Copyright Concerns

by
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I feel that the copyright laws need to be updated to meet the easy of stealing material in the digital age.

As a photographer, writer and artist I have seen my work, and the work of others, stolen. One of my ebooks had over $1,000,000 worth of illegally downloads.

I read one report that 90% of all images on websites are stolen copyright protected material. And that 70% of online users think that there is nothing wrong with online piracy.

This, along with so many Internet users thinking that everything online should be free, has led to massive amounts of online theft.

And then there are people like Richard Prince, who steals people's photographs, and sells them for $90,000 to $1,000,000. And when sued, they win lawsuit after lawsuit by hiding behind Fair Use.

I feel the following changes need to be made to the copyright laws.

- **Remove Fair Use**. If a person wants to use a work created by someone else, in part or in whole, the law should require them to have written permission. Microstock sites allow anyone to legally choose from millions of photographs, artworks and videos, usually for between $1.00 and $20.00 each. This, along with images in the public domain, gives people ample access to images to use for any purpose.
- **Have an easy and economical way to deal with copyright infringement**. As of now, the copyright laws are useless and offer no protection to the majority of creative people who can't afford to take a person to court. And with Richard Prince and his ilk, visual artists don't feel that they can win a lawsuit even if they can afford to bring one. And even if a visual artist does win his case, the losing party seldom pays restitution which often requires one or more additional lawsuits to collect money owed from the first suit. I've filed DMCA complaints with website owners, domain name registrars, web hosting companies and corporations like Facebook, with only about a 50% success rate. And even when

a site was shut down, within a week the same person had started a new website offering illegal downloads of the same copyrighted material.

The idea behind copyright laws is a wonderful one. Protecting works made by creative people to allow them to earn money from the fruits of their creativity. It gives them an incentive and finances to continue to create, which enriches our society. But hampering these good intentions with legal fees and the loophole of Fair Use can easily demoralize a creative person into giving up, which is a loss to us all.

Sincerely,
Jeff Colburn