



Beyond the Book

A podcast series on the business of writing and publishing

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HOST, [ONCOPYRIGHT 2012](#)

THOUGHTS ON THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

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There once was a day that we could afford, most of us, not to care so much about copyright, right? It was something those ivory tower people worried about, or maybe some guy in a law firm somewhere. But today, how can you not be concerned about copyright – the legal implications, the cultural implications, what it means for technology going forward? If you're like me, a creative guy, or you're like someone who is helping progress the technological side of the world, you don't have a choice but be concerned about this. You may not care about copyright, but copyright cares about you.

Of course I care about these issues. I'm a writer and a television talker. I mean, I don't have any real marketable skills other than what is sometimes in a little bit of a highfalutin way described as intellectual property. That's all I got. And I don't want to do volunteer work for the rest of my life, let's be honest. I would like to be paid for what I do. I would like to be sure that if other people are making money off of it, I get my little slice of that. And I know that the only way that's going to happen is if there is some kind of system in place that ensures that people who bring their creativity and their energy and their talent to bear in all of these fields if



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we come up with some kind of fair compensation system that actually makes sense, given the digital technologies of today.

There are important competing values here, right? We have technology on one side – God knows that’s important. And we have creativity on the other side. Where would we be without that? But what happens when those two collide – and not just come close to each other or almost bump into each other, but come smashing, headlong careening into each other in ways that are truly disrupting, both the economy and the creative world. What do we do then? How do we deal with that? Who is it that should be in charge? Are there rules that should apply? Can we still afford to just throw up our hands and say, meh, whatever happens?

We know how much the world has changed. It will never be the same, no matter what any of us wish for. But the values that got us here, they’re still so important, right? We need to encourage people to create. We want people writing and creating art and making movies and creating music. We want to make sure that we don’t do anything that stops that important creative process. At the same time, the ways that all that creativity comes to people, it’s changed tremendously, right? We have digital ways of delivering things. We have new ways of presenting them. Sometimes we can’t even avoid things, they’re coming at us so quickly.

It can’t just be the creative people saying this is what we want. It just can’t be the tech people saying, no, no, no, this is what we need. Somehow or another, if we’re going to figure our way through these mazes here, all the stakeholders, all the people who are affected by it – and that means everybody – all those folks need to come together under one roof, in one room, being frank and honest and smart and sometimes a little passionate and disagreeable, and figuring out how is it that we’re going to solve these things in smart ways, in ways that let technology flourish, in



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ways that let creativity be better than it's ever been, and in ways that make sure that the creative economy is both creative and an economy.

I love that term, creative economy. Creative economy. You can't ignore either part of it. Without the creativity, the economy doesn't move. Without the economy, there's not much incentive to be creative. We're in the middle of an election right now, and there are many issues out there. But truly, as the months go by, this is becoming more important than almost any of them. How is that we use what we have here in this country to advance ourselves in ways that no one else around the world can do? We are smarter, we are more creative, we do have technical expertise that can't compare anywhere else. But you know what? Unless we can come up with some fair rules of the road, all of that's going to be a waste. Creative economy – it's got to be creative and it has to be an economy.

Where else could we do that but New York? This is the center of so much of that conversation. All these creative people here, all these businesspeople here – you should be here and be part of that conversation. As the tug of war progresses, as the debates rev up, there's no other way to do this, than to put all the smartest people who care about copyright – take all of them and put them in a room together. We won't lock the door, but we'd encourage you to hang around a little bit. Because in one day, one action-packed, very full day, we truly are going to have a frank and passionate and intelligent exchange like you've never been part of before. If you care about copyright, you got to be here.

And those two important values, that creativity on one hand, that technological and digital development on the other, somehow or another, they need to coexist. OnCopyright 2012, that's the focus and the discussion and the smartest people in this field figuring out how it is that we're going to make that work.