



# Copyright Copyright

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The recent (2006) changes to the Copyright Act went some way to recognising this problem and libraries are permitted to circumvent DRM in order to make use of the copyright material for administrative purposes — for example, to make an acquisitions decision.<sup>2</sup> However, circumventing DRM is not a simple matter — it may require some computer expertise — and the Act prohibits anyone from providing a circumvention service.<sup>3</sup> So unless the library has an inhouse expert, they may be unable to make use of this part of the Act.

DRM can also prevent access to material which could be used because the copyright term has expired. For instance, an electronic journal archive protected by DRM may contain historical material which is now in the public domain. There are many other examples from music, radio and film.<sup>4</sup>

But DRM has a positive side for librarians — it can assist them in controlling the use of copyright material as:

- it makes it difficult, if not impossible, to print or copy e-books
- librarians can lend audio books on iPods, safe in the knowledge that they cannot be transferred
- books on e-reserve can be limited to single concurrent user.

The latest 2006 amendments to the Copyright Act have been a mixed blessing for librarians. We have had the introduction of the 'flexible dealing' exceptions (section 200AB), the clarification of the status of corporate libraries and the limited provisions for circumventing DRM. However, we must fight to maintain what we have gained and make sure that the term of copyright is not extended even further.

#### Notes

1. Gittins, Ross. 'Just what are we giving away?' *The Age*, (Melbourne), Aug 11, 2004, p.17
2. *Copyright Act 1968*, s.116AN(8)
3. *Copyright Act 1968*, s.116AP
4. Thompson, Bill. (22/9/2006). 'When Private Locks Shackle Public Works' In *BBC/Technology*. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/5371182.stm>>, viewed 1/9/2007.



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