My name is Quentin Westcott, and I am an artist. I'm writing about how unhappy I am to have to defend the copyright protection that I currently have.

Again.

This is profoundly unfair to individuals. I am an artist and I create visual works. These works are mine- I put the time and money into creating them. I make money off of them. I do not put time and effort into the things that I love and have value to simply give them away or let others exploit for their own benefit. I want you to stop changes that would take my current copyrights away from me and make it harder to secure the rights to my own art.

There's a lot of steps that go into that creation- thumbnails, sketches, and a lot of iterations. Some are traditional, some are digital, and come in a whole host of mediums. Sometimes you need to send these images to the client for approval and then go through more revisions. Making me register each and every tiny created piece is an undue burden put on my shoulders, and I might not be able to do it all before deadlines are met. This is not including things like meta-data that might have to be registered as well, creating a unfair level of technical knowledge that every creator must have.

Creating a private database, or multiple databases, is fundamentally flawed. I found out about this proposed change through social media, but really, I got lucky and stumbled upon it. Nobody is going to contact me on what I need to do and where to go to do it or when to do it. I will have to hunt this information down, and hopefully find the place to register my works before large corporate interests scoop up vast amounts of images and start using them for profit. You are considering setting up a system that makes it hard for individuals to protect themselves and much easier for well heeled greedy infringers to get something for nothing. "Private databases" are controlled by people who want to make a profit- they're not doing this out of the kindness of their hearts. There's going to be money involved and a whole host of hoops to jump through and hurdles that we don't know about... because they're private interests and don't have to disclose their practices now. We don't know how onerous this whole thing will be. We don't know how well these databases will be maintained, the quality of equipment, the level of maintenance or the competence of the staff running them. How accountable will they be to fixing mistakes? What if those mistakes allow people to steal your art; the credit card companies have been around for decades and it takes them forever to fix a mistake. How secure are their servers? Why are we even thinking about this when the existing system requires none of that infrastructure? There will be costs- especially for established artists who have been making a huge amount of work for decades. We do not want to create a class of artists who simply can't afford to protect their works, or get their works appropriated because they're not digitally savvy, or simply can't process the volume of material they have by an arbitrary deadline. There should never, ever be that kind of division in any first world society, one that proactively takes advantage of the uninformed or impoverished. Again, I didn't create art to make other people rich, and I have no desire to be forced into paying money to private interests, for things that are FREE to me right now. What's good for these private businesses is not good for artists.

Considering these changes will mean less creativity and innovation displayed in public. Barriers like this will stop people sharing because they will be afraid of losing their rights. Even the potential of losing your rights will have a negative impact, especially beginning artists who need feedback and critiques to grow and are both more prone to post their works, and less likely to understand how to protect themselves. Because of this, artists will simply post less, and that is an inherent curtailing of the Freedom of Expression. Established websites like Facebook, Polycount, DeviantArt, Artstation, Imagr, Twitter, etc, will have less traffic and sell less add space because their user art submissions/photo submissions will drop. Less content means less traffic and less ad revenue.

Funny how a system, that is working just fine for common people, needs to be changed because some entity isn't making money off of us.

Once the law is changed, I have to go through EVERYTHING I EVER CREATED and register it. Every scrap of it. That's an insane amount of time, effort, and probably fees. I work a full time job and take contract work on the side. Where do you think I'm going to get the time to go through hundreds of works, sketches, thumbnails, photoshop files, design documents, contract letters, etc... and input all that stuff? Especially if there's a deadline? I'm one person and I don't have a staff. But the companies who want this law changed DO have a staff and it will become their fulltime job to harvest new content for them to exploit. How is that even remotely in my interest? On one side- individuals with limited resources and manpower. The other side- well funded and staffed institutions dedicating a lot of time and effort to scoop things up for free.

Our society has had a long term problem with digital piracy. If I download a movie via peer-to-peer file transfers, I could get penalized for it. Fines, possible legal action and other things. So if a company puts out a product, it's protected and is valued. But if these changes come into effect, I won't have the same inherent protections with my products as a company does, unless I put more time/effort/money into it. Corporations will have MORE day-one rights than people will.

The fact this is even coming up, AGAIN, shows how much corporate money has been given to politicians. I've been polite but I'm furious. I'm furious that I have to do this, I'm furious that I have to justify how bad this situation is, and I'm furious that so much private interest money is being thrown at my government to even consider this. AGAIN. I'm not getting paid to write this, but the people who helped push this legislation forward were very well paid. That in its self should show you exactly how bad this situation is.

So, in closing, just say no. Please, say no to this horrible one sided change in a system that works fine as it is.

Thank you,

Quentin.