

Message from the Register



I am pleased to present the Fiscal Year 2000 Annual Report of the U.S. Copyright Office.

The Copyright Office administers the Nation's copyright laws and provides legal and policy assistance to Congress and the Executive Branch. As we enter the new millennium, new digital technology issues raise complex and difficult concerns and questions for both copyright owners and those who use copyrighted works. The continued growth in the use of digital technology and computer networks means more Americans are learning about and engaging in activities that involve our national copyright system. Copyright issues are increasingly covered in the media because of their economic and social impacts. Such questions as when exactly does copyright infringement take place in the online world are at the forefront of debates. The use of digital technology and networks has tested, and will continue to test, the legal boundaries of the law and require new solutions and new rules.

In October of 1998, when Congress enacted the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) as a part of an effort "to begin updating national laws for the digital era," it gave the Office responsibility for conducting several studies and rulemakings on various subjects related to new technologies. During Fiscal Year 2000, a major focus of the Office's policy and regulatory efforts continued to be the implementation of the tasks associated with this Act. Specific activities related to these studies and rulemakings are covered in detail in this report. This year we began a major, multi-year effort to reengineer our core business processes and services to the public. The way in which we work, the processes we use, and the technology we employ must be able to accommodate the demands of our digital world. We will maximize the use of information technology systems in our redesign of registration and recordation processes and public services.

In this report, I have summarized the Office's work in each of its major areas of responsibility — copyright law administration; policy assistance; regulatory activities and litigation; public information and education; and management. This report outlines the challenges and changes we have faced and the gains and progress we have made in meeting these demands.

Our work this year is a beginning. Much important work remains to be done. As I look to the future, I am confident that we will build upon the accomplishments and progress of this year to ensure a strong, effective and balanced national copyright system. The Copyright Office will continue to lead, serve and safeguard the rights of creators and "promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts..."

The work outlined in this report is the result of the efforts of the staff of the Copyright Office. I thank them for their competence and dedication.

Marybeth Peters
Register of Copyrights