The Importance of Learning the Difference Between Copyright and Wrong: Empowering Programs to Teach Copyright Education

Melissa G. Ocepek[a], Sara Rachel Benson[a], Siyao Cheng[a], Laura Saunders[b], Tomas Lipinski[c]

[a]University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, USA

[b]Simmons College, USA

[c]University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, USA

mgocepek@illinois.edu, srbenson@illinois.edu, siyaoc2@illinois.edu, laura.saunders@simmons.edu, tlipinsk@uwm.edu

ABSTRACT

Copyright impacts all aspects of librarianship and most aspects of the wider information professions, yet courses that specifically address the legal rights and limitations of U.S. Federal Copyright law are not well represented in Library and Information Science (LIS) curriculum (Cross & Edwards, 2011; Schmidt & English, 2015). Studies have found a lack of copyright familiarity let alone literacy among librarians and LIS students surrounding many important copyright topics regarding open licensing, orphan works, and digital institutional repositories (Estell & Saunders, 2016; Saunders & Estell, 2019). The recent update to ALA's Core Competencies has added additional copyright focused language to note that librarians should have foundational skills to "Understand the legal framework in which libraries operate, including laws relating to copyright and fair use…" (ALA, 2023). The need for this material is quite clear and yet many library and LIS programs have not addressed this notable gap in their curriculum.

This panel of copyright experts, researchers, and course instructors is designed to help identify the roadblocks that have led to a dearth of copyright focused courses, and to opportunities for change using existing resources. The aim of this panel is to inspire all in attendance to work with in their institutions to advocate for more copyright focused instruction throughout LIS.

The panel will consist of five brief five-minute talks from all panelists followed by a moderated discussion with the audience to map out the limitations and opportunities of copyright education for already existing LIS curriculum. The panel will close with a presentation of resources that can be used to improve copyright education including open educational resources and other no-cost material. Closing the session, the panelists will ask audience members to share their contact information, to provide continued support in bringing curricula change to their home programs or departments. We hope this panel will help create a community around this topic and become a regular topic at ALISE and similar conferences.

Moderator & Panelists:

Tomas Lipinski will serve as the panel moderator and speaker. Professor Lipinski is the former Dean of the School of Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. After Leave in the 2020/2021 AY he returned to faculty status as Full Professor. He completed his Juris Doctor (J.D.) from Marquette University Law School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, received the Master of Laws (LL.M.) from The John Marshall Law School, Chicago, Illinois, and the Ph.D. from the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Lipinski has worked in a variety of legal settings including the private, public and non-profit sectors. He has authored numerous helpful legal resources including the books, *Copyright Law in the Distance Education Classroom* (2005), *The Complete Copyright Liability Handbook for Librarians and Educators* (2006), and *The Librarians Legal Companion for Licensing Information Resources and Services* (2012).

Melissa Ocepek is an everyday information behavior scholar who in collaboration with fellow panelist Benson developed and taught Copyright for Information Professionals at the University of Illinois iSchool. The course is designed to empower students while learning about copyright through an ever day lens. The creation and execution of this course has also been documented by Benson and Ocepek (2021) with research that demonstrated reduced anxiety and uncertainty about using copyrighted material and providing them with the tools to answer copyright related questions using relevant sources to keep pace with the changing copyright landscape. Her presentation will describe how to work in this space without formal legal training while relying on other LIS related skills and expertise.

Sara Benson is the copyright librarian and an associate professor at the Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Before becoming a practicing librarian, she acquired her JD and taught at the University of Illinois College of Law. Working with Ocepek, she developed a copyright course to be approachable to students from varied educational backgrounds, while staying grounded in sound legal education. She will share her work making copyright information accessible and understandable to information professionals, including her recent book, *Compact Copyright: Quick Answers to Common Questions* (2021).

Siyao Cheng is a doctoral student at the University of Illinois iSchool and focuses on copyright education and information-seeking behavior. Her current research is on how copyright legal frameworks are not applicable to Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCEs) materials management within a library setting. Nevertheless, such a topic is not well represented in the LIS field to prepare newly graduated librarians for the ethical management of TCEs and other corresponding challenges. Therefore, in this panel discussion, she aims to advocate for greater concentration on TCEs, including content in terms of the complex relationship between TCEs and copyright legislation, into the LIS curriculum.

Laura Saunders is a Professor at Simmons University School of Library and Information Science. Her previous studies showed that copyright literacy varies considerably among LIS professionals and students. They tended to feel comfortable with topics like fair use, but were often unfamiliar with areas related to orphan works, copyleft, and international law. The study results, and the extent to which students and other professionals rely on librarians to be copyright experts, suggests a need for more training, but courses dealing with or devoted to copyright are still scarce. In her section, Laura will review the results of her studies, discuss some of the barriers to fuller integration of copyright into the LIS curriculum, and how those barriers might be addressed.

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ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

copyright; intellectual property; curriculum; information rights; education.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

copyright; LIS curriculum; open educations resources; legal issues; core competencies.