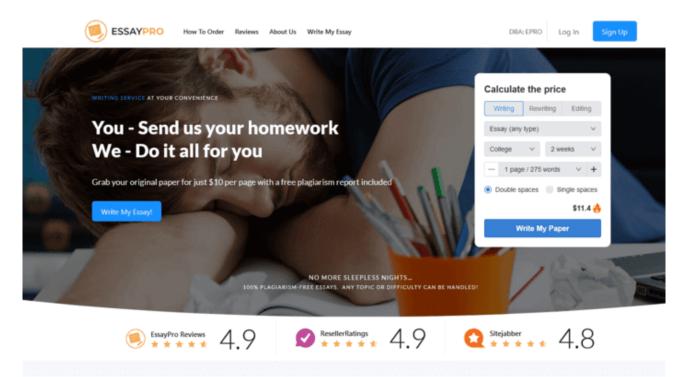
Copyrights: Intellectual Property and Technology



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The Government and many other agencies around the world are continuously at work to improve protections for intellectual property rights and the enforcement of intellectual property laws. In today's age of digital madness, passing legislation and actually enforcing of those laws becomes a very daunting task. However, the protection of intellectual property has both individual and social benefits. It protects the right of the creator of something of value to be compensated for what he or she has created, and by so doing; it encourages production of valuable, intangible, creative work

In order to understand the difficulties surrounding the laws associated with intellectual property an understanding of the term is needed. The Louisiana State Bar Association defines intellectual property as the product of someone's mental efforts. It is usually intangible, and its value lies in its appeal to others who might wish to use it or the goods it describes. Intellectual property can be covered and categorized into three separate protective laws; those include copyrights, patents and trademarks. The true key to understanding intellectual property protection is to understand that the thing protected is the intangible creative work, not the particular physical form in which it is embodied (Baase, 2003, p. 235).

This paper will discuss the ideas and laws behind copyrights as intellectual property along

with the daunting task of protecting that property in a digital age where piracy seems to be commonplace. The fair-use laws and the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) of 1998 will also be covered, along with the challenges faced by those who choose to use the fair-use laws for educational purposes, and the impact that the DMCA has had on this law. Finally this paper will discuss what can be learned from having a basic understanding of copyright laws and the impact on world economics that the breaking of these laws could possibly cause.

Examining intellectual property can spark the old argument that standing is more tiring than walking paradox, how do you differentiate between an idea and a creative expression. Copyrights protect a creative expression, which is the expression, selection, and arrangement of ideas. The boundary between an idea and the expression of an idea is often not clear (Baase, 2003, p. 236). Most people...

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...industry will quickly realize that consumers eventually get tired of being slapped on the wrist for obeying the law, and this is basically what the DMCA has done to people that actually follow the fair use laws. The actual impact of boycotting the industry would be an economic disaster. This will most likely never happen, but Congress is posed with a great task in front them.

The first step towards ensuring copyrights and fair use laws would be to ban the use of technology that is produced for the sole purpose of circumventing copyrights. Congress should then either redefine the Digital Millennium Copyright Act or do away with it completely. Infringement on copyright laws will never completely disappear but managing the problem without stepping on the toes of the owners or the consumer can definitely be accomplished with the right application and redefinition of copyright laws and the fair use doctrine. A new digital age calls for new types of protection without overstepping the boundaries of what is fair and what is not.

References

Baase, S. (2003). A Gift of Fire: Social, Legal, and Ethical Issues for Computers and the Internet. 2nd Ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

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