

Hello,

This issue is extremely important to me personally. As the term of copyright has been extended time and again, increasingly large segments of culture are forever disappearing. Most novels, and nearly all nonfiction and ephemera such as manuals, advertising, and the like, goes out of print after a few years never to return. Only a tiny percentage of books continue to be printed decades after their first edition, much less the 100 or more years that copyright now lasts by default. With computer software the situation is even more dire--new versions of software are typically released several times annually, and many titles are available less than a year altogether. Once software becomes outdated, it is very rarely made commercially available again.

It is obvious that there is a demand for these products, even if they are not commercially available. Already there is a burgeoning, but not technically legal, community trading in orphaned computer software, not just games but classic applications that people still find useful or interesting. Moreover all these works represent important points of culture that should be preserved.

Libraries and universities--the traditional keepers of archives and cultural gems--are clearly inadequate for the job. Most titles, whether of books or computer software, are of little academic interest at the time they become commercially unavailable, and the sheer quantity of material means that it is impossible to for them to keep up.

The only solution is to put into law or regulation that it should be perfectly legal to freely distribute copyrighted works that are no longer commercially available to the public.

Sincerely,  
Nathan Kennedy  
Philadelphia, PA