

Litman, Jessica. *Digital Copyright: Protecting Intellectual Property on the Internet.* Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus, 2001. 208p. \$25, alk. paper (ISBN 1-57392-889-5). LC 00-45917.

With the passing of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act and the increased interest in Internet copyright—and in Virginia and Maryland, with the passage of UCITA (Uniform Computer Information Transaction Act)—an increasing number of people, including many librarians, are trying to sift through the complexities of copyright law. Jessica Litman, a law professor at Wayne State University, describes where we currently stand with digital copyright and how the law has been shaped over the past one hundred years.

The first half of *Digital Copyright* includes rather detailed descriptions of how copyright law has been created, shaped, and reshaped over the last century. It opens with an explanation of the basic principles behind copyright law, followed by a more in-depth look at how copyright law has been negotiated and legislated in the United States (a process decidedly different from the usual congressional practice). Litman provides a lengthy review of copyright revision, highlighting the negotiations and bargains struck in the approval of each new copyright bill. Copyright law has been shaped through a series of conferences and negotiations with

interested parties (publishers, artists, etc.). This has led to fractured coverage with those interests having the biggest collective voice getting the better bargaining position.

The second half of the book is based on the historical groundwork laid in the first half and discusses how copyright law is supposed to work in the digital age, providing the details of the progressive legislation that has attempted to make older laws fit new technologies. This discussion begins with a recounting of the development of the Internet and the Information Superhighway. As with earlier copyright legislation, discussion of digital copyright was done in committee with little input from the general public. In fact, these early committee discussions, setting the stage for the passage of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, were conducted using a theoretical framework that was not based on current Internet use and with the idea of stimulating growth among producers of material. This shortsighted manner of development continues to plague our system of copyrights and has created a number of problems and road blocks for those attempting to break into new Internet markets. As with past copyright legislation, big-interest groups continue to exercise great influence over copyright discussions in Congress. Litman is opposed to this legislative process that gives us laws that have great impact on consumers, but on which they have had little or no input.

Litman delivers a wealth of information, both historical and legal, yet the entire stream of information is conveyed in language that is easy to follow. One of the most difficult tasks of any book whose purpose is to inform readers about copyright law is to boil down the confusing language of copyright statutes into understandable terms. *Digital Copyright* is designed like a textbook for copyright law, and librarians will benefit from the information found here. As Litman points out, librarians have lobbied against enactment of various revisions to the current copyright law and our successes have been less

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than impressive. Certainly, one of the keys to the profession's gaining greater influence is education, and books such as *Digital Copyright* will be instrumental in that education as they attempt to translate the confusing language of copyright law into understandable terms.—*Timothy Hensley, Randolph-Macon College.*

Matthews, Jack. *Reading Matter: A Rabid Bibliophile's Adventures among Old and Rare Books.* New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Pr., 2000. 208p. \$29.95, alk. paper (ISBN 1584560274). LC 00-031361. If you missed reading a selection of Jack Matthews's essays in prior appearances in the *Washington Times*, *Antioch Review*, or *Soundings*, you will be glad to have another opportunity in *Reading Matter*. This delightful collection of twelve essays is both educational and entertaining, and includes topics as disparate as the comma and booksellers' catalogs. The essays are unified by the theme of book collecting, described by Matthews as bibliophilia. Elements of this underlying theme creep

into each essay in the form of an anecdote. Matthews, distinguished professor of English language and literature at Ohio University, uses the anecdote as preamble, a device through which he launches into the central theme of the essays themselves. The first essay, "Anecdotal Evidence," contrasts trivia with triviality and anecdotes, placing anecdotes in context in literature and history and thus preparing the reader for what is to come—especially in an artistic (if not thematic) sense.

Several essays address the book as object. In "The Binding of Books and the Matter of Spirit," Matthews offers a chatty, yet theoretical, discussion of bindings. Far from taking a traditional approach, the author bounces between topics, ranging from book coverings to their contents, in a manner that might be described as a "stream of consciousness." He speaks of establishing a "sensible balance between inner and outer validities." Matthews paints an interesting history of dust jackets in "Dust Jackets and the Art of Memory." Through examples, he dem-

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