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Copyright Law Information on the Web

by Steve Anderson

In order to respond effectively to clients' questions, librarians today often need to learn about complex copyright issues very quickly. The Web's ease of use makes it a fertile starting point for "library and copyright" research, especially if more thorough treatments of the topic are unavailable in print. However, as with other legal materials on the Web, the quality, accuracy, and timeliness of copyright information varies widely. In an effort to bring *AALL Spectrum* readers the best of this material, this column includes an annotated list of Web sites in alphabetical order that offer the most useful copyright information to librarians.

Association of Research Libraries: Copyright & Intellectual Property: <http://arl.cni.org/info/frn/copy/copytoc.html>—Our sister library organization ARL has created an informative copyright law page, geared primarily to comprehensive coverage of legislative action on the intellectual property front. For example, the full text of much of the library community's testimony on the *Uniform Computer Information Transactions Act (UCITA)* and database protection legislation is available here. ARL also provides strong coverage of international copyright activities and the erstwhile domestic Conference on Fair Use (CONFU).

The Copyright Website: <http://www.benedict.com/>—Attorney Benedict O'Mahoney's site provides helpful descriptions of Web copyright issues, as well as a section on the basics of copyright law and the "fair use" defense. However, most librarians will want to take a look at the author's illustrative examples of

copyright infringement. The strength of these discussions lies in the wide variety of media formats included. For example, the author describes the differing types of copyright protection afforded visual art, literary works, audio recordings. Only one word of caution here—many of the news items are a bit dated.

Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis: Copyright Management Center: <http://www.iupui.edu/~copyinfo/>—Under the leadership of noted copyright expert and Center Director, Kenneth D. Crews, this site provides numerous practical and scholarly articles and a select number of exemplary guidelines on fair use. The Center Web site also includes a section on "Library Issues," containing recommended copyright notices and links to the *Copyright Act*. Another section offers additional information on the copyright protection of multimedia material.

Library of Congress: Copyright Office: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/copyright/>—As one might expect, the Copyright Office site is THE place to look for information on copyright registration. The site has little information specifically on libraries or fair use because much of its content is geared toward authors. One exception to this is Copyright Information Circular No. 21, "Reproductions of Copyrighted Works by Educators and Librarians" (<http://lcweb.loc.gov/copyright/circs/circ21.pdf>), an indispensable document for those trying to make library copyright policies. Librarians may also find useful Circular No. 22, "How to Investigate the Copyright Status of a Work" (<http://lcweb.loc.gov/copyright/circs/circ22.pdf>).

Nolo Press: Legal Encyclopedia entry for copyright: <http://www.nolo.com>—Nolo Press is renowned for describing complex legal issues in way that the lay person can readily understand. Nolo's basic descriptions of copyright issues are similarly accurate and lucid—a good place to start if you need to start at the very beginning.

Stanford University Libraries: Copyright & Fair Use: <http://fairuse.stanford.edu/>—This is perhaps one of the most ambitious library copyright Web sites on the net. It links to a number of domestic and international primary legal materials, such as the U.S. Code, an extensive list of judicial opinions and treaties. For librarians, one of this site's biggest draws is its list of "Library Copyright Guidelines," policies promulgated by about 20 academic

libraries and educational institutions. However, researchers using this site would do well to check the timeliness of this site's information—many of the legislative links are two years old.

University of Maryland: Copyown: <http://www.inform.umd.edu/copyown/>—This University of Maryland Web page, produced in conjunction with the Association of Research Libraries, is a treasure trove of information. Although this site does not provide library copyright policies, it does contain dozens of links to university copyright ownership policies. Such policies can be helpful to librarians in explaining copyright law to their professorial client base. Copyown also links to articles and other intellectual property guidelines covering an array of issues, from distance education to "courseware" design agreements.

University of Texas: "Crash Course in Copyright": <http://www.utsystem.edu/OGC/IntellectualProperty/cprtindx.htm>—As one might expect from a Web page thusly titled, this content-rich site provides sound analysis of a variety of library copyright problems. There are thorough discussions of fair use, "Rules of Thumb" for when "fair use" reproduction is permissible and sample faculty copyright, and distance learning guidelines. The site's "Copyright in the Library" section analyzes common library services in relation to Section 107 (Fair Use) and Section 108 (Library Reprography) of the Copyright Act. Lastly, information on copyright in multimedia material rounds out this Web site. Users of this site should note that it contains relatively little primary legal or legislative material.

Wake Forest University Professional Center Library for Law and Management: Copyright Permission Pages: <http://www.law.wfu.edu/library/copyright/>—The Wake Forest University Professional Center Library for Law and Management offers a wonderful resource to those librarians and educators who need to seek permission for use of copyrighted material. The Library site not only provides links to licensing institutions, such as the Copyright Clearance Center and the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers, but also to scores of academic publishers' Web sites, usually linking directly to the publishers' copyright permission or contact information pages.

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Yale University: Copyright Resources

Online: <http://www.library.yale.edu/%7Eokerson/copyproj.html>—This site by Associate Yale University Librarian Ann Okerson is a well-annotated guide to a score of university library copyright policies and about 15 other, non-academic copyright Web sites. While this site is a good starting point for researching library policies, it was last updated a year ago.

Yale University: Liblicense: <http://www.library.yale.edu/~llicense/index.shtml>—

Not all restrictions on the use of library material are due to copyright law; some arise due to the terms of the licensing agreement in effect between the online information vendor and the library. For these situations, Ann Okerson's second, and perhaps better-known, site is a priceless research tool. On it she provides a

glossary of licensing terms, overviews of common contract clauses, direct links to information vendors' license agreements, and samples of many model licenses, all of which are aimed at strengthening librarians' bargaining positions with vendors.

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