

A message from the Register



*Register of Copyrights
Marybeth Peters*

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Copyright Office for Fiscal Year 2006. This report highlights the Office's activities and accomplishments related to its administration of the copyright law, services to the public, regulatory activity, domestic and international policy work, and the Office's multi-year reengineering effort.

The overarching goal of the Copyright Office Reengineering Program is to improve the quality and timeliness of the Office's services to the public. Initiated in 2000, this ambitious effort encompasses a complete reengineering of our business processes; the design, development, and implementation of an enterprise-wide information technology system that supports electronic registrations; and a substantial staff reorganization that aligns work units and divisions with the newly streamlined and automated processes and systems. Fiscal Year 2006 marked the final full year prior to completion of reengineering, and a number of important milestones were reached on the information technology, organizational, and facilities fronts. Each positive development in the reengineering program was the result of a tremendous amount of hard work and collaboration on the part of Copyright Office staff.

As usual, the Office engaged in numerous policy and legal activities. Of particular note, the Office submitted a Report on Orphan Works to the Senate Judiciary Committee on January 31, 2006. The report addressed the issue of "orphan works" — copyrighted works whose owners may be impossible to identify and locate — and followed an exhaustive study conducted by Copyright Office staff that elicited an extraordinary amount of interest and response from various groups and members of the public. Among other things, the report recommended changes to the copyright law designed to clarify what constitutes a sufficiently diligent search for ownership of a copyrighted work. I expect issues related to orphan works to remain of high interest to both owners and users of copyrighted works next year.

Copyright Office staff were very active on other fronts as well. On March 1, 2006, the Office submitted a fee study to Congress that provided an analysis of the costs it incurs in providing services, as well as other pertinent information, including a new schedule of fees. On August 1, 2006, the Office received its first referral of a novel question of law from the Copyright Royalty Judges; the question was whether ringtones made available for use on a cellular telephone or similar device are subject to the statutory license for the making and distribution of phonorecords of musical compositions. In accordance with requirements of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, the Office also began developing recommendations for the Librarian of Congress on the classes of works that will be subject to exemptions for the next three years from the copyright law's prohibition against circumvention of technology that effectively controls access to a copyrighted work.

I acknowledge and appreciate the dedication and commitment to public service of Copyright Office staff, without whose continual efforts the accomplishments noted in this report would not have been possible, and I look forward in excitement and anticipation to the transition into a wholly new way of doing business at the Copyright Office in the coming year.



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