

Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden invites the public to provide input to the Library of Congress on expertise needed by the Register of Copyrights. Beginning today, December 16, an online survey is open to the public. The survey will be posted through January 31, 2017.

The results of this survey will inform development of the knowledge, skills and abilities needed for the position. We encourage you to participate and look forward to receiving your feedback.

Deadline for submitting comments: January 31, 2017

1. What are the knowledge, skills, and abilities you believe are the most important for the Register of Copyrights?

The new Register of Copyrights must have a deep understanding of the internet - how it works technically, how the various parts of the digital economy succeed and compete in a market environment, and in particular, how current and potential future copyright laws and policies affect it.

Copyright law has its roots in the offline, analog world. And, in many ways, it has been shaped by political forces to serve primarily the interests of traditional industries. But the pragmatic purpose of copyright law dictates that it promote creativity and innovation. And copyright law is woven throughout the internet, ranging from the inherent technical copies involved in ordinary internal computer memory transfers, to the illegal mass distribution of copyright-protected works, to transformative and expressive parody and criticism in online videos, images, and commentary that represent a major component of our online life.

Digital technology has enabled more people than ever before to become authors, creators and remixers, whose lives are affected by copyright - copyright on their creative inputs and their creative outputs. The internet is often both the technology that enables creation, and also the mechanism by which copies of these creative outputs are legitimately disseminated and experienced.

Taken together, these points mean that the understanding of the next Register of Copyrights of the internet will be an important factor in how successful copyright law is at promoting “the Progress of Science and useful Arts” in accordance with the U.S. Constitution.

Technical literacy is an important criterion for all policymakers, government officials and others in public life as technology and the internet become more entwined in our private lives. The Register of Copyrights is no exception, and in fact needs to understand the internet better than most. Therefore, we feel that the need for this understanding is the most important thing to highlight about the position.

2. What should be the top three priorities for the Register of Copyrights?

- Promoting opportunities for innovation and creativity, particularly on the internet
- Protecting safe harbors for intermediaries (such as the one in section 512) so that people can continue to communicate online and businesses can compete and grow
- Modernising and streamlining the section 1201 process for copyright exceptions, including pushing for the introduction of a presumption of renewal

3. Are there other factors that should be considered?

4. Additional comments may be uploaded here for our review: