Hello, my name is Kyle Montgomery, and I am writing in response to the inquiry by the Copyright office.

I have concerns about the legislation being looked at by the copyright offices at this time. I have looked much up on the matter, from current copyright law to proposed changes. As an artist this effects me, so I wanted to give it the time and energy required to fully understand and respond properly. So I think it best I start with the questions asked.

1. What are the most significant challenges related to monetizing and/or licensing photographs, graphic artworks, and/or illustrations?

The biggest challenge for me has been finding a proper venue, or market. Monotizing work has become easier and easier with things like PayPal or Patreon, to allow the artist to further their reach, and expand the ways in which they receive compensation for their works. With things like these in place, it is much easier to make money off your works on an individual level.

2. What are the most significant enforcement challenges for photographers, graphic artists, and/or illustrators?

This depends on the the artist, as well as the infringer. That being said, it is much easier to deal with most copyright infrengment in many areas. Most infringement I have met with has been kids, who in liking my work, start posting it against my permission. Usually asking them to remove it gets the desired results. But beyond that there are easy ways to get sight owners to remove the work. Most sights that allow for image posting will respect copyright claims and remove any works that the artist asks removed. And lastly there is court. It is rare I have to even threaten someone with this, but usually just the threat will stop them, if not a Cease and Desist does. Enforcement isn’t all that much a challenge, and when it is, the law is there to help the artist.

3. What are the most significant registration challenges for photographers, graphic artists, and/or illustrators?

For registering for Copyright, there is no real issue with gaining copyright as of now, once you publish the works, they are yours. It's simple, and easy. However, when it comes to full registration, issues do arise. It is very difficult to find a registration beyond basic copyright that is favorable to the artist. Whether it be fees that dissuade the less financially inclined, or the unfriendly terms of which registration companies operate. Copyright allows us to govern our works as we see fit. This is ideal for the artist as they can decide who, and under what conditions they allow their work to be used, without a middleman to mess with the details.

4. What are the most significant challenges or frustrations for those who wish to make legal use of photographs, graphic art works, and/or illustrations?

I have dealt with this as well. Again it depends on the artist, and the one seeking permission. Most art, can be traced back to an origin pretty easily for those who are serious about getting permission. If you can't find them off a Google search, then post to a few forums, someone will likely be able to point you in the right direction. Admittedly this can be a hassle, but more and more do I see forums, and image sights require an artist name, and location. So the issue is shrinking naturally.

Also, this is dependent upon the use. As an artist I do not care about many uses of my works, such as educational, or posted to sites I don't frequent. But for those who do, they usually will step in and speak with you if they have issue.

5. What other issues or challenges should the Office be aware of regarding photographs, graphic artworks, and/or illustrations under the Copyright Act?

The biggest issues facing artists right now in copyright is understanding it. And understanding their rights. Many artists start as kids and publish so much work on the web as they learn. It's part of how they learn. Copyright can be complex, and it can be hard to look into. But one thing we all understand is, that Copyright is ours, as soon as the piece is published. It's the one thing that everyone can understand.

You will be getting a lot of flack in these letters I am sure. And I am sorry for that. I know you are only doing your jobs.

That being said, It goes to show just how important copyright is to everyone. How important it is to every artist, and even people who are not artists. For so many art is a labor of love, and something we feel blessed to not just have in our lives, but to create and to share. Copyright law should always honor that first and foremost. Copyright should always be a tool with which an artist may protect their works on their own terms. And many wish to handle such things purely on their own. And they should have the right to do so. No registration should be required to be allowed to keep your works safe. It should be automatic, and easy. Creating artwork should be the hard part, not ensuring you get to keep it.