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Review of "Copyright and E-learning: a guide for practitioners" 2nd Edition

Submitted by Jon Knight on 31 May 2017 - 4:38pm
Review info:

Copyright and E-learning: a guide for practitioners

2nd Edition
Jane Secker with Chris Morrison
Facet Publishing,
London
2016
ISBN 978-1-78330-060-0

[Adrienne Muir](#) reviews the Facet publication, "Copyright and E-learning: a guide for practitioners", 2nd edition by Jane Secker with Chris Morrison.

This is a second, revised and updated, edition of Jane Secker's 2009 book. For this edition Chris Morrison is a contributor. Both authors are prominent copyright experts working in higher education in the UK. They are also advocates of copyright education for professionals working in the sector. The second edition takes into account changes to UK copyright law in 2014 and developments in the field.

The book has seven chapters, including the conclusions. There is also an introduction setting out the scope and target audience and defining key terms. The six main chapters provide background and context for e-learning and copyright; digitisation; digital media; copyright issues specific to born digital content; copyright and networked applications and services, including social media and peer-to-peer sharing; and copyright education and training. The book also contains seven case studies, which are placed in each of the chapters of the book. Six of these illustrate various aspects of copyright and e-learning and digital resources in higher education institutions in the UK, New Zealand and Switzerland. The last case study is a card game designed to facilitate copyright education and training.

The book incorporates background and context, relevant legal provisions and advice in a very readable (and enjoyable) way. The legal aspects are introduced as and when they are relevant rather than all together at the beginning of the book. This works really well and will be helpful to practitioners. The tables that neatly summarise key points are also very useful. The advice is authoritative, practical and clearly based on both in-depth knowledge and experience. The authors include the issue of risk management in the conclusions, which is important, as learning more about copyright issues may result in increased anxiety in information professionals and make them risk averse.

Understandably the focus is on UK law. The book is up-to-date on UK copyright law and explains the nature and impact of changes. There are some minor issues, however. The comment "Performances qualify for protection for 50 years" (p. 90) doesn't take into account that the term for protection of performances in sound recordings was increased to 70 years in 2013. In the glossary it is stated that moral rights must be asserted. In fact this only applies to the right to be identified as the author. On p. 16 the authors say moral rights may remain after copyright expires. It is not clear why as this would contradict s. 86 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. In chapter 1 (p. 38), the authors state "As a content creator, a teacher can attach a Creative Commons licence to their work". It might have been useful to mention that under UK law, the employer would be the rights holder for content created by employees as part of their normal duties. The policy and practice in an institution would determine whether teachers may take such decisions, although practice is moving in the direction of open licences, at least in higher education. The book has a list of acronyms, glossary and index. There are some omissions, for example HERON is not included in the acronyms and I couldn't find moral rights in the index. As a former employee of the institution, I feel obliged to point out that on page 231 the authors refer to the University of Loughborough rather than Loughborough University. This is repeated in the index.

Overall, this is an excellent book. I would certainly recommend it to anyone in higher education as both an introduction to copyright issues in e-learning, libraries and digital humanities, and as an authoritative source of advice. I hope that Facet will continue to publish updated editions.

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