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Subject: Comments on Distance Education

I am sending brief comments on behalf of Florida's State University System Libraries Distance Learner Services Subcommittee. We strongly support revising the copyright law in a way that advances learning, balances fair use with the rights of copyright holders, and is coherent with accelerating technological progress. Distance learning makes it possible to advance the public good through greatly expanding educational opportunities. In many cases, current licensing practices do not recognize and meet the needs of distance learners, and licenses should never be seen as a substitute for fair use. For librarians who are providing information resources in support of distance learning, several issues are specific concern:

- * Insuring the ability of libraries to offer services routinely available to on-campus students and faculty in formats and delivery modes appropriate for those in distance education programs. Licenses that limit access to individual workstations or buildings or geographic locations impede this ability.
- * Insuring the ability to provide access to course reserve and other curriculum supporting materials through digital networks without additional costs or limits on the number of times materials may be accessed.
- * Insuring that libraries are not burdened with excessive administrative requirements that are not technologically feasible (For example, authenticating users by categories such as "currently-enrolled students" is manageable. Authenticating users according to their enrollment in a specific course is extremely difficult at the present time.)
- * Insuring that faculty and staff do not face the administrative complexity of employing different copyright regulations and guidelines for different formats or media types.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide brief comments.

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