

The Value of Registering Creative Works

The Austrian Competence Network for Media Design, a research consortium of Austrian higher education institutions and SMEs in the so-called creative industries, had launched a service for registering creative works at the Wizards-of-OS conference in Berlin in September 2006. After nearly two years of operation, we would like to draw a summary of experiences and challenges. Furthermore, we will have a look at related services and Creative Commons' strategy on this issue.

The creator who registers with Registered Commons benefits from two important advantages. A certificate issued allows the creator to provide evidence for her intellectual ownership of a work. Secondly, and almost as important for evidence of authorship as a certificate, Registered Commons digitally records the exact time of a registration with a timestamp, obtained from a trusted third party. Typical users are musicians or photographers, who are keen to post individual works on the internet, but who wish to retain control over them, or bloggers and even agencies who prior to giving client presentations, wish to protect their work from plagiarism using the timestamp. Companies who are interested in the commercial distribution and other uses of the material require legal security for their business, notably in the form of reliable information. Precisely this is missing from many websites that offer material under alternative licences, the public domain as well as for orphan works.

In this paper we present good practices for online registration services at the first COMMUNIA conference on the Public Domain in the Digital Age ([COMMUNIA 2008](#)). Furthermore, we will be going to ask the following questions: Is reliable and simple registration of works the right way to improve confidentiality and trust? How could Rights Collecting Societies benefit from such registries? What kind of governance is required, to run such registries? And do they conflict with public patent laws or authorities? We will conclude with a proposal for either adapting the DMP authority scheme or establishing registration peering and using existing namespaces. The authors are affiliated with Registered Commons, a service initiative launched in 2006.

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This paper should go to the conference section „Creative Works“.