

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [FN-OMB-IntellectualProperty](#)  
**Subject:** Copyright and Why I Care  
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Thanks for asking for input from those of us who depend on copyright to protect our intellectual and creative works.

I am a writer--primarily a novelist, though I've also published short fiction and nonfiction. I support a family with my writing. As such, I depend on copyright protection to protect both the integrity of my work and my income.

Like most writers, I care about the things I've written. I've taken care with them. My publishers have taken care with them. But when books are pirated the writer has no control over the integrity of the work. I've seen some pirated versions of my work that were carelessly scanned and full of errors. Badly copied texts degrade my reputation as a writer. For both fiction and nonfiction, introduced errors make the books less useful--as either entertainment or information--to readers. The public deserves to have books in their best form--and writers deserve to have their work presented that way. Moreover, with current technology it is possible for book-pirates to insert into a text both data and opinions not those of the writer--including with intent to discredit not only the writer but his/her nation of origin, religion, or culture. Those reading the book would have no way of knowing that the material was not original to the text unless they compared it (and those downloading pirated books are unlikely to do so.) Misinformation is a security threat, something often used in spy novels...but modern technology makes it ever easier in real life.

Book sales support my book publishers...and through them, support me and other writers. When sales are lost to piracy, publishers lose money...and that affects not only me but all writers. It's especially bad for new writers, because they're a riskier proposition for publishers anyway, and when profits go down, all businesses tighten up--there are fewer opportunities for talented new writers to break in. But none of us who depend on our creative output can afford to lose sales.

In a larger view, book sales also support both national and state governments--because publishers and writers all pay taxes. Lost sales thus also represent lost tax income. A healthy publishing industry contributes directly to the financial health of the nation, just as any other healthy industry. The overseas sales of my work bring money into our economy (published in 17 countries, as of now.)

I have been appalled at the erosion of protection for writers, artists, and other creators, and at the misinformation spread about by those who want to infringe on our rights. The Google rights-grab, for instance, presented publicly as 'service' to give access to books out of print--as if "out of print" meant "out of copyright"--was a very obvious attack on the whole idea of copyright, and should have been recognized as such by the court. (Google digitized two of my books--both of them in copyright, in print, and readily available in stores--which makes it clear that they were not really concerned with making older books available--but with grabbing rights.)

Although it is impossible to interdict all cases of unauthorized digital piracy, certainly all companies operating in the United States should be firmly reminded that "in print" and "in copyright" are not the same thing, and that they must abide by the copyright laws. Copyright holders should be contacted \*before\* works are digitized or digital copies circulated, and it should be possible for copyright holders to protest mis-use much more easily. (It took me more than a week--about 60 hours--to "claim" my works at Google, one by one, fighting my way through their system, and even so they refused to allow writers to "claim" individual stories in anthologies, despite the fact that copyright in those remains with the writer. The length and difficulty of this process--which included having to protest erroneous data in Google's list, such as print status and "commercial availability" status, neither of which has anything to do with copyright status--cost writers hours of uncompensated work time, the amount depending on the number of their books. Google never contacted me to confirm that they had received this information and agreed not to digitize the works or distribute the two unauthorized digitizations they had made.) U.S. courts also need reminding, as the Google "settlement" also shows: what they did was clearly copyright violation and yet the settlement essentially allows them to keep doing it.

Other signatories to international copyright laws should be encouraged to seek out unauthorized "rings" of violators in their countries. Procedures for individual writers and artists to protest should be simplified--such as sending an email to law enforcement in the country where the violation is occurring.

Copyright is important to me, to all writers and artists, and to the country as a whole for the same reasons it was originally instituted--to encourage and support the intellectual and creative activity of our talented citizens. Copyright infringement hurts all of us.

I am including a link to my main website below, for the bibliography.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Moon  
Florence, Texas

<http://www.elizabethmoon.com/>