

Copyright in Online Art Communities

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Abstract

Web 2.0 introduced a technological change that affected – among others - the field of art. Creation and dissemination of artworks have undergone significant change due to rise of Web 2.0 applications. Within this context online artist communities emerged giving the opportunity to both amateurs and professionals to create their own portfolio. In an environment where technology meets creativity the absence of physical barriers makes the artworks widely accessible to others as well as interaction between artists easier. As far as moderation is concerned each registered user has both rights and responsibilities according to the websites' particular policy. However, the increasing growth of these communities makes the matter of artists' rights a matter of great importance that has two aspects. The first one concerns the origin of uploaded artworks while the second one is related to the policy implied by the websites in order to protect user-generated artworks from being misused or even stolen.

The aim of this paper is to examine the terms of use and policy of art related websites like deviantart.com, flickr.com, photobucket.com in order to note the extent to which user's work is protected. Copyright infringement consists a serious problem and despite the fact that these websites have restrictions in submissions they do not seem able to provide adequate protection. In addition, we are interested in alternative; more liberal terms of license that have arisen such as Creative Commons license that seems to become popular among the new generation of artists.