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Turk, assistant professor of English, testifies in United States Copyright Office hearing

Summary: Turk researches the phenomenon of fan-made videos, whose makers are impacted by the recently released ruling.

(August 6, 2010)-The United States Copyright Office has released its ruling on proposed Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) exemptions. The office granted an exemption to makers of noncommercial remix video, including vids (fan-made music videos), anime music videos, and political remixes. Tisha Turk, University of Minnesota, Morris assistant professor of English, testified in favor of the exemption at the DMCA hearings in May 2009, along with two other scholars affiliated with the Organization for Transformative Works, a nonprofit organization “run by and for fans to provide access to and preserve the history of fanworks and fan cultures.”

Turk, who holds a doctorate in English from the University of Wisconsin, researches vids and vidding. A typical vid combines repurposed clips from television or film with repurposed music. The DMCA ruling represents a significant victory for vidders and other remix artists. Previously, film studies professors held the only DMCA exemption for DVD ripping. Now makers of noncommercial video are also permitted to circumvent DMCA technologies if needed to make artistic statements.

Says Turk: “The DMCA made it illegal for remix artists to rip DVDs in order to get high-quality source for their remixes. The discussion of vids in the Register of Copyright’s [Recommendation](#) to The Librarian of Congress makes clear that vids and other remix videos can be fair uses of copyrighted material and therefore shouldn’t be preemptively restricted by the DMCA. Multimedia literacy means being able to not only analyze but respond to mass media texts in their own language. It means being able to talk back to TV. That’s what vids do, and that’s why this ruling is important.”

Turk teaches courses in writing and narrative theory and directs the Writing Room, a resource for students seeking feedback on their writing.

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