

Copyright Law Expertise in the Digital Environment

Negentropy Evidentiary Record — Winthrop University to Northeastern Illinois University (1990–2002)

Evidentiary Standard

This record is evaluated against the same three-part test applied throughout this documentary: (1) a documented before-state, (2) an identifiable ordering agent, and (3) a measurable after-state. No inference is drawn beyond what the primary sources below explicitly confirm.

I. Before-State: An Unsettled Legal Environment

Copyright law during this period was actively being extended, through litigation and evolving doctrine, into domains the 1976 Copyright Act had not anticipated — electronic data, networked computing, and multimedia. The primary sources documenting this arc state this condition directly, in contemporaneous language:

From the 1990 policy document itself: “Intellectual property in these centers may be in the form of electronic data, magnetic and laser disks, magnetic tapes, microfilm, and printed material... Guidelines must be established based on copyright law for the appropriate use of intellectual material in our educational environment.”

From the 1994 ASCUE paper: “The area of multimedia involves many types of copyrighted works, the legal implications of which are overwhelming. Most information technology (IT) users have neither the knowledge of or expertise in copyright law to insure that they do not infringe on an author's property rights... Many cases must be resolved in court.”

These statements establish, from the author's own contemporaneous record, that the applicable law was understood at the time to be incompletely settled and actively contested — the condition the policy and expert-system work below was built to address.

II. Ordering Agent

William J. Moressi is the consistent lead figure across every primary source in this record — as committee chair, lead/co-author, and presenter. The full authorship record, drawn directly from primary sources rather than secondary summary, is as follows:

- 1990 CAUSE National Conference paper (“A College Policy on Copyrighted Material”): William J. Moressi, Betty M. Laster, Laurance R. Mitlin, Christopher C. Hodgdon, Benny G. Coxton — Winthrop College.
- 1991 Winthrop University Policy on Copyrighted Material (as cited in the 1994 ASCUE paper's References): William J. Moressi, Benny G. Coxton, W.E. Hobgood, Christopher C. Hodgdon, Laurance R. Mitlin — Computer Utilization Committee, Winthrop University.
- 1994 ASCUE National Conference paper (“An Expert System Prototype: Copyright Law in a Multimedia Environment”): William J. Moressi (Academic Computing Center) and Renée A. McCauley (Department of Computer Science) — Winthrop University.
- 1994 HENA Conference paper (“Legal and Ethical Use of the Internet”): William J. Moressi (Academic Computing Center) and Jeff Rosen (Dacus Library) — Winthrop University.

Moressi chaired the Computer Utilization Committee that produced the governing policy document (internally dated “Ver. 050190:01,” May 1, 1990), directed its national presentation, and later led its translation into an automated expert-system tool. At NEIU (1995–2004), he directed the drafting and implementation of that institution's first Copyright Policy as part of a broader IT policy suite, and maintained ongoing subject-matter currency through Cornell University's Computer Policy and Law program in 2000 and 2002.

III. After-State: Documented, Independently Corroborated Outcomes

Unlike many entries in this record, this arc carries substantial third-party corroboration independent of the author's own account:

- Policy artifact: “Winthrop College: Policy on Copyrighted Material” (internal version 050190:01, May 1, 1990) — the actual governing document, detailing statutory basis, fair-use application across six media categories, and administrative enforcement procedure.
- National presentation: “A College Policy on Copyrighted Material,” 1990 CAUSE National Conference, Miami Beach, FL (Nov. 27–30, 1990). Attendee evaluation forms on file show predominantly Excellent/Good ratings across knowledge, delivery, and material organization, with one attendee's handwritten note: “Thanks for the impressive policy!”
- National distribution: accepted into the CAUSE Exchange Library as catalog no. CSD-0443 (42 pages), confirmed by CAUSE Information newsletter (Jan. 1991) and by direct executive correspondence from Michael R. Zastrocky, CAUSE Vice President for Information Resources (Feb. 6, 1991 letter, on file).
- Trade press coverage: Library Hi Tech News, No. 79 (March 1991), reporting the Winthrop policy under the heading “Management and control of ‘intellectual property’ have become a major concern of IS management.”
- Regional dissemination: “A College Policy on Copyrighted Material: Ver. 2,” presented at the 11th Annual HENA Conference, Charleston, SC (1991).
- Applied technology extension: “Copyright Law Advisor,” a rule-based AI expert system (VP-EXPERT shell) translating the Winthrop policy into an on-line, menu-driven reference tool. Presented as “An Expert System Prototype: Copyright Law in a Multimedia Environment,” 1994 ASCUE National Conference (full 16-page paper on file).
- Continuity extension: “Legal and Ethical Use of the Internet,” 14th Annual HENA Conference (Oct. 1994), embedding the full text of the June 1992 NSFNET Backbone Services Acceptable Use Policy and extending the copyright framework to networked/Internet use.
- Institutionalization at NEIU: direction of NEIU's first Copyright Policy as part of its inaugural institutional IT policy suite (1995–2004), alongside the Acceptable Use Policy, Internet/Email Account Policy, Contingency Recovery Plan, and Internet/WWW Policy.
- Ongoing credentialing: Cornell University, “Computer Policy and Law,” School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions — completed July 28, 2000 and July 12, 2002 (certificates on file).

Sources on File

Winthrop College: Policy on Copyrighted Material (internal document, Ver. 050190:01, May 1, 1990) — Moressi, Laster, Mitlin, Hodgdon, Coxton

“A College Policy on Copyrighted Material,” Proceedings of the 1990 CAUSE National Conference, Miami Beach, FL

CAUSE90 Track Presentation Evaluation forms (multiple, on file)

Letter from Michael R. Zastrocky, CAUSE Vice President for Information Resources, Feb. 6, 1991

CAUSE Information newsletter, Vol. XX, No. 1, January 1991

Library Hi Tech News, No. 79, March 1991 (Pierian Press)

“A College Policy on Copyrighted Material: Ver. 2,” 11th Annual HENA Conference, Charleston, SC, 1991

“An Expert System Prototype: Copyright Law in a Multimedia Environment,” Proceedings of the 1994 ASCUE National Conference, Myrtle Beach, SC (Moressi & McCauley) — full 16-page paper

“Legal and Ethical Use of the Internet,” 14th Annual HENA Conference, 1994 (Moressi & Rosen)

Cornell University Certificates of Completion, Computer Policy and Law — July 28, 2000 and July 12, 2002

Note on Scope

This record documents the author's engagement with copyright law as an institutional and technical practitioner across a fourteen-year span. It does not constitute legal analysis or a claim to have resolved any specific point of unsettled law; it documents that the work was conducted, presented, adopted, and sustained during a period when the governing law was itself still being actively defined.