

February 22, 1999

Sayuri Rajapakse  
Attorney-Advisor  
Office of Policy and International Affairs  
U.S. Copyright Office  
Copyright GC/I&R  
P.O. Box 70400, Southwest Station  
Washington, DC 20024

Re: "Promotion of Distance Education Through Digital Technologies."

Dear Ms. Rajapakse:

As a leading educational publisher of nonfiction magazines for the middle school market, we applaud the Copyright Office study regarding possible changes to U.S. Copyright Law in order to promote distance education through digital technologies. We strongly support the promotion of distance education opportunities that can make our materials available to an even wider audience. We believe, however, that the broad statutory exemptions sought by the educational and library communities will only undermine rather than support that end. In addition, we believe that given the infancy of this technology, all participants in the distance learning process -- educators, schools, publishers, students, authors, on-line providers -- need to experiment further with different models for licensing, fair use, and application of the existing copyright law, in order to make appropriate decisions about any changes to the law.

Cobblestone itself provides eloquent testimony to the variety of possibilities created by distance learning and our experiments with them. Our markets include schools and libraries, and we have a wide range of contractual license arrangements covering distribution of our materials in electronic form to state education departments, commercial test-makers, and library database providers. In addition, we have two educational websites and we are in the process of designing magazines specifically for the Internet, to be distributed through our websites. Granting a new "distance education" exemption that would allow performance, display and distribution of all kinds of copyrighted

works in digital formats *without permission* from the copyright owners would undermine this vital experimentation in its infancy and would do considerable financial harm to Cobblestone and to its licensors.

Please remember: as educational publishers the education market *is* our market. Even if educators and the librarians will not themselves be profiting directly by the distribution of our materials, their distribution without our consent will greatly harm the primary market protected by the copyright laws.

In recognition of these factors, and the vital role that copyright plays in encouraging creativity, Congress has always crafted very narrow exemptions to the rights of copyright owners. To abandon that cautious approach at this time, in the infancy of this new technology, would be premature and totally counterproductive.

Sincerely yours,

Malcolm C. Jensen  
Publisher