November 2013

Questions and Answers-Copyright Column

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**Recommended Citation**


DOI: [10.7771/2380-176X.3504](https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3504)

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Legally Speaking
from page 73

At this time, the dispute between Halvorson and Lexis-Nexis is still going on. Disagreements over domain names such as this occur with some regularity now that the Internet has become popular. The Domain Name System does provide a possibility of both abuse and unintentional conflicts. However, ICANN, the trademark law, and the Anticybersquatting Consumer Protection Act of 1999 are trying to bring order to the system. The .new.net challenge to ICANN is a troubling prospect. Still, sometimes disputes do arise over domain names, even without any bad faith on the part of anyone. The more we know about trademark law, the easier it becomes to avoid trouble.

The Internet is still in the Wild West days of its beginning. However, ICANN and its allies are trying to bring law and order to the system without bringing control. We who work with the Internet often have a hard road to travel, but the Wild West came to order, and even the most infamous territories were tamed. So, too, can the Internet become civilized.

Questions & Answers
Copyright Column

by Laura N. Gasaway (Director of the Law Library & Professor of Law, University of North Carolina, CB # 3385, Chapel Hill, NC 27599; Phone: 919-9621321, Fax: 919-962-1193)
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QUESTION: How does one deal with copyright on a photo taken prior to 1900 where the photographer is unknown and not identified in the image? ANSWER: In order to deal with this issue, there are several questions that need to be addressed. Has the photo ever been published? If so, the copyright is dated from that date since it was under earlier Copyright Acts rather than the date when the photograph was taken. If it was never published, the photograph is still under copyright until the end of 2002 or life of the photographer plus 70 years, whichever is greater.

Is the photograph famous? If so, then one of the stock photography companies may hold the rights. If not, and the photographer is unknown, the library may decide that the risk is small and go ahead and use the photograph.

QUESTION: Recently the “Today Show” featured a man who buys movies on video and then edits out the sex, offensive language and violence. He then rents the edited versions to anyone interested in seeing “clean” movies. Is this copyright infringement? ANSWER: Yes. By editing the movies and making them available he is preparing a derivative work that can be done only with permission of the copyright holder. Then he distributes the videos. Television networks pay for this right when they broadcast movies that have been edited. One might assume that he is also making at least one copy of the work to produce the edited version. In other words, in addition to preparing an unauthorized adaptation of the work, but he is reproducing it as well as distributing copies.

QUESTION: A faculty member has posed an interesting question. She uses photographs of houses as reference for her paintings, although she sets the houses in her paintings in a context of her own creation. Is this copyright infringement? A related question is when one appropriates an image and when its reworking is an infringement of copyright and when it becomes a new work of art? ANSWER: Reproducing a photograph is infringement if the photograph is still under copyright. The house itself could be copied directly, just not the photograph. There is a famous saying in copyright law that it is permissible to copy the original but not to copy the copy. This means that the house is the original and the photograph of the house is the copy. The artist certainly can reproduce the original, i.e., the house, but not the copyrighted photograph. If the house in the paintings is just based on the house in the photograph, then it may be a new work of art.

The related question is much more difficult since by tradition many works of art are based on earlier works. Again, reproducing the original painting in any format (such as pen and ink, watercolor, etc.) is infringement. If the work is copyrighted, then reworking it creates a derivative work, and only the owner of the copyright has the right to create adaptations of the original work. When the adaptation is for display in face-to-face teaching in a nonprofit educational institution, it might, however, be fair use.

QUESTION: One of the library’s requests for an interlibrary loan of a 1999 article got referred on to an association library. That library refused to continue on page 75
Bet You Missed It

Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

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ERUDITE ENGINEERS

by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)

If you enroll in the first freestanding undergraduate engineering college in the U.S. now under construction outside Boston, be prepared to take Diana Dabby's course on Leonardo da Vinci's scientific and artistic achievements as well as courses on starting a dot-com, fluid mechanics, and thermodynamics. Student-partners will also combine on-campus seminars with monthlong experiences abroad. Head Richard Miller isn't fazed by the challenge of actually educating rather than simply training future engineers. Opening in September 2002, the goal of the new Olin College of Engineering, which will have no academic departments or tenured faculty, is to produce 150 graduates a year with the ability to predict, create and manage the technology that will shape the future.


THE MISSING LINK

by Sandra Beehler (Old Dominion University)

The "map" is now the size of half the continental U.S. Anoto, the Swedish startup company that owns the "map", is working to ensure that their system of transmitting handwritten information will be the standard for the future.

Here's how it works. — A sheet of "digital paper" is covered with microscopic dots that are arranged in such a way that each dot is a unique "location" on the "map". A pen equipped with a tiny optical device, a Bluetooth microchip and a ballpoint (so you can read what you're writing) transmits those "locations" through your mobile phone or PDA to one of Anoto's computers holding the "map" which deciphers them into an image that is then sent to the service provider that owns that portion of the "map." Presto! — instant transmission of handwritten communications in any language (or none; graphics will be possible too). Anoto makes its money by selling portions of the "map" to service providers and tracking transactions (taking a cut of each transaction payment). Digital paper and special pens are cheap to manufacture and easily distributed to consumers. Industry observers say Anoto's system, if widely adopted, may provide the final missing link between paper and digital.


Please Note: Additional "Bet You Missed Its" can be found on page 93 in this issue. — KS

Against the Grain / June 2001