Cases of Note: Copyright --Revisiting 1909

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Questions & Answers — Copyright Column

QUESTION: Why are more books not available electronically? Are publishers concerned about copyright infringement for eBooks?

ANSWER: There are many reasons that not all books are available digitally. More and more works are digitized everyday and publishers are seeing the value of making their backlists available for print-on-demand.

Many works are being published originally as eBooks, either with or without a printed version introduced simultaneously. Authors are self-publishing, and some authors are quite successful without the services that publishers have traditionally provided.

Traditional publishers (sometimes called legacy publishers) have many reasons for not offering digital works. It was only seven years ago that Amazon introduced the Kindle (2007), and the development of good digital reading devices was essential before eBooks could be widely distributed. Today, electronic publishing is growing by leaps and bounds while printed book publishing is on the decline. There are many reasons that some traditional publishers have been hesitant to make their...