

report
from the
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Creative Themes in OnCopyright 2012

Copyright Clearance Center opened the doors to its biennial OnCopyright conference in late March to initiate a lively conversation on the theme Advancing the Creative Economy.

While more than 130 attendees were on hand at the Kernochan Law, Media and the Arts Center at Columbia Law School in New York City, nearly 400 remote participants also took advantage of the live stream and video presentations via their desktops and iPads. And many attendees shared commentary via tweets about the ongoing conversation.

The daylong event touched on key copyright issues including remixing, infringement, piracy, and rights from disparate perspectives where art, law, and technology intersect. *Newsday* columnist and OnCopyright 2012 program host Ellis Heni-

can pointed to technology and creativity as two critical values that are clashing more frequently these days. Though some disruption is inevitable in the marketplace, he said it's important to keep such disruption in check so it doesn't hinder the creative process.

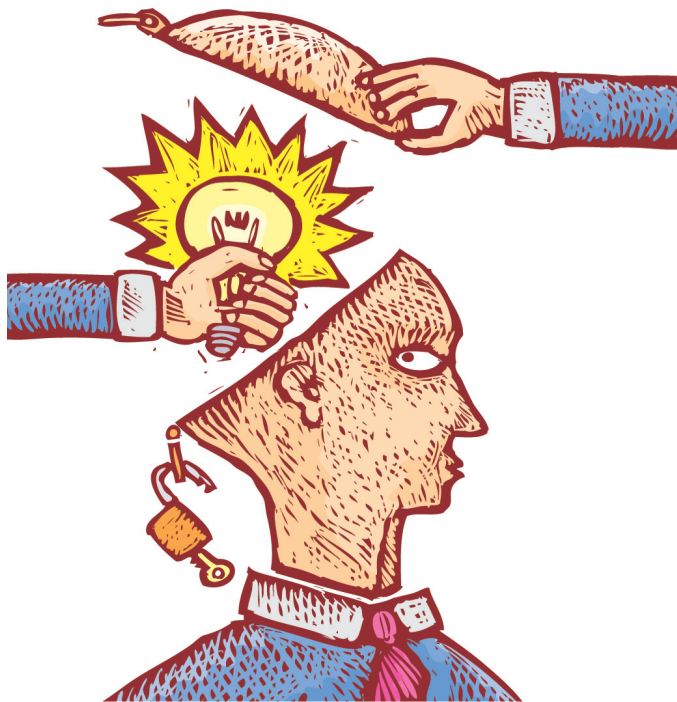
Keynote speaker John Howkins spoke on topics relating to his book, *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money From Ideas*. He focused on the value of the idea business: "New ideas, not money or machinery, are the source of success today," he said, identifying the economic value of creative people, industries, and cities at a time "when intellectual property propels prosperity."

Michele Woods, associate register for policy and international affairs at the U.S. Copyright Office, thinks "[A] lot of

Singer/songwriter Erin McKeown said she does not live by copyright alone. She makes a living by teaching, playing music, and lecturing about it too.

the conversation is about copyright as a barrier and that's something we really need to work to overcome," she said, remarking that "as one system [it] is a really positive force in the U.S. economy and around the world." She added that the popularity of the U.S. entertainment products worldwide have had a big impact in the U.S. creative economy where copyrighted works have been instrumental in taking the lead in worldwide distribution.

Piracy remains a global concern. Alfred Clinton Perry, vice president of worldwide content production and outreach at Paramount Pictures, struck a chord that resonated with the audience, saying that he doesn't have any illusions about try-



ing to stop piracy. “Every business that’s selling something, tolerates some level of theft,” he said. “[W]hat concerns us is the vast and profitable commercialization on a scale that is so threatening that it causes us to seek legislation and other redress.”

Robert Levine, author of *Free Ride: How Digital Parasites Are Destroying the Culture Business, and How the Culture Business Can Fight Back*, concurs. “Traditionally, the culture business always lived with a certain level of piracy,” he said. “That didn’t prevent them from making money, creating work, etc.” But he sees a tipping point when set prices shift substantially in a legitimate market, and he said he believes we’ve hit that point. The line between a person’s right to remix and an artist’s right not to be remixed remains in contention.

Copyright issues clearly have an impact regardless of which side of the fence you’re on. Filmmaker Kirby Ferguson, cre-

ator of “Everything Is a Remix,” doesn’t favor an end to copyright, but he’s in favor of modifying the system. Copyright holders don’t worry much about the laws until someone infringes upon their works, he said, adding that he is “not opposed to people making a profit, but I don’t think you need two lifetimes of protection.”

Singer/songwriter Erin McKeown said she does not live by copyright alone. She makes a living by teaching, playing music, and lecturing about it too. But when it comes to owning what she creates, she said she’s “not really any different than the farmer that owns their land. So I just want to be paid for the cucumbers I grew.”

For more about OnCopyright 2012 and related copyright issues, visit www.copyright.com. Copyright Clearance Center provided additional research for this report.

➡ **BARBARA BRYNKO**