

Title:

**Sharing is caring vs. stealing is wrong: A moral argument for limiting copyright protection**

Abstract:

Copyright is at the centre of both popular and academic debate. That emotions are running high is not surprising - copyright influences who contributes what to culture, how culture is used, and even the kind of persons we are and come to be. Consequentialist, Lockean, and personality interest accounts are generally advanced in the literature to morally justify copyright law. I critically discuss these and come to the conclusion that only very limited authorial control of works is morally justified: Lockean accounts (including Nozick's) fail at grounding moral rights in intellectual creations. And if one accepts that copyright is not the only means of remunerating authors, then neither public interests nor authorial personality interests justify more than a small subset of the rights accorded by copyright law. The pared-down version of copyright that I defend consists of the right to attribution, the right to have one's non-endorsement of modifications or uses of one's works explicitly noted, and the right to partake in the profits that result from commercial uses of one's works. Importantly, this last right must be implemented so that it does not grant the author the ability to boycott any uses. These rights hinder neither public nor authorial interests and advance at least one of the two. Additionally, I defend the importance of non-copyright compensation schemes that ensure that authors are financially compensated for their useful work. In my paper I also cursorily explore whether contribution to another person's authorial work gives rise to moral interests.