

I write from the perspective of authorship and as both a copyright owner and as a professional librarian.

You may find that I am off topic on some of what I am to say, but I hope you will consider giving me a fair reading.

I recently published with a bestselling series, and as an unknown author I had to sign away any right to benefit from copyright law in perpetuity. Therefore, I will never see any monetary compensation from copyright compliance, which if I understand correctly was originally meant to benefit authors as well as publishers.

Unless you are Stephen King, publishers and large corporations hold all the cards, and authors and creators have little or no bargaining power when they enter into publishing agreements. There has been a marked shift toward copyright laws benefiting corporations and not the authors and creators they were intended to protect. I'm sure you've heard this all before, and I do not mean to belabor the point, but as a librarian it's my job to uphold copyright laws, laws which often seem pointless and conflicting, and of no benefit to anyone but conglomerates.

I've been on both sides of the coin.

I hold copyright on several video productions as a former small video production business owner. As my business has folded, it would be very hard for you to find me if you had one of my works, many of which have been aired nationally and are known in my field, and wanted to use it for some purpose. You would not find the name of my business in the phonebook, and you would not know where to get in touch with me. However, because the works are copyrighted by me personally and not my business, I am still the rightsholder.

It's very difficult to own a small business, and the odds of being financially successful are slim over the long haul. People like me have limited avenues for protecting our works. Contrastingly, corporations have entire marketing departments devoted to advancing their sales, and have rights and permissions people (and attorneys) to make sure copyright infringement has teeth in it.

My bottom line? Tough luck if you want to use my work and you can't find me. I don't want you touching projects I spent hundreds of hours developing and financing without my permission.

For the copyright laws to bend to allow people to use works indiscriminately merely because they "can't find the rightsholder" is irresponsible. After all, I can't find Walt Disney or Mark Twain these days either. How is it we

are still protecting the copyright of two dead men, who so far as I know are deceased and will remain deceased, and we are now potentially discussing the use of the works of the living without barrier because of inconvenience?

That scholars and researchers have to be denied use of works because of unclear copyright is a shame. Society suffers. But that's the law, as unfair and stultifying as it is.

Better to change the law and restore it to its original purpose, that of protection of creators and authors. In the mean time, protect my works. If you don't, no one else will.

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