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To: Julie L. Sigall  
Associate Register for Policy & International Affairs

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From: Dave Reed

Comment:

I am a creator (writer and photographer) as well as a reader, movie watcher and music-listener-to. I believe it's important to remember WHY copyright exists at all. It's not out of a philanthropic urge to see that artists get their due. It's a cold, calculated bid to get more books/songs/stories/movies

If we pay them, they'll probably make more.

Copyright is about making more stories/songs/books/movies/etc. That's important enough to say twice.

With that in mind, the idea of finding a way for Orphan Works to be used, either directly by reproducing them and selling them; or indirectly, as raw material for another work of art, fits right into the idea of copyright management. A Work (book/movie/song/etc) SHOULD drop into the public domain sooner or later. While a creator should be rewarded for his work, there's no reason to make his heirs wealthy. They didn't give us any books/songs/stories.

On the other hand, let's face it: Disney is not going to allow Micky Mouse to become a public domain character. Neither is DC Comics going to let Superman or Batman out. They will both move heaven and earth (and congress) to protect viable commercial properties. As well they should.

I propose a simplification to the existing copyright rules. Return to 25 years of protection, but permit the copyright owner to register for an additional 10 years with the payment of a small fee (\$100?) that will most works to drop into the public domain in a (relatively) short time. And those that are still viable can be renewed indefinitely.

Heck, even Disney might be in favor of this one. Most of their best movies came from public domain sources.