

From: [REDACTED]
To: FN-OMB-IntellectualProperty
Cc: info@copyrightalliance.org
Subject: U.S. Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator, PRO-IP Act of 2008, Joint Strategic Plan
Date: Wednesday, March 24, 2010 3:10:44 PM

Dear Ms. Espinel-

As a professional Photographer, my livelihood depends on maintaining the value of my intellectual property. The American Society of Media Professionals (ASMP) and the Copyright Alliance have informed me of this welcome invitation from the Obama Administration to share my thoughts on my rights as a creator.

In recent years, especially with the popularity of the internet growing, infringements on my work have increased tremendously. It seems that people are unaware of copyright laws, or simply ignore them. If artists' works are stolen, it undermines the value of the creation, thereby essentially taking income away from the creator. Since the crime seems virtual or less tactile to people, they may be misinformed about the seriousness of using an image without paying for it. When people strip out the metadata from an image that they find online, it would seem to me to be further incriminating. Apparently, however, designers are doing this constantly, and act as though the image they are using somehow becomes theirs by default. Also, why is it perceived as ok for bloggers to use pictures and stories that they "find" on the web, merely regurgitating information that others have worked diligently to create? Again, the people creating the content should be paid for their work.

Moreover, I believe we need to better educate the public on the rights that creators have, and adhere to a system of licensing/usage fees. Artists, writers, musicians, photographers, etc, are integral contributors to a healthy society, thereby deepening its' culture. Government must value these contributions and protect them as assets. If creative professionals lose their incentive to create, the loss to Americans will weigh heavily on future generations looking for their identity. These are costs we cannot afford, and instead must invest in our artists, as great civilizations have always done. When we look at the history of lost civilizations, we study what they leave behind, and the most significant pieces are their stories, art and artifacts. The government has the responsibility as patron and protector of our artistic treasures.

Many thanks for your time and consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Michael Weschler

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