Library License

Library Lab Grant Proposal

Overview

We propose to build out the concept of the "library license" over the coming nine months. Library License is a tool to grant public non-commercial online access to copyrighted material. Library Licensed works will be served over a secure, rights managed platform provided by libraries.

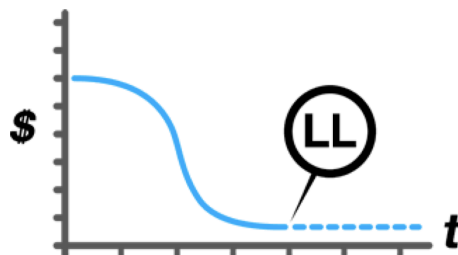**Licenses may take several forms**

 They may be triggered after an elapsed time – eg. after 5 years.

 Institutional carve-outs may be made – eg. DPLA after 5 years.

 Licenses may be triggered by sales or other performance-based metrics or when a book goes out of print.

Two possible scenarios in which an LL may be invoked

1) Content producers might add a Library License to the terms of their publishing contracts.

2) Once a work has gone out of print, an author may request the rights back from the publisher. An author may then Library License their work, letting the library be their new publisher.

The Library License could be a conceptual breakthrough for digital books much as its close cousin, the Creative Commons license, has been for content on the web. Authors could use the LL to contribute their works to the public sphere under a "some rights reserved" model.

For a for a graphical representation of the Library License process, please visit: http://librarylicense.org/process.html

Why a Library License?

The benefits of LL are obvious, and manifold. For starters, the LL could help with the seeding of a DPLA with books and other content. Imagine an author who insists that her publisher enable her to contribute his academic book to the DPLA after a period of, say, two years of exclusive publication. The LL model, like the CC model, could allow for variations on the theme, with various authors and intents in mind.

Costs

The proposed costs of the LL exploration project take three forms:

1) The project needs a project coordinator. A Berkman staff person, of the sort who lead all the Berkman Center research projects, might devote 25% of her or his time to the LL concept for 6 months and could make a great deal of progress, in partnership with the proposer (Jeff Goldenson).

$20,000 – $30,000

The project coordinator could also work with the Berkman Center clinical team to engage students or others in the drafting of Library Licenses.

No Cost

2) Peter Brantley, from the Internet Archive has signed on to help bring the project to life. He will advise, lead publisher and community outreach, and evangelize:

$5000

3) We would also propose a single meeting after 6 months or so to bring people to Cambridge, MA to discuss the draft licenses.

Peter Brantley, organizer of the Internet Archive's "Books In Browsers" conference, to organize the conference (in addition to prior consulting fee):

$5000 (negotiable, depending on size and scope of event)

Associated event costs:

$10,000

Total: The total cost of this project is likely about **$50,000** to explore this concept and to build it out in such a way that it could be tested.

Progress

This concept has been discussed broadly already. The idea has traction among key potential supporters: Creative Commons is possibly interested, as are Joi Ito and Larry Lessig (two former CC presidents/CEOs). John Palfrey has been involved in the conceptualization and project planning, as have others at the Berkman Center and also on the DPLA team. Peter Brantley at Internet Archive, formally associated with this grant, is well connected in this space and has already been of great help advising and advocating.

We have met with Berkman and secured the commitment of both staff and the clinic. Development with Berkman will be in phases. This will be a research, refinement and data gathering phase. We believe that this initial exploration may lead to new partnerships to take the idea to scale. The idea has gotten going at Harvard and we should put support behind its further development on an urgent basis. It could be an inexpensive breakthrough for access to knowledge in a digital age.

Principal Investigators

Jeff Goldenson, Library Innovation Lab

David Weinberger, Library Innovation Lab

Peter Brantley, Internet Archive

Team Berkman (Staff & Clinic, names to come)