

U.S. Copyright Office modernization efforts underway

College and academic libraries know full well the problems with orphan works, those titles for which the copyright holder cannot be found. Academic librarians seek to preserve or digitize works in their collections to make them more accessible, but this can be challenging, even after an extensive search.

Fortunately, the Library of Congress's modernization initiative includes the Copyright Office and will 1) build a new enterprise copyright system featuring a user-centered and flexible design, 2) streamline processes and policies, 3) improve access, and 4) reimagine the entire Office. Modernization will improve all of the Office's services, from registration to copyright renewals, which will make it easier to locate rights holders.

A number of major efforts are underway, as summarized by the Copyright Office:

- **Enterprise Copyright System (ECS):** The Office will develop a new enterprise copyright system that integrates and improves Office technology systems. This includes evaluating the current registration system and performing outreach to a cross section of users to improve the entire application process. Another improvement will be to modernize and automate recordation to simplify and improve how the Office records information on copyright ownership changes.

- **Business Process Reengineering:** The Office will review its business processes and staff responsibilities, and recommend new methods and processes to reduce operational costs and improve efficiencies.

- **Comprehensive Access to Public Records:** The Office will address all of its records, both those housed within legacy systems and historical records that are not easily accessible to the public online. The Office will convert its extensive, paper-based pre-1978 entries into digital format and improve public access, enhance online search capabilities, and continue preserving records. As part of this effort, the Office will continue its proof of concept for the Virtual Card Catalog (VCC), an online system to replace the current onsite-only card catalog, and will allow users to access the Office's historical records online with full-search capabilities—beyond just the VCC.

- **Outreach:** The Office will engage and inform staff, industries that rely on Office services, and the public.

- **Data Management Initiative:** The Office will analyze its data, including the types and location of the data. The Office will use this analysis to develop a data model that will allow the Office to use and work with data more easily and completely to the benefit of the Office and the public.

To learn more about the Copyright Office modernization efforts, visit copyright.gov/copyright-modernization, where you can register to join—and even ask questions—in the Office's next bimonthly webinar in a series focusing on various aspects of their modernization process and progress. *ZZ*

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