and a Panelist of the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Centre.