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The Congress shall have Power...  
To promote the Progress of Science  
and useful Arts, by securing for limited  
Times to Authors and Inventors the  
exclusive Right to their respective  
Writings and Discoveries.

**CONSTITUTION  
OF THE UNITED STATES  
(ARTICLE 1, SECTION 8)**

# COPYRIGHT: THE ENGINE OF FREE EXPRESSION

UNITED STATES COPYRIGHT OFFICE  
STRATEGIC PLAN | 2019 – 2023

# Statement of the Register



As the Supreme Court has recognized, copyright is the "engine of free expression" – it is critical to the continued development of our cultural and artistic heritage. The United States

Copyright

Office is

extremely proud of its important role in supporting a well-functioning copyright system for the benefit of creators and the general public.

These are exciting times at the Copyright Office. As we approach our 150th anniversary, the Office can look back with

pride at the role it has played in supporting the development of a vibrant and diverse creative marketplace that offers rich economic and cultural benefits to the American people. Ahead of us lies the challenge and the opportunity of remaking the Office for the twenty-first century.

This requires continued focus on ways to streamline and improve the efficiency of Office services while actively participating in discussions,

both national and international, on ways to further transform the copyright law to better meet the needs of a modern digital society.

It will be necessary to completely reimagine the Copyright Office to best fulfill these goals. Modernization of the Office will therefore mean much more than improvements to our

technological capabilities – instead it will encompass business realignment, process improvement, and investment in talent. And, it will require active and direct engagement with stakeholders and the copyright community on a panoply of topics through roundtables, rulemakings,

user studies, and other avenues.

Several of the themes that have already emerged from preliminary stakeholder engagements are reflected here in the *United States Copyright Office 2019–2023 Strategic Plan*, which in turn aligns seamlessly with the Library of Congress's strategy framework: Expand Access, Enhance Services, Optimize Resources, and Measure Impact. This plan includes a focus on information

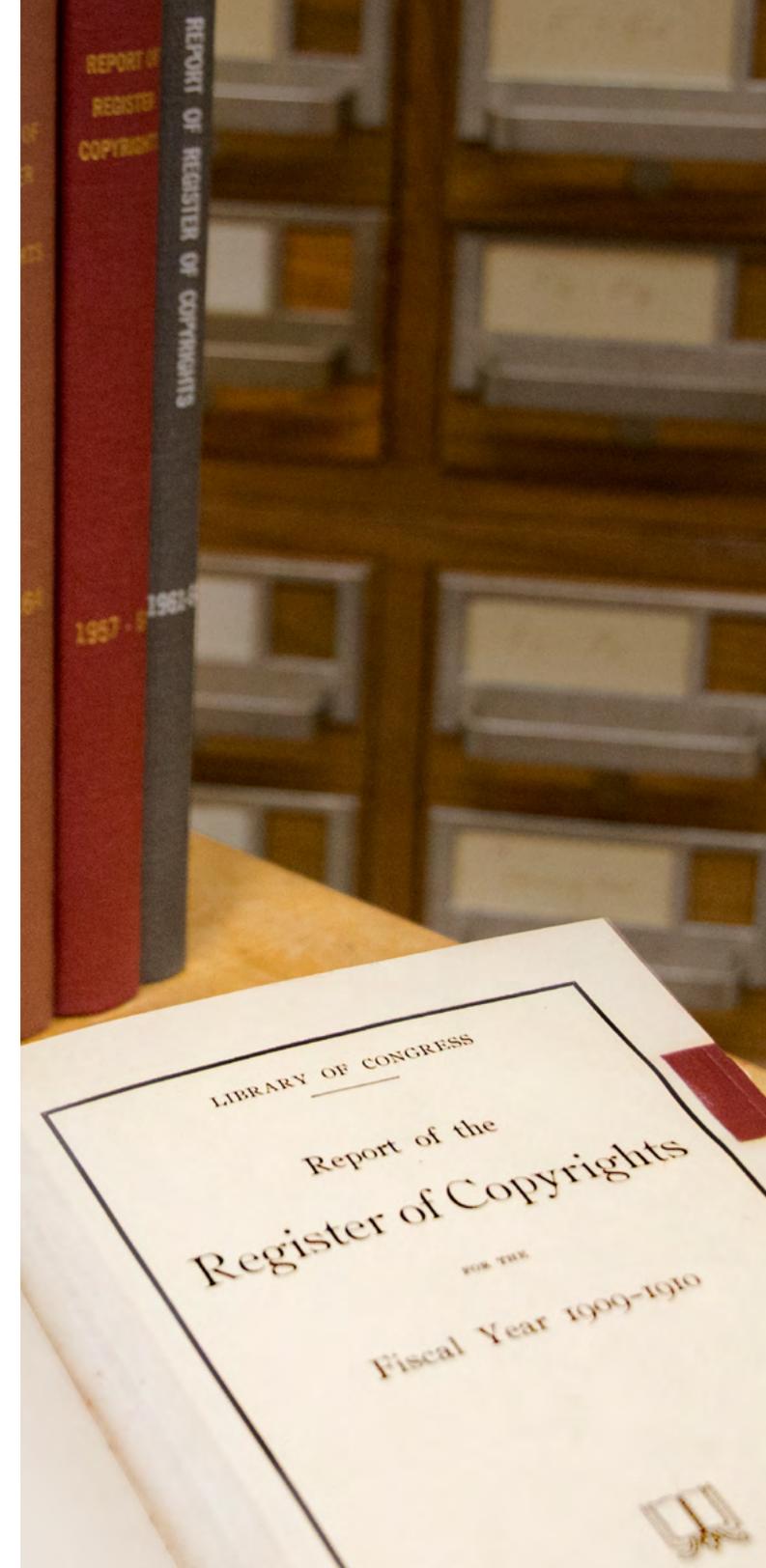
[T]he Framers intended copyright itself to be the engine of free expression.

**Supreme Court of the United States**  
*Harper & Row Publishers, Inc. v. Nation Enterprises*, 471 U.S. 539 (1985)

technology upgrades, process optimization, and organizational change management. The Office has committed itself to adopting quantifiable, measurable goals and benchmarks on these and other areas to improve transparency regarding the pace and progress of Office modernization. Throughout this process, the Office will seek continued engagement with stakeholders via a multiplatform communications plan that focuses on reaching people where they are and through the means by which they prefer to communicate. Whether it is an individual creator or large business, true modernization of the Office will enable us to become user-centered, digitally enabled, and data-driven, and to meet the varied needs of an ever-evolving public while harnessing the power of innovation.

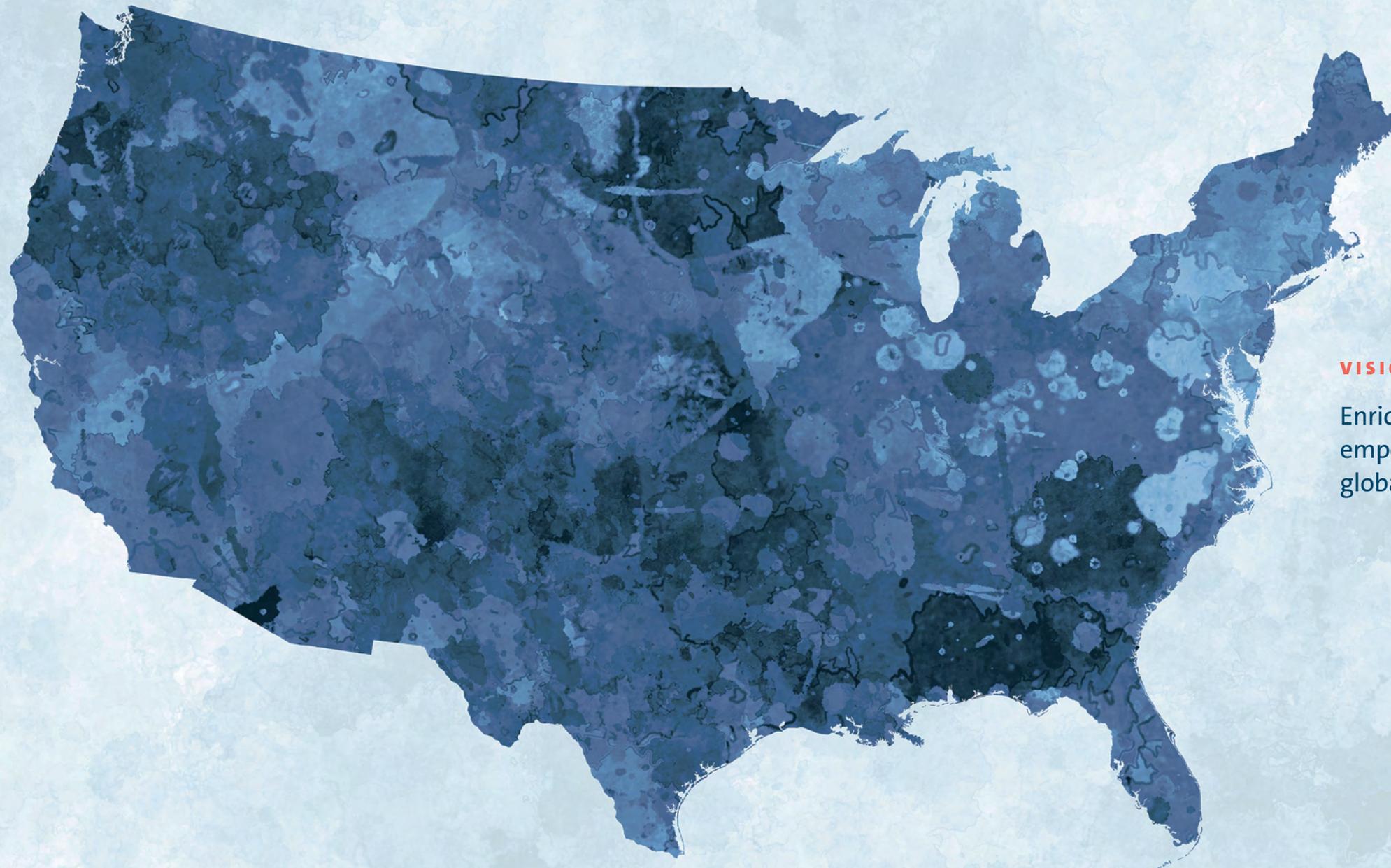
Finally, the Office's *Strategic Plan* could not have been developed without the input and comments of the talented staff of the U.S. Copyright Office, who have already embraced the challenges – and opportunities – of modernization. There is a lot of work ahead of us, but I am confident that, with your support, the Office is up to the task.

**Karyn A. Temple**  
*United States Register of Copyrights,*  
*Director, U.S. Copyright Office*



### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The U.S. Copyright Office promotes creativity and free expression by administering the nation's copyright laws and by providing impartial, expert advice on copyright law and policy, for the benefit of all.



### **VISION STATEMENT**

Enriching the nation's culture by empowering and connecting the global copyright community.

# About the U.S. Copyright Office

The U.S. Copyright Office, directed by the Register of Copyrights, is responsible for administering the nation's copyright laws. Pursuant to the Copyright Act, the Register is appointed by, and works under the general direction and supervision of, the Librarian of Congress, who is appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. Among the various duties and responsibilities of the Register, the Office:

- examines copyright claims in a broad range of creative works, including books, music, movies, sound recordings, software, and photographs;
- registers copyright interests and records transfers, assignments, licenses, and other copyright transactions;
- promulgates regulations implementing various provisions of the Act;
- maintains authoritative records of copyright data;
- administers the deposit provisions of the Act, which enriches the national collections of the Library of Congress; and
- works to ensure the efficient and accurate administration of statutory copyright licenses, including through legal review of royalty rate and distribution proceedings administered by the Copyright Royalty Board.

The Office's core services of registration, recordation, and statutory licensing are integral to marketplace transactions in the United States and abroad—providing legal certainty for licensing works to new businesses, bringing U.S. content to foreign countries, and ensuring public access to copyright ownership information. Together, the Office's registration and recordation systems constitute the world's largest compilation of copyrighted works and copyright ownership information, encompassing an unparalleled record of American cultural heritage.

In addition to these administrative responsibilities, the Office is charged by statute with providing a variety of critical law and policy services, including:

- advising Congress on domestic and international copyright issues;
- providing assistance and copyright information to other federal agencies and the courts;
- participating on U.S. delegations in meetings with foreign governments and in intergovernmental meetings; and
- conducting studies and programs regarding copyright, including educational programs conducted cooperatively with international intergovernmental organizations and foreign intellectual property offices.



## Copyright and the Library of Congress

In 1870, Congress placed the national copyright registration system at the Library of Congress, initially under the direction of Librarian of Congress Ainsworth Rand Spofford. In 1897, Congress created the U.S. Copyright Office as a separate department of the Library. This structure has provided for a free flow of copyrighted books and other works to the Library, helping to build a national collection and record of America's creativity.

Apart from registration, the Copyright Act also contains a provision requiring copyright owners to deposit two copies of the "best edition" of works published in the United States with the Copyright Office for the benefit of the Library's collections. The "mandatory deposit" obligation can be satisfied when applicants submit "best edition" formats for registration.

Over time, the Copyright Office has transferred to the Library millions of selected books, sound recordings, and other works through administration of the registration and mandatory deposit programs. Under the custody of the Library, these works may now be used in conformance with provisions of the Copyright Act.



# From Vinyl to Streaming on Demand

**JANUARY 1, 1978, TO PRESENT**

The 1976 Copyright Act, which was implemented on January 1, 1978, and has been subsequently amended, is the current U.S. copyright law. At the time of its implementation forty years ago, consumers enjoyed music by listening to broadcast AM/FM radio and by playing vinyl records. Cable television subscribers made up a small fraction of U.S. households. Four decades later, the ways in which consumers access and enjoy music, movies, books, and other forms of entertainment have changed dramatically. The latest content delivery evolution – on-demand delivery of digital content – is driving changes in how people consume entertainment on a mass scale. At the same time, the e-commerce marketplace has developed to the point that consumers expect to conduct transactions online at any time and from anywhere, with mobile-friendly, intuitive, interactive, and user-centered interfaces.

The ways in which creative content is created and distributed have also changed dramatically since 1978. For instance, it is now possible for songwriters to write, and for musicians to record, songs on a mobile device and to employ applications to help capture in real time the data needed to satisfy copyright registration requirements. Yet these creators must put down their smartphones and tablets, log on to the Office website, and complete a lengthy online process involving considerable manual typing to protect their works. Ideally, creators should be able to submit songs and the associated metadata to the Office for examination and registration quickly and easily using up-to-date technology.

At the other end of the copyright spectrum, digital content services trying to license large amounts of registered works shouldn't have to painstakingly search for works one at a time via the Office's website. Instead, potential licensees should be able to access a highly searchable database with the ability

to download large batches of records directly via an application programming interface (API).

Congress recently passed the Orrin G. Hatch – Bob Goodlatte Music Modernization Act, representing significant improvements to streamline licensing and accessibility of data in the music industry. However, the impacts of the digital revolution are not limited to music. Book publishing, filmmaking, photography, and virtually every other sector of the copyright community have been dramatically affected. These examples demonstrate the pressing need for the Office to provide a flexible platform that others can build upon for the seamless protection and licensing of copyrighted works.

The creative community and the copyright marketplace that the Office serves are dynamic, technically sophisticated, and rapidly evolving. It is imperative that the Office evolves and becomes more user centered and digitally enabled as well.



# Copyright Office Focus Areas

The Office has identified six Focus Areas that form the core of this *Strategic Plan*:



## Information Technology Modernization

We will develop a robust and flexible enterprise IT system that is designed for the current and future needs of the copyright community.



## Optimizing Business Processes

We will streamline and coordinate Copyright Office processes, practices, and policies to promote timely and reliable services.



## Organizational Change Management

We will promote a culture of excellence by engaging in a strategic realignment of the organization and investing in the professional development and growth of our workforce.



## Education and Engagement

We will expand and target our outreach and educational programs to reach a broad array of audiences.



## Impartial Expertise on Copyright Law and Policy

We will provide impartial expert advice and assistance to Congress, the courts, and executive branch agencies on questions of copyright law and policy.



## Measuring Success

We will use data to support evidence-based decision making.



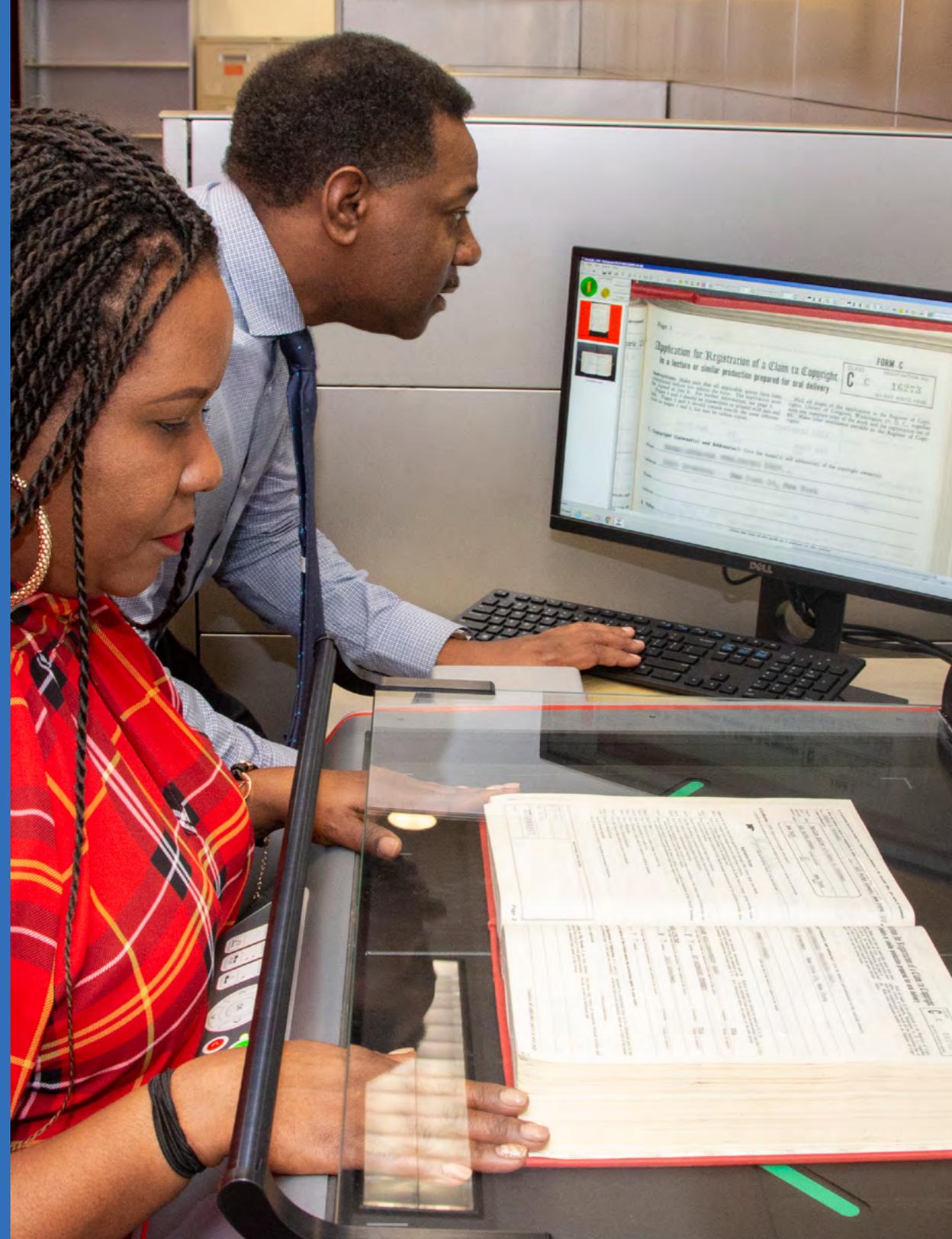


# Information Technology Modernization

Today, more than 95 percent of the approximately half a million copyright applications filed annually are filed online. However, many users of the electronic Copyright Office (eCO) filing system find that completing the application is challenging. eCO provides for automated processing of copyright applications while other Copyright Office services remain paper based and relatively burdensome for both Office users and staff. This focus area strives to replace legacy IT systems and provide for more automated services.

Developing a robust and flexible Enterprise Copyright System (ECS) to automate all Office public services will significantly improve the user experience for those who transact business with the Office. More intuitive system navigation, better and more accessible help text, data field validations, and other modifications will reduce errors that trigger correspondence and prolong the application process.

The benefits of having a high-performing cloud-based system are obvious. A flexible design will support future system modifications so that the system will continue to evolve as our users do.



## GOAL

We will develop a robust and flexible enterprise system that is designed for the current and future needs of the copyright community.

## IMPACT

Improved external and internal user experiences and enhanced efficiencies.

## OBJECTIVES

- 1 Adopt user-centered design principles
- 2 Prioritize data integrity and integration
- 3 Design for operational sustainability



# Optimizing Business Processes

Our users expect timely service. By streamlining and coordinating changes in processes, practices, and policies, we expect to realize timely and reliable service delivery for all Office services, including the registration of copyright applications, information request response time, and management of copyright deposits. This will result in an enhanced user experience. Process optimization also benefits our staff by reducing inefficiencies in how they conduct their work, leading to higher productivity and enhanced job satisfaction.

The Office will examine current business processes and modify them, as appropriate, to take full advantage of new and improved automation. Effective optimization requires a holistic review of our current policies, practices, and procedures to find opportunities for change as well as a commitment to measuring and monitoring the impacts of new and updated processes and workflows. Our users interact with the Office in many ways, and we will seek input and feedback from them frequently to ensure that we are providing consistent services.



## GOAL

We will streamline and coordinate Copyright Office processes, practices, and policies to promote timely and reliable services.

## IMPACT

Timely, consistent services delivery that does not compromise quality.

## OBJECTIVES

- 1 Conduct a holistic business process review
- 2 Harmonize policies and operations by reviewing and revising regulations
- 3 Identify and adopt best practices to ensure reliable services
- 4 Set standards for timely service
- 5 Improve deposit management



# Organizational Change Management

The organizational structure and range of professional and technical positions in place today at the Copyright Office largely trace their origins to the implementation of the 1976 Act. This construct has served the Office well over the years, but effective modernization requires a top-to-bottom strategic analysis of the organization and workforce. We strive to build and maintain a professional and highly skilled workforce that is results oriented and that works effectively within an organizational structure designed to deliver optimal efficiency, adaptability, and decision-making capability. Strengthening our workforce strengthens us as an organization.

Recruitment and retention of a diverse, dedicated staff will help ensure that we meet the mission and vision of the organization. Investing in our workforce will enable staff to thrive in a modern and evolving Copyright Office.



## GOAL

We will promote a culture of excellence by engaging in a strategic realignment of the organization and investing in the professional development and growth of our workforce.

## IMPACT

Enhanced service responsiveness and increased staff productivity.

## OBJECTIVES

- 1 Manage a strategic realignment that focuses on responsiveness and delivery of services
- 2 Attract and retain dedicated, mission-focused talent
- 3 Formalize career roadmaps and training that encourage staff engagement



# Education and Engagement

The Copyright Office provides educational and informational services to raise awareness of, and respect for, the copyright law and the role of the Office in the copyright ecosystem. The Office also seeks to expand participation in the national copyright system by designing and offering educational content for authors/creators, teachers, students, librarians, practitioners, and other groups within the copyright community. As the Office modernizes, we will communicate with users and stakeholders through a multiplatform communications program in an effort to best meet the needs of the copyright community.



## GOAL

We will expand and target our outreach and educational programs to reach a broad array of audiences.

## IMPACT

Expanded understanding of, and participation in, the national copyright system.

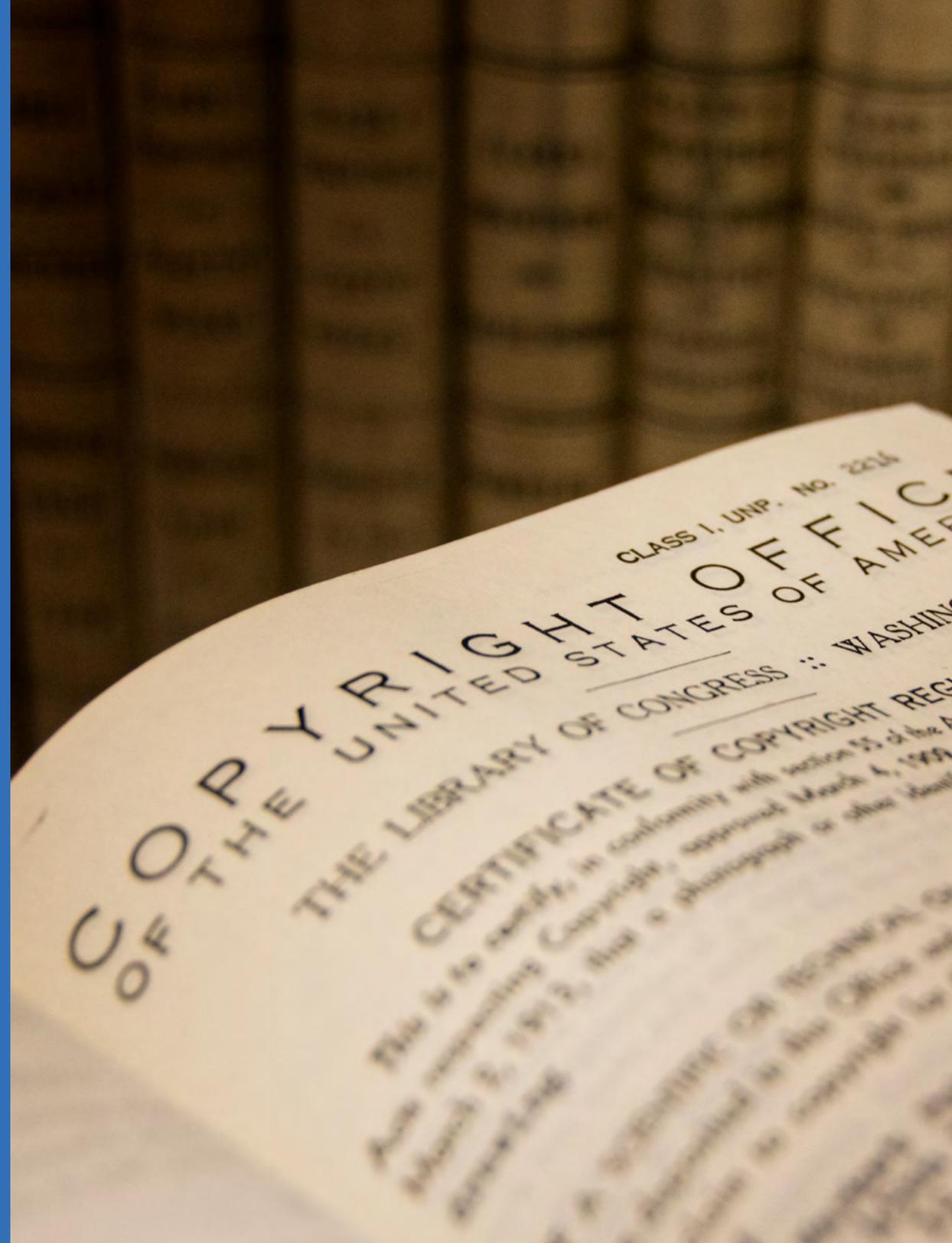
## OBJECTIVES

- 1 Reach new audiences where they are
- 2 Execute a multiplatform communications program
- 3 Actively engage stakeholders



# Impartial Expertise on Copyright Law and Policy

The Office has expertise in all facets of domestic copyright law and policy, as well as international matters involving foreign laws, copyright treaties, and trade agreements. The Office has provided impartial advice to Congress on existing and emerging copyright issues for more than 120 years. Experts in the Office regularly interpret the law as enacted by Congress, develop and issue regulations to implement appropriate provisions of the law, and provide legal advice and assistance across the government regarding complex or emerging areas of policy.



## GOAL

We will provide impartial expert advice and assistance to Congress, the courts, and executive branch agencies on questions of copyright law and policy.

## IMPACT

Congress, the federal courts, and executive branch agencies receive authoritative advice and assistance on questions of copyright law and policy.

## OBJECTIVES

- 1 Advise Congress on domestic and international copyright law and policy
- 2 Initiate rulemakings and produce regulations necessary to implement the copyright law
- 3 Provide timely expert advice and information to the courts and executive branch agencies on national and international copyright matters
- 4 Participate on official U.S. delegations relating to copyright matters



# Measuring Success

Measuring success allows the Copyright Office to validate the impacts of our services on those who participate in the copyright economy and on the general public. To measure success, we will ensure that valid data and analysis are applied to key metrics. We are committed to continuous assessment and review of Office operations. Data-based decision making will help us improve services, address problems more effectively, and identify gaps. Accurately measuring success is critical to keeping the Office focused on fulfilling our stated mission and vision.



## GOAL

We will use data to support evidence-based decision making.

## IMPACT

Improved organizational performance and enhanced user experience.

## OBJECTIVES

- 1 Standardize governance processes for business proposals
- 2 Incorporate data analysis into the daily management of all public services
- 3 Evaluate the impacts of investments
- 4 Set goals and targets that are strategic and focused on performance

# Alignment with the Library of Congress Strategic Plan

Although the Copyright Office has a unique mission, it has been an part of the Library of Congress since 1897. Thus, the Copyright Office and the Library have a long history of complementary service to the public. The Library's 2019–2023 Strategic Plan sets forth a strategic framework composed of four pillars: Expand Access, Enhance Services, Optimize Resources, and Measure Impact. This strategic framework relates to the Library as a whole and to the work and unique missions of its component departments.

The focus areas identified in the Copyright Office's Strategic Plan align with the Library's strategy framework in clear and meaningful ways.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS STRATEGY FRAMEWORK	COPYRIGHT OFFICE FOCUS AREAS	<i>The focus areas identified in this Strategic Plan complement and align with the Library's strategy framework in clear and meaningful ways.</i>
Expand Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Technology Modernization</li> <li>• Education and Engagement</li> </ul>	We will <b>Expand Access</b> to Copyright Office records and services by engaging in targeted outreach to drive users to copyright.gov and by designing and deploying highly user-centered interfaces and robust records search capability.
Enhance Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Technology Modernization</li> <li>• Optimizing Business Processes</li> <li>• Impartial Assistance to Congress</li> </ul>	We will <b>Enhance Services</b> by making it easier and more convenient for users to transact business with the Copyright Office from anywhere on any device and by providing for timely and reliable services.
Optimize Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimizing Business Processes</li> <li>• Organizational Change Management</li> </ul>	We will <b>Optimize Resources</b> by conducting a business process reengineering in conjunction with an organizational analysis and strategic realignment to ensure that our processes and organization are ideally configured for maximum efficiencies.
Measure Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measuring Success</li> </ul>	We will <b>Measure Impact</b> by using data to set goals and objectives, establish SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely) metrics, and then evaluate impacts.

# Plan Implementation and Communicating Results

## IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation process requires thoughtful planning with a focus on developing meaningful annual performance goals and targets that measure impacts rather than progress toward project completion.

The Copyright Office has already begun implementing some elements of the *Strategic Plan* by soliciting user input for user experience/user interface (UX/UI) design of the ECS, drafting a communications plan, and framing the implementation of business intelligence tools. Also, the first module of the ECS, an online document recordation system, is being developed to allow online filing and processing of copyright-related documents. As the Office continues to modernize, we will modify initiatives and activities in the implementation plan to allow for continuous improvement.

## COMMUNICATING RESULTS

The Copyright Office must effectively connect with users and the copyright community. We are committed to communicating upgrades to services, process changes, and regulatory updates to all stakeholders. We will also solicit and incorporate user feedback to ensure programs and services meet the needs of our users.

