Two Minute Challenge: Library/Database Use

You are working as an intern when your supervisor asks you to do a rush research project on reputation management strategies of executives who use social media. You know that you could do a fast, quality job using the University of Illinois Library resources, since it has excellent databases and you are already familiar with how to use them effectively. What do you do?

Thought question: What if your supervisor specifically suggests you use your access to the University's databases because the company doesn't have access to the same quality databases? Does that change your view of the situation?

Issues	Rules and Regulations	Questions
Misuse of resources (theft of services)	Intellectual property laws	How can you determine appropriate use of the university databases?
Determining limits on appropriate usage	Company regulations	Does the company have access to the same databases?
Looking good to your boss		Is there another way to do the research?
Getting the company in trouble		Does the university provide a reference service to any state citizen? Would they assist the company if asked to help on the question?
Costing the university money or access		Would it be legitimate for any company employee to go to the university library to use the databases on site? If so, is it also ok to dial into them?
Telling your boss it will take you longer		What do you think of my boss, who has asked me to lie using my name, or "just" to use another name?

Resources	Options
Mentor	Use the university's databases and risk getting caught
Colleagues	
Company code of conduct	
Company Ethical Hotline (anonymous)	Ask for access to company research tools
University librarians (ok to use?)	Call the library for advice
	Ask your boss for guidance

Takeaway Lessons:

1.) Intellectual property is still property. The databases subscribed to by the University Library are subject to restrictions and your access is provided while you are a university student, not while you are serving as an employee of a company.

2.) Getting caught. Many of the database vendors use sophisticated tracking and auditing systems to monitor that usage is appropriate and legal. The likelihood of getting caught using the database outside the licensed terms is high, and the consequences could be high to the University and to your employer.