

Hello,

my name John Reeve, and I am a graduate student working towards a PhD in Technology, Literature, and Discourse at the English department of Texas Tech University. I work with many pop-culture films from the early and mid 20th century, many of which likely fall under the category of orphaned works.

Unfortunately, as a graduate student and scholar working with limited funds and time, often do not have the resources to sufficiently ascertain the copyright status of a work.

I have comments on one question regarding orphaned works.

1. Nature of the Problems Faced by Subsequent Creators and Users

Although working with texts in a scholarly manner allows me to present my work in some contexts, it is difficult to distribute my work to larger audiences without fearing infringing on a valid copyright.

I am interested in producing critical DVD editions of short early and mid-20th century public domain films that feature scholarly commentary on alternate audio tracks.

For instance, I will present research and critical commentary on an instructional film, produced in 1953, at the Popular Culture Association's national conference this March in San Diego. My presentation includes screening several sections of the film. While my work can be presented at the conference, as it is a one time scholarly setting, I am wary of reproducing it on DVD, even though technology makes this quite easy. Although I am reasonably certain that the film I am working with is in the public domain, it is difficult to do an exhaustive search, even with the nice set of tools available at the <http://www.copyright.gov/records/> website.

Another project I am working on is producing a textbook that incorporates media analysis as part of a writing curriculum. Part of this project would have included examining earlier media forms and discussing the textual changes allowed and dictated by technological changes.

Unfortunately, I do not have the resources necessary to sufficiently ascertain the copyright status of the media I was hoping to examine. So I have altered the project to discuss other media that my publishing company already has access to, media that is much more contemporary and thus less interesting in terms of comparison to contemporary digital media production.

John Reeve, MA

In response to:

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-1434.htm>